



PERSPECTIVES

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A groundbreaking joint Congress
- From Metz to Marseille
- What is Le Pas Opton?

Paul's Page: Travels in France

Reflections by Paul Cooke, France Mission's UK Director

The last week in April and the first three weeks in May were a busy time of travel for me with a couple of extended trips to spend time with church workers in France and an additional visit to missionary friends serving in Portugal. I was reminded again of how challenging the modern European context remains for evangelical Christianity but was also encouraged to hear how the gospel is changing lives.

During my first visit, I was hosted for a few days by Elcio & Sueli Rocha, the pastoral couple at the Perspectives church in



Montluçon Congress: "Together for the Progress of the Gospel"

Châteauroux. The Lord is using them to help grow the congregation here; I particularly appreciated the fervour and dynamism of the prayer meeting I attended – no awkward silences here! It was also good to be able to

travel from Châteauroux to meet up with Laura Simmonds and hear more about the various individuals with whom she's able to share faith, hope, and love in and around Descartes.

Elcio and I then drove, with another Brazilian pastor and a young Frenchman from the Châteauroux church, to Montluçon for the first-ever joint Congress for denominations within the Réseau FEF – the network for "classical" evangelical churches in France. With over 1000 people of all ages attending from all over France, this was a very special event with a strong emphasis on unity and a determination to increase collaboration. Jonathan Vaughan reflects on the event on the next page.

After my onward visit to Portugal and a brief return home to catch up with office-based tasks (and wash some clothes!), it was time to return to France for a "missiological road trip" that took me from Mulhouse to Dijon to Lyon and then to Marseille. You can read more on pages 8-9. I'm grateful to the Lord for safe travels and for opportunities to see how He's building His church in ways big and small. Your prayerful generosity is very much part of this. Thank you!

Every blessing in Christ

Paul



Paul Cooke

Cover photo:
The "missiological road trip" group in Marseille.



Me sharing about FM at the Châteauroux prayer meeting



You can contact Jonathan at jony.vaughan@gmail.com and find out more about the Réseau FEF at reseaufef.com



A vision of unity

Pastor Jonathan Vaughan reflects on a recent event in Montluçon

This year, for the first time ever, the 13 evangelical denominations that make up the Réseau FEF (including Perspectives) held a joint conference in Montluçon, right in the centre of the country. The three-day event brought together over 1000 participants; the theme was *L'Eglise Une*: the implications of us all belonging to the one church of Jesus Christ.

The main auditorium sessions included Bible teaching on Philippians, sung worship led by Philippe Viguié, and talks exploring the theme of **collaborating more closely** for the advance of the gospel in France. There were discussion times where we split into regional groups, seminars on a wide range of different topics, and times where we were free to mingle and discover the stalls in the central area representing different Christian organisations and ministries.

I found the experience inspiring. On a personal level, I was glad to meet former students from the Nogent Bible Institute who are now in ministry. There was

refreshing honesty from the leadership that following the 2010 creation of the CNEF (the French equivalent of the Evangelical Alliance), the Réseau FEF had struggled to define its role clearly and had come under some criticism. A combination of the right people and a new way of working led to renewed clarity of vision and a new dynamic which is now bearing fruit.

The key message was that as members of the same spiritual family, we cannot be content to simply tolerate local churches from other denominations in our area, or worse, regard them as rivals. We must, out of obedience to Christ, get to know them, and see how we can best **work together** to bring the good news of Jesus to French people.

We returned home feeling refreshed and encouraged to pursue the vision of gospel unity. **Praise God** for using the Réseau FEF to help His people love each other and work together for His glory.



The main auditorium



Supporting college students to share their faith

GBL worker Cédriane Prohin shares about her role



[Note from Paul Cooke: thanks to the generosity of supporters, FM has been helping fund a couple of workers in the GBU (Christian student work) this year. Cédriane is one of them; she works as the co-ordinator for tertiary college students (Groupes Bibliques Lycéens or GBL) in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region.]

