

6-15-1970

## Interview of Dale McAnulty

Dale McAnulty

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/missions-history>

---

### Recommended Citation

McAnulty, D. (1970). Interview of Dale McAnulty. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/missions-history/12>

This Oral History is brought to you for free and open access by the Oral Histories at Scholar Works at Harding. It has been accepted for inclusion in Living History of Missions by an authorized administrator of Scholar Works at Harding. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@harding.edu](mailto:scholarworks@harding.edu).



HARDING COLLEGE LIVING LIBRARY OF MISSIONS

This is June 15, 1970, in Geneva, Switzerland. This is Winfred Wright and I am talking to Dale McAnulty who preaches for the church in Lille, France. Dale is here with us for the campaign in Geneva and will also be staying on for a few weeks to help in the follow up work of this campaign.

Wright: Dale, we are glad to have you take a few minutes today to visit with us and to tell us something about your work and to share your experiences with the students at Harding College. Would you give us a little bit of background of your work in Lille?

McAnulty: Thank you, Winfred. I appreciate very much the opportunity to talk about the Lille work because it has become a part of me. I have grown to love the French people a great deal. We have been here for five years on the field with my family. I have two boys, aged 10 and 11. Of course, they were very small when we arrived and they have fit in so beautifully with this way of life. Everything has been a tremendous blessing to us in most every way. We are so happy that we are here. As I have already said, I have truly learned to love and appreciate the French people.

The work was already begun in Lille when we arrived. It had been going for some five years. They had encountered, of course, a little difficulty because the first assembly had been meeting in a rented place in one of the suburbs of Lille and they felt it would be necessary to move it to the center of Lille because of the transportation problem. All of the transportation went to the center of Lille and it was difficult getting to their meeting hall in the suburb. When they moved, a number of those people that had been meeting were lost as far as the church was concerned. So it was almost like starting anew. It was very expedient, at the time, that they move to the center and it was because of this, I am sure, that they arrived at the decision. Transportation was essential because few of the people had cars at that time and even today many of them do not have. We are now well located as far as the possibilities of getting to the meeting house are concerned. We are about 150 yards from the central point of all of the transportation coming into the center of the city so this enables anyone to come from any part of the city or any of the suburbs to the meeting hall with just a very little effort. We have also recently bought a building which we are planning to move into around the middle of October.

During the period that we have been there, we have been able to contact some wonderful families. The church was very small upon my arrival. It still is small compared to the churches in the States, but we do have a very solid foundation for a beginning. We have some very promising people, for example, the DuBoise family. Brother DuBoise is about 30 or 35 years old. They have five children. They are some of the most faithful Christians we have ever known. They were converted just a few months after our arrival, and they have continued to grow spiritually since that time. They are very willing and very capable. He is able to deliver a sermon whenever he is called upon to do, teach a class whenever required and is willing to participate in any aspect of our work. We have contacted others similar to them, and we might say that our leadership and our real strength is found in young families. We have another young family that was converted last May. They walk five kilometers every Sunday to services and then return. These are the

things that encourage us so much in our work and make it look so promising.

Wright: That would be about two and a half miles.

McAnulty: So it is a very commendable thing and especially for a young person today. There are so many things that attract them in other directions so we feel like we are very very fortunate and we feel like this is going to be the future of our work at Lille. These people are so solid as members. I might also mention another young family which forms a very important part of the nucleus and that is a young barber. He recently loaned us \$5000 to help us to buy this building, no interest, no papers of any kind made out. He just brought the money, handed it to us and said, "We're Christians so you can take it and use it as long as you want to. You can pay me when you have the money."

Wright: That hasn't happened often in Europe, has it?

McAnulty: Very rarely. I believe this is one of the things, of course, that makes our work look so promising, gives us so much encouragement.

Wright: What are the general religious beliefs of the people in Lille? How do you have to approach them? What particular special approaches do you use?

