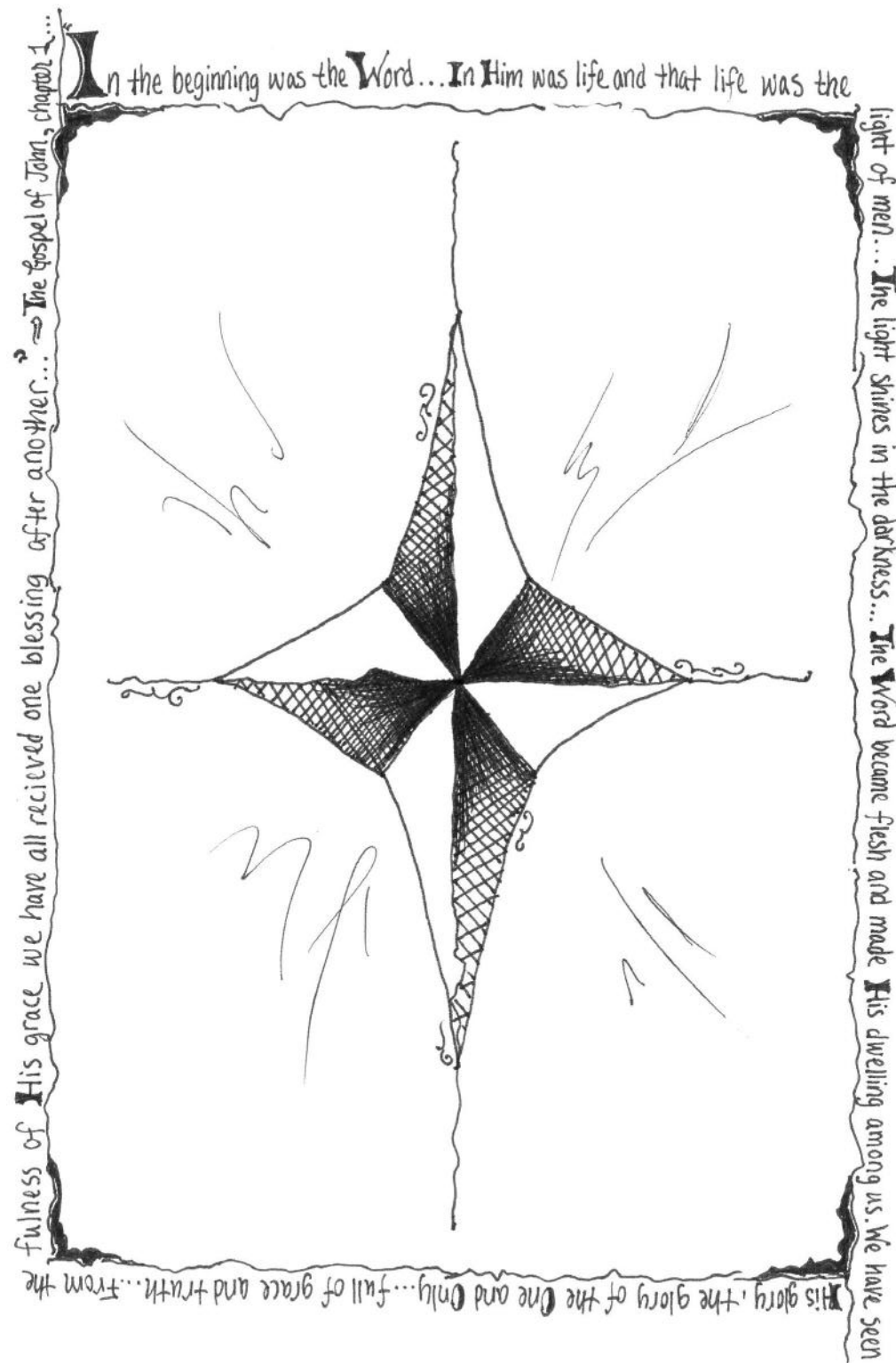


Esther (nearing 12 years old) has been the only Maddux child who hasn't added any chaos to our attempt at a simple life. With her infectious smiles, she walks through each day blessing us. Whether its coming up with lovely songs on the piano, guitar or violin, making her delicious whole wheat biscuits, or being a very attentive little mommy to her baby dolls, her sweet spirit reminds us to slow down and enjoy the little things in life.

