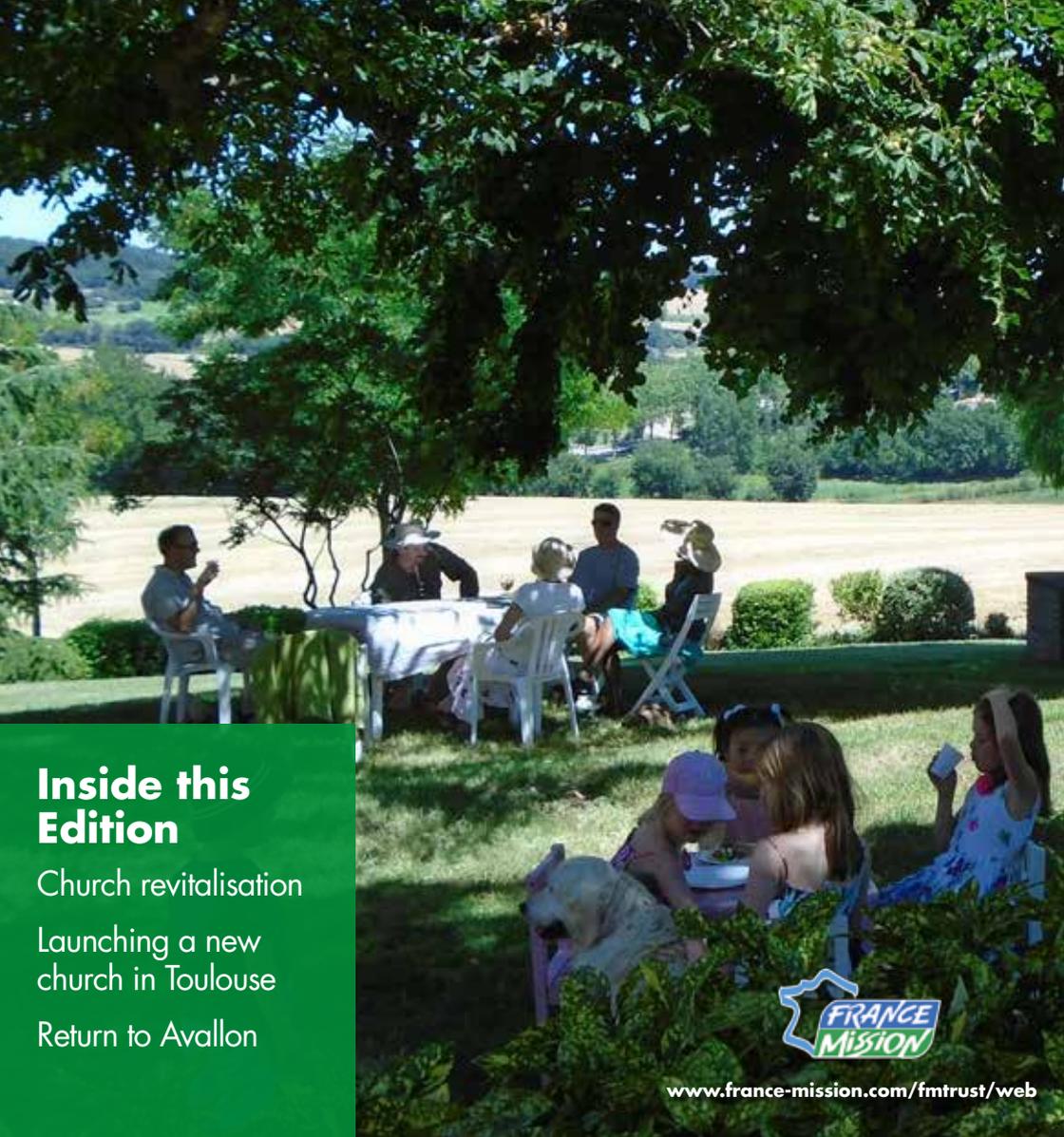


action

Missionnaire



Inside this Edition

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Return to Avallon



Paul's page: "The light shines in the darkness"



Reflections by Dr Paul Cooke, FM's British Director

Since the last issue of the magazine, France has rarely been out of the headlines, often for the wrong reasons... First came the **massacre in Nice** on the country's national day, followed by the murder of an 85-year-old priest towards the end of July. Then came the **burkini row** which stirred up such powerful emotions. Less publicised, a fire destroyed the Assembly of God church in Calais – arson is suspected, as was the case earlier in the year with the AoG church in Manosque. And, as I write, the issue of the **"Jungle" camp** in Calais is once again front-page news.

