

# HIGHLIGHTS

Volume 54, Issue 1

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**Jimmy Martin**

**A Compelling Vision  
for the IBC's Future**

**MLC**

**What's Christian about  
Christian Leadership**

**Euroventure 2016**

**The Well: Springing  
Up to Eternal Life**

# A Compelling Vision for the IBC's Future

## CONTENTS

Highlights  
Volume 54, Issue 1

Ministry Leadership Conference: What's Christian about Christian Leadership ..... 4

First MULTIPLY Conference Held in Malta ..... 5

Registration Open for Euroventure 2016 ..... 6

Annual Convention Meeting Plan Now for Costa Rica ..... 7

News from the Churches ..... 9



*Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.*  
Colossians 1:24-29 (NIV)

■ **The Apostle Paul** had a vision for healthy, growing, Christ-honoring churches. Vision has been defined as “a clear, challenging picture of the future of the ministry, as you believe it can be and must be” (A. Malphurs). Paul’s letter to the Colossians gives a glimpse into the passion of the apostle to see the church in Colossae move toward maturity. He believed it could happen and must happen.

He speaks of his trials on behalf of the church, seeing himself as its servant. His unique calling was to unveil God’s mystery, which included bringing Gentile “outsiders” into God’s family as “insiders.” Christ, the hope of glory for all people, was the message Paul preached and taught. His desire was not for a select few but for “everyone” to hear and for “everyone” to become “perfect” (fully grown, mature) “in Christ.” Paul worked hard toward this end but realized that it was Christ who energized him.

The IBC has a vision for its churches. We believe that God has given us this vision for the future. “We envision a movement of global-minded churches that are reproducing healthy disciples, leaders, and congregations.” We see the convention as a servant to the churches. In other words, we exist to serve the churches and not the other way around. We see the local church as central to the plan of God. Our role is to help “mobilize and multiply” churches that are carrying out their mission “to make disciples.”

We are not there yet, but we are moving in the right direction. Having identified five Core Strategies – Multiplying Churches, Strengthening Churches, Empowering Leaders, Building Connections, and Developing Resources – we are now working to help every church to become mature. We know that Christ is working in our churches. He wants to bring health and multiplication in every church through healthy leaders who are making healthy disciples. Our churches are made up of “global nomads” who come from around the world. We want them to know that in Christ they are part of God’s family. They may be

expatriate outsiders but they are insiders when it comes to being part of God’s family.

Recently I was privileged to worship with and speak at Frontline Community Church in Ramstein, Germany. Frontline is a good model in both mobilization and multiplication. The church is 11 years old. It continues to grow in a healthy way and has recently given birth to a daughter church. The church is focused on making healthy disciples and developing healthy leaders. People in their community are regularly coming to know Christ; they are unified around a strategy to accomplish this. And God is blessing the church. There are other IBC churches, big and small, moving in healthy and maturing directions. When this becomes the trend, we will see a movement in the IBC.

Meanwhile we want to help all IBC churches, whether they are healthy and growing and multiplying or plateaued or declining. The size of a church is not the determining factor of health. Large churches can be unhealthy and small churches can be very healthy. A shared vision is one of the things that can help any church to move from complacency or conflict toward healthy growth. It might be worth your church’s effort in the near future to have a discussion about the church’s vision. And once a compelling vision from God is clearly articulated, help the church to fully embrace and pursue that vision.

A strength of our churches should be that we are global-minded. Since most IBC churches have a rich diversity in their membership, it should be natural for us to lift our sights beyond ourselves toward the multitudes “from every nation, tribe, people and language.” Celebrating that diversity and directing it toward our unity in Christ through genuine love for each other is a powerful witness to a watching world. When that unity is encouraged and maintained by church leaders, a strong ongoing Gospel witness is the result. Disunity, most commonly caused by unresolved conflict or complacency, is among the most devastating enemies of IBC churches. I see a

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Am Dachsberg 98,  
60435 Frankfurt/Main,  
Germany, Phone: +49  
(0)69 9540 8505, Email:  
admin@ibc-churches.org  
www.ibc-churches.org  
Jimmy Martin, General  
Secretary  
Judith Lynn Maxwell, Editor  
Cover photo: Jeremy Woods

