

Charles and Pam White
January 2009

Dear Christian Family,

We've had a highly unusual month. Here are some details:

In the beginning of January, Pam and I traveled down to Grenoble to study with a young widow and mother of two children. To make a long story short: she had lived in Strasbourg where there is a congregation and had recently moved to Grenoble. Daniel and Tamy Frérot, who work in Strasbourg, had already studied with this lady, whose name is Tania and who comes from a Moslem family. She did more study when arriving in Grenoble and, when ready for baptism, contacted the Frérots, who contacted us. After studying with her and seeing how ready she was to obey the Lord, we invited her up to Lyon on Sunday the 11th of January and I baptized her. As she does not have much in personal resources, the Church here then decided to fund one trip per month to Lyon, so that she can worship with us. The Strasbourg Church is also paying her way to Lyon once a month, so that makes twice a month. And, I will be going down once a month to visit and study further with her; so that makes three contacts with the Church per month. Tania is sincere and committed, and we want to encourage her as much as possible.

Now, there's more. Some of you remember that, in the days shortly after your conversion to Christ, all sorts of things seemed to go wrong, perhaps as the devil worked on trying to dissuade you from being faithful. It could be said that this is what is happening to Tania. Last Friday, she was in a crowded office with several people standing in line. A frustrated member of personnel angrily slammed the office door, under the pretext that he was not able to hear. Tania was standing by the door with her baby of eight months in her arms. The baby's fingers were in the door hinge. When it was slammed, the last phalange of one finger was completely crushed, to the point that it fell off entirely. Tania told me later that, as she is trained in emergency first aid, she knew what to do, though it was quite difficult because of her screaming baby and blood everywhere. She admitted, too, that she questioned God at that moment. I might also have asked him "why" (wouldn't you?). But her faith is strong and she is determined to cast this care on Him. The doctors were able to sew the phalange back on with a skin graft, but they only gave a 50% chance that the body will not reject it. Please pray for Tania and her two daughters, Sara (who is 14) and Lisa (the injured baby).

This month, we made the acquaintance of another young lady whose name is Virginie. She lives in Lyon and comes from an Assemblies of God background, but was brought to us by two members of the Church of Christ in Marseilles, who have known her for a time. We've only just gotten to meet her, and at present I'm not sure she is really interested in learning more about the Church of Christ and what we are trying to be and do. So, please pray for Virginie.

On a Sunday afternoon this month, I took two of the brothers from the Church to visit what is called the "Christian Assembly of Lyon," which is all that is left of the Boston movement here. They had been the Boston Church of Christ, then the International Church of Christ. After the collapse of the ICOC about 5 years ago, those who did not leave the movement have regrouped into various organizations. The leader of the present "Christian Assembly of Lyon" had been a member of our assembly before leaving to go to university, where he was taken in by the Boston movement, eventually becoming the leader of their Paris group and even what they called a Geographic Sector Leader. In other words, he was very high up. The present group has about 15 members and has become just a bit Pentecostal in their worship style, though they are not charismatic. They welcomed our visit and were very open with us. The leader then invited me to lunch a few days later. During the meal, he apologized to me for his arrogance and that of the Boston movement. He meant the apology for me personally as well as for the Lyon Church of Christ. He did not go so far as to say that his group would like to come back to the Church, and I suspect that, at this

point, that is not their desire. But he did say that they would like to visit us soon, so the door is open. Please join us in thanking the Lord for this opportunity. Please pray also that these erring folks can learn the hard lessons of their mistakes and come back fully to the Lord.

You'll remember that in recent months I have spoken to you about a couple having trouble being faithful to their commitment to the Lord. I told you about losing the husband entirely and fearing that we were losing the wife. After multiplied visits and phone calls to her with no change in her attitude (over a period of over two years), we decided to ask her to make her decision — for or against the Lord and His Church. Not having heard from her for three weeks afterward, we were working on the wording of a letter informing her that we considered she had cut herself off from the Church and that we could no longer consider her a member here. We were ready to send that letter when she called me and expressed — for the first time — that she really wanted to be faithful. Always before, she had said she really didn't really need the Church. Now she wanted to be faithful, but said she was not able. The "not able" intrigued me, so I explored that idea with her. It appears that her marital situation and financial situations (both disastrous) have finally led her to see her need for the Lord and His body, but she is financially — and emotionally — unable to travel the distance to Church to worship, even though she has a car. We offered to set up a system whereby someone would pick them up (the mother and two children) every Sunday morning. And the sisters of the Church are going to try to become more involved in the life of this young mother, now that she will allow them to do that. So, henceforth she'll be coming every Sunday and the rest of us will be participating in helping her be "able" to come to Church, until she can get her life and her finances on their feet. We're all glad to see Natalie and her children again !

In Lyon, many folks are in the throes of winter. If you think I've misspelled a word there, consider that I am speaking of gastrointestinal flu. Of course, that could be thought of as throes of winter, too, so I might just as well use that word. Other "throes" have been the intense cold and some rather unusual storms, like a flat wind in the southwest that felled lots of trees in that area, much like the same kind of storm that downed forests all over France on the eve of the new millennium, in 1999. There is also a lot of upper respiratory infection going around, of a wicked sort that puts people pretty much out of commission for a week or so. Pam and I have done quite well in the latter area, perhaps because of the vaccination we had in October and the continuing treatment we are taking to fend off respiratory complications.

Here's the latest family news: This month, Pam and I celebrated our 42nd wedding anniversary, spending a few days with our wonderful friends the Carters in Scotland. Tami and group in Colorado Springs are in the "throes" of winter; Tia and Jeff in Italy are expecting their second child in July; and Tess (also in Colorado Springs) is engaged to be married in August to Stephen Holechek! Tia will likely be having her baby in Lyon; then we'll be heading to Colorado Springs for the wedding just before beginning our tri-annual reporting trip in September and October.

Thank the Lord with us: for His goodness and mercy, for His love and faithfulness. May He bless you all, today!

Sincerely,

Charles and Pam