

A Permeating Passion

It's Christmas letter time! We aren't very good about sending out our yearly letters, although this year's letter should go out in the next few days. Of course that's what I said last year too—all of last year. At first it was going to be a Christmas letter, and then a New Year's letter, and then Valentines, Independence Day, Halloween, etc... You get the point. The box of 150 photos from last year was still sitting on my desk in the "to do" pile up until a few weeks ago. They are now neatly packed with our other pictures. Instead of getting into the hands of our friends, they will be divided among our children and grand children for numerous generations until eventually even our great-great-great-great-grandchildren will possess their own personal copy of our 2005 Christmas photo.

Anyway, that is not why I am writing. Still, I would like to write about another Christmas letter. We received it from some friends that have something like 14,000,000 children. (Have you ever noticed how families that are larger than yours seem to have waaaay too many kids?) Actually they *only* have nine.

In typical fashion, there was a short paragraph that described each child's accomplishments and activities. However, the atypical part was that the paragraph also included an update on how each child was being used by God and/or what area they were growing in. Here is a sample (with the name changed):

“Renee has successfully made the transition to public school, and continues to show signs that she is a leader among her peers. We continue to pray for her efforts to bring Christ to classmates and track teammates. Her eye for detail and budding art creativity give us wonder as to how God would lead her life direction. However, we know that it will involve helping others know Christ more deeply and fully as she is so doing herself.”

By the time we read through several similar paragraphs, we felt like we had a personal tour through the hearts of the parents. They clearly grasped 1) that their kids have a life mission, and 2) that their development related to that mission was what mattered the most. School, soccer, karate and other activities were a valuable and exciting parts of their children's life experiences. However, these were presented as a means to an end, not as an end in and of themselves.

We are on a mission to reach a lost and dying world! God has a personal life assignment for each of our children which relates to their gifting, abilities, and even weaknesses. Their growth and development toward that end dwarfs the importance of other typical childhood accomplishments. That flavor permeated each paragraph of our friend's Christmas letter. What an incredibly encouraging letter it was for us to read!

It's not that I'm wanting people to rethink how they write Christmas letters. That would be senseless. The point I'm attempting, is to make sure that you are excited about the things of God—that you are passionate about His kingdom. Surely that will flow out into your Christmas letters, and more importantly, your life. That's what I like about that letter, not that it was written just right, but that it reflected a passionate life.

Here are some questions to consider:

How is our child uniquely gifted by God?

How can we help him/her develop those gifts?

What are our child's most weaknesses?

How can we strengthen those areas?