

# Rift Valley Reflections

August 2009

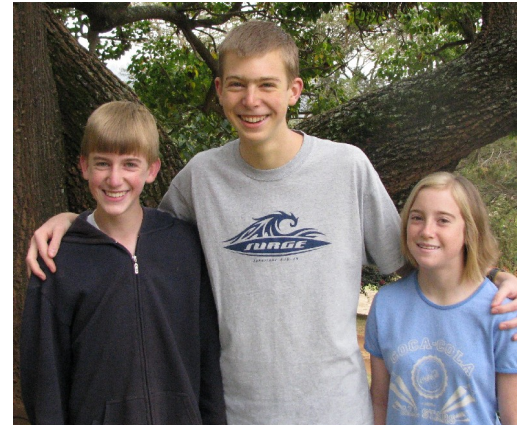


Pictured to the left are Daniel, Jonathan and Jennie. We took this picture five years ago. Daniel was just beginning Junior High (seventh grade) and Jon and Jen were going into fourth grade. We have finished our family's eighth year here at Rift Valley Academy. Below is a picture (taken today) of our children who will all be in high school this year. Daniel will be a senior and Jon and Jennie will be freshmen. I (Ed) took both pictures and stood in the same spot, notice how much smaller the tree behind them has grown :o)

I am writing this newsletter solo (Debbie is in the states visiting her mom and family for three weeks). Please know that any misspellings or grammatical errors are definitely my doing, I tend to take the creative approach. Debbie is not here to proofread. We are so glad that she had the gift of spending time with family and I have had a blast with the children, but when Debbie returns the "Rothfus Family Wheel" will definitely be a bit more balanced.

I thought that it would be nice to write about our children in this newsletter. As we begin Daniel's senior year, it is similar to a time when I drove our car to Buffalo at night. I remember driving over the crest of a hill and seeing the glow of the city lights on the horizon. I wasn't there yet, but the destination was in sight and rapidly approaching. This vacation has been the crest of the hill and Daniel's graduation is definitely on the horizon.

**Daniel** has begun the college process. He is applying to at least five schools and his number one choice (at this point) is LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas. He is interested in majoring in mechanical and/or electrical engineering with a concentration in computer (he takes after his Papa Rees and his Uncle John). This past year, we have seen real growth in different areas. He was willing to help coach grade school (Titchie) sports and be a big brother to a grade-schooler. He so enjoyed both. But, I think the biggest encouragement to us as parents, has been his growth spiritually. In December, he encouraged me to go down to an IDP (Internally Displaced People) camp to help pass out food and clothes. His challenge was, "I'll go dad if you go." Ever since then, we have seen a deeper spiritual sensitivity in him.



**Jonathan** has taken school a lot more seriously this past year. With Daniel looking into college, he has been asking "What do you think I should do?" This young man has a mind that is always going. He is a designer, engineer and architect (he takes after his Uncle Fred and Uncle Mike Chapman). He would love to design roller coasters and theme park rides (he is always sharing very interesting facts about roller coasters, including the angle of the first drop and unique statistics about each ride). Unlike Daniel, Jon would pass out if you placed him behind a computer. He needs to be outside and active. We enjoy doing a lot of outdoor activities together (everything from motorcycle riding to fishing). We have so enjoyed seeing him grow and mature this year and have had good times of sharing. We see the Lord using Jon as a missionary in unique ways (like designing an underground roller coaster in South Africa while reaching people for Jesus).

**Jennie** is doing well and has grown in many ways. We see Jennie as a teacher, working with people. She is definitely an extrovert. She said the other day, "What if I have a double major in college, like art and physical education?" (Hmm, those were my majors) I find it difficult at times to grow along side of Jennie as she turns new pages in this chapter called the "Teen Years." But, the Lord is so good with us, He has challenged me many times to let go of my agenda to grab a hold of relationships. With Debbie in the states, Jennie and I have done quite a bit together (from late night talks to being on the same team against her brothers in wally ball). I feel like I am getting back in touch with her. She said, "This has been a good break dad, I have grown closer to Jesus and I feel like we have grown closer to each other." I said, "Yes, that's so true." This break has been a real blessing for me with all three children.

It would be nice to say that I have arrived as a dad, but I am so far from that. Some of the best times we have had have been through life's challenges (conflicts are going to happen), but Jesus has helped us to resolve them in Him. Which, in turn, has helped us to grow closer. I appreciate each of our children and Debbie (we're so looking forward to her return). But most of all, we so appreciate Jesus and the fact that He is working to the completion of our design (Philippians 1:6).

We thank Jesus for the family He has given us in you. What a blessing and encouragement you have been to us through these eight years! Much love in Jesus,

Ed, Debbie, Daniel, Jon & Jennie

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