

Mission to the Aja

Work Report

January - February, 1998

Crowson's Work Report

French Language School Begins

By the time you read this we will have finished our first two months of French Language school here at Laval University. Christine and I made a smooth transition from Birmingham to Quebec. We are now deep into French Language learning. Every aspect of our life right now is in French. We are enjoying the winter months, the last we will have for many years to come, as well as our discovery of the first of our two new languages for the coming years.

Work Schedule

During our first week in Quebec, we took placement tests to determine our level in French. We were advised not to guess if we did not know the answer, so we ended up leaving the majority of the questions blank. We were placed in the beginning level, Elementary A. This is exactly where we needed to be. We have a wonderful teacher who is very patient with us. Her teaching style suits our every need.

In Class

- We meet daily for four college hours of class Monday through Friday. Mondays and Thursdays we have class in the afternoon from 12:30 to 4:30. Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays we have class in the mornings from 8:30 to 12:30.
- In class, we study grammar, phonetics, oral expression, and listening comprehension.

Outside Class

- On average, we have one to two hours of devoir (homework) each day. We usually have more homework on the weekends (3 to 4 hours).
 - Christine and I both meet with conversation partners to practice speaking French. This has proven to be one of our most productive and enjoyable times. We both meet with Piere Monday mornings for 1 1/2 hours. On Wednesday, Christine meets with Maureen in the afternoon for two hours, while I meet again with Piere for a 1 1/2 hours. Sunday evenings I meet with Joel after our team worship for an hour.
 - Because Quebec is 97% French speaking, all of our activities outside our home are in French. We speak French, as best as we can, from the bank to the grocery store to the pharmacy. As soon as we leave our apartment, we enter our French classroom!
 - In addition to learning French, we spend a good amount of time communicating with our Aja Prayer Warriors and others who participate in our work.
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Church in Quebec

- Usually, going to church would not be considered 'work'. But I have included it here because when you're learning a new language, that's exactly what it is. The church here is totally in French. There are a few members of the congregation who speak a little English, but that's all. Next to our conversation partners, going to church has been a major help in our French comprehension and usage. Every Sunday and Wednesday we take our dictionaries and notepads to church anxious both to practice our existing vocabulary and learn more. Since we are the fourth phase of missionaries to come through Quebec (two with the Fon team, and two with our team), they quickly latched on to us. Although we do not understand the majority of the words they speak, we can definitely feel their love. We look forward to this summer, when we can participate more in the worship services.

"Words grow up, get married, and have children." Each day we comprehend more and more as our vocabulary grows.

Team

We are enjoying the times we have with our team. For some of us, this is the first time we have been together for more than one weekend. The Lord continues to deepen our relationships as we share our French language learning together.

Team Meetings and Gatherings

- We meet as a team for worship and prayer every other Sunday evening for several hours.
- We have an English worship service at our apartment on the opposite Sunday evenings where we invite many of the friends that we have made in school.
- The men and women meet for prayer separately on Thursday mornings.

Overall

Overall, we are doing well. Christine and the baby are doing fine. We found a good doctor to take care of Christine. The medical care is pretty good up here, and not too expensive. The Lord continues to provide for our One-Time Fund needs, the majority of which came through Homewood's generosity! Thank You!!! Although we are enjoying our time here, we are anxious to begin our work in Benin. The time is quickly passing, and we will be there soon enough.

Thank you so much for your support, prayers, encouragement, and backing. Without you, we could not carry out the work God has called us to do. We are so grateful for all of the ways you take care of us. May the Lord bless you richly as you seek to serve Him!!!

Pictures