But, despite the darkness, **God continues to shine His light in France** – and the reports in this issue provide solid reminders that *"the darkness has not overcome it"* (John 1:5). Even though the Lloyds are currently struggling to find a suitable public meeting place in Auray (pages 4-5), it's wonderful to read how their advice has helped

a new church to be planted in Toulouse (pages 6-7). Thanks in large measure to the generosity of FM Trust supporters, Hannah Prior has been able to embark on **new training** as she prepares for long-term service in France (page 3). Although FM's main focus is on church-planting – as exemplified by the Calverts in Blois (page 10) – it's great to hear of Dave Brown's strategic involvement in the Europe-wide **Church revitalisation** programme (pages 8-9). Supporters Laurence Richardson and Geoffrey Crees share stories about how our fellowship in the gospel **transcends national boundaries** (pages 12-13). And, alongside new initiatives like the café church being trialled by the Vaughans (page 11), Paul & Marjorie Dowling remind us that much Christian witness is about **perseverance** (page 14).



Thank you for your perseverance in prayer and support for all that the Lord is doing in France.

Every blessing

Paul

FRANCE MISSION IN BRIEF:

61 Churches and centres across France

123 Missionaries & trainees

16 Workers from the UK

Church growth through multiplication



www.facebook.com/FMTrust

@PaulFmtrust

Front page photo: A "Super Sunday" event for Church 31 in Toulouse

Fresh challenges in Paris



Trainee missionary Hannah Prior is embarking on a new chapter

In August I successfully completed a four-week **TEFL course** in Southampton. It was very intense, but I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to do it. I think it'll be very useful for my time in France: I learnt lots about English teaching but also about more **transferable skills** such as giving presentations and leading activities.

This *rentrée* has seen a few changes for me. My apprenticeship in the FM church in Le Pré Saint-Gervais has come to an end. I'm still living in the same flat in Le Pré but I've started studying at the **Faculté Libre de Théologie Évangélique** in Vaux-sur-Seine, north-west of Paris, and started attending the nearby **FM church in Paris-Télégraphe**, a great opportunity to experience being part of a bigger church in France. I've also started a part-time job **teaching English** at the Town Hall in Le Pré on Monday evenings. Ilka Fauveau (wife of Philippe, the pastor at Télégraphe) retired in the summer and I've been able to take on her job.



Please give thanks:

- For successful completion of the TEFL course and all I was able to learn.
- For the opportunity to study theology and for God's provision for my needs through paid work and people/churches that support me.

Please pray:

- That I'd grow in my relationship with God, and that studying theology wouldn't become a dry exercise but rather something that helps me to know and love God more.
- That I wouldn't drift into a "Christian Bubble", that I'd maintain the good friendships I already have with non-Christian friends and always be seeking to live and speak for Jesus wherever I am.
- That I'd settle in well to the new routine I have (teaching, studying, Télégraphe) and manage my time wisely.
- For wisdom for plans for my long-term future in France beyond this year.



You can contact Hannah at

hannah_prior@hotmail.com and can read more about her plans for this year at <https://goo.gl/e4iKal>.

Location, location, location

Missionaries Chris & Fiona Lloyd explain the difficulty of finding a suitable meeting space in Auray

One of the steps in the process of starting a church is to find a public meeting place. It's important that this be a **public meeting place** and not held in a private home.

Why is this important? There are a whole lot of **unwritten customs** involved with inviting someone to your home. In general, you invite someone into your home as an indication that they are a long-term friend or they are a member of the family. You're expressing confidence in them by welcoming them into your private world. So it's not usual to invite into your home a casual acquaintance or a stranger – especially in France, where social relationships have different “rules” from those in the UK.

So, the members of our small church who meet with us in our home in Auray are at ease because we're the ones who invite them.



Sadly, Auray's bustling market doesn't offer rooms!



“In France social relationships have different ‘rules’ from those in the UK.”

