



PERSPECTIVES

No. 6 | Autumn 2020 | www.francemission.org

Registered Charity 1176433



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A new church plant in Lyon
- A new role for Stéphanie Revault
- Dave Brown & Daniel Liechti look back

Reflections by Paul Cooke, France Mission's Director

While 2020 will undoubtedly go down in history as the year of Covid-19, it's also been the year in which the **Black Lives Matter** movement has had a huge impact all over the world, especially in North America and Europe.

Given Jesus' command that we should "love each other" as He has loved us (John 15.12) and the fact that "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, [...] for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3.28), Christians shouldn't need persuading that **racism is sinful**. But, because of "sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3.13), it's all too easy for our attitudes in this area to be shaped more by our culture than by Christ.



A typically multicultural Perspectives church in Nantes

In my home church (whose members are predominantly white British), the death of George Floyd caused us to reflect on the abundant **Scriptural teaching about (in) justice** and what it means to embody the love of Christ. Perhaps your church has been asking similar questions?

In France, there seems to have been less of a reaction among churches – perhaps because there is *already* a strong level of **ethnic diversity** within French evangelical churches and this has been the norm for many years. Perhaps the French church has something important to teach the English-speaking world in this respect?

Of course, there is plenty of prejudice within French society, as was seen over the summer when an evangelical church in Saint-Étienne was targeted by racist graffiti. I can well understand why, referring to the French Republican motto of *Liberté, égalité, fraternité*, black pastor **François Furtade** says: "Apart from God, I find it difficult to believe in the reality of the 'fraternity' proclaimed in our Republic's motto." But, as he significantly adds: "within the Church, unity is given to us from above." * Whatever our nationality or ethnicity, may we all "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph. 4.3).

Every blessing in Christ

Paul

*You can read this interview (in French) at bit.ly/2Rh3qQ2.

Front page photo: The Lyon church plant team



François Furtade (right) and his brother David comprise the Christian hip-hop group Leader Vocal

Photo by Melleloun on Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0



Paul Cooke

Encouragements in Paris-Cardinet



Pastoral couple Jonathan & Rachel Vaughan are settling into their new church



We were very encouraged at la *rentrée* (the September restart) that two new people joined services at church. In particular, one man, J, came to the evening service explaining that he was looking for a local church following a spiritual experience he had at home. We're struck that God is answering our and your prayers to remove spiritual blindness. **Please pray** for J to keep coming to church and to discover the truth about Jesus in the Bible. **Pray also** for Jonathan as he reads the Bible with him. And **please pray** that God would bring other seekers to church.

Since July, we've been holding services in church with most of the congregation present and some connected on Zoom (we don't have enough space for everyone with the social-distancing rules). In September we had our church weekend away on the theme of prayer. It was far enough out of Paris that we could enjoy being outside without masks on! **Please pray** for each



Church weekend away

of us to grow in our prayer lives, both as individuals and as a community, and that we would particularly persevere in praying for our non-Christian friends, family, and neighbours.

"We're struck that God is answering our and your prayers to remove spiritual blindness."

As for many of you, other projects have had to be put on hold. **Please pray** for us that, despite the constraints, we'd take every opportunity to witness to Christ and glorify Him in our lives. **Please pray** for inspiration for outreach at Christmas and how to make best use of the church website and social media. **Pray also** that we'd use this time well to train people to take on new responsibilities and that we'd all continue to grow in our faith.



L-R: Zoe, Rachel, Leah, Jonathan, Stephanie, Naomi

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

Over four decades of God's faithfulness

Missionary Dave Brown looks back on what the Lord has taught him

Over the summer, Dave handed over to Jonathan Vaughan as the new pastor of the Perspectives church in Paris-Cardinet and stepped into "retirement" after 44 years of ministry in France. The quotation marks around "retirement" are very appropriate in Dave's case, as he will remain very active in gospel work. Here he looks back on God's faithfulness...

My ministry

I joined France-Mission in 1976. While still working as a young teacher, we'd created a small church in our home in Nancy and I was looking for a mission to support me and provide wise counsel. My wife and I moved to nearby Vandœuvre and saw the Lord's hand from the outset. When I'd asked a developer I knew if he had any suggestions about housing, it only took him a few minutes to offer us not only a flat but also a room to rent in a shopping centre where we could start public church services, and the possibility of setting up



a Bible stand in the same centre every Saturday!

