

Health-wise we're all OK. Alan is hoping that his post-flu cough will clear up as the weather warms up. Steroids didn't do a lot and neither did homeopathy ! Pat says that sometimes her joints tell her that time is passing. Gwilym is now officially taller than Alan, which must make him about 6 foot at 15. Help ! Catrin is also getting tall and graceful. She suffers a bit with E.N.T. things now and again.

For next year Gwilym has a big decision to make. He would like to become a car mechanic and in April he'll do a week's work experience in a garage round the corner from home. Then comes the decision: does he go to a specialised high school to do a BAC Pro in vehicle mechanics or does he look for an apprenticeship ? We visited the high school the other day and we were very impressed...

For this summer we expect to be in Britain in July. We have one church visit lined up in the second week of July, but mostly it will be holiday, visiting family, camp for the children and the UFM conference for us all, including the Personnel Panel's four-year review. There is the possibility of Gwilym doing a beach mission, too. We're in the planning stage !

Thank you again for your partnership in the work.
Every blessing,

Alan, Pat, Gwilym & Catrin

To start or stop receiving this prayer letter, or to change your address please contact

Mr P Harman, 14 Eaton Ave, Connah's Quay, Flintshire. CH5 4HR
e-mail phil.harman@harpeople.net.

Contact re. financial support directly to:
UFM Worldwide, 145 Faringdon Rd, Swindon, Wilts. SN1 5DL



Daveys in France

N° 21, March 2010

Alan & Pat Davey

14b Rue Pères, 33600 Pessac, France

alandavey@gmail.com

www.daveys2france.blogspot.com

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

Dear friends,

Firstly thank you for your continued generosity and faithfulness that makes it possible for us to be here and to have the immense privilege of sharing the hope of the gospel. There is progress and encouragement on every hand, but also many obstacles ! So much so that Alan often thinks of Jesus' words above, and he quotes them to colleagues, too. Churchill's famous "Never, never, never give up" is less useful with French colleagues. They don't have the same emotive force for them, somehow. But we never must give up and by God's help we never shall.

Progress ? Encouragement ? Really ?

Yes ! Firstly in the French church, with new faces in the congregations both in Cenon and in Anglade. For example, our next-door neighbour texted Pat one Sunday saying that she wanted to come to church. Completely unforeseen, it threw us into immediate disarray - we even forgot to put out the bread and wine for communion. She has attended off and on ever since, bringing her two children who are very happy in the crèche. Another new face is a chap from Alan's English class. To be honest he struggles in the class - to be honest, he's stopped coming - but he comes to church instead ! Amazing ! Leafletting and special meetings have brought in one or two new faces, too.

Meanwhile there are many obstacles, but we press on with the plan to buy the Canon building. We hope to tell you more about this soon. For now suffice it to say that we think the purchase price will be around €250000 (or just over twice what the church has paid in rent over the past ten years...)

Then in Anglade it has been great to see new folk in the congregation, some of them men. Lots of leafletting is going on round the area, lots of prayer, contacts in the town have opened up the possibility of using a building in Blaye itself and we need wisdom in our discussions of how to move the work forward. Alan always finds it a joy to preach in the Blaye area.

In the International Services we've been encouraged by new faces, too. A professional basketball player comes with his two young daughters. He's 6'9" tall ! An Indian Christian brings a Hindu friend. Our numbers hover usually around 20 to 25, though the first Sunday of the recent school holidays when we expected fewer people we were 35. At present perhaps a third of us are Americans, including our regular pianist, and about a quarter are French. Most are students and sometimes it feels more like a Christian union than a church service. But as an outreach of the French church it works well. We are currently thinking through what to do in July when the Daveys and the Griffins expect to be in Britain. It would be a pity to close up.

In the student work we began running Christianity Explored in French. Usually Alan does the talks, showing clips from films where appropriate to illustrate sin, grace, etc. and he sometimes leads the introductory Bible Study but others lead the closing discussions. It's been great to share these studies with the students. Most who attend are already Christians but not all who experience salvation by grace understand salvation by grace !

Witness on the campus continues. During the winter months when it was so bitterly cold we did more door-to-door work than surveys, but now the sun is back it's good to be out talking to people. Recently we have been collaborating with the Christian union group who plan to run some meetings to address the five questions people want to ask God. They've been given a room on campus to hold the meetings ! Amazing ! It's quite useful to ask people "If you could, what question would you ask God?" It's more open ended than our usual survey questions and it leads to less predictable conversations. Please pray for us in this, and also as we consider using another form of survey based on photographs meant to provoke open-ended discussions about salvation.

The Chinese group, too, is making good progress. Recently for Chinese New Year there were 60 people present ! But the core of the group is a more manageable 15-ish. Alan continues to provide support for the three wise men who lead the group. (That reminds me, I must remember to get my systematic theology back.)

Then there's another rather unexpected opportunity. In the centre of Pessac there's a school that thinks rather differently from the others. It's a European middle school and international high school and it's linked to the Catholic church. And our elder is the school manager. They wanted to hold prayer times for the pupils at lunch time and they approached Alan to see if he would be willing to lead one. He said ... um ... yes ... It had to be squared with the management committee but apparently the local priest said "Protestant pastors are very good at leading prayer times."

Anyway, here goes this staunch, valleys non-conformist thinking, "This'll be a complete lead balloon. I'll show my face till they're convinced it's not working and then duck out as graciously as I can..." And the first week there were 20 children ! One young lady read the Apostles' Creed and stumbled over a word or two. Alan said "Do you understand what you've just read ?" She said, "Could you explain *la rémission des péchés* (the forgiveness of sins) ?" At that moment he knew why he was there. So he is teaching through the Lord's Prayer using Scripture to illustrate Scripture and trying to help these kids to grasp the grace of God. So many opportunities !

A group from Toulouse is coming mid April to help us with evangelism here. We are also preparing for a visit of a Mission Vacances team in August. It's a real blessing to have this help. There are students in Britain preparing to come and help us next academic year, too, and some of the folk here just now are really invaluable, as was Liz Richards (now in Spain). However the student centre finance is delicate. Please pray for a way ahead. We have also spent some much needed time together as a family. Some friends down near Carcassonne had returned to the States and invited us to use their house. It's just what you imagine when people go to live in France ! On a hill outside a little village. The views are astonishing. We chilled together and it did us good.