However, they're not at all at ease with the idea of inviting a friend to come along with them: because **their friends are strangers to us** and to everyone else in the church. This is the case even if we say that we'd be very happy to welcome them.

So, if we want our church members to be able to invite their friends to be with Christians worshipping God then we **need to find a public meeting place**.

The options of potential public meeting places facing a French church-plant are the following:

- Convert part of a private property into a meeting room.
- Rent a building, shop space, café, conference room in the private sector.
- Set up an appeal for funds in order to purchase land or an existing building.
- Request the use of a municipal public meeting room.



You may ask: “Why don’t you find a school to meet in? They’re free at weekends, there’s plenty of space, and it would mean some revenue for the school...” Well, that may be correct, but it’s illegal in France for a religious organisation to use a state school as a meeting place for a church service. It may be possible to request the use of a private Catholic school.

As you can probably work out, most of the options require finances that a church-plant simply doesn’t have. So our first attempt has been to request the use of a municipal public meeting room. Unfortunately **this request has been refused**, on the basis that it will set a precedent for undesirable groups to be able to rent such rooms. Our next option is to approach the Catholic priest and request the use of a room that they have next to their church building.

If this fails then we may have to go back to the hotel room which we used in the summer holidays. **Please do pray** that the Lord will lead us to the right solution.

Having amassed a fair bit of experience in church-planting over the past few decades, Chris and Fiona were delighted to be able to share some ideas with Denise Stevenson when she contacted them about her own desire to start an evangelical church near Toulouse (not with France Mission, but that wasn’t important). You can read Denise’s story over the page.

You can contact the Lloyds at
chris.lloyd@orange.fr



One option



And another



And another



And another

Church 31: a new beginning in Toulouse



**“My power works best in weakness”
(2 Corinthians 12:9; NLT)**

The first seed was sown at an English-speaking women’s ministry in 2012. **First Fridays**, as the name implies, met every first Friday of the month for worship, teaching, prayer, and community. By the spring of 2015 it had become clear that this was only the beginning.

I’d approached the pastor of my local French Baptist church for **advice**. He proposed a message entitled “What is Church?” – in essence, an encouragement to attend a local church. Not only were the women stirred by the message, they went one step further by asking: “Why can’t we start our own?”

Matters proceeded apace. In April 2015 we held our first **Super Sunday**: a day for our families, where we ate and spent time together. In the meantime, I’d been busy following up contacts from Thomas Koning, my pastor in Albi, including a link to France Mission Trust, who sent us their **church-planting DVD** which a small group of us watched together at our first “Praying, Planning and Planting” meeting in May 2015. Paul Cooke introduced me to Chris Lloyd



Denise & Carole (left) at the Forum des Associations in Pibrac

who gave us lots of good, honest advice, based on his experiences in France. Some of it was challenging – it really made us analyse who we are and why we were doing this.

In July, our second Super Sunday brought **50 people** to our home. We worshipped, prayed, and listened to a message from one of our young people who’d recently returned from a mission trip to Albania with Organisation Mobilisation. We held our second church planning meeting facilitated by an experienced Toulouse-based American Pastor. We committed to hosting **monthly “Preview Services”** from September 2015.

The first of these services was full. People stepped up to lead Junior Church, worship, hospitality and to preach. We clearly needed a regular venue and in November our prayers were answered when the Baptist church in Minimes (Toulouse) rented us their former building until June 2016.

We met there in November, holding an Extraordinary General Meeting after the service to elect Association officers (President, Secretary and Treasurer) and a minimum of 15 members – the requirements to become an **official French 1905 Association**.

Our application (using France Mission’s guideline documents) was approved online.



Relaxing at Super Sunday



The first service in Pibrac

L'Église Protestante de Toulouse (known as Church 31) was officially born in January 2016 and registered in Pibrac, where we believed God wanted us based. Come mid-February it became abundantly clear why. A meeting with the *Mairie* (Town Hall) was scheduled. Lunchtime that day found us circling the Town Hall building in heavy rain. Our **prayer walk** was for doors to open and walls to come down. Following a two-hour meeting we were given the use of a building for our Sunday services beginning in March 2016. Only God...

