



Daveys in France

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Alan & Pat Davey

14b Rue Pérès,

33600 Pessac, France

alandavey@gmail.com

www.daveys2france.blogspot.com

The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark 1:1

Dear friends,

Warm greetings from a very warm Pessac. It's all Mark's gospel here ! I'll explain more below, but it has been great once more to be able to tell people that Jesus Christ is the good news ! The situation is far, far worse than any of us really realise, but God has come himself to rescue us in the person of Jesus. Amidst so much sad news, this good news is the best.

Eglise Protestante Réformée Evangélique de la Gironde

Pat has been involved more with speaking to the women's group in French as well as the Sunday school, her one-to-one work and the anglophone ladies. Alongside this she's started helping in the Christian Bookshop in the middle of Bordeaux.

Work still continues on the building and it will do for some time ! Meanwhile the fellowship in Blaye has known significant growth - when you're small just a handful of people makes a big percentage. Lots of people come to check us out at Cenon and some return. There were over 60 people at the Easter service. However we're normally about 30 - 40.

It is true to say that the work is not easy in this city but we are not going to give up. Please pray for perseverance, for unity, for flexibility, for grace. Recently Alan preached from Philippians 1:9-11 *And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.*

Alan is in the middle of a significant administrative step - on Friday he goes to Nîmes for an interview about becoming a *pasteur associé*. This is the title that is used for missionary pastors in the group of churches we belong to. It won't make any real difference to our work for the foreseeable future but it will make things more official.

One weekend he zoomed off to Switzerland to attend a workshop for preachers given by Stuart Olyott. It was wonderful to see Stuart and to hear him in French. It was also wonderful to have the notes in French and (soon) a recording of the sessions. The goal is to use the material in training preachers here. He also attended the Colloque Biblique Francophone for the 1st time.

Meanwhile we had a student-pastor on work experience here from September to May and so we met up to read and talk together about how to preach better using Stuart's book, *Prêcher comme Jésus*.

One of the student-pastor's projects was to set up a short Alpha course (just five sessions, "Alph"?) and so Pat was involved in the hospitality and Alan in giving the talk on the cross and in leading discussion groups.

Foi et Action pour Christ - the student work

Aha ! Mark's gospel ! Yes ! Well together with the GBU and a church's student group we had a project to put on 'The Mark Experience'. This is a useful little book that explains a structure that helps you to memorise Mark's gospel and then put on a simple play, recounting the whole of Mark's gospel in about 90 minutes. We studied the structure for months in our Bible studies. Actors were chosen from amongst the students (Alan made sure he would not be among them !) and the play was put on at the end of April. *The Town Hall gave us a public room for the Saturday night* and the second performance was in a city centre church. Despite the fact that there were no buses or trams for the day of the second performance several hundred people saw Mark's gospel re-enacted and several churches are keen to take up the relay.

The English classes, again in a café then in a public room, and the café based discussion nights have been blessed, with good attendance and good conversations. Another joy has been to see students involving themselves more in the work of preparation, outreach, in surveys and door-to-door. A Saint Patrick's Day evening held in the church attracted some 40 students.

Now it's exam time, some students have already finished and gone home and things are winding down. Time to think and plan and pray ready for next year. Please pray for this important time.

A word about co-workers. This year Fiona has had lots of help, among them the excellent Simon Farewell. Do pray for Simon as he resumes his studies in Bath and his role as CU president, and for the workers preparing to come next year. Also pray for Simon's future - in France, please.

English services

The services have been greatly enhanced by our accompanists, Andreas on piano and Gwilym on guitar. Andreas, Jeanette and Emil (almost 2) came to Bordeaux from Cambridge. Andreas is a mathematician and his work takes him all over the world. They travel an hour by bus and tram to come to church. Ki, Lauren and Alvin are Korean Americans here to study French for a year. Students like that make up the bulk of our group, together with the folk from the French church who come. We're working through Romans and finding this helpful.

Chinese Christian Fellowship of Bordeaux

Last time we talked about getting Easy-English Christianity Explored. Well the English wasn't easy enough so Alan translated the booklet into Easy-French, then got Samuel the student-pastor to correct it. So we've been doing Christianity Explored in Easy French with the Chinese new Christians. One girl said "My favourite study was the week on Grace". Yes !

One result of the discussions about baptism has been that some students have decided not to be baptised yet. This is a good thing. One Chinese sect teaches that you don't really become a Christian till you're baptised, and lots of the students get infected by this thinking. It's good to be baptised, but not if you think it's going to at last make you a Christian !

What to preach for the main group of Chinese ? Well Alan has also been reading Tim Keller's "King's Cross", so after discussion with Dik he started in Mark's gospel, emphasising that the Christian message is Good News, not just good advice. It's been interesting - he takes a French/English Bible, prepared to preach in either language - then someone translates into Mandarin.

Meanwhile Sen has flown back to Wuhan to get married to YiFei, a girl who was a student here and who started the Chinese group back in 2003. Pray that God will use this couple in the years to come.

Church visits, June 2011

Here's the schedule. Alan found this visit harder to work out than ever before. Doesn't it get easier ?

1st Grove Chapel, 5th Widcombe Bath/Emmanuel Cardiff, 7th Llanelli, 8th Bethel Cardiff, 9th Hengoed+Bryn Golwg, 12th Pontefract/Leeds, 13th-15th Bala Conf, 15th Ebenezer Swansea, 19th Blackburn, Deeside, Flint, 21st Cardiff Bay, 22nd EMA and Child's Hill, 26th Glasgow.

Some family news

Gwilym (16) has concluded that his future does not lie in car mechanics so we are trying to arrange for him to switch to a course in Commerce at a school nearer home which has a European Section. Catrin (14) continues on into the next year up in her school after a good school trip this year with Pat as helper in... London. The ageing parents (that's Pat and Alan) are doing fine, though creaking somewhat from time to time ! Do continue to pray for the children as they grow in their commitment and faith. Both are going to the UK on camp this year thanks to the help of some wonderful friends who we have not yet met ! Gwilym is also going to the Aber Conference and maybe a beach mission.

Every blessing,

Alan, Pat, Gwilym & Catrin

To receive this letter by post :

Mr P Harman, 14 Eaton Ave, Connaught Quay, Flintshire. CH5 4HR

To receive by e-mail : alan.davey@gmail.com

Contact re. financial support directly to:

UFM Worldwide, 145 Faringdon Rd, Swindon, Wilts. SN1 5DL