

THE GREAT ESCAPE!

MAY 27TH - WHAT A DAY OF REJOICING! Today we brought Angelo home with us free on bail! It's hard to describe how overwhelmingly happy we felt, for God to do such a mighty miracle in the face of such seeming impossibility! We had tried so many avenues & different influential friends to secure his release over the past 4 months, with so little results, so we truly knew it was only the hand of the Lord in answer to the desperate prayers of our wonderful world-wide Family that touched the heart of the judges to set him free. Surely it was a wonderful fulfillment of the prophecies He had given us that "He would deliver, that He might get all the glory." "I will not share My glory with another." (Isa.42:8) TTL!

YET EVEN THOUGH THIS GREAT VICTORY HAD BEEN WON, we knew there were many obstacles yet to overcome as the old boy must have surely been angry to see his plans being spoiled! In his news articles that appeared in the following day's papers, his inspired writers slyly implied that the government had perhaps made a mistake in this case!

THE BAIL PROCESS ITSELF ENTAILED 2 FULL DAYS OF WORK ON OUR PART. We even had to drive a government secretary to the prison to bring in the release papers, or they may have put it off over the weekend! The system sure is as sticky as glue! - And when it catches someone, it doesn't like to let go easily! The following morning we had to go to Immigrations to get Angelo's passport & that is a story in itself, as it's hard for these officers here to imagine a police mandate being revoked! We really had to witness to these officers, which helped to turn the tables, & in the end they didn't even require Angelo to check in with them while out on bail. PTL! That was a real relief & made things much easier.

A SUPREME COURT TRIAL WAS SUPPOSED TO BE HELD AGAIN AT THE END OF SUMMER, giving Italy time to provide more information for the case. But we did not feel that it was the Lord's will to wait here & give the enemy more time to trump up more false charges, & while half the world's population was waiting to be reached in the East! Our lawyer strongly advised us

to get a copy of the full 10 page Supreme Court decision in English for Angelo to take with him in his travels, should he decide to leave on bail. (It was not known yet whether the decision gave him permission to travel or not.) This decision takes up to 2 weeks for them to finish writing up, then another week for the Foreign Ministry to translate to English & put their "official" seals on it.

WHILE WAITING FOR THESE PAPERS, it was also necessary to put Angelo & Sarah's visas in order, which you must have in order to leave the country if you've been here more than 3 months. What a surprise we had when we went to the Visa Office! When opening Sarah's Visa file, it was officially marked that she had left this country last January & hadn't returned since! It was really an eye-opener to us how corrupt the system can be where they can legally go into someone's files & put whatever they want into it, if they want to cause trouble to those who dare to be different. Even though it was obviously untrue that she had left the country as she had no exit stamp in her passport, still it took us several days with the lawyer at the Visa Office to work it all out. Obviously someone was unhappy with the government's decision - perhaps even the immigrations Police themselves were not happy with the policies of the new Socialistic Greek government. Or just some enemy persuaded them to falsify her papers.

THIS AND OTHER SIMILAR INCIDENCES REALLY STRESSED TO US HOW MUCH WE NEED TO BE ON THE ALERT as our enemy is always looking for a way, & one minor mis-move in our attempts to leave this country could have ended up with Angelo being sent right back to where he started. So we had to "look out for the unguarded moment!" (The Unguarded Moment 838:14) "So to stay free, as I've always said, requires eternal vigilance -- the price of freedom." (Contingency Plans 1104:13).

THOUGH THEY GAVE SARAH AND THE CHILDREN THEIR VISAS, on Angelo's paper they stamped in "Answer to your request in 30 days", without the proper visa seal. At the same time, the Supreme Court decision was taking much longer than the 2 weeks

we'd expected it to take. So we had an uneasy feeling that while we waited, more papers from Italy could arrive, but on the other hand, we didn't want to move too fast if it wasn't safe without the official decision papers, visas, etc.. The days passed by & it became weeks, & we began to realize if we did it the system's way we'd never get out of here!

SO WE DECIDED TO TAKE A STEP OF FAITH AND PREPARE FOR A DEPARTURE DATE; But we still weren't too sure because of many, many risks - such as the improper visa stamp, traveling without the court decision (he had only an abbreviated release paper), & with his car still stamped on his passport! (We had a paper saying he had turned the car into the government, but they wouldn't remove the stamp from his passport without paying a huge fine!)

FRIDAY NIGHT, THE 11TH OF JUNE, our lawyer K. held a party for Angelo. It was really an anointed witnessing night with lawyers, a diplomat, government and legal secretaries, the leading music critic in Greece, & journalists attending. It was really like "God's Explosions", after the 4 months in prison without music, & Angelo's musical flame was by no means damped but only burned the brighter! One of the guests, upon seeing K. wildly gypsy dancing with Katrina, remarked to the others nearby - "Look at K., he's all the way in!" And later on when we sang "Into My Heart", K. led the chorus with the motions he'd seen our children do! An extremely beautiful young female lawyer started crying at this point, as she received Jesus! That night was also confirmed our plans to leave with K., and he agreed to come to the airport to see us off in case any difficulties came up.