At our first service a **representative from the *Mairie*** welcomed us; this in a country where the Church/State divide is so strong! April 2016 saw us move to two services a month and as of September we are meeting every other Sunday. Our First Friday women's ministry, MOPS (Mothers of Pre-schoolers), and Bible Study ministries continue and a new Alpha course has begun.

We place huge value on our relationship with the *Mairie*, they welcome us as an English-speaking group to serve the approximately 11% of the town that are non-French. **We're active in supporting local events.**

“April 2016 saw us move to two services a month and as of September we are meeting every other Sunday.”

Community is key. Our Facebook page describes us as “An English-speaking community, loving God and loving people”. We're excited to see where God leads us: “Humanly speaking it is impossible, but with God everything is possible” (Matthew 19:26)



Carol-singing in Pibrac's shopping centre

You can contact Denise at

info@church31.fr and visit the church website at <http://church31.fr>.
Their Facebook page is www.facebook.com/Church31Toulouse.

Investing in church revitalisation

Missionaries Dave & Mary Brown report on a new national initiative

After planting three churches (Vandoeuvre, Villers-lès-Nancy, and Blanc-Mesnil), it was a big change for us when the Lord led us to pastor a church which already had a long history. The Église Protestante Évangélique de Paris-Villiers was **founded around 1905**, and since that time had had many ups and downs, and had moved twice within the neighbourhood before purchasing the premises we now use.



“Revitalisation is turning out to be a very important topic for the church in the western world.”

When we joined the church in 2008, the congregation was somewhat disheartened following a three-way split, and their natural reaction was to look to the safety of tried and trusted ways of doing things. Mary and I had to help to **heal the wounds** and then find ways to **bring new vision** to the church. Among other things, we adopted (at last!) a declaration of faith, a church constitution, and thus a clear notion of membership. We also opened **Équithéo**, our fair trade shop, and started an **evening service** with a different feeling to the morning one. But we’re still working on all this. We have discovered that the expression currently

used for this sort of ministry is **revitalisation**.

In fact, revitalisation is turning out to be a very important topic for the church in the western world. Of course **we need to go on church-planting**: that was the mission we were involved in for 30 years. But studies in the United States have shown that at least 70% of American churches are plateauing or slowly declining, and between 10 and 15% are in danger of simply disappearing. I conducted a similar but more informal study in France, and the figures were more encouraging – 50% of churches were healthy and growing – however, that means that **50% need help to recover their initial growth**. And this applies even to some churches planted over recent decades by France Mission.

Because of my experience in revitalising (although we still have much to learn), it seemed right to bring this concept into the work of the Evangelism Commission (which I chair) within the **CNEF** (National Council of French Evangelicals).

Partly as a result of this, the CNEF are planning a **learning community** based on the need to develop existing churches. At the same time I’ve got involved with the **European Leadership Forum**, running seminars





CHURCH REVITALIZATION

at their annual congress in Poland. In fact this year, with **Phil Walter of FIEC** (Federation of Independent Evangelical Churches), we're running a year-round **mentoring programme** on the topic – partly through webinars, but also through a retreat in Budapest in December.



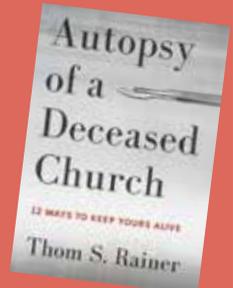
Phil Walter

It's fascinating to work together to see how we can find a European approach, with participants from Wales, Holland, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Bosnia. At the beginning of November I've been invited to speak on this subject at the Eastern European Leadership Forum in Kiev.

We're not experts on revitalisation. And we don't want to be seen as such while the Paris-Villiers church is still quite fragile. But the Lord has put this need on our hearts, both locally in Paris and more widely. So **please do pray** that God might bless these efforts to breathe new life into churches which have lost some of their momentum. May fellowships across our continent increasingly experience the reality of Acts 2:47: *"the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."*

If you're interested in finding out more about church revitalisation, take a look at <https://fiec.org.uk/what-we-do/article/revitalising-churches>.

Thom S. Rainer has written extensively on the subject, for example in a book like *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* (2014), and on his website: <http://thomrainer.com>.



THE PURPOSE OF THE EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP FORUM IS TO BE:

"A BRIDGE BETWEEN LOCAL EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS' NEEDS AND GOD'S GLOBAL RESOURCES."



