



# Daveys in France

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*Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift! 2 Cor 9:15*

Dear friends and supporters,

We write on the eve of the sales, tightly controlled in France. The South-West prefects have set the dates for 9.1.8 to 17.2.8 and all the newspapers are giving directions on how to get the best bargains. There are bargains to be had, sure, but often it's stuff we neither need nor use.

God's grace is different. It's always available - *today is the day of salvation* - and it is free, not just cheap. *You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.* And it is exactly what we need, though often it is not what we feel we want.

Christmas is a time of great opportunity to share God's grace. It began with the visit of an American children's choir who sang in the Bordeaux area as well as farther afield. There were a good number of folk who came along and some have been back to church since. Pray particularly for J-M the coach driver, who came to all the concerts and since has come to church and to the student centre for Christmas Day.

One couple who came to the English-language evening said to Alan, "We know you, don't we?" It was the son and girlfriend of a church member and their first time at church. They continued, "You did a survey with us on the Campus." Then he remembered this charming couple eating their lunch beneath the trees. They said hello as he passed, so he got out the survey! You could pray for his mother J as she witnesses to them. (That evening was the first time for Alan to wear a tie in two years, by the way.)

Christmas Day at the student centre saw about 20 people gather for lunch, games and a short gospel talk. This year no Muslims were present, though we were ready - all the meat was halal. However there were more French people than usual and also Chinese folk.

As well as surveys on campus this term we have taken groups of people distributing tracts and invitations for Christmas Day. It has been good to see people set to work and they have been encouraged by sharing their faith in the streets.

In our church people come from quite a wide area and we are dependent on loaned or hired premises, so that means that most groups are unable to meet weekly. The sixth-formers meet once a fortnight in principle but we seldom hit that target. The next meeting is on 20<sup>th</sup> January and we'll be continuing with Christianity Explored.

T, from Pat's French class, is Egyptian and an interior designer. He is in France for further study and he hopes to bring his family here in the next few months. Meanwhile he's lonely and needy. He's typical of the many people who come to France, often from

Muslim countries or other “closed” countries, and who then have an opportunity to hear the gospel. Please pray that God would guide us to more people like T and that he would open their ears to hear, and their hearts to understand and to believe.

Gwilym and Catrin are both well. Our boy is now a teenager and revelling in the new horizons this opens up - at least in his mind... Catrin is gearing up for moving to the collège, the middle school, this September. Alan went for a chat with the director the other day. Would you believe that Catrin has decided to forego the joys of German for the splendours of Spanish ?

And of the future ? Alan has just been working with the church elders on a convention defining his role in the church. The term *pasteur adjoint* has been chosen, with particular responsibilities for sixth-formers, sharing the preaching and teaching, developing English-language worship and the follow-up and integration of families. This in conjunction with his role in the student work, of course.

The pressing need is for the church to find a home of our own. We saw a building currently used as a shop in Mérignac, not too far from the tram, ample parking, it will be available for rent in the spring but would need lots of alterations. There is no evangelical church in Mérignac. The price is right, but is it right for us ?

Then from March 24 to April 17 Alan will be in the UK visiting churches. This is his schedule at the moment :

Wed 26 March - Geneva Road, Darlington

Thu 27 March - Whitby Evangelical Church

Mon 31 March - 3 April - Banner of Truth Conference, Leicester

Sun 6 April - Strathaven Evangelical Church

Tue 8 April - Christ Church Shotton

Wed 9 April - Bethel Evangelical Church, Clydach

Tue 15 April - Llanelli Evangelical Church

If you think it would be a good idea for Alan to visit your church could you please get in touch. There are still plenty of gaps as you can see. Then please pray for the organisation of all this. It's Alan's first deputation trip and he's learning what to do as he goes. Pray that all the mistakes will be minor ones. Then pray for Pat and the kids. All those weeks without Alan around. What if they don't want him to come back..?

*Alan, Pat, Gwilym & Catrin*

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

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