

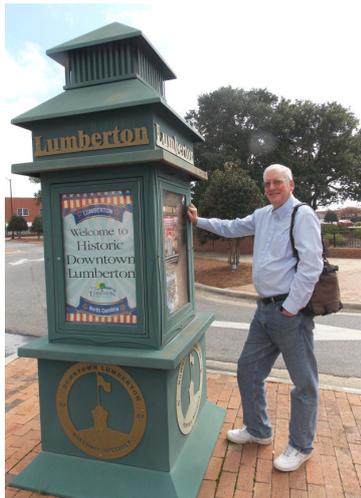
## November - December 2015 Edition

Being written in January, this publication brings Happy New Year and Best Wishes greetings from across the pond. We sure hope that each of you are feeling perky and looking forward to the new year and what will unfold.



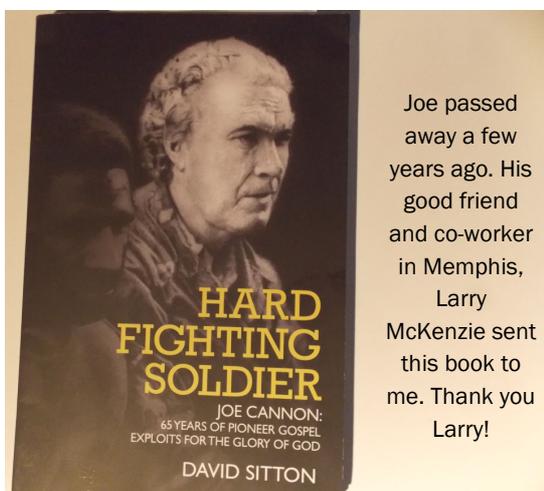
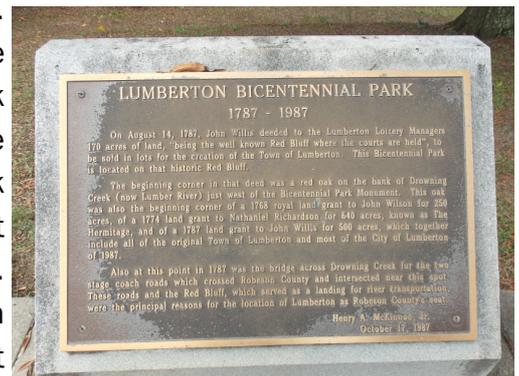
New Years eve at building

I arrived stateside on November 2nd. after a long but smooth ride across the Atlantic, and my sister



and mom were sights-for-sore-eyes as they picked me up in CLT. Regina was not along, but we talked most days on the phone. I stayed 5 weeks. I got to see a few people whom I haven't seen in ages. The first weekend I combined 3 neat events. One friend is a semi-retired missionary currently in Florida. He is from eastern NC, and had a family reunion there as I arrived home. We decided to meet for a couple of days, as he was underway back to Florida. Worked out perfectly. We met near the town of Lumberton, NC. by choice. That is where my dad was born (1920) and grew up.

I wanted to see the homeplace, and the Lumbee river just a block from his house. From his stories, it must have been one of his favorite places to hang out. Talk about dark water! The house is still there, but has been converted into apartments it seems. So my friend and I scouted out the small town together while we talked our heads off about stuff! Was awesome.



Joe passed away a few years ago. His good friend and co-worker in Memphis, Larry McKenzie sent this book to me. Thank you Larry!

On Sat. Am, he headed on down I95, and I headed up the same to Raleigh. I wanted to visit a family whom I first met at the North Carolina Evangelism seminar in the last half of the 80's at the Brooks Avenue congregation. It was a pretty big event, and was where I first met and heard Joe Cannon of Mission 1000, a small mission school in Memphis. Joe lit, or at least fanned, the evangelistic fires for lots of people. I then attended his 3 month program in the Fall of '89 before leaving for overseas in 1990.

