



PERSPECTIVES

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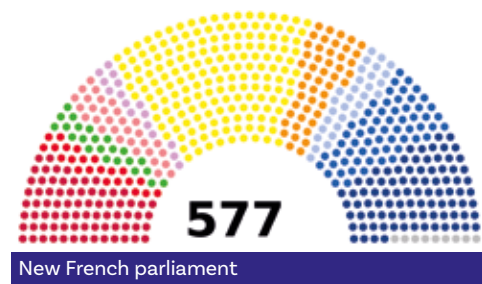
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Paul's page: Times of change

Reflections by Paul Cooke, France Mission's Director

French people have been called to polling stations quite a bit since the last issue of *France Mission Perspectives*: twice for the presidential elections and twice for the legislative elections. The former, of course, returned Emmanuel Macron for a second term of office; but the latter resulted in a very different National Assembly with over half of the victorious *députés* being new arrivals. Although President Macron's supporters form the biggest single party with 246 seats out of 577, it's still not clear how this can translate into a majority capable of governing the country. At this time of **political uncertainty**, it's important that we **pray** for "all those in authority", that our brothers and sisters in France "may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2.1–2).



This is also a period of change in the world of French Protestantism. As explained later in this issue, our principal mission partner in France (**Perspectives**) now has a new President and a new-look Directorate. Do please **pray** for Patrice Niveaux as he takes over from Patrice Alcindor as President and for all those who are entering into new mandates.

But there have also been recent changes in the CNEF (National Council of French



Evangelicals) and in the FPF (French Protestant Federation). Relationships between the two organisations haven't always been easy, but the two new Presidents – Erwan Cloarec for the CNEF and Christian Krieger for the FPF – seem keen to build bridges. Pastor Krieger has pointed to the FPF's 2022 initiative called *Oser lire la Bible ensemble* (= "Dare to read the Bible together") as a place where the various strands of **French Protestantism** can put into practice Paul's words in Ephesians 4.3: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." May the Lord help us all in that endeavour, especially if we too are having to navigate times of change!

Every blessing in Christ

Paul



Paul Cooke

Front page photo: A GBU summer camp



2021 financial review

Paul Cooke provides an overview of how supporters' generous donations were used last year

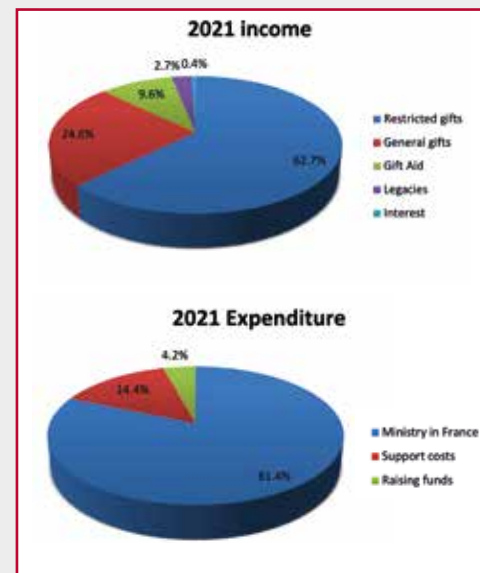
Compared to the previous year, 2021 saw an increase in total income and a decrease in total expenditure.

Income rose from £398k to £425k, while expenditure fell from £399k to £360k (see pie charts for more detail). The increase in total income was largely due to higher than anticipated giving to the general fund – so thank you for this wonderful surprise! Last year, over 81% of total expenditure went directly towards supporting work in France, benefitting 27 churches/institutions and 33 workers. The Trustees have already identified suitable missionaries and projects to support from surplus reserves for the current year.

Legacy revenue rose last year (from £5k in 2020 to £12k in 2021) which added to our higher-than-anticipated income. Legacies are generally unpredictable, so we never include them in our base plans but, if they arrive, they can make a **huge difference** going forward – a legacy really is the ultimate gift.

With little scope for advertising etc. last year, we were only able to welcome a limited number of **new prayer partners** in 2021, though there were still 49 new entries in the database. This year, we're investing particularly in exhibiting with a view to attracting new supporters. We're blessed with fantastically faithful long-term supporters but are conscious of the need to recruit new partners.

A huge thank you to all supporters, old and new, whose prayerful generosity is



helping God's kingdom to grow in France. May He continue to enable and prosper the work through the gifts and prayers of His people!

The Annual Report and Accounts for 2021 are now available for download (bit.ly/ARAC21). If you'd like any more information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you once again for your amazing support!

