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Mission

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Paul's page: Welcoming the stranger with Christ

Reflections by Paul Cooke, France Mission's Director

Our world is marked by greater **migration and diversity** than ever before. This reality is often presented as a problem or a threat but, from a Christian perspective, it surely provides an opportunity.



Vincent Morvan

Vincent Morvan, who played a significant role in developing the work of *Un Coeur pour le monde* (as featured in the previous issue of *FM Perspectives*), has recently published a book to help believers engage with this issue. And we

could probably all do with some help! As Vincent himself writes in his introduction: "Hospitality is one of the Bible's great themes [...]. Yet, as a Christian, it took me a long time to understand the richness of the spiritual significance of hospitality when understood and practised with Christ."

Vincent's book explores the theme of **Christian hospitality** through the four lenses of theology, ethics, spirituality, and missiology. If these terms sound abstract, Vincent invites us to consider the analogy of a car in which the engine equates to theology, the steering wheel to ethics, the fuel to spirituality, and the wheels to missiology.

When driving a car, we soon notice its blind spots; in a similar way, all of us – whether as individual believers or as churches – have **blind spots** when it

comes to putting biblical hospitality into practice. This book aims to help us see more clearly, practising hospitality *with* Christ, welcoming His presence as we welcome strangers into our midst.

I haven't yet had the chance to read this book in full but, to quote a FM supporter who has done so: "this is a **superb book**: a deep theological, biblical study of hospitality and the Gospel to train us in serving through welcoming foreigners into our churches." You can read a sample of the book (and buy it if you want more) at <http://bit.ly/2kcfCot>. I very much hope that an English translation will be made available at some point but, if you can read French, why not enjoy the original now?

Every blessing in Christ

Paul



Paul Cooke

Publication details: Vincent Morvan, *Accueillir l'étranger avec Christ: une approche théologique, éthique, spirituelle et missiologique de l'hospitalité* (BLF EDITIONS, 2019)

Front page photo:
Châteauroux church barbecue

How can I pray for pastors' children?

Rachel Vaughan offers some ideas

In the last issue, we started a series called "How can I pray for...?". This is the second article in the series and the focus here shifts from church planters to pastors' children. Rachel, as a pastor's wife and mum to four girls, is well placed to help guide our prayers in this area.



Rachel Vaughan

Faith

Pastors' children tend to have heard all the Bible stories before and know all the answers in Sunday school, and sometimes they can be well-behaved, good

children. But what they need is to know Jesus personally and trust in Him – not in their knowledge or their niceness – for salvation. **Pray for** pastors' children to love Jesus, to have real, personal faith in Him, not just head knowledge and good works.

Fellowship

"Church, church, church, you're always talking about church as though it's the most important thing!" (quote from a Vaughan child!).

In a pastor's family, church is often associated with work and church is often the reason daddy/mummy is out in the evenings. Also, congregations may have

unreasonable expectations of how their pastor's kids should behave! **Pray for** pastors' children to have a positive attitude to church, to find their role and make friends, and to enjoy church, particularly for those in small churches with few other children.

Friends

Like all Christian children, pastors' kids need good friends, but this is particularly important if they move church/home several times because of their parents' ministry. Teenage rebellion may well be directed at the church and/or God if they resent ministry pressures on the family. **Pray for** good friends to encourage and support them.

Often, pastors' children are very aware that their non-Christian friends need to know Jesus and they can carry quite a burden for them. Pray for them to be good witnesses and faithful in prayer, but also to trust Jesus to save their friends.

And pray that, throughout their lives, they would abide in Jesus: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).



Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

You can contact Rachel at rachel.e.vaughan@gmail.com

A year of change at Le Pré and Paris-Cardinet



Missionaries Jonathan & Rachel Vaughan and Dave & Mary Brown share exciting news



News from Jonathan & Rachel:

agreed that Le Pré would be a good place for Nathan to start.

The plan is for **Jonathan to work with Nathan until Christmas**, as Nathan gets to know the church members and gains experience of the different aspects of pastoral ministry. From January onwards, Nathan will gradually take on more responsibilities, so that, God willing, the handover will be complete by the end of the school year in June 2020.

We're very grateful to God for preparing and

leading Nathan & Naomi to continue the gospel ministry in this town. Nathan is a capable Bible teacher, grew up in Parisian suburbs similar to Le Pré, and shares our vision of **making church friendly for outsiders, whilst building up the congregation through Word ministry**. He and Naomi are both musical (Nathan plays piano, Naomi sings) and are keen to invest time in the **gospel choir** which we've been leading (now ten years old!) as a means of reaching people with the good news of Jesus.

