

IMPRESSIONS

Vol.6.2

Meet the
Missionaries

A publication of Synergie Francophone

NEW FACES, SAME HEART



Synergie
FRANCOPHONE

Together... planting, watering, growing fruitfulness

Recipients of books from BLF Éditions in Togo. Credit: Mesmin Tchao



Synergie
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New Workers in the Harvest

About a year ago, we began to pray for God to raise up partners in France, francophone Africa, Canada, and other French-speaking parts of the globe, trusting in Christ's instruction to pray for new workers in the harvest (Luke 10:2). God responded and has now taken two of these partnerships to a new level of trust, engagement, and shared vision.

This edition is dedicated to introducing to you two new couples who have now moved into missionary status with us. This means that they are specifically working to further the Gospel and SF's work. For our part, we are committed to supporting them in their various ministries. An important need for them is prayer and financial backing. We trust God will move hearts to become part of their support team.

Both of these relationships grew over time. It became increasingly evident that they share our heart for giving people the opportunity to hear of Christ's love, respond to that love, be effectively grounded in God's Word, and grow in their faith. Both couples come with years of demonstrated ministry experience and impact. We are so excited to see how God will use these new team members to have an even greater impact for the Gospel.

We pray these stories will touch your hearts and give you yet another view into what God is doing across the



Credit: Ray Sanford

francophone world. As you read, let God speak to you. Let Him show you how the Gospel is alive in unimaginable ways across the world.

We know that God has always provided for SF in prayer and financial support. As we add these new missionaries, we look forward to seeing how God will build teams around them who will allow them to freely focus on the calling God has graciously set before them.

I end this editorial once again by commending you for your obedience to our Lord and thanking you deeply from my heart for your prayerful engagement and ongoing support and care for ministry around the world.

Ray Sanford, President of the Board

A Tapestry Beyond Human Handiwork: How God Entwined New Missionaries with SF's Story

By: Elise Teegne

At certain moments, one can only stand back and gape in awe at the mysterious, inimitable work of God – accomplished beyond anything human minds or efforts could create, or even conceive (Psalm 40:5). Standing at a crossroads as the Phillips return to US soil after 21 years of ministry in France, we have been astounded by God's perfect, timely provision of new missionaries Fabrice and Sylviane Dubus of France and Modeste and Lucie Mutshiawudi Mbombo of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Long before we began to imagine these couples as missionary partners, our all-wise God had already begun weaving beautiful tapestries of connection that would tie seamlessly with SF's heart and work. In the Dubus' words, "We really see the hand of the Lord who provides so faithfully."

SF's connection with the Dubus reaches back decades. Sylviane's parents, who were in pastoral ministry, served with SF Executive Director Angela Brandle and her husband Willy in Paris. As a high school student, Sylviane volunteered at the Brandles' office, little knowing she would work with Angela again decades later. Angela recalls young Sylviane's "hard work, attention to detail, and diligence in writing well." Growing up watching her father publish books and speak, Sylviane was steeped in both the literary and biblical worlds. As an adult, Sylviane served for several years on the BLF (now SF) board in France, working with the late Rory Clark and Alain Stamp, who continues to mentor leaders through SF's Beautiful Feet project. Raised in a staunchly atheist home, Fabrice did not meet an evangelical Christian until he was 25. This reality

inspired him to get God's Word and biblical books into the hands of the spiritually hungry in Europe and throughout the world.

After the Dubus had left promising careers in IT and teaching, they completed their studies at the Geneva Bible Institute and engaged in outreach through literature for 16 years at a Christian bookshop in Brussels, Belgium, where only 1.4% of the population are evangelical Christian. In 2021, the couple began

serving at Christian publishing house Éditions Clé at the same time as Nathan Phillips, who created layouts and book covers there for two years.

SF had been building a partnership with the publishing house, which laid a solid foundation for a good relationship with the Dubus.

