

HIGHLIGHTS

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Fellowship, Partnership

**Celebrating Our
Core Values**

MULTIPLY

**Coaching for
Multiplication**

Connect, Euroventure

**Summer Conferences
to be Held**

Celebrating Our Core Values of Fellowship, Partnership

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a servant of the church in Cenchræa. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of the saints and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been a great help to many people, including me. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. (Rom. 16:1-4)



by Jimmy Martin
General Secretary

During our March Ministry Leadership Conference near Athens we had the rare privilege of visiting the ruins of the ancient city of Corinth. Leaving from Athens we traveled through Corinth's eastern port, Cenchræa. Two busloads of pastors and wives, other leaders, and a few children enjoyed "walking where Paul walked." We saw the remains of a city that in Paul's day was famous for some things and infamous for others. It was a city where the Gospel took root, and a thriving church, not without its problems, was the result.

Paul was probably in Corinth when he wrote to the Romans. He likely had Phoebe to deliver the letter for him. He takes the time to acknowledge, accept, and affirm her to the Romans. He also brings greetings to friends – more than 25 by name – starting with Priscilla and Aquila, "my fellow workers in Christ Jesus," who in some way "risked their lives" for Paul. Paul regularly acknowledged people with whom he ministered, and he did it publicly... by name. He knew the importance and joy of fellowship and partnership among God's servants.

Although a major focus of our MLC each year is to empower leaders and provide biblical instruction and learning for ministry, we also cultivate and experience the benefits of fellowship and partnership. I am grateful to the Empowering Leaders team for carrying the weight this year. David Fresch, EL director, led with the help of Werner Swart, the Executive Leadership Team, and the IBC staff. Thanks for a job well done.

We are already thinking about next year's MLC. It is our hope that more lay leaders in the church –

elders, deacons, and others – will join us. This year, of the more than 110 adults who attended, we had 30 who were not IBC pastors and wives. Some were guests, but at least 16 were lay leaders in IBC churches. I hope we can work together to have more of our church leaders to join us.

Among the values we celebrate when "servants of the church" get together are **fellowship and partnership**. With this year's theme, "Healthy Leaders/Healthy Churches," the plenary sessions focused on soul care, the importance of leaders maintaining a close walk with the Lord to be emotionally, spiritually, relationally, and physically healthy. "Healthy leaders build healthy churches." Beyond the formal times of teaching and breakout sessions with discussion, we enjoyed fellowship as we met together, ate together, prayed together, and talked about life together. Friendships were made. Bonds were built that will encourage and strengthen us in the future. Partnerships were forged organically. Churches decided to work together. Information was shared. In a word, family happened.

Among the greatest benefits of belonging to the IBC family are the opportunities for fellowship and partnership. Over the years, I have seen many pastors and wives and other leaders come and go. All face difficulties of loneliness in ministry, challenges in their churches, family issues near and far. Sharing with one another in the presence of the Lord gives us courage and strength to face life's difficulties. Kindling fellowship and partnerships between leaders and churches is vital.

Just as Paul recognized the importance of people

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Cover photo: Erastus inscription at Ancient Corinth
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Photo by Judith Lynn Maxwell

with whom he served, I want to take some space to give a “shout out” to the many people who attended the conference because they are a great value to the Lord’s work. They are a treasure to the people they serve and to me. I commend them all. While sharing, I may steal a little of the Apostle Paul’s wording.

First, our pastors and wives. **Paul and Kathy Arneson** are the new pastor and wife in Sofia, Bulgaria. They are already making a difference in that strategic city. **William and Helen Colledge** have served faithfully in Zürich for three years. They will be missed when they move back to South Africa in July. **Roland and Hanlie Eskinazi**, who are deeply committed to growing the church in Brussels, are also South Africans. **Tim and Jacki Faulkner** are doing a great job of serving in Naples and working with **Danilo Bozza** in a succession process to secure the church’s future effectiveness. I appreciate the work of these Neapolitans.

David and Scottie Fresch continue to serve in Stavanger, Norway. They have led the church in the “best and worst of times.” David grew up in the church he now pastors. He is full of energy and zeal. **David and Tiffany Hamburger** have been a breath of fresh air in Antwerp, Belgium. They represent a growing number of younger leaders in the IBC. The church is growing in health and size under David’s leadership. **Jeff and Cindy Hinman** continue to serve God’s people in Düsseldorf, Germany. They have helped the church through some challenges, including a fire that devastated the education and children’s building. **Bob and Debbie Hnat** lead two churches in Celle and Hannover, Germany. They have been tested and approved in Christ through service of almost 20 years in those locations. Bob is the first person I met in the IBC; he served as chairman of the committee that called me as pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Kaiserslautern, Germany, 24 years ago.