In France, there are **no RE classes** in state tertiary colleges. The Bible is presented as a foundational text alongside Greek myths, and requests to create official Bible clubs are denied. Teachers, as representatives of the state and its neutrality, are not allowed to share their personal beliefs.

“It’s the students themselves who can share the good news of the gospel.”

But students can talk about whatever they want amongst themselves! Sharing their beliefs is even an opportunity for them to exercise their **freedom of expression**, as enshrined in the French Education Code. Thus, it’s the students themselves who can share the good news of the gospel.

My job, therefore, is to encourage and train them to be **missionaries in their colleges**. First, to tell them that it’s possible to talk about what they believe and to read the Bible with their friends, and then to train and support them so they can live it out. Thus, in addition to allowing students to discover the gospel, the GBLs offer Christian students the opportunity and space to reflect on their faith and take a stand on their convictions, to experience mission work, to explore the Bible, to be



GBL training weekend for college students

mentored, and to meet other Christian students motivated to experience the Church in a very special way. This is what we saw, for example, at the GBL weekend, where the students were happy to get together, to welcome newcomers, and where we heard them discussing naturally – even with the invited non-Christians – the Word of God, the GBLs, and their testimonies.

Currently, there is only one active GBL in my region, but there are six participants at each meeting. **Please pray** that I have opportunities to meet and encourage more college students, and that they will dare to take the plunge and create their own GBL!

You can contact Cédriane at cedriane.prohin@gbu.fr and find out more about the GBU & GBL at gbu.fr/en



Dirty hands and responsive hearts

Board Chair Rachel Calvert provides an update on A Rocha France

“I think we’re really missing the mark. We should be equipping our people to be **salt and light** in the area of ecology, but in the denomination I’m part of, we barely talk about it.” The comment came from a pastor’s wife I was chatting to at a conference the other day.

For A Rocha, being salt and light means getting our hands dirty, taking care of God’s creation in practical ways. Our teams at Les Courmettes and in the Vallée des Baux are out in all weather, with a particularly **heavy load of fieldwork** at this time of year, contributing to better knowledge of threatened species and better protection for vulnerable ecosystems.

Practical action is a vital expression of our obedience to Christ, but thinking deeply and speaking clearly about the issues is essential too if we as the Church are to be **wise, timely, and biblically faithful** in our approach. That’s why writing, reflection, and public discussion about faith, climate, biodiversity, and sharing resources fairly is also part of what we do.



Fieldwork in the Vallée des Baux



Study Day in Vaux

In April, the Evangelical Theology Faculty at Vaux-sur-Seine, A Rocha, and SEL (France Tearfund partner) organised a **Study Day**. How does our responsibility to take good care of God’s earth fit together with our other callings as Christians: life and worship in the local church; gospel proclamation; caring for the poor; speaking up for the persecuted? It was good to have leaders involved in all these areas together in one room to think through how we can better articulate different aspects of our vocation as the people of God in this particular place and time.

We’re thankful for the research and writing that our national director, Jean-François, has been able to do on sabbatical this past academic year. **Please pray** for all of us as he comes back and shares new insights with the team and trustees, that we would follow God’s leading and rely on His provision.

You can contact Rachel at rachel.calvert@arocha.org and find out more about A Rocha France at france.arocha.org/en



Progress in Le Pré Saint-Gervais



An update from theology student and church intern Mickael Mailleraud

[Note from Paul Cooke: the Perspectives church in Le Pré Saint-Gervais has been blessed in many ways by France Mission supporters over the years. The pastor there, Nathan Millet, has been delighted this year to have an intern to help him with the work. In this article this intern, Mickael, provides an update on church life in Le Pré.]

Hello, my name is Mickael Mailleraud, I'm 46 years old, and I've been married to Lynda for 16 years. After completing the FORMAPRE (Training for Church Leaders) programme with Lynda, the Lord encouraged me to continue my biblical studies. This led me to the **Nogent Bible Institute (IBN)** in September 2022, benefiting for the first two years from the support of the 2 Timothy 2:2 Foundation for trainees. I graduated in June 2025.

