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## And then it was Christmas 2009

Friend:

Merry Christmas!



Lil' Brad, Big Brad, Irene and Anthony  
Three of us are looking at something to our right.  
Someone is trying to make Anthony laugh.  
Anthony's thinking about it.  
Lil' Brad sees right through it.



Anthony at 2 weeks.



What a difference a year makes



Selah Camille last Christmas



Selah Camille this Christmas



Lil' Brad as a mature 4-year-old

To the left the same kid a couple years back.  
No comparison.



Just because it's a good foto.

Brad is in kindergarten now. He's very quick, but he hasn't yet gotten the hang of the sitting-quiet-and-reading thing. He's full of energy, challenges everyone, and is willing to complain when things are not right, in his eyes. I look forward to the day when we can get him into a soccer league. That's what he needs. A reason to run, and to run and to run and to shout and laugh and keep busy. Maybe next year.

Selah Camille is prettier each year. It's not all laughter and shouting for her, despite the two photos. She oftentimes expresses her feelings with a posture of shyness and gestures that are more typically reserved to older girls depicted in films based on Jane Austin novels. Difficult to describe, but above her age and station in life.

Anthony likes to jump up and down in his stroller, jump up and down on the couch and the floor and anywhere where someone will hold him. He's starting to try to walk. A few more weeks and he'll be into everything.

Irene is busy with keeping house in her meticulous way, teaching the children's class at church, helping care for two grandchildren, four dogs, three cats, two or three dozen parakeets, a parrot, and yours truly.

Once we had these photos in the machine she pointed out to me that I am wearing the same *chaleco* (sleeveless sweater) that is in the last three or four Christmas letters. I believe that's so. I see I am also a little too casual about how I pose in it. I must be more thoughtful about my appearance.



This is pretty much how it is.

Apologies to those of you who have written me these past few months and to whom I have not yet responded personally. It's been one thing then it's been something else. At the same time, there's a lot of good news around here. We're all healthy. We own our house, there's no mortgage so we are not at risk in the current meltdown, and we own a '99 Jeep Cherokee, paid for.

Cool, eh?

And then there is a lot of work to do. I still find it interesting, worthwhile, and diverting. That in itself is a blessing, and I am thankful for it as the blessing it is.

At the same time, we all have friends this Christmas season who are in prison or in hiding for being unwilling to leave this work to others. None of us knows how we would act if we ourselves were threatened with years in prison for, simply, being unwilling to keep our silence when confronted by the State and the threat of prison.

This is a proper time of the year to be particularly aware that revisionism addresses moral and ethical issues, not just historical ones. The desperate need felt by some to imprison and ruin those of us who express doubt about what we are supposed to believe is a moral issue. Belief is to be born in conviction, not as a reaction to intimidation and the threat of force. At the same time, in our culture, we are called upon to "love" those who would ruin and imprison us.

The subtleties of the moral life.

We wish all of you a beautiful Christmas and a fine New Year.

Irene and Bradley