

Charles and Pam White
October 30, 2007

Dear Christian Brethren,

The other day, I celebrated (internally and personally, but celebrated just the same) the 49th anniversary of my baptism into Christ. It was a day of self-examination and scrutiny. And, as I looked into my heart, I was not always pleased with what I saw. So much progress still to be made, in so many areas! I suppose we all have those particular "zones" that seems to elude our best efforts at improvement. Not only that, but the Lord sees right to the bottom of our soul, and His eye is even more requiring than our own, for He "searches all hearts, and understands every intent" (1 Chr. 28.9). But, then, His love is also so much deeper. As I grow older, I am learning more and more about the wonderful compassions and grace of the loving Father and His interceding Son.

I arrived home on the 10th of October and Pam came in just a couple of days ago, on the 27th. Whereas I had some minor problems getting back because of bad weather in Paris, Pam had the time of her life, so to speak. As many times as we have traveled in and out of France, we have never been caught in one of the French's infamous transport strikes. This time it is an airline strike (still going on as I write this), and it is, as the say, a looloo (wonder where that expression comes from?). Pam was traveling Colorado Springs–Chicago–Paris–Lyon. In Chicago, she found that her Chicago–Paris flight had been cancelled. They put her on a Chicago–New York–Paris. In Paris, she arrived at 8:00 in the morning to find absolute chaos in the airport, as the strike was taking place on the day of departures for an important French holiday weekend. Crowds milling about, endless lines, total confusion. After standing in a couple of lines to find out what to do, she finally got in the line she needed (though she was never sure until she got to the front, three hours later). Her Paris–Lyon had been cancelled, of course. The other flights to Lyon were unsure, said the agent. So they put her on a train to Lyon and she arrived here about 12 hours after her arrival that morning in Paris. Her luggage is melted into the piles of bags that must encumber the Paris airport luggage area. If indeed they ever arrived there. An agent in Lyon has now told us they don't come up on the computer, which probably means they never left the States. So, here we go We are confident they'll show up somewhere, someday. But for the moment, we are rejoicing in being back together and we thank the Lord for that (Rom. 8.28).

Well, I'm supposed to be telling you about the Lyon work (though the above certainly has its place in that context).

Here's something I think you will find interesting. I had hoped it could be concluded so that I could tell you "the rest of the story" here, but that will have to wait for the next time. One couple in the Church here is having problems with their relationship. One result of that has been that neither has been to worship for the last nine months. We have tried several ways to encourage them to come back: multiplied personal visits, numerous cards, many phone calls, etc. Last week, I suggested that, since they aren't coming to Church, the Church should go to them. My suggestion was that our Friday evening prayer meeting should be held at this couple's house — without telling them that we were coming! Several of the brethren convinced me that we should at least give them the choice, and so a brother called them, and, barring a cancellation — which, with this couple, is always possible — we should be going over there this week to pray with them and encourage them to come back. I'm hoping that this show of intense interest on the part of concerned brethren will be the spark that this couple needs. It is, in a way, a last-ditch effort that we are asking the Lord to bless. I ask you to pray also. I'll let you know how this all turns out.

In our current class on Judges, I have had to remind the group that the characters do not act in Christian ways, for an important reason: they did not live under the Christian covenant. If you are wondering why that point was made, do read the Judges again. The stories are fascinating, the lessons are profound (Rom. 15:4), and

the blood really flows, sometimes. One of our members was quite shocked by it in our last study. We'll be talking soon about the differences between the two covenants. God, meanwhile, does not change.

In our last meeting of the brothers, there was a very long discussion about evangelism. (Remember that we are trying to train the brethren to think independently and to take initiatives.) Several ideas were proposed, aside from the usual one of simply sharing our faith with friends and neighbors. I was pleased to see how high a priority it is for the brethren, and how each is personally committed to be involved in it. One brother even proposed to put a sign in his apartment window "advertising" the Church. As it is normally illegal to do that sort of thing in France without prior permission from the building managers and the city, the others encouraged him to take the legal steps necessary. No word yet on what he has found out. The same brother routinely goes out in the streets and approaches people in public, to share his faith. (How long since you did that?)

I saw the rheumatologist the other day (for the first time in 6 years) about my fibromyalgia. It is advancing but still certainly bearable. I just have to reduce speed and pace myself. Pam's feet are bothering her because of the way she has to adjust to one sore metal knee and one crunch-on-the-bone knee. We are such a bundle of aches (!). But we're happy and grateful to be able to serve the Lord in this place!

(By the way: while I was writing this, the lost luggage was delivered. The Lord has been duly thanked!)

Much love to all of you!

Charles and Pam