

WHITE NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2006

November 2006

Dear Friends and Family,

We've just been through two great American-tradition periods: Halloween and Thanksgiving. In the newsletter for his work in the French world, Doyle Kee notes that after having done heavy promotion in the stores for Halloween in the past five years, the Swiss have dropped it as not profitable. Well, the French must have made the same decision, as the same thing has happened here. The pumpkins and masks and diverse scary things were not in the stores this year; instead, the merchants went directly into Christmas advertising.

As for Thanksgiving, the French don't celebrate it, of course, since it is a purely American holiday; and Pam and I haven't celebrated it officially for years, as we try to stay away from traditions that would emphasize our "American-ness". But we are certainly thankful, every day, for so many blessings that the Lord gives us. Among those are all of you, who think about us, pray for us, support us financially and encourage us in so many ways. We hope your Thanksgiving holiday went well, and that you were able to be together as families (which, for me, was always the best part of that particular holiday). Even after 30 years in France, I still feel a tug on my heart when Thanksgiving rolls around, and I remember sitting around the table, eating Turkey (or chicken), and telling jokes with the gathered family.

I want you to know that Danielle, the member whom I told you about in the last letter, and who was so upset with me, is back. She has admitted having over-reacted and seems to have understood the mistake she was making. Your prayers (and ours) for her have been answered positively.

In the middle of this month, we had a round table discussion on the subject of "humility". About 20 members were present for quite a good exchange of ideas and encouragement. I know that we were all humbler on leaving than on arriving. Here's a good quote someone made: "Humility is being proud of God." So many good things were said, and I could see the members exhorting each other in such a positive way. Isn't this one of the reasons that God placed us in a family?

Also this month, we had an afternoon program for the Church and our contacts entitled: "Voyage into the soul of Narnia". Max Dauner from Marseille presented a multimedia program which used the recent "World of Narnia" film as a backdrop for explaining the plan of God. Max went through the film practically scene by scene, showing what the author, C. S. Lewis, was trying to say about the Gospel story, including — and especially — the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. For this activity, we sent out and handed out hundreds of invitations, but only one contact attended, so that was disappointing. But most of our members were present, which was good. Even though it is hard to get the friends and neighbors to come to our meeting place, we will continue to propose to them such presentations of the Gospel message.

Speaking of friends and neighbors: one of our neighbors, when I invited him for the umpteenth time to one of our latest meetings, told me to persevere, and that my perseverance would produce its fruit. I thought that was a strange thing to be coming out of his mouth, since he has never crossed the threshold of our meeting place. But I took it as an indication that his heart is not entirely closed and that perhaps the Word is working on his heart (he is a "believer" of sorts); so we will continue to invite him and talk to him as often as possible, until the last reserves break down. Please pray for Vincent Bastide and his wife, Thérèse. They are good people.

Last weekend, seven of the men from the Lyon Church attended the annual French Workers' retreat, held in a retreat center about an hour from Lyon. There were 33 persons in attendance, from France, Switzerland and Belgium. We talked about so many things: our songbook (which is out of print); different projects under way among the assemblies; the development of leaders in the congregations; the summer camp; the

work in other French-speaking countries; different ministries that have been or are being developed, etc. And we heard some excellent studies on the theme of "the man after God's own heart". Several of these brethren are well into their fourth decade on the French field, persisting and teaching in spite of the large cultural and spiritual difficulties of a field that has not been the most receptive. I admire them all, young and old, as they continue to work confidently, knowing that "the Lord will give the increase". Since I've been asking you to pray for different people, please add these men (and their wives) to your list: pray for the workers in the French fields.

We had a good visit with Brad Stinson this month. Brad is in tele-communications and was in Europe on business. He is my brother Wayne's son-in-law, the husband of my niece (are you following me?). I have to tell you this: when I introduced him to the Church on Sunday morning, I called him "my niece's son-in-law". We all had a good laugh about that one. I really "mixed the paintbrushes," as the French would say.

The news from our children is good. We especially enjoyed Tess' visit, which overlapped from the end of October into the beginning of November. We hope to see Tia and family at Christmas. And we don't really know when we will be able to see the others.

Pam and I are feeling better, though I am still coughing some. Such a pesky business this stuff has been! But we're not getting any younger, and I guess it shows. Not to worry, though. The moral is great, the weather is still beautiful and we are so happy to be working for the Master in this place! We send you all our best and our prayer for your safety and happiness as the year moves toward its close.

May the Lord bless you, today!

Sincerely,

Charles and Pam