

# FELLOWSHIP NEWS



## ZEC Ministries, Surge, and Northwoods: A Church Planting Partnership

Raj (names have been changed), a member of a terrorist organization in south-east India, met Jesus Christ through an experience like the apostle Paul's. When he met Jesus, he left everything to follow Him, but he lost his income and his wife left him. Then, Raj met Syam and Esther Babu of ZEC Ministries and received training and support. Eventually, he was able to build a church in the middle of a marijuana field, drill a well, and raise goats for income. Through the partnership that ZEC Ministries has with Surge, a church-planting movement, and churches like Northwoods, Peoria, Illinois, donors connect with pastors like Raj.

15 years ago, Syam and Esther began working with children in slum areas, even opening their family's home to orphans and a church. To meet more needs, their ministry has grown and changed over the years to include pastor training and church planting.

In a partnership that only God could orchestrate, Northwoods was already

partnering with ZEC Ministries when they began planting churches with Surge. While Syam focused on church planting in rural communities, Northwoods envisioned planting a church for every seat in their auditorium. Through Surge, both individuals and churches give to ministries like ZEC, and those ministries train the pastor, build a small structure in the village, and pay the pastor's initial salary. Eventually, the church becomes self-sustaining as it grows. In Raj's case, a Northwoods donor provided all that he needed for his wife to return!

The churches that are being planted in rural communities bring light and hope as the gospel spreads throughout a village. Since the start of the Surge Project, ZEC Ministries has established 79 churches in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

Find out more about ZEC Ministries at [zecministries.org/](http://zecministries.org/) or visit [surgeproject.com/](http://surgeproject.com/) to learn more about their global church planting movement.



## FEC Partners with DR Pastors During Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected ministries in every country. For pastors in rural communities of the Dominican Republic, a long-standing partnership with FEC became even more important. When those pastors shared their financial burden, FEC shared resources so that the churches could continue to meet needs.

The partnership between FEC and the Dominican Republic (DR) stretches back 75 years to 1946 when the first missionaries were sent to plant churches in the southwest area of the country. By the early 1980's, the denomination was led by DR nationals and fully independent, but the partnership with FEC churches has continued through ministries like Solid Rock Medical Clinic. Many of the churches that have been planted in the southwest area of the country are supported by rural communities made up of day laborers. With quarantines in effect, churches in those areas were experiencing financial struggles.

Because of FEC's partnership with pastors in the Dominican Republic, 30-35 pastors continued to receive support during December and January. Dr. Samuel Medina, the Evangelical Mennonite Church President in the DR expressed his gratitude for the partnership: "You have no idea how joyful I am because I had no idea how I was going to respond to the pastors who were calling me from all the areas asking if and when there would be help. I believe this is an answer from the Lord for our churches."

## Illinois Couple Connects with International Students Through IFI

When missionaries Jim and Paula Hanes left Senegal in West Africa, they returned to north central Illinois to work as a different kind of missionary. Settling into their Washington, Illinois, community, they began working with International Friendships, Inc. (IFI), at Illinois Central College. Through IFI, they build relationships with international students and lead a volunteer team.

IFI works alongside U.S. colleges and universities in 10 states, on 36 campuses. They promote friendship and hospitality for international students, scholars, and their families on those campuses. At Illinois Central College, the Hanes and their volunteer team work with 40-45 students through the friendship partner program and the conversation partner program. These partnerships provide much needed support like trips to the grocery store and community connections. The Hanes also plan social activities each month to introduce the students to American culture.

Every semester, Jim takes a class on campus to meet more students. One Muslim student who meets him for coffee on Monday mornings asked Jim about ethics. "Jim, what do you get out of your IFI events? Money? Do you move up the ladder at IFI?" Jim shared the gospel with the student and explained that he gives his time so that he can bless other people.

Find out more about opportunities with IFI in your state and city at [www.ifiusa.org/](http://www.ifiusa.org/).