We'd value your prayers for the Millets and for a smooth transition this year. It won't be easy saying goodbye to the church in Le Pré, having been part of it for 18 years (since our arrival in France). But we're learning to trust God for the future and are excited about the new challenges that lie ahead (see next page!).



Update from Dave & Mary:

As you may know, for several years we've been praying and searching for a pastor or pastoral couple to continue the work here at Paris-Cardinet. After a number of setbacks and disappointments, we're finally seeing an answer to our prayers. The prospect of Nathan Millet's arrival at Le Pré Saint-Gervais led to discussions with Jonathan & Rachel Vaughan about a possible move to Paris-Cardinet. As we prayed about this, the proposal was gradually confirmed by the

Vaughans, our church council, and a vote by the church members.

Jonathan & Rachel know the challenges of gospel work in the Paris area, particularly the high turnover of the congregation. They share our convictions about the importance of good Bible teaching and the need for creativity in reaching people who have not yet heard the gospel. The alternative-style meetings they've run in Le

“After a number of setbacks and disappointments, we're finally seeing an answer to our prayers.”

Pré (café church, contemplative evenings) have much in common with our evening services. We're pleased to have found a couple who are keen to use their gifts in both services, with their different styles.

Since the start of term, the Vaughans have been involved on Sunday evenings. After Christmas, they will be more available to take part in the morning service as well, and David will hand over to Jonathan by the end of the school year. We're waiting to see what opportunities God provides for us to serve in another church, probably in the Paris area.

Please pray for smooth handovers in Le Pré and Paris-Cardinet churches, and for all of us as we start a new chapter of our lives.

You can contact Jonathan & Rachel at jony.vaughan@gmail.com and Dave & Mary at david.brown.paris@gmail.com

This coming year will involve some big changes for us, and for the church. In September we were pleased to welcome **Nathan & Naomi Millet** and their children into our congregation. Nathan and Naomi have been involved in a project called MyGospelChurch, a Perspectives church in central Paris based on gospel music (www.mygospel.church). At the same time, Nathan has been training for ministry, and is now ready to begin working for a church as **trainee pastor**. After discussions with the Perspectives leadership, it was



The Millet family: Nathan, Naomi, with Elise, and twin boys Isaac and Paul



Café Church at Le Pré

A time of transition



Missionaries Paul & Marjorie Dowling report from Châteauroux



Our thoughts and the thoughts of the church here are inevitably starting to turn towards the preparations for our retirement and return to the UK in just a few months. Paul turns 65 next May and we plan to finish our ministry here and move to the UK shortly afterwards. From a personal point of view, we will soon need to start to think about all the administration involved in organising a move to another country – not least finding somewhere to live (probably back in Yorkshire to be near our grandchildren). We'd value your prayers for this. At the same time, there is a lot to be done here to prepare the church and we're aware of the temptation to take our eye off the ball and be caught up too much too soon in thinking about the next stage.

It's still very much our hope that there will



English Conversation group lunch with friends from Yeovil

be a pastor or pastoral couple to take over from us when we retire but, although we know that Perspectives are actively looking for someone, there's nothing definite to report at the moment. So we need to have a plan B – a "survival strategy" for the church in case there isn't anyone, at least straight away. We've drawn up a list of all the different things that we do which will have to be handed over – and it's a frighteningly long list! Please pray for the

"There are many encouragements in the life of the church with a number of new families arriving over the summer, which is a real answer to prayer."

Church Council as we go through the list and decide who will do what and which activities may have to be left in abeyance. Please pray for peace and trust in the Lord for everyone during this time of transition – a period which is inevitably unsettling for all concerned.

Meanwhile, there are many encouragements in the life of the church with a number of new families arriving over the summer, which is a real answer to prayer. The Lord is good!

You can contact Paul & Marjorie at paul.dowling@sfr.fr

Blois Centre: human planning, divine direction?



Missionaries Peter & Rachel Calvert are seeking the Lord's wisdom



"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps." (Proverbs 16:9)

During the last school year, the Blois Centre team organised one Sunday Gathering per month in a local hotel and one in our home. The other two Sundays we were usually at the Blois North Church, or sometimes at the Perspectives churches in Vendôme or Romorantin. From September, we shifted up a gear, to two Sunday Gatherings per month at the hotel, and two in homes (in two groups). This has meant decreasing our involvement in the Blois North Church somewhat, particularly in terms of participation in the children's ministry team.