1977 started well, meeting up with the other FM missionaries – there were only 12 of us in the whole of France at the time, including the committee! But then, in May, came a **terrible shock**: my wife, Jan, lost her life in a car accident on the way back from the FM congress. I was left alone with our two-year-old daughter and son of just two months. Nevertheless, the church in Vandœuvre was born and started to grow.

The Lord was watching over me and, the next year, I married **Mary**. She is still very much at my side after 40 years of ministry together.



Mary Brown

"I don't see the word 'retirement' in the Bible."

I felt that 10 years was about right to plant a church and then hand the role of pastor onto somebody else before moving on. 10 years to go from a small core to a mature church, with its own premises and leadership team. For each step of our ministry, the Lord has blessed these aspirations: in Vandœuvre (1976–86), Villers-lès-Nancy (1986–97), Le Blanc-Mesnil (1997–2008), and Paris-Cardinet (2008–20). And, in each of these

locations, God miraculously provided **accommodation** that we could afford on our limited budget.

From 1983–2008 I was part of **France-Mission's national leadership** and helped set up the Department of Relationships with Partner Churches which enabled



France-Mission (and now Perspectives) to become *Des Églises, une mission* ("Many churches, one mission"). Previously, once churches planted by FM reached the "mature" level, they would join another denomination.

From 2003–12, alongside my church ministry, I also served as **General Secretary to the GBU** (supporting student Christian unions). It was wonderful to see the GBU develop a truly French identity during this period thanks to several new young co-workers.



Dave & Mary with a GBU team in 2011

Our 12 years at Paris-Cardinet have been a **church revitalisation** project. People have often told us that, if we hadn't responded to God's call, the church would have closed. And revitalisation has since become

the main focus of my ministry. Yes, I'm stepping down as a pastor with France-Mission/Perspectives after 44 years, but I don't see the word "retirement" in the Bible and I'll be continuing to serve the Lord through my writing (nine books published to date) and through offering training in relation to church revitalisation, especially within the context of the **European Leadership Forum** (see revitalisation.fr).



REVITALISATION

What I've learned...

- God is faithful and provides for all our needs, whether material or spiritual.
- The importance of joy in ministry: it's a real privilege to serve Jesus Christ!
- The necessity of passing on the baton: one of the reasons why spending one's entire life in the same church may not always be ideal.
- Being able to trust God in relation to funding for projects: if the Lord wants us to do something, He will provide the means.
- A pastor needs to cast a vision for his team and/or church. That said, listening to others is essential for making improvements!

You can contact Dave at david.brown.paris@gmail.com

Dave preaching in Vandœuvre in 1976





Imagining a regional network in Brittany

Pastoral Assistant Stéphanie Revault shares an exciting new vision



God's timing and planning are always so incredibly perfect! Patrice Niveaux, Perspectives' Regional Director for central and western France, contacted me last year, asking if I'd be interested in helping him support churches in the western region. He had some projects in mind, the main goal being to develop a **regional dynamic** among the churches. To say I was excited about this idea would be an understatement! It felt like my family history, the direction of my own life, and my ministry experiences over the years had all brought me to this moment. Let me explain:



Patrice Niveaux

- **Family roots and a genuine love for the region.** Sometimes God calls you to serve overseas, and then He calls you back home, which is what He did for me. Brittany is a beautiful Celtic region



The Perspectives churches in western France

and I'm very attached to it. My family has been rooted here for more than four centuries. I've learned to love its rich, historic traditions.

