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The virgin will give birth to a son,
and they will call him Immanuel, which means "God with us."

Dear Friends,

A fortnight ago, I read the news letter that Anne and I sent last December. It gave me a shock, since at that time we apparently had no idea that within a few weeks Anne would be with the Lord. Recently, I've been reliving in my mind those last few months of her earthly life, witnessing her increasing bodily weakness and her steadfast faith and hope. How I miss her ! Yet so glad that her suffering is in the past, and that she's now enjoying the presence of the Lord, according to His promise.

After Anne's death, I asked the Moulins church elders to give me time before asking me to preach. When I was ready, they invited me to speak on Easter Sunday. That was Anne's favourite day of the year, and it was a privilege to proclaim – through a few tears, certainly – the victory of life over death. I now take part regularly in the teaching programme and other aspects of church life and witness. I've also taken up the calendar ministry again. No longer as editor, but as a contributor and proof reader.

In March, I visited Toulouse, where Anne and I served as missionaries from 1979 to 1986. It was lovely to spend time with Christians who were an important part of our lives then and with whom we've kept in touch. One in particular who became a Christian when I was a student in Toulouse and who was baptised on the same day as me, in May 1971 !

Another important visit was to Scotland, in October. I hadn't been back for five years, and to walk the streets of Edinburgh and to go back to the church where Anne and I met in October 1971 were moving experiences. Even more moving was time spent with several friends from those student days. Some had been Anne's friends before they became mine. Her presence was greatly missed, of course, but it was good to share wonderful memories and encourage one another in God's goodness. I also enjoyed visiting friends formerly from Paisley, where Anne and I spent our first five years together.

My three children, their spouses and children are all well. All involved too in their respective local churches. In Stephen and H  l  na's family, L  onore has gone to Athens for the 3rd year of her Glasgow University Archaeology and Linguistics course. Her brother Scotty has started Sports Science at Lyons University, near home. Their sister Lysandra will be going to senior high school in September.

Rachel and Eddy are as busy as ever in church and student ministry in Besan  on. Rachel is also involved in the French equivalent of the Gospel Coalition's "Women of the Word". Their children – Nathan, Sarah and Odeya – are all making good progress in their high and primary schools, and above all growing in grace !

Jonathan and Priscille belong to a church in Clermont-Ferrand. They and I are so grateful to God that Abiga  lle, who will be six next month, walks, runs and jumps with no sign of the displaced hip she was born with. Since they live nearest to Yzeure – just over an hour's drive – I see them fairly frequently.

I'm looking forward to spending time with the three families in turn for Christmas and the New Year, and I wish you all a real time of blessing as we remember our Saviour's birth.

With my best wishes in Christ,

Allan