Since September 2025, I've been pursuing a research Master's degree at the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Vaux-sur-Seine, with the aim of a **future teaching ministry**. At the same time, I'm a pastoral intern with Perspectives, working part-time alongside Nathan Millet at Le Pré-Saint-Gervais Church on the north-east edge of Paris. My wife, Lynda, works in the banking sector and is involved in the church through her participation in the gospel choir and by teaching the Word to the women of the church.

Le Pré is a small church (about 20 adults and 4 children) that desires to be a light in this city and to grow. We've been trying for some time now, sadly without success, to find **bigger premises** to buy. That's why, since last spring, we've been meeting in a private school to have more



Mickael with Le Pré pastor, Nathan Millet



Florent Varak's book on the Big Bible Story

space and thus better welcome those who visit us. Furthermore, following training provided by Perspectives on reading and studying the Bible, we've established small Bible study groups within the church. We've also started work on structuring



Mickael and Lynda

the church with a provisional council because we believe that *"Without counsel plans fail, but with many advisers they succeed"* (Proverbs 15.22; ESV).

Nathan and I have the joy of accompanying T., a young man, towards his baptism, and I have the privilege of guiding Y., another young man, in his **discovery of the Christian faith** using Florent Varak's "Big Story" method.

(Florent is a well-known Bible teacher from the Lyon region; he was one of the keynote speakers at the recent Réseau FEF Congress.) I also have the pleasure of teaching the children, along with Naomi Millet and Cécile, an intern from the IBN.

And lastly, starting in September 2026, God willing, I'll be one of the instructors for the **F-ITE training programme** at the IBN, dedicated to developing future church leaders.

Here are some **prayer requests** I'd like to share with you:

For the church in Le Pré:

- That the council will work in unity and authenticity.
- That the Lord will call new people to Himself.



IBN graduation



The F-ITE training programme

"Le Pré is a small church that desires to be a light in this city and to grow."

- That Nathan and I will work well together for the glory of the Lord.
- That more families might join the church.
- That T. and Y. will continue to grow in Christ

And on a more personal note:

- That the Lord will help me manage my schedule.
- That He will guide me in my studies.
- That He will assist me in my work with the F-ITE training programme.
- That I might find new financial supporters.

Thank you so much for your prayers!

You can contact Mickael at mickael.mailleraud@gmail.com and find out more about Le Pré church at eglisedupre.org



From Metz to Marseille

Paul Cooke reflects on a recent road trip



I spent 12th–19th May on a “missiological road-trip” from Metz to Marseille. The trip was led by Michael Eckstein and Jean-Georges Gantenbein who both have roles with **Liebenzell Mission**, an organisation that also runs an evangelical seminary and university called IHL in Bad Liebenzell, Germany. Michael is based in Nantes and is the Team Leader for Liebenzell’s French missionaries, while Jean-Georges is based in Mulhouse and is Liebenzell’s European Area Lead for France, Spain, and Germany. (Jean-Georges was formerly Regional Director for Perspectives churches in Alsace, Lorraine, and southeast France.)

The trip was primarily for a group of **IHL students** with an interest in France, to give them a better understanding of France as a mission field. Two additional staff members from IHL provided theological input and practical support. They were a wonderful group!

The trip started in **Metz**, a city in northeast France where French and German cultural



The group outside Fabricquai with pastor Paul Gabbrielli (front left)

influences meet. The students were able to hear from a Franco-German couple who’ve served at the Perspectives church in nearby Amnéville over the past couple of years.

Jean-Georges and I took the train from Mulhouse to join the group in **Dijon**. Here we spent time in a Baptist church, doing some theological reflection with Prof. Tobias Schuckert from IHL about joy as the biblical source of mission, and also hearing a moving testimony from a man whose life had been completely transformed by Christ.

