



Andy & Uta Buckler
12 rue de Gassicourt
78200 MANTES LA JOLIE
01 30 33 07 95
andy.buckler@free.fr
uta.buckler@free.fr



FEBRUARY 2009

Dear friends

Family downs and ups

As many of you know from our blog (faithfully updated, never read by Uta), parish life since the summer has rather been overshadowed by family events. Uta's bike accident in September rather shook us all, and life has never quite been the same since. After a week in hospital, which was hard for the children in particular and seemed to age Andy by about 15 years, Uta came home with 5 fractures to her jaw and her mouth firmly shut for 6 weeks. Which is when she became an expert in soup-making.

Progress was slow (from Uta's point of view) and miraculous (from the doctors' point of view). Thank you to all of you for your prayers and support during that time. We really were wonderfully surrounded by the church, by friends, prayer partners. It helped us survive.

Since December we have finally been able to move beyond this « survival mode » to get used to the idea of another arrival in the family : **Amélie Zoé** arrived safely on Monday, December 15th. A beautiful baby (this is the mother talking) with the trademark Buckler nose. We welcome her with open arms and are a bit overwhelmed by the sense of responsibility that we carry as her parents. Once again, life will never be quite the same...



Church ministry

In the midst of all this, Andy has done his very best to pastor our church (which has very much pastored us in all these upheavals). Baptisms, weddings, funerals etc have taken their course ; another Alpha course has been completed successfully. We continue to praise God for new people who join the church, and to pray for spiritual growth.

- At the end of October, Andy led **Pierrefonds 2008**, the annual regional youth week-end. He managed to get together a fantastic team of young, dynamic and committed Christians who worked their socks off to present the Gospel to 180 youngsters in a fresh way. A real step forward spiritually. Fearlessly (foolishly ?) he has agreed to head up the 2009 edition. An initial encouragement is that all of the team from last year are motivated to continue.



- **Children's church** – the Christmas presentation for Christmas involved more children than ever ! Over 50 children between 3 and 11 took part, and for once it wasn't a complete stress, thanks to planning in advance and teams of helpers. More generally, the children's work in the church

continues to be an encouragement. Do please pray for the new teams of leaders that have been put into place since September, for ongoing inspiration and love for these children.

- Since September, we have benefited from the presence of **Ben & Rachel Tanner**, a young couple with us for a year to help in the church (also with Crosslinks). They have in particular been investing in the youth work. Do pray for them, and their time here over the next few months. Also that they and we manage to prepare for youth ministry next year when they will no longer be here.



- As a church, we are increasingly getting involved in areas like marriage counselling, helping unemployed individuals, giving financial support in the form of short-term loans etc. We have also continued to be in contact with human tragedy in its many different expressions – divorce, abortions, death, miscarriages, illness - faced with which it is impossible to remain indifferent. Pray for us that we remain sensitive and compassionate when faced with other people's misery and that we may never become indifferent towards the suffering of others.
- We have recently started two new **homegroups** (that makes 5 so far), and are about to launch another **Marriage course** (in March). Do pray that these will be fruitful.

Wider ministry

- At long last, Andy's book on **Calvin and Mission** came out at the end of December (for more details, see our blog). It coincides with 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth in 2009 (John Calvin, that is, not Calvin and Hobbs !) which is a big deal in the protestant world here. Andy is being increasingly asked to do talks in other churches and articles for magazines, etc. It's a real opportunity that God is giving and we trust it will stimulate thinking within the Reformed Church about Mission and Evangelism. At the same time, it is time consuming and time is a precious commodity...
- Andy continues to teach once a week at the Protestant Institute of Theology (IPT) where future Reformed church pastors are trained. Do pray that this also serves to instil vision to the students.



You can catch up with our news on a regular basis, either on our blog <http://andybuckler.blogspot.fr/>

Or on the church website

www.erfmantes.org

Please check them out!

Once again, thank you so much for your prayers...

With much love

Andy and Uta

