

# IMPRESSIONS

Fall/Winter 2021

NEW  
name . logo  
faces and  
projects!

A publication of Synergie Francophone  
Formerly BLF USA

Sight sees problems, vision sees potential,  
Sight sees plight of man, vision sees power of God,  
Sight sees barriers, vision sees bearings,  
Sight sees buffeting, vision sees blessings in disguise,  
Sight sees the natural, vision sees the supernatural,  
Sight sees the visible, vision sees the invisible,  
Sight sees the present, vision sees the past,  
present, and future,  
Sight sees danger only, vision sees opportunity  
as well,  
Sight sees dead ends, vision sees new beginnings,  
Sight sees the status quo, vision sees the possibility,  
Where sight gives up, vision goes on.

Tokunbeh Adeyemo

Speaker, educator, author

Former General Secretary of the Association of  
Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar



Synergie  
FRANCOPHONE

*Together....planting, watering, growing fruitfulness*

# God first, Going forward!

*God... went ahead of you... to show you the way you should go.*

— Deut. 1:32-33

**“Plus ça change; plus c’est la même chose” is a French saying meaning “The more it changes, the more it is the same thing.”**

**T**he people of Israel had a hard time with change. As soon as they were miraculously delivered from slavery in Egypt, they longed to be back there. Their grumbling prevented a whole generation from enjoying the blessings God had prepared for them in the promised land. Just think of what they missed! The people of Israel, through whom God planned to reach all the nations, not only failed in their task, but later opposed Jesus Christ and God’s new Covenant of salvation, led by their religious leaders, the ones who should have seen God’s foretold plan unfolding. Yet God faithfully goes ahead of his people, then and now, and shows us the way we should go. All stories serve a purpose; God has included some bad examples in the Bible for us to avoid! In Synergie Francophone, we want to follow where God leads, participating and rejoicing in his blessings to the nations. As you have prayed with us, he has been showing us his path.

At our Fall Board Meeting in 2020, God confirmed to us his vision, given first to our founders nearly seven decades ago, to take his word to French-speaking peoples, 300 million of whom inhabit over 60 countries and regions around the globe. As so few printed resources were available in French, we founded our own publishing and printing house, now operating independently as BLF Éditions – still one of our suppliers – to help feed the “hungry giant” that is the French-speaking world. Many hungry countries have fewer than 1 percent of their population knowing and following Christ. In many countries with more believers, there is a lack of access to Bibles, Christian books, and trained disciple-makers to

equip God’s Church to show people the way to go. SF will continue to purchase, with your participation, Bibles, and resources to help overcome these crises of evangelism and discipleship. Our vision and goal have never changed, and fast-changing current world realities make our mission more urgent and needed than ever.

As God goes ahead of us, he is answering the prayers of faithful participants like you by sending new team members for the mission he has given us. In this issue, you will read about new board member Dr. Amy Lynelle; Consultant Eli Nupanga, and new staff Eileen Martin and Ana Imes. Look how God has uniquely prepared them for our specialized niche of ministry! God has been going ahead of us for years, listening to our prayers and beautifully expanding our team for a new season of ministry with people he chose before they were even born.

At our Fall Board Meeting in September 2021, our Board approved 11 new projects through which God is adding new partners to some trusted old ones to expand literature creation and distribution for evangelism, disciple-making, and training of leaders in more places. Now we look to God to raise up new generations that will participate in these projects by finance and prayer to bring God’s word to more people who hunger for it. When God goes ahead, he shows us where to go. When we put him first, he gives us the joy of seeing him grow fruitfulness from what we sow... and lays up for us treasure in Heaven. Imagine what awaits us!

Thank you for following God with us. His path is the way of blessing and fruitfulness.

Angela Brandle, Executive Director



# What's in a [New] Name?



Synergie  
FRANCOPHONE

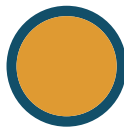
Quite a lot! The Board asked Angela Brandle to lead the search for a new name and logo for BLF Ministries. She called on creative people inside and outside of BLF to find a name and logo that express what we are and how we work. So, what is in the new name and logo mark of Synergie Francophone?