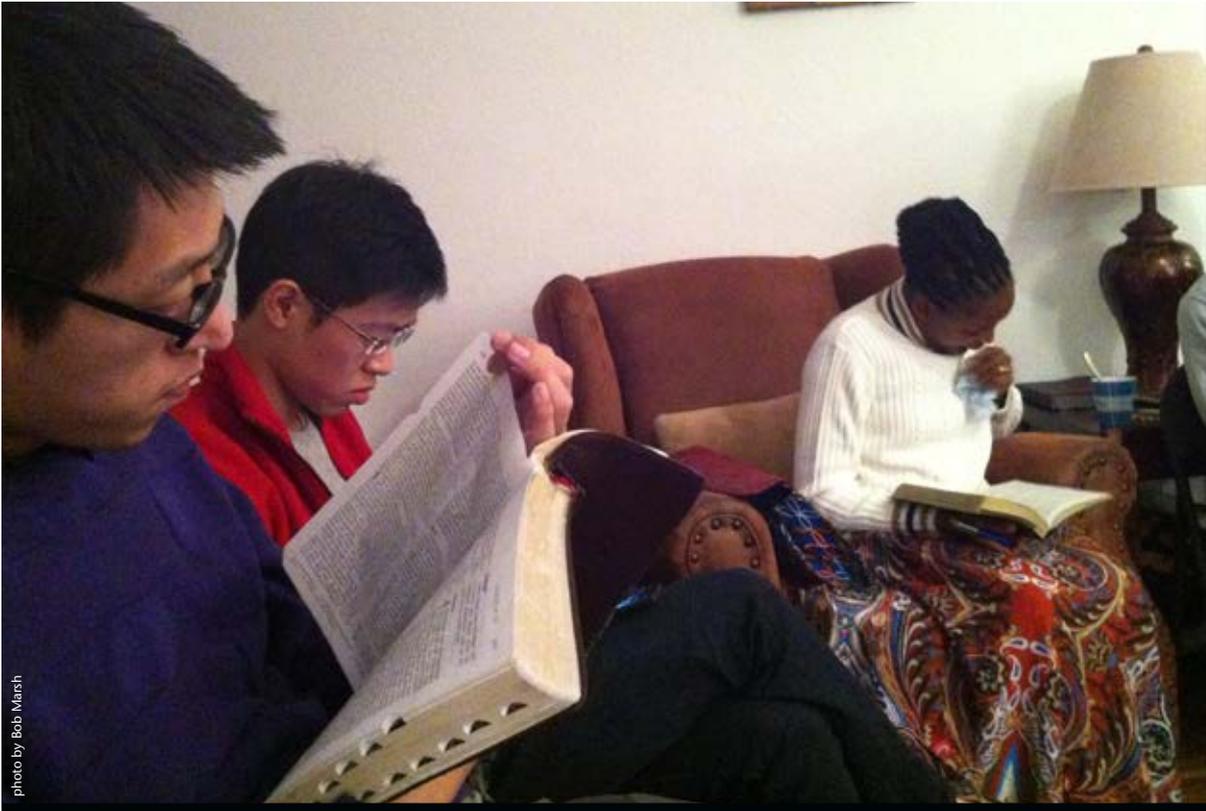


photo by Bob Marsh

day when IBC churches are moving together as a powerful force for global witness.

At our recent IBC Ministry Leadership Conference, I was encouraged to see and hear the discussions about ways that we can pursue our IBC mission of “mobilizing and multiplying disciple-making churches.” I am thrilled to see the progress we are making in implementing our core strategies because the end result will be strong, healthy, mobilized, multiplying churches that are reaching people with the Gospel and bringing glory to God, AND we are doing it TOGETHER.

What picture do you get as you consider the IBC vision? How might God be calling you and your church to be a part of that vision? Let’s pray that our vision will become reality in the near future.

**We envision a movement of global-minded churches that are reproducing healthy disciples, leaders, and congregations.**

**We dream of...**

- stimulating churches toward mission advancement. We see churches intentionally and consistently sending members to live out the mission of the Gospel. We see churches working in partnership with one another and with other Great Commission organizations.
- helping churches to keep their focus on making and multiplying disciples. We see churches being equipped to teach and train their members to be lifelong, loving, and loyal followers of Christ who are actively sharing their faith.
- developing pastors and leaders in essential ministry skills. We see pastors and leaders equipped with knowledge and skill and filled with passion for Christ and love for His people. We see churches where Scrip-

ture is being preached and taught with relevance, power, and clarity.

- becoming a catalyst for strategic church-planting. We see churches praying for, contributing to, and supporting an ever-increasing number of church plants to reach people with the Gospel, blessing the communities and churches where they are located.
- nurturing a spirit of love that bridges cultures, nationalities, ethnicities, generations, politics, privilege, position, and religious backgrounds. We see churches learning to manage, celebrate, and leverage their diversity to become worthy examples of grace and peace, encouragement and unity, acceptance and compassion.
- fostering fellowship and connections among pastors and churches. We see leaders and churches taking initiative to start and develop deep relationships with one another because they view themselves as utterly dependent on God and mutually dependent on one another.
- supporting churches in times of need and transition. We see leaders being assisted to help their churches take steps toward achieving and maintaining health and growth in their congregations. ■

Serving with you,

*Jimmy Martin*  
IBC General Secretary



## Ministry Leadership Conference

# What's Christian about Christian Leadership

■ **The International** Baptist Convention's Ministry Leadership Conference was held 11-15 March in St. Paul's Bay, Malta. The weekend conference provided pastors and leaders in IBC churches an opportunity to enjoy fellowship, relaxation, encouragement, teaching, and the sights of the area. The theme for this year's conference was "What's 'Christian' about 'Christian Leadership'."

