

Dear Friends,

December 1999

Oh wow, what a year!! I hardly know where to start. As you know we've moved again, this time to Colorado. We moved here in March, but I'd rather forget that move. Let's just say we have titled this one "The Move from Hell" and it really was.

We really had no intention of leaving San Diego (we really didn't!) but the Lord had other plans for us. Last December our landlord decided to sell the house we were leaving in. (Merry Christmas!) We had to move; there wasn't a choice, but where to go? We did a lot of praying over the holidays and the month that followed. We prayed and talked and read the Bible and Dad became more and more convinced Colorado was where we were to go. There was no writing on the wall or booming voice telling us where to go but it was a matter of simply reading the Bible and doing what it said. "Honor your Father and Mother" and all that entails. You see the real reason we came to Colorado is to minister to Dad's parents. Grandma and Grandpa are old and not in good health. Dad just felt the Lord saying this was the time.

So here we are! We are living in Superior, a small town between Denver and Boulder. Grandma and Grandpa live in Canon City, which is almost 3 hours southeast. The past 9 months have been crazy, driving to and from Canon City the weekends Dad is home. We've tried to make life easier and safer for Grandma and Grandpa and show them Jesus' love. Our big projects this summer were cleaning up the yard, tearing down some old buildings and painting a couple of rooms. It's been hard work but rewarding.

This summer my Aunt Linda (Dad's sister) was diagnosed with leukemia and on October 1st (Dad's b-day) she passed away. It was the first death in Dad's immediate family and was particularly hard on Grandma and Grandpa. We were on our way down when she died so we weren't able to say good-bye but I'll get see her again in heaven. Was it a "coincidence" we *happened* to be living in Colorado this year. I think not!

Bridget and I graduated high school before we left California but the move destroyed our graduation plans. That was disappointing but I guess it was just not meant to be. Bridget left in August attend Calvary Chapel Bible College in Murrieta Ca. The past few months without her have been hard. She is truly my best friend and my kindred spirit. It makes me teary-eyed to think about it. We've both learned a lot being separated and strange as it sounds I think we've even grown closer. I can't wait until Christmas break when she'll be home again.

It's been a hard year for me, especially without Bridget. Moving to Colorado was not on my agenda. I still miss San Diego dreadfully. Colorado is nice and the mountains are beautiful but it's not home, San Diego is. I would move back in a heart beat and it is such a tempting thought to just move from home and go to school there but I know here is where I'm suppose to be right now. I'm not terribly thrilled about it, but I'm trying to learn to be content. (Philippians 4:11-13)

I made the decision to take this year off and figure out what I wanted to do before wasting my time and Dad's money in college. I won't be a Colorado state resident until March so college plans before the fall of 2000 were already out of the question anyway. Currently I am moving in the direction of becoming a professional seamstress. The more I think and pray about it I'm sure that's the thing for me. Most people think I'm crazy. Certainly it's not the most glamorous, well paying or easiest of jobs but it's what I do. I would love to just jump in and start my own business but I know I'm not ready. I don't have the skills, resources or experience to make it a success. Where to go for those things? I haven't the faintest idea, but Jesus does. I'm relying on Him to guide me through this stage in my life.

My next step? To find a second job and save up for the professional courses I need to take (pattern drafting, tailoring ect.). I am continuing to work for BCI (for my Dad) but the work is un-steady. I was working for Jo-Ann's Fabrics for a while but that didn't work out. We'll see what happens.

The definite highlight of my year was my trip to London. Yes, your globetrotting Jenny-Rose is off again! Dad had a business trip over there so he spent some flyer miles and took Mom and I along. We had a blast. We were there for 7 days and barely scratched the surface of what the city had to offer. Talk about a history lover's heaven! :-> I could write for pages and pages about everything we saw and experienced but I'll spare you and only talk about the highlights. We went Oct 31st-Nov 8th, just at the height of the rainy season! Actually we had wonderful weather. It only **really** rained 1 day. The leaves were wonderful colors providing a lovely backdrop for that amazing city. It is so different from anyplace I've been and yet so familiar.

Our hotel was in a great location and the drive from the airport (we took a shuttle) took us through some of the prettiest parts of town. We stayed at the Stakis Hotel Hyde Park on Bayswater in Kensington. It is right across the

street from Hyde and Kensington Park and only about 3 blocks from Kensington Place (where Princess Diana lived). We were less than a half a block from the underground (or "tube") station which was great! The room was nice, nothing spectacular but adequate. The two small windows over looked the backs of two other buildings but we could open them and when the clock turned a new hour we could hear Big Ben's chimes. How cool was that!

In our 7 day adventure we saw the Sherlock Holmes museum, the Victoria & Albert Museum, took a sight-seeing bus, Westminster Abby, Fortnum & Mason, the British museum, the Tower of London and the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich. It was all fun but my favorites would have to be the V&A and the Tower.

The V&A is a wonderful and lovely museum. I don't know which I enjoyed more, the things exhibited or the architecture surrounding them. The V&A is a museum of decorative arts. Dresses, textiles, furniture, jewelry, stain glass, statues, ironwork, tapestries, paintings and much more from all over the world are to be found there. They have extensive collections from India, China, Japan, Italy, and of course the English Isles.

We, naturally, went straight to the Dress collection. The V&A has one of the best Dress and Textile collections in the world and we had so much fun! We spent a good 2 ½ hours there looking at each dress and noting construction and detailing, sketching a small detail here and there. The collection was just amazing. Over 400 years of silk, lace, tucks, pleats, hats, corsets and shoes. Oh wow!! I could go on and on but I'll spare you.

