



Gribbin's Grapevine

May 2011

Dear Supporters and Praying Friends,

Some refer to France as the "graveyard" of missionaries. I just returned from a week at the Baptist Bible institute in northeast France, where I taught the Major Prophets. One of them was Jeremiah. We can't compare ourselves in all aspects with him. But, if outward evidence includes response by the people, Jeremiah's ministry must be counted a failure!

As difficult as France is, the ministry of Missions to Military in France has not seen total failure like Jeremiah did. Besides professions of faith over the years, there are at least three men in France ministering as pastors, missionaries, and church planters. Not content with that, we continue to share the Gospel with military and civilians alike. As in Jeremiah's time, we speak to so many hard hearts and a mountain of unbelief.



Joy and John

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PROGRESSING LIKE A FRENCH SNAIL

There have been cases of people, who've heard the Gospel at the Military Christian Center, coming to Christ years later. Olivier Rouault was one of those but the Word did its work in his heart just as God promised in Isaiah 55:11.

Unless the Lord does something drastic in the lives of two other couples here, it could take years for them as well. One couple is Remy and Katia. They actually felt bad to have missed the last special event we had so they came to our house for a special evening alone with us. Another couple is *Romain and Judy*. A remark he made seems to show he is, at least, interested in the Person of Christ.

SPRING CHURCH BIBLE CONFERENCE

April 8-10, we held a three evening Bible conference in our little church. Only a handful of visitors attended after we gave out over 7,000 invitations and inviting friends and contacts. Our French evangelist preached three powerful messages on the personal meetings Jesus had with individuals in the Gospel. Results: two people clearly told us they were searching for the truth, much like Zacchaeus, Nicodemus, and the woman at the well, the subjects of the three messages preached. Those two people seem serious and sincere in their search, but we fear the work of the enemy who delights in taking away the seed of the Word. The two searchers are a man in his mid 50's and a woman over 70 and who recently lost her husband.

GREAT FAMILY TIME

In April, a rare family moment was enjoyed with Joy's mother and sister coming from Erie, PA, to see us, along with our son, *Joey* (27). *Janelle* and *Julie* were with us, too, and Julie is staying on here, in Toulon, as a fill-in English teacher in a few local public schools. They all pitched in to give our dining and living rooms a new look (paint, furniture, curtains). One of our close French friends, on seeing the improvements, made one of her typical direct remarks: "You should have had them come sooner."

PRAYER AND PRAISE (cut out and put on your refrigerator)

1. We thank the Lord that His Word is at work in hearts even after we've shared the Gospel with some who apparently weren't ready to receive Christ. Pray for our follow-up with those who seem interested in spiritual things.
2. Praise the Lord for the two searching souls who continue to come to church and Bible studies. Pray for the Holy Spirit's deep conviction in their hearts.
3. Praise that Julie at least has work on a regular basis. It's temporary for now. Pray for a permanent job after this one ends on June 30.
4. PRAY FOR LOST SOULS. French Military: *Jean-Pierre, Remy, Romain, Michael, Stephane, Bruno* and their wives, though the last two men have wives who are saved and attend sound Baptist and Bible teaching churches.
5. The one lady searcher, Marie, though she honestly admits to being an unbeliever, asked us to pray for her son, in his 50's, who has only one lung (big smoker) and is in the hospital in Marseille.
6. Pray for our next military event: a picnic on June 25.

SPECIAL EVENT, SPECIAL "SAND" PRESENTATION

On March 12, at our Military Christian Center, we had a special outreach with Military contacts and their families. A presentation, using sand (similar to a chalk talk) on the "two houses" - one built on the sand, and the other built on the Rock. Since the theme was on building one's house--one's life--on the sure foundation of the Word of God, after the sand presentation, I gave a short meditation from John 14 with the goal of showing how Jesus went to prepare a house for those who trusted Him as Lord and Savior. About 19 were present--civilians also--and at least 15 of them were not saved.

Pray that soon we'll see a real harvest among these precious souls.

It's May now, and shortly we'll be in the season we apprehend: vacation time. It is sad, but so many church members here seem to take a "vacation" from attending church services. **We thank you for prayers for us at that time** that we might have closer contacts with some of those military whom we mentioned above. And **THANK YOU** for giving so faithfully in these trying economic times amid international upheaval. Jesus is coming soon!

Thankful for the Cross,



John & Joy

Missions To Military
Toulon, France

P.S. We're sorry if some of you did not receive our February prayer letter. We had either an email or regular mail omission.