



May 2017

Dear Friends,

France has long been considered one of the most secular countries in the world. Its policy of *laïcité* keeps anything smacking of religion out of public life, to the point where there is serious legislation limiting the size and prominence of symbols such as the cross or the hijab. But it doesn't take much to see another ethos coming to the surface.

The left-leaning *Nouvel Observateur* recently asked, "Why the devil are all five leading presidential candidates Catholics?" Despite declining numbers attending mass, one quarter of the French population considers itself *Catholiques engagés*. And everyone, Protestant, Catholic or secularist, is newly fascinated by Martin Luther on the five hundredth anniversary of his posting the 95 Theses on the Castle door at Wittenberg. Part of the reason for the new courage of Christians to declare their faith is the perception of a double standard applied to Muslims and the rest. After years of trying to comply with *laïcité* they resent how the media and politicians enforce the rules differently with Muslims. Time to stand up.

Our Seminary in Aix is at the forefront of these trends. In a recent *Carrefour Théologique*, the annual conference held at the Faculté Jean Calvin, the topic was "faith and works: the biblical and theological approach". Not only were Catholicism and Protestantism compared, but a special lecture on the role of good works in Islam was given by Karim Arezki, a converted Algerian now serving as a pastor in a large evangelical church in Paris.

Our graduates are going into a society which has been deeply disappointed by secularization. There is a thirst for something more. Their message will not primarily address the unfair treatment of Christians but the great relevance of Jesus Christ for our times. For more information on the Huguenot Fellowship and the work of the Seminary in Aix do visit our newly invigorated web site. And thanks you very much for your generous support.

Very Truly Yours

William Edgar,  
President