Keynote speaker for the weekend was Richard Wells, founding president of John Witherspoon College and founding pastor of Christ Church in Rapid City, South Dakota. Wells has written, lectured, and taught on topics ranging from psychology and counseling, to apologetics, biblical studies, theology, higher education, homiletics, world religions, media, culture, leadership, and more. He is the author of *Inspired Preaching: A Survey of the Preaching Found in the New Testament* (with Boyd Luter) and *Forgotten Songs: Reclaiming the Psalms for Worship* (with Ray Van Neste).

In his Friday evening message "What's Christian about 'Christian Leadership'?" or "How Harvard Business School Got Religion," Wells gave a brief history of Christian leadership with a focus on several of the Church Fathers. These Church Fathers, three in particular, studied leadership systematically, were theologian-pastors who were grounded in Scripture, and dealt with the essentials of ministry. In contrast, the history of Harvard Business School shows a secular view of management (management vs. leadership).

In 1 Chronicles 17:1-2, David had a great, God-sized, God-honoring vision – to build God's temple. Yet, there were

three reasons why David should not build the temple: God did not require it of him; it was not his calling; and God would do it according to His plan.

The other sessions featured case studies from Paul's life concerning leadership.

In session two, Wells asks "Who was Right?" in the argument between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15. Most Westerners, Wells said, fall on the side of Barnabas, the Encourager and the God of second chances. Yet, there are six evidences that perhaps Paul is right:

- The way he described what John Mark did – "deserted" is the Greek word for forsake or divorce. This was a very serious matter at a critical time in the early church.
- All of Paul's letters have a call to unity, so it would be out of character for him to cause disunity.
- Paul put his own integrity on the line (talks a great deal about unity but unable to resolve this controversy) so he must have good reasons.
- Paul risks the future of the church. Note the context of this story following the Jerusalem Council; it is not a flattering story.
- Barnabas 'wanted' (v. 37) – an emotional motive. Paul 'thought it best' – a Greek word meaning as a matter of principle or a logical conclusion based on evidence.
- The church agreed with Paul (v. 40).

Character comes before leadership. John Mark needed to work on his character before leading again.

In session three, Wells raised the question, "Did Paul compromise?" in the matter

of Timothy and Titus. There is no compromise as the circumstances in each case are different. Timothy is traveling with Paul to preach to the Jews. No one would listen if Timothy was not circumcised. Titus was a Gentile.

This illustrates four principles of biblical leadership. Biblical leadership:

- Leads out of Truth (not experience or what works)
- Demands Discernment (when to speak vs. silent, what is worth fighting for)
- Takes Courage.
- Serves People (people are always an end not a means).

In session four, Wells looked at how Paul got to Philippi. There are seven factors in his journey:

- Paul had a mission – to please/glorify God.
- Paul had a vision which guided him (2 Cor. 5, Rom. 15).
- Paul had a strategy. He went to outflow cities, then places with a Jewish presence, Greek cities, and Roman cities.
- Paul had spirituality. He was a man of prayer who listened and discerned God's guidance.
- Paul was guided by providence, often hand-in-hand with the voice of God. Paul took circumstances as God's closing of a door.
- Paul looked for signs.
- Paul listened to the counsel of others.

In the final session, Wells addressed two hard questions for leadership as found in Acts 16 – Why did Paul allow himself to be beaten (why not claim Roman citizenship



MLC provides times of worship, fellowship, and sight-seeing.

at first)? and Why did he then later claim his Roman citizenship?

Wells pointed out three things:

- Suffering was part of the strategy (planned not to resist it, suffer for sake of righteousness).
- Suffering was a witness of grace (could have pressed charges but does not, a lesson in grace to the magistrates and everyone in Philippi).
- Suffering was a ministry (“for this you were called” 1 Pet. 2:21).

Breakout sessions were led by core strategy directors – Darryl Evetts (Multiplying Churches), Gary Preston (Strengthening Churches), Scott Corwin (Building Con-

nections), and David Fresch (Empowering Leaders). Judith Lynn Maxwell (Developing Resources) was not able to attend.

The music team for the weekend was led by David Martin (Cologne, Germany), along with Scott Chadwick (Munich, Germany) and Erik Nielsen (Copenhagen, Denmark).

Fifty-nine people representing 27 IBC churches attended the conference in addition to the speakers and IBC staff. ■



photos by Jeremy Woods

Wells

## First MULTIPLY Conference Held in Malta

■ **More than 40 people** joined the “multiplication conversation” at the International Baptist Convention’s first MULTIPLY Conference. Twenty IBC churches were represented at the conference held in St Paul Bay, Malta, on 15 March following the Ministry Leadership Conference. The purpose of the conference was to invite every IBC church into the conversation about multiplying English-language international churches around the world. The conference was a venue for discussing the many facets of international church planting, generating ideas, and discovering opportunities to inform our church multiplication efforts.



Darryl Evetts, director of church multiplication, opened the one-day conference with an emphasis on our spiritual dependence. There was a time of worship in song, and Rodrigo Assis da Silva, pastor of Bethel International Baptist Church, Frankfurt, Germany, presented a devotional focused on God’s love for the nations. Several attendees gave moving testimonies about real people in their churches who have found faith, community, and love in Jesus Christ in spite of major obstacles they have faced as expats, including some life and death situations. A significant portion of the morning was spent in intercessory prayer for known expat communities.

