

## *Letter of Recommendation from Valerie May.*

Valerie and her husband, Keith are members of the  
First Baptist Church of Spencer, Ohio.

France has been spiritually dead for several decades. I was born in France and lived there for twenty years before coming to the United States. God was not part of my family life, neither was it for anybody else I knew. Jesus was the little figurine you put in the manger on Christmas day. To my generation, believing in the existence of God was synonymous to stupidity. The country elevated and privileged science and the Cartesian mind above all things and still does.

Nevertheless about five to ten years ago, a shift of belief started to occur in the mind of people. The idea of the existence of God is not so taboo anymore. There is now a general thirst for the knowledge of God and his Son. When once nobody cared, a great number of people are now looking for answers to life's questions, turning to anybody who seemingly gives the form of an answer. The fields are white to harvest; unfortunately the laborers are almost nonexistent.

France is five times the size of Ohio in surface, with a population of fifty-five million. In 2004, you could find only twenty-eight Baptist churches in the yellow pages in the whole country. Adding to the drama, there is no pertinent literature-- so to speak. People are so ready to hear from God that they would follow anybody who has a form of godliness.

Mark Gostlin saw first hand the spiritual condition of the country. He made a couple trips to France over the span of fifteen years and was able to make an evaluation. As long as I have known him, he has shown a special interest for the country. I soon understood that God had set his destiny in that direction. Since the time God had given him the green light and he knew it was time to go, he has flung himself totally toward his new ministry. He took upon himself to learn the language, immersed his mind into the culture to be ready to serve as soon as possible.

Valerie May