

Charles and Pam White's Monthly Report from Lyon, France



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Strange thing. The blackbird that usually sings to me in the morning hasn't been back since I mentioned him in my last letter. (I certainly hope he was not offended.)

I am always amazed at the rapidity with which I find myself right back here at the end of each month writing this newsletter. It seems only yesterday (as they say) that I was last with you. But in that super-brief time, several great things have occurred here. Let me tell you about them.

On the 13th of the month, I had the privilege of baptizing Julien Nocun into Christ. We did the baptism at the regular Tuesday night Bible study hour, and so had quite a few witnesses. Julien is a young man of about 22 years of age with whom Arlin Hendrix and I have studied for the past couple of years. His faith has grown a lot during that time, as well as his understanding of biblical teaching. Though he has a long way to go (don't we all?), he has now definitely committed himself to the Lord's way and the Lord's will. He is a highly intelligent young man, currently studying literature, with a special interest in computer sciences. We are happy to have him as a new brother, and we look forward to growing together with him. Please do thank the Lord for Julien, and pray for his spiritual development.

There was another birth as well. A third child was born to Orès and Antoinette Michel. Orès is one of the men we are preparing for the eldership, and Antoinette will be a great elder's wife. Their newborn, who will go by the interesting name of "Christmyrne", was welcomed by her big brother Vick Emmanuel and her big sister Christgerny. We are expecting two more arrivals of this sort in the next few months. I'll let you know when each one makes his/her appearance!

In the last letter, I told you that we would be having a one-day church retreat in the beginning of April. That retreat went very well, as we heard several excellent studies and participated in some good group discussion. We had about half the members present, which is not really good enough, obviously. Those who did not attend missed out on some special one-another moments of communion. So, those who were present have given themselves the job of convincing those who were not that they should come next time. These annual retreats (we've done 10 now) are designed to help us know each other better and serve the Lord better ... together.

At the end of the month, we had the visit of the Chorale Harmonie from the Marseilles Church of Christ. This group, made up of teachers and students of the CEM ("Christians in Missions") school and some members of the congregation, makes a yearly tour to sing about their faith in God. For several years,

now, we have made arrangements for them to sing in local Catholic Churches, because this is a common venue for such events as well as an open door for many who would not — for the life of them — set foot in our meeting place (which would be too small, anyway). The Chorale sang one evening in our neighborhood of Villeurbanne, with about 35 persons present (a bit disappointing), and one evening in Meximieux, which is out of town, with about 85 persons present. They sang magnificently and were lauded afterward by the Catholic representatives present not only for their beautiful singing, but also for the obvious fervor of their love of the Lord. The Gospel was presented in song, in the middle of a great witness to God's love and power.

Our class on Deuteronomy is going well. This book is filled with vital principles that apply well to the modern Church. I'm thinking that is the way the Lord intended it. Thus, the teaching, the warnings, even the judgments that were so pertinent to Israel's situation 15 centuries before Christ are also alive and meaningful for today's Church. It is a fascinating study, at least for me. I'm learning more than anyone else!

Since we got back home, Pam has still been quite involved in arrangements and details concerning her parents' recent move to assisted living and her sister's current situation. It is not easy to stay on top of such changes from this distance, and the time difference complicates things quite a bit, since the best time to talk to folks over there is the time our day has ended! Pam is pretty strapped with that and with all of our own financial bookwork (income tax, etc.) built up during the 8 months of her absence.

In my March letter, I mentioned a government agency that has decided to tax us twice on our apartment. That concerned the studio that we bought for my office, and which we got at a really good price. Apparently too good, say the tax people, who have decided 1) to tax us according to the higher price the studio is worth (according to them), and not on what we paid for it, and 2) to impose a three-year late fee, because I didn't pay the extra tax for three years after the purchase (which was the time the government had to notify me of this situation). Interesting logic. We were able to get the tax reduced somewhat because of some water damage that had to be repaired in the studio, and the agent even reduced the late fee by half. But the total is still several hundred Euros. (I'm reading Romans 13 a lot these days!)

Franck Pittaluga, our oldest member, has just had a pretty serious operation. He is home now but still suffering quite a bit. Please pray for him. We have other members in different physical straits, and we ask you to pray for them, as well. Several of our members are also traveling at this moment, in Guadeloupe or as far away as India. We know the Lord accompanies them and we hope we can all be back together again soon.

Our children seem to be doing well. We are glad that they all love and serve our exalted Lord. Pam and I are so grateful to all of you who have been so faithful in support over the years, and you who have just begun to help in this work.

We look forward to the arrival of good friend and faithful brother Richard Wolfe in just a few days. I will tell you about that next time!

May the Lord bless you, today!

Sincerely,

Charles and Pam