Preparing for our family's missionary work in Africa has *not* simplified our lives this year. From visiting churches, participating in 5 Vacation Bible Schools, Portuguese lessons for Mom and us kids, to finding time for Dad to contact churches while keeping up with his full time job, I don't think we could have predicted how this would jeopardize our dream of The Simple Life. As we began getting ready for our move to Mozambique in November of 2007, I also don't think we could have anticipated all of the blessings that would come from this preparation time. Three of the things we've really been encouraged by have been the precious friendships we have made, the generosity we've found overflowing from so many hearts, and the power and support that has come from the prayers of the saints for our family.

From all our family we send you our love & hugs

God Bless You All!!!!





## Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Dear friends,

As I, Chloe, sit down to write this newsletter, I can't help but reflecting over this past year. One theme really stands out in my mind which can best be summed up by briefly quoting my mother, "Simplify, simplify, simplify." If there are any two people who understand and shrink back from the evils of a busy life, I'd nominate my parents for first place. For us, this year has been a time to try to cut out unnecessary activities, get rid of dusty and rusty "valuables", and guard our time as a family. Notice I said, "**try**".

This summer, we took our first big step into the simple life when we moved out of our country lodge into a smaller city duplex just five minutes from Dad's work. The scarcity of space meant stocking nearby thrift stores with nearly half of our possessions, or in my case, learning how to really *cram* things in. Step One, complete. But wait! All of a sudden we had a different problem. Due to the claustrophobic city air, my untamed brother Elijah (13 years old) came down with an acute case of cabin fever. Stranded on the 1/4 of an acre lot on Grant Street, he began to wonder, "Now where can I hunt, explore and build forts? Now what outdoor chores can I do?" "Wait! Don't despair," said Dad, "We'll send you to visit some country friends!" This we did promptly, and almost as promptly Elijah succeeded in breaking his wrist while impersonating Tarzan on a tree swing. Enter a dozen doctor visits and 7,000\$ in hospital bills. Ahh...the simple life. But not simple enough, thought Elijah. The very day he got the cast off of his arm, he slid down a moss-covered dam (this time impersonating I know not who), and tore a muscle in his foot, which left him on crutches for 2+ weeks. Not one to be held back by such minor injuries, he went off and shot his first eight point buck. ::smile:: I present this as my case to any of you who wonder if Elijah's manly side is surviving in a house full of women.

When this autumn rolled in, I began to listen to the little voices in my head. Certain my *own* life needed simplifying, I looked around my bedroom. What literally stood out were the piles upon piles of my writing scraps, and half-read books. I decided to invent a solution for this problem over the weekend we spent at the National Missionary Convention. While thinking, and wandering through hundreds of exhibits, I happened to stumble upon a Used Book booth. An hour later I *somehow* found my arms brimming with 20 "new" books. Shrugging my shoulders with a laughing sigh, I decided that there are just some dilemmas worth savoring, and hazardous towers of half-read books was one of them.

If you were to ask me *who* has managed to complicate our family-life the most, I'd take you by the hand and escort you over to my sister, Hannah. You'd ask her if anything interesting was happening in her life, and she'd blush and stammer, and say some rather vague things. So I'll just save you time and a few blushes from Hannah by sharing the glad tidings with you myself. Hannah is being courted by a wonderful, godly young man, and his name is Daniel David Creed Winter (isn't that such a nice name?). So what does this mean? For one thing, it means that they are seriously considering marriage. For another, it means that my name is no longer Chloe Elizabeth, but The Chaperone. I am a very blessed chaperone though, because I think that Daniel David is a top-notch guy. I'm just surprised he hasn't been scared off by our family yet. It has been wonderful to see Daniel David and Hannah's wisdom and purity as they have decided to not get into physical involvement, but to focus on growing in their friendship with one another, and in their relationship with the Lord. From a chaperone's perspective, I have to say that they like each other a *lot*. This has brought much joy to our family, but also a little sadness, as Hannah marrying Daniel David would mean her not going to Mozambique with us. But we are very thankful for all the wonderful blessings God is pouring out amidst this rather complicated and joyous season of our lives.

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