

Dear Friends,

In September Tim and I had the joy of joining our beautiful daughter, Grace, and our incredible son-in-law, Bryan, in Europe. Together, we loved seeing Denmark, Sweden, and Italy. How remarkable to observe how God has worked in different cultures through the centuries. In Copenhagen, we went to a 700 year old church that was still holding services after all these years, and in Rome we beheld a Christian cross erected in the ancient Coliseum, proclaiming it a sacred place after the martyrdom of so many Christians. The Christian faith has experienced many trials, but God has been with us through it all...and He hasn't changed. Whatever our needs are, we can come to our Savior who loves us.

After we returned home from our trip, I saw how much God had changed my heart while we were gone, in ways that I hadn't realized at the time. One of which was how much time I have wasted looking at all that is going wrong with the world. Being away helped me remember how beautiful it is, and what is going right.

On our trip, we witnessed a golden sunset overlooking the city of Rome while standing on the Palatine Hill, we swam in the Mediterranean Sea and as we flew over Greenland with its miles and miles of breathtaking tundra and ice. We were speechless. Seeing Michelangelo's seventeen foot statue of David, still preserved, was inspiring. Watching families walk together at dusk and having dinner together at the many outdoor restaurants in the streets of Florence warmed my heart. Tasting mango and pistachio Gelato was so yummy, we decided that we had to eat it every day after that. Bicycling in the rain with Tim was unforgettable. And the patience of the many train and ticket offices with these foreigners is laughable now.

On one two hour train ride, Tim had fun helping a woman named Eliza translate a job application for a friend into English. After we got off, she took us out for breakfast, along with the friend that she was meeting. Another time, Tim struck up a conversation with a couple of Palestinian men, who invited us for tea and dessert (on them) after we ate at their place. We also met a young Chinese woman who lived in Germany, but had come with her parents to see Rome. She reminded us so much of a good Russian friend here at home. While in the Icelandic airport we met a man named John, who lived in Portland (a transplant from Chicago) who was a Christian. We had a great little time of fellowship.

Even with all of these amazing experiences, there is nothing like coming home. Seeing Peter Riegelmann pull up in his Toyota minivan with his big smile at the baggage claim, after circling the airport for an hour because of customs and all, was a wonderful welcome. And then, after an hour and a

half drive home, seeing our banners, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" was like a little bit of heaven. "We get to work here", I thought, "with these wonderful people." My heart overflowed with gratitude. Of all the places in the world, this is my favorite place, here with family, doing the work of encouraging others in the Lord.

As we climbed out of the van, our sons David and Jonathan greeted the four of us and we chatted for a good bit, telling all the great stories, then we hugged and fell straight to sleep...

Love and God bless,

Julie