The couple in Raleigh has been close to Regina and I since then, and has visited us

in Wilkes at previous dates when I have been home. They are quite an international family and grand-kids crowd themselves. Was awesome to get together for meals and talks with them.

Back in Wilkes, family visited from in-state and out-of-state. We had a few gather at Thanksgiving. But most are now far flung, so to speak, and have in-laws elsewhere to visit too, so it „ain't lik it used to be“, as far as the whole crowd getting together. I was already back here, but I heard that more of the family gathered at Christmas time this year.



A couple of visits before, I attended five funerals during a 17 day visit. Thankfully, this time there were none. However, it is easy to sense the times we live in; the fears and uncertainties and shadows that are increasingly uncomfortably close to people's Everyday. It has all caused me to reflect on just what I believe, hear and teach; how it touches other's lives and reflects the truth of the love and care of the Father, Son and Spirit in our Everyday. It is a big concern to me how that goes in all of our own lives; our message, beliefs, doctrines and relationships.

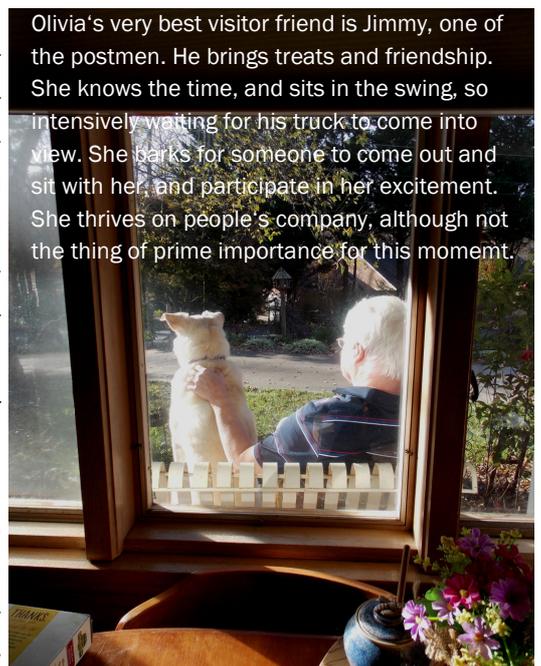


Although she is still working full time for some months ahead, and will still be there two days a week for maybe years, Regina's retirement should allow somewhat longer visits together stateside when desired or needed. I look forward to this. I have never been to Williamsburg, Va. I would like to see that area someday, along with other historical places of early North American settlements. Also, the beautiful Skyline drive in Va., and places in Pennsylvania where early Europeans settled, including many seeking religious freedom; they would be on my travel bucket list. Many of those religious freedom movements had their early groundings right here in Saxony.

While home, I had the deep joy of having a few hours with a friend from way back. His passion became helicopters and rescue work. Getting together with him was very special. We both have now become familiar with major disease.

I enjoyed lunch get-togethers several times with congregational folks. Jesus seemed to like the setting of meals together. They clearly contribute something besides just opportunities to stuff our faces. It seems to me that meals, or even simple coffee together, beats visitation programs. There is a difference in the „getting together“ part of that. „Lunch“ somewhere provides the reason, and then far more natural visitation seems to take place. The purpose then of a „visitation“ evening seems more forced, don't you think? It certainly reduces the naturalness of the time together.

2016 is the 49th. year anniversary of my very first flight; a trip around Wilkes county with my freshly licensed brother-in-law in a 2-seat rented Cessna 150. The bug bit. People I taught to fly in Florida during the 70's are now retiring as senior pilots for



various airlines. It astounds me to think on that. Certainly gives new meaning to „time flying“!

Arriving back in Chemnitz on December 8th., I found the whole thing about Christmas here had already taken off. Of course, the over punched-up and stressed shopping part is somewhat there. But there is some sanity. „Advent“ is much more generally known and practiced in Europe, I believe, than stateside. Many groups and individuals participate in this. There is also quite a bit of television and radio programming around the season; often very meaningful, well-done programs. Regina and I enjoy many of these ourselves, finding real interest in them. Its really neat to me to think on each person we are seeing involved in those programs are on a journey themselves.