The beautiful “open book” logo we were using belongs to BLF Éditions in France. As they have become independent – a ministry milestone achievement – it was time for us to find a new logo and name that reflect the collaborative nature and desired outcomes of our work.

Synergie (the French spelling), the coming together of partners to produce an outcome that is greater than the sum of each partner's effort, expresses well what we do. Partners like you share your earthly treasure to pay for the Bibles and books that we supply. We partner with the ministry projects of mission and church groups to ensure that books are provided in solid contexts of evangelism, teaching of disciples, and training of leaders. Recipients are taught how to use the resources we send so that fruitfulness will follow in their characters, lives, and work for the Lord.

Reflecting the three persons of the Trinity whose combined work brings salvation, growth, and

fruitfulness in the lives of believers, our logo mark comprises three colors and three elements.



The disk represents our planet, and the circle around it represents the French-speaking world that stretches around the globe. What do you see in the image?



A quill for the writing of words – the method chosen by God to communicate with people on earth? A leaf that indicates growth as God's word takes root and changes a life? A flame signifying the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to bring fruitfulness in lives and communities as his words are lived out?



As that symbol breaks into the circle, so God is at work in the French-speaking world as greater distribution of his word overcomes the obstacles of ignorance and inaccessibility.

Our synergy is more than a three-stranded cord. There is God; you, and others like you; our suppliers – such as BLF Éditions; our partners in ministry on the ground; and our SF Board and staff, all working together to provide “literature,” a powerful tool in God's hands to educate, teach, bless, and transform lives, communities, and nations.

## Board member Lynn Lockwood presents new people uniquely prepared by God for his French literature ministry

### A DREAM COME TRUE

"I can't imagine how in the world I never knew this organization existed!" exclaimed new member Amy Lynelle as she was welcomed to the SF board of directors in September 2021. "I could never have so perfectly imagined a ministry that I would be excited to join. I appreciate SF's unique focus on the French-speaking world."

Amy's interest in French is "one of those God things." In fifth grade, she transferred mid-year to a school in her home state, Indiana, where she started learning French. It was a difficult introduction, since she was so far behind. Within a few years, "fabulous teachers" enabled her to excel in this language she had come to love. Amy was fascinated to discover Christian books in French while studying in France during high school and college. Years later, she served SIM as a translator. She discovered that the French-speaking world is "vastly underserved."

Dr. Lynelle's Ph.D. is in French language and literature, and her dissertation topic was Haitian poetry! She was "always interested in areas outside of France that had literary traditions." After its revolution in 1804,



Haiti had a century's worth of tradition before many other French colonies gained their independence. A poet herself, Amy fell in love with Haitian history and poetry. She has traveled to Haiti twice. She says, "It's a special, special place, a nation that has a thriving culture. I'd love for people to focus on that, rather than on its natural disasters."

Habakkuk 2:3 has been a key verse for Amy as many of her dreams have come later than she anticipated. When wondering why God led her

to spend so many years in academic environments that were hostile to Christianity, she realized that she has gained a deeper understanding of the effects of colonialism in French-speaking countries. "I have been waiting for something like SF. God hasn't forgotten me. He wouldn't give us passions and dreams if he wasn't going to use them."

Amy's seven-year-old daughter is interested in Egypt, so the two of them are studying Arabic! Amy hopes to visit missionary friends in North Africa when that becomes possible. She'll be able to speak both French and Arabic there and will take some biblical books in French in her luggage!

### NEW MERCIES EVERY MORNING

God continues to provide just the right people for BLF's new season of ministry to the French-speaking world! Consultant Eli Nupanga has arrived in God's time, with outstanding skills and resources for the creation and refinement of our logo, online and printed communications pieces, and more. Eli explained that

"everything SF is dealing with I've already done in starting my company, or for clients."

Born in Bangui, Central Africa, Eli also lived in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Pretoria, South Africa, before coming to the Chicago area in 2007 to attend high school. Our Ambassadors Russ and



Mary Ann Miller taught Eli's parents at FATEB (Bangui Evangelical School of Theology). Eli's wife, Lynn, works for Tyndale Foundation and met SF's Leadership Team when we applied for a grant last spring. SF's focus on the French-speaking world and involvement in several projects in the DRC also drew Eli to us. His first real job was running a children's library, including raising funds to purchase textbooks. "I really understand what you do," he said. "I lived through it. I have lots of contacts to contribute, and I like that you always work with locals."