From Dijon, we drove south to **Lyon**, the cradle of French Christianity. Romain Tessieux, pastor of *L’Église comme à la maison* (part of Perspectives), shared about their approach to church-planting, with a



Dinner with the Allchin family



Jannis preaching in English with Paul translating into French



Romain Tessieux sharing in Lyon

strong emphasis on building relationships with non-Christians and making church accessible for them (while remaining clear on the supremacy of Christ). Romain and the team had clearly thought very carefully about their context, and the Lord is blessing their witness.

We then drove down the Rhône Valley to **Marseille**, where we spent three days with the Perspectives church in Saint-Just. They have new premises called Fabricquai

which combine a community café upstairs with a worship space underneath. The young adults group hosted an evening meal for us on Friday, which provided a great opportunity for different nationalities to mix; on Saturday, pastor Paul Gabbrielli shared about **Actes 13** – an exciting vision for church-planting and missionary training in Marseille (I’ll be sharing more news about this over the coming months); and on Sunday we were able to participate in the service and enjoy a church lunch afterwards.

The Liebenzell group then embarked on the long drive home, while I spent an extra couple of days with those (especially **Simon & Radia Allchin**) serving in the city’s northern *quartiers*. The media image of this area is very poor due to various social problems, but it was a privilege to spend time praying with and listening to those who minister here. God is at work, but the context is very challenging with Islam as the dominant faith. **Please ask the Lord** to continue to build His Church.

Participant impressions:

- Jannis (24): “I was reminded of the diversity of France: diverse cities, people, cultures, architecture, churches, ministries etc. And for those diverse places there’s also a need for a diversity of people going into mission. Pastors, Church Planters, Youth workers, Professionals. All are needed and prayed for in the churches in France.”
- Rahel (19): “Whereas established churches tend to focus on welcoming existing believers, church-plants focus on reaching out to non-Christians.”
- Birgit (IHL staff): “I was touched and impressed by the passion, patience and love the people we met have for their cities, suburbs, and the unreached people living there.”

You can contact Paul at paulcooke@franceission.org and find out more about Liebenzell at liebenzell.org/service/english



A small church with a big heart



FM supporters John & Christine Bouckley encourage you to visit Pontivy

As it stopped raining here in the North of England, the sun made my thoughts wander towards our distant holidays in France... And I remembered: "I've not written that piece Paul requested back in December!"

No doubt many people will be thinking about holidays in France now that summer is here. Many will be drawn to **Brittany**, and that's understandable because it's a most excellent place... Many will leave the ship on the north coast and drive, probably missing completely a real jewel. Back in his day, Napoleon was so impressed by this place that he renamed it *Napoléonville*. In fact, the local launderette still bears this name (though I doubt it's the one he used!).

Anyway, **Pontivy** (named after the monk Ivy who built a bridge and what not) is a real marvel, conveniently central for all of Brittany, and with its own wonderful character and tourist attractions. There's a castle, and below it, a canalised river: the Blavet. Between the castle and the river lies a small and very welcoming cafe, **Café-Ecoute**. This provides a street presence for the Perspectives Church in Pontivy – a real service to the town, a place of befriending and outreach.

The church itself lies further along the Blavet, and as much as I'd recommend visiting Pontivy, I'd recommend more that



you visit the church. Not only does this remarkable church serve via Café Ecoute, but also through an **activity day** it runs in a nearby park each September where the townspeople come to join a great range of activities. Even in rainy 2025 it was well attended and was really good!

Go along to the church, and you'll be sure of a **wonderful welcome**. The service is in French, of course, with lively worship, engaging prayer, biblical teaching, and French hospitality as a mini café with coffee and cakes etc. follows the service. Tell them on arrival that John sent you (!) and they'll find you a translator if you need

"The café provides a real service to the town, a place of befriending and outreach."



Church members with a group of English missionaries who came to help with street evangelism

one. (I could do with one as I've sometimes no idea what they're on about... But their love is infectious!)