Likewise **Dave and Cathy Hodgdon** have proved themselves to be faithful. They are true missionaries in the great city of Rome and are diligent servants to those who live and visit. **Carsten and Melanie Lotz**, Oberursel, Germany, are serving faithfully in spite of health issues. They inspire others with their growing family of boys. Carsten is my pastor. **Jeremy and Christina Woods** are recently married. Jeremy serves in Oberursel as Associate Pastor of Family Ministries. He is doing a great job in a new field of ministry. **Bob and Carol Marsh** are the dedicated, inspirational couple that planted Converge International Fellowship in Darmstadt, Germany. They have done a great job of establishing this church

that is committed to planting other churches.

David and Kristen Martin came to Cologne, Germany, as youngsters and have also proven themselves to be faithful. **Erik and Kim Nielsen**, dear friends, continue to serve the Lord and His people in Copenhagen, Denmark. Their close family and faithfulness during trying times of illness in recent days inspire many others and me. **Gary and Suzanne Preston** are a delight to many as they serve in Ramstein, Germany. They have taken a thriving church plant to even greater health and strength, already planting a second church and looking at their next church plant. Alongside them are **Josh and Teri Ramsay**, also serving diligently in Ramstein, who delighted us with their new baby, **Addie**, in tow. Also connected to the Frontline Community Church are **Mike and Jennifer Walk**, who bravely stepped out over a year ago to plant Frontline City Church in Kaiserslautern, Germany. A fourth couple from Frontline is **Chris and Jeanine Carson**, who served previously in Rota, Spain, but have been serving as pastoral interns in Ramstein for the last year. They are a precious couple.

Dave and Gillian Stemmett have served in the IBC for a number of years, currently serving faithfully in Leidschendam, The Netherlands. They are part of the growing South African contingent of pastors and wives. **Taylor and Lydia Whitley** both serve on staff in Stuttgart, Germany. They have brought youthful zeal to us. **Brian and Pearl Williams** are newcomers to IBC Vienna, Austria. They are both involved in Christian ministry beyond the church also. **Parker and Kyrach Windle** are indeed newlyweds, serving in Paris, France. Parker has a vision to plant an additional church in the city of love, light, and romance. Serving alongside Parker and Kyrach are **Justin and Rachel Hendricks**, also young adults who are serving effectively.

Nick and Susan Howard are relatively new to the IBC, serving effectively in Wiesbaden, Germany. They bring a wealth of experience in ministry, having served as missionaries in the country previously. **Barry and Jeannie Cole** are recent pastor and wife in Aviano, Italy, but not new to the IBC, having served effectively as associate pastor in Stuttgart, Germany. **Scott and Sandy Chadwick** are serving IBC, Munich, Germany. We are thankful for their faithful service and leadership now, and previously in Bulgaria. Although Scott had to leave for a family funeral just before the MLC, he was with us in spirit. **Richmond and Esther Ofori**, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, serve in the church where Richmond came to faith in Christ.

Dan and Sharon Maxton, interim pastor and wife in Budapest, Hungary, are a delightful couple – full of energy, wisdom, and humor. **Gerhard and Joan Venter** came to Bratislava, Slovakia, after many years of effective service in South Africa. They are leading the church in a steady, effective way. **Doug and Yvonne Johns**, serve in Bielefeld, Germany. Doug ran two half-marathons in the last month, at age 65. We salute you, Doug! **Bill and Naty Tully**, IBC Bucharest, came with their two daughters, **Mina and Bella**. They have served in Bucharest for many years. The last year has been exceptionally trying, with Bill's heart illness and going through the adoption process for the girls. Through it all, they have served faithfully.

Several pastors whose wives were not able to come to the MLC, include **Scott Corwin**, **Jürgen Ferrary**, **Werner Swart**, **Nathanael Fawcett**, **Kristian Bak**, and **Tim Melton**. My dear friend Scott serves with Laurie in Berlin. IBC Berlin recently planted a new congregation in Berlin. It was a delight to have **Bruce and Mary Boeckel**, new church planters, with us. Juergen and his wife, Alex, serve with Scott and Laurie in Berlin. (And yes, his last name is Ferrary). Werner and Adel Swart have brought a burst of spiritual energy to the IBC church in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Nathanael, along with his wife, Julie, has served for many years in Sao Paulo, Brazil, but only recently as lead pastor and wife. Nathanael has a tender heart for God and for people. Kristian serves as assistant pastor in Aalborg, Denmark, along with his wife, Kylene. Tim Melton currently serves as associate pastor at Immanuel, Madrid, Spain, along with his wife, Paola. Tim will become pastor of the church in September when the current pastor, David Dixon, retires.

Paul Grinyer, dear fellow worker, serves in Bremen, Germany. Paul is guiding the church toward new levels of leadership and effectiveness. Our dear brother in Christ, **Gilbert van Bueren**, was able to join us this year. As he mourns the death of his wife, Diny, he continues to serve the Lord faithfully. Tested and approved. My dear friend **Lee Hanson** continues to lead Koinonia church in Aalborg, Denmark. Lee may be the funniest person I know. He is also a faithful shepherd to a church made up mostly of young adults.