Eli continues to serve FATEB Seminary along with other mission organizations. In fact, the website he



developed for them as a teenager is now the email platform for their entire program. While staying in the US with only infrequent visits home to Congo was hard, Eli "saw the analogy to being 'stuck in the mud.' I needed to be on a firm surface to help others. Being here enables me to do way beyond what I wanted to do."

Eli cites the entire third chapter of Lamentations as pivotal in his life, because the context makes verses 22-23 so powerful. It's another "God thing"

that they were also Lynn's favorite verses, even before they met. God's mercies certainly are "new every morning," in the lives of each contributor and of Synergie Francophone. One example is God sending Eli to us!

## PERFECTLY PREPARED

God continues to bring gifted members to the SF staff, such as Eileen Martin, Bilingual Executive Assistant to our Executive Director.

Eileen grew up in Tacoma, Washington. She fell in love with French because she "thought it sounded beautiful, like music." Studying other languages was a window into someone else's world for her.

Since Eileen's parents and grandparents came from four different countries (Ireland,



England, Canada, and South Africa), she was always interested in “all things international,” especially geography. This love of travel came in handy when she worked as a technical translator for a French fingerprint identification company. She would be “borrowed” by affiliates, which involved travel to a variety of countries. During college, she participated in a student work exchange program, traveling on her own to Paris, finding housing, and working for a summer in a shop near Notre Dame Cathedral.

Several years ago, Eileen began volunteering with Angela’s SIM International French Media Group. “I was amazed that I could use my French in a non-corporate setting,” Eileen said. This connection to Angela drew her to SF.

In Eileen’s role at SF, she hopes to help Angela as her assistant and further the goals of the organization by contributing what God has given her. She is excited to participate. She didn’t realize “how inaccessible many materials are for people in places like the ones visited by Pastor Jonas in the DRC.”

In addition to her SF job, Eileen assembles products and fills orders for a business owned by friends. She feels blessed to work with Christians in both positions.

Eileen reflects often on Philippians 4:8 and tries to bring a faithful focus to all she does. “My husband Paul and I were primary caregivers for a parent in our home before we had children,” she said. “I’m hoping that the practice helped prepare us to be parents. Maybe our daughters will let us know some day.”

## GOD HAS ANSWERED

We have all been praying for talented young contributors to help develop our communications and online presence, and God has sent a lovely gift in response. Eliana Imes is our new content and style editor. Her name, in Hebrew, means “God has answered.”

As a George Fox University senior, Ana brings strong communications experience and a fresh perspective to her part-time position with SF. She’s a great example of the way God draws people to this ministry who are passionate about spreading the Gospel to the French-speaking world, even those who do not speak French.

Ana’s parents served with SIM throughout her childhood. When Willy and Angela Brandle moved to Oregon City, just a mile from the Imes’ home, they were quickly adopted as grandparents. “Angela let me come to the college Bible study they led when I was in high school,” Ana explained. “I remember her talking about the 10/40 window and how many of those least-reached regions were French-speaking. That was my



introduction to the needs of the French-speaking world.”

Ana’s touch can be seen on our new website for which she edits and writes text. The flexible schedule fits well with her college workload, which includes heavy responsibilities as the co-editor-in-chief of the school newspaper, majoring in philosophy in hope of someday teaching, plus preparing for a possible master’s degree. “I’m passionate about translating the very technical aspects of philosophy into something

accessible,” she said. She loves to write creative nonfiction (for which she has won awards) because “storytelling is the best way to learn about each other and about God.”

Ana’s family moved several times while she was growing up, which may help explain her choice of Bible verse to share with us. She finds Ecclesiastes 1:1 “strangely grounding,” especially because her mother, a professor of Old Testament, believes that “mist, all is mist” would be a more accurate translation than our more common use of “all is vanity.” Ana appreciates the counsel: “don’t hold on too tightly,” which shows wisdom beyond her years.