Bob Marsh, church planter in Darmstadt, Germany, facilitated the second session of the conference with a discussion about the “global citizen” or “expat.” Marsh relayed current estimates on the number of expats in the world and significant trends of the countries they are mov-

ing from and to. According to United Nations estimates, there are approximately 232 million people currently living outside their passport country. If the expat population were to form a country they would be the fifth largest nation on the planet.

Conference attendees spent time in breakout groups discussing who the expats in their communities are, best practices in reaching them, and potential populations that could be reached with new churches.

Tim Faulkner, mission pastor at Il Faro Baptist Church, Naples, Italy, led the afternoon session focused on current church multiplication efforts in the IBC. Faulkner provided a broad overview of our major church multiplication processes and facilitated a panel discussion with current church planters, LEAD team members,

and a parent church pastor. Panel participants described lessons learned, pleasant surprises, challenges, and their confidence in current church multiplication practices being used by the IBC. Three IBC LEAD teams were represented at the conference, and each gave status updates on current actions – feasibility studies on cities for new churches, church planter recruitment and assessment, and church plants underway.

The next MULTIPLY Conference is scheduled for 27 October following the IBC Annual Convention Meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica. Join the church multiplication conversation. Together we can become a movement – starting disciple-making churches in strategic cities around the world! ■

*Darryl Evetts*



Church Planter Bob Marsh discusses the global citizen.

# Registration Open for Euroventure 2016

■ **We are so excited** for another GREAT WEEK at Euroventure 2016! Euroventure is designed for students who have completed 6th – 12th grades or the European equivalents (ages 12-19 yrs). Euroventure is sponsored by the International Baptist Convention and will be held 2-7 July in Grindelwald, Switzerland. The theme for this year is “the Well,” based on John 4:12 “... a well of water springing up to eternal life.”

This summer we will once again offer some amazing activities during the week of camp, including canyoning, a ropes course, and hiking in the gorgeous Swiss Alps. Euroventure is filled with a good balance of spiritual growth, physical activity, fun and games, fellowship, and worship.

Please take note that we will be offering a special training time for youth workers and volunteers during the breakout sessions. We are very excited about the opportunity to have youth pastors and lay leaders from all over Europe together for a time to be encouraged, receive training and resources, and connect with other leaders.

We have a great team of speakers lined up for you this year. Our evening speaker will be Brandon Barnard, who is no stranger to the IBC. He was a youth minister at Faith Baptist Church in Kaiserslautern, Germany, and has spoken at Euroventure several times. Our morning speaker will be Tom Hufty, who you will definitely be familiar with if you have been to Euroventure before.

Brandon Barnard is a teaching pastor at Fellowship Bible Church in Little Rock, Arkansas (USA). Barnard grew up in a Christian home, and it was in the parking lot of a fast-food restaurant that he accepted Christ.

Barnard relates his Christian walk to the older brother in the story of the Prodigal Son. “That’s me,” he said. “Although very far from perfect, a good part of my life has been lived following the rules, supposedly doing the right things. Although never stated, I secretly thought God might be lucky to have me. Even now that thought devastates me. I was so confident in my good works and my own self-righteousness that I failed to see how wicked my heart really was.”

“Thankfully by God’s grace and through the Scriptures, I realized that I was just as distant from the Father as the younger, outwardly rebellious son was. And now, I am continuing to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, striving to preach the Gospel to myself everyday and praying for that same Gospel to bear fruit in my life in ways that points other people around me to Jesus.”

Tom Hufty is the senior pastor at First Baptist Church, Maryville, Illinois. Before coming to Maryville, Tom served as the Vice President for



Collegiate Affairs and Assistant to the President of Hannibal-LaGrange University.

Before his positions at HLGU and FBC Maryville, Hufty served for 13 years as the associate pastor for students and family ministry at Pleasant Valley Baptist Church in Liberty, Missouri. Along with his regular ministry duties, Hufty and wife Rhonda enjoy a speaking ministry both jointly and separately. Tom and Rhonda have led conferences and seminars throughout the U.S. and internationally on marriage, family, leadership, and life purpose.

Euroventure 2016 will be the Hufty’s 20th year of involvement with the camp. “We love this camp. We can’t wait to return each year and see familiar faces and meet new friends. It has been a life-changing experience for the entire Hufty family.”

The Huftys have two adult children – Zac (32) and Mackenzie (28) and are madly in love with their daughter-in-law, Nicole, son-in-law, DH, and four beautiful granddaughters.

In addition to Hufty and Barnard, we will have a team of volunteers from Oklahoma Baptist University and Hannibal-LaGrange University supplying leadership in the roles of small group leaders, break out session teachers, and music and drama leaders.

Euroventure is a unique camp bringing English-speaking students from nations all over the world. It is a camp that for so many has become a place of spiritual growth and a place that life-long friendships have been formed, right in the heart of Switzerland in the middle of God’s majestic creation of the Swiss Alps.

