

# BY THE WAY



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## ADDRESSING THE ADDRESS ALTERATION

As highlighted in yellow above we have a new mailing address. We have not moved (not for going on thirteen years), but the name of the road we live on has recently been altered. The folks who own the land on which the road sits grew tired of the Spanish name. *Vaquero* is out; *Fern Meadow* is in.

## LIVING IN THE LIMINAL LANE

Kathleen and I have been reading a book together. In doing so, we learned a new word – *liminal*. I, certainly, had never heard or used the word in the past three-quarters of a century. We ran into the word while working through *Bearing God's Name*, by Prairie Bible College professor, Carmen Imes. She used the word to describe the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites after their history-making exit from Egypt.

It's one of those words that comes to us via our Latin-language heritage. Way (as in, way, way) back, it originally meant *threshold*. It gradually came to refer to situations that exist as a metaphorical threshold or place that exists between different circumstances of life. Like forty years of wandering around in a wilderness -- waiting for the next "stage" of national life. Or like – being engaged to be married...one is not married yet, but well on the way. Or like being a teen-ager...one is not an adult yet, but well on the way. These liminal spaces are times when our identity, roles, and responsibilities often change significantly.

We've come to see that life is full of liminal times. And Kathleen and I are currently

experiencing one of them. We are in a period of life where we are not doing what we were a year ago...but being prepared for what we will be doing once the doctors give the green light. Meanwhile we continue to up-grade existing cross-cultural training material and seminars as well as work on material for some new opportunities we anticipate once we cross this current threshold. So, for the us and the time being, *normality* is out; *liminality* is in.

## CHERISHING THE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

As kids Christmas was a special time. A very special time. Presents, Christmas trees, decorations, presents, food, candy, school programs, presents, family dinner, oyster stew on Christmas Eve, and Santa. Oh, did I mention...presents.

No longer kids, Christmas has become an ever more special time for us. Contemplating (and celebrating) the historical fact of God becoming man continues to amaze (even, bewilder) us. All of those past Christmas specialties still fill these holiday times. But there is a big difference. *Santa Claus* is out; *Jesus Christ* is in.

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It is not a stretch to say that we all, since the ascension of our LORD, live in a very long, large, and life-shaping liminal space. We are (and have been) standing on a very old threshold – that time between the first and the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is a time in history when our new identity, roles, and responsibilities are shaping us for something beyond our wildest imaginations.

We are, this month/these next few days, celebrating his first coming. We will for eternity celebrate the second. We have been standing at this threshold for over two-thousand years. Time gradually moves us toward the new heavens and the new earth. Address changes will be no more. Liminal times will be no more. Talk of Santa will be no more. Very soon, we tic off one more year. *2023* is out; *2024* is in.

Moving ever closer to when all *sin and sorrow* are out; all *holiness and joy* are in,

*Mike & Kathleen Matthews*