McAnulty: Of course, for most of older Europe and I say older Europe because the city of Paris, for example, is over 2000 years old so that gives you a little bit of the length of life in this nation. The French people have strongly deeply rooted traditions that have become a part of their life and most all of them are Catholic, but it is a Catholic by tradition. It is not a deep conviction in the Catholic faith or the Catholic belief. Of course, most of these do not practice the Catholic religion. They go to the church maybe three times in their lifetime-- for their baptism, for confirmation, for the marriage. Then, of course, the fourth visit they don't go voluntarily. They go to be buried.

As far as the approach is concerned, we try to make any approach possible. I think one of the biggest obstacles is that many of them are very distrustful. They are distrustful for several reasons. They are uncertain. They have been betrayed so many times in the past by their neighbors in other countries such as the invasions by the Germans and so forth. They become very skeptical people and suspicious. The same thing is true in religion. They have been approached by people who were a little bit too insistent such as the Jehovah Witnesses and the Mormons. When they consider a Protestant or anything that is non-Catholic, this is the image that they have. In other words, they put everything non-Catholic in one category and if you represent anything else, then you are one of those. So, we have to first break down this barrier and get through to them.

Concerning my own experience in this work, I came over here just determined that I was going to start baptizing people by the hundreds. Well, I think one of these days I may be getting to the point where I can become a missionary. I don't say this to discourage anyone concerning it, but these are things we have learned. I think this zeal, this enthusiasm, is very necessary for us, but sometimes we should prepare ourselves not to be too disappointed if it doesn't happen immediately. It will happen if we have patience, perseverance and faith in God. Of course, when

we came, we found out that we didn't start baptizing people by the dozens every day or so. We have to first cultivate the soil and then we have to start planting some seed. Someone has to plant the seed. Otherwise there will never be any harvest. Unfortunately in the past there was no one here to plant any seed so this is what we are now setting as our objective--to plant the seed so we can start harvesting some. Then maybe some of the future workers who may be coming will also realize more harvest than we actually do. But, concerning our work, we are very hopeful also because just recently we had seven baptisms. This again was after a long period of study, every week for approximately seven months, before these people reached baptism.

Wright: We talk about French people being traditionally Catholic and being generally indifferent to religion. What does catch their attention? How do you break through this? Is there anything you have found to be particularly effective in reaching them?

McAnulty: Yes. I am convinced that there are many of these people that are sincerely seeking the truth, but they still have this problem of distrust. It is hard for them to get away from it. I understand it because I can see that they are approached on every side by different people and each one saying, "Well, I have the truth." Well, who does have the truth? I understand that it is difficult for a person who has not come to know Jesus Christ but who is sincerely seeking Him. We have to find a way to get through this.

We have used two ways that have given us some measure of success. One method which we have used is distributing tracts which were selected radio sermons that were given over the radio. They are about a ten or twelve page tract on various subjects. Most of them are basic fundamental Christian teaching. We distributed these in the mailboxes in a selected part of the city for seven weeks. I found that after about four weeks on Friday, which was the day that I delivered these, that many people would meet me at the door to receive it. They were looking forward to getting it. Then at the eighth week we would go around and we would knock on the doors. The first seven weeks we made no personal contact at all unless they happened to be at the door when we went by. We made no effort to try to communicate with the people. We were trying to gain their confidence as to what we were trying to do. Once we had delivered the first seven, we knocked on the door and most of them were very friendly, very congenial. I think we had in this way eliminated the barrier. We still have some contact with some of these people.

Another way which has proven most successful, I think, in most of our areas is through what we call the Concours Biblique which is a questionnaire that is sent out with a portion of the gospel of Mark. These questions are designed to help a person to learn how to look up passages and also to win a free Bible. Many of these people, of course, have never seen a Bible in their life. How can they believe in him whom they have not heard? They have never heard really the message. We want to get a Bible in their hands. This is one very effective way because they don't feel like they are getting something for nothing. They have to work, to fill out the questionnaire and answer questions on the Bible in order to receive it. At this same time we plant some seed thoughts that we hope are going to develop too. Then, when they have completed the second questionnaire of approximately 147 questions, we grade it and we deliver the Bible in person.

The other contact is made by mail. This one we deliver in person and we propose cottage Bible studies.

