

IMPRESSIONS

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FACES
of the
NEXT
Generation

A publication of Synergie Francophone
Formerly BLF USA

Multiplying the Fruit



Synergie
FRANCOPHONE

Together... planting, watering, growing fruitfulness

It Means “Energy Together”!

When introducing Synergie Francophone (SF) in one of my sessions at the children’s field day at Missions Fest Seattle, I asked if anyone could tell me what “synergy” means, giving them the clue that the word sounds like “energy.” An older child surprised me by explaining that “syn” comes from the Greek meaning “with” or “together,” so synergy must mean “energy together.” Yes! A child figured it out. Maybe you could use that explanation when telling your friends what Synergie Francophone means. As we specialize in language, here is a bit more etymological detail about our choice of name:

The Greek word “érgon” means “work” and is the root of “energy” and “ergonomics.” Put it together with “sun” or “syn” and “sunergos” means “working together.” That became the modern Latin word “synergia” which, in the mid-17th century, gave us “synergy” in English – “synergie” in French – denoting “cooperation.” And that is what Synergie Francophone is all about – a cooperation or working together with our donors, prayer supporters, partners, and disciples to multiply the number of people in the French-speaking world who know and follow Christ as, all together, we provide biblical literature to support evangelism and training, empowering the Church to fulfill God’s mission of making disciples of all nations.

SF keeps our emphasis not only on sharing the Gospel, but also on training. Jesus commanded us to “make disciples of all nations” which involves teaching disciples to make disciples, and training leaders who will train more leaders to strengthen the Church and multiply her worldwide impact. Our goal is not addition but multiplication. Fruit that bears more fruit. John Mar Quirao, an entrepreneur who enjoys helping others succeed, said, “The best leaders are passionate about developing emerging leaders, because true leaders don’t create more followers, they create more leaders.” We are not interested in working with people who want to build a personal empire of followers, but in partners who want to build God’s Church by multiplying trustworthy leaders who can “rightly handle the word of truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15)

In this issue, it is our joy to introduce you to some of Africa’s new francophone leaders. Their spiritual formation includes studying books provided by you, our donors,

through SF. The truths and principles they are learning have been illustrated by the life and example of an experienced leader and humble role model, their teacher Alain Stamp. As part of their preparation, Alain invited some to teach alongside him or even in place of him. He trained them to be leaders who will mentor new leaders. You can read more about Alain’s perspective on multiplying leaders in his article “Leading by Absence.”

You will also meet Elise Tegegne, a published young author who led through teaching on the mission field and currently leads by writing. Her spiritual maturity and humility have impressed us as she has joined our team, and we trust that you will be blessed by her words that point us to God’s hand at work not only in her own life but in and through SF. Who would have thought that we would describe our board meetings as exciting? They are! Elise explains

the reason why.

In recent months, we have exhausted our stock of printed Sunday school manuals, building on years of distribution and training of teachers and children across Africa and Haiti. Read updates about shipments of literature and training sessions on page 7. As we pray for teachers and children, we dream of what God might do with each life being impacted by these materials. Charles Spurgeon said, “You may speak but a word to a child, and in that child there may be slumbering a noble heart which shall stir the Christian Church in years to come.” As we pray about printing more sets of manuals, we are eager for the inauguration of the new print-on-demand center in Kinshasa, DRC, for which the machinery has been delivered, and for locally produced, less expensive materials that will change and empower lives.

With all our heart, we thank you for putting your “energy together” with us as you pray, give, and tell your friends about the ministry of giving the Word in French. Our board members have adopted the goal of each inviting one new person this year to consider joining the “energy together” support team. Would you be willing to do the same so that this ministry may not only continue but multiply the lives being changed by the Word of God?

