

# 20 Years!

Can you believe it? 20 years ago, in 1984, Alan and I returned to France with a couple of suitcases, our "super dog" and our Justin, firstborn. We had returned to France where we had met, he doing his seminary studies and I was on a team to plant a church. Alan had been totally integrated into the small but spunky French Christian world as one of their own. We were both convinced that evangelism/churchplanting was the greatest need of France. We were sent to Boulogne sur Mer to plant a church. We poured the next fifteen years of our lives into starting a church! What amazing years those were!!! What a privilege to be co-workers with the God of the universe - seeing people rescued out of darkness into Light, have their lives transformed a community of love born. But something that happened several times started pressing our souls; we would see people move away because of work or marriage and find themselves in an area where there was no evangelical church. We became convinced that there was A LOT OF WORK to be done in France! We needed a different model. We who believe in the priesthood of all believers, we needed to put everybody to work and not just cleaning the toilets. We became convinced of the need to model, release, encourage, and train Christians to start churches. That it would be impossible to send enough missionaries or even finance French churchplanters given the socialistic employment system in France.

So here we are 20 years later preparing a long weekend retreat for Christians/churchplants.....Very exciting, kind of scary. We have been convinced that bi-vocational church planters had to be released and empowered, trained and encouraged. It is starting to happen. So on Saturday October 30<sup>th</sup> thru the 1<sup>st</sup> of November in an old monastery run by a Catholic community there will be a gathering of VERY hungry , thirsty people who are seeking to bring the kingdom of God to their town/region. These are not "trained, ordained pastors" - there are bankers, computer programmers, regional directors of grocery stores, bed 'n Breakfast hosts....who have heard the call to "Arise and let your Light shine for all to see! For the glory of the Lord is streaming from you. Darkness as black as night covers the peoples of the earth, but the glory of the Lord shall shine from you...." We were visiting one group last weekend and were so impressed again by the fact that these people are the "hidden heroes of the faith" and are desperate for encouragement, blessing and training.

Twenty years...Thanks for walking with us, praying for us, giving to us, loving us

Sandy, for the Gage's - Alan, Justin, Thomas, Elyssa & Leah

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