After almost 3 hours pouring over European fashion we wandered through the long galleries filled with beautiful objects. As we wandered we would stop occasionally to read a plaque or take a closer look. It was such an overwhelming experience. We mostly just walked through the rooms at a slow pace trying not to keep our mouths open the whole time. The most amazing thing about the museum to me is that these things weren't behind glass or ropes. (The dresses a notable exception of course.) You could get right up to them and study them. You weren't supposed to touch anything, of course, but they were right there if you wanted to. It was so cool!

After lunch we wandered into the Plaster Cast Rooms. These rooms were just amazing. They were filled with plaster casts of art objects of the Medieval and Renaissance from all around the world. From the Trojan columns in Rome to Michaelangelo's David. There were tombs, Celtic crosses, cathedral doors and entries, Nordic church doors, statues, bas-reliefs and so more! To see those things I've read about for so long! It was amazing.

Next we wandered past more amazing galleries and into the textile rooms. Oh wow! The room was lined with hanging shadow boxes filled with old, luscious textiles. In the center of the two rooms were cases filled with pull out frames in which were more old and incredible textiles. Mom and I looked at only a small amount. By that time my little sponge of a brain couldn't possibly soak up any thing else. We just wandered the rooms with glassy eyes stopping to gaze at 15th century velvet, then Tudor needlework, next to pull out a frame or two from one of the cases and glance at Elizabethan handwork, Georgian silks and 18th century muslin from Egypt. Then gaze up on the walls to see red Toile de Jouy made by Jouy himself. It was very overwhelming but an incredible experience.

We came home that night tired to the bone, drained and poorer but having thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. To me the time at the V&A was worth the whole trip over there. I could have spent the whole week in the V&A and come home content.

The Tower of London was way awesome too. A quick history lesson for those of you not familiar with the Tower: The Tower is actually a series of towers around a large courtyard. In the very middle is the White Tower. This was the original tower, build in 1078AD by William the Conquer. This tower was originally a royal residence and actually still is, although no King or Queen of England has lived there for over 500 years. Eventually the Tower became the state prison, most of its inmates being accused traitors to the Crown. With a series of royal and gruesome deaths in the 13th century, the Tower gained the sinister reputation it holds to this day. Here Queen Ann Boleyn and Queen Catharine Howard were be-headed. Queen Elizabeth I was imprisoned here for 9 months by her sister Bloody Mary.

It's a place so jam-packed with history, it's amazing! As we walked through the gate into the Tower proper I had to pinch myself to make sure it was true. I was really walking in the Tower of London! (Aren't I a sap?) To actually walk where Elizabeth, Ann Boleyn, John Lackland and William the Conqueror stepped. . . wow!

The Crown Jewels are kept there. They were very neat. We were just going to skip them, none of us being particularly interested but I'm glad we saw them anyway. What fascinated me wasn't so much the crowns and diadems but the Plate. The huge (4-ft. wide) punch bowl and ladle, huge plates and decanters all of solid gold. Amazing. . .

We also toured the White Tower. It was way cool. I enjoyed the actual building. It was so old and lovely with graceful stone arches and simple Norman windows. Inside the White Tower is the Armory. Tons of barrels of gun power,

racks of swords, rows of muskets and canon and the best of all King Henry VIII's armor (2 sets of it). There were lots of different sets of armor but his was the coolest, especially the set with matching horse armor. He was a huge man, quite awe-inspiring I would think. And his horse! I have never, never seen a horse that big. Wow.

One of the coolest parts was the reconstruction of the Medieval Palace. They reconstructed 2 rooms (and a small chapel) as they would have been in the 12th century. Lit only by candles and a roaring fire, it really gave you a sense of what life must have been like back in the days of Norman England. Very cool! After a walk on the battlements it was time to go home. The whole place was awesome and diffidently one of the highlights of the trip.

Equally unforgettable was our stop at Fortnum & Mason. Fortnum & Mason is a department store, very nice if you know what I mean. On the ground floor was a grocery store and the restaurant. That's where we spent most of our time. Now this is not you ordinary grocery store, the Queen gets her food here! Imagine red push carpets, and crystal chandeliers over head with mahogany shelves lined with preserves, mustards, pate, etc. Imagine glass cases filled with kippers, salmon, salads and relishes, cheeses and meats sold by the kilo by guys in **tails**. It was pretty amazing. There was a huge candy counter to rival See's candies and a huge tea counter with dozen of different types of tea. Oh wow! It's something you just have to experience to believe it. We spurged and had a high tea there, Oh, it was so good!

Despite coming down with a cold and almost missing our flight home, I enjoyed my trip. I'd love to go back but only for a visit. For one thing I couldn't afford it over there. I honestly can't get over how expensive everything was. Everything over there costs **twice** what it would in the States. I paid 1\$ average for every post card, cokes (in a restaurant) were about 4\$. Everything from toothpaste to a car is twice the price. Then it's all taxed almost 20%. Amazing. . . I don't know how people stand it.

Anyway. . . I had a good time. Boy, was it nice to get home though. Coming home is always a nice feeling. It's the best part about leaving. To wonder what's different and what's exactly the same. Traveling always gives you a different view of things. You never see the old familiar things quite the same again. I think that's the real reason to travel. To experience other cultures (and sub-cultures) and people and other ways of doing things, because it does make you view the world around you differently. One thing traveling always does for me is that it makes me really appreciate home and living in America. I don't know; it just gets my patriotic blood pumping. How I love this country! London, Australia, where-ever. . . they're great places to visit but this place, this land is home.

I better go so I can get this in the mail before Y2K comes and the world ends. :->

Hope you all have a very Merry holiday and a wonderful New Year!