My wife tells me that we've been going to this church on our holidays for about



A Sunday service in Pontivy

15 years. It's changed over time but has changed well. They know Jesus and are keen to reflect that and share it in different ways. Maybe you've driven past Pontivy en route to the south coast in the past? Next time, why not **arrange a stopover** there and drop into church... Free parking and a coffee will be the least of your blessings!

Note from Paul Cooke: the Pontivy church has been without a pastor for a while, so, earlier this year, the Church Council asked members for their views on how things were going. Here's how one person responded:

"My feeling is that our church can only grow; the atmosphere is healthy and pure today.

Regarding those who come and go, it's because they didn't find what they were truly looking for – often personal power or influence, the opportunity to speak out, take the spotlight, or cause division – but not the love of God, because that's what reigns in this church: the love of God, kindness, and humility.

In my opinion, the church is well-led. 2026 is the year of growth for the church. As long as we remain vigilant against the attacks of the enemy, new souls will come seeking the love and knowledge of God. May our church leaders be strengthened and protected."

Amen to that!

You can contact John & Christine at jc.bouckley@hotmail.com



What is Le Pas Opton?



An interview with John Musgrave, Managing Director of Spring Harvest Holidays

How did you end up doing this role?

I worked for Spring Harvest, the main event in the UK, when Le Pas Opton was purchased nearly 30 years ago and set up Spring Harvest Holidays. While I didn't work for SHH at that time I always wanted to. It was by chance that I caught up with Alan & Jenny Johnson who told me Steve May-Miller, who'd been the CEO for many years, was retiring. It was Alan's vision to set up LPO; he encouraged me to apply and the rest is history!

What's a typical holiday at LPO like?

We use the three words Relax, Refresh, and Renew to sum up our vision, and our guests tell us that this describes how they feel when they leave! There are many ways to relax at LPO, whether by the pool with a good book, by paddle on the river, or exploring the local area. For many the refreshment comes from spending time with friends and family over a meal, joining in with the weekly quiz, bingo or karaoke nights. Our spiritual programmes,

with morning programmes for children, youth, and adults, and our evening all-age celebration are key to our vision for people to be renewed. To worship together, to hear God's word, and share holiday time with other believers. Our spiritual programme and entertainment activities are totally optional, we're offering a holiday, so there's no typical way to holiday at LPO, but it appears that Relaxed, Refreshed, and Renewed guests are the results of a typical LPO Holiday.

How does the Christian content impact your guests?

God works in the lives of our guests in so many ways. We've seen many young children make new friends, learn about Jesus, and turn to Him at a young age. Our youth venues are a safe place many explore their faith, benefitting from time with other young Christians, realising there are others like them learning to love Jesus. For our adults, our morning Bible study is often the place they set aside the busyness of life and hear from God. Each week God pours out His blessing with words of wisdom and encouragement received, people healed, support offered and received. We always end each week thanking God – oh, and the worship times are awesome!

“We always end each week thanking God – oh, and the worship times are awesome!”

How do you relate to French churches?

We welcome French guests throughout the season, most booking through AGAPE Village and benefitting from a discounted price. Our programmes are in English and in our busy weeks we have people translating the talks into French via a headset system. The Perspectives church



Worship time

from Challans meets at LPO every Sunday and we benefit from their year-round prayer for the site, our team, and our ministry. We want our site to be a resource for the French church, a place where you can hold your own conferences and events knowing you can book a range of accommodation types that suit your group, with venues for meetings and all the facilities to enjoy, all in a place saturated in prayer. LPO is a place of prayer and worship, and we continue to pray for the French church and for God's blessing on this beautiful country.

What can we pray for LPO?

Please pray for the safety and wellbeing of our guests and our team. **Please pray** for spiritual protection as we believe God is at work here and there are spiritual forces that wish to disrupt and destroy. Most of all **please pray** that God continues to work in the lives of all who come to LPO, with people of all ages making commitments, meeting with God, and leaving ready to continue to serve Him in their hometowns and churches.

You can find out more about Le Pas Opton at springharvestholidays.com. This year all guests are being provided with a copy of FM's "Why France?" booklet.



Fancy a dip?