## Cost:

Before 1 May: 260 Euro

1 May: 280 Euro

1 June: 300 Euro

1 July: 320 Euro

Two or more family members attending save 20 Euro each.

All Sponsors pay 200 Euro.

Online registration is available at <http://ibc.ibc-churches.org/ibc/>



Barnard



Hufty



The famous National Theater of Costa Rica in San Jose

## Annual Convention Meeting

# Plan Now for Costa Rica

### Greetings from Costa Rica!

As you know, this year the International Baptist Convention will be in San Jose, Costa Rica, and IBC Costa Rica will be the host for this year's convention. This will be the first time that the convention is being held outside of Europe and so the interest is very high. We are thrilled at the possibility of hosting you. Here is some information so you can begin planning on joining us in Costa Rica.

### Dates

The actual convention will begin on Tuesday 25 October to allow for people to preach in their churches on Sunday and then make their way to San Jose. We will have a missions project on 24 October. More information on the missions project will come later. The actual convention will begin Tuesday morning and go through Wednesday evening with a tour during the day on Wednesday. On Thursday, the Multiply Conference will take place, followed by LEAD Team meetings.

### Airport

The main airport is Juan Santamaria International Airport (SJO) in Alajuela. There are international flights into Liberia but this is a city that is 4

hours away. We will try and provide some sort of shuttle to and from the airport. However taxis are readily available, and many hotels also provide a shuttle service from the airport.

### Accommodations

There are numerous hotels and B&B's in the greater San Jose area. Since it is October which is the low season, getting good rates should not be a problem. However, it is important that you are within the vicinity of the church. We are located in Guachipelin de Escazu which is just west of San Jose. We are right off highway 27. For directions, go to this website:

[www.ibccostarica.org/worship-services.html](http://www.ibccostarica.org/worship-services.html).

Our church is located in a very well-centered area with several different choices of hotels. We will be calling these hotels to try to get a group rate, but you are welcome to make reservations on your own. As we get more information on the group rate, we will let you know. Some of the closest ones are Sheraton, Real Intercontinental, Courtyard by Marriott, and the Wyndham Garden. Here are links to them:



- [www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/landing/index.html?propertyID=3968 &language=es\\_ES](http://www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/landing/index.html?propertyID=3968 &language=es_ES)
- [www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sjocy-courtyard-san-jose-escazu/](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sjocy-courtyard-san-jose-escazu/)
- [www.intercontinental.com/hotels/gb/en/san-jose/sjoha/hoteldetail](http://www.intercontinental.com/hotels/gb/en/san-jose/sjoha/hoteldetail)
- [www.wyndham.com/hotels/costa-rica/san-jose/wyndham-garden-san-jose-escazu/hotel-overview](http://www.wyndham.com/hotels/costa-rica/san-jose/wyndham-garden-san-jose-escazu/hotel-overview)

### Transportation

One of the things we are trying to do is to include transportation to the church from the hotel. There are no hotels that are in walking distance to the church. Public transportation is okay. Taxis are available and affordable. The bus system is way behind what you are used to in Europe. Renting a vehicle is a viable option but tends to be expensive.

### Weather

San Jose and the surrounding areas have an average temperature of 75 degrees year round. October is the final month of the rainy season which typically means bright sunny mornings and then rain moving in during the afternoon and staying through the evening. If you plan on visiting the coast, the temperatures are much warmer, if you go up into the mountains, the temperatures are cooler.

### Main Attractions in the Area

Downtown San Jose offers museums, typical stores, and different malls. Beaches and mountains are close by, but around 2-3 hours away.

### Pacific Coast or Caribbean Coast?

For those of you wanting to visit the beach, keep in mind most of the tourist beaches are on the Pacific side. The closest beach is about 1 hour and 1/2 away, some others are 2-3 hours away.

### Recommendations of Places to Stay while at the Beach

We are friends with Lyle & Stacey Watson, pastor and wife from Tamarindo Church. They live in the Tamarindo area (about 4 hours away from San Jose) where they have planted a church and have connections for condos at the beach. We can gladly give you their contact information if you are interested in this option or you can contact them directly. For the most part, regular hotel sites will give you a variety of options.

### What Else is There to Do?

We will try to have an organized tour to a volcano and La Paz Waterfall Gardens. The trip to Poas Volcano and La Paz Waterfall Gardens will cost approximately \$100 per person. This includes breakfast, lunch, transportation and entrance to both sites. There are also several choices for water rafting, canopy, volcanoes, walking trails, etc.

### Concerning the Zika Virus and Other Health Issues

As you have probably read, Costa Rica along with other countries in Central America have the Zika virus. At the time I write this, there have been two confirmed cases. We actually do not hear too much about it. We do have a few other tropical diseases like dengue fever, but this, too, is not common. Costa Rica has excellent health care. A very nice private hospital is close to the church. Our water is clean so you can drink the water. Having had numerous groups from the U.S. and other locations, we have rarely had health problems.

### Exit Tax

Costa Rica has an exit tax to leave the country. The cost is \$29. Some airline tickets include it in the price of the ticket; others do not. When you purchase your ticket, check to see if the exit tax is included. If it is not, be ready to pay before you leave. You can pay with a credit card.

