

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." – 2 Corinthians 5:20

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SPECIAL THANKS: We want to thank everyone who has reached out to us while we've been here in the States. It was so helpful to receive car seats, toys, clothes, and everything else we needed to function while away from home. We tried to send thank-you cards and say "thank you" to everyone involved, but we're sure we've probably missed some people. So THANK YOU to everyone!

Spiritual Awakenings

DADDY, I'M SCARED TO GO TO THE BEACH. WHAT IF THERE IS LIGHTNING AGAIN?

I assured Elin that she could trust me and that I wouldn't purposefully take us into danger. As we continued our preparations to walk down to the beach, she didn't seem too reassured. She had honed in on the danger of lightning.

BUT DADDY, IF THERE WAS LIGHTNING, YOU WOULD PROTECT ME, RIGHT?

While her faith in me was endearing, I had to break the news to her that I couldn't protect her from lightning if it struck. In fact, if I held her hand like she wanted, that would only allow the lightning to strike us both. I just wasn't powerful enough to stop lightning. Elin thought for a minute, then asked another

question. She didn't ask it in a genuinely inquiring way. She already knew the answer to her question - but the answer she was coming up with didn't comport with what she had been taught.

WOULDN'T GOD PROTECT ME?

September has been an exciting month. Thanks to the generosity of some friends and an opening in our schedule, we were able to take the beach vacation we had rain-checked back in June due to Denton's health. Unfortunately, a tropical storm decided to throw actual rain at the beach during that very same time, but the vacation was still very refreshing. And as you can see from the dialogue above, it was also theologically productive. We had the opportunity to have some wonderful conversations with Elin about God and the problem of evil. It's really exciting to see her wrestling through issues as she awakens to God and a spiritual life. If you want to read about the rest of that interaction along with some of our thoughts and responses, you can find that story entitled "[The Problem of Joy.](#)"

Discussing the problem of evil with Elin was great, but it was also fun to discuss this same issue - along with many others - with my Romanian tutor. I've been taking classes online with a tutor in order to keep building my Romanian while Stateside. Not only has that been productive for my language, but it's also been fun to have spiritual discussions with someone who has a bad taste in her mouth for what she perceives to be a stagnant church and stagnant traditions. We were able to talk about the priesthood of the believer and the importance of church, the problem of evil, intrinsic human value and the image of God, and many other issues. I don't know if there was any spiritual stirring in my tutor, but we are praying that seeds have been planted. We're excited that her family only lives about an hour away from us, and we're hopeful that we may be able to invite them over one day this winter and build a relationship.

September was also exciting because we had the opportunity to share more about what is happening in Romania. Besides getting to share stories in our church and in individual encounters, we were also able to share with the presbytery of our denomination. We shared about a Romanian pastor we heard speak a few months back, who gave a wonderful analogy of the spiritual condition in Romania, and the need for spiritual awakening. He asked us to imagine that there were corpses propped up beside a huge bonfire. If you went around and touched each corpse, they would feel warm to the touch. But on the

inside, they'd be as dead as they could be. He said this depicted his people's condition. That is not my assessment of Romania, that is a Romanian's assessment! Romania is a beautiful country with beautiful churches and a wonderful Christian tradition, Most people in Romania have been baptized in the church. But very few people actually follow Christ or choose to actively participate in the church. They have the appearance of spiritual life, but not true spiritual life. As the atheist Christian I met on the plane last month can attest, identifying as a Christian doesn't mean that one is a Christian.

But warm corpses aren't only found in Romania. We have them in the States, especially in traditionally Christian areas like the South. There are many who identify as Christians simply because they grew up steeped in a Christian culture. This is why we also enjoyed presenting at a local Christian school in our area. We were able to share about our experience in Romania, but also about how we were once warm corpses. I grew up inundated with Christianity, but I never truly recognized what it meant to actively pursue God until high school. For quite awhile I relied on my works, my sincerity, my repentance, and all of these other things to save me. While those were all good things, I ran to them instead of taking those good things to God in full reliance on him. I vividly remember my spiritual awakening, when I looked unto Jesus alone, the author and perfecter of my faith. It was awesome to be able to share our experience, struggles, and life with Christian school students, some of whom are likely working through the same issues we did, and the same issues many Romanians do.

Finally, September is exciting because it is the month in which we are returning to Romania! We fly out on Sunday, September 30. While we have been refreshed and encouraged by our time Stateside, we have wanted little more than to get back to Romania as quickly as possible. We are so thankful for everyone who has made our time here refreshing and fruitful. Thank you so much for all your encouragement and support.

PLEASE PRAY...

- We return to Romania on September 30. Please pray for safe travels as well as our sanity. We're traveling with three kids, and one infant-in-arms. Denton is only six pounds lighter than Atticus now and he just became mobile, as well as much more vocal. We're anticipating an interesting flight with him in our laps.

- Elin has expressed excitement for returning to Romania, but the sadness has also started to creep in. We're anticipating some issues when we return, but we pray that those will be in the normal range of emotions. Please pray especially for Elin's adjustment to moving yet again.
- Continue to pray that our church would find a Romanian pastor. Also pray for our church leadership and congregants who are facing hardship.
- Please pray for our church congregants, especially the elders, as there are many who are facing some very difficult circumstances. Please pray that God would give them wisdom and endurance, and that he would help them to lean into the body. Pray that we would have wisdom in reaching out to them and supporting them.
- We return to Romania at the beginning of respiratory illness season. Please pray that our health - and especially Denton's health - would remain good. We anticipate that we will get sick, but we are praying to avoid continuous, serious sickness.

Announcements:

- Our teammates, Derek and Shannon Ebbers, have been faithful missionaries to Romania for 11 years now and are seriously the best team leaders God could have possibly provided for us! As is normal for all long-term missionaries, they have recently lost some financial supporters and are looking to make up the loss in their monthly account. Supporting our teammates is a direct way you can be in support of us; if they have to go back to the States for support-raising, that affects the team dynamic and ministry. We would love for you to consider joining our support team by literally supporting our whole team! If you would be interested in reaching out to them, supporting them, or passing their names along to individuals and churches who may have interest in what we're doing in Romania, we would greatly appreciate this. You can [find them here](#).
- If you're interested in one-time giving and would rather support projects, we have a project account for the Romanian church which goes towards things like the youth program, elder trainings, etc. The account is **#94978** for the Romania church plant.





Top Left: Elin dancing across the beach as we mulled over how to explain the problem of evil to a four year old

Top Right: Denton getting cleared by the doctor, as he tries to eat everything in sight so he can catch up to his brother's weight (only 6 lbs. to go!)

Bottom Left: All the (2nd) cousins coming to town

Bottom Right: Meeting our new MTW resource rep, Chelsea Floyd



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

09/24/18 - [The Lesser of Two Evils: How Moral Pragmatism Undermines God's Benevolence](#) by Derek

09/22/22 - [How Christians Ought to Vote](#) by Derek

09/11/18 - [The Mold](#) by Catalina

09/08/18 - [The Problem of Joy](#) by Derek

Check us out on Facebook! We post on Catalina's "[From Dacula to Transylvania](#)" album so that you can stay up to date with us. You can also follow [our photos on instagram](#) or check out our [video archive](#). But best, of all, you should let us know if you want to join our secret Facebook Group to get more updates!



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To make a donation (Account #14088 for Derek and Catalina) or (Account #94978 Romania church plant for church projects):

<https://www.mtw.org/missionaries/details/derek-and-catalina-kreider>

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