You can contact the Browns at david.brown.paris@gmail.com

Getting closer to a new church-plant



Missionaries Peter & Rachel Calvert provide an update on developments in Blois Centre

“You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord ‘My Refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’” (Psalm 91:1)

Thank you for praying for us over the summer. We'll be starting **regular team meetings** this month (October), and plan to hold two **experimental Sunday gatherings** in a local hotel conference room before Christmas. We've also started looking into **possible premises to rent** on a longer term basis.

As team life gets underway and things get more intense, **please pray** that we'd be seeking God and His Kingdom first of all. We'd also appreciate prayer for **Anna, Sophie, and Inès...** that the new church would be theirs too, not just “Mum and Dad's project”.



David Shutes

This month several of us will be meeting with **David Shutes**, who has many years of leadership experience in one of the evangelical scouting movements in France. **Please pray** for God's guidance as to whether or not a **scout group** would be a good way of sharing

the gospel and sharing our lives with the families we've been getting to know here in Blois. **Pray too** for God to call the right people to be part of the team if the scout group project goes ahead.



Fun at the school fête

“Please pray that we'd be seeking God and His kingdom first of all.”

Peter is involved with the local **Ultimate Frisbee Club** and the **Neighbourhood Council**. Rachel is part of the Parent-Teacher Association and will also be teaching an **English conversation class** for a group of retired people. **Pray that** we'd be open to serve and witness to the people we meet in whatever ways God leads, and to take the opportunities He gives us. **Pray that** the small groups we'll be developing in the context of the church-plant will also help us develop these relationships.



Anna, Sophie & Inès with Peter

You can contact the Calverts at pierrerachel.calvert@gmail.com

A busy lead-up to Christmas



Missionaries Jonathan & Rachel Vaughan share the upcoming schedule for Le Pré Saint Gervais

With the start of term, we took an important step forward with the introduction of small groups. These three groups (which meet weekly or fortnightly) are a way for people to get to know one another more deeply, share how their Bible reading has helped and challenged them, and pray for each other. Our hope is that the meetings will create a stronger sense of community, and also **support and facilitate outreach** to non-Christian friends.

Thank you for your prayers for **café church**. We're encouraged that each month one or two new people have come along, and there have been good discussions around the tables (on the subjects of reality, peace, and thanksgiving). Our **annual art exhibition** is planned for the 4th-10th November, this year's theme being suffering. In addition to the opening night and the closing evening talk ("If God exists, why so much suffering?"), the event will involve café church on the Sunday evening, using the works of art and Bible verses on display as a basis for discussions. **Please pray** for the artists and those who visit the exhibition, that they might

seek the God of compassion who can give them hope in the midst of pain.

We have many **events scheduled for December** and will encourage our church members to be inviting their friends to hear the good news of Christmas:

- 4th: Advent all-age service, café church on "waiting"
- 9th: Gospel Christmas concert (gospel choir), following its success last year
- 18th: traditional evening carol service
- 24th: craft and games afternoon at church
- 25th: Christmas service

Please do pray that God's light would shine into people's hearts and that they would be keen to find out more.

“With the start of term, we took an important step forward with the introduction of small groups”



L-R: Leah, Zoe, Jonathan, Naomi (behind), Stephanie, Rachel



All set for Cafe church

You can contact the Vaughans at jony.vaughan@gmail.com

Supporter stories



The French: our neighbours and a nation beloved by God



British FM supporters Laurence Richardson and Geoffrey Crees share stories of friendships forged across the Channel.

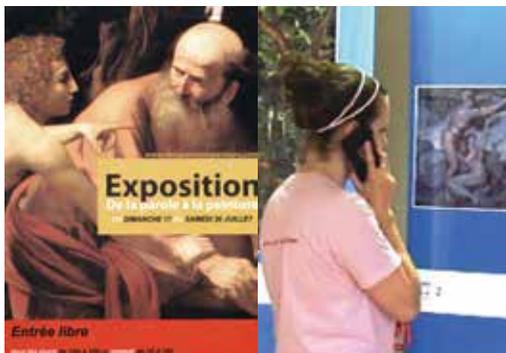
Having been on a first mission trip to Avallon last year, I again met up with British and French friends there this summer. A small but faithful group of French believers continue to worship and serve the Lord in the heart of the town. The whole area is rich in beautiful scenery, local history, and fascinating architecture – yet **it's spiritually so poor!**

As I waited to catch the plane to Paris on the evening of 15th July, I was stunned to read on my mobile about the **massacre in Nice**. Just as I was returning from France on the 26th, I read about the brutal **attack on the Catholic priest** in Normandy. We pray that we were able to give **fresh hope** to many unchurched French people during this period of national trauma, as well as **comfort** to the believers.

