

Robert & Regina's Trans'lantic Newsletter

July - September 2015

July - So, it is really summer where we are, with record breaking heatwaves. Actually, as is usual, Chemnitz is not in the areas of the record temps. We usually are not in the extremes of any weather events. But it has been plenty hot anyway. I feel for those having to work in the sun. That can't be fun. Regina had 90 degree temps in her office. That was more than enough for her to be glad to finally get home. Here in our apartment it has been a more tolerable 80 to 85 or so. One lady, who has an apartment on the top floor, says she just has to leave it in the heat of the afternoon.

And, we are finally getting some rain. It has been pretty dry, but not a crises. As I write this on August 17th. neighboring Dresden is playing soccer host to top ranking Bayern Munich for a friendship game. It has been played in streaming rain, with Bayern winning 3-1. R and I enjoyed supper-time pizza while watching it on TV, high and dry on the sofa! That's the best way.

As most of you probably already aware of, I live here on social security, and a regular monthly contribution from my retirement account. Regina has her regular salaried job. Her income will change as she retires at the end of this year. But we anticipate still being able to pay the bills.

After retirement, she does plan to continue part time in the group where she works; doing the financial bookwork. Nobody else there has any experience with that complicated system, and she is glad to plan on about 2 days a week involved there with that. To me, it is an excellent plan.

But, on my income side, I do notice that it seems that some people must still be contributing. I cannot see individual depositors names online, but only a total amount. So, I want you to know that I realize that some might still be helping us financially in our life here, but I just don't know who you are. We thank you for your sharing and appreciate just knowing each of you on this mailing list.

The last few chemo treatments were not fun, I guess due to accumulation. I am very glad that those are over for now. On the 24th of August, I had a CT scan of the abdomen and thorax looking for signs of cancer. A health report follows at the end of this report. But I wanted to mention the following, because it is of importance too. It was a joy to watch the scan staff serving people like myself. Was nice to smile with them, including those not smiling so much. Their desire to serve comes from far deeper than just a desire for wages. I believe that there is only one source of desire and passion in this universe, and so I feel fairly certain of who put those qualities in their heart.

But as you too know, none of us always see our passions and desires so intensively or correctly. We all need help, as satan is an expert in twisting them up. So, as we accept this humbling thought, we might start getting a grip on the fact that even non-believers exhibit the working of the father, son and spirit too in their own lives!

I do now have plans for a trip home in November, and staying into early Dec. Regina will stay here. However, Europe is really heating up right now under what appears more and more to be an invasion. I will stay here if things then seem increasingly dangerous for Regina alone here.

Regina hits a new rung on the ladder today as I write this part (on Aug.18th.) This is her 65th. birthday. She plans to visit her mom early afternoon after work, then come home for coffee with me. Tonight, dinner at a Mexican restaurant in the city, then dinner together with her brother and sister-in-law on Sat. Neither for her day today, or my 65th. in October, do we plan much gift exchange. We have decided to put some funds together to do a long weekend at a nearby place in Germany we haven't been to; the city of Erfurt, the capital of the neighboring state of Thuringen.

Let me add some historical info to the vacation and travel thing. In the time before the wall fell, people wanted to travel well beyond the borders, far further than just to other socialistic countries such as Czechoslovakia or Bulgaria. The pent-up desire to travel was one of the chief reasons for the protests that led to the falling of the wall.

But travel requests to the “West” involved dangers and increased suspicions. If you were a single person, with no relatives here, then your chances to get permission to travel beyond the borders were small. You were considered suspicious, as there was no family “pull” to make you want to return. But we know a family whose son was able to even have a job with an east German firm in a west German city; a rare occurrence! He had close family members here, and no family connections in the West, all giving him an incentive to return. Otherwise, relatives could suffer consequences.

(An item of interest: Google the term „Prora“, a place on the island of Ruegen, for information on Hitler’s idea in the 30’s for a huge vacation facility at the Baltic sea. In the GDR time of the 50’s - 80’s, Regina never heard of this place.)

