



Dear Friends,

There's a verse that expresses well what we need to say after this first-time, full-year furlough: *"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"* (Psalms 107:8, 15, 21, 31). That verse appears four times in the Bible, all in Psalms 107, which is something unique in Scripture. So, yes, for *"his wonderful works"* for us during this furlough year in the U.S., we give Him praise. A list of those "works" could cover both sides of our prayer letter. Here are just a few:

- * While in the States, our house in France was rented (reasonably) to a young French pastor and his wife and three children.

- * A fellow missionary gave a car to our mission board and was given to us to use, free of charge.

- * A mission in Virginia Beach offered us free housing from Aug. 2008 to the first week in May 2009.

- * The mission that gave us housing also gave Joy a job from September 2008 to after Easter 2009. That allowed us to help Julie with her school expenses.

- * John (pictured here at his graduation) was able to complete his seminary studies and earn a Masters in Biblical Studies, which will help him in the Bible teaching ministry.



Joy and John

If everything goes as planned, the Social Security quarters John was lacking will have been obtained.

- * A family friend and employee of a major airline has graciously given us two of his allotted passes in order to return to France at a very low cost. This means going standby, so if you read this before June 13th, please pray we get seats as quickly as possible.

Besides these blessings, there were many others of a more personal nature, dozens of people--pastors, professors, teachers, missionaries, secretaries-- from all walks of life who made our stay in Virginia Beach a "souvenir" (a memory) that outdoes anything bought in a gift shop. Getting off the plane in Norfolk in June 2008, a wonderful couple whom we'd never met--and will never forget--greeted us at the airport and opened their home and hearts to us. Everyone in *Colonial Baptist Church*--from pastor to church family--along with *Central*

Baptist Theological Seminary, made us feel so right at home and ministered to us and our needs in so many ways; it is impossible to adequately say "thank you" for all they did (and do) for us.

Visiting as many of our partnering churches as possible was a tremendous encouragement as we met many people who uphold us, and France, in prayer. Our travels allowed us to see old friends who have stood behind us throughout the years. New friends, and old, surprised us with gifts and kindnesses which we do not take lightly, nor will we forget. We have seen the gift of hospitality lived out before us, experienced the generosity of SOOO many, and have been truly encouraged by the contact with you all. We thank our gracious, loving Heavenly Father for preparing such a wonderful year for us.

LOOKING AHEAD:

French military. While in the States, and with the leadership of a French pastor with whom we work, a Bible study has begun and continues to reach military nurses (men and women) in the French military hospital in Toulon. Some unsaved attend this study which is unusual for the French. We're looking to the Lord as to how this study could revitalize the military outreach.

Our local church. Our little church (*Bible Baptist Church*) has been absorbed by the "other" autonomous French Baptist church in East Toulon, giving us the help of faithful French Christians to reach the lost around the church. The pastor, who is renting our house, is very active there and I would like to help him in any way possible. With those coming to help from the other church, we look to the Lord to lead us in more effective ways to reach Toulon's West side (population of Toulon: around 200,000).

Youth and more. With the influx of youth (French and Arab) in the Military Center, a small Bible study began last year and continues. S. and G. have attended fairly consistently, and our MTM team member told us recently that even S.'s daughter participated. We are praying about a more substantial outreach to the Muslims in Toulon.

English outreach. English groups will start back up in the fall, but Joy is hoping to

make contact with all of her "students" as soon as we return to France. Please pray for open hearts among these dear people, who have become friends over the years. Pray for boldness on Joy's part for each lesson, that she might expose them to the Word of God. Several new ideas have been given to her, and even one Pastor's wife gave her a complete note series on TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language).

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS:

1. Jean-Pierre also continues studying the Bible with our colleagues in Toulon, though he seems to hang on to his traditional religion.

2. Our three adult "kids". God is at work in their lives and we thank you for your prayers for them as they face challenges in their work and studies.

3. Flight to France. Pray that this first stand-by experience will work out in God's timing. We look to Him to provide seats for us.

4. **CRUCIAL REQUEST:** We believe, if we are to see souls saved and fruit that endures, those to whom we proclaim the Gospel of Christ need to get "into the Book", that is, they need to seriously read the Word of God. Pray specifically with us that the French will hunger after His Word, based on God's promise, *"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."* 2 Timothy 2:9

It appears we will be returning to France on about June 13th. After a year's furlough, a few days of adaptation might be needed as we go back into the French language and mentality, since previous furloughs were only a few months in the States. Thankfully, both on the front end and last month of furlough, we had good times of rest and refreshment, physically and spiritually. We look ahead with keen anticipation to getting back "into the yoke" in Toulon. We also want to thank so many others who encouraged us during this year on furlough. May God bless each church and each one serving the Lord where He has placed you.

In His abundant grace,



John & Joy