

December 25, 2004

My Darling Chris,

For almost 40 years now I have spent the final hours of Christmas Eve alone with Jesus, listening to my favorite carols, reflecting on the year past, counting our blessings, and touching our sorrows. Each year I become more acutely conscious of the days and weeks of our lives passing into eternity, like streams running ever more strongly from their birthplace in the highlands down, down, rushing to rejoin the vast ocean from which their waters were long ago lifted. I know our journey is far from over, but this year, when I look towards the horizon, I can see the sea – vast, deep, and forever.

I know that the great privilege of my life has been to make this journey with you, our lives inter-twined far upstream, poured out and running through quiet forests and green meadows, over rocks and rills, all these long years. I know that, together, we have turned deserts into gardens a-bloom with beauty, brought hope to those parched for waters of life, and helped many pilgrims on their own journeys. Some have been guided by the paths we carved as our lives poured down through the hills. Others, too small or weak to walk, we have carried long miles over rapids and through the dark canyons, safe in their cradle-boats. And some, the most precious of all, are now themselves rivers of life in a thirsty land. Oh what a life it has been!

We are far downstream now, still together, running strongly and deeply, if more slowly. Our path is certain and the sea, however distant, is in sight. We still have many adventures, much richness yet to come on our journey. I am blessed to know that we will share the same bed to its end, hearing your voice murmuring beside me, tasting your goodness, refreshed by your coolness, delighting in your depths. I draw encouragement, hope, wisdom, and above all, joy from our union, all of which have become more and more important as our years together grow shorter. Perhaps now, when our lives flow more slowly, we can watch more, listen more, rest more, love more, and give more – finally knowing that the long course of our years has given us an inexhaustible supply of grace.

I love you.

Allan
Christmas, 2004.