

# Happy New Year!

## 2010



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### *The Lord's Light Within*

*Lord we reflect with thankful hearts  
On the wonder of your birth  
The love you expressed when you left  
Your glory to come to earth*

*For your life was like a beacon. Lord  
Shining brightly in the night  
Filling the world with the radiance of  
The Fathers glorious light*

*And we, too, long to have inside  
Your light for others to see.  
The beautiful reflection of your grace  
And the wonder of your majesty.*

*For as your life indwells our hearts  
We can shine wherever we are.  
And arise to take hold of each new day  
With your light ablaze in our hearts.*

*So rekindle the flame within us Lord  
So it will not flicker nor dim.  
Quiet us with the light of your love  
So you will shine brightly within.*

- M.S.Lowndes, 2007

This poem looks back farther than Christmas 2009 and helps us to look ahead during 2010 and beyond. In spite of 29 years in France (30 next June), we need to have the flame rekindled (see poem) in our hearts for the work in France. Though we have few good contacts with French military--Remy and his buddies for example--we need to do a better job reaching them. We're also praying with a Christian friend, and former Muslim, about a possible outreach to his people in our region.

Remy (r) and Benoit (l) are back in town. They came by the house recently and renewed contact with us.



In our little church, and in the surrounding neighborhood, the light is shining brighter. You've been praying for the Christian baker, *Jean-Francois*, and his employee who came to Christ in August. Pray that their combined light continues to draw others to Christ. The baker has friends who come in now and then, and he tries to steer them toward the Word of God. One of them came one time to a Bible study we have in Jean-Francois' apartment each Monday evening. The Lord is working in the hearts of two people who have been coming regularly to church and the weekly Bible study; both are seeking the peace that, we know, only comes from God. Their lives are so entangled in the things of this world and human philosophies, and the decision to accept God's Word as their authority is not an easy one to make.

One of Joy's English students, a young military wife,

has embraced the study in the Gospel of John with great enthusiasm and, between lessons, reads and meditates on the chapters discussed. She has very New Age thinking - from reincarnation, to the idea that we decide everything that happens in our lives. She rejects the thought that Christ should die for her sins, for it's her responsibility to perfect herself. Studying with her has been an immense challenge and an eye-opener for Joy, and yet what a blessing to have someone who loves to study the Word! Please pray that she will see THE LIGHT in the Word .

Sadly, some French friends reject the Light of the world. Joy tried sharing the same DVD of the Gospel of John with another group of English students, just for a few minutes at the beginning of the class. After 3 sessions, they politely asked that this not be continued. The spokesperson for the group said that it wasn't interesting. Perhaps there is someone in the group who was interested, but didn't want to go against the wishes of the majority. The Lord continues to give opportunities to speak about Him and we pray that the Word they did hear continues to have the effect God said it would (Isaiah 55).

We rejoice in the freedom we have in France to let HIS LIGHT shine. The center continues to open its doors to a host of unsaved youth, with all of the challenges which that age group offers!! Please pray for open hearts among these young people, as well as in the military families that we know. The children's Bible club, retirement home meeting, individual Bible studies, ladies Bible studies, and visits are all means that the Lord has given us to make Him known. Please pray that we will faithfully let our light shine for Him.

One special gift we had this past Christmas was the blessing of having *Janelle* and *Joey* with us here, in Toulon, and having *Julie* "visit" with us via Skype. Any of you who have family or friends far away, know what a privilege modern technology has been! To be able to see them and nearly reach out and touch them is just tremendous.

*Janelle* is teaching south of Paris in a school for special needs children. It is a challenge as she has teenagers with k-1 levels of learning. She drives sixty-three miles to and from school in a part of France that has dense traffic. Her church continues to be the central point of her life, and we are so thankful for the family that the Lord has given her there.

Joey is continuing his job at Better Baked Foods in Erie, PA. Despite the financial crunch, the Lord has blessed him with continuous work, and he has been able to buy a house. He is learning and growing in his walk with the Lord, and our home church continues to be his spiritual home, too.

*Julie* will finish LIBERTY UNIVERSITY in May and we hope to be present for her graduation. In France, there are no ceremonies, no diploma's, no celebrations! So this is an event that has great meaning. We are praying, as Julie is, about the next step in her life-- a job! There are many possibilities -- her degree is in International Affairs-- but you need to know where to start to look. The Lord has certainly proven Himself faithful in the past, and we know that He will lead her.

God has done such great things this past year, our hearts are continually praising Him for His grace in our lives. One of the blessings is your partnering with us in the ministry to the French. We could not be here without your prayer and financial support. We never take that lightly, and our hearts are filled with gratitude. The special Christmas gifts we received, both material and financial, were much appreciated.

May this year of 2010 be a blessed one for each of you, and may we all shine as lights in this dark world.

In His eternal love,



*John & Joey*

Toulon, France