

FELLOWSHIP NEWS



FEC LEADERS VISIT SPAIN'S BASQUE REGION

The Basque people share a rich cultural history and a unique language. Their beloved homeland, known as the Basque region, covers an area stretching from northern Spain to southern France. FEC has been praying for the Basque people and sending workers there for over 15 years; however, church planting in this region looks much different than church planting in the U.S. In April, 7 pastors visited the FEC families living in Spain's Basque region to encourage them and pray for the Basque people.

For 10 days, the visiting pastors traveled Spain's Basque region, learning about their history and culture. They visited sites like Vitoria-Gasteiz, the capital of the Basque region, and Pamplona, known for the running of the bulls. While they traveled, the visitors learned about the religious history of the Basques and prayed. In earlier centuries, Catholicism permeated the region, but today, most Basques have turned away from religion en masse. Additionally, evangelical churches that reach out to ethnic Basques in their own language do not exist.

During their visit, the pastors also spent time encouraging the FEC families who live there. Building relationships as an outsider takes time and yields few spiritual outcomes, although one couple leads a Bible study with a Basque couple who has believed in Jesus. Levi Stuckey, pastor of Crossroads Church, Napoleon, Ohio, traveled to Spain and intends to share what he learned with his church since they support the workers. After visiting the FEC team, he knows how to pray for them. Levi says, "In the Basque mission, there is a huge emphasis on prayer. It's the main work that we need to do."

Through another program, FEC churches have hosted Basque high school students who want to learn about American culture and practice English. Levi Stuckey and Crossroads members have hosted students and see the opportunity as a way to reach out to more Basque people.



New Church Leaders Discover FEC

Twice a year the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches (FEC) welcomes new churches and church leaders into the fellowship. This spring, 23 church leaders came together at Grace Church, Morton, Illinois, to learn about FEC history, mission, doctrine, and resources at the Leaders Orientation.

At the orientation, leaders who are new to FEC learn two important distinctions that make FEC unique: mission and organizational structure. FEC's mission is to "establish reproducing churches worldwide." Tom Bennardo, Director of Pastoral Development & Western U.S. Church Multiplication, points out, "God's kingdom is going to expand through churches that reach the next generation. Establishing healthy, reproducing churches has always been the most effective way to reach lost people." FEC wants every person who comes into the fellowship to be involved in that mission.

FEC also maintains a unique structure by placing its churches at the center of the ministry. The leadership of FEC works to resource and support churches as they accomplish the mission. During the Leaders Orientation, participants learn about media resources, counseling resources, retirement benefits, and ministry credentialing opportunities. Another advantage of FEC participation is the partnership with Christian Service Foundation (CSF) for individual investments and church loans.

FEC began offering the orientation in 2016, and they want every leader to attend one when they join the fellowship. The next Leader's Orientation will be held September 23-24 in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Brookside Church Seeks to Build Bridges of Racial Reconciliation

Since the last presidential election, political strife has dominated the airwaves and conversations, and racial strife continues to create division between people. In a strife-filled world, where people can be more loyal to their political ideologies and racial biases than they are to their faith, Eric Dubach, Brookside Church pastor, Fort Wayne, Indiana, wanted to bring his church together. He began asking, "What does it look like for the church to rise above the strife and unite under the banner of Jesus?"

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., remembrance day approached this year (January 21, 2019), Eric planned to celebrate King's life and achievements and bring the church together around a common conversation about racial reconciliation. He planned a series of talks called "Bridges: Building racial bridges instead of continuing to watch them burn down" and invited three Fort Wayne men to lead the conversation, February 3-24. The panel included Josh King, Yul Martin, and Luther Whitfield.

Each panel guest shared his personal experience with racism and with the gospel. Then, on separate weekends, the men explained how the gospel had taught them to build racial bridges instead of burning them down. Their messages encouraged listeners to build the kingdom together as brothers and sisters. Luther Whitfield, New Covenant pastor, Fort Wayne, challenged Christians to be more Christ-like than cultural. This fall, New Covenant Church members will join Brookside Church members for on-going cross-cultural conversations.

