

White Newsletter April, 2007

Dear Christian Family,

The remarkably warm weather of the winter has now extended into the spring. We're breaking records here. I'm wondering, though, why global warming is pointed out as the reason, especially when they say, for example, that we've had the warmest April since 1922; was it global warming then? Though it is obvious that we need to assess and stop the damage we are doing to the planet, it is equally obvious that Nature has its cycles, a detail we tend to forget. Well, so much for my ecological statement for this month!

We're in the midst of presidential elections here. In the first round, two candidates were chosen among the twelve who were running; the president will be elected from those two in the second round, which will take place on the 6th of May. Please pray that this nation will choose a wise, conservative believer in God. France is such a pagan place, in so many ways. The secular humanist philosophy — now sometimes called "modernity" — reigns, and the population is largely closed to authentic faith, in favor of the kind of formalist, ritualistic religion in which one can participate with little or no actual commitment. That has been our challenge from the beginning. A good president could turn that around, by calling the people to faith, thus laying an "official" foundation for the opening of the French heart to the Gospel. God is all-powerful; we are asking Him to use this new president for His own good purposes.

On the 9th of this month (which was a national holiday), we held our 7th annual Church retreat, this year on the theme: "God will take care of you". We held a morning session in our meeting place, hearing exhortations from four of our young men. Then we had a potluck. Then in the afternoon, we went to the Hendrix place and held some lengthy discussions outside, where we could spread out on their large, open lawn. All of this was punctuated with praying and singing. We also played a couple of Bible games. The goal of this activity is to grow together, to get to know each other better, and to examine in an informal setting different challenges to our faith. It is one of the highlights of the year and is well attended by the brethren.

Our next planned outreach is coming up next week: a seminar by Greg Young of the Marseilles congregation. We've sent the invitations to our contacts and are now inviting friends and neighbors. I'll fill you in on that activity next month.

This month I taught the last class in the current session on preparation of elders and deacons. Most of our men attended this class faithfully over the several months, and several expressed an interest in working toward being elders one day. I have told you in the past that we have three who are excellent candidates. In just a few more years, they will be ready, in my considered opinion. Please pray specifically for Ekel Jean, Orès Michel and Christophe Varoquier. The next phase of this session will be several classes on leading in worship. We'll not finish those this spring, so they will be continued in the fall, before we move into some specific preacher training. Most of our men already participate in worship, and several (the three mentioned above) already preach. So we are working on an established foundation, in order to improve our worship and service and to prepare these men (and others) for their roles in the maturing Church in Lyon.

This month, we got to see our good friends, Dick and Anne Carter from Scotland, who have bought and are rebuilding a house in the Burgundy region of France. They were there for a couple of weeks working, and we were able to visit them one day. They were accompanied by their daughter Emma, now Mrs. McCready. We met Emma when she was an "au-pair" in Lyon more than 10 years ago, and our friendship

with all the Carters has been growing since. The parents will be retiring this year from their respective jobs (he in education, she in medicine), so we'll be seeing more of them.

Last week, we had the pleasure of the visit of some other Carters, too: Chad and Amy Carter (and their son Noah), members of the four-family team presently working among the Dagara tribes in Burkina Faso. The Carters spent several months in Lyon in 2003-2004 learning French, and it was during that time that we got close to them. The work among the Dagara has produced several hundred Christians in the past three years, for which we praise the Lord. The four couples there, all of whom spent several months in Lyon learning French, work well and wisely together. Chad Carter spoke to the Lyon Church, amazing us with his stories of the work among the Dagari. The ties between this assembly and the brethren in that far-off African country were strengthened, and we look forward to other times of mutual sharing of experiences. Pam and I would like to visit the Dagara work one day, but it would have to be during the coolest (the least hot) time of the year, because of my fibromyalgia. And Pam's knees wouldn't take much moving about on uneven surfaces. But we would still like to go. Perhaps it can be worked out. We shall see!

Most of you don't know Golda McMullen. She and her husband Ivan (now deceased) supported and encouraged us for many years in this work. On our reporting visits, Pam and I and the girls would always go see them on their farm in Ohio. Golda would fix a great meal and Ivan would always hand me a check. Golda has done the same, since Ivan's passing. I'm telling you all of this to say that Golda, whose heart is like her name, turned 100 years old on the 25th of this month of April. We were able to talk with her briefly on the phone, and she sounded like she always does: sweet and sincere. Though you may not know her, ask the Lord to bless this wonderful lady, won't you?

Our girls seem to be doing well. Each has her own particular set of circumstances to deal with, as we did at their age. But each has her faith set in the Lord, and of that we are proud. I suppose that when all is "said and done", those three fervent Christian young ladies are the best thing that Pam and I have been able to give to this poor, miserable world.

There was a wicked virus about Lyon last month, and Pam and I both caught it. We managed to maintain our working activities, though. My potential retina problem, mentioned last month, has been confirmed: I have a tear in the retina of my right eye (for the second time) and will have a laser treatment soon to repair it.

Such is life in Lyon at present. Thanks for being a part of it in a concrete way. We thank the Lord daily for you, and for your continual prayers on our behalf. We can be strong, because He is our Father and you are our brothers and sisters!

Sincerely,

Charles and Pam