



## 2001: a year of first's: a Baby girl, a trip to Spain, stitches, kitchen tiles...

We entered this year of Patience and Promise with great anticipation. Fresh was the news of Lee's pregnancy- the conception of a new life among us. On new year's day Louis woke with a vision of fertile ground and fresh, new sprouts of grass. It was clearly a call to prepare for growth. Just as Joshua had to patiently endure until the promise could be claimed, we were encouraged to exercise patience and anticipate all of God's promises for us. New things can grow in fertile ground – and they can steadily grow to become very big!

This was a year of milestones – Lee and Louis both turned 30 (yes, we know), our 5<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and the birth of our first daughter. We had occasion to commemorate, appreciate and be grateful for God's sustained blessing in our family. The greater Eksteen family had more significant events in 2001, such as Louis' brother Riaan's wedding and the passing of Louis' uncle LC at 71. For the greater Evans family it was new babies all around – Corne, Herbie and Cathy – the 17<sup>th</sup> great grand child of Oupa en Ouma Marais, who also celebrated their 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**We were pregnant** (for most of the year!) and our home has some stretch marks:

Lee made curtains, finished tables, tore out carpets, polished the floors and made our house a home, an expression of her warm heart and comfortable touch. Ongoing home improvements (Louis' bathroom project; the kitchen, contractors and re-contractors) also stretched our living space. The playroom became our escape and Jake's learning center - making our playing more colorful. We also visited the hospital early in the year with Jake – his foot, cut open in the backyard, needed five stitches (his first) and some grown men to hold him down during the operation.

As Lee's tummy was expanding and Louis's hairline receding, we needed one last getaway before having to share Jake with his sister. So, in May, we were off to Spain – occasioned by Louis' and Francois' 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. The real gift was being able to celebrate together, realizing the birthdays apart will quickly catch the ones we are able to be together. The Costa del Sol was the rest we needed and a small fisher's village the place for revitalization of body, mind and soul.

**We survived labor** (but barely finished the kitchen tiles)... and gave birth: Cathy was 7lbs 6 oz on September 1<sup>st</sup> (another first) - a labor day weekend to remember. Lee's parents were here to share in the joy and really poured themselves into Jake and Cathy for six whole weeks. Their love and selflessness still lingers in our home and our souls. During this time we dedicated Cathy - an opportunity to announce our gratitude and recognize her calling to great things, beautifully summarized in Louis' prayer.

Lee will continue to stay at home and do the most important job – with the kids, and start homeschooling. In her position there is no year-end bonus, no three-day weekends, no promotion and no raises (and not enough thank-you's). But there is tremendous job satisfaction – and the benefits are eternal. We pray that God will continue to provide the resources to enable her to leave this legacy.

**Jake's year** – well what a life he's having! He has a great diet of sleeping (new bunk-bed), eating (preferably vleis or chick-ennn and sous), playing (with Mom – his best friend!) and then juice! Above all, he looks just smashing in those toddler outfits! His tongue has really become untied – from words to sentences. From “wait wag net”; “watch me” to “share”; “your turn” and “I did it!”, we've heard a verbal composition showered with laughter. We've also shared unforgettable bed-time worship as we sing together “Jesus, we crown you with praise”.

We celebrated a great year with our inaugural year-end Eksteen break-away weekend, at Legoland. It was a lot of fun and Jake even left the exhibits intact...almost intact.

**Reflecting** on this past season of our lives, it was definitely a year of relationships. In no other period before have we been introduced to so many significant friendships. We have been blessed with many friendships rooted in a common love for Christ and passion to be Christ-like in our daily lives.

As we end the year, we are amazed at all of God's blessings in these twelve months and are expectant that He will do great things in us in the next year. We are grateful for friends and family like you who have welcomed, cared, treated and loved us. Your relationship and bond with our family is very important to us and we thank you for the role you are playing in the molding of our young family. We look forward to the next time we can be together with you.

Merry Christmas and a Terrific Two Thousand and Two,  
Love,

Louis, Lee, Jake and Cathy Eksteen  
Sherman Oaks, CA