

February 2011

Dear Christian Family,

The December letter was written from the States because we were here for a wedding. The February one is being written from the States because we are here for an operation. Without going into all the details I have given you previously, suffice it to say that when Pam's insurance coverage in France was canceled by BCBS, her scheduled thyroid operation in Lyon had also to be canceled, and we quickly rescheduled for the States.

And it was a good thing, as it turned out, that it was done quickly. The surgeon came out of the operating room with the thyroid and goiter in a cloth and showed them to me (and Tami and Eden Joy, who were waiting with me). He said, "Look at this; it's huge!". And it was, indeed, much larger than it should have been. The goiter itself had grown down into the chest cavity and was resting on the aorta. So it was high time that it be removed, before it could cause more problems. We found out later, after the biopsy, that there was a small cancer in one of the lobes of the thyroid; but it was entirely encapsulated and there was no metastasis, thus requiring no further treatment. God be praised!

The operation was on February 4th. Since then, Pam has been "no-fly" until she is sufficiently healed. She has been trying to rest, in spite of a kind of energy see-saw that the lack of a thyroid has put her on. The doctors are working on getting her synthetic hormone levels balanced so that she can function somewhat normally. We are scheduled to return home to Lyon on March 7th-8th.

Many thanks to those who have written notes of encouragement, and especially to the members of the Webb Chapel Church of Christ in Dallas, who sent numerous cards.

While here (in Colorado Springs), we are staying in the basement apartment of a family whom we have known for many years. The wife and mother came to work with us in Grenoble for about six months when she was 18. That was about 32 years ago. (The Lord looks much farther ahead than we do, doesn't He?) We are very grateful to Sheila (Matheny) Sellers and her great family for their wonderful hospitality.

Though Pam has been trying to rest, she has also been struggling with the multitudinous details of her new Medicare coverage; with finding another policy to cover us both in France; and with the details my upcoming Medicare coverage. Not to mention the ongoing work on her family's medical and lodging situation in New Orleans. For this period, I continue to work on my translations for Truth for Today and on being Pam's caregiver, dishwasher and taxi driver. We are both so very anxious to be back in Lyon.

Tess and Stephen, our newlyweds, were here for a few days to handle some business and visit us. Tami and family are doing fine. We're expected over there this very evening for supper and some entertainment provided by their children. And Tia and family in Italy seem to be doing well.

Back in Lyon, the brethren have just finished a budget proposition for the next fiscal year. They are organizing the annual in-congregation retreat that will likely be held in April. They are also planning the visit of a choral group from Marseilles as an outreach activity. And they are dealing with a huge water leak from the apartment above our meeting place. Business as usual!

When we return, I will begin a study in our Tuesday night class on the biblical doctrines of election and predestination. These are two doctrines we have perhaps not studied enough and which have been mishandled and misused for a long time by certain folks who, as Peter said, "distort ... the Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Pet 3.16). In Europe, the original stomping grounds of Calvinist theology, it is especially important to be able to show how this otherwise very able man was nonetheless terribly wrong in his conclusions. It is not confidence in myself that makes me say that; it is simply confidence in the Word of God.

And that, my friends, though it is short, is all I can report to you this month. We ask for your continued prayers for Pam, that she can get her hormones stabilized and feel somewhat "normal" again. I might also ask you to remember to pray for her knee problem (one knee still needs to be replaced) and for eventual dealing with this difficulty. Please do also remember us as we travel home in just a few days. We are so anxious to be back (but I said that already, didn't I?).

We are so grateful for your love and your care "to usward", as some of our older brethren still say. It is encouraging to know that so many are praying for our well-being. The Lord is good.

May He bless and enrich you, today !

Sincerely,

Charles and Pam