**Angela Brandle, Executive Director,
Synergie Francophone**







Empowering the Next Generation

By Angela Brandle

BLF USA, now Synergie Francophone, paid for missionary Alain Stamp to make at least ten trips to Africa and provided hundreds of books, paid for by our donors, for the disciples and leaders he has trained. Now Alain is gratefully offering back to Synergie Francophone the choice fruits of his labors

GOD IS MULTIPLYING HIS CHURCH IN FRANCE

According to *impactfrance.org*

-  In 1950, there were 50,000 Evangelicals in France. This number has increased 10 times in the past 60 years.
-  In 1970, there were 769 local Evangelical churches. Now there are 2,521, plus 500 more places of worship that meet less than 3 times a month on weekends.
-  A new local church is born in France every 10 days (about 35 new churches each year).
-  Most French church denominations share the goal of seeing one church for every 10,000 people, making the Gospel accessible to all inhabitants of France.

under God: men and women whose influence we can help to extend as we partner with them to empower the next generation of disciples they are training to live out and teach the Word of God.

You can meet these leaders in the enclosed brochure entitled “Beautiful Feet,” for that is what they are: beautiful feet bringing good news not only of salvation, the beginning of new life, but also of sanctification, the transformation of life to resemble Christ in a world desperate to know His goodness, love, mercy, and truth.

The brochure introduces you not only to leaders on the African continent, but also to leaders in France, where 1.6% of the population professes faith in Jesus Christ. Missiologists define as “unreached” a country where less than 2% of the population professes faith in Christ. We want to collaborate with leaders in France whom Alain has worked and walked alongside as together we seek to reach the French-speaking world. In France and beyond, their efforts join those of local French churches and missionaries from across the globe, using material published or printed by our partners **in France**. Such missionaries in France include our own Nathan and Annie Phillips.

A Minister’s Heart Was Changed

This is the story of pastor Maouna Maxime Kakpo of Benin, who tells us how meeting Alain Stamp “clarified for me the importance of mentoring and of the integrity of a minister’s heart.”

I accepted salvation through Christ when I was twelve. During my studies, I sensed a call to full-time ministry. I was already very involved in a ministry of evangelism. So, after four years of university training, I enrolled in the Assemblies of God (AOG) Bible school in Dassa to study basic theology. I graduated in May 2008, married Andrea Koffi in August,

and began my ministry journey in September with her as my teammate. The Lord has given us two beautiful daughters and two handsome sons.

My ministry began with a week of open-air evangelism, where about 50 people decided to follow Christ. They became the first members of my church and needed to be disciplined. I went door to

door, visited prisons and hospitals with the Good News about Jesus, and saw people come to Christ. The big challenge, however, was their spiritual growth. Sadly, training them as growing disciples was not very intentional; the church was growing in numbers but not in quality. I was an evangelist more than a pastor.

After I worked in this



Pastor Maxime and his family. Credit: Alain Stamp

way for five years without great transformative impact on the quality of lives,

Leadership by Way of Absence: Multiplication Jesus' Way

By Alain Stamp

The board of Synergie Francophone (SF), which financed almost all my travel for the Evangelists' Forum in Africa over the past years, asked me a question recently: *Alain, have you thought about your successor, when you are no longer able to travel? Who will take over your ministry?* I must admit that I was honored and surprised by the question. To be honest, I had not asked myself the question for this specific ministry.

Right or wrong question?

While this question expresses the tremendous confidence of my friends in the U.S.A., their generosity, and their desire to bless the French-speaking world, I realized that this was not necessarily the right question. The goal should never be to prolong but rather to multiply a work, a vision, a ministry! According to the Gospel economy, from Matthew 28:19-20 to Ephesians 4:11-12 and 2 Tim 2:2, our focus should be to equip others who, in turn, will equip others, rather than maintain the status quo of a ministry, a service, or a project.

