

GLOBAL REPORT

SUMMER 2023

FOI'S FUTURE IN SECULAR FRANCE

TAKING THE GOSPEL TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Welcome Henri Fernandez to FOI's International Team! Read about his passion for Israel and heart to serve the Jewish people in the largest Jewish community in Europe, France.



For the second day in a row, Henri Fernandez spoke with the Spanish-speaking housekeeper at his hotel in New Jersey while visiting The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry's (FOI) headquarters last summer. He shared his faith in the Lord Jesus with this young woman in Spanish, one of his native languages. Later that day, Henri gave her FOI materials in Spanish. He soon learned the woman accepted the gift of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ! And Henri continues to minister to this woman, even from France.

"I can't resist sharing my faith with anyone the Lord brings into my life," Henri said.

I'm delighted to share that Henri officially joined the FOI International team as a full-time field representative in France in July 2022. As I share his story and ministry, will you consider how your prayer and financial support can keep the mission in France alive and growing?

Henri Fernandez first met FOI workers Jean and Ginette Massincaud 32 years ago at an evangelical church in Wittenheim, France. The Massincauds were working on creating the very first edition of *Israel Ma Gloire*, the French translation of *Israel My Glory* magazine. They became fast friends because of their shared passion for Israel and the Jewish people.

Henri assisted the Massincauds with Bible teaching and outreach to Jewish communities throughout France. On that day three decades ago, God orchestrated ordinary events to achieve the extraordinary by expanding FOI's reach throughout France.

Recently, Henri expressed his happiness in joining The Friends of Israel: "FOI has a biblical vision to bring concrete help and to make known the message of salvation through Yeshua [Jesus] the Messiah. It is with great joy that I serve with this mission!"

HENRI'S JOURNEY TO JESUS

Henri was born into a Spanish family and raised in a non-practicing Catholic home. When Henri was 22, he went on vacation to visit his brother, Michael, who lived in Edmonton, Canada. Over dinner, Michael shared the gospel with Henri. Henri was intrigued and receptive to this Good News, which he heard for the first time.

When he returned home that evening, he read the gospel tract he was given. The tract gave him the words to express the compelling truth that had already changed his heart. That night he asked God to forgive his sins and received Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. Henri relays, "After praying, I fell asleep; and the next morning when I woke up, I asked my brother, Michael, 'Please, give me a Bible!' That



Henri and Jean's shared passion has helped translate FOI literature, videos, and teaching materials into French.



Henri and Christine are eager to share the love of the Messiah throughout France.

day, I experienced a new birth; and the Lord revealed Himself to me.”

While flying home to France, Henri read the first nine chapters of Genesis. He concluded with the story of Noah and God’s sign of His covenant given through a rainbow.

“When I arrived at the airport in France and exited the plane, there was a brilliant rainbow in front of me,” Henri recalled. “It reminded me that the Lord loves me and always keeps His promises.”

Shortly after arriving home, Henri left to serve in the French army with his Bible in hand. He spent his free time reading and studying God’s Word, constantly drawn to the prophecies of the Messiah.

Early on, the Lord gave Henri a heart for the Jewish people and a desire to answer God’s call to bless His Chosen People (Gen. 12:3). He studied Hebrew for a year at Mulhouse Synagogue, which led to a relationship with the Mulhouse Jewish community. Today, Henri brings Christian friends to join the Jewish community in Mulhouse so they can connect with and love the Jewish people.

SPIRITUAL CLIMATE IN FRANCE

France is home to 450,000 Jews, the largest Jewish

community in Europe and the third-largest Jewish community in the world. The most recent data shows that 61 percent of anti-religious acts in France are directed toward Jewish people. Fearful of violence, many Jewish families conceal their identity by refraining from wearing traditional Jewish clothing and symbols, like the Star of David, in public. **Antisemitism is very much alive throughout Europe, but especially in France.**

Meanwhile, evangelical churches in France have seen a dramatic decline in attendance since the pandemic restrictions were enacted in 2020. Even though restrictions were eventually dropped, many Christians simply haven’t returned to church.

Henri reveals, “Secularism is enshrined in French culture and government since the French Revolution, despite the church’s history here. We even have articles in our constitution that intentionally discourage religious involvement. This is another reason Christians have seemed to abandon a commandment to evangelize and make disciples.”

Henri has also noticed a general lack of biblical knowledge and understanding within churches, allowing the acceptance of Amillennialism in the church. This momentum has created a culture of Christians who lack the desire to study the prophetic and eschatological texts of the Bible. Henri is committed to training



Henri continues to help build bridges between the Christian and Jewish communities in France.

and teaching these important truths to this generation and the next.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

This past year, Henri has sought to build deeper and stronger partnerships with Jewish leaders within his community, opening the door for more meaningful relationships. He attends Jewish conferences and national remembrance ceremonies and shares meals with his Jewish friends. Through his efforts, Henri demonstrates to his Jewish friends that they have Christian friends who love them.

Henri speaks at conferences, leads Bible studies, and preaches in churches throughout France about Israel's role in God's plan for the ages and our Christian responsibility to stand against antisemitism in all its forms. He hopes to develop the YouTube channel "Le Coin du Librairie" (translated "The Corner Bookstore"), intended to be an advertising platform for the many FOI resources already translated into French.

For 30 years, Henri has partnered with the Massincauds in their diverse ministry in France. They have

done much work translating FOI literature, teaching materials, and videos into French to be used in French-speaking countries around the world.

MAKING CHRIST KNOWN

Just as he met Jesus in the pages of Scripture, Henri is passionate to take God's Word to the world, just as he did with the woman he met at the hotel. He doesn't shy away from

any opportunity to share his faith and the gospel of Jesus. Your financial support would enable Henri to continue teaching the Word of God and sharing the love of the Messiah across France.

We see God providing a steady stream of unsaved people across Henri's path. Would you pray with us that they would be open to the truth of the gospel and feel the love of Christ through Henri?

Henri and his wife, Christine, are eager to see how God will continue to work through them to share the life-saving message of the Messiah.

Your prayer and financial support will enable Henri's work throughout France to continue. With your help, desperate people will come to know Jesus through Henri's ministry. Will you help spread the Good News of salvation through Henri Fernandez in France and beyond?

Mike Stallard

MIKE STALLARD
Director of International Ministries



If God has spoken to you about providing much-needed support for the ministry of Henri Fernandez, please send your gift to The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, Inc, PO Box 908, Bellmawr, NJ 08099, or visit foi.org/global-report to donate online.