



Adelgram-too!

A second generation's CHRISTmas greeting. December 2004.



Dead Loved Ones,

Have you ever had one of those years? You know...the kind where you're always a week behind, your to-do list is longer than your driveway and holidays come and go before you really get the chance to celebrate them? Well, 2003 was that year for me, which is why I must begin my letter this year with an apology for my lack of a letter last year. Just for the record, I *did* write a letter last year and even began to construct homemade cards, but when approximately December 23 dawned, and I was still attaching the ribbon to the cards, Damon was still entering addresses into a computer database, my family had arrived from Charleston and I had a grand total of 4 stamps in my possession....well, I threw in the towel! BUT, please visit the new and improved www.adelgren.com, and you can read the 2003 letter that never made it to your mailbox on-line!

This year I've decided to be a little creative with my letter. I'm combining my love of literature with our yearly updates by choosing a book title to describe the aspects of our year. Please don't try this at home...too little sleep, too many lattes and a warped sense of humor are required.

The Invisible Man by HG Wells

I know....that's not an entirely fair or accurate way to describe Damon, but he has been extraordinarily busy this year! He continues to work at Mercy Children's Clinic as their chief operations officer. This year he was part of a very successful event called the Franklin Classic, a 5 and 10 K run and walk, benefiting the clinic. We made it a family affair, for the kids recorded a commercial that was played on a local radio station and all of us participated in raising money for the event. We all did the 5K walk together. We continue to be very excited in our involvement with this ministry. Damon also serves as a deacon at our church and on the board of the Mid-South Ballet Theatre. This year, Damon and I, are actually joining Annaleigh in dancing in the Nutcracker production put on by this company. I apologize for the mental image that many of you just had of me and Damon in tutus. We're just extras in the party scene and perform nothing more strenuous than the box step.

Damon turned 35 this year, and thinking his days are numbered, fulfilled a life-long fantasy of recording a rap-single. Now, don't pinch yourself....you are still reading the Adelgren family Christmas letter....I did say rap single. Damon collaborated with his friend (or in this case, shall I say "homie"?), Scott Dotta, owner of the

Retro Room sound studio and produced "Big D: Closet MC". Go to our website and have a listen. Hearing is believing!

At Home in Mitford
by Jan Karon

Actually my existence very little resembles life in the quaint town of this favorite series, but most of my time still does center around hearth and home. We entered our fourth year of homeschooling, and I still love it as much as ever. Often someone will comment on what a sacrifice that I'm making to do this. Well, perhaps, but for me it would be a much greater sacrifice to send them off to school. Oh, sure, there are days that I look longingly out the window at the bright yellow school bus as it hurries past our house, but most days I'm very content to cuddle on the couch, reading the Chronicles of Narnia or gather around the kitchen table to make Christmas ornaments out of macaroni.

Lately my time and thoughts have revolved around preparing for my Mom's move to TN right after Christmas. Initially she'll be living in our home until we can hopefully build her an apartment attached to the back of the house. Although we're having to do some rearranging and careful planning, we're all looking forward to having her close to us.

Little Women
by Louisa May Alcott

Annaleigh at age 8, is truly becoming a 'little woman' at a rate which scares the socks right off of Damon and me! As I sit and ponder this, I realize that her personality even mirrors the sisters of this classic novel. She has the grace and beauty of Meg. Annaleigh still loves to dance and along with weekly ballet classes will appear for the third year in the Nutcracker, as I mentioned earlier. This year she has two parts: the party scene with us and Chinese tea in the second act. Annaleigh has the sharp mind and creativity of Jo. She's forever making something, whether it's writing stories, doing crafts or baking cookies. As a third grader, she continues to do very well in school. Her favorite subject this year is science, which is my least favorite, so it makes for an interesting dynamic. She has the sensitive, caring nature of Beth. Recently I took the kids to a nursing home to visit, and Annaleigh came alive as she interacted with these needy, hurting people. She's chomping at the bit to go back and visit with her new friends. Lastly, she embodies the youthful, fun spirit of Amy. Not a day goes by that I don't find myself doubled over with laughter over some of her crazy antics. We thank God every day for the blessing of this 'little woman.'