My disciples are the future

Over the course of my travels, a Community of French-speaking African Mentors (Communauté de mentors d'Afrique Francophone – CMAF) was formed. Made up of African leaders with whom I keep in contact, I encourage and interview them. After spending time in prayer, I quickly realized that I will not look for a successor to my own ministry. I asked SF, whose vision is to support evangelism and training in the French-speaking world, to consider not my ministry but rather the ministries of all those I have guided, in whom I have invested and to support them where possible.

Let my ceiling become your floor

A well-known leader in France used this expression to illustrate that his mentoring should accelerate the development of his mentees' ministries. It is an excellent formula if applied. I hope that SF, which has demonstrated such loyalty, such kindness toward my



Alain Stamp training leaders in Brazzaville, Rep. of the Congo. Credit: Alain Stamp

ministry of developing mentorships and sound leadership, offers all my mentees a floor for their ministries.

Leadership by way of absence

"Here is what is essential in our ministry: we reveal God not only by our coming but also by our going. Therefore, we must dare to say: *I spent time with you, and we shared, but it is good for you that I go away. It is time for me to leave so that God can better manifest himself to you.*"¹ "I tell you the truth. *It is to your advantage that I go away;* for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7, my emphasis). Jesus gives a key lesson in leadership here. *It is to your advantage that I go away.* Our Lord entrusted absolutely everything, including his disciples, to the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit qualifies others with His gifts and guides them, we must let the Holy Spirit determine our leadership responsibilities.

Paul models leadership by way of absence

It is striking to see how much Paul models leadership in his absence by trusting the Holy Spirit. "Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel..." (Phil 1:27). "By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you." (2 Timothy 1:14).

¹H. Nouwen, *Compassion*, Éditions fidélité, pages 18-21

What if some of the overload and tensions we experience in carrying out our responsibilities are the result of a lack of trust in the transforming work and power of the Holy Spirit? Do we know how to exercise leadership by stepping away to give the Holy Spirit ample space?

To read the full article about leadership through *presence and absence*, go to www.synergiefr.org (QR code on page 8).



Synergie Francophone is pleased to support Alain Stamp's mentees, working with the Holy Spirit as He grows his work and multiplies the workers, allowing SF to expand our partnership with them by book shipments for their training conferences, as the Lord provides for us to purchase them.

As a mentor and spiritual advisor, teacher, author, and radio presenter, Alain Stamp focuses primarily on guiding emerging or experienced Christian leaders in France and in Africa. With his blog paroledementor.com, he seeks to share his thoughts, his spiritual walk, and his experience as a mentor to encourage *leaders to be more and more like Christ*.



We Can Really Do Something

By Elise Teegne

This past August, board members gathered in Wheaton, Illinois, for their annual face-to-face meeting to launch a new chapter for Synergie Francophone. Over Zoom, I spoke with Chairman of the Board Ray Sanford to learn about the board's latest accomplishments and dreams. "This is an exciting time for Synergie Francophone," Ray said. "We have a clear vision of where we're heading."

This clarity is due in part to Missio Nexus Board Coach Corwin Macklin's assistance. Fruit from Mr. Macklin's support is already evident. Engagement on the board has blossomed: people asking questions, taking initiative, and demonstrating ownership of Synergie Francophone's vision to multiply the Gospel across the francophone world. Ray observed how board members are beginning to get excited, realizing that "we can really do something and have significant impact."

Additionally, a clear structure of governance was formalized, which, according to Ray, is the board meeting's

biggest accomplishment. Treasurer Karl Eisenmenger volunteered to create a new governance package and has already drafted a 27-page working document. This freshly organized structure will clarify the staff and board members' relationships within Synergie Francophone, ultimately accelerating the ministry.