Regina and I had a little more holiday time this year with her family. As her mom ages, it is more difficult for her to participate in family events. But everyone was with her in her apartment more often too. We also finally enjoyed a Christmas meal with Regina's brother, along with his family. Regina had always worked many years on the 26th., cooking for the large client crowd at her job. And she enjoyed doing that, and I got to help some too. But this year, she found someone to take her place for that, and we went to her brothers.



Also, there were events together in the congregation. We were at the coffee time with them on a Saturday afternoon. Naturally, there were loads of great „Leckerlies“ to enjoy, along with some nice conversations. We have a number of kids in the congregation, and their neat programs reveal quite a biblical knowledge. A New Years eve program is also a traditional part for some of the group, and we have attended this for years, enjoying food, games, and fireworks.



A friend I have now known for 12 years is from Nepal. He studied here in Chemnitz, but now lives in Leipzig and works for a university there. He and friends have recently opened a small restaurant here in Chemnitz with menu from their native land. He invited Regina and I to eat there. I had the chance, too, to talk a little with the 2 neat guys who were cooking; one from India originally and one from Nepal. These are small events, and some people are meeting others mega times more than I ever do. But if the world was engaged with each other like was that evening, and in this kind of atmosphere, war, I believe, would end.



Our Belgium family was able to squeeze in a few days with us before jobs and school resumed for them on Jan. 4th. A main event of that visit was being with Regina's mom; Liam's great grandmother.

Again, our wish for you is for a very meaningful and joyful year ahead, despite the loads of seeable and unseeable potholes in the road.

Much, much love, Robert and Regina



*PS* Besides the above mentioned events, here is my best Christmas story this year.

It happened on the Christmas market. Two guys first came here from Austria 5 years ago and have since set up their food booth each year bringing tasty pastry from Tirol; little pizza type things that can be topped with sweet stuff or cheese and meat combinations. (They are a type of „funnel cakes“, if you are from Wilkes). While most people who sell foods and products are just filling orders, these guys are attracting crowds with friendly talk, jokes about their problems with the local dialect and free food samples. They thus naturally have quite a following here now. I'm one of that following. Last year, I couldn't be there due to being in the hospital. This year I talked with them when they had a free moment. They asked me how I was getting along. I don't mind being open with people, and told them right up front about the year. One listened intently. After I stopped, he came over to the side and told me about two close relatives of his who had suffered and died recently from cancer. He is just 35 years old, and already experiencing this reality close around him. He was so warm and open and concerned for me too. It was unbelievably easy to converse with him. True living water was pouring out of this guy's inner most being. Although he himself might not have yet known that that was streaming out of him, it can't help but bear good fruit in his life. I know that the very same passion and the relationship between the Father, Son, and Spirit exists, and this was visible in him. He is just expressing it, as it is how he is wired. The passion for his job, his interest in other people, his warmth and realness of his conversation and manner, his ability to look you in the eye, his lack of fear of others or of opening up to them, or even his desire to come to unknown Chemnitz from Austria (the „far country“?) to get to know the people; these passions are from the one Source of such in our lives. They simply reflect the lives of the Father, Son, and Spirit. He is on a path and journey of *discovery*. I'd call that Faith!

Their love is in this guy, as it is in you. The Father/Son wired us all that way, without even asking us. But too many of us don't *recognize* that way of relationship that they have brought to us. and wind up hiding that under the basket; just like Adam and Eve fearfully hiding in the garden. That's called unbelief. That was a big problem for the Pharisees. Their unbelief, i.e. blindness, had them really tied up in bondage. They knew scriptures and laws, but they did not know who they *already* were themselves.

Incarnation and *our* adoption. The best Christmas gift ever!