

October 2009

Dear Christian Family,

This has been an interesting, challenging month in many ways. Mixed in with the great joys of this month (see below), there has been the pain of being misunderstood; there has been the hurt of seeing an accomplished goal belittled; there has been what I considered justifiable anger and unjustifiable discouragement. It is not important that I go into the reasons for all of this. Just know that I appreciate you all very much, and that I covet your prayers for my family and myself. These ups and downs happen here all the time, as they do, surely, in your life also; I just don't often mention them in the newsletter (!).

In October, we had our fourth baptism of 2009. On the 18th, I had the privilege of baptizing Constance Varoquier, daughter of members Christophe and Verline Varoquier. Constance is 13 years old and a very mature, intelligent young lady. Her parents, who are becoming "pillars" in the Church here, have taught her well over the years. They are rightfully full of joy at her decision — and so are we all. Rejoice with us! The visitors we had that Sunday were able to witness a precious moment in the growth of this family in Christ.

The 18th of the month was also a "Visitors' Day" Sunday. Several times a year (well, it depends on the year), we do a Visitors' Day with special emphasis on getting neighbors and friends to come with us to Church. This time we had five visitors, one of whom was present for the first time at our services. The subject of the day was "Christian naiveté". I approached this subject from several angles : 1) the naiveté evident in history, when "Christians" believed that they should persecute and even kill in the name of Christ ; 2) the naiveté of those who refuse the text of the Bible but accept other texts of Antiquity much less attested by extant copies ; 3) the naiveté of those who cannot see that the universe has a Designer ; 4) the naiveté that the world thinks it sees in true Christians because they seek humility instead of pride, gentleness instead of force, patience instead of irritation, service instead of domination, etc. We had a potluck meal after the service. It was a full day, and the baptism of Constance made it extra special. We hope God was glorified, that our members were edified and that our visitors can say that the Lord was among us.

This month, two of our teenagers, not yet Christians, participated in a campaign effort organized for young people by the Geneva congregation in the town of Albacete, Spain. They worked from early to late for several days, distributing tracts, singing in the streets, and attending evening conferences. These two young men had a very positive experience that we hope will move them steadily along the road to their own decision to give their lives to Christ. I hope to have good news to send you in the near future about that.

This month, I published my 4th book, entitled *UPRIGHT : Traits of the Righteous Heart*. It represents a feeble attempt to describe some of the qualities that God expects to find in those who wish to please him. And about how pleasing him is only possible because he

is gracious and forgiving. On the "authoring" side, there is something indescribable about holding in your hands a book you have written and which is finally — finally — done. In fact, I finished the manuscript four years ago, but it has taken me all this time to get it published. I just hope it can be helpful to someone. Writing it certainly helped me. If you would like a copy, it can be ordered from: J. C. Choate Publications, P. O. Box 72, Winona, MS 38967.

In just three weeks, I will return to the States, Lord willing, to begin our every-third-year personal report to supporting congregations. If you have been following these letters, you know that this is the trip originally planned for September-October. You also know that, when I arrive in Colorado Springs, Pam will already have been there with Tess for a couple of months. Pam and I plan to do a first month of travel together; then we will return to Colorado for Christmas with the family. Then I will travel alone during part of January. Then, Pam and I will again travel together in February, before returning home to Lyon on the 3rd of March. Please do pray for us, and for Tess, and for our entire family during this time. I will attach the itinerary to this letter, so that you can follow us if you wish. I'll admit that I am a bit apprehensive about all this moving about, which will create some physical stress that our bodies have been finding harder to handle. But, at the same time, we are really excited about seeing many of you, and we certainly look forward to telling you personally about the work you are supporting in France. As you can see in this letter, things are happening in Lyon !

I must tell you about this: In 1985, I received a letter from the missions coordinator of a supporting Church telling me that that Church would be terminating their support of our work (we were then in Grenoble). To their credit, they gave us over six months notice; also to their credit, they helped us quite a lot during the approximately 30 months they contributed. We were very grateful for their support and encouragement. But I had seen the writing on the wall, as I had been receiving letters asking "how many" of this and that I had done during each month. Numbers were becoming the issue. So, when the termination letter arrived, I was not at all surprised. But, just last week, I received a call from that same missions coordinator. (You understand that I won't be giving names.) Remember, this is almost a quarter-century later. He told me he had been on several mission efforts outside of the USA and that he had understood that "numbers are not what is important". This man, once pretty much against this work because of its slow progress, actually apologized to me over the phone. I told him there was no need, and there wasn't, as I had certainly not been offended by that decision so long ago. But I'm glad that he understands today, and I so much appreciated his willingness to tell me he is sorry. It took a godly person to do that, don't you think?

The Church of the Lord is growing, one soul at a time, whether it be in France or in the rest of the world. We plant and we water, and God gives the increase!

Thanks for reading me. May the Lord bless you, today!

Sincerely,

Charles and Pam