In addition to laying the groundwork for a healthy, thriving board, officers completed other agenda items as well, including financial reporting and ministry updates. Notably, Ray and Vice Chairman Amy Lynelle were elected to their new roles, while Karl Eisenmenger and Pam Lisle continued as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

Looking towards the future, Ray shared with me his biggest dream: to raise up francophone leaders on the stage of global missions. There are emerging Korean, Filipino, Latino, and African leaders—but not yet any significant French voices. Discussing Synergie Francophone's role in making this dream a reality, Ray talked about educating and promoting emerging francophone leaders. This includes continuing to support the work Alain Stamp is already doing to multiply biblically-sound mentors within the francophone world (see "Beautiful Feet" brochure). "It's really important to figure out how we can take some of Alain's leaders and make sure that they have platforms on their own and are being heard," Ray said. Having a healthy board—a financially secure and well-organized foundation for ministry work—is a key part of realizing this vision.

When I asked what Ray was most excited about in 2023, he shared about new contacts Executive Director Angela Brande has established (in part through her work



Ray Sanford, left and Corwin Macklin, right

A Childhood Dream Fulfilled

Looking back at my life, I'm astounded by how God has prepared me to join the work at Synergie Francophone. From a young age, I've had a passion for writing and French. As a little girl, I would staple together homemade books, scribbling stories over the pages in marker. In middle school, I would sit at my little wicker desk and repeat French phrases trickling through a cassette player. Growing older, I continued in both pursuits, reading voraciously, writing a couple of novels, and learning to say with panache *"La banane est sur la chaise."* Through Indiana University, I pursued a double major in Creative Writing and French—two highly impractical subjects, but ones I dearly loved.

At the end of my senior year of university, my favorite French professor—one Dr. Amy Lynelle—emailed me about an opportunity to teach at Bingham

funding in a matter of weeks. A few months after graduation, I found myself on a plane skittering on the tarmac in Addis Ababa.

Living for four years in Ethiopia profoundly shaped me. I learned that America is not the center of the universe. I learned that the denomination of Christianity I was raised in is only one way to live as Jesus did. I learned that my views comprise just a small sliver of the kaleidoscopic diorama of the human experience. Through their daily lives, Ethiopians taught me about generosity, interdependence, awareness of others, gentleness, and humility. And one Sunday after church, I met a handsome, soft-spoken Ethiopian who could make me laugh like no one else, who took me to jazz concerts under the stars, and who one year later would ask me to be his wife.

Thanks to a miraculously expedited fiancé visa, we were married in my hometown of Indianapolis. We lived together for a year in Ethiopia before moving back to the US to pursue our master's degrees. While continuing to teach French at a local high school, I completed my Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Seattle Pacific University.

After giving birth to our son Jeremiah in 2021, I decided to leave teaching to focus on Jeremiah and (during his naps!) my writing career. Since then, I've been listening for God's voice in the rhythms of everyday life, keeping my eyes open for abundant graces—and seeking to capture what I find in words. My work appears in various publications, including *Risen Motherhood*, *Fathom*, and Velvet Ashes' newly-released book *Yet We Still Have Hope: Stories of Courage from Women Serving Around the World*. Each month, I also post on my website's blog, which currently offers essays about the spaces where God dwells with us.

A few months ago, I received an email from Dr. Amy Lynelle, sharing the opportunity to write and edit for Synergie Francophone. As I read the job description, I knew it was an answer to prayer. During my interview with Angela, I was blessed to finally meet someone who had been highly influential in my life, but whom I hadn't even known existed! I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the team at Synergie Francophone and look forward to seeing how God will continue to make Himself known among the nations.



Credit: Elise Tegegne

Academy, an international mission school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Only a few months ago would I learn that the woman who told Amy about this position was none other than Angela Brandle!) The idea seemed impossibly exotic—I didn't even know where to find Ethiopia on the map. But God opened the doors in miraculous ways— including providing 100% of my

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN JOURNALISTS TRAINED



Credit: Magazine Training International

In November 2022, our partner Magazine Training International (MTI) provided training in Ghana to budding

African Christian journalists in English and French. SF provided funding to bring interpreters to ensure that French-speakers received the conference training in French. Angela Brandle was an interpreter, using the French version of [Introduction to Magazine Publishing](#) written by Sharon Mumper, founder and president of MTI. Participants came from various countries, including the manager of the only Christian bookshop in the francophone country of Guinea.