If you'd like a statement of personal gifts for the 2021–22 tax year, please just ask and I'll gladly supply you with one (paulcooke@francemission.org).



Student ministry in the Rhône-Alpes region



GBU worker Lycia Français reports on her first year in post

Paul Cooke writes: *growing up, Lycia spent time in the Perspectives church in Châteauroux where FM Trustees Paul & Marjorie Dowling got to know her well. Through supporting Lycia, FM is renewing its connection with the GBU where Dave Brown served as General Secretary for many years.*

My ministry

Hello, I'm Lycia and I live in Lyon. After doing a year's internship with Christian Unions Ireland in Dublin, I started work last September with the **Groupe Biblique Universitaires (GBU)**. I'm the coordinator for the Rhône-Alpes region around Lyon and I work with 7 student groups in Clermont Ferrand, Saint-Étienne, Valence, Grenoble, and Lyon (+ planting projects in Chambéry and Annecy).



My role is to **train and encourage the leaders** of the student groups and to organize weekends away for students to encourage a strong regional dynamic. I also meet every other month in Paris with my colleagues from other regions of France to discuss the movement's projects. When my timetable allows, I take part in local meetings with pastors of churches in the cities mentioned above to discuss how we can best shine God's light in our context.

Although it hasn't always been easy to settle into this **new role** and adjust to the various responsibilities and projects in progress, I praise the Lord for my colleagues and other people that He put on my path to serve Him and persevere together. I've also really seen

God working in students' hearts and people coming to Him through reading His word.

“I've really seen God working in students' hearts and people coming to Him through reading His word.”

Some of the main challenges we face in student ministry in France right now are due to **Covid and French law**. The pandemic isolated students and threatened their mental health in significant ways. In France, because of the historic separation of Churches and the State, being a religious society at uni means you have no official status (despite the organisation existing on a national level), so there are very few institutions in France where the local GBU group is recognised as a uni society. This means they can't advertise events in the same way as other societies and most groups have to meet in cafés near the campus or in a student house.

GBU vision/mission

GBU was created in 1943 and is part of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES); it's the equivalent of Christian Unions in the UK or InterVarsity in the US. There are about **100 groups in France**. As a Christian student organization, our main



A GBU summer camp



GBU staff team



GBU chalet near Mont Blanc



Recent regional weekend away

priority is to spread the good news of Jesus in French universities. Students are often quite open to discussing their worldview and talking about values, priorities, and what life is about. This is a **fluid stage of life** for many of them as they move around, go through life transitions, choose a career, decide what to do with their free time, and think about integrating into new communities.

In this context, we see the need to give every student the opportunity to open the Bible (maybe for the first time) and discover who Jesus is. Every year, we see about **1000 students** taking part in discussions around the Bible. As students study the Bible together, preconceived ideas about Jesus and the world are challenged and young people are enabled to grow by serving other students on campus and in a local church.

Alongside these standard activities, the GBU offers biblical training, organizes conferences, and runs training camps over the summer. Some of our **latest projects** include developing international student ministry, youth ministry in high schools, and professional Christian groups enabling believers to think biblically about issues that are linked to a specific field (e.g. teaching, business, healthcare). **Thank you so much** for supporting and praying for our ministry!

You can contact Lycia at lycia.francais@gmail.com and find out more about the GBU at gbu.fr

Stepping out



Former missionary (now Trustee) Paul Dowling reports on the Perspectives Conference

Picture the scene. A mass of bodies glides solemnly around a large hall in pairs. One person in each pair has their eyes shut and their hand rests on the hand of their partner, who is guiding them gently around the room, taking great care not to bump into anyone. At the same time, everyone is singing a haunting gospel song in lightly accented English: "It is I, take courage, don't be afraid." This was one of the **most memorable moments** from the recent annual conference for church leaders in the Perspectives denomination, which Marjorie and I had the privilege of taking part in.

This exercise was in the context of a deep and extended exploration of the passage



The venue



Matthieu Koumarios

in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus comes towards the disciples walking on the water. Pastor and Perspectives Board member, **Matthieu Koumarios**, led the delegates into the passage in several stages, using a variety of approaches to uncover the hidden depths of the story. We were invited to ask questions beginning "I wonder...", to look at the events of the story from the perspective of the different participants (including the boat!), and to choose a key word from each verse to make a simple summary of the story. But for me personally it was the **trust exercise** that touched me most. The discovery that, as the person being guided, it was much easier just to relax, let go, and let the guide



Trust exercise

do the work led me to reflect how much simpler our lives might be if we trusted Jesus completely and let Him do the worrying, as it were.