Our basic job was two-fold. In the mornings we handed out flyers advertising an Art Exhibition in the main church hall, as well as gospel tracts. (It was only after a while that we discovered that the message on post boxes saying *Pas de pub* meant that they didn't want business publicity and that it wasn't a rejection of the British pub!)



Laurence enjoying breakfast in Avallon



The Bible art exhibition

“Many of the guests expressed a real appreciation of the exhibition”

Then, after lunch, we'd be on duty in the church hall to welcome visitors and encourage them to use an audio guide which contained a commentary on the 21 works of art in the hall illustrating the key moments of the Bible story from Genesis to Revelation. Many of the guests expressed a real appreciation of the exhibition.

It was great to **renew friendship** with the faithful French **pastor Henri and his wife Idelette** who have sacrificially supported the church over so many years. It was also fascinating to meet the American couple – **Ace and Marilyn** – who've been there to support and promote the church in the area. Also I found it riveting to see the **brand new room** (with its fold-up tables and bright white paintwork) for the children's work which we had worked on for nearly two weeks last year.

A short visit can still allow time for the precious rekindling of friendships and this was what made it all so special to me again.

You can contact Laurence at richardsonle11@gmail.com



Idelette & Henri Klopfenstein

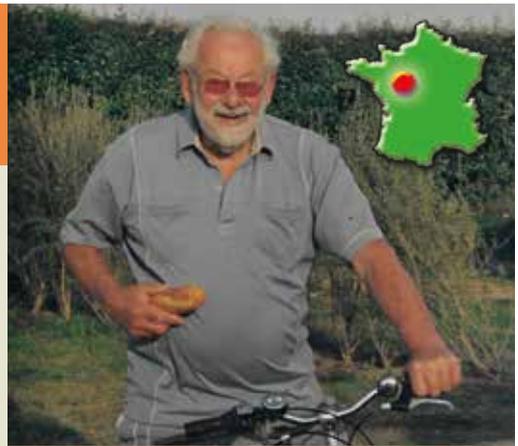


A recent baptism in the Avallon church

God provides life-long friendships!

Back in 1987 after some searching we eventually found the FM church in Vannes which was meeting in a house. There we met a delightful German girl flautist named Esther. Following this meeting she came to stay with us in Hull on her way to Capernwray Hall. In 1989 I flew out to Germany to speak at her wedding to Joachim. We met up several times after this and she and Joachim with their two sons have been to stay where we now live. This April we joined their silver wedding celebrations in Germany at which I preached in Mannheim's Salvation Army church (1 Peter 3:7).

Arriving one Sunday morning in **Montreuil-Bellay**, looking for the FM church, we spotted a British number plate and the driver getting out realised we were searching so he introduced himself as the preacher that morning. We met Chris and Colette Small and following lunch together there was an invitation to return and preach.



Geoffrey on his bike in Brittany

This has now been done four times with the over-riding theme of encouragement in Christ (Romans 15:4). What bonuses and benefits come from worshipping with fellow Christians while on holiday!

You can contact Geoffrey at creesjean@gmail.com. You might also be interested in reading his collection of stories, *Jeffrey's Shorts*, available at <https://goo.gl/48ESKJ>

If you have a FM-related story that you'd like to share with others, please contact Paul Cooke at fmtrust@france-mission.org

Pressing on in Châteauroux

Missionaries Paul & Marjorie Dowling are encouraged by your prayers

We find ourselves wanting to say the same things in this issue as in the last one! But then a lot of the Christian life is about pressing on, **persevering** – to “keep plodding on” to use the (politer!) version of Churchill’s catchphrase. But with the Lord, it’s never a question of just plodding on as we know that He’s at work in ways we could never imagine.