A Tale of Two Cities
by Charles Dickens

"It was the best of times. It was the worst of times." The first lines of this novel provide the perfect description of what it's like to be our four year old, Harrison. Another classic novel, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, comes to mind. One minute he can be cuddling with me on the couch and the next minute he's writhing on the floor, choked with tears because I told him he needs to clean his room. Fortunately, he just started taking taekwondo, and one of the tenets he's learning is self-control. I've reminded him that this is also one of the fruits of the spirit that Jesus wants him to have, to which he replied, "Oh, does Jesus know about taekwondo?"

He loves all things "boy," which is a PC word for violent. His room is filled with guns, swords, crossbows and Star Wars paraphernalia. Everyday when I read to them, before he joins me and Annaleigh, he wants to know if the book has any fighting in it. {sigh} He has really taken to school this year. He is working through a K-4 language arts book and a K-5 math program. He does really well in both. While I work with Annaleigh, he usually busies himself with Legos or Play-doh and absorbs what he will....usually the fighting parts. When studying ancient American history, he focused on the Aztecs and their human sacrifice rituals. When studying Columbus, he wanted to know if he had a gun. Go figure...

All Creatures Great and Small
by James Herriot

The animal kingdom is still alive and well at the Adelgren house much to Damon's chagrin. Baxter. Our aged feline, still lazes about the house and tries to pretend that he's our only pet. Bridget, our boxer, will soon turn 7 but seems to be in denial as she still prances around like a puppy most of the time. Maybe this is her mid-life

crisis. She'll probably be the next member of our family to produce a rap CD. Ripley, our 2 year old cat, is the trouble-maker of the group. He eats our plants (then throws them up on our carpet), interrupts our lessons and tries to sleep in our beds. Although during the Christmas season it's the baby Jesus' bed he tries to sleep in, as I can't keep him out of a little stuffed nativity scene that the kids have. We still love him, though. Well, most of us anyway.

This year we tried our hands at raising a couple of crested geckos. While these little animals proved fascinating, it was short-lived, and the responsibility of their care soon fell to the one person who didn't want them in the first place: me. I was actually a little repulsed by their live-cricket consumption and their zoo-ish sort of smell, so after about eight months or so, we found them a home with a lizard-loving boy from our church.

Skipping Christmas
by John Grisham

Have any of you read this? If you haven't I highly recommend it! The thing to skip is the movie based on this book, Christmas with the Kranks. Watching Tim Allen try to eat his lunch after a Botox injection is about as amusing as watching a cricket being swallowed alive by stinky, little lizards! Ah, but I digress...It's an interesting concept, not 'doing' Christmas. Saving money, avoiding stress...where could that go wrong? If someone were to suggest this to me in October, I wouldn't buy it, for at that time I'm usually foaming at the mouth to listen to Christmas music and wrap my banister in garland. Now, however, when I find myself knee-deep in Christmas and all of its hoopla, I think the idea is sort of appealing. Sure let's cease the wrapping, boycott the baking and nuke the Nutcracker! But even as I think these highly radical thoughts, my eyes drift to my mantle where my Nativity scene is displayed, a symbol of the reason for this season. I'm very thankful He didn't skip Christmas! Perhaps the cure for the Christmas blues we sometimes feel mid-season would be to skip Xmas and keep CHRISTmas. Keep baking cookies with your kids. Peruse the Sunday paper for the best sales. I can assure that I'm not going to start a bonfire for my nutcracker collection. But amidst all of this I challenge you to look for ways to share Christ's love with your family and with others. Turn your hearts and minds often to not just the baby in the manger, but to the Savior on the cross and the King on the throne.

Wishing you a blessed CHRISTmas,
The Adelgren family
Damon, Kellie, Annaleigh and Harrison
Baxter, Bridget and Ripley