For us it was a particular joy to be present at the Conference, as it was the first time we'd been able to get back to France since our retirement in 2020. There were many **joyful reunions** with friends and colleagues we'd not seen for two years, especially as we managed in the same trip to visit our former church in Châteauroux.

As well as the Bible exploration and an AGM, the Conference included a selection



AGM voting

of **workshops** on diverse subjects ranging from the practical, such as church administration in the current legislative climate, to the more pastoral, including one entitled "And if suffering were the greatest blessing?". There was an **evening of thanksgiving** where new colleagues and Board members were welcomed and retiring members were thanked, including, of course, **Patrice Alcindor** who has retired as President. A video with dozens of short clips of people saying in different ways "Merci, Patrice" was shown – a moment of great emotion.

There was also plenty of time for **chatting and catching up** with news over meals and



Patrice & Yannick Alcindor watching the thank-you video

coffee and outside in the beautiful grounds of the Lycée-Collège-Internat d'Île de France where the Conference was held.

Matthieu Koumarios went on to give us a number of steps to help us to put our trust in Jesus and "get out of the boat and walk on the water". One phrase that particularly struck me was the following: "God's call does not come to us in the

"A video with dozens of short clips of people saying in different ways 'Merci, Patrice' was shown – a moment of great emotion."

absence of storms, but in the presence of God." Is God perhaps calling the Perspectives churches to take **new steps of faith** at this time of transition with a new leadership team taking its place?

You can contact Paul at pauldowling@francemission.org



Training the next generation of French gospel workers

Missionary Laura Nelson explains the role of 2 Timothée 2,2



Paul Cooke writes: *Laura is based at the Église des Ternes in Paris, a Baptist church with strong links to Perspectives. As FM now helps administer Laura's UK support, I invited her to share a little about her ministry, especially as it resonates so strongly with FM's own Training & Education Fund.*

Just over 20 years ago, freshly married, my half-French husband and I attended a France Mission meeting in Gloucestershire where **Daniel Liechti** (part of the Perspectives' Directorate until 2020) was presenting his research on the need for church-planting in France. We barely needed convincing but relished the discussion with other like-minded Francophiles. We left even more committed to **praying for the Lord**



Laura, Edward, and their children

to use us, however He might choose, in His glorious kingdom project.

Six months later we'd moved into the 17th arrondissement of Paris and ended up church-planting with the **Baptist Association** (AEEBLF). Edward worked closely with many FM pastors and had the privilege of inheriting Daniel Liechti's seat on the national evangelical council (CNEF) with a particular role in encouraging **national church-planting initiatives**. We saw a network of Paris church-plants spring up over 10 years, by God's grace, before the Lord called Edward home in August 2020, aged 45, in a climbing accident.

In the aftermath of that **tragedy**, as all kinds of people reached out and reflected on



Edward Nelson

Edward's humble but enthusiastic contribution to the work of the gospel here, it became clear that there was an **opportunity** God was giving us. From the very first year of the Église des Ternes church-plant we had at least one intern every year. And every year Edward ran a preacher's club to train young men who showed potential. He

was convinced that training up the next generation of French gospel workers was a **vital priority**.

"Edward was convinced that training up the next generation of French gospel workers was a vital priority."

Others shared this conviction and so, on the day of Edward's memorial service, **2 Timothée 2,2** was launched: a foundation committed to helping the next generation train for gospel ministry. Many people in the UK, the US, and France gave and continue to give, and we've been thrilled to



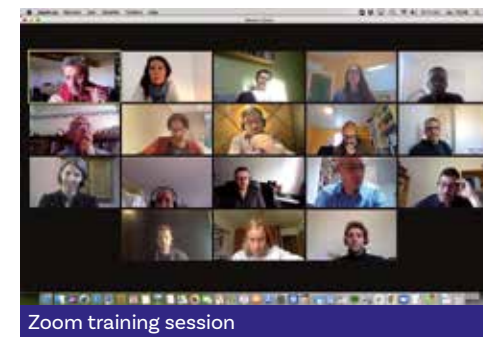
support our first 10 interns in 2020–21. The aim is three-fold:

- **Generous bursaries** to make the idea of a year's internship a financial possibility.
- **A community of support and training** to complement what the local church offers.
- **A raised awareness in churches**, so that training interns and looking out for potential gospel workers becomes a normal and expected part of church life.



