

December 22, 1980

We're Blessed,

We're Blessed! We're Blessed! We're Blessed! We declare that we are blessed because it has been another year that we have been healthy, happy and loved. Today we share with you the continuation of the Mouning's Saga; that came our way this year. We are learning to be thankful for whatever situation we find ourselves in.

Our young men are becoming more and more independent as the years go on. Marvin, our oldest son, spent more of this year at home and worked at Yale in the Biology Department. He was reasonably happy, but decided to go active in the U.S. Army for three years and travel some. In October he renewed his status in the Army and was sent to Fort Carson, Colorado. We received a call that he is well and has thirty-five more months to serve. He has spent two weeks in Alaska to get adjusted to the winter weather that is in store for us. We are expecting him to be home for Christmas for about ten days.

Gregory, our second oldest, is now at home working at the Yale Computer Center as a Computer Operator. Because of his working schedule, he often doesn't know when he should be asleep or awake. One month he works 1:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m., the next month he works from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. But he likes his job; so much so that when he is not scheduled to work he still goes in. He is also taking a couple of courses.

Jeffrey, our third son, graduated from High School this year. Jeff had lots of fun the last year of High School. He played hockey and they won many games. He was a member of the VICA Club at school and traveled with the club when they went out of town. He competed in a contest and won second place for his school in Job interviewing. Jeff kept his grades up and was very happy to graduate in June. He worked two jobs during the summer; one at a local bank in New Haven and the other at Yale University. This fall Jeff went to Johnson and Wales College in Providence, Rhode Island, majoring in Culinary Arts and learning how to be a Chef and managing restaurants. He appears to be happy there and enjoying the cooking. He shares with his mother the professional way of setting the table and some of the recipes. It's good to have Jeff home for the holidays.

Kenneth, our fourth son, is growing up very fast. This year he continued on the Honor Roll and graduated from the Intermediate School in June with High Honors. Ken had a full summer taking care of the chores around the house. He also maintained a neighbor's lawn. In September Ken was very happy to enter into high school. He is meeting the new challenge and still on the honor roll. It's hard to believe that he is fourteen already. Ken was a little disappointed because he could not take part in many of the sports activities at school because it conflicted with our working schedule. He is adjusting to it and looking forward to sixteen when he can get his driving license.

Thelma and Johnnie are still enjoying their work at the lab. We feel it is a real blessing to work with and share experiences with the team in the Department of Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry.

This spring we experienced a terrible loss in our local church. First, one of our Church mother Annie Mae Sharp was eulogized. In April our Co-Pastor Rev. G.M. Allen passed and our pastor's wife Sister E. Philpot passed in the same week. Of course, it was a sad time and a great loss for our Church family, but with God's help we had endured and are being healed. Also a few days ago in this month we felt the pain when one of our old friends Sister Minnie Graham passed. It seems that we never get accustomed to the pain of death; but with time, the pain eases off.

How well do I remember the night I received a phone call from Sister Mary Council stating: "Brother Mouning, Sister Edna Philpot has passed, come over our pastor needs you." This call came just two days after the passing of our Assistant pastor, Reverend George M. Allen which was a Sunday my wife and I were away ministering in Newington, Connecticut. We returned back to the church when we heard the sad news.

Rev. Allen was left at the church with the Annual Women's Day service. The Pastor was away ministering in New London. We were told that Rev. Allen stood and exhorted the congregation to Praise God if no one else did. "If mother don't go, father don't go, brother or sister don't, I'm going to see the Lord," then he went to his seat in the pulpit sat down and died. The excitement came with the paramedic trying to revive him but it was too late this was Sunday, April 20, 1980.

I arrived at Sister Council's home and picked up the pastor and we drove to Yale New Haven Hospital where we went to Sister Edna Philpot's room. The sheet was over her, I watched Pastor Philpot pull back the sheet and take her hand and pray. "Thank you, God, for her life, she was a loving wife, mother and sister. Thank you for her love and care that we shared. God you have given and you have taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." He repeated Psalms 23, he then removed the rings from her finger and I prayed for them and read Psalms 27. Pastor Philpot then pulled the sheet back over her face and I took him back home.

We arrived at the pastor's home where some close friends came over and had prayer and we all left. The next few days were filled with plans for the wake and funeral of Rev. Allen and Sister Philpot. The Lord had arranged for a revival to be conducted by Rev. Charles Pratt from Ohio. He sang, played the organ and piano and preached each night. This kept the saints mind on the Lord and even though it was a time of mourning they had peace.

I, Johnnie, watched Pastor Philpot conduct his Assistant Pastor's funeral with Bishop Jesse Winley from Soul Saving Station, New York doing the eulogy. The church was filled to the capacity not even standing room. There were city officials and clergy from all over the country.

Just a few days later the wake and funeral for Sister Edna Philpot. I walked just one step back along side the pastor and he held his held high and walked with dignity and strength. He sat on the second pew at the right side with his family next to him. Rev. Wilhemenia Redmon did the eulogy. As we processed out of the funeral, I walked along side Pastor Philpot about a half step back and I saw the strength of God stand up in him.

After the burial, we returned to the church and received the family and friends. The family was strengthened because of the prayers of the saints. We are all thankful to God and Rev. Charles Pratt for his total ministry.

Our vegetable garden produced lots of vegetables, enough for the summer and to store some in the freezer for the winter. Our annual camping trip took us back to the Poconos in PA; where we enjoyed a week of rest at the Blue Mountain Christian Retreat Center.

This year 1980 was our twenty-third anniversary where the two of us spent five days at Cape Cod in MA. This was another quiet time for Thelma and I to enjoy each other. We are thankful for the life we share together.

This year we had the family annual Thanksgiving Dinner. We had a house-full of relatives and friends. It was a joyful time sharing of the events of the year with each other and eating the delicious food; Thelma is such a great cook.

We are especially thankful to God for the young men He has given us. Again We're Blessed! We're Blessed! We are blessed that there were no major tragedies in our immediate families. We pray God's richly blessing upon you and yours; that you will be healthy and happy in the New Year.

MERRY CHRISTMAS