



Ever get some ditty or song lyrics stuck in your head? I do. From something I first heard 50 years ago, *Leaving on a Jet Plane*, by John Denver:

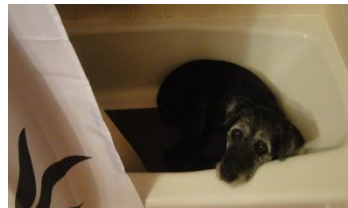
*All my bags are packed
I'm ready to go
I'm standin' here outside your door
I hate to wake you up to say goodbye
But the dawn is breakin'
It's early morn
The taxi's waitin'
He's blowin' his horn
Already I'm so lonesome
I could die*

*So kiss me and smile for me
Tell me that you'll wait for me
Hold me like you'll never let me go
'Cause I'm leavin' on a jet plane
Don't know when I'll be back again
Oh babe, I hate to go. . . .*



It's "early morn" as I leave my "babe" (Cindy, age 9) alone in Madison to board a jet plane in Mpls-St. P, bound for Berlin. **Allow me creative license and catch the parallels between these lyrics and my life:**

- Having to leave our only child-at-home, our furry girl, who prefers the self-comfort and safety of a bathtub when storms rumble through or her master is gone.
- This medical transport driver is "blowin' his horn" (cell phone) during one last 3-hour round of cab rides as "dawn is breakin'" on the day I leave for Germany. . .



➤ . . . with Sue. She and I disembark at curbside of Mpls-St. Paul airport, where Steve Tadevich, now based in Mpls, takes this pic. He also takes my car for two weeks, promises to "wait for me", and takes care to hug us goodbye.



➤ Once in Berlin, the "taxi's waitin'" and "blowin' his horn"—it's our beloved friends, Gerhardt & Inge, who hustle us down to Glashütte. Here in the watch-making capital of Germany a press conference Saturday is being staged for me and a presentation of valued drawings of watch parts and watch functioning—for the first Gruen prototypes in 1892—ones that we are donating to a national watch museum, as well as to the Gruen company museum in town.

Of course, **there are differences between my current life and these 50-year-old lyrics**, several in fact:

- I *do* know when "I'll be back again": it will be 18 days from now on August 13; but to Cindy, that may seem like forever.
- I "hate to go" but love where I'm going: to be family and Christian friends for boys orphaned by war, leaving all behind.
- I am not "so lonesome I could die"—not this year anyway; yes, last year I often traveled alone on mission, but this year Sue, my companion for life & mission, joins me for ministry with refugees in Germany. And not compared to these boys, who are truly lonesome, missing family from war-torn Middle East countries. More on that in two days. Love, Diet & Sue