



Hello friends,
living somewhere on the surface of the Earth of about 0.3×10^{14} square meters¹:

We wish your merry and joyous Christmas with the true gift of God – Jesus,
One who “takes away the sins of the world.” (John 1:29)

May God bless you on your paths to a manger,
a place of humility,
where the babe Jesus,

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
and Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), was laid!

With you whom we miss dearly, we would like to share
what’s going on our spiritual journey from afar!

The year of 2013 was the time we have to adapt changes in our journey. Every single member of our family faced some irresistible changes in his or her life this year. **Theodore Atticus**, 5, discontinued his life within the family boundary from September when he started his kindergarten at Cashell Elementary School. **Jeremy Solo**, 13, my brother, is getting taller and taller, probably an inch every other month. **Gideon Thory**, that’s me, 16 in January, now have acquired a learners permit almost 90 days ago. **Mom**, YoungHoon Lee, used to be called “Thory” Umma, meaning mom in Korean, has been called as “Mrs. Park” since last September with her new job, teaching music for the children of two Prince George’s County Public Schools. **Dad**, Rev. DaeHwa Park, in fact we never call him “the Reverend,” had new placement for his continuous works for the Lord as a local church pastor. This year, he had an interesting assignment working two churches at the same time – one in Savage and the other in



Lanham from July. We have seen him driving all the time at least twice a day, commuting to each church – one in the morning for his office hour, the other in the evening for meetings for business. Thankfully, dad never missed a couple of hour of family hour with us from 3:30 through 5:30 p.m. It was careful time-management that kept the juggling balls rolled in the air without any conflicts throughout the year. There were more than four alarms set on dad’s i-phone in the morning for him to handle morning arrangements for all four school goers, beginning with mom, leaving



as early as 6:20 a.m., me around 6:35 a.m. for a bus to take, and then Jeremy wakes up and gets ready for the other bus at 7:15 a.m. Finally, according to dad, Theodore Atticus appeared to the dining area for a bowl of cereal or rice with fried fishcake and seasoned laver. By then, one way or the other, dad is always ready for all the works for his duties, perhaps working



sometime during the night, when he works most of church works, including writing sermons, drafting weekly bulletins, and replying emails, and so forth. His final job, helping Theodore Atticus for school allowed him to drive to either church to begin his own day no later than 10 a.m.



Such a routine was set with a couple of minor adjustments, caused by a serious of mistakes and miscommunication. Learn by mistakes, now every family member gets fitting better for the routine, even Theodore the youngest!

Thankful is each one of the family of the Rev. Park as healthy and joyful without being exhausted from the routine. Each has accomplished his or her own jobs. **Theodore Atticus** seems to enjoy his school and his Kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Siska, for whom he never forget making a little treat each day for several weeks during the fall. For him, all classmates are close friends. He never skipped play at the playground after school on dry days, which made dad or myself, who would once or twice picked him a month, wait for half an hour. **Jeremy Solo** has shown his academic excellence, finishing 7th grade with straight As and good standing. He enjoyed playing violin. He started this year for the first time a couple of afterschool extracurricular activities, including jazz band and recycle team. One of his routines was playing “Assassin’s Creed IV: Black Flag,” after watching a couple of hours of “Brainpop,” his favorite e-subscription. No one can help him playing Play Station® 3 better. He has been patiently generous enough to play with Theodore Atticus with a couple of racing games and “Bubble Bubble Nostalgic.” Jeremy switched his violin to full-sized and serves as orchestra master this year. He also plays



¹ The distance Santa has to travel can be estimated from the following. First, while the surface area of Earth is about 10^{14} square meters, only about 30 percent of that is land mass, or about 0.3×10^{14} square meters. Second, we’ll assume, for simplicity’s sake, that the 800 million homes are equally distributed on this land mass. Dividing 0.3×10^{14} by 800 million gives 4×10^4 square meters occupied by every household (about six football fields); the square root of that is the distance between households, about 200 meters. Multiply this by the 800 million households to get the distance Santa must travel on Christmas Eve to deliver all the children’s gifts: 160 million kilometers, farther than the distance from here to the sun. Thanks to the rotation of the earth, Santa has more time than children might initially think. Standing on the International Date Line, moving from east to west and crossing different time zones, Santa has not just 10 hours to deliver his presents (from 8 p.m., when children go to bed, until 6 a.m., when they wake up), but an extra 24 hours— 34 hours in all. (From Arnold Pompus, “Santa Nearly At the Speed of Light,” Purdue University.)