When the Phillips were called to the IMÉAF print shop, Nathan handed the baton of his work to Fabrice (who was also already the IT specialist), while Sylviane

continued in her multifaceted role editing manuscripts, helping to develop marketing materials, and managing sales, among other tasks. For

years, she has worked full-time for Éditions Clé as an unsalaried volunteer, while Fabrice receives the minimum legal wage and is unpaid for his teaching and serving as board chairman of the Brussels Bible Institute (IBB). As some of the couple's supporters have passed away and churches run into financial constraints, raising support in one of the world's most secular countries has proved increasingly challenging.

Despite working from a one-room office at their home in France (Éditions Clé moved out of its Lyon offices to save money), the couple has made a global

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Credit: Fabrice and Sylviane Dubus

Continued from page 3: **A Tapestry Beyond Human Handiwork**

impact: pouring into the next generation of leaders in Europe, a secular mission field ripe for harvest; collaborating with the Geneva Bible Institute to produce and distribute Gospel-centered literature to equip leaders; and spreading Éditions Clé's biblically-rich resources throughout the French-speaking world through partnerships with other ministries. A former IBB student the Dubus had known in Belgium returned to Togo, where he established a Bible school and planted several churches. The Dubus brought a carload of books from Éditions Clé to a partner in Belgium so the books could be sent to Togo, helping educate and multiply theologically-sound leaders in francophone Africa.

While the Dubus have been working in France's harvest, Modeste and Lucie Mutshiawudi Mbombo have been serving in the DRC's. SF's connection with the couple began with Clement ("Bud") and Charlotte Kroeker, the son and daughter-in-law of Abe and Mary Kroeker, who served for nearly 20 years in the DRC and founded SF (then ELB) in 1953. Lit with the same fire as the elder Kroekers, Bud and Charlotte started Congo Open Heart, an organization that sought to distribute much-needed Bibles in the DRC. One of the intrepid missionaries who distributed these Bibles was Pastor Modeste, who met the Kroekers in 2015.

Having come to Christ in 1984 after a friend invited him to church, Pastor Modeste has lived a life of sacrificial service to the Lord. "God has placed on my heart the burden to preach his word for the salvation of all who believe and to serve Him everywhere (Matthew 28:18-20)," Pastor Modeste writes. Adept in six languages, Pastor Modeste has pursued extensive biblical education from institutions including the Berea Graduate School of Theology, the Divina Gloria University of Butembo, Dr. John Maxwell's leadership courses, and Kinshasa Christian University. Such a theologically solid foundation equipped him for evangelism, discipleship, and community development among neglected Pygmy villages in the DRC. When an aging Bud and Charlotte passed off the reins of their ministry to SF, we met Pastor



Fabrice and Sylviane at a Christian bookshop in Brussels. Credit: Fabrice and Sylviane Dubus

Modeste, who continues distributing hundreds of Bibles on multiple annual trips, thanks to our donors. His wife Madame Lucie joins him when she is able, making and selling slippers at the local market to support their ministry when she is not.



Credit: Modeste and Lucie Mutshiawudi Mbombo

Pastor Modeste and his wife Lucie have 15 children, nine of whom they adopted as orphans when their parents died of AIDS. Fulfilling roles as Sunday school teachers and singers, all their children serve in the church, with the exception of one who passed away. Passionate about the Great Commission, the Mbombos both teach the Word of God in their local church: Pastor Modeste as pastor since 1992 and Madame Lucie as leader of the women's ministry. They both have a heart for indigenous Pygmies, a marginalized, vulnerable community suffering from both physical and spiritual poverty. Traveling by dugout canoe, plane, motorcycle, and foot, they brave hazardous roads, illnesses, and other dangers to evangelize, educate volunteers in community development, and provide pastors and believers with training, biblical literature, and Bibles. Looking to the future, the Mbombos dream of opening a Bible school, establishing two health centers, a vocational training center, and a library to serve the overlooked Pygmy community, and organizing education for teenage mothers and illiterate Pygmy youth. A massive need for Bibles and material support among the Pygmies remains.

