

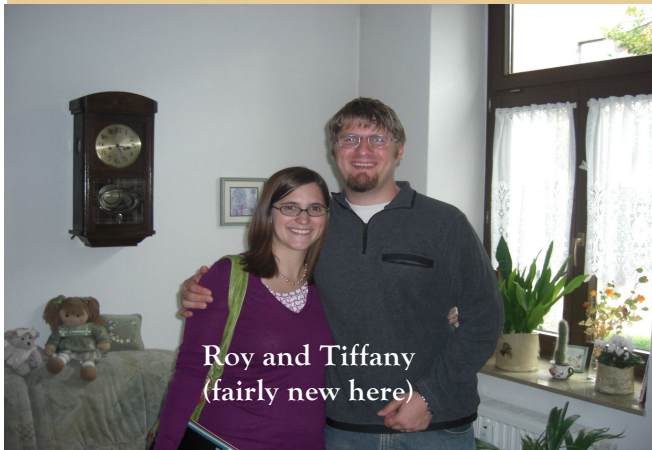
Rob and Regina's Newsletter

September - October 2009

Greetings from Germany! We are enjoying Fall weather, but are noticing the quickly darkening days and longer nights. But that is just the way it is, and we learn to enjoy this time too!

I taught the mid-week study a couple of times in Oelsnitz during Sept. In the Lost Son parable, I taught about the younger son. The older son had the same problem too, but from the other direction. He diligently and religiously obeyed his father, but also had no relationship with him. As you read, you can detect the results of that situation; no joy, but jealousy at the return of his brother. Maybe we find ourselves right there in his place. Both sons would get their inheritance. The father desired relationship, but neither son did. Neither lust nor obedience provided the LIFE the Father sought with his sons. Salvation isn't the only issue for us. Something vital was still missing; a life here on earth in relationship.

Are you one of the uncountable numbers who have tried to live obediently to God and never known Him relationally as the perfect Father?



Roy and Tiffany
(fairly new here)

Locally, we have some changes. Sara is now with us. She was part of the LST team last year, and decided to come back to help with follow-up. That is a real need to fill. We appreciate her including Chemnitz in her life plans!

Joseph is also with us. He is teaching English at a language school, and doing translation work; English, French and German. He had lived in another part of Germany, but had visited Chemnitz, and decided that he would like to move here! He and our Mario have been friends for a few years already, as they did not live so far from each other in the west side of Germany.

May both these newcomers find rich reward in being here and sharing their lives with others!

Mark and Karen have been here for a time now, but have recently moved to Leipzig. Several people are already known in that area. May God's hand stir many hearts to recognize Him through this couple.

Things we have observed: Often, dark valleys must be gone through to see God's love and light. Two important truths: 1. God's hand is always moving close by, with His desire that we reach towards Him, and 2. His love is unending! It doesn't vary. WE are the ones who think that it varies, or feel at times that He is far away or doesn't care.

„For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.“
Ps. 86:13 NRSV

King David certainly discovered these incredible truths, coming to know God and His mercies so personally by always turning to Him despite dark valleys. And wow, who hasn't benefited from his experiences revealed through his writings!

Zinnowitz, where Regina and family vacationed in 1956.



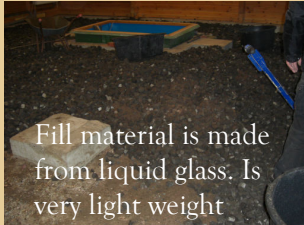
Regina and I had enjoyed the Baltic sea so much for a long weekend last year that we decided to do the same again this year. Although Fall was already in the air, the weather was perfect. The water was 59 degrees. I stayed in a few minutes, but preferred the 74 degree air temperature. Adding to the enjoyment: excellent local fish on the menu each evening.

Our building in Oelsnitz has suffered a big problem; the floor joists have rot-



Part of sidewall damage

ted out. When we built that log house in 1994, the building contractor (no longer existing) did not mention anything about needing ventilation and special protections in the area between the ground and joists, and little was provided.



Fill material is made from liquid glass. Is very light weight

We have now pulled out the entire flooring system and plan to fill in with cement. It will then be like a house on a cement pad. A few people have come around to discuss and obtain details to prepare some estimates for the repair.



Rotted main carrier sunk into cement support column

A total estimate at the moment is around 20K euros, or 30K dollars. Lots of people have put in some days of hard labor. But it has been good exercise and fellowship!

Our main German language Men's retreat has just finished. The main theme was "Agape". From a report of the retreat, I gathered that Agape is not about feeling or emotions, but more impersonal, and involves just being patient; enduring everything and everyone, and doing stuff to help them all.

While sounding noble, and certainly parts of that view being a part of Agape (Eph.4:1-3), I have often questioned if it is really a complete view. Does that view really encompass or express the totality of the perfect love of a perfect father? Can we even judge or assess such love with such terms? Is it just about "doing stuff" patiently?

