



Daveys in France

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Ever had the feeling of being followed? These A380 wings came from Deeside.

*May his name endure forever;
may it continue as long as the sun.
All nations will be blessed through him,
and they will call him blessed.
(Psalm 72:17)*

Dear friends and supporters,

Phew! Sammy, the pastor of the church we are attached to here, returns from 10 weeks of deputation in the USA this evening. During his absence Alan has taken the church prayer meetings and the Thursday evening student Bible Studies as well as preaching most Sundays. It's been a bit of a marathon, added into the personal work and the activities relating to the work of the student centre.

In addition, this past week saw the death from cancer of a very involved and much loved church member at the age of 44. Her funeral was two days later. It was the first time for Alan to attend a funeral in France... and he was conducting it... in a black French pastor's robe, borrowed for the occasion ("*Handsome as a lorry!*" they said). With advice from the chairman of the association of churches, great team-work from the church and wonderful chairmanship from the church's elder, God's hand was on us all. Alan preached from John 17:24 *Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world* to a church packed to overflowing. Well over 200 people crammed into our little basement garage, and most were not church-goers. It was good to be able to speak simply of the Christian's hope (and simply is the only way Alan can do it in French)

French funerals are long. This one was about 80 minutes with six hymns and personal statements from friends and family. French funeral directors are wonderfully relaxed and cooperative. One of them prayed with us at the cemetery where we sang *A Toi la gloire* (Thine be the glory). The whole day was filled with a sense of sadness at the loss of our loved one, but joy and gratitude for all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ. Thank God for all his help and grace. Thank you for your faithful prayers. This week Alan is exhausted!

Sunday preaching has been from the Psalms. In the student Bible studies we have been working through Mark's gospel. Alan is very grateful for these opportunities to use his French and to improve it as he goes. The folk are really very gracious indeed, helping and advising in a kind and loving way, and we laugh a lot.

Some of the male students are really growing and changing and that has been a particular source of encouragement. The church is increasingly giving opportunities and

encouragement to these young chaps, and this is great to see. Pray for M. and S. who have just started attending a Saturday school of theology.

Our Chinese students went through a hard time following Chinese New Year, but recently things are much more positive again.

As for family life, we are all fine. The children are getting on better in school as their French improves and we are thankful to God.

Looking ahead, we will all soon attend a workshop on International Churches, to consider beginning evening services in English or bilingually sometime under the auspices of the church here.

Meanwhile we need to find a house for our pastor and his family and premises for the church, and all at affordable rents. Not easy in Bordeaux.

Another UFM family plans to come to Bordeaux to learn French, this time en route to Cote d'Ivoire, God willing. We may be involved in helping them to find a home and a school, and to settle into the city.

Our own situation could change this summer. Pat will have done two years at the language school. Should she continue next year? Meanwhile Alan will complete his two year *stage* with the church here and it is an obvious point of decision - to what degree does our future lie with this church, with the student work, with the church in the Blaye area, with starting a new church in another suburb or in the centre of the city? Churches are proliferating in Bordeaux - African churches, a Spanish church, a gypsy church, all shades of extreme churches, but there is still a crying need for straightforward Bible preaching churches. But after less than two years in France are we really ready to begin a church plant?

Meanwhile our financial support struggles at the moment. Will we get through to 2008 without Alan needing to do a deputation trip back to the UK? I think we will! God has been very faithful and his people very generous, and he has supplied our every need even though sometimes it seems "touch and go"! However, if you know of churches or individuals with a heart for the gospel in France and who may identify with our work, then feel free to mention us to them.

A bientôt!

Alan, Pat, Gwilym & Catrin

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Mr. Phil Harman, 14 Eaton Avenue, Connah's Quay, Flintshire. CH5 4HR

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