Our main need for prayer is still for an **enlarged Leadership Team** and generally a greater sharing of responsibilities. As one church council member said (semi-seriously): “Paul & Marjorie leave and the whole thing falls apart!” It’s not true, but it is true that too much rests on our shoulders at the moment – and we have less than four years left here! Our priority for the Leadership Team this year is to think carefully about who could take on extra responsibilities. But if the Lord also brought us some new experienced Christians, we wouldn’t say no!

Please also **continue to pray** for the steady trickle of people feeling their way towards faith. As a follow-up to the *Passerelles* enquirers’ course, we’re about to run the **Alpha course** and hoping that some extra people will join in. And, following the baptism of a young woman recently, Paul is now preparing a young man for **baptism** who joined us last year. **Please pray** that the Lord will continue to touch hearts and open doors for all church members to talk sensitively about their faith with non-believers.

You can contact the Dowlings at
paul.dowling@sfr.fr



Finally, please join us in thanking the Lord for the wider **network of support** that we enjoy – whether through FM supporters like yourselves, the various British families with second homes nearby who bring us so much encouragement, or the wonderful folk from **Yeovil Community Church** who make regular visits out here – the next due in November. We praise the Lord for this large network of faithful support and prayer – keep pressing on!



A recent baptism in the church



A church social event this summer

Other news from Paul Cooke



Future “France Days”

Assuming that France-Mission’s **planned merger** with Vision-France is voted in 2017, my intention is to hold a number of smaller scale “France Days” in various venues around the

country to keep supporters up to speed with developments. If you’d be interested in hosting one of these events in your local church from autumn 2017 onwards, please let me know (fmtrust@france-mission.org).



Finances

In response to supporters’ requests, there is now an option available for **giving via direct debit** on our website. Using this option is really easy – just go to www.france-mission.com/fmtrust/web and click on the “Donate” tab.

Do you have any **unwanted foreign currency** following a trip abroad? If so, **Bob Skelly** has kindly offered to receive any coins and notes to help raise funds for church-planting outreach in France. You’ll find Bob’s contact details on the back page of this magazine. Thanks to those who’ve already sent him some euros.

Correction

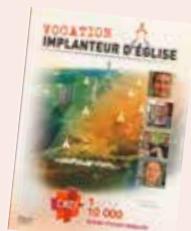
Thanks to those of you who spotted the incorrect photo caption on p.6 of the last magazine: the couple pictured are **Michel & Christine Louis**, not Richard & Terece Dilworth. Sorry about that!

Thank you to Nigel

After five years’ service, Nigel Sullivan has decided to step down from his role as a Trustee, but will continue as the **Area Rep** for the West Midlands. On behalf of the Trustees, a big thank you to Nigel for the prayerful thoughtfulness that he’s brought to the role. The Trustees are exploring options to find a replacement for Nigel.

Free DVD

Vocation: Implanter d’église (“Vocation: Church-Planter”) is an excellent DVD produced by the National Council of French Evangelicals. It presents five recent examples of French church-planting, including the **FM church in Loches**. The DVD retails at about £8, but it’s such a great resource that we’ll gladly send it you for free! Please just complete and return the relevant part of the response form that came with this magazine.



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Each area representative offers your church or Christian Union group:

- Up-to-date news about God's work in France.
- DVD presentations.
- PowerPoint presentations to explain France Mission's strategy.
- France Mission literature.

Please contact your local representative direct by email, letter or phone as above.

ALL OTHER REGIONS

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FRANCE MISSION is a French-based Protestant evangelical mission organisation founded in France in 1957. Our French headquarters is at 36 bis rue du Borrégo, 75020 Paris. We are a fellowship of over 120 church-planting missionaries of all nationalities, of whom the majority are French nationals and 14 come from the United Kingdom.

FRANCE MISSION TRUST is the mission's UK support office, a registered charity (Number 267979) founded in 1974. Our UK Trustees are: Bob Crockford, Colin Judkins, Helen Robinson, and Charles Zealey. France Mission Trust is a group member of the Evangelical Alliance and a member society of Global Connections. Donations should be made payable to "France Mission" and sent to the Exeter office. Gifts designated for particular missionaries are forwarded without deduction.

This newsletter is also available in large print. It is published three times a year, and is available free of charge from:

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Email: fmtrust@france-mission.org
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