The Chemnitz congregation has been looking at outreach methods and efforts, and have come to some conclusions. We have invited back to Germany one of the EFG guys; EFG being like Let’s Start Talking summer program, but developed and localized for here. Kye plans to live here for a time and involve himself in the congregation as a youth leader with the young folks in the congregation, and meeting people whom he met with while here for the summer program.

The congregation has bought a different place to meet. It is in a residential area, and was a drink market before. Time will tell if it was a good choice. Some needed renovation I guess is going on now.

The English Bible study continues on, and attracts a few people who haven’t found the body here as a home. I love to see them, and appreciate their thoughtful hugs and comments when I have taught. Some already seem to understand the thought of being on a journey, and sense being loved intensely by the father. I love supporting that!

Whenever I speak of „God“, I am speaking of father, son, and spirit; always the 3 in 1. It is all about them (father, son and spirit), and their relationship with one another. They have brought that same relationship to you and me, and putting us into that relationship, their plan, even without asking!

Now Jesus’ words in Jn. 17 come out with astonishing new simplicity and meaning: „And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.“ v.3 NRSV. RL– Jesus speaking; red letters! I confess, I had neither thought of, nor taught, „eternal life“ in this frame of reference, *their* relationship inside one another. I have missed the big picture that Jesus speaks of in this verse. I believe that the whole world has basically missed it.

Although the 3 in 1 concept has been somewhat of a struggle for many people, including Bible writers, to conceptualize, that relationship is, nevertheless, definitively and very clearly there for Bible readers to get a grip on. Remember, *they* were the creators, not just an alone „God“. When thought through, I believe that it makes a real difference how we see the rest of the Bible, and thus the world; whether people are separated from the Creator and the Creation or not. Jesus was, and is, the ultimate perspective changer! (Rom.12: 2). The Pharisees couldn’t deal with that.

I have been here 25 years now. R and I have enjoyed 16 years together already. Can’t believe how fast the time has gone! Please check out the health report that follows. Do write if you have any questions about it, or about any part of this report.

Much love, Robert and Regina

Health Report

Sept. 10, 2015 I put off sending this until after our meeting with my cancer doctor this morning. 2 weeks ago, a CT scan was done (my first) of the thorax and abdomen to check on whether cancer was hiding in the organs and other areas. The info was sent to this doctor, and he told Regina and I today that every thing is absolutely in order. That is good news, as far as I can tell!! Blood work done two days ago showed those values are also in order; with the expected numbers after the chemo treatment. Cancer markers were also in order. I believe that he was very happy to be able to tell us this.

Another ultrasound is planned for December, as the 5 year follow-up begins. An intestinal scope test is also planned, maybe around January, to recheck areas there that the CT scan would not see.

During all of the chemo and examinations, I have tried to keep close tabs on my 5 year old heart bypass. That doctor did an examination earlier in Sept.; the first since my cancer operation last December. He did the usual stress EKG, followed by the heart check with the ultrasound device. Naturally, I was concerned how that might turn out, after all this other stuff going on, especially the strong chemo drugs, although I had been told that damage to the heart was not expected with the chemo. The report was very good, with the usual heart-related blood values being better than previous reports, ie before the tumor operation. That made him very happy, and he didn't try to push statins on me this time. (I have resisted his pressure all along since bad experience with them way back.). No bad changes to the heart itself were seen through either test.

I have felt fairly well, with a very slow reduction of the tiredness and most other often occurring side effects since the last chemo around the 10th. of August. The tingling and loss of feeling in the finger tips, feet and toes does continue. The doctor feels certain that that will go away, but to plan on 6 months, or more, for it to happen. I have patience for that.

Many of you have shared your best wishes, handy-work gifts, prayers and your own experiences with us during this time. It has been a joy to hear and receive from you. Thank you for thinking of us so very personally.