Credit: Leonard Kiswangi

PRINT-ON-DEMAND EQUIPMENT ON SALE

The Lord allowed SF and our partners to obtain new printing equipment at a lower price. It was already in the Democratic Republic of Congo, saving on shipping costs as well. The

equipment is now at the African Enterprise campus, and the project is queued with the organization Print4Africa, whose personnel will do the setup and provide training

for local employees. We are raising funds for initial costs until the print-on-demand center becomes self-sustaining. The first titles to be printed are being selected.

Despite Upheaval, Haitian Students Graduate

Despite the crises affecting everyone in Haiti, the Apollos Center for Study and Training (Word of Life Mission, Haiti), held its third graduation of 23 students at the end of last November. Our partner, BLF Canada, had supplied books for their studies. Our prayers go with these newly-qualified and empowered servants of God as they go out as God's representatives, sharing His love and truth in times of turmoil, shortages, and danger.

SO POPULAR THAT WE RAN OUT

Synergie Francophone shipped several thousand copies of our Sunday school curriculum manuals to three pastors in Burkina Faso who have conducted several trainings of Sunday school teachers. In February, SF shipped the remaining printed copies of our Sunday school curriculum, about two pallets, from France to Haiti. Teachers, parents, and children all love this curriculum that was specially written and



Sunday School teachers at two of the training conferences in Burkina Faso. Credit: Pastor Paul

designed for the cultures where it is used. We are collecting funds to reprint the curriculum. In the meantime, manuals are available in PDF format for users to print locally. Please contact Angela.Brandle@synergiefr.org to request them.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN DRC

During a follow-up visit to southern DRC, Pastor Jonas Muyima met with the religion teachers at Lwende Nzangala Elementary School and Sambakonde Elementary and High Schools. They said their students are excited about learning from the Sunday school curriculum provided by SF and that the material makes their teaching easier than before. Sunday school teachers in Mukedi said children are enjoying the materials being used in churches of different Christian denominations. In their journeys to the DRC each year, the Muyimas will continue to coach the Sunday school teachers and teachers of religion, to raise up the next generation of Christ-followers.

A New Generation for God

In December 2022, Synergie Francophone was present at the Urbana Student Missions Conference in Indianapolis, IN, where several thousand young people came

together to explore how God wants them to put their gifts and skills to work in His world. Our name attracted people with a particular interest in French or the French-speaking world, as well as a few who wanted to learn more about it. It is almost always a great discovery for people to learn how much of the world uses French, and that it is spoken by 321 million people – and growing!



Pastor and students exploring opportunities at Urbana. Credit: Angela Brandle

WAYS TO SERVE GOD WITH SYNERGIE FRANCOPHONE:

- Opportunities in France: **Graphic designer; Offset printing operator/apprentice; Printshop production worker/stock manager; French-speaking administrator/bookkeeper; computer-assisted publishing.** Some roles could be done remotely from the U.S.A. or Canada.
- **Teams to Quebec**, for various ministries
- **Ambassadors in the U.S.A.** Full or part time.