We have had a reasonable success with this. We figure that in distribution of these brochures, the Concours Biblique offering it, that our response average is about one to one thousand which we consider good. These people will respond, we will follow through with it and then we deliver the Bible. As far as a percentage of those who complete the Concours Biblique that we are able to arrange the Jule Miller filmstrips, usually we have a very high percentage of success in baptizing them.

Wright: You mentioned that you have already changed some of your attitudes that you had when you first came. Have there been any particular methods that you have abandoned or that you would suggest would not be particularly effective in France?

McAnulty: I think one of the most difficult things for us to do is to forget that we are Americans. Not that we want to forget it entirely, but we must respect these people and their tradition, their culture which is a part of them. They are just as sincere and honest in their way as we are in ours. I think that our attitude sometimes have to change first of all toward these people. We have to respect them for what they are and for where they are. They are there because they have been taught that all of their life and through a tradition that is much older than our entire nation. It is not to say that we have to agree with everything that they do, but we respect them because they are sincere and honest in what they are. If we are going to lead them, this attitude must change. I am not here to make an American out of them, but I am there to help them to learn about the Lord.

Once we do this then I find that the mass media methods are not always the best. It is easy to write back to the States and ask the brethren for a lot of financial help in order to mass produce printed materials and things like this. It is fine in certain circumstances, but as a general practice I doubt that it is useful in our work. I think the main thing is to try to develop a contact little by little with this person to gain his confidence and then in this personal contact method we will be able to succeed far more. I say this partly also because of the conversations that I have had with some people like the Mormons. One thing that may be interesting to you is that there are 820 some odd Mormons working in France, Switzerland and Belgium, and they have had success. All of their work is done by going door to door. I believe that we can do this also. It will take us more time because we don't have 800 some odd persons working with us. The proof is that it can be done. I feel like we need to make more use of it.

Wright: You were in the campaign in Lille last year where you had a small group of campaigners. From your experience in the past with campaigns, would you evaluate the value of them? What suggestions would you make concerning size and just general suggestions for a good campaign?

McAnulty: As a matter of fact, I have participated in all of the French campaigns on the European continent with the exception of the Lausanne campaign. I think this would depend almost entirely upon the size of the city as to what size campaign one should plan, the number of workers and so forth. We had a very effective campaign at Lille last year and we had sixteen workers. Lille with its suburbs

has a total population of approximately one million people. We were able to cover almost the entire area with this distribution. However, our main objective was to present the Concour Biblique and also to announce a meeting that we did have. I mention also that in this meeting with Brother Andrejewski doing the preaching we had it in our local church building and every night it was completely filled. We even had to ask our campaign workers to move out on to the sidewalk to give their chairs to the visitors. We had such a tremendous response.

As far as the size of the city, I think the main thing is to have enough personnel to make an adequate coverage. The material also will determine how many workers are needed--if you are going to cover the city once with one brochure or if you are going to have one main brochure and then other brochures for the other days. This is something that each situation will have to determine.

The small campaigns have a great value because there is a closer contact and relationship with the workers themselves. I think one of the big values from a campaign is the benefit that each person receives in his own spiritual development and edification. I don't believe any person can participate in one of these campaigns without going away and being much much stronger in the Lord afterwards than he was before. I think his entire outlook will have been affected so that he will never be the same again.

Wright: I believe that is a pretty good testimony, Dale, considering the fact that in the beginning I believe you were somewhat unsold on the idea of a campaign.

McAnulty: Definitely so. I did have a little bit of a problem because I had been talking to brethren in the States trying to persuade them to help me get over to France to preach the gospel and having just arrived on the scene there was going to be a launching of the Operation French World to try to saturate the French-speaking world with the gospel of Christ. It was thought that it would be good to have something close by going to Montreal and that way many of the brethren from the States could come up and get a glimpse themselves of a French-speaking country. I had a problem inside myself trying to justify it in my own mind. I just got here. I begged brethren to send me here and then I was going to have to beg brethren to send me back to the other side. Now, that I've had experiences in these, I can look back and consider that as a mistake in judgment. I would be glad to have the opportunity again. I think that I would not hesitate for a moment to ask them because I think that it has a tremendous value.