ANGELO COMMENTED HOW HEAVY THIS PARTY WAS, saying how the Lord had us reaching all these influential people here, the class Rachel always desired to reach misguided through riches. Yet here we were delivering unto them the full counsel of God! It seemed like the people took more credence to our words having seen Angelo go through the fire & still standing.

SATURDAY MORNING, JUNE 12TH, we were quite tired as we hadn't arrived home from the party until 3am. We had devotions & Angelo was really praying for a fleece

to confirm the plans to leave, but not even knowing what kind of a fleece to pray for! Just as we finished united prayer, we received a long distance phone call from some family leadership, asking when Angelo was coming, saying they needed him yesterday! Just hearing their encouraging words & voice on the phone was the catalyst we needed to step out!

MONDAY MORNING WE BOOKED A FLIGHT FOR WEDNESDAY THE 16TH AND MADE FINAL PREPARATIONS. A cousin of K., who is a police official, confirmed with us that his name was not on any list at the borders. So PTL! All doors were open!

WEDNESDAY WE FINISHED PACKING & HEADED FOR THE AIRPORT. Uriah was to drive Angelo & Sarah, while Rose & I went to pick up K. When we went to pick him up, he informed us with the sad news that Angelo's name was now on the police list at the borders to stop him & arrest him if he tried to go out! It seemed like history repeating itself as it reminded us of when the extradition papers came in only a few hours before the end of the 40 day limit! We quickly called Angelo to let him know, & after praying about it he called us back saying he'd still rather try. So off to the airport we went, without K., as he felt he could no longer take responsibility, but told us to call if we needed him.

WE MET AT THE AIRPORT, & upon examining the conditions, including a computer check at the passport control for anyone in question, the Lord gave us the verse to "Wait on the Lord" & "the Word of the prophet"! At the same time the Lord inspired us to put into effect the second contingency plan that we had prepared. Thank God for Dad's admonition to always have contingency plans. "In other words, in case something doesn't work, what else would you try?" (Contingency Plans 1104:7).

SO WE HAD ALWAYS CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY OF GOING BY SEA to a far flung island border post where the computers weren't installed yet, even though it would be a much more expensive & strenuous journey! So home we went to repack, & Angelo and Sarah were only to travel with minimum tourist luggage, & to plan our tourist vacation to Asia Minor! Ha! "Because if you're going to survive, you're going to have to learn to live with a lot less, t keep moving!" (1104:10)

WHILE SHARING WITH ANGELO & SARAH OUR NEW IDEA, Sarah remembered a dream Paul had of Angelo fleeing to that land by boat, & then while reading & going through the Daily Micht for the next few days, we saw that for the day we would have to be crossing the border by sea if reads, "Don't tie up in port, launch out into the deep!" (DM 172) That night, while trying to get word to the folks of this new factor in the equation, one of their sweet secretaries reminded us of what Peter A. had earlier told us, "Don't miss the boat while waiting for counsel from us" if we needed to make split-second decisions! - Ha! What miraculous confirmations! So we were off by faith!

THE NEXT DAY, THURSDAY, we had to not only pack up all our things for Angelo & Sarah & ourselves, but we also had to move out of our house, & we literally had no place else to go!

FRIDAY MORNING WE TOOK A LONG BOAT RIDE, arriving on a distant beautiful island where we spent the night. Saturday morning, English Adrian (who spoke the native language) & I made an explorative trip crossing the border & returning the same night, observing how much of a check they did on people departing and arriving on both sides. PTL! Though these countries are traditional enemies, it seemed quite simple & routine as so many tourists cross at this time of the year.

SUNDAY MORNING EARLY WE DECIDED TO CATCH THE BOAT OUT OF THE COUNTRY. You have to hand in your passport to the Customs' officials at least 1/2 hour before the boat departs, but we waited until the last moment so they wouldn't have that much time to check. We decided not to hand in the visas as there were many tourists who were there only a short time & did not have visa papers but only a stamp on the passport -- so we thought we'd mingle in with them. At 7:55 the Custom's officer returned with the passports of all those who were to cross, & began calling everyone's name to get their passports & board the boat. We all passed through safely, except for Angelo, whose passport was the last one, & instead of calling his name...

THE OFFICIAL SHOWED HIS PASSPORT TO THE BOAT CAPTAIN asking him where this man

is. As you can imagine, this was quite a tense moment for us. But it only turned out to be the car on his passport! So he called the head of police & asked him what to do, who told him, "No, you can't leave Greece with a car on your passport" - Even though we had the paper saying we'd given the car to the government! Our hearts were broken to say the least, as we were looking forward so much to the salvation of crossing only a few miles of water into a new land. Poor Sarah was just in tears, wondering if we'd ever get out of here. At this point, the Lord really spoke to us in our hearts how thankful we should be for the salvation of our souls He'd already given us which meant so much more than this little earthly salvation we were seeking. --Whether we ever crossed these waters or not, we still had the greatest freedom they could never touch! We again saw the incomparable difference between God's mercy & the devil's justice as we knew the family back home would somehow help Angelo to pay this fine if we had to, so he could leave the country.