To explore these opportunities, contact Angela.Brandle@synergiefr.org

JOIN A PROJECT | CHANGE A LIFE | GROW FRUITFULNESS

A Bible that Makes Sense. Give leaders and teachers study Bibles in French with articles and applications written by African theologians. Goal: \$?	\$	Ministry's Essential Ingredient. Make our ministry of the Word possible by helping cover our costs of part-time staff, services, postage and supplies. Goal: \$?	\$
Adopt a Country. Bring God's Word to people in various walks of life in one of the world's poorest countries, Burkina Faso. Goal: \$?	\$	More than Surgery. Give African missionary surgeons the spiritual "sword" to go with their scalpel by donating to biblical resource packs. Goal: \$?	\$
Beautiful Feet. Put Bible teachers on the ground in Africa, Haiti, and other countries to mentor and train leaders. Goal: \$?	\$	Read Right Now. Help to install a print-on-demand center in Kinshasa, DRC, to print small or large quantities of books for less without shipping expenses. This is a great way for new authors to get their books printed. Goal: \$?	\$
Christmas Year-Round. Give the gift of a Christian book to change the life of a child, a refugee, or a needy family. Goal: \$?	\$	Train the Teacher. Allow new generations of children to learn God's ways with SF's Sunday School Curriculum, as we raise funds to reprint. Goal: costs of reprinting	\$
Culturally Correct. Sponsor Christian theologians writing Christian books for their cultural contexts. Goal: \$?	\$	Where Most Needed. We will direct your gift to where it will help the most. Goal: \$?	\$
Fill their Shelves. Supply books for libraries at Christian universities and Bible colleges overseas to help students understand, apply, and teach God's Word to others. Goal: \$?	\$	Write Truth Right. Help to train Christian journalists to influence readers for Christ through our partner Magazine Training International. Goal: \$?	\$
Gospel Waves. Help to share the Gospel in the Province of Quebec, Canada, by funding the setting up of 100 Christian radio repeater stations and the distribution of Christian literature. Goal: \$?	\$	Missionary Support: Walter Zurfluh	\$
		Missionary Support: Russ & Mary Ann Miller	\$
		Missionary Support: Nathan & Annie Phillips	\$

Name: Street:
 Phone: City, State, ZIP:

Please mail this form with your cheque to PO Box 629, Wheaton, IL 60187 or give online by pointing your phone's camera at the QR code that will take you to <https://synergiefrancophone.org> where you can read more about these projects. Find articles for your personal spiritual reading or for group Bible studies in our new blog that you can access from our website.



A Minister's Heart Was Changed

God intervened using his servant, Papa Alain. This happened through training at his evangelists' forum and through the creation of a community of mentors. God used Papa Alain to open my eyes and get me started on training disciples. Two things changed: My first goal was to train disciples to grow in

the image of Christ and to be capable of training others. My second concern was to mentor those called to be evangelists who seemed to be forgotten or overlooked among God's workers. With this new approach, I saw people not only come to Christ but go on to be used by God as evangelists.

From 2012-2016 I was sectoral chairman of the AOG youth department, from 2017-2019 its regional chairman, from 2020-2022 a sectoral secretary and President of the Federation of Evangelical Churches and Missions of Benin (FEMEB). I can assure you today that if I had not had

the opportunity to meet Papa Alain and receive all the training relating to the life of the servant of God, an evangelist in my case, and the importance of mentoring to have a fruitful ministry, I would have been just a sterile branch. My purpose now is to bear fruit for which God receives the glory.

We Can Really Do Something

By Elise Tegegne

at Missions Fest Seattle and at a training for Christian journalists in Ghana this past November) as well as fresh opportunities to take Bibles to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He also dreams of vision trips to Quebec and to other sites of Synergie Francophone's work throughout the world. He hopes to open doors for people to see for themselves what God is doing: to shake the hands of people already serving on the ground, to look into the faces of those receiving Bibles perhaps for the first time. "Excitement in missions comes when people are hands-on," Ray said.

The future is bursting with opportunity. Though oftentimes overlooked, the French language is an existing, tried-and-true bridge capable of reaching 300 million souls

with the Gospel across the globe. There is much work to be done in helping the church understand the number of unreached peoples whose language is French—and inviting them to partner in efforts to reach these communities. But the work has already started, and Synergie Francophone will continue it: reaching the unreached, equipping French speakers to go to French speakers, supplying resources to the right places—all for the multiplication of the Gospel. "This really is the beginning of something that God is doing," Ray said. "[We're] going to be able to see...some exciting fruit come in the next several years...It will only continue to grow."