For decades, God has been gathering the threads of the Dubus and the Mbombos' ministries and stitching them together with SF's vision to support evangelism, multiply disciples, and equip the Church with biblical

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Credit: Nathan and Annie Phillips

A Tribute to the Phillips Family

By: Ray Sanford

Missionary statesman Dr. Dick Hillis, the founder of OC International, once stated, “No one is ever lost to the will of God.” In other words, workers who move on from their ministries in obedience to God are not a loss – but rather taking the next step in contributing to God’s kingdom. In light of this sentiment, today we pay tribute to the ministry of Nathan and Annie Phillips and their 20-plus years of service with SF.

In 2005, Nathan began working with BLF Éditions in Marpent, France. Though contributing in many ways, his primary focus was using his gifts in graphic arts to help publish books and materials for the French-speaking world. Five years later, God brought Annie into his life, and they married and joined in ministry in 2013. Annie used her skills to help with the print shop’s administration and the publication process. Three years later, God brought their son Benjamin into the picture.

Their lives were forever changed in 2019 when the board and leadership of BLF Éditions decided to take the ministry in a new direction to function primarily as a publisher, thus redefining the need for graphic artist support. The Phillips returned to the US for their home assignment, as together we prayed for God’s next steps. The year 2020 was eventful with their relocation to Lyon working with Éditions Clé, the

arrival of Caleb, and COVID’s global impact.

After two challenging years in Lyon, the family moved again, this time to Montélimar and the IMÉAF printing facility. Their ministry focus remained the same: producing books and materials for French speakers globally. Towards the end of 2025, they began to have the sense that God was asking them to prepare to leave France and return to the US.

We thank God and honor Nathan and Annie for their years of missionary service. They helped publish numerous books, making needed resources available to church leaders and believers across France, the African continent, and Haiti. God alone knows the spiritual impact they have had across these decades. As Paul wrote, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase,” (1 Corinthians 3:6, ASV). Likewise, both Nathan and Annie have given back to God the gifts He gave them to use for the kingdom. One did graphic layout, another administered, and others fulfilled needed roles – but God gave the fruit around the francophone world.

Nathan and Annie have stayed true to God’s calling through many challenging times. Now as they move forward into these next steps of obedience to God, we pray God’s richest blessing on them and their family for his glory and his kingdom.

Pleasing the Master

By: James Hely Hutchinson, Director of the Brussels Bible Institute

I've known Fabrice and Sylviane for two decades. For more than a dozen years, we regularly rubbed shoulders in the workplace – in a building in the center of Brussels housing both the Christian bookshop Le Bon Livre, which the Dubus managed, and the Brussels Bible Institute (IBB), which I look after and of which Fabrice has been board chairman for over 15 years.

Sylviane is a gifted linguist with a remarkable eye for precision and accuracy in her editorial work. There are many books, published by Editions Clé and meticulously edited by Sylviane, that are important for the training we offer at IBB. I have developed sounder instincts in French thanks to Sylviane's kindness in pointing out my mistakes. Further, when the proofreader for IBB's magazine was out of action, Sylviane stepped in to copyedit, which she did superbly.

She is faithful in her commitments, generous, and considerate. My wife Myriam was so grateful Sylviane lent her some large-scale display boards for teaching

children the Bible. And our daughter Clara had a splinter removed thanks to Sylviane's skilled care!

Fabrice's technical expertise in IT is legendary, but his servant-heartedness is perhaps less well-known. On several occasions, he sacrificed his time to come to the rescue in computer trouble. He also did the administrative work leading to my owning the computer on which I am typing this article.

In chairing IBB's board, Fabrice admirably combines wisdom, reliability, and prayer. He knows when to pause discussions when a consensus is

hard to reach. He is comfortable with the figures of financial outturns and budgets. He leverages his external perspective to provide out-of-the-box reflections or ask a question no one has thought of. In addition to regular visits to IBB from his home in France, he is available to hear IBB's news and connects via Zoom fortnightly during the academic year.

Both Fabrice and Sylviane are characterised by thoroughly solid doctrinal faithfulness. Although their work at the bookshop produced robust financial results, they were, above all, concerned with offering their clientele only beneficial, theologically orthodox resources. Sometimes this concern was costly to them: they missed out on some revenue and had to face misunderstandings with less theologically grounded clients. They were clear on their priority: pleasing the Master. In IBB's ministry, there can be considerable pressure to be unclear on key doctrines in order to please a broader constituency; but Fabrice has consistently backed our firm theological outlook.