Hopefully, this gives you plenty of information to begin planning on coming to the convention. If you have questions concerning Costa Rica, please contact IBC San Jose at [jilmarivera@gmail.com](mailto:jilmarivera@gmail.com). For questions related to the Annual Meeting, contact the IBC Office at [admin@ibc-churches.org](mailto:admin@ibc-churches.org).

*Paul Dreesen*

Save the Date!

Summer Family Conference  
3-6 August 2017

Lachen Gästerhäuser  
Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, Germany

## Madrid, Spain

■ **Fall 2015 Highlights** included a work day at Immanuel Baptist Church, Madrid, Spain, with the church's "World-Changers." This ministry to "tweenagers" (11-13 years old) includes Sunday morning Bible study as well as extracurricular activities. Susie Dixon, pastor's wife, relishes the opportunity to challenge these international kids (Third Culture Kids or TCK's) to find their foundation in Jesus Christ. She also has a team of young adults (university age+) who are being mentored as they learn to personalize the message in small groups, as well as a cadre of parents who come to her aid for special events like



Tweenagers help prepare the evening meal after fall work day.

the fall work day. The event was geared to teaching the kids about the joy of service and the functioning of Christ's Body.

These adolescents worked both inside and out, doing all kinds of jobs, including helping to prepare the evening meal. Their small-group time included delving into the questions that trouble their hearts and pointing them to Jesus as the key to understanding and Scripture as the dependable place to find answers.

Pray for the discipling of these young people, that God would soften their hearts to His Word and Spirit. ■

*David and Susie Dixon*

## Freiburg, Germany

■ **We thank God** for His mercy and grace towards our life. 2015 was a battle for us at Royal Family Christian Centre in Freiburg, Germany, but the good Lord turned our battle to joy and peace. We were sacked from our place of worship due to the noise, but God gave us a new place which was even more than we expected.

Last year in May, Royal Family was recognized as a German Baptist church and in November, Sylvester Peprah-Kwakye

was ordained as a licensed pastor of the German Baptist Union. Glory be to God!

Using Acts 20:20 as a guide, we did our best to visit several asylum houses and won some Muslims to Christ. We hope that by the end of 2016 we will increase the congregation to 400 members.

Please pray for financial break-through for the church, for strength to win more souls for Christ, and for the provision of our own church building. ■

*Sylvester Peprah-Kwakye*



Pastor Peprah-Kwakye (r) is ordained as a licensed pastor.

## Tamarindo, Costa Rica

■ **January is always** an exciting month for us at Tamarindo Church, Costa Rica, as we celebrate our church's anniversary and always do our mission church trip to Nicaragua during this month.

### 3 Year Anniversary

On Sunday, 17 January, many gathered at Tamarindo Church to celebrate our big day that marked three years of meeting for weekly worship services and doing ministry in Tamarindo. It was a day of remem-

bering how far God has brought us and also a day of giving thanks to God and the many people who have contributed toward the life of our church. By the grace of God, we have been here three years now, and we are grateful!

### Nicaragua Mission Trip

At the end of January, Tamarindo Church took a team of 19 people up to Nicaragua as we built homes, fed the poor, and did art projects with children in the

barrio of Cristo Rey. It was a very moving experience for many on the trip, and we were blessed to have the opportunity to help those in need. Many others helped to contribute to the success of the trip including those who gave financially, prayed for us, shuttled us to the airport, organized donations, and made crafts for children's activities. ■

*Lyle and Stacy Watson*



January is a busy month as Tamarindo celebrates its third anniversary and does a mission trip to Nicaragua with food distribution and children's art projects.



## Calahonda, Spain

■ **When a church** in Torremolinos split, a Christian fellowship was formed under the leadership of Reverend Donald Spence, who was elected to take the pastoral oversight of the new church. There was little to call their own apart from one box of overhead transparencies that amounted to 50 songs of fellowship, a small keyboard, and four school tables.

Finding a place to call their own was like a roller coaster ride as God, in His wisdom, moved them from one location to the next, starting at a hired hall in the Geresol Health Spa with 18 adults and 12 children. After 22 months, the spa changed hands and the small congregation were given one-month's notice to leave. So as an emergency measure they were given space in a restaurant in the village of Mijas. Whilst there, the Union Evangelica Bautista de Espana accepted the new church into full membership under the umbrella of the Malaga Baptist Church.

After only five months they were again given one-month's notice to leave as the proprietor was selling the restaurant. The Lord answered their prayer and miraculously opened the way for them to occupy two large rooms above a Kodak shop in Calahonda. A lease was signed on 1 November 1999 for five years and finally the faithful, that had grown to 33 members and 16 children, were able to settle and even make structural changes to the rooms allowing them to extend onto the balconies.