Wright: You feel generally that the expense involved in several people coming from America and even though they don't speak the language and all that's involved in it is justified by the good that is done?

McAnulty: Yes, I would not question it for a moment because there is a very great spiritual uplift for every person who participates. I don't think he can go back and be the same afterward. I have talked to some of these people in this campaign and even though there is a language handicap you have never seen people that would try any harder to express themselves and to break this communication barrier. They are trying to get through and they will try everything within their power. They will rely upon God's help to do it more than perhaps under any other circumstances. I think this is something that presents a challenge and that these people will try harder to meet that challenge, to accept it and to make use of it. These

young people that have been here this time, many of them are more determined than ever to go even in America and to share the gospel with their neighbor. They felt they could never do it before. I am convinced that some of them will.

We can compare this to any expenditure. Yes, there will be some waste, perhaps. I hope that it isn't, but, inevitably with the number of people that we are dealing with, there will be some waste. In the overall, I don't think there can be any question as to the value. The production, for example, is going to justify any expenditure that we make.

Wright: Dale, you've been working now for several years with Richard Andrejewski. Of course, Richard is kind of a special case. He is a very special preacher among us, but he is French and he is supported from America. What are your observations concerning American support for French preachers? Are you for it in general? What are the problems that you see? Is it justified? What is your general feeling concerning this?

McAnulty: In this case, of course, knowing him, there is no doubt in my mind that it is a very justified expense. But, as you say, it is a special case. I think that the support of a local native preacher of the gospel only in special cases should be even considered. We have a very difficult problem because the church is in its infancy here. We are developing patterns that may determine the future of our work in the French-speaking world. For that reason we have to be extremely careful.

I have seen many experiences that have been undertaken and I don't know of very many of them that have succeeded where we have put a native worker on the payroll. The moment that he is put on, many problems are presented. For example, he begins to compare his salary with that of an American who is living on the field. Many times his living standards do not satisfy him. I look at it from the standpoint of these people in order to really be the kind of Christians that the church here needs in its infancy they are going to determine the future of the church. If they are willing to give of themselves and of their time and of their talent above and beyond their regular work day, then this is what we want. Perhaps in the future, these people might be considered this way, but first let's give them a chance to give of themselves above and beyond.

Let's let them be a Christian on their job because they will have a great influence there whereas if they are on the payroll they are going out preaching the gospel just like we are devoting full time to it. They will not have the same contacts that they would have in a secular job. I have discouraged two or three because I believe it would be a mistake to take them on. This is based upon two or three experiences that I know very personally that have been undertaken, much heartache, much sadness because inevitably a congregation is going to have to withdraw its support from a native preacher. You can't pay him indefinitely for work that maybe is not producing. The moment that this support is cut off, it produces a great problem because if he had been hired in secular employment he would have been put on the social security system, he would be a beneficiary of all of the assistance that the government gives, whereas, if he is paid from America, he has no benefits or access to any of this. If he is ever removed from the payroll, then he is incapable of receiving his government support and he is really in a very difficult situation.

Wright: How shall we go about training native workers to bear their part of the responsibility? I assume that like most of us you would not recommend sending workers to America for training. What would you suggest in France for the training of nationals?

McAnulty: For the present time it presents a great problem for us. We have tried at different times to establish somewhat of a little school for them, but because of the European educational system this is difficult. For anyone who may not be completely familiar with it, I will just give you a brief statement on what it is. At the age of about 13 or 14 there is division in their system. Those who have the capacity, who have succeeded successfully in their studies up to that point, who are making good grades, they can go on into higher education. But a person who has just barely succeeded in passing or maybe who has not had the capacity to really succeed in his studies with satisfactory grades, he is moved off into what is called a trade school. He learns an occupation. He is trained in a specific work and even starts taking an apprenticeship in whatever trade he has been selected for. He is preparing himself for his work in life. Because of this, it presents some problems in setting up a school to train these people. Two years out of a person's life over here is a great deal. He has one opportunity in life and this is based upon what is called the peasant philosophy. They plant the seed one time and if it doesn't succeed, then chances are they will not have a second time to plant because it will be too late in the season. This system has carried over even into other walks of life and especially in education. They have one opportunity. If they pass it up, then chances are they will never have another. They will have to accept a ditch digging job or a garbage collector or something like this so it presents a problem to families who would like to maybe send their children to one of our schools.

