The Bordeaux Student Centre

Daveys in France

Issue 9, November 2006

Alan & Pat Davey
14b Rue Pérès
33600 Pessac
France
alandavey@gmail.com
www.daveys2france.blogspot.com

God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him. (Ps 67:7)

Dear friends and supporters,

First of all let us apologise for the late arrival of this prayer letter. We decided to delay the letter until after our house move, which finally happened last week. So we greet you from somewhere in the middle of a pile of cardboard boxes.

Kids' stuff

Thank you once again for all your prayers. Gwilym and Catrin have settled well back into school. What a difference from last year! They have friends. They're used to the routine. All is going OK. Of course, there are the normal children's issues with school (maths, German!) but all is well. Thank God for all he has done. People remark that Gwilym speaks just like a French lad would. No accent. What's his secret?

Mum's stuff

Pat is getting on well in her class at the language school. She has some really good teachers and some good contacts in her class. Please pray for *L* who came to church a few times at the start of term, for *H* who was keen to receive a Bible, and for *T* who seems fascinated by what we're doing.

Dad's stuff

Dad says he speaks French like a dog. If he could have two goes at every sentence, once wrong and the next corrected, then he'd be in with a chance. However, sometimes people don't notice his errors and happily lots of French people speak French pretty badly, too.

Ministry stuff

At the beginning of the year (September) Carol Liddiard announced her retirement from the mission, with effect from Christmas. She won't be leaving Bordeaux or withdrawing completely from the student work, but she will no longer be heading the work or shouldering the administration. Thank God for the very effective pioneering work Carol undertook here, with God's direction and help, and pray for all the team here as we adjust to the new situation.

Preaching: Alan preaches once or twice a month at the church in Floirac, and each time he feels more at ease. He has a sermon buddy who corrects his sermons (“post-mortem” at the moment). People seem to cope with his more direct style. He asked his sermon buddy whether his style of speaking was too abrupt for French people and she said (rough translation) “Frankly, with your accent that's the least of your worries”. Thank God that people hear the message of God's word and are encouraged by it. Pray that people would come to faith.

Bible study: Alan also shares the leadership of a student Bible study with the pastor here. At present we are looking at encounters with Jesus in John's gospel. There's quite a good number who come along, but please pray that they'd bring their unconverted friends.

House group: Alan is also the house group leader for *le groupe de maison rive gauche.* This group is very important in establishing a firm foundation of Bible understanding and in cementing relationships in the church. The group is held at someone else's home, in the city centre – and we have not yet been able to meet. Please pray that soon every obstacle will be removed and we can begin to meet regularly.

English class: Saturday is English Class day, and the class is quite big and growing. Fiona Steward takes the beginners and Alan takes the “top set”. Almost all the people who come are unconverted, many are Muslims. Fiona uses a curriculum called “Good News English” which teaches English from the New Testament. In Alan's class they always read and discuss a Bible passage, as well as talking about points of pronunciation, style and grammar. (Alan's particularly pleased that all his class can now say “the thing” instead of “ze sing”!) Thank God for those who come, and for the BBC Learning English website (!), and please pray that the English Class may be a step on the road to faith for at least some of these people.

Personal work: Alan meets up with some of the men in the church and in the student group for encouragement and discipleship. Please pray for *S* – a new believer, full of life and growing fast, for *E* – a useful older man, and for *M* – a young chap who feels God's call to mission. As *M* is given opportunities to serve in the church and in the centre pray that he will rise to the challenge.

Training Men: Another project Alan has in mind is to begin a group to build up the young men as future Christian leaders (deacons, elders, heads of families, etc.) Only one of these young chaps had a Dad at home, and that was a bad relationship. This seems far from unusual in France. Alan would like to get these men together and get them studying the Bible for themselves and leading studies with a view to the future. However – at present Alan has no evenings free, and some of them live a long way out of town. Pray that God will guide us into what he wants us to do.

Early next year the pastor of the church here has to spend some months in the USA trying to raise more support. During that time Alan will probably be covering for him in the church. Shortly afterwards it is likely that Alan will need to return to the UK for deputation to try to raise more support. That's fellowship for you! Meanwhile we are seeking new premises for the church and the pastor's home.

House move: Yes, we've moved. This morning we did the school run in 20 minutes! Bliss! And Alan can get home at any time from the student centre. No more last bus deadlines. The house is plenty big enough, though there is rather more work to be done than we would have liked (decoration, a bit of plumbing, the heating?). Our mortgage is about 250 euros a month cheaper than our rent, but because of the way mission funding is worked out our support requirement will probably go up. (Rent is subsidised by a central fund that everyone pays into.)

Looking more widely: Alan recently attended a workshop for leaders of international churches (English language) to explore the possibilities of starting an international church in Bordeaux. Somewhat perversely, he came back more convinced than ever of the need to invest time in encouraging French Christian men. We need lots of good, solid workers to reach the towns of the Gironde (and beyond) with the gospel, and Frenchmen would be best. And an English language work in the city? Maybe. One day. But preferably linked to the French church if possible.

A bientôt!

Alan, Pat, Gwilym & Catrin

To start or stop receiving this prayer letter, or to change your address please either contact by e-mail phil.harman@deeside.org.uk, or fill in this slip and return it to:

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

Please send the Daveys' prayer letter to:

Name:

Address:

You may like to receive the prayer letter by e-mail. If so please give your e-mail address.
Contact re. financial support directly to: UFM Worldwide, 145 Faringdon Rd, Swindon, Wilts. SN1 5DL