

THE FIXED POINT

Life is change. It is impossible to freeze life and make everything remain the way they are. During the months in Paris, I've gotten to know many very nice people. I've experienced a city with a lot of beauty. I've tasted new and very good foods. I'm in the privileged position that I'm allowed to learn a new language. I'm very grateful for all of these privileges. At the same time I have said goodbye to people and things I love in Norway. Things change. I know that many of the friendships I start here in Paris will be of limited duration. Some of the students have already left for other countries. Others will leave in the end of December. One month ago one of our teachers at the school lost her 18 years old son in a car accident. Life changes all the time, and not only in Paris. One grows up, moves, education and work brings us to different places, families and relationship changes. Sooner or later we will face challenges, difficulties and grief. It's part of living as a human being in this world.

As I reflect on this, I understand better why the Bible many places speak of God as the one who never changes. He is the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Rev 22,13). In other words: he is the one fixed point in our existence. He is always the same, and he has promised to be with us through all changes. More than most others David experienced that life can be like a rollercoaster. As a youth he worked as a shepherd. In secrecy he was crowned king. Later he worked as musician at the court of King Saul, before he made a career as a soldier and became a national hero. King Saul tried to kill him out of envy, and David became a refugee and guerilla leader who slept under open sky and in caves. Later on he became king and had to handle wars, rebellions, grumbings, criticism and rivalries within his family. Often he couldn't control the circumstances. Perhaps this is the reason why so many of his psalms talks about turning to God with all pains and difficulties and trust in him:

I love you, O LORD, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is the my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
(Ps 18,1-2)

God is the fixed point through all changes, including death itself. Lately three things have happened that have helped me remember this in all the changes I've experienced this autumn. First of all, I've found a Church where I feel at home. It is a small Lutheran Church situated in the suburb Noisy-le-Sec, North-East of Paris. Every Saturday and every second Tuesday I participate in meetings there. The priest is a good Bible-teacher, and there is a genuine spiritual life among the people there. As I have started to make some sense of all the strange sounds that make up French, this Church has become important to me. They help me to remember the unchanging God also during language school. So does my friendship with a classmate called Jim Shoberg. Jim is American with Swedish ancestors, but in spite of his Swedish background he is both nice and intelligent☺. He and his wife Debby have worked 14 years as a missionary in Ecuador. Parts of the time they lived in the jungle, far from the nearest town. Now they have brought their four children to Paris, where they will lead a team of American missionaries. Jim and I go jogging together approximately once every week. We have also started to meet once a week to pray together. My friendship with Jim is therefore another thing that helps me to keep God as my firm point in my life here in Paris. Other than this, I have been helping out as a "dish-washer" at an Alpha-course in a Church in the suburb of Massy where I live. Several people who don't have a Christian background participate on the course, among them an Iranian gentleman who knew Ayatollah Khomeini at the time when he lived in Paris.

These were some reflections from Paris. I wish you all the best in BIC and remember you in my prayers. I also look forward to see you around Christmas time. Merci pour your prayers and support!

In Christ, Frode

GIVE THANKS FOR:

- That I'm making enough progress in the language study for the strange sounds to mysteriously starting to make some sense. (I'm moving from nonsense to sense😊)
- That I've found a Church in Noisy-le-Sec where I feel at home.
- The friendship with Jim Shoberg.

PRAY FOR:

- The language study: that I will continue to make progress, both in understanding, writing and speaking.
- The Church in Noisy-le-Sec and my relationship to Jim Shoberg.
- The Alpha-course in Massy