

# The Growth of the Church in **France**

*Paul Appéré is Pastor of L'Église Évangélique Baptiste de Paris-Centre on the left bank in Paris, and Chairman of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptists in Europe (FEBE). In an interview for GBM Herald he describes the needs of France:*

**1** Tell us about spiritual conditions in France today.

Though I am no expert, my impression is that there is a growing longing after spirituality; spirituality rather than religion or, worse, religious institutions. Also, we observe that most of the immigrants who keep coming into our country are far more spiritually minded than French nationals. As a consequence, evangelical churches of all kinds are growing and multiplying much faster than ever before. Mind you, they are still relatively scarce. We estimate that Evangelicals represent no more than one per cent of the total population of France.

**2** What are the major challenges you face in bringing the Gospel to France?

Our major challenge is to reach the French themselves. Ethnic churches are a success, for which we are glad, but we would like to see our own people listen to the gospel and turn to Christ. Relativism is probably the biggest obstacle we meet as we try to communicate the one Truth about God and his plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Culture is another obstacle: in France, religion belongs to the private sphere. You simply do not talk about your faith.

**3** What are the big encouragements among the 'Association Baptiste'?

New churches apply for membership constantly. In the last ten years, the size of our Association has doubled to more than fifty churches. Our desire is that it would increase not just by welcoming existing churches, but by planting new ones, so we strongly encourage our members to think more and more in terms of living off. Another encouragement is the number of younger

Christians who are preparing themselves to be leaders in the work of the Lord. In our one church alone, six people are training for the ministry.

**4** Your own church in Paris has started a church plant. Tell us how that came about.

Not just one, but two new churches have come from our own church in the last two years - one in the city, and the other in the suburban area. The vision came first: any Parisian should be able to walk to a nearby evangelical church. That meant that churches should multiply, and ours lead the way. Then came the workers: young men and women whom the Lord had called to do pioneer work, and who thought they would like to work with us. A team was soon formed, which developed a church planting program. We are now considering the planting of a third church. This is a big undertaking; so we covet the prayers of your readers for this new project which we would like to complete within three years.

**5** What are the most spiritually needy areas in France?

Large cities, Paris in particular. We should never lose sight of the fact that to reach a whole country we must start by canvassing the greater urban areas. It was the Apostle Paul's strategy; it should be ours too. But there are other areas, such as the centre and the south-west of France, where there is very, very little evangelical testimony. I have met people in those regions who did not even know that there was such a thing as Protestantism.

**6** If gospel workers come from the UK to France, what kind of qualities would you want to see in them?

A sincere love for France: its culture, its way of life and, of course, its people.

Other than that, I would say a lot of patience for it may take a lot of time before one starts to reap what he has sown.



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