

From Jonathan & Rachel in France November 24, 2020

Dear friends,

Autumn greetings from Entrepierres!

The picture is of our current core team. From left to right: **Roger & Dominique, Rachel & Jonathan, Jeanine & Marc.**

It is a wonderful privilege - truly a gift of God's grace - for us to serve together!

Our wider team, made up of associate team members and occasional volunteer helpers, currently comprises the following:

- **Antoine:** chiropractic care
- **Bernard:** repairs & renovations
- **Claire-Lise:** counselling & debriefing, based in the Ardèche area of France
- **Daniel:** chair of our board & psychiatrist, providing counselling & medical care
- **Laurence:** general practitioner, providing medical advice, particularly for burnout.



We appreciate your prayers for each one: for health and strength, for God's wisdom, and for renewed joy in serving Him and His servants scattered throughout the 29 French-speaking countries of the world.

Reasons why missionaries sometimes struggle (and what can be done)

Someone emailed us recently to ask what, in our experience, are the main reasons why missionaries sometimes struggle, leading to mental health issues and burnout.

You may be interested in our response, as it is the reason why we do what we do.

6 reasons why missionaries struggle:

- Interpersonal conflicts within their missionary team.
- Unclear, unrealistic or ambiguous job descriptions and role definitions.
- Unresolved grief linked to losses incurred as a result of multiple transitions.
- Cross-cultural stress and adjustment issues.
- Pressure to perform and produce visible results.
- Inadequate attention to self-care and lack of a healthy work-life balance.

This was followed by a second question: *What can supporting churches and missionary organizations do to promote positive mental health habits in missionaries?*

10 things churches and organizations can provide, encourage or help missionaries to do to promote their mental health:

1. Take regular breaks to unwind and replenish (including days off, holidays and sabbaticals).
2. Be accountable to a mentor or supervisor.
3. Have the opportunity to debrief after each term of service.
4. Nourish and nurture their spiritual life (engage in the spiritual disciplines, have access to good books and teaching...).
5. Take specific training in interpersonal skills and stress management, such as the Sharpening Your Interpersonal Skills course developed by www.itpartners.org
6. Learn how to acknowledge and manage one's emotions and grief.
7. Give adequate attention to sleep, nutrition and physical exercise.

8. Stay focused on a grace-based rather than a performance-based theology of service and ministry.
9. Set reachable goals, maintain realistic expectations of what can be accomplished, and accept one's limits.

Be spiritually covered by having adequate prayer support.

The need to expand our team

In recent years we have received so many requests from Christian workers wanting to come to our centre for help that we must regularly (sadly and frustratingly) refuse requests due to a lack of availability. **The situation has led us and our team to realize that we need to expand in order to better meet the needs of those we are called to help.**

We are in conversation with a French missionary couple whose experience and training would be an excellent match for our needs. They are interested in joining our team and would be available in two years from now.

Please pray that God will make it possible for them to join us.

In order for us to include this new couple on our team, we will need to have extra space for them to live and serve at our centre. We have our eye on a small property that is just next to us and would be ideal for the housing of future co-workers (small house in the foreground below).



For many years we have felt that the Lord wants this house to become part of the ministry due to its position and proximity, and we have been praying that we would discern His timing and be ready and able to integrate it into the work when it becomes available. We believe that time will soon come.

The current owners know that we are interested, but so far have not shown an interest in selling.

This could change at

any time, however, as they are advanced in years, they have not been here for the past three years (they purchased it as a holiday home but rarely use it), and they have no children so no heirs.



Please join us in praying that God will move the current owners to sell and pray that we will have the means to purchase it.

While we wait for the Lord to act in His way and in His timing, we are sensing that He is asking us to set aside whatever funds we can so that we are not caught out and unable to purchase the house (or at least make a down payment) when the owners decide to sell.

To this end, a special fund has been set up with MSC Canada, called "[Pierres Vivantes Building Fund](#)". If you would like to contribute, [click here](#).

Family news:

Our three children are keeping well and hope to be with us for Christmas. Whether current travel restrictions will enable this to happen is yet to be seen...

Thank you for your love, prayers and support. We are so grateful for each one of you!

With our warm greetings,

Jonathan and Rachel

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If you would like to help us come alongside God's workers to help them manage the pressures of serving Him in challenging places, tax-deductible giving can be made to **MSC Canada** (msccanada.org) and designated for "**Association Pierres Vivantes**".