

Christmas 1993

Greetings! and
Happy Holidays!
From: The Ritchey Family

We are on our way west! The Joe Ritchey Family will be living at 6200 Sandia Ln., Belleville, IL 62223. Belleville is located about 15 miles east of St. Louis. Joe started employment with a new company, Burlington Environmental, the first of November and we hope to be in our new house by January 3, 1994. We are looking forward to exploring new territory and the challenges of living in a new location. We hope this adventure will go smoothly. Yes, we know we have lots of experience in moving and that should help.

This past year has been very exciting for us. In January Joe and Darlene were able to travel to Joao Pessoa, Brazil for a short term mission project. We went with 36 others from our church. After a brief tour of Rio we arrived at the camp where we stay. We worked hard building a long wall (fence) out of brick, tiling roofs and other

miscellaneous jobs. We held special services almost every night at different churches. It is hard to describe what a rewarding time this was for us. Being in a country where a different language was spoken was very challenging. Meeting people that had so little but were so gracious and willing to open their homes and their hearts was a humbling experience. We made many new friends. God protected us and it was thrilling to be a part of this ministry to the nationals. We appreciate everyone that had a part in allowing us to have this experience. Without you, we would not have been able to do this.

Joe made his radio debut on Yes FM, a new contemporary Christian radio station in Toledo, during the month of May. A short (5 minute) devotional is done every morning by local volunteers. Joe was able to do one week and was back again in October for another week. Even Jamie was able to participate one morning.

In June Darlene and the boys traveled to Cleveland to help

Dad Ritchey prepare for the move to his new house. The garage sale was successful and the move went smoothly. Later, while Jamie and Timothy attended church camp and John stayed with his cousins, Darlene traveled to Kansas City to visit with friends. It was a relaxing time. Darlene and the boys also traveled to Champaign, Il. To visit friends.

We saw many benefits from homeschooling Jamie last year and decided to have his brothers join him this year. The Ritchey Christian Academy started its school year on August 17. John is in 1st grade. He spends most of his time with reading, writing, and arithmetic. He also has learned to tell time and is constantly watching the clock and counting the minutes. Timothy is in 4th grade and Jamie is in the 6th grade. John has joined Jamie and Tim in taking piano lessons. They have also been working on their Awana books for church. Timothy goal this year is to learn to swim. Jamie will become a 2nd Class Boy Scout before Christmas.

Dad Ritchey took a new bride on August 28. It was a joy to welcome Mary Ellen into the family. After a difficult year for both of them, it is good to see them so happy.

In October Joe travel to Providence, Rhode Island for work and we decided to take advantage of the opportunity to learn more about the history of this nation. Darlene and the boys were able to tour Providence by foot and later travel to Plymouth, Massachusetts. It was very interesting and we hope the boys have a better understanding about the pilgrims and the settling of New England.

We may look back and say this was our year to see new places. We are making plans for a trip to San Francisco at the end of January. Joe has to be there for business and we are using this opportunity to visit another part of the United States. Darlene and the boys will travel out by train and meet Joe there. After a few days we will all travel back to St. Louis by train.

Please note our new address and know we would love to have you visit us. May God richly bless you in the coming year.

And may you focus on the **true meaning** of Christmas, celebrating the birthday of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.