Children's session



Perspectives update

Patrice Niveaux, president of Perspectives churches, shares their vision

Perspectives is now recognised as one of France's leading church unions. Over the past 50 years, we've focused on church planting, and our vision remains steady: disciples making disciples and churches launching new congregations. It's woven into who we are – each church should help identify people's gifts, nurture future church planters, encourage proper training, pray for them, support them, and send them out. Currently, we're focusing on **planting churches in southwest France** under the guidance of Arnaud Schrodi, our Director of Church Planting and Development. Arnaud is starting a church in the Bordeaux region and aims to assemble a team of French church planters and missionaries to join him in that beautiful part of the country.

Perspectives continues to provide training, and we're planning to start **new training centres** across different regions of France. We're committed to developing pastors and equipping church members with hands-on ministry skills. Our goal is to inspire every brother and sister to engage actively in the ministry of their local church. Many of our members are first-generation Christians lacking formal training, so we strive to create an environment where future generations embrace our vision.

To invest in tomorrow's leaders, Perspectives is dedicated to **generously supporting students and interns**. We help facilitate their education and internships, accompanying them through their studies



Patrice co-hosting the recent Réseau FEF congress

as well as practical church experience. This investment requires both time and money, but it's truly valuable.

God's goodness renews our vision and passion daily, and **Romans 10.14-15 motivates us**: *"How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!'"*

We sincerely appreciate your support and prayers.

You can contact Patrice at patriceniveaux@gmail.com and can find out more about Perspectives at eglises-perspectives.org

News in brief from Paul Cooke

Church-planting in southwest France

If you'd like to find out more about the church-planting initiative in southwest France mentioned by Patrice in the previous article, here are two things you can do.

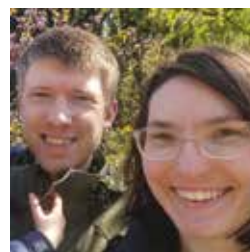
- 1) Watch a video produced by Arnaud Schrodi at bit.ly/4vw4wbI
- 2) Take a look at the project presentation at bit.ly/4g8GbEe

I'll be sharing more news about this exciting new venture in the next FM appeal letter. In the meantime, please do pray for Arnaud and the rest of the team that's taking shape.

(The photo shows Arnaud with his red map at the recent Réseau FEF congress. For the significance of the map, take a look at project presentation referred to above.)



France Day: 10th October 2026



Jack & Sarah Winterburn

God willing, this year's France Day will be held at Pannal Village Hall (near Harrogate in North Yorkshire: HG3 1JG) on Saturday 10th October from 10.30am to 4.30pm. Our main speaker from France will be Jack Winterburn. Jack and his wife Sarah are ECM missionaries who've been the pastoral couple at the Perspectives church in Saint-Brieuc (Brittany) since summer 2025. We'll also have the pleasure of Chris & Fiona Lloyd joining us to mark Chris' retirement from full-time ministry. And Patrice Niveaux (see previous page) will be there to share more about church-planting in France today. The day will include times for prayer, worship, structured discussion, Q&A, conversations, and food!



Chris & Fiona Lloyd

If you'd be interested in coming along, please drop me an email at paulcooke@francemission.org for catering purposes. If you're making a weekend of it, Premier Inn's Harrogate South Hotel (HG2 8RA) might be a convenient base, being close to Hornbeam station, which is just one stop by train from Pannal Station, right by the venue. Pannal is well connected by road, rail, and air (Leeds Bradford Airport) and there is ample parking at the Village Hall. I'm really looking forward to it!

Theology Week with A Rocha France

A Rocha is organising a week at Les Courmettes entitled "Hoping Against Hope: Theology for an Anxious Age", 16-22 August 2026, with Dr Andrew Shepherd from the University of Otago, New Zealand. For more details see courmettes.com/en/hoping-against-hope-theology-for-an-anxious-age/

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 **Give as you Live** – 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 bit.ly/FM-GAYL and help us raise more funds to support the Lord's work in France.

Thank you!



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