

**To Dear Loved Ones, including our circle of Friends, from Herb and Norma Douglass,
Celebrating our Lord's Birth, in this year of our Lord, 2006**

Seems like each year is more full of appalling surprises and unsureness wherever we look across the seven continents (some say six). And how we look at this changing world depends on our worldviews. We are divided quickly between those who believe that God will have the last word and those who think that man's well-being depends on the next invention or medical surprise. And then those who believe that God will have the last word are divided quickly over what kind of God they are talking about. So much God-talk must make God weep!

For instance: He is not the God of the Health and Prosperity Gospel—ask Job. He is not the God who arbitrarily has elected some to be “saved” and others to get “what they deserve.” He is not the God who will figure out how to save everyone—because His “love never fails.” He is not the God who blankets us with “laws” that can not possibly be “kept” and then asks us to keep asking for forgiveness. But He is the God who revealed Himself in the Man who was born into this world 2000 years, born as all babies are born with the DNA and genetic code that was constantly being weakened after 4000 years of human history. We needed a clear picture of Mercy and Justice, of Pardon and Power, in a world where all the greatest philosophers and theologians had been given their chance to paint that picture. The world has never again been the same, even dividing the centuries that our calendars recognize today.

That is why December 25 means so much to the Douglasses. Without Jesus, we would have no clue as to what happens after death. Nor how to find peace in troubled homes. Nor how to find meaning in the few years we expect to live before Jesus returns or when He calls us to rest for awhile..

We are saying this with a point: On September 15, our dear, wonderful Mavis went to sleep after a heroic struggle with breast cancer. This has truly slammed us as we watch son Herb, her constant companion, and their two golden treasures, Candi and Kelli, as they nobly sink back into their class work at Pacific Union College. More than 200 of their friends gathered on a grassy hillside overlooking some of the nicest views in California for a memorial celebration on September 30. Without a God who has given us a “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13), all of this and much more would turn us into secularists who “eat and drink because tomorrow we die.”

In March, Norma's mother, Evangeline Collier in her 102nd year, whispered “Good-bye until Jesus comes.” What a gal! Fully conscious, always an inspiration to her physician and nurses who had much to say at the dedication of a fountain in her honor at the nursing home.

Some of the other highlights of 2006 included:

- Speaking appts at the General Youth Council held at Southern Adventist University in March—what a fired-up group of young people who didn't need razzle-dazzle entertainment to keep them interested.
- First week in May in Montana finally acceding to Donna and Britney's pleas to see baby buffalo, elk, etc., in Yellowstone Park. They were everywhere, often closing the road while they sauntered by. We walked very close, pictures prove it!
- Later in May we took advantage of a western Caribbean cruise package at a phenomenal price that also gave us several days with Chip and Judy in their Brooksville, FL, Shangri-La.
- A long weekend at Country Haven Academy, Pasco, WA, in June (a truly remarkable educational center) where we combined closing school with a regional health convention.
- August always starts out with Herb and Dad doing their annual ballgame at the Sacramento River Cats to signal how fast the years are adding up. Always get good seats, near the diamond.

- Then the annual August ASI meeting where Amazing Facts has its usual, overflowing crowd at its booth as well as our annual board meeting—this time in Dallas, TX.
- Another week with Vivienne Sue in Palm Springs. Her fourth back operation scheduled in May, to end all need for one in the future, was stopped in the middle after the surgeon discovered a sizable cache of infection on her spinal column. Before sewing her up, he unscrewed the metal brace that had caused a vertebra to slip into her nerve paths to help relieve her pain, only slightly. Then for the next seven months she was on heavy antibiotics poured into her Pic line in her right upper chest 2x daily. Fortunately we have Jan’s gorgeous home in Bakersfield to use as our favorite Bed & Breakfast.
- September seems a blur, like a rocket pass. First weekend, Grandfather Leo and I married off granddaughter Cady Van Dolson to Joe Shulman in Ooltewah, TN; then dear Mavis leaving us, then a week later, Ryan Van Dolson asked Grandpa Leo and I to help him marry Oriona. We all think that I made marriage too appealing in his sister’s wedding and he leaped at the opportunity to make it work for him and Oriona. Four beautiful, agreeable young people!
- First weekend in October, we presented three subjects at the Loma Linda University’s Advent Hope group of medical personnel. Really serious and joyful young professionals.
- Anniversary week at Timber Cove Lodge on the Pacific Coast above Ft. Ross—hard to describe the quiet elegance made even more comfortable with a hot tub in the room!
- Back in time to devote another week with Vivienne Sue in Palm Springs—this time overlapping dear budding nurse, Emily, who returned to classes at PUC. Her operation this time was most successful—her major task now was to go through drug withdrawals because of what she had needed for the previous seven months! By the time we left, she was walking slowly around the house with her walker—and full of new hope and gratitude. Amazing how much our bodies will take and what redundancy we all have.
- December 8,9 we had the pleasure of sharing three Sabbath meetings in Santa Barbara, living at the home of old friends, Vance and Joanne Johnson—glorious views.
- December 19, 20—a flying trip to (you guessed it) Collegedale, TN, again but no wedding this time although young Randy briefly contemplated the possibility, but only for a nanosecond. This time to honor a devoted supporting family of Amazing Facts—it truly is amazing how deeply men and women respond to the clarity and vigor of Doug Batchelor’s ministry.
- Snuggled in somewhere, four books have been published with two on the way for next year: *They Were There*, *Feast Days*, *Never Been This Late Before* and *Truth Matters*. Next year: *World Events Divinely Foretold* and then in 2008 *This Same Jesus—What Is He Doing Now that Should Make a Difference in Our Lives Today?*
- Next October, the Church History Department of the Adventist Theological Seminary is featuring the 50th Anniversary of the 1957 publication of *Questions on Doctrines*, often called “the most divisive book in Adventist history.” Some of us have been asked to present study papers.
- Space is vanishing as I speak!! We wish we could hug each of you. That day is coming when we will do just that! Think about it! Young and old! One of these days the eastern sky will brighten as we have never seen it before, we will hear trumpets, trombones, violins as we have never heard them before, we will hear the swish of angels as they hurry by bringing fathers and mothers together with their children, lovers long separated by war or accident hugging each other again. All the while we will hear the melodious welcome from our wonderful Lord, “Welcome home, children.” The same Jesus who hung on the Cross, with outstretched scars—how much we owe him only eternity will give us time to add it up! When He died on that Cross, He had your name on His mind. We must not disappoint Him! See you around the Tree of Life!

