



Chambéry, January 2017

Greetings and happy New Year from a very cold Savoie.

At the time of writing, the northern part of the French alps are facing their worst winter drought since records began, according to the national weather forecast company. It hasn't rained or snowed for over 50 days as high pressures are firmly blocked over our part of the world. The mountains around us should be covered in snow but you have to climb very high in order to find some of the white stuff. Apart from a few places which have known some heavy snowfalls in early December, the rest of the region is still waiting for snow.

Yet that is nothing compared to the spiritual drought that France has been facing for several centuries. Pray with us that the Lord would revive the French church and bring a large harvest in.

The Lord is at work. The door is opened for the gospel in France. Many people are still unhappy to speak about religion, but many others are happy to ask us about our hope, and want to know more. It is a privilege to be able to minister in this country.

Thank you for your financial support and prayers as we continue to serve not only the local church in Cognin, but also further afield through Emmanuel's teaching in Brussels and preaching. As more ministry opportunities arise, your support is more needed than ever.

Looking back, Looking forward

A lot of memorable things happened in 2016. Emmanuel turned 40 in January and was diagnosed with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia in June. He also became an elder in the Cognin Church in October. Esther has been getting to know some of the school mums and has been helping out with the parents association. She also joined the pool of musicians in the church. We both joined the council of the FEU, a student outreach work supported by our local church. Jean-Baptiste turned 11 and started secondary school in Cognin.

We are now looking forward to many more ministry opportunities in 2017. Here is some news for your prayers.

Ministry

Emmanuel is now an elder in the church. He is joining Jean-Pierre who has been the only elder for several years. They both agree that the church needs strengthening, and Emmanuel is looking forward to work with Jean-Pierre. He has already spent some time with a few church folks, and will be spending more time visiting members and non-members over the coming months. *Pray for unity, as Jean-Pierre and Emmanuel get to know each other and lead the church together.* They are working with three deacons: Bill, Samuel and Michel.

Emmanuel taught Ecclesiology in Brussels Bible Institute from September to December. It was a lot of work, but very rewarding. *We are grateful for this new opportunity to contribute to the training of future church leaders for the French speaking world.* He won't be going back this academic year but has been invited to come back next year and teach a course on Early Church History, and another one on Cults. He needs to prepare an exam for his Ecclesiology students and he will have some papers to mark in the coming weeks.

The FEU is going very well. Many students have been attending the meetings this year and the staff workers are excited about it. Emmanuel visited the work a few months ago and met with one of the staff workers

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recently to get to know him better and encourage him. There will be a council meeting at the end of January and Emmanuel or Esther hope to attend another of the weekly FEU meetings soon. *Pray for this work. Pray for us as we try to encourage the staff workers: Joe Mellon, Pamela Sudeck, Brent and Marianne Pilson . Pray that the Christian students will grow in their faith, and that they will be faithful witnesses on the two campuses.* There may be a conference evening soon where Emmanuel would speak, but we are waiting for confirmation.

On the evangelism side, the autumn has been rather slow. Traveling and teaching took Emmanuel a lot of time. The church distributed an evangelistic letter a few weeks before Christmas and Emmanuel went to the market only once with one of the church members.. He hopes to be able to go out more often in the coming months. There are always opportunities for conversations during these outings. Our Christmas Carol service took place on 18th December and we had three visitors, including our neighbour François. One of our plans is to upgrade the evangelistic letter. *Pray for us as we improve our communication of the gospel.*

Several ministry opportunities have arisen recently. Pray for us as we consider whether we should take them or not.

People

Continue to pray for Christian and Geraldine . After attending our church regularly, they decided to go back to the International Church of Christ in Geneva. They still live in Cognin though and we will see them regularly. Emmanuel had lunch with Christian before Christmas and it was interesting to get to understand the mindset of International Church of Christ folks. Christian was so concerned about good works that Emmanuel is wondering whether he has really understood the gospel. We pray that they will soon realise that the International Church of Christ doesn't preach the gospel. Continue to uphold David and Magali who are going through a hard time with Magali's teenage daughter. Pray for another member who lost her elderly mum a few weeks ago.

Esther is still meeting with some friends in the local cafe on Wednesday mornings. It has become a big meeting with lot of people coming and going. She had invited some to the Christmas Carol service, and Anne-Catherine was quite enthusiastic about it but couldn't attend. Emmanuel had a good conversation with her before Christmas. Pray that there will be more opportunities to speak about our hope with these people.

Family

Emmanuel's health is stable. He will see the consultant in February. Jean-Baptiste has just finished a very good first term in high school. He changed football team this year and is making good progress. Maxime and Benjamin are also doing well. Clémence is a happy little girl. We are making the most of her before she starts school in September.

We hope you are all well. We wish you a happy and blessed New Year. If you are anywhere in the Northern French Alps over the coming months, let us know.

Emmanuel, Esther, Jean-Baptiste, Maxime, Benjamin and Clémence.

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