But what can we offer? Can we assure him that he is going to have a congregation that will be able to take up his support afterwards and to help him to earn a satisfactory living? At the present time we do not have the congregations of that size and since we do not feel it is best to seek aid from the States to support these people, then what is the other solution? I think that the solution is going to be on each local congregation, the local worker spend as much time, perhaps even setting up evening classes with these people, maybe two or three nights a week offer Bible studies and help them to develop in this way. The way we have been doing at Lille, and it has proved very effective for us, is to prepare mimeographed lessons for these new converts and each week they will have their homework and this lesson. On Sunday morning they will bring it to us. We check it out and have another one for them to take. They have made very good spiritual development in this way. I think that each local situation for the time being is best. We hope the time will come when we can have a preacher training school.

Wright: Dale, you and your family have made a good adjustment to the French way of life and the learning of the French language and so on. What would you recommend for a new missionary in terms of preparation in language, culture, background before coming to the field?

McAnulty: I would highly recommend anything that one can learn in the way of French history, in the way of the French language even if it is French vocabulary alone. As far as pronunciation is concerned, I think that one has to be extremely careful there because the habits you develop in pronunciation are sometimes hard to break. I've learned this. There are some words that I have a little bit of difficulty with now because I learned my pronunciation in the States. However, under good instruction where the pronunciation is good, then there is no reason why one could not learn a great deal in conversation as well as vocabulary and



grammar in the States.

I would recommend that a person allow adequate time in the States getting ready to come to the French field to make sure that he is given proper thought to it. The French culture is a very rich and beautiful culture and I think that people who consider themselves highly educated or well educated that unless they know the French language and something about French culture and French history they do not consider that they have a well balanced education. I am convinced that this is true because it is such a rich history and has so much to do with molding the present day Europe and even our culture in the States.

I say that anything anyone can pick up on that side as far as to adjustments in the field when one arrives the first thing that is necessary is the desire to become a part of it because to come into the French field and expect to live like an American is impossible. It is not to say that the French do not have many things that one can enjoy just as well as in America, but American products, for example, are so expensive that one could not afford them in France. But why should one want to afford them? We have looked at it from the standpoint that we want to make use of and to profit from the opportunity. We are glad to have it and we want to get the most from it so we try to become as much French as we can. My boys are completely bi-lingual. They speak both languages equally well. I think they can fit into almost any situation adequately.

Wright: Thank you, Dale. We are just about to the end of our tape. I guess we will have to draw this to a close. We appreciate your time. We appreciate your work and your continued devotion to the French work. In closing, I would ask you to summarize very briefly what you think the future of the work is in Lille and in French-speaking countries in general. Does it look bright to you?

McAnulty: Definitely so. I am very enthusiastic about it. I have had discouraging moments because it is slow and hard establishing any work. It has been a long slow period even before I arrived. Many others have given themselves and given of every ounce of energy that they have and their finances and everything. They have made many sacrifices to bring it to the point where it is now. Since I have been here I have seen lots of progress even during this period.

One of our big handicaps is that we are limited in the number of workers. If we had more workers, we could make so much more progress, so much more quickly. The French work is going forward. As I mentioned while ago, for example, to show that it can happen and is happening, we had seven converts in May. We have two others who are ready to be baptized. We have others who have asked us as soon as we can arrange the dates to come and to study with them. We are beginning to scratch the surface. We are beginning to get through to some. These will put us in contact with others so I think the only thing that is lacking is more of us and more application of what we have.

I think that in the past many of the failures have been not due to a lack of possibility and potential with the people but it has been mistakes on our part. We have tried one thing and it didn't work. We tried another and these are inevitable experiences in any work, any where in the world.

Wright: God bless you and your family for your faith and your persistence in a very difficult field. This has been a conversation held in the Spanish church hall in Geneva, Switzerland.