An impersonal view of God is actually the view worshippers have in many eastern religions, positioning God as unreachable and untouchable. Jesus is who makes what is SEEN as impersonal and cold into what is very personal; God on earth among people; warm, up-close and perhaps most of all, living! That's personal!

Agape?

A very good dealing with this is in the book "the Shack" in the chapter entitled "Here comes da judge". In a dramatic dialogue with the judge (one involving having to judge his own children!), Mack moved beyond knowledge and performance based "love" into a much deeper, agape-based love towards his own family; one far deeper and more personal than he had ever considered possible. Through that, he came to a deeper understanding of God's own living and warm personal love for His own children, including Mack himself (and you and me)! God's Agape is FAR warmer, and FAR more encompassing and personal than some kind of unfeeling, unstable, just tolerating, connection or even a deeper brotherly fondness.

This is very Good News! May it make your day, as it does mine!

And,... about the retreat: a brother who was there, and who would have the same concern, said that lots of people shared a much fuller understanding of Agape with him too! I am glad to hear that, and makes me want to finally return to the men's retreat again!

We are thankfully well. I have told you in the past about suffering from gout. My doctor here told me that I would have to be on Allopurinol for the rest of my life. And yes, when I did not take the stuff, the pain would return. I feared he was correct. However, through some events with him, his agenda became clear. "I came to my senses", and realized that I would have to solve the problem myself. I don't go to him anymore, and do not take the stuff, but the inflammation hasn't returned!

The fix? I am dealing with getting my Vit. D levels in order. D is the master in dealing with good and bad inflammations in the body. Although available in other ways, D is best generated by the various forms of the sun's rays striking the body.

Your Vit D level is a very big deal, meaning directly affecting your health, and one you should not ignore. The blood value check is 25(OH)D. There is even a home test variation available now in the US. According to those working with this stuff, a blood value of 50 ng/ml is the target number, not the lower range values shown on the blood test result paper. Dr. John Cannell (vitamindcouncilDOTcom), Dr. Mercola (mercolaDOTcom) and Mike Adams (www.naturalnewsDOTcom) sites all have lots of info. All 3 have free newsletters to help you be aware by educating yourself, and thus making informed choices leading away from sickness and disease.

Dr. Cannell discovered something old of interest. In the DDR years (1954-1989), the East German babies all received shockingly large doses of Vit. D at 6, 12, and 18 months! There have been no reports of overdose found. No doubt, that is one way they stayed well and healthy.

Enough sunshine is hard to get here, as our latitude is the same as wintry Winnipeg, Manitoba: 50 degrees north. So, they were "vaccinated", but with a very healthy cocktail!



Visitors from Vienna

A few more notes from here. We had a weekend visit from a Vienna studies group; i.e. students from Oklahoma Christian doing a semester in Austria. During this time, they visit quite a few mission points of interest. Arriving Friday PM, they spent their Saturday morning sorting and packing almost a ton of donated clothes for an annual trip to Bulgaria in November. Then the afternoon hosted an indoor (in a gym due to rain) sports time with them and readers from recent LST and campaign programs. Regina and I kept two of the students with us. Visits like this mean so much to us, and also to the group, without a doubt. In my opinion, everyone grows towards a sometimes elusive relational bases with each other, and towards God. And that is what we all really need, and what we try to develop.

Regina just went through the experience of a root canal. Hopefully a low grade pain in an upper tooth will have now ceased. Their group just held an open house of their "new" facility. Lots of visitors from other social works and some city officials joined many of the usual folks for a few speeches, house tours and a sandwich buffet.



Regina's coworkers at their Open house



Their new address

As I add this note on Oct. 15th, it is snowing a little bit outside. In places around town, there have been some accidents today due to ice and snow, with two cars landing in a pond.

A very late development: I have decided to take up an offer from my sponsoring congregation to make a between-the-usual-visit visit back home if I felt the need to do that. Regina supports the thought. I will strongly miss having her along, but we both understand that we can trust the Father through it all, regardless of what comes. And that is just what counts!

I should fly very soon after you receive this, and be home for about 5 weeks. Please contact me if need be at my usual email address.

So, that's it for now from the east side of the Atlantic. See you again in early January.

Much love to you all,

Robert and Regina

PS - A friend recently described it to me this way during a discussion of God's incredible love:

Email: robertlewis@web.de

he honestly confessed to wondering how much he really loves his own little daughter at times. He was trying to do some work at home for the office. The daughter (the Germans have a great way to put this!) had just “clawed his last nerve”, and he kind of hit the roof. After coming back to earth, and quieting down, his little girl looked up at him with her tear-filled brown eyes and said “But daddy, I love you anyway.”!

No wonder Jesus respected the little children so very much! God often uses them as almost perfect and untarnished mirrors towards understanding; reflecting how really turned around we ourselves can get things as adults.