piano for jazz band after school. Jeremy would prepare snacks for the rest of the family members in later afternoons. Even he serves dad with light dinner prior to his evening business. **Mom** working in two schools and **dad** serving in two churches allow us to face new realities, living with less flexibility and more commitment. No more whining. No more asking help for minor chores, such as finding pencils and erasers, jerseys and knee pads, socks or pants. One way or the other such a lifestyle helped us be prepared in advance. I (**Gideon Thory**) have been interested in sports, playing tennis during spring semesters, right now wrestling. Keeping 113 lbs and lighter is harder than running several hours around the tracks. Continued to playing trumpet, I started this year marching band, which allowed me to stay longer after school for rehearsals. Many weekends were spent for marching band play for our proud Varsity football team. Watching movies in a couple of theaters was a new addition to my life. I kept all the movie tickets in a collection album.



Missing friends of Saint James, now we had to make new friends at Savage, Lanham, and Mill Creek Towne United Methodist Church. Mill Creek Towne of Derwood, MD has become new church home for me and my brothers, since we cannot commute with dad. First experience to have a different church home from those of dad!

Who may say that you are too busy to do all these things? No one skipped the church on Sundays. No one missed what he or she was supposed to do for one another. We never skipped our seasonal events either. We just have to do our own jobs, based on calendar set in front of us. We made a snowman when we had snow a couple of days ago. We lighted Christmas tree about two weeks ago. We came back to the National Gallery of Arts to acquire Christmas cards as we have done for years. We traveled to New York during Thanksgiving Weekend – this year to the 102nd floor at the Empire State Building.

Before we started our school in the fall, we went across the country, beginning with dad's annual meeting of "The Global Leadership Summit" in South Barrington, IL, "Mount Rushmore National Memorial" and "Devil's Tower National Monument" in Dakotas, "Saint Luis, a frontier city once upon a time in the mid 19th century with gold rush and expansion to French territory. Our journey never stopped. We visited Missoula, Montana, where dad's favorite movie, "A River Runs Through It." Unforgettable is hearty hospitality from a man, named John on the street, who helped us find the parsonage where Rev. McClain and his family had lived and the other lady from the First Presbyterian Church, who welcomed us and gave us a special tour to the church where the gospel of "dry fly fishing" was spoken by the pastor, McClain. Mom and day took turns driving to west. This trip gave us sufficient impression about how vast our country is as well as how large portion of the state of Washington is covered with desert. Driving over the continental divide allowed us to understand natural boundary formed by nature in North America, which is not always divide people in political and geographical interest. This tour included meeting with mom's friends at her young age in Seattle, who works for Costco as a high ranked officer as well as dad's clergy friends working several decades in a couple of churches in Seattle, WA, Nashville, TN, and Lexington, KY. We drove around the city of Seattle, locating at a couple of places where another movie, "Sleepless in Seattle," the other movie mom and dad love was filmed. A tour to Boeing Assembly Factory was a fun experience. On our way home, we also visited a couple of places, such as Salt Lake City, helping us learn about an American dream of the Mormons who believed America as a Promised Land. Driving through Kansas City, KS, a city along "bible belt" and a city, where a headquarter of AMC movie theater is located, we continued to heading back home, visiting a small town in Tennessee for Sunday worship with the Korean-American friends and a beautiful state of "almost heaven" and home.

We went camping with other BSA friends. Theodore went the other conference with dad in April and he, who is very much social, made a friend Sophia on his way to Orland, FL.

During weekends we would go to our uncle Michael Fehn and enjoyed seeing Michael Connor, 1 in mid December. Meeting with grandma Ko is the other joy. We missed the other uncle, InHwa, who is not with us anymore here on earth, and hope missing us in heaven. We miss friends from Saint James whom we encountered for three years of our continuous journey from afar. We give thanks to God for many other wonderful friends – some of recipients of this annual epistle - of Oakdale Emory, Olney, MD, Mowatt Memorial, Greenbelt, MD, and Metropolitan Memorial UMCs in Washington, D.C., and other friends, you, living in the other side of the Pacific and down south in Latin America and over the other side of the Atlantic.

May Emmanuel be with you at this season of comfort and joy! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

From The Park's Family