It was wonderful to have lay leaders from IBC churches. **Benny, Cristi, and Julie Stan, and Emma Tita** came from IBC Copenhagen. They served on the team that led our worship in music. **Stewart and Judith Lynn Maxwell** serve as leaders in Darmstadt, Germany. They have served the church since its beginning and also led Bible studies in Darmstadt before the church was planted. **Pete and Vierka Miller** have served as leaders in the Bratislava church for many years. They regularly attend our MLC. Pete is on a campaign to bring more lay leaders to our meetings. Go for it, Pete! **Nicole Faulkenberry** came with the Howards from Wiesbaden, Germany, where she

serves as an intern. I am glad she was able to meet the IBC family.

No MLC list would be complete without **Lorraine Stringer**, who not only serves as the IBC administrative assistant but is also a key leader at Bethel IBC in Frankfurt, Germany. **Lolly Raja**, who came with the Oforis from Rotterdam, serves faithfully in the church. **Sam and Desireé Dyer**, along with their precious kids, **Ezra and Salem**, from ICF Oberursel, Germany, are working with refugees in the Frankfurt area. I love this family. **Hans-Joachim and Alexandra Rieger**, from IBC Hamburg, are faithful servants there, having served in Africa for a number of years. They have a heart for the world.

Special guests attending this year included **Jim, Joy, and Katelynn Crockett**, who were visiting from Oslo IBC of Sandvika, Norway. **David Simon**, a lay leader in the church, also was there. The Oslo church has ministered faithfully for many years and has had some interaction with the IBC. We were honored to have them. **Earl Evans** was a guest this year, unlike other years when he and Delma have attended as interim pastor and wife of several IBC churches. Earl has worked very hard for us and is deeply loved. **Eric and Nicole McCrorey** shared time with us as visitors of **Bob and Carol Marsh**. Nicole is the Marsh's daughter. They serve the Lord in the USA.

In addition, our speakers blessed us as they gave of themselves in teaching, counseling, and coaching. They all came with servant hearts and deserve our thanks. **Bob and Myra Marsh** are deeply loved encouragers, mentors, and friends to everyone in the IBC. To paraphrase Paul the Apostle, "not only I but all the churches of the IBC are grateful to them." Our friends from Missional International Church Network, **Ken and Melanie Driedger** and **Warren Reeve**, graciously shared from their hearts, giving counsel and encouragement. **Martin Sanders** and **Ingrid Davis**, from Global Leadership, Inc., were also a blessing to the group as they spoke into our lives and spent time with many who had questions.

Along with **Laurie and myself, Darryl and Debra Evetts** were also present. These dear friends have served in the IBC for many years, most recently spurring on our church planting movement while living in San Antonio. Tested and approved in Christ. Finally, it was a thrill to have **Loren and Alaina Holland**, who are "almost IBCers" as they complete their support-raising in preparation for moving to Rome to serve at Rome International Church.

Paul concludes the book of Romans giving praise to God: *Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ... so that all nations might believe and obey him – to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen.* The names Paul listed in Romans 16 were precious saints to him, and the ones listed here are precious to me... and you. I give the glory to God but am thankful for His people. 

Healthy Leaders Build Healthy Churches

The International Baptist Convention's Ministry Leadership Conference was held 24-28 March in Vouliagmeni, Athens, Greece. The weekend conference provided pastors and leaders in IBC churches an opportunity to enjoy fellowship, relaxation, encouragement, teaching, and a trip to ancient Corinth. The theme for this year's conference was "Healthy Leaders / Healthy Churches."

Keynote speaker for the weekend was Martin Sanders, director of doctoral programs at Alliance Theological Seminary, in Nyack, New York, Sanders has served as a pastor, professor, and consultant with a focus on empowering leaders to become the best they were designed to be.

In his Friday evening message "Welcoming the Spirit," Sanders encouraged those attending to create space in their suitcase (their soul). We each need to identify what is in our suitcase, create more room there, and fill it with the best "stuff." Part of going to the next level, Sanders said, is to track your self-talk (what you say to yourself about yourself) and look at your personal limitations. "The next level of your effectiveness and faith lies just beyond your current experience," he said. Welcoming the Spirit, Sanders said, means to welcome Christ's freedom (Galatians 5:1, 13-15). We need to walk in His ways (5:16-23) and clean out the junk in our lives. We need to give Him control of our lives – remembering what our lives look like when He is in control and when we are in control.

put on forgiveness (3:12-13). We are chosen of God and have His Spirit within. Finally, we need to put on love (3:14-17). We need to have a perfect bond of unity and a peaceful existence in Christ.

In his final session "When Jesus Takes You to the River," Sanders reminded the group of the power of water. One of the symbols of the Holy Spirit is water (John 7:37-38). We need to cultivate God's presence in our lives, Sanders said. We need to "get into the river." We need to pay attention to the things that dull our senses and to feed our spiritual hunger. Once we are in, we need to wade out deeper, Sanders said. We need to pay attention to the flow and the currents and remove any barriers that may prevent a free flow. We need to strengthen our capacity to love and to become a reflection of Him. Finally, Sanders