Please pray for a smooth transition, and for energy and perseverance in the months ahead. Pray that, both through the Sunday Gatherings and through the gallery we use as a base for public contact, Jesus would



Hotel used for Sunday Gatherings

be drawing people into His saving love. The needs are so great. There's so much that could usefully be done, and our strength and time seem so limited. A group to follow through with the older kids who came on camp but aren't currently involved in church or scouts during the year, for example? That would be wonderful, there's lots of potential. But, at the moment, we're just aiming at five get-togethers over the school year and keeping them simple.

We make our plans, but the Lord directs our steps. At least, we want to let Him direct our steps! I expect you can identify with the challenges of having to choose between committing to a number of good things, knowing that you can't commit to all of them without compromising on quality and on sanity. May we all be attentive to the Holy Spirit's wisdom as we live out the days God gives us, walking in His grace and His strength.

You can contact Peter & Rachel at pierrezcalvert@gmail.com



A Sunday Gathering



Gathering for the baptisms



A baptismal testimony



Great rejoicing in Romorantin!

Church members Graham & Pauline Stevens share good news



would shine. By the time folk started to arrive at our home the sun was out and it was a glorious afternoon. We began the service in the shadow of the barn, with great singing led by our worship team. How the folk at Romorantin love to sing! It was a special joy to welcome folk who don't usually attend the church (including the Mayor of our village who'd lent us tables and benches for the afternoon).

As relative newcomers to France (we've lived here permanently for two years now), it's wonderful for us to see the welcome everyone gets from church members. It's not long before people feel welcomed and loved. Graham gave a straightforward message about the meaning of baptism and then Dominique and Adrien gave their testimonies. How powerful testimonies are – both men gave witness to salvation and a real relationship with the Lord. There was great rejoicing as they were baptised in the swimming pool! To mark their baptisms both of them were given Philip Yancey's book *The Jesus I Never Knew* – in French, of course! (*Ce Jésus que je ne connaissais pas*)

At the start of the *rentrée* (new school/ church year), the Perspectives church Romorantin met to celebrate two baptisms:

- **Dominique** has regularly attended the church for a while and was very eager to follow the Lord's command to him to be baptised. He is a very quiet man and we knew that this was a brave step he was taking.
- **Adrien** is a member of the thriving youth group at the church and it's been a joy to see him take initial steps of faith and then shine for the Lord.

The day had started wet and dreary but with the promise that by midday the sun

“There was great rejoicing as they were baptised in the swimming pool!”

Do you know what French people do particularly well?... FOOD! After the baptism we stayed together well into the evening sharing food. It was a banquet! There was lots of happy chatter as well as deeper conversations taking place. It was good to welcome **Michael & Catherine Brooks** back



to celebrate with us. We're continuing to pray for them as they've retired from the pastorate here and are settling in Wales.

As a church we'd be **very grateful for your prayers** as we seek the Lord for the future ministry of the church here in the very centre of France:

- Pray for the leadership team as they seek the future for the church.
- Pray for the young and old in the church and all those in-between! Our youngest attendee is 9 months while the oldest is 101 years!
- Pray for the witness to the local communities.

(And, as an aside, a **prayer request from us** – please pray for the expat community in this area. It's not as popular as some parts of France but there's quite a group of us here. Pray that they will be open to the gospel.)

Please know that if you're ever in this beautiful part of France you'll get a real welcome from L'Église Évangélique à Romorantin!

You can contact Graham & Pauline at pauline.stevens@hotmail.co.uk

Sharing about France Mission in Northern Ireland

Area Rep Jill Kennedy reports on her involvement at two Christian festivals



Founded in 1937, Bangor Worldwide is a virtually unique week-long phenomenon in the UK, having all its Bible readings, prayer gatherings, seminars, evening celebrations and keynote addresses focussed on promoting and supporting world mission. Its location at one of the larger churches in Bangor (Northern Ireland) allows a mission resources exhibition to run alongside the main programme.



