



Christmas 2010

Merry Christmas from the Staley family

OK. Hope this was a good year for you and your family. 2010 is just about over and Donna and I have not yet completed the July stuff on the calendar, let alone December. Donna and I are doing well.

We have been lucky so far concerning both boys – Chris and Shaun and their families still being close and living in Jacksonville. Our grandson Benjamin (Chris and Tawney's) is now 15 months old and is just a bundle of fun to play with. He is now getting to the stage where we can wrestle on the floor and chase each other around the house. Shaun and Kristin are also expecting a baby girl in March. Even though the boys live in Jacksonville, it's not too say we see a lot of them. They are kind of hard to connect with. We have been told by them that if we want to talk to them, it is best to do it by text – on Wednesdays – at 3:51am – or just wait until the next Wednesday at the same time and try again. I think they are trying to tell us something.

This bad economy thing is finally catching up with us. We met with our financial planner to talk about future retirement. I mentioned the retirement age of 62 and our planner excused himself and ran to the bathroom. I could hear him laughing with intermittent flushing in there for a couple of minutes. He came back out and said that we would need to consider a later age for retirement. I then suggested 65 and once again he left the room only to go into his associate's office and they both laughed for about a minute while attempting to drown out their laughter by sharpening some pencils. He then suggested that I should consider something in my mid 70's. I told him by then I'll be lucky to know who I am and how to spend my money on things like a cruise or bowling with my arthritis knuckles what won't come out of the bowling ball. I told him with all of those pencils that he just sharpened to do some further calculating to get me retired by 65 or else. That means I get to have 5 more years to harass EP children, feed them tons of sugar candy and send them on their way each Sunday, tearing the upholstery off the car seats on their way home. Now if you are a parent and want to contribute to my 401K to help move me on to pasture or a nice grazing field earlier – let's talk.

Not only has the economy messed up my retirement, it has also trickled down to our normal day to day living. I had forecasted to purchase a new/used vehicle for Donna sometime at the end of last year and also a replacement vehicle for me by this year-end or beginning of 2011. Donna's van is a 1998 and my Acura is a 1999 so we have done pretty well with getting our money out of them. It does require some additional maintenance and creativity to keep them running and looking good though. In the case of Donna's van, the back gate rusted out and we lost the back window and door somewhere on US I-95 in North Carolina several months



ago. I tried to pull off so Donna could pick up the pieces however an 18 wheeler, two cars and an SUV passing by finished them off before she could get to them. It's OK though as once I got home I purchased some used pressure treated fence lumber off of Craig's List and built a back end for the van. We could not seem to keep the clear plastic stapled to the upper rear end for a back window so I just closed it completely with the remaining lumber and hinges which was the used fence gate. The fence gate worked out well since Donna still has access to get to the back of the van in case we need to pick up additional lumber if the side doors come off later. Kinda proud of how well we have managed with our vehicles. Donna has turned the odometer over again and heading for 325,000 miles.

Christmas present buying is also very limited this year. Donna will think she made out pretty well though as I went through her old clothes she has stored in the attic and picked out a few nice outfits that look like they are coming back in style. I then bought some of that Ritt Dye for clothing and did a couple of washer loads with different colored dye and -walla-walla-woo - coordinated red-dyed blouse and nice brown dyed slacks. I even printed out some Hanna Montana clothing labels and attached them. So far I have three outfits dyed, labeled and gift wrapped to put under the tree. She asked me what I wanted and I told her to go easy and gave her my list and told her not to spend over three hundred or so on me.

We'd love to have you stop by over the Christmas season. Just bring a couple of pot-luck dishes with you when you come and we'll have a great time. Don't forget your drinks also.

Now to get a little serious. This letter goes out to all our regular children's volunteers and EP friends we love so dearly. For the children's volunteers, we cannot say in words how much we appreciate you for your week-in and week-out dedication to our ministry. Some of you help out in Awana, some for special events, some teach. Just know that we really do appreciate what you do. For those EP friends not involved in children's ministry, we also enjoy your friendship and the fun times we have together.

Christmas is a good time to reflect on God's love for us and how we should pass it along to one another. I look forward to a great and exciting year and sharing that love with you at East Pointe.

God bless and Merry Christmas,

Ken and Donna

To view past Staley Christmas letters, music and pictures go to www.kenstaley.com