- **A desire to help spread God's light here.** Learning about a region's identity also means discovering its dark sides. For some family members in the past, this "dark side" took the form of occultism

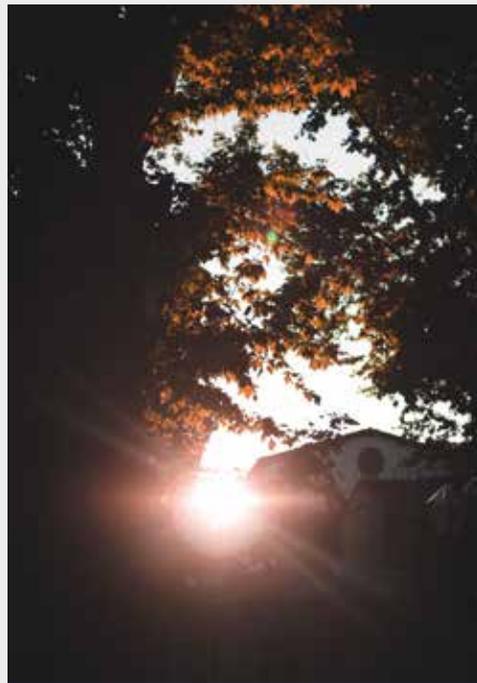


Photo by Guillaume Bleyer on Unsplash

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Cor. 4.4)

and this is what Christian members of my family pray against today. Brittany has a heavy spiritual background: druidism and its present-day revival, so-called "healers", intense veneration of many saints, etc. But God made me understand, at an early age, that beneath this **spiritual darkness** lies a real and deep longing for transcendence. However, the desire is often misguided, so many people fall into the occult and can become quite hostile towards the God of the Bible. Sharing the gospel in France is no easy task, but the mission in Brittany sometimes has an extra layer of difficulties because of this subtle, yet very real, dimension of spiritual warfare. I'm thankful that the Lord allowed me to discern this, and I've been learning how to address it with Him in prayer.

"God's timing and planning are always so incredibly perfect!"

- **Helping to foster church unity.** Over the years, I've met many people from Protestant churches in western France. Some leaders became friends. Our discussions made me realize how often we face challenges alone here, as individuals and as churches. So, for many



Photo by Alunelis from Pexels

years now, I've had this dream: wouldn't it be wonderful to create opportunities to work together as churches, thinking and training together, sharing our resources and experiences, praying more together, and so becoming a stronger voice in this region?

So, of course, Patrice's suggestion to me felt like a call and I accepted the offer!

Could you **please pray** for Brittany? And could you **please pray** for the work that Patrice and I plan to do? May God use us in a powerful way. May His church shine even more in this region!

From Paul Cooke, France Mission's UK Director:



Stéphanie's part-time ministry for Perspectives is centrally funded, which is a great blessing. But her other part-time ministry in the local church in Rennes (aere.asso.fr) is fully dependent on gifts. Her monthly target is around £1400 to cover salary + pension, insurance, etc. For a year now, around two thirds of this amount has been reached through regular support, the rest being covered by one-off gifts. FM's Christmas 2018 appeal to support Stéphanie's ministry helped her a great deal in 2019 and she's really **grateful for your generosity!** If her ministry speaks to you, perhaps you could prayerfully consider the possibility of a gift for her? Please don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions: paulcooke@francemission.org or 07980 450462. Thank you!

You can contact Stéphanie at stephanie.revault35@gmail.com

Plant a church? Never!



How Perspectives missionary Jean Schott changed his mind



I always said that I'd never try to plant a church. My parents were church-planters in France and I saw how difficult it was. But while my wife Sarah and I were starting a Christianity Discovery Group with three non-Christians and

a friend called Romain who'd recently come to faith, God started showing us that creating a church could be done **more simply**. With a living room, good Christian friends, a regular commitment to spending time with non-Christian contacts, and a Bible, we had all we needed for a powerful expression of church life.

How about it?

One of our Muslim friends came to faith in Christ after seeing a vision of "the paradise offered by Jesus" when he was alone in his bedroom. Then another friend came to Christ from a Buddhist background, followed by another friend... **God was clearly preparing something.** We discovered that these people had specific needs. So, with two other Christian couples in our friendship group, we said to ourselves: "How about planting a church with these folk?"

A small spiritual revival

While we were preparing the church-plant project, God brought us an experience



Jean, Sarah, and their friends

of spiritual revival by revealing Himself to **more than 15 people** among Romain's acquaintances. Very often their stories involved a miracle, a dream, or a personal revelation. Not all of them have been baptised yet, but they've started on their journey. Belonging to a loving community is really important for most of them.