Intern Mariya speaking at a women's brunch in Paris

It's been a great joy to get to know these young men and women and to host the **monthly Zoom training sessions**. The latter involve someone with ministry experience here addressing an important topic, hopefully laying foundations for long-term faithful gospel ministry. The Lord is raising up workers for this harvest field. And they're **desperately needed**. The



Zoom training session

CNEF calculated recently that 1000 new pastors will be needed just to replace those heading into retirement. And we all know the crying need for new churches in areas where there's no local church witness.

Please pray for this new movement. There are already more than 15 interns applying for 2021–22, and some of them would not have considered that possible without hearing about 2 Timothée 2,2. As with any new initiative, we need to be careful as we grow, to maintain a clear mission and control the quality of the training and the internships. But we also want to be ambitious. *Lord, do more than we ask or imagine! For Your glory, raise up a generation of French men and women who love Your word, preach and live Your grace, and urgently and humbly seek the salvation of those around them.*

If you'd like to find out more, go to 2timothee22.fr or contact Laura at 2tim2.2.en@gmail.com



50 years on: time to take stock

Peter & Rachel Calvert reflect on Romorantin's 50th anniversary



In 1971, the main employer of the town of Romorantin, capital of the very rural Sologne region of central France, was the motor manufacturer Matra, famous for its sports cars that would go on to win the Le Mans 24-hour race three years running from 1972. 50 years on, all that remains of Matra in Romorantin is a museum to former glories. But the evangelical church founded in that year by a team of **Canadian missionaries** is still going.

It's had its ups and downs, but over the weekend of 11–12 June this year we had the privilege of celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness to our church in the presence of one of those original Canadian church-planters, **Henry Friesen**, who'd crossed the Atlantic especially for the occasion. He recounted to us the early



Peter praying with Patrice Niveaux

history of the church, beginning with the first evangelistic meetings, held in a marquee on a patch of waste ground. On the Sunday morning, new Perspectives President Patrice Niveaux joined us, along with several other old friends of the church, for a **thanksgiving service**.

Anniversaries are a good opportunity to seek to raise the profile of the church by inviting the **mayor** (to whom we presented a Bible) and the press. They are also punctuation points that encourage



Thanksgiving service



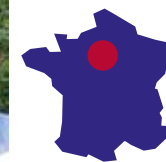
The mayor receiving a Bible

us to take stock of where we are at. The church leadership team in Romorantin is doing this at the moment by going through an **evaluation process**, organised by Perspectives, based on a detailed questionnaire covering all aspects of church life. **We value your prayers** for this: that the Holy Spirit would use it to guide us according to His priorities. 50 years on, the church is still going, but far too many people in this corner of France still live and die without hearing the good news of Jesus communicated to them in a meaningful way.

You can contact Peter & Rachel at pierrerachel.calvert@gmail.com

Five recent baptisms

Missionaries Jonathan & Rachel Vaughan share good news from Paris-Cardinet



Four members of our congregation were baptised recently. At the end of March, we borrowed the larger premises of the nearby Tabernacle church for the **baptisms** of Juliette and our eldest daughter, Naomi. Juliette's baptism had originally been scheduled for March 2020, right when lockdown started. There were a large number of invited guests; some had never been to a Protestant church service before. Many told us how much they appreciated the warm welcome, easy-to-follow service



very recently. We were very happy to have the Clichy church join us to celebrate this special day.

An evening service in May on the theme



Sylvain Lombet

of "**Christians and psychology**" with Sylvain Lombet, pastor of the Perspectives church at Le Blanc-Mesnil, drew a large number of people. Sylvain trained and worked as a psychologist before going into ministry and gave us a clear biblical perspective on a subject that many Christians are unsure about.

The end of the school year meant saying **some goodbyes**: to Paul, who's returning to Belgium after a year studying at Vaux theological seminary; and to David and Alice Hoffmann and their three young children who're moving to the south of France (David was one of our elders). We're grateful for all they've contributed to Paris-Cardinet church and pray that God would bless them in the next stage of their lives.

You can contact Jonathan & Rachel at jony.vaughan@gmail.com

"There were a large number of invited guests; some had never been to a Protestant church service before."

and the lively singing. Some took a copy of John's Gospel away with them at the end.