All the legalities of becoming a registered church were in process thanks to the work of Jeannette Cortes whose bilingual capabilities helped when liaising with Pastor Jose Carmet in Malaga. In October 2001 the church were accepted as an affiliated church of the European Baptist Convention, now the International Baptist Convention (IBC). This provided a channel for future pastoral oversight, possible resources for church growth, and the knowledge that belonging to a wider body of more than 60 Baptist churches throughout Europe gave the church much support. There are also ties with the Southern Baptist Convention in the U.S. Thanks go to Martin Levey, former president of the IBC, who was a great help and inspiration throughout the whole process. The church was finally declared independent in September 2002, giving them legal status in Spain.

The Lord had established a community church in the form of a legally accepted Baptist work in the best location for growth. It was time to *"enlarge the place of our tent, stretch our tent curtains wide, lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes."* Our God, who is always faith-

ful, had tested our steadfastness in times of difficulty and uncertainty. Finding the premises was a miracle. Why? Affordable premises to be used for Protestant church meetings was almost impossible – unless God intervened. Not only that, but He also provided adjoining Sunday School premises to help accommodate the four Sunday School classes.

The assembled had now grown to 57, plus 13 associate members, 22 adherents, and 18 children, the majority of whom were attending all year round. Along a 650-kilometer coastline, Calahonda Baptist Church was one of only three legal English-speaking Baptist churches; the others were at Rota (the U.S. Air Force base) and



Calahonda purchases this lot for their building.

Javea in Alicante. With the growth in the church came many baptisms, so numerous places were chosen to conduct these including the sea as well as private and commercial swimming pools. Twenty-one people were baptized, and the Sunday services were swelling in numbers.

Pastor Don stated "that we dare not limit God's work to this present situation as we press on towards the vision for the future which should be our own spiritual home."

Approximately half a kilometer from the Kodak shop, a residential plot of land was found (1,165 square meters) and purchased for 125,000€. It was 2003 so this was not expensive by European standards. Who would have believed that it would be another four years before any building work would start and seven years before the doors opened.

Unfortunately many delays were encountered but were overcome until, nearing the end of the work, the builder declared bankruptcy and disappeared to Brazil. After much legal wrangling and

delay, the construction was completed in early 2009 and signed off by the architect. Throughout this whole process Terry Webb, the church treasurer, remained relentless in maintaining the legal status of the building work and spent many hours at meetings or in officials' offices waiting for documents, none of which would have been possible without his dedication.

The lease on the rooms above the Kodak shop was coming to an end so the congregation moved to the premises of the local Norwegian church while the official occupancy license was issued which would allow the normal life of the church to commence. Little did they know that it would take more than 12 months for this

to be granted. Our verse during this time was *"Wait for the Lord; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the Lord"* (Psalm 27:14, NASB).

Finally the doors were opened for the first service in April 2010. The purpose-built baptismal pool could be used, the three Sunday school classes were full of young children, and the first outreach event was held at the end of July – a wonderful music and tales evening that was a triumph. The annual Carol Concert was also a huge success with standing room only for the two nights, and this has continued for the subsequent years.

The church building is currently configured to hold 150 people in the sanctuary, plus three rooms for Sunday school classes and a communal area with a small kitchen for refreshments. In time, the building can be extended internally to allow for an upper level which would then extend the sanctuary to hold 240 people. This would greatly increase the area for small groups and offices upstairs.

The congregation has grown from

strength to strength. The church is fortunate to have some of the first members still present who were in attendance during the early years. New people have come into membership, and visitors who had not been seen for a few years as the church moved to various locations, found their vacation church home again, which has been likened to a 'Beach Ministry', but with its own premises.

Calahonda Baptist Church has officially become international with the rise of foreign brothers and sisters attending the Sunday morning services. On a typical Sunday there are at least to 10-12 nationalities represented in the congregation.

During the week the church is open for 'Age Care' who reach out to the elderly English-speaking community, offering support and activities that include Spanish lessons, exercises, art, and writing. Each month there is a speaker or group of singers who entertain the clients, and from this community the church has welcomed some of the people to our Sunday morning services. The Lord continues to show the church ways in which the community can be reached, and there is a vision for a clear and bright future. The current motto for the church is "Building Up to Reach Out" based on Colossians 2:6-7: "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord,



Completed: Calahonda Baptist Church

so walk in Him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."

Our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations will be in October. There are plans for a special service to which we are inviting IBC General Secretary Jimmy Martin as well as the president of UEBE and many friends and dignitaries along the coast. There will be a special family meal during the month, as well as an evening of live music from a group from Ireland who performed in 2015 and who are only too happy to return for this commemorative occasion. ■

Sue Labbett

## Eindhoven, The Netherlands

■ **The International** Baptist Church, Eindhoven, The Netherlands, held a women's afternoon fellowship and outreach on 23 January. The theme of the day was "Walk in the Light, as He is the Light," based on 1 John 1:7.

We are in an increasingly high-technology, busy, and fast-paced world. The very face of social media is seemingly always new and has inevitably changed the landscape of our walks of life. For example, we even talk on a smart phone while walking.

1 John 1:1-10 is one of the inspiring Scriptures, full of practical encouragement, coupled with steps we can use to learn to walk closer to our God. These were the verses shared by our speaker Laurie Martin. We all savored her simple biblical approach, her refreshing thoughts, and her perspective which comes from above.