L'église "comme à la Maison"

We started our church in September 2019 in **Caluire-et-Cuire**, one of Lyon's northern suburbs. We called it *L'Église Comme à la Maison* (Like at Home Church) because we want to reflect God's desire to welcome us home



into His family. And it's been a fantastic experience! We try and have fewer formal services and more small-group activities to create an attractive community rather than attractional events and also to focus more easily on leadership development.

We started with two **Home Groups** in 2019 and are now up to six. We're so thankful to



Home Group

the Lord for His grace. Our challenge is to remain an outward-facing church. We try to create meetings where each person can progress in their faith at their own pace. Sometimes we simply ask questions about the meaning of life and try to bless those present through sharing biblical wisdom. At other times, we give a really clear gospel presentation. We try and intentionally focus on cultivating links with non-Christian friends. Given the current situation with Covid-19, gaining people's confidence is even more difficult. **Please do pray** for us in relation to this.

"Our challenge is to remain an outward-facing church."

Resources

Planting a church also provides us with an opportunity to create and try out tools for the wider church in France. We've worked with other evangelists to develop discussion booklets to help people discover the Christian faith. We believe such tools are necessary to help the Church develop more relational forms of evangelism rooted in everyday life. **Thank you for praying** for this.



Jean and his team are looking for sponsors for their projects. If this could be of interest to you, please get in touch with Paul Cooke (paulcooke@francemission.org).

- For more info about the church plant, see eglisecommealamaison.com
- For more info about Jean & Sarah's ministry more generally, see rendrejesusvisible.com
- You can contact Jean at jeanschott@gmail.com

Life in Loches

Jim & Annette Wheeler reflect on their time in France



After nine happy years, we're due to retire back to the UK in December. Now seems an appropriate moment to review how the Loches church has developed during our time here.

When we arrived, church life was very active, having not only a new church plant but also a new **Regional Training Centre for church planters**, led by the pastor, Raphaël Anzenberger. It attracted many interested visitors and we became B&B hosts for frequent guests, some of whom enrolled for the training courses. Those trainees were young, giving energy, enthusiasm, and skills to the church's life. In addition, English-speaking services were held twice a month for local ex-pats.

Most ex-students went on to Christian ministries elsewhere in France, some planting churches themselves. The English services were eventually stopped because those who attended had sufficient language skills to join the French services.



The façade of Loches church, formerly a bus garage

By 2015, the rent for our church building was becoming unaffordable. Months of searching led us to an **old bus garage** with a reasonable rent, but it needed massive refurbishment to convert it into a church. With the assistance of working parties from the UK, the building was ready for our first service in November 2015, just before funds ran out. We thank our friends from other Perspectives churches for their loans for the project and, of course, God for helping us through the crisis.

“Most ex-students went on to Christian ministries elsewhere in France, some planting churches themselves.”

As planned, the Training Centre moved elsewhere in 2018, coinciding with Raphaël's departure from Loches. Of the ex-students, only two couples remained, **Greg & Nicole Saldi and Emmanuel & Rebecca Hochet**, who were tasked with planting a new church in nearby Descartes. Greg now has the unenviable role of pastoring both Descartes and Loches.

As well as fewer students, some key families moved away in 2019, reducing the church membership; then this year Covid-19 added to our difficulties, but a decision by the leadership to hold meetings outdoors this summer has given a new spirit of creativity, which Greg will tell you about in the second part of this article.

You can contact Jim & Annette at oasis1jim@aol.com

The future of Loches and Descartes



An update from Perspectives pastor Greg Saldi



“What is the goal of the Church?” This is a simple question which is well answered in the New Testament. This latest situation brought on by Covid-19 has made many people (including us) ask this question. Of course, it's a general question but also a specific one. For Loches the lack of space made us **rethink how we met**. We met in parks, back gardens, front gardens, and walking trails over the summer. This gave us a spirit of freedom and also of discovery.

We're now back in our building but are seeking a way to be **creative and out of the building** once a month. We understand well that there's a double action in the New Testament: 1) God coming to us and 2) Us going out to the world. **Pray with us** that we take that as a literal command and not forget the action of God which propels us to go to others.

