

FELLOWSHIP NEWS



THE HILLS OF THE FEC, PART 1

The FEC elders commonly field questions over "permissible beliefs and practices". Our response depends on whether FEC understands a belief or practice to be foundational to being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Historically, in Christianity, there has been a pragmatic need to divide beliefs and practices into categories of importance. In FEC, we continue developing "The Hills of FEC" as a practical guide to organize beliefs/practices into 4 categories – Hills We Die On (what makes us Christians), Hills We Stand On (what makes us FEC), Hills We Dialogue On (where we vary significantly), and Mole Hills (where we have complete freedom). This article will very briefly outline the Hills We Die On and then introduce the Hills We Stand On. Next month's article will provide examples of the latter and then describe the final two categories.

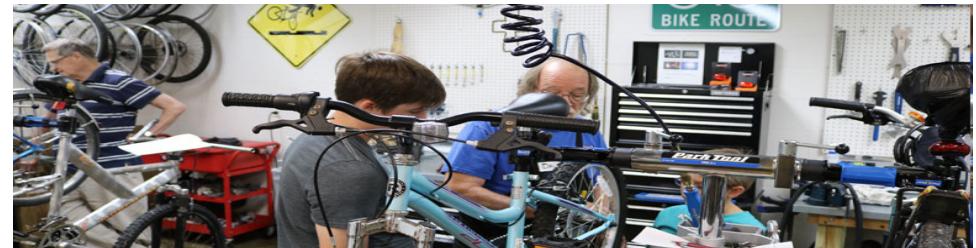
The Hills We Die On are considered non-negotiable beliefs because they are the foundation of what it means to be a servant of Jesus Christ. They begin with the exclusive authority of the Scriptures in revealing doctrinal and moral precepts to us – they are complete, inerrant, sufficient, and trustworthy.

The Scriptures reveal God as Trinity – one divine nature in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. They teach the supremacy and exclusivity of Christ – His divinity and humanity, His sinless life and atoning death, His bodily resurrection and ascension, His redemption of and provision for believers, and His future physical return and reign.

Finally, they reveal that none are seeking God. Apart from Christ, all are lost and can do nothing to merit salvation. Yet in Christ, believers are saved from themselves and set apart to be sanctified for service to God.

The Hills We Stand On are the beliefs that bind us together as a group of like-minded churches. This is the category where questions most often exist. Our intent is to hold firmly to specific beliefs yet allow local churches freedom in expressing how these beliefs are to be taught or expressed.

- Mark Biehl, FEC Elder Board Chairman



Mission Church Bicycle Ministry Serves Fort Wayne Inner City Residents

When **Heart of the City Bicycles** opens its doors at 9 a.m. on Fridays, a diverse group of people stops by the shop. A father and son arrive early to volunteer, fixing bicycles during the 9-12 p.m. shop hours. A homeless man comes to have his bicycle fixed. Two Fort Wayne city bike patrol officers visit the shop. A father and his four children arrive to serve and earn bicycles.

The bicycle shop, a ministry of Mission Church, serves patrons in Fort Wayne's (Indiana) inner city. However, the ministry offers more than bicycle repair; they offer relationships, freedom, control, and an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty through an apprenticeship program and an earn-a-bike program through service.

When Michael Brown joined co-pastor Tim Stauffer at Mission Church, he brought a passion for cycling and a talent for fixing bicycles. Even though Heart of the City Bicycles already existed, Michael wanted to find it a more permanent home, so for 7 years, the bike shop has been at their Cass Street location.

When Heart of the City Bicycles has extra donated bikes, the ministry reaches beyond Fort Wayne to partner with Working Bikes. The Chicago-based organization is committed to providing bicycles for people who need them for transportation in Chicago and developing countries. To date, Mission Church has donated 7,000 bikes to Working Bikes.

Northwoods Church and FEC Continue to Partner with DR Churches

Since 1946, FEC worked in the Dominican Republic to establish reproducing churches. When FEC full time missionaries left the country in 1992, partnerships with individual U.S. churches continued. Northwoods Church in Peoria, Illinois, has cultivated a partnership with Central Church in San Juan de la Maguana in the DR's western region. In June, a Northwoods team led by Cal Rychener, Senior Pastor, joined Central Church leaders to offer a conference for Dominican pastors and church leaders.

The two-day conference hosted by Central Church brought over 250 pastors together from different denominations. The training focused on the theme "The Visible Church" with an emphasis on the pastor's and church's role in its community and its role in reaching into other communities through church planting and multiplication. Other Northwoods team members included Craig and Brenda Smith, and Noah Kneer.

Hal Lehman, FEC International Church Multiplication Director, also joined the group. Hal lived in the Dominican Republic for 6 years as an FEC missionary. In his role, he is exploring ways that FEC can continue to partner with church leaders in the Dominican Republic, especially equipping and encouraging pastors in rural areas. God continues to write His story in the Dominican Republic, and 75 years later, FEC continues to ask, "How can we help?"