## UBECA FINALLY RECEIVES A LIBRARY

by Mary Ann Miller, Ambassador, SE U.S.A.

Securely shipping books from France to remote locations in Africa can be complicated! Flexibility, time, and God's intervention are necessary to take books from warehouse to shelves. Our last newsletter showed two boxes of books provided by our readers for a Christian university in Dungu, DRC, waiting to leave Entebbe Airport in Uganda. A local pastor took care of the boxes until safe passage was found. Because no one at Dungu had ordered merchandise, the trucker lined up to pick up the boxes had no reason to go to Entebbe.

In his providence, God showed this need to a Christian woman in Entebbe who sends materials safely across the border into Congo. She picked up the boxes from the local pastor and put them on the bus which would be met across the border by a vehicle from the University. The books safely crossed the border, but the driver from the university fell sick and could not make the trip. Once again, God led someone at the bus station to put the books on a bus going to Dungu. A member of the university staff drove into town and picked them up.

Imagine the excitement of students and professors when the car arrived on campus, and the books were unloaded and placed on the shelves that had been waiting



for the library to begin! Dr. Bagudekia Alobeyo said, "Even the titles of the books we've received are impressive. The students have a great desire to read every book because they see that each one will contribute enormously to their formation and growth of their faith." One of the teachers was reading the book *Follow Me* by David Platt. He came across "a call to die." He was astonished to realize how he can be called to die. He understood that it was a call to a commitment he had to make to be willing to sacrifice his life for Christ, because through Christ he has eternal life.

As bees around pollen, students lingered by the shelves, selecting books they wanted to read. Even during break times when they were free to leave, they could be seen sitting outside devouring their new spiritual food. The steps taken to safeguard and deliver the books safely are clearly worth the effort.

## AT JUST THE RIGHT MOMENT

by Esther Schaeffer, serving with CMA in Burkina Faso

For Nadège, it was after a big disappointment in her life that we stepped in to send her for a six-week training program for Sunday School teachers. She had failed her high school exam and wasn't sure if she wanted to repeat the year or give up on her dream of being a teacher. That summer was a turning point for her. During the next year, she was able to pass her exam and begin teachers' college. Through all this time, Nadège has been teaching Sunday School. In the early years she served as an assistant teacher, and later started teaching the class on her own. If you asked Nadège, she would tell you that the biggest challenge in her role is finding materials. Sunday School is often held under a tree. Distractions are frequent. She appreciates having a lesson guide that allows her to spend her preparation time reading over the lesson and then looking for ways

