

59 Totoket Road
North Branford, CT 06471

December 9, 1999

Dear Families and Friends,

Our hearts are filled with joy, excitement and the new inspiration of the turn of the century. It's the first one and probably the only one we will ever experience. This millennium will be different from anything we can imagine or think with all the new technology that is being developed. What a good time to be alive. We have heard a lot about Y2K but believe with the help of the Lord this too will pass, and we will look forward to another new challenging problem to resolve in the year of 2000.

This is the 30th edition of the Mouning's Saga, and our sons and their wives and sons are very well.

Marvin and De'Etta are doing very well with their new home. They shared with us and hosted our whole family with a Barbecue before we took our trip around the world. Thanksgiving dinner was held at their home also, with about 35 to 40 people in attendance. Marvin is back in the Army Reserves and has an elective weekend a month, with all of the camping, cooking and hiking. That leaves three weekends to do all the raking of leaves and shoveling of the snow and cutting of the grass at home.

Gregory is enjoying being a home owner with all the routines of paying the bills, and maintaining the place. He is busy with working, acting, directing, and traveling with his companion and best friend Cathy Slocum in Newport, RI. Greg helped us by establishing a world wide e-mail address that we could use while traveling. He also helped to keep our home while we were gone. He took us to the airport to start us on our adventurous trip around the world.

Jeff, Linda, Marcus and Jordan are doing very well. This year they purchased a larger home, nearer to us in North Branford. Marcus is in the same High school his father attended. He enjoys his studies and new friends very much. Marcus has added chores now at his own home, with grass cutting, and taking out the garbage. Jordan is in day care a couple hours a day. He is happy with his new pals. We arrange for Jeff, Linda and Marcus to maintain our home while we were gone. There was the garden to be weeded and watered, the lawn to be cut, and the eggs to be collected and the chickens to be fed and watered. They have done a great job with Jordan, now age 3, helping mowing the lawn with his bubble machine.

Kenneth, Rose, Kenneth Jr. and Malachi are enjoying life. From time to time we get the honor of baby sitting our grandsons and what a joy it is. They grow up so fast now days. The other day Thelma was playing with Malachi, and he came to me and said "grandpa, grandma is being rude to me" and he waited until I told grandma not to be rude to Malachi, then he said "thanks grandpa" and went on his way. Ken established an e-mail address for us to use own our trip around the world.

Many of you know that they gave us our 40th Wedding Anniversary celebration in 1997. At that celebration they presented us with a gift certificate for a trip any where in the world we wanted to go. Well after two years of praying, planning and thinking we concluded that the trip would be around the world. The year began with the gathering of materials and information on countries we were interested in. After much consideration we decided to go West. We got our passports renewed and visas for countries we would visit.

July 24, 1999, we began our trip. Our first stop was Branson, MO; Eureka Spring, AK, from there to New York, Los Angeles on to Tahiti, a French Polynesian Island. We spent a restful five days there. Then to New Zealand for seven days. On to Australia for a fortnight (14 teen days). From there to Singapore and China, back to Singapore to India. From India to Singapore to Frankfurt, Germany, onto New York and back to North Branford, Connecticut. After 49 days and 30 thousand air miles we are at home again. Thank you Lord.

Branson, MO is one of the fastest growing countries in the western Christian communities in America. This was our first pause before pursuing our trip around the world. There we visited many of their dining places and a Sunday afternoon gospel concert that was very enjoyable.

Eureka Springs, Arkansas is the place of the Christ of the Ozarks, and the Great Passion Play. It is performed on a multi-level staging area 500-feet long and 400-feet deep by a cast of 250 actors. The amphitheater has been recognized as the largest attended outdoors drama in America.

Tahiti, "O God if I ever decided to settle somewhere. It would be so much easier to do it here rather than somewhere else. I have got the South Seas under my skin; this beautiful brown-skinned gentle people, flowers, Lagoons and moonlight. Should I ever be able to do so. I would enjoy hiring a small boat and spend five years cruising in this part of the world." *Author unknown.*

New Zealand is the most beautiful and cleanest country we visited. The cities and the country side are the most marvelous areas that look like a picture. The North Island has it own unique features, including

the Glowworm Caves, forty to fifty feet below the ground. Rotorua where many of the native people the Maori. We enjoyed the full evening at a Hangi, with lots of food. The South Island, where the lovely Milford Sound, Milford Track is located. It has been reported by National Geographic that Milford Track is the most beautiful spot there is in the world. We did not see the Track but we enjoyed the Sound.