The way in which God providentially opened the door for the Dubus' service at Editions Clé seems remarkable to me. Day after day, they conduct themselves with considerable integrity, conscientiousness, seriousness in God's presence, and awareness of the reality of spiritual warfare (I praise God that they are so quick to pray). May God provide for their needs, strengthen them, and harness their gifts so that the best books can be published and disseminated.



James and his family.
Credit: Moorlands Church



Recipients of books from BLF Éditions, which the Dubus helped send to Togo.
Credit: Mesmin Tchao



Staff Highlight: Meet Karin Wilcox

By: Angela Brandle and Elise Tegegne

God has blessed SF by assembling a team of highly skilled, dedicated servants, a dream team we could only have imagined. SF Executive Director Angela Brandle met Karin during a conference for African Christian writers in Ghana. A mathematician, professional opera singer, and videographer/video editor, Karin enjoys exploring how technology can further God's work. Having seen some of her videos, we consulted Karin when we wanted to start sharing the story of God's movement in the French-speaking world through video. She quickly volunteered to create our introductory video and joined us as videographer on two France Impressions Teams. One morning in France, Angela felt impelled by God to invite Karin to join our operational team. Karin had the same conviction – but there were no budgeted funds to hire her. "No problem," said Karin, "I will raise support." God provided, and Karin became an SF missionary.

Resourceful and multi-talented, Karin gives voice to our global partners through a medium essential to reaching today's audience. SF missionaries Sylviane and Fabrice Dubus greatly appreciated Karin's ability to guide them through the self-filming process and then to create an engaging video about their ministry. It was "above our expectations," Fabrice writes, adding, "Karin does behind-the-scenes work that puts things and people in the spotlight." With her long-term perspective, she has also been instrumental in organizing our media library for future generations of SF staff.

Highly intelligent but humble, Karin is fluent in

You can enjoy Karin's work on our **YouTube** channel. Each video unfolds stories about our ministry, our history, and our gifted partners around the world: <https://www.youtube.com/@SynergieFrancophone>.

English and German, and is learning French to better serve the French-speaking world. Having grown up as a missionary kid in Germany, she is thorough and efficient yet always willing and quick to learn new skills and grow in Christlike character. Seriously responsible for all her work (including OC

International, the San Diego and Colorado Operas, and Lyft), her wry sense of humor and clever turns of phrase keep the mood light. We appreciate her pursuit of excellence while extending grace to others, her courageous spirit that is dependent on God, and her generosity in singing beautiful hymns to bless overseas partners and supporters. SF Director of Communications Elise Tegegne writes, "Her honesty, conscientiousness, and sensitivity to hearing God's voice help to shape a culture of Christ-centeredness at SF."



Credit: Karin Wilcox

Donors supporting our operational team keep this amazing group of people fulfilling SF's God-given niche in the greatest cause on earth – helping God's Church fulfill her worldwide mission!

Learn more about our operations ministry on our website www.synergiefrancophone.org/our-work.

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Pastor Modeste, Madame Lucie, and three of their children.
Credit: Modeste and Lucie Mutshiawudi Mbombo

tools in French. Our human efforts could not have contrived the beautiful, synergistic tapestry God has woven, nor provided ministers whose hearts align so perfectly with ours. We look forward with expectation to seeing how God will work through these servants of God to further his Church throughout the francophone world – far more abundantly beyond what we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21).

You can learn more about our new missionaries on YouTube @Synergiefrancophone and on our website www.synergiefrancophone.org/our-work as well as support them www.synergiefrancophone.org/give.

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 US or Canada.

Ambassadors in the US to advocate for those without God's Word. Full or part time. To explore these opportunities, contact Angela.Brandle@synergiefr.org.

MISSION STATEMENT

Impressions magazine exists to share stories of what God is doing through SF, to educate readers about the French-speaking world, to include a platform for French-speaking voices, and to inspire readers' engagement with the francophone community – all for the glory of God.

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Together... planting, watering, growing fruitfulness