The beginning of the autumn term is always a chaotic time here in France. Children are learning new routines and parents are figuring out how to manage school and any events that take place. For obvious reasons, this autumn term is even more chaotic! Health regulations and recommendations from the school mean in Descartes that our **intergenerational**

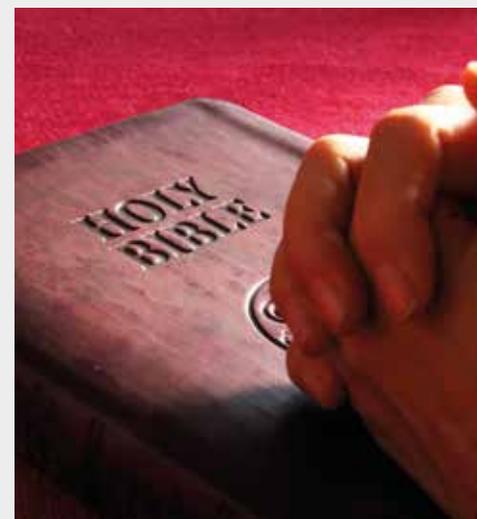


An outdoor church gathering, Covid oblige!

goûters (events centred around games, snacks, and Jesus) can't take place for the time being.

As a community, we're busy working on new ideas, praying for inspiration, but most of all trying to rest under the sovereignty of God. Our church has started meeting again in our public space. We've also happily welcomed a **few new faces** in the last few months and continue to strive toward God and seeing His Kingdom come in Descartes.

You can contact Greg at greg.saldi@gmail.com





Changing Perspectives

Daniel Liechti, former Director of Development with Perspectives, looks back on 18 years' service



Over the summer, and as had been planned for a while, Daniel stepped down from his role on the Perspectives core leadership team (he remains a "detached pastor" within Perspectives). His end-of-mandate message to colleagues provided a helpful summary of significant changes over the past couple of decades. Here are some of the edited highlights:

Although the future interests me more than the past, this is an appropriate moment to look back: **to give thanks to the Lord** for His faithfulness over the past 18 years and also to thank colleagues who've helped me learn so much.

Long before Perspectives was created from the merger of France-Mission and

Vision-France, I joined FM's leadership in 2001, with a brief to work as a "visionary strategist" alongside the other directors at the time: David Rowley, Daniel Borde, and David Brown. We already knew each other a little as I oversaw church-planting with the FEF (Federation of French Evangelicals). I was very positive about France-Mission's desire to multiply local churches willing to share the gospel in under-evangelised parts of France. Several churches/plants with which I'd been working closely in the Somme area (Abbeville, Amiens, Albert) and in Firminy also joined FM at this time.

"Church-plants account for 20% of the places where Perspectives currently work."



The Perspectives national leadership team. From left: Guillaume Hirschy, Daniel Liechti, Patrice Niveaux, Jean-Georges Gantenbein, Didier Fuin, Patrice Alcindor

During my first couple of years with France-Mission, I started creating **regional networks**. In 2005, when David Brown took over as General Secretary for student Christian Unions in France, I took on a wider role within FM, focusing on three main areas:

- (1) **Reimagining FM's church-planting vision**, putting greater emphasis on teams with members drawn from various parts of France to limit the strain on the local "mother church".
- (2) **Clarifying the role of "pastor"** to facilitate collaboration and mobility. This also led to more targeted training for volunteer leaders.
- (3) **Bringing greater clarity to France-Mission's vision** – balancing the church-planting dimension with the church-union aspect.

I'm grateful that, supported by France-Mission's National Board and AGM, we were able to **maintain unity** while navigating these significant changes.

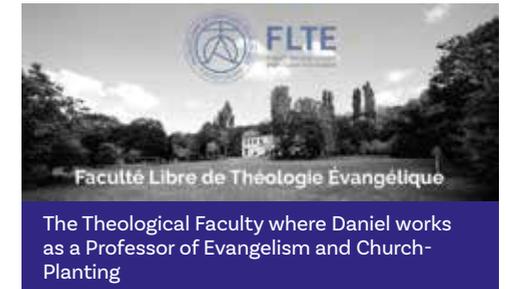
About 10 years ago, thanks to the flexibility of my FM colleagues (especially fellow directors, Patrice Alcindor and Pierre Egger), I was able to focus more of my time on **supporting church-plant projects**. This tied in nicely with my involvement in the **creation of the CNEF** (National Council of French Evangelicals). I'd been talking about



"1 pour 10,000" – 1 evangelical church for every 10,000 people in France – with FEF colleagues since the late 1990s. It's been a real joy to see this slogan picked up and

applied by many others more gifted than I.

