

# The Trans‘lantic Newsletter

## from Robert and Regina

2016 January - February

Well, 2016 entered like a lion here in some ways for sure; not meaning weather, but factors related to humans and their situation. The price and pressure of greed, corruption, and oligarchy is escalating with full gas and taking its toll on humans all over the planet. I believe that that is the price of blindness, the chief sin, and not an inherent badness of humanity. People don't know who they are, have developed false images of the Father, and thus have painted God with the same scheme that Adam and Eve did. So, we have also believed the same lie.

At least in our part of Germany, Winter hasn't really been much of an issue yet. Two times a few years back, we had snow on the ground from middle of November on into Spring. In the last few years, it has been entirely different. As I write this at the last week of February, there is no snow, and its 50 windy degrees outside. We have had a little snow, but nothing much.

The lack of snow and having fairly warm temperatures has been hard on the businesses related to Winter opportunities and needs. Many service organizations have to have personnel, equipment and supplies kept ready and on standby, even if no snow comes. That's not so easy, and I feel for them.

Ski areas and winter resorts have certainly suffered too. Whole communities, especially in the mountains just a few miles south of here, depend on winter activities for their very lively hood. In February, there is also 2 weeks Winter vacation for school. Families make, then might break, vacation plans for these times if there is no snow. The effects are, of course, very stressful and expensive in many ways.

It has also been noted that the Storks have returned from their Wintering in the south, and are building their nests back in the area about 2 weeks early. Around our little feeder here, the usual garden birds are fewer, as their main evergreen nesting tree near us was really sick and thus cut down last November. Some birds left, I am sure. But for the few times we have had a little snow on the ground, we have been warned accurately 6 to 12 hours before its arrival by somewhat hectic action at the feeder. It is great to watch, and more accurate than the TV weather. If the seeds run out, the birds can see us when we are in the kitchen, and make us aware of their problem in no uncertain terms with dances and flutterings before the door. But little interest is there for the food if the snow is not coming in the next few hours. When they are around, these guys are a real joy to experience!

Since the tree was cut, a pair of Magpies have built a nest in a leafless tree close by. I enjoyed watching one bringing twigs in and working it between the tree branches to get it to the nest. I no longer think that birds are just "programmed" to build nests, but are actively expressing the very real-time (he notices their fall!) and present love and intimate care of the Father, Son, and Spirit for the whole creation; their relationship expressed in earthly terms for the bird's survival and livelihood and plus even for our enjoyment! I have a new appreciation of the phrase "Live and Learn".

So, let me give a little health update. Actually, I am really feeling great physically. I wrote you recently about my CT scan results; nothing bad to report, thankfully. Follow-up with occasional ultrasound tests start in March. Even though my last Chemo treatment was in August, I still feel and sense its, albeit lessening, presence. I can still taste it sometimes, and sense at the same time its effect on my voice and movements, and feelings in the extremities. It is good to be able to sense again a too hot cup of something in my hands. I also notice a return to being able to actually balance on one foot. Am very thankful for these slow returns to normal functioning.

Last year in February, I did not go to the English-language Advanced Bible Study Series, due to the then-recent operation. So, this year, Regina and I planned to attend; at least the weekend (Part 2) portion. Mario, Tonia and Liam planned to be there too, and so we met and had a great time together. Tonia was the cook for the weekend part. The “week” part of the event is intensive study. The week-end part is more relaxed with more time to refresh and re-enjoy old, treasured relationships. I can’t find the words to express how much that time means.

Jim McGuiggen was one of the main speakers for the week. He remained for the weekend part. Jim is a well known writer and speaker in the churches of Christ. He has a very refreshing view of life in Christ sparked and fueled by his Trinitarian understanding. It was neat to be with him.

Another speaker is a favorite human of mine; Patrick Boyns from Great Britain. Pat has had a long history connected with the British Bible School. Global changes had worked deeply into the old operation methods and programs offered at the school. So, in the last years, he has been busy, along with others, grappling with these changes and seeking to bring the operation methods of education and evangelism into the current realities of the times. I believe that I am accurately reporting that it has led into development of more distant learning courses and methods as the schools mission.

The Barna research group has struggled to document these winds of change blustering through the global religious world. If this kind of information interests you, you can Google them and find books and online publications reflecting their investigations. Wayne Jacobsen has a new book coming out soon based on some of Barna’s findings. It is entitled “The Dones”.

Work must be preceding along on the church building in Chemnitz. To remodel a commercial building (it was a drink market in its past life) to our needs is apparently turning out to be a real challenge.

Two house study groups are currently going on. Regina and I are in one group studying the book written by James MacDonald entitled “Lord, Change my Attitude before it is too late”. While the title is noble, I am not sure of the true value of the book, due to power of our own perspectives and expectations strongly resisting change. But I do enjoy being with family where things can be “put on the table” so to speak, and then hashed out and openly considered. In this day and age of SMS, Facebook and Twitter kinds of conversation, the quality, and even just opportunity, of face-to-face and looking others into the eye are treasures that cannot be overlooked.

Regina and I cherish the thought of your love and interest in us.

In Him!

Robert and Regina Lewis