Australia, we arrived in Sydney, and spent four days in that area and went over night by Train to Melbourne. We toured the city and went to Philip's Island, where we enjoyed the miniature Penguins Nightly "Parade". From there we flew Outback to Ayers Rock. There we had a wonderful Aboriginal candle light dinner which included Crocodile, Kangaroo and Emu. The Uluru rock is believed to be six hundred years old, we watched it change colors as the sun rose at 5:50 am. Climbers were climbing making history, we observed and thought--what an adventure. Overland to Alice Spring and through the air to Cairns. We took the Quicksilver boat about 35 Miles out into the South Pacific Ocean to The Great Outer Barrier Corals Reef. There we took a submergible about 25 feet down under the reef to see Marine wonderland. The next day we took a four hour train ride through the narrows gorges up to Kuranda. On to the rainforest where we explored it. Returned via the longest sky-rail ride in the world. The next day we flew to Brisbane.

Then the eleven hours non-stop flight to Singapore. After a six hour lay over in Singapore we flew seven and a half hours to Beijing, China.

In China, we met May Han's brother-in-law Mr. Jia Yuning and his friend Mr. Jack Sun. They took us shopping in Beijing and showed us around the city. We learned that there are 9 million bicycles in the city. Our tour guide Miss. Alice Hang, took us to the Great Walls of China on August 26, 1999 which was our forty-second wedding anniversary. We visited Ming Tombs, Temple of Heaven, Summer Palace and Tianamen Square. We fly to Xian where we visited thousands of life-size Cotta Warriors. We flew to Wuhan to board the Presidential Cruises on the Yangtze River. We spent six days passing through the beautiful gorges going up river 800 miles to Chongqing. The ship held more than a hundred and fifty passenger and a hundred and thirty five crew members. We had all those crew members with only seven passengers. We were spoiled with all that service and the whole ship to our disposal.

We flew from Chongqing three and a half hours back to Beijing and from Beijing to Singapore. We flew from Singapore for six hours to New Delhi, India.

In India, we established contact with our long time friends from Yale, Drs. Sujata and Raghorans Varadarjan. We had a fine Labor Day dinner with them and their families. We were honored to be received so graciously by the whole family and the food was delicious. The next day our private driver took us four and a half hours to Agra. We visited the Red Fort and the great wonder of the world--The Taj Mahal. "The Taj Mahal is perhaps the most beautiful building in the world. The subtlety of the building, faced entirely with white marble, is enlivened by highlights of inlay and calligraphy in other colored stones. The gentle white gives it a quality of weightlessness."

The next day we drove four and a half hours back to New Delhi. We flew to Singapore and laid over for sixteen hours.

In Singapore, we visited that airport three times, it is the biggest, cleanest, with more entrepreneur than any other airport we have visited. We got to go out of the airport into the city. It was very clean and the taxi driver told us there are no homeless people there. He said if people become homeless the city will find them a job and get them into a home. We left Singapore and flew non-stop eleven and a half hours to Frankfurt, Germany. After a two hour lay over we flew eight hours to JFK Airport. Overland to North Branford, CT. Sorry we could not fill in all of the details of our trip but look for our book in your local bookstore in the new millennium.

We returned home to find everything in order. Looking back over the greatest trip we ever took, we can say we did not have one bad experience the weather was good, food was very good and accommodations, communication and translation was second to none. We are thankful to our Heavenly Father and for your prayers. Glad to be back with our families, church, work and friends.

We managed to harvest a few things out of our garden before the frost came. It took us about two weeks to get over jet lag. We are back in the routine at work and church and with our family.

Special thanks to my brother J.W. and his wife Rovena for helping out with the garden and our neighbors Ricky and Cathy for watching our property.

As we celebrate this unique Christmas time of hope and new beginnings, we wish you the very best of health and everything in the coming millennium, and years. We take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers, support and love.

With all our love,

Johnnie and Thelma Mouning