

# The Trans'atlantic Newsletter from Robert and Regina

2016 October - December Edition

I admit right up front that the news here is a little old. But you know too that if you have people that are close to you, maybe even family, that everyone likes to joyfully hear about what has gone on in each others lives when you finally do get in contact, regardless of the news' age. So, I rely on the thought that you feel about me as I feel about you; in just this way! Please enjoy the thoughts ahead!

We had a really nice visit home in October. It was possible to see some of you. October is always special to us in the US, especially weather-wise. The annual Apple Festival in my hometown is a highlight for us. While home, we visited the North Carolina Zoo for the first time since its opening in the middle 70's. It is a huge place. Wikipedia says that it is the largest walk-through zoo in the world. We don't challenge that statistic after completing only the half during a day's visit.

Just before arriving home, a hurricane cruised up from the Caribbean, scraping along the Florida and Georgia coastlines until coming closer to shore in SC and NC. In 2015, I was home and visited the town of Lumberton, which was my dad's hometown, and located in the southeastern part of NC. A missionary friend and I met up, and visited the home place, as it still existed. I spoke about that in a report. But this last October, the town was often in the national news, as it was totally cut off due to the on shore winds, high water and rains generated by the hurricane and other converging weather systems in the eastern part of the state. I am sure that my dad's house we saw the year before was decimated, due to its nearness to the Lumber river, less than a block away. I think that many of the towns in that area have not yet fully recovered from flooding.

My dad was born in 1920, and the river was his life growing up. I think I am telling you right that he learned to swim in that river at 2 years old, when someone threw him in.

Besides seeing family and local folks, it was neat to see a few people I hadn't seen in ages. A flight-school roommate (middle 1970's) came up from Charlotte for a few hours visit. It was such a precious time. He is now usually occupying the left front seat of an Airbus 330. Although he wasn't my student, there are a lot of pilots nearing retirement age who were my students back in the 70's at the large flight school who are still careening some heavy Iron around the skies for the airlines. Believe me, I am proud as any papa could be for them and their success!

As you already know, lots of people fleeing conflict in other lands have arrived here, and are still arriving here. The government and lots of volunteers have taken up the challenge of helping these newcomers with basic needs to live. We, as a congregation, met with some of these helpers and refugees during a coffee time with them. The language barrier was naturally a big problem, but with some that we could communicate with, mostly in English, we had neat conversations getting to know them.

In my observations, people in all lands and all religions have exactly the same needs, as people are all wired alike. Everyone needs a little appreciation (some feeling of worth) and lots of love and affection from each other. We all need enough warmth, a roof of some kind over us, food and water, and life (and all its qualities) with and among others. We are made for that relationship, which is the relationship that the father, son and spirit have among themselves. It is their relationship that they have brought into us in their life here in Jesus. Even Jesus, here as God who has become human (he even became flesh and sin!), needed food, water, clothing, rest and surely a blanket at times, just like all humans do! He needed relationship with others, and sought that out, and found that, in the people he met along the way. Everyone you know has these life relationships and needs already in them.

Even though they have moved now a few miles away, our former neighbors remain close in heart to us. I enjoy the times that the man, who is my age, and I have once or twice a month together. We like

to walk, talk and, naturally, eat. Their family has become quite international. When the dad and I are together, we find much in common by sharing family stories, many with really neat understandings of the work of the father in our lives! This offers time to discuss relationships, and their origins.

As for the congregation here, most news at the moment is our new (to us) building. Some work still needs to be done outside, but the inside is very tastefully and harmoniously renovated providing a large meeting room, three classrooms, kitchen, bathrooms and storage areas. It is all on one floor.

A baptistry is not built in, but I think a cart-mounted setup is planned. It would then be rolled out of the storage area when needed. Water connections have been built into the floor.

Various learn and study programs are currently going on, and summer outreaches are being evaluated and planned.

January 2015, I had an operation to install a port for my chemo sessions that began a month later. Chemo ended in August 2015, after 12 sessions. A year later, I talked with the Oncologist about getting the port taken out, as I was becoming a bit paranoid of its condition, especially the connection point of the little unit to the tube that connected into the blood supply. It had been implanted below the left shoulder blade, and was increasing uncomfortable while sleeping on my left side or stomach. He agreed that I could have it taken out. So, it was removed in November. It actually turned out to be still in very good condition. Since the op, I have heard of some ports remaining in the body for a decade or so. I sleep much better now with it out. I asked, and was able to keep it as a souvenir.

Christmas is always a nice time here for us. A close friend/family returned from the west side of Germany to be with the dad's family here near Chemnitz, and I got to be with them for a short time. He was a close support during my bypass days 6 years ago before they moved away. Other visits were centered around meals and get-togethers. The Christmas market was very nice, as usual. Sure wish that all of you could visit this tradition at some time. Here, I saw again my two friends from Tirol; the Innsbruck area. They had again set up their booth on the market to sell some tasty goodies from their local area. They love coming to Chemnitz, and feel at home here. They have a large group of regular customers, due to their genuine openness and warmth. It is always a terrific joy to be with them, encouraging in every way. I think its so for them too. With these guys, and the others mentioned, it is so nice to have some warm hugs, greetings and thoughtful conversations. It is in such gatherings that I find the very best of fellowship and joy of the spirit!

Life is full of change all around us. My well-worn thoughts on Extrapolation have been quite useful, as things are spinning up at super turbocharged speeds. I am sure that you have noticed. It is taking an accelerating toll on us all. But what is great about it, is that it is an excellent time to rethink everything; including how we ourselves might have participated in supporting these "troublesome times"; what has been our own icons and idols replacing the true knowledge of the father, son and spirit.

Feel free to inquire. Someone, a German friend, actually did just that about something in my last report! I really need to respond to his questions.

Many best wishes for 2017! May you see the love, life and interest of the father everywhere you look, and in everyone you see. May you become more and more aware of him filling your day, as he already does just that; involving us in everything the father, son and spirit are doing with you for that day; whether it be washing clothes, playing sports, enjoying a movie or concert, or taking in a sunset!

Much love, Robert and Regina