We held **another baptism service** at the end of June, this time in our own building, for Halim, Angeline, and H. (from a Muslim background). Halim is a young man who's been coming to the evening service and reading the Bible with Jonathan. Angeline comes to the morning service with her teenage son, a nephew, and two nieces. H. recently started attending the new **church-plant in Clichy** with David & Mary Brown and discovered the Christian faith

A time of transition for Perspectives

Paul Cooke introduces the new Directorate

As mentioned earlier (pages 6–7), the recent Perspectives Conference contained a very moving farewell to **Patrice Alcindor**. Patrice served as President from the time of the merger between France-Mission and Vision-France in 2018 but, before that, had already been serving as the President of France-Mission since 2010. 12 years is a long time to spend leading a national organisation, especially when combined with a role as a local pastor! His prayerful hard work, his tact and humility, his strategic vision and pastoral heart were frequently mentioned in tributes. Please join me in **giving thanks** for Patrice's faithful service and pray that the Lord will continue to guide him and his family into whatever comes next (not least, pastoring the main Perspectives church in Nantes).

Patrice's replacement is... another Patrice! Until recently, **Patrice Niveaux** served as pastor of the Perspectives church in Vitré and as the Regional Director for central and western France and, latterly, for northern France and the Paris area too (a very

large patch, obviously!). He shared at the Conference that he felt very under-qualified for the role he was taking on, but that he was trusting in the Lord to *"meet all [his] needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4.19). Please do **pray** for him (and his family) as he takes on this new role.

There are two other new members of the Perspectives directorate: **Matthieu Koumarianos** (pastor of My Gospel Church, Paris) as Director of Development and **Arnaud Schrodi** (pastor of the Église de la Krutenau, Strasbourg) as Regional Director for the Grand-Est. **Jean-Georges Gantenbein**, who previously held that position, will replace **Didier Fuin** as Regional Director of the South-East for a year. **Guillaume Hirschy**, Perspectives' Administrative & Financial Director completes the team. They would all value your **ongoing prayers**. Thank you.

Patrice Alcindor will be one of the main speakers at this year's France Day (see page 15). You can read more about Patrice Niveaux's story at bit.ly/PNiveaux



Snapshots from Marseille

Missionary Simon Allchin underlines the value of collaboration



Marseille is France's **second largest city**, with a population of 871,000. However, it only has 25 evangelical churches: a ratio of 1 for every 35,000 people – a long way short of the "1pour10,000" aimed at by CNEF (National Council of French Evangelicals). The upside of this is that there are **many shared activities** done through different networks of Christians in the city.

This first photo comes from our sister Perspectives Church in the **Saint-Just** area of the city. With the help of two American missionary families, they've just opened a sort of **day centre** near one of Marseille's métro stations where people can drop in to



have a coffee, play table tennis, bring their laptops, talk about the Christian faith etc. This centre is a real blessing for the churches and offers a chance to bring the gospel message into the heart of a very busy city.

The next photo (apologies for the camera wobble!) is of a **prayer meeting** we had in June with other churches from the north of Marseille. We often meet up as a network



of local churches and are currently thinking about inviting an **Algerian Christian music group** to do a series of outreach events in the area before the end of the year. This is an important prayer subject, as about 60% of the population around us is of North African origin.

Finally, here's the **joint service** we had at Chante-Colline (a Christian centre in the hills above the city) in June, during a day out with the other Perspectives Churches in the Marseille area. **Please do pray** for us all as we seek to serve Christ and make Him known in this spiritually needy city.



You can contact Simon at simon.allchin20@gmail.com and will be able to hear more from him at this year's online France Day (see page 15).



The new Perspectives Directorate

L to R: Patrice Niveaux, Matthieu Koumarianos, Arnaud Schrodi, Jean-Georges Gantenbein, Guillaume Hirschy



Inauguration at the Institut Biblique de Nogent

IBN fundraiser Rachel Vaughan shares encouraging news



Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. (Psalm 127.1)

On Saturday 2nd April, the Institut Biblique de Nogent welcomed alumni, friends, donors, board members, faculty, and staff for the official inauguration of our new accommodation block. Étienne Lhermenault, college principal, reminded us of our dependence on God not only to build, but also to fill the new building with students, that the work might not be in vain. **We're encouraged** by the number of enrolments and continue to pray that God would raise up more workers for the harvest field.

We praise God for His provision: following the inauguration, we received over €115,000 in donations, meaning the full cost of the project has now been raised. So, **thank you**



Accommodation in the new building

all for your support and prayers. Since the inauguration, the furniture has been delivered, and the new kitchen and dining room

have been installed. We've already welcomed guests over the summer and the first student residents will arrive in September. **We thank the Lord** for His work and entrust our ministry to Him for the decades to come.

