

The Trans‘lantic Newsletter from Robert and Regina

2017 January - February

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God ,
and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” - Jesus - Jn.17:3 NASB

What better words could I greet you with than with these comforting words of Jesus? This is the eternal purpose and eternal plan of the father, son and spirit.

Jesus asked Phillip “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me?” John 14:10. One of the issues that people had with the book “The Shack” was the thought that the Father was *with* and *in* the son on the cross.

The movie “The Shack” is coming to theaters in the US early in March. Since many people will try to discourage you from going, I will take the opportunity to *urge* you to go. See for yourself. Think for yourself. We have a living father, son and spirit who is in love with you, and is more active in that than you can possibly imagine. I don’t know anyone who really would not want that kind of relationship. I can’t wait till it arrives a little bit later here in April on the screen in German!

January opened with our family from Belgium with us for a few days. What a great way to begin the year! Thinking on the surface, I believe that most everyone was somewhat glad for 2016 to be making it’s exit for right obvious reasons. Of course, there is no certainty that 2017 will fare much better.

For years and years now, a small group of us had met at the building to see the new year arrive. But this year, the group broke with the tradition. So we 5 spent the evening here in the neighborhood together; going outside to watch the local fireworks, and send a few of our own skyward. The whole fireworks display; especially after midnight, was the best I have seen in many years here.

The big event for me of the Jan.-Feb. time frame is always ABSS. This is the Advanced Bible Study Series held each February at the church’s camp in the Taunus mountains, just north of Frankfurt. The camp itself was built around 1970 I think with a cooperation effort between German and American congregations and supporters. Otis Gatewood and his wife, I believe Irene, are US names that you might recognize involved in the organization, building and equipping. Untold thousands of kids and adults have participated in programs of all kinds. Adults of all ages have giving whole summers of their time hosting children’s camps. Much of that still continues now, but I am not sure if the intensity is so strong anymore. US military presence isn’t as numerous as in the past, and many congregations have closed along with the bases. Price pressures and needed volunteer help have played a role too; all difficult to come by in this pressurized economy and extreme busyness and demands of today’s times.

As for ABSS, Paul Brazle, leader in the congregation in Antwerp, Belgium seems to always put together a viable program with various local and out of country speakers. Teachers give much time and money to travel here and be a part of this for our sake. Regina and I came for the weekend part; a kind of separate addition to the more study intensive part of the weekday program. Our family comes over from Belgium too. It is a good halfway point for our travels, and makes it fairly easy to get together with them. About 10 or 12 others were also there for

the weekend. The house is nowhere near full with this number, and thus yields a more relaxed and intimate atmosphere for everyone. Ben Langford from Oklahoma led the study through the book of Mark, with a kind of center point of the question Jesus often used: "Who do you say that I am?" It was just a great weekend in all ways. The same love that the father, son and spirit have for each other and for such events is expressed through us all then in gatherings like that. They are the source of all of that, and enjoy sharing that through humans.

On Sat. April 8th., the congregation is planning a day to introduce ourselves to the neighborhood location of our new meeting place. Other guests will also be personally invited who have been a part of our 26 year presence already in Chemnitz, such as LST and campaign efforts, former members and others known to us. We plan the event to be a 2.5 hour afternoon program. We hope to meet many new people, especially those from around our building. If you would like to participate, plan a trip over the pond to be with us!

We have already had a few curious folks come by and visit. Most recently, a lady from the area there came to the English Bible Study. Its neat to see that some people still have curiosity, and willing to check things out. Regina and I were at ABSS, and were not there that night.

Over the 20 years of Regina's employment and leadership roles at MSHD, she has come to know a lot of "clients". She has helped many deal with aspects of all kinds of addictions and all the problems that associate themselves with that. She relates personally with all of these people, but naturally on various levels. Some of them become much closer to her personally than others do. We all know how that works. With some she has close ties that remain even when they are handed over to other workers or become a part of other care givers. She has affected a lot of lives in positive ways.

One lady has been a friend and client for many years. She has two sons; the older one who has a regular job out of town and less contact with his mom, and the younger 19 year old who has lived at home with his mom, and taken on the load of caring for her as she was moving into late stages of cancer. Regina was always impressed with the understanding and stick-to-it-ness of this younger son. We visited the lady in the hospital a couple of weeks ago. She later was moved to Hospice. The son called recently, and told Regina that if she wanted to visit her again that this might be the last possible time. Regina went there. Later we found out that the lady did die that evening after Regina's visit. Her funeral is coming up, and Regina will plan to be there for that.

Regina and I wish you all the very best in the New Year. It is beginning already very rambunctiously. I think that change is in the wind.

Much love, Rob and Regina

"Before there was ever any law, there was the Trinity and irrepressible life and fellowship and joy of the Triune God. The logic of the universe and of human existence flows out of this relationship. The eternal purpose of this Triune God is not to place us under law and turn us into religious legalists, but to include us in their relationship, to give us a place in their shared life and fellowship and joy. If we must speak in terms of law, then we must say that the law of this universe is the primal decision of the Father, Son and Spirit to give humanity a place in the Trinitarian life. This eternal purpose to adopt humanity, to include us in the Trinitarian circle, predates all things and is the proper framework, or the logic, within which we are to understand creation, the Fall of Adam, Israel, the coming of Jesus Christ and his death, resurrection and ascension."