Although footfall at mission stands at Christian events is famously (among reps!) variable, this year at Bangor was very encouraging. Monday, Thursday and Friday all provided a few conversations with genuinely interested enquirers. Tuesday was the evening of back-to-back visitors, so it was enormously helpful that **Megan O'Rourke** (whose article about her gap year in Blois can be found in the last issue of *France Mission Perspectives*: bit.ly/2k6n2cJ) was able to add extra manpower and bring right-up-to-date insights into what life in a

As this article demonstrates, Area Reps can play an enormously helpful role in promoting France Mission around the UK. If you'd be interested in the possibility of joining the team, please contact Paul Cooke (paulcooke@francemission.org) for a chat.

relatively new church plant looks and feels like.

Another highlight was reconnecting with a student who'd stopped at the FM stand at Bangor back in 2017. Her attention then had been caught by a PowerPoint slide showing **Champfleuri**, the Perspectives residential centre in the Alps (champfleuri.org), where she was about to spend part of a post-A-Level gap year on the DEFI discipleship programme. A couple of years later, it was good to hear how that experience has fed into her life going forward into uni. **Two-way sharing of information** became a feature of the week, with a number of visitors bringing news to me from their own love and experience of France.

Who dropped by looking for an update on what God is doing in France?

- a lady who'd spent a number of years as a CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship) worker in Paris
- another who'd worked there as part of a Baptist Youth Missions team while a student
- a former France Mission supporter keen to reconnect
- a couple from a Bangor church which supports a church planter in France
- a number of holidaymakers, eager to know how to track down a French church in their favourite region

- a person cautiously exploring a possible call to work in France
- an enthusiastic GCSE French learner
- and an inspirational 87-year-old lady who feels called to pray for people engaged in the kind of work she no longer has the energy to do!

Please pray for these people as they consider what ongoing involvement in France God may have for them.

Wednesday was different, requiring that a summer's day be spent in the beautiful grounds of Castlewellan Castle, which sits nestled under the Mourne mountains – not too much suffering there! This was for EQUIP, the annual student festival of CUI



The FM stand at CUI Equip



Jill and Megan representing FM

(Christian Unions Ireland, the all-Ireland equivalent of UCCF). Although I was only there for a day, this was sufficient for the lone linguist at the festival to be reassured that there are more evangelical churches in France than she'd been expecting and that any of them would be delighted to welcome her during her year abroad!

It was also a day of **significant contact with other stand holders**, some with a personal or family interest in France. FM's neighbours in the marquee, UBM (United Beach Missions), were encouraged to find their "Avancer" programme among the summer opportunities promoted on the new FM website (francemission.org/go). In addition, it seems likely that these opportunities will be promoted on CUI's various social media platforms, following a visit to the stand of the CUI Team Leader responsible for digital content. So, all in all, a useful day in a sunny forest park.

You can contact Jill at gjknndy@gmail.com

Students serving in the Paris area



Year Abroad students Bethany Pearson and Joseph Goodyy report on their recent experiences

Bethany's story:

Having only started learning French during my first year of university, I knew that the third year abroad would be crucial for improving my language.



I was unsure of what to do for quite some time but, after a great deal of prayer, it dawned on me that this would be a great time to spend serving God. I began searching for churches in France before stumbling upon the **Perspectives church in Le Pré Saint Gervais** and also France Mission's Director, Paul Cooke, who answered many questions and put me in contact with the pastor Jonathan and his wife Rachel.

Finally feeling positive, the search for accommodation proved somewhat challenging. Rachel suggested I contact a **Bible College in Nogent-Sur-Marne** which had a place available for a volunteer in exchange for accommodation. And before

Bethany with other volunteers at Nogent



I knew it, the French half of my year abroad was finalized! I helped out with the Sunday School at Le Pré whilst volunteering alongside 3 other people at Nogent during the week.



As a volunteer I was able to **fully integrate into student life**, attending classes, joining the choir, and even participating in an evangelisation week that took me to the south-west of France. My French improved more than I could have hoped but I also learned so much about myself and about the God we serve. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities I was given during my five months in France, as I was able to meet an array of inspiring people both at Le Pré and at Nogent. My faith undoubtedly grew during this time and I made some lifelong friends. Overall, any fears I had for this time abroad were completely quashed. I was able to put my trust in God and now have only the best of memories.

I also have an amazing opportunity to talk about my time serving abroad with non-Christian friends and family!

You can contact Bethany at bethany.pearson9@googlemail.com. The Bible College in Nogent is again offering accommodation to volunteer students for the year 2019–20.