It's encouraging that church-plants account for 20% of the places where Perspectives currently work; maintaining this kind of proportion should help avoid stagnation and stimulate renewal among existing churches. I'll **continue to pray** for more church-planters, both French nationals and from overseas, to join the work.



The Theological Faculty where Daniel works as a Professor of Evangelism and Church-Planting

For me, the future will mean focusing even more intensively on my role of **training church-planters and teaching missiology** to theology students at the Evangelical Faculty in Vaux and elsewhere. The courses, at both Masters and undergraduate level, are particularly important because they're the only ones of their kind in francophone Europe.

May the Lord bless you all richly as you continue to serve His purposes in France.

Please do pray for Daniel in this new phase of ministry and also for the national leadership of Perspectives as they reorganise. Give thanks that two new Directors – Didier Fuin (for the South-East region) and Guillaume Hirschy (Administration & Finance) – were voted in at this year's AGM, but please pray that the team might be strengthened further.

You can contact Daniel at daniel.liechti@eglises-perspectives.org

What a time to be a teenager!

Church-planters Peter & Rachel Calvert would value your prayers for the teens in Blois



Anna takes the plunge



Anna's rainy baptism



“Will there be a job for me when I leave school? What about climate change? Is it too late to make a difference? How do I cope with being stuck at home because of Covid?”

These are **challenging times** for young people everywhere. Being a Christian doesn't make life any simpler. For French teenagers, being willing to identify yourself as a believer within a strongly secularist school context requires courage. But what an amazing privilege to know that God is on the throne and is working out His purposes for the universe in Jesus Christ!

Please pray for the teenagers who are part of the Blois Centre and Blois North churches, and for those on the fringes too. Several young people who don't normally go to church came to camp with us this summer, and we long to be able to help them grow in faith and love for Jesus during the year. This morning I was chatting to one guy who

came to camp with us last year. He had just dropped his little brother off at school. He believes in God, but says he finds the Bible difficult to understand... **Please pray** that this year, we would have opportunities to help him to grow in faith and understanding.

At her baptism recently, **Anna** explained that she'd been feeling God was nudging her to tell others about Him. It wasn't easy to invite her school friends to come and hear her testimony, but in the end four of her best friends made the effort to come, along with three of their parents.

Please pray that many French teenagers would discover the joy of being part of what God is doing in the world, reconciling all of creation to Himself through Christ. **Pray** that they would shine like stars as they hold out the word of life (Phil. 2.15-16), using their talents and passions to demonstrate the compassionate love of God in tough times.

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



Photo by Gaëlle Marcel on Unsplash

How can I pray for French teenagers?

Rachel Calvert continues our “How can I pray for...?” series

- Lockdown has hit the most fragile hardest. Pray for teenagers who have fallen seriously **behind with schooling**, and for those who are seeking to support them.
- Pray for teenagers who are struggling with **poor mental health**, particularly in the context of Covid... that God would put the right people on their path to help and encourage them.
- Pray for **Christian teenagers**, that they would be hungry for God's Word and would grow into all that He has planned for them. Pray for them to find their place in the multi-generational family of their local churches. Pray too for specialised ministries such as the *Groupes Bibliques Lycéens* (gbl.gbu.fr) equipping teenagers to serve Christ where He has placed them.



A post from the *Groupes bibliques lycéens*



Manu Hochet



Jean Schott

- Thank God that his Word is not chained! Pray for many teenagers to discover the gospel on-line. Pray for Christians such as **Manu Hochet** and **Jean Schott** who have a particular burden to reach out to a digital generation and to disciple those who spend much of their lives online.
- Pray that God would raise up **servant leaders** from the current generation of French teenagers. Pray for men and women after God's own heart (Acts 13.22), who will serve Christ with all that they possess and all that they are, both in church and in society.

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

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!