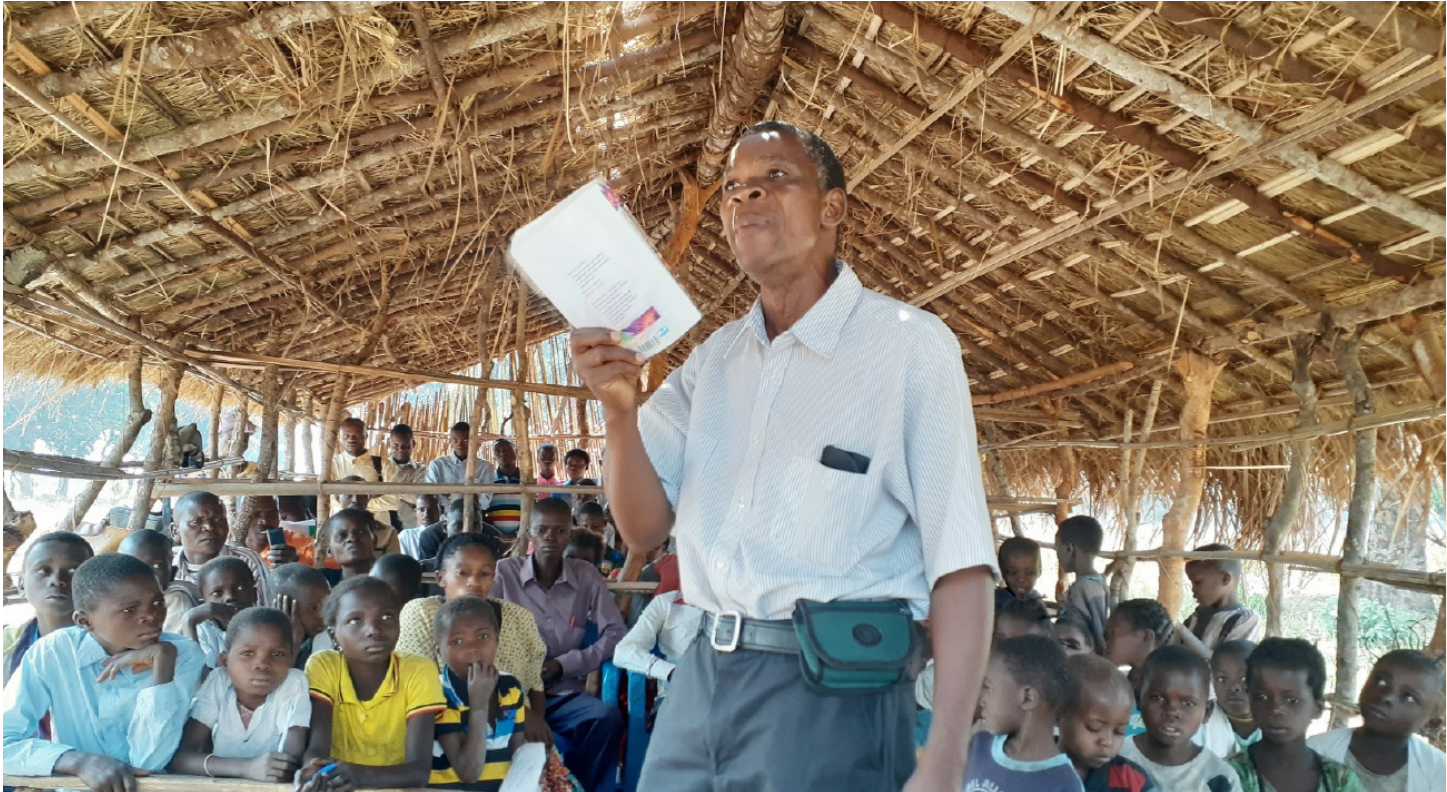


Nadège teaching Sunday School

to adapt it to her class.

At just the right moment, we were able to come alongside Nadège and provide a learning experience for her that has given her practical skills in teaching as well as confidence. Now, we are able to provide her with teaching materials from SF that will save her time and provide systematic lessons for her Sunday School.





Pastor Jonas Muyima

## PASTOR JONAS' JOURNEY – THE FINAL LEG

By Jordan Lockwood, Staff Writer

In March, 29 churches and over seventy Sunday School teachers in Kinshasa, joined Pastor Jonas and his team for a series of training. The team provided Bibles and teachers' manuals and taught the pastors and Sunday School teachers how to use them.

This work continued through April, when the team made stops in Boma. There, forty churches were represented, and over two hundred Sunday School teachers were trained! The teachers celebrated that "[we] don't have to look for material for lessons, because [we] have the curriculum." In May and July, they continued through the Batéké Plateau and to villages in Mukedi, where 47 churches were represented overall. The team led training in biblical teaching and leadership skills, supported by books for the leaders from SF.

During the next stretch of their trip in August, the team focused on providing resources and encouragement to churches and leaders in rural cities like Mukedi, Idiofa, and Tshikapa, in the Kwilu province. The turnout was dramatic: 37 churches participated in the training, and 20 teachers

of religion were trained. Pastor Jonas described the locals as "enjoying the message of the materials, being amazed," and "glad to have well-done materials to use." Teachers who had been working with only a Bible and remarkable perseverance are now supported by Sunday School materials to help with teaching children and are described as "fired up to do the ministry of making disciples of children and youth in their churches."

The impact of these new resources cannot be overstated. Many Sunday School leaders who had no resources expressed relief at now possessing tools designed specifically for their situation. And what important work it is! The pressure facing many teens and young people to "join in violence, such as attacking homes with machetes" is great. "Thankfully," said one teacher, "because of the training, the youth will know Jesus as their Lord and Savior and become light in their villages." Some of these students have accepted Christ and are sure to become an influence for him in their communities.