

A Letter to Heaven

Newspapers have begun their annual tradition of printing children's letters to Santa.

I read about Julianne Holland, 13, an eighth grader in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, who wanted to do her part for Jesus at Christmas.

Without informing her parents, she addressed a letter to Jesus in care of the local post office. It landed on the desk of Donald L. Orner, 62, a Presbyterian and director of customer services at the postal center in Harrisburg.

"Dear friend," wrote Julianne. "I am 13 years old. And you must think I'm weird for writing a letter to Jesus when everyone knows it wouldn't get anywhere. But I wanted to give you a message.

"Every Christmas, all people think about is getting presents. But that's not the reason at all. I think Christmas means getting all your friends together and having a good time because Jesus is born, and that's just the beginning of all the beautiful things He did for us. By being born, He let love into the world."

Orner was moved by the letter, and he replied:

"We have no mail route to heaven, but I am sure that Jesus is aware of what you wrote. He knows our thoughts, our feelings, in every line of your beautiful letter (they) flowed out across all the miles that no mailman could ever travel and touched His heart. You said your letter wouldn't get anywhere – it touched my heart, and be assured, Julianne, He knows. May you have a happy Christmas, and God bless you."

Somehow, a reporter found out about the letters, and the *Associated Press* flashed the story around the world.

And now you have read Julianne's letter. And my guess is that it got into your heart, too.

My wish is for you to have a happy Christmas as you prepare for the holiday. And as Julianne wrote, remember the reason for the season.

– Beecher Hunter

