

Greetings from across the Pond!

We hope and pray that you have had a great holiday time. We are also aware that many of you have again helped us financially to live here. As I see the unraveling of the whole system stateside, and also in the rest of the world, we very much realize the sacrifice you have made to support us here. We have not done very well keeping our thanx flowing like we should have.



For New Years, Mario and his new wife Tonia were able to be with us, along with Regina's mom. It was all very relaxing, and full of eating and great conversation and fellowship. As is traditional, many from the Chemnitz cong., along with several visitors, met together to see the New Year in. It always impresses me that so many young folks are there, all on their own free will, when there are so many other choices that they could make to party the New Year in. As I get older, I learn to appreciate and cherish the good decisions others make. Making good, caring and unselfish decisions has much, much to do with the advancement of Gods Kingdom on earth, as these are related to the heart, and are the essence of how God's Spirit leads in our lives.

On Jan. 5th., I, along with about 15 others, met in Cologne for an annual 5 day seminar. Bill Wilson, along with the elders and members of that congregation,



sponsor a simple but meaningful program. This year, Dr. Keith Stanglin, a professor at Harding University, taught on the roots of Christianity in Europe; specifically the use of Creeds and the various values given them as historical authority in the general spread of the Good News over the years. Even their use by the Stone-Campbell movement was discussed. Yes, churches of Christ

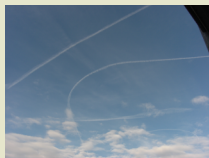
have made use of creeds too, even though we might be unwilling to admit that. The late Cecil Hook often made that observation about us decades ago; one of the reasons making him quite unpopular amongst many believers. But

it has helped me ever so much to just accept these facts about us, and not spend time, and my integrity, denying these, and similar, truths. Keith made a subject that could be quite boring into something very interesting and well-presented.



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Regina wound up spending 10 days in the hospital in January. As I was on the last leg of my return train trip from the above seminar, she called on my cell phone and said that she had called the ambulance due to a very strong dizzy spell with high blood pressure and racing pulse. It really frightened her. Nothing organic was found as cause during her stay. I think that she learned to recognize during this time how the body deals with stress and strain. As a firm believer in Rom. 8:28, always applying it to all areas in life, I feel the simple rest did the most for her, above and beyond any treatments and tests. We are thankful for all things. Many of you have known about her stay, and all the prayers and support thoughts have been truly appreciated.

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We were both later pretty sick with the wicked colds that seem to be affecting everyone; those who have had “shots” and those who haven’t. People have been very un-naturally sick, in my opinion. I watch man-made clouds being formed in the sky. What is in them will be breathed, drunk, or eaten. If you want more of my thoughts on that, please ask me about this when we get home. We are planning, Lord willing to be there in early April, until early May. We hope to see many of you then.



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A treasured couple of hours were spent with my Nepalese friend in a neighboring city where he works. He has almost finished his doctorate in mathematics. I had not seen him for a long time, and had truly missed him. So, during a phone call, we made the spontaneous decision to get together that evening for supper. He is so easy to discuss matters with.



Before he and I ate supper, we toured the National Geographic’s Outstanding Photos of 2008 traveling exhibit on display at the train station. In the Sports photo section, I noticed a shocking picture catching a basketball player in the act of gouging the eyes of an opponent with his fingers. The accompanying text said that, thankfully, no permanent damage had been done. But I was further horrified to see that the one doing the gouging was wearing a Pepperdine University uniform.

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I have my work cut out for part of the summer. One of the American families has recently left Dresden. The other family is planning to be stateside in July, just after the Let’s Start Talking 6-week program ends. So, at the request of a German leader, I

am planning to spend time in Dresden for the month helping with follow-up. Although many Germans there can speak very good English, the expectation is that native English speakers will be the ones following-up. So, I am very glad to help.

My favorite retreat, ABSS, took place recently. This year the format was somewhat different. It involved small group sessions dealing with conflict and counseling. I cannot tell you how much this was needed. It was simply too little time-wise. Two ACU professors, a family counselor-trained missionary in Germany, along with Bill Wilson; all four brought useful, well-thought-through considerations. Jon Galloway, Scotland, brought refreshing thoughts from deep in the Genesis account.



Let me say very seriously that if I felt the need for counseling services in Europe, I can count on one hand those of whom I would consider potentially helpful in the counseling area. Some of those would be in our own religious circle, and others not. I find it a really sad situation that we don't have more such Christian service to offer. It isn't that we need more "professionalism", we need more people-oriented hearts who can ask simple but relevant questions; being observant, and helping steer people to see their own need for, and get a grip on, a change in their thoughts and feelings. To learn to "back down" in their own assessment of things stops cold a huge basis of conflict. Root reasons of problems can then be unearthed and dealt with.



Paul Brazle, from Belgium has organized this event for years. Many thanx, Paul, for all the effort. It means a lot to me, and also to many others I am sure. I wish that more German leaders would take part. Some recent events have only confirmed my judgment of this need for understanding in the areas studied this year.

Much love to each of you. Again, many thanx for your continued support in all ways of us here. We would love to have visitors, but that doesn't look so hopeful.

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