Joseph's story:

Like many Modern Languages students, I had the exciting opportunity of going on a **year abroad in 2018–2019**. From September to March I worked as a language assistant in Barcelona and then from April to July I was a *stagiaire* (intern) in two small churches in the suburbs of Paris. I've wondered for a while whether working for the church is something God is calling me to pursue, so this year seemed like the perfect opportunity to give it a go! Paul Cooke very kindly helped organise a placement for my 4 months in France and at the beginning of April I set off.



For my placement I was with the Perspectives churches in **Le Pré Saint**



Gervais and Romainville, and their pastors Jonathan Vaughan and Khévang Sely. As a *stagiaire*, I really enjoyed throwing myself into the lives of both churches and developing friendships (and sharing English tea) with both congregations.

I learned a huge amount during my time



Joseph about to preach in Romainville, being introduced by Pastor Khévang

in France – and not just on a linguistic level. **No two days were ever the same** which enabled me to help out with many different kinds of things. Amongst other things I had the opportunity to plan and lead or attend twice-weekly Bible studies, lead and play for services, sing in a Gospel choir, study New Testament Greek, lead the singing for an ecumenical walk, teach English classes, and spend valuable time reading and studying.

I'm really grateful for the **warm welcome** that I received during my time in Romainville and Le Pré, and especially to Jonathan and Khévang and their families, for their kindness and guidance. It was a real encouragement to have this experience of the church in France and to see how God is working in the lives of His followers over the Channel.

"Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!" (Psalm 67:5 ESV)

You can contact Joseph at josephgoodyy@gmail.com

Christianity over a cuppa

Group leader Alex Price-Alexander reports on a week of summer outreach in Avallon



More than 50 locals and tourists sat down to free English tea and biscuits at a pop-up *salon de thé anglais* (English Tea Room) that we helped run at a Perspectives

church in the heart of Burgundy in July. The *salon* was a re-run of a similar venture last year when a small party of British Christians supported their fellow believers at the Avallon Evangelical Protestant Church during a summer outreach programme.



“I never knew that the French liked English Earl Grey tea so much!”

We were delighted to welcome a **diverse group of people** of all ages and backgrounds to share our tea and biscuits. It was a simple formula and great way to put the existence of the church on people's radar. France is so secular that even some locals were amazed to discover that an evangelical church exists in their town!

Church members who also helped had some **very good conversations** with café guests and made a great team with their British helpers. To quote Henri Klopfenstein again: “This was the fifth year that our British brothers and sisters have spent their holidays with us and they’ve promised to return next year – Brexit or not!”

You can contact Alex at alexnews123@yahoo.co.uk and Henri at klopfenstein.henri@gmail.com



The church at Avallon is blessed with a street-front garage just off the town's main square. So we set up a nice big parasol decorated with Union Jacks and a French Tricolour in the midst of a collection of pavement tables and chairs – and offered **free tea and biscuits** to everyone walking past. We did morning and afternoon sessions on the town's two market days and served tea to dozens of intrigued guests. Church pastor Henri Klopfenstein said: “I never knew that the French liked English Earl Grey tea so much!”



Other news from Paul Cooke



Next France Day (25th April 2020) in Lichfield

As the last few France Days have been in the south of England, it's great that next year we'll be moving a bit further north. The venue will be Wade Street Church in Lichfield (wadestreetchurch.com) and our main speakers will be Jonathan Vaughan (Paris) and Stéphanie Revault (Rennes). More details will be available in due course but do please put the date in your diary.



New Area Rep for North Wales

I'm delighted to announce that Eirwyn Vaughan has recently started as the France Mission Area Rep for North Wales. You can read more about him on the FM website (bit.ly/2kyBL04). If you'd be interested in discussing the possibility of a church visit from Eirwyn, please contact me (paulcooke@francemission.org) and I'll gladly put you in touch.

Paris-Cardinet appeal

Thanks to the generosity of FM supporters, I was able to send over €48,000 to the Paris-Cardinet church to help with the purchase of a ministerial flat. As I write, there are still some final things that need to fall into place. Please pray that, by the time you read this, the purchase will have been successfully completed.



Envoyé-s DVD

This DVD comprises two 25-minute films providing a powerful reminder of the biblical basis for mission and a fascinating overview of the history of Christian mission, all interspersed with a couple of engaging contemporary scenarios reminding us how we can be “missionaries” in our everyday lives. Subtitled throughout, the DVD is entirely accessible to English-speaking viewers.

You might like to offer it to your church's mission group or consider it as a resource for Home Groups. For a free copy, please use the response form that came with the magazine or email me.



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

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Thank you!