We were thankful for Laurie's Godly wisdom which provided us with three great reminders, all starting with a "C."

- **Cover Up:** In 2 Samuel 11, King David covered up his sin. He defiled himself with Bathsheba and continued living in defilement until God Almighty reproached him through Nathan the prophet. Instead of keeping covered up with sin, Laurie said, David eventually chose to cover up with God's command through obedience.
- **Confess:** King David was honest with himself and God. He went to the throne of grace and confessed. Laurie elaborated by cross-referencing these verses with 1 John 1:9 and Psalm 51. God's invitation of forgiveness is always open if we obey. Isn't that wonderful?

- **Conquer:** David repented and yielded to God's polishing. He conquered his sinful nature by obedience. He was real and transparent with an unveiled face. He had seen, heard, and been touched by God. David walked out from the darkness, and he walked into the light as God is the Light.

After Laurie's message, we had group discussions, following her warm and inviting style. During this time, we shared our thoughts and cherished this hearty sharing of our experiences and struggles. We opened up to one another and were encouraged.

One important thing that I learned during group discussions was that we cannot fix unfavorable circumstances, but we can definitely fix our mind on God. This helps me to reflect on how to make wise choices.

*"Father God, we thank You and praise You for this mini session of studying Your Word. Help us to walk in Your marvelous light. You alone are our divine GPS. In Jesus' most precious name, Amen."*

We also had the privilege to listen to Inez Spruit's personal testimony. Her two "give-away" verses (Jeremiah 29:11, Psalm 139:13-16) were my greatest "take-aways" spiritually. I have once again hidden these lovely verses deeper in my heart.

*"Father God, we are grateful that You are our Masterpiece. Lead us to delight and be faithful with the plans You have for us. We acknowledge You are our Light and guide us to walk in the light. We ask these in Jesus' lovely name, Amen."*

We are grateful to the core team who made an extra effort to arrange this fellowship. ■

Joyce Geerts

## Leidschendam, The Netherlands

■ **Trinity International Baptist Church**, Leidschendam, The Netherlands, started an outreach to refugees in late 2015. In January 2016, an Iranian man was led to faith in Jesus. He shared the Gospel with his cousin, and a month later there was a group of men – all former Muslims – meet-

ing twice a week for discipleship in a temporary refugee center approximately 15 kilometers from where Trinity meets.

On Sunday, 28 February, a group of men from Afghanistan and Iran were baptized on profession of faith in our building. A Dutch man also responded to the Gospel call and was baptized on the spot.

Please pray for the men who were baptized and those who have come to faith and have not yet been baptized. They have all been scattered throughout The Netherlands to different refugee centers.

One young man was transferred to a center that houses asylum seekers in a prison. He arrived there on the day of his baptism. He encountered an atmosphere of hostility and frustration. Recently a refugee from Iraq committed suicide out of desperation in that center. The newly baptized man immediately set about sharing his faith, and more than 10 others have come to faith in Jesus in that place.

Each Sunday, Trinity dispatches members to travel to various refugee centers to collect people who want to come to worship. On two days each week, leaders from Trinity go to disciple the new believers. Please pray for us as we seek to support and disciple these new believers. ■

*Dave Stemmett*



photo by Nabili Namik

Pastor Dave Stemmett prays for those being baptized.

## Rome, Italy

■ **When my wife Denise** received her diplomatic assignment to the U.S. Embassy in Rome, we knew that our “government-funded missions work” was to continue. The core group for Rome International Church began meeting in 2014 in our apartment. We were so pleased to see the group begin to take shape and want to begin to worship together.

Following the team meetings to discuss things like core beliefs and ministries, the group began to plan its first worship service together for October 2014 in our home. From there, through connections from team members, we rented the theatre at St. George’s British International School for a worship location. This school is located in the north of Rome in an area where several other international schools are located, giving a dense English-speaking population. The first official service open to the public was held on 25 January 2015, with approximately 75 people present.

In this first year, we have seen young people come to Christ through our youth group. Our church has people from places like Egypt, England, Grand Cayman Island, Ethiopia, Taiwan, and the U.S., reaching out to people ranging from U.S. diplomats to Ghanaian refugees. RIC has several “Life Groups” which meet around the city in people’s homes throughout the week. We held a performing arts camp for young people in June and a quarterly Taizé-style prayer service. The first church-wide weekend retreat near Spoleto saw 45 participants, including Pas-



Rome International celebrates its 1st anniversary. During their first church retreat they learn an Israeli folk dance.



tor Tim Faulkner and his family from their IBC church in Naples, who served as volunteers to work with our children.

We celebrated our first anniversary on 31 January 2016. Jimmy and Laurie Martin, IBC general secretary and wife, were

our special guests. On Saturday night, our elders and wives hosted them for dinner and a special time of discussion on what it means to be an elder. For the anniversary service, there were more than 80 people, almost all of who stayed for the lunch we organized at our favorite corner restaurant. We have exciting plans for the coming year as we continue to work with a local refugee center as well as creative outreach events. ■

*Brian Kirby*