You can contact Rachel at rachel.vaughan@ibnogent.org



Invitation: a holiday with a difference in the Alpes-Maritimes

Missionary Rachel Calvert invites you to save the date: 17th-23rd September 2023



I want to tell you about an opportunity to meet like-minded Christians who have a heart for France and to **find out more** of what God is doing through France Mission. There'll be time to get to know some of France Mission's partners on the ground in France, to explore different aspects of their work, and to open the Scriptures together. How does creation care fit in with church planting, evangelism, and care for the vulnerable, for example?

We'll be based in the mountains at Les Courmettes (see bit.ly/3QU0kPG), with beautiful views over the Mediterranean.



Les Courmettes reserve

There'll be optional times of worship and teaching each morning, and ample opportunities to walk, to relax, and to discover the local wildlife with the A Rocha team. More details in the autumn!

You can contact Rachel at rachel.calvert@arocha.org



Other news from Paul Cooke

France Day 8th October 2022

Please do join us via Zoom for the next France Day on Saturday 8th October, God willing. Our speakers from France will be Patrice Alcindor (Nantes) and Simon Allchin (Marseille). I'll also be giving a talk, and there'll be plenty of time for Q&A, prayer, and worship. More information and joining details will be made available via the monthly email prayer bulletin so, if you don't currently receive that, please just let me know at paulcooke@francemission.org.



Patrice Alcindor



Simon Allchin

year, go to bit.ly/ETF-22. A further £2,500 has so far arrived in response to the most recent appeal letter and the Fund will remain open for any future donations. We already have several new applications for funding, so **please pray** for wisdom as the Trustees assess these.

New book

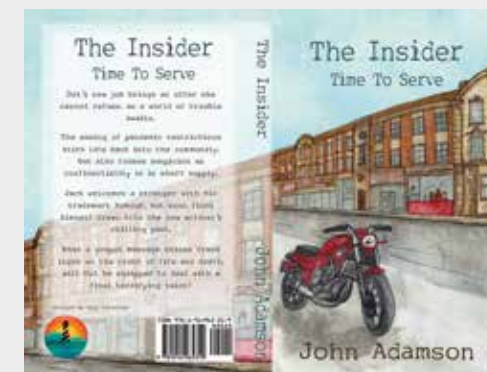
I recently enjoyed reading FM supporter John Adamson's new novel *The Insider: Time to Serve* that focuses on a Christian community in Liverpool with strong links to France. A mysterious stranger joins the group and an outreach week based around Luke's Gospel culminates in tense life-and-death drama. For orders and enquiries, please email John at johnbadamson@aol.com. The cost is £9.99 plus £2.20 p&p to UK addresses, with John kindly donating profits to FM.

Education & Training Fund



Jean Massoussi

A big thank you to everyone whose gifts and prayers have helped us set this up over the past year. If you'd like to read how the Fund has been supporting Jean Massoussi this



France Mission: Love France – Love Mission – Love Church

France Mission's vision is to see increasing numbers of people in France encountering God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – through the work and witness of local evangelical churches. As a support organisation, we provide targeted, strategic support to help the French evangelical church move closer to achieving its own goals. To find out more, please visit francemission.org.

If your church or small group would like to hear more about the Lord's work in France, please contact Paul Cooke to book a speaker:

- Email: paulcooke@francemission.org
- Phone: (+44) 07980 450462 or (+44) 01392 213275
- Post: PO Box 743, Exeter EX1 9RN, UK

Support France Mission when you shop online

We've registered with two websites – **easyfundraising** and **TheGivingMachine** – that enable you to raise funds for France Mission whenever you shop online. Both sites provide access to a wide variety of popular retailers, are easy to use, and don't cost you (or us) a penny!



So, if you shop online, please do consider signing up either at easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/francemission or at thegivingmachine.co.uk/causes/france-mission and help us raise more funds to support the Lord's work in France.

We're also registered with **AmazonSmile**. If you already have an Amazon account, you'll be able to use the same account details for AmazonSmile.



On your first visit to smile.amazon.co.uk you need to select a charitable organisation to receive donations (please select France Mission).

Amazon will remember your selection and, as long as you make purchases through *smile.amazon.co.uk* (rather than the standard Amazon website), eligible purchases will result in an automatic donation to France Mission at no extra cost to you.

Also, your Amazon mobile app can now be linked to your Amazon Smile account so that purchases made via the app will also generate income for France Mission.

Thank you!