BUT PTL! GOD HAD A WAY OUT! The previous day, Adrian & I had somewhat made a few "friends of unrighteous mammon" (so) "that when ye fail they may receive you!" (Luke 16:10) - We had purchased for some Greek islanders cigarettes & a leather coat, etc. in the Duty Free Shop & at the cheap bazaars on the other side, which Greeks are not allowed to purchase & bring back. One of these was the head of a travel agency, & a personal friend of the Head of Customs on the island. And GBH, he called the very Head of Customs (whose office is normally closed on Sundays) to come down & hear our story! This man didn't seem to be too aware of all the intricacies of all the official legalities, but more relying on common sense, & upon studying the papers saying Angelo handed the car in to the government, he promptly signed the car right off his passport! PTL! (This really encouraged us too that we'd made the right decision not to try to leave from the airport even though at the time it seemed almost like a defeat that he didn't get to go, because the officials there in Athens definitely would not have been so merciful & would have made him pay the ridiculously huge fine for

the over-stayed car visa -- & probably would have stopped him from leaving altogether.) TTL we Heeded His checks and took the long way instead. "A lot of times we thought we knew what to do & we almost did the wrong thing, & were so thankful that He stopped us & got us out of there in time." (Prayer for Protection #765:3)

PTL! WE WERE ON OUR WAY AGAIN BY FAITH, this time to catch the only other boat leaving that day. With this departure it was only us, and one other French couple, which would give them a lot more time to study our papers. So once again we arrived at the very last moment, securing our tourist books & maps, cameras in hand, goo-ing & gaa-ing at the sights! We showed them our round trip tickets & said that we were planning to stay there only a few days -- which was true! Ha! (II Cor.6:8)!! "There is always some place to go, especially if you're just going as a tourist & they don't recognize you or identify you & you stay only as a tourist & you leave as a tourist, ... you look like a tourist & you act like a tourist & you only carry tourist luggage!" (1104:34)

AGAIN WE DIDN'T GIVE IN OUR VISA PAPERS, hoping they'd think we were only there a few months. The officials came back to give us our passports & we were on the boat! The engine started & we were ready to go! While they were untangling the ropes, back came the official asking for, "your visas! - the Italian one!" So we handed in all 7 of our visas together & started helping the boatman undo the ropes! PTL! As God would have it, while he was starting to page through our papers, the Lord sent along one of His pretty angels in the form of a cute little Customs girl, interrupting his work! By this time we were seeing if the boat's man needed any help pulling up the anchor -- ha! -- And then we started pulling out of port! Meanwhile our dear official seemed to be taking more interest in this girl than in our papers, PTL!

WE THOUGHT IT BEST TO START LAYING THE GROUND WORK FOR OUR ARRIVAL, there in a new place, & make some friends in that country. So Angelo & Sarah pulled out their guitar & violin, & we got to sing for the captain & workers who were from that country. Our plan worked somewhat better than we wanted it to, as the captain liked the music so much that he

stopped all the engines, pulled out a bottle of Campari, & sat down to enjoy the music, serving drinks to us all! The boat was rocking back & forth in the choppy waves, & we were fearing a Coast Guard coming upon us as we were still in their territorial waters! But PTL, one of the other workers started the boat again while the captain stayed and listened to our songs most of the way over, & was quite insistent that we play for him & his friends upon arrival.

PTL! WE HAD NO TIME FOR SONG. As we breezed through Customs & had a bus minutes later, taking us on an all-night ride to a large city of this nation. We really rejoiced in our hearts & had tears in our eyes - it's hard to put into words how thankful to the Lord we felt. And the joy we had in knowing, as Grandmother said - "For better proof can not be had than truly answered prayer, & answered in such a way to know that God is there!" And we were so thankful that we had taken the "pilgrimage of faith" rather than the easy system way of denial. PTL!

THREE DAYS LATER, ANGELO & SARAH WERE IN THE AIR to a far-away land, determined to serve the Lord as never before & with much greater conviction that time is short & to redeem every moment. While waiting for the flight, the Lord even raised up a very sweet girl, an old friend of the family who took care of many of our needs. "God's stories always have a happy ending!" (Alice in the Magic Garden #290:53) Especially for His children, even if we hadn't been "delivered", we know that we'd still "obtain a better resurrection" and deliverance into His happy heavenly kingdom with eternal rewards! (Hebrews 11:35).

III FOR THE VICTORY! We'd like, once again, to thank all of our wonderful family for their support & encouragement during this time, & especially our wonderful Shepherd & Shepherdess for their love & concern & for the guidelines they've given us through the words, which truly saw us through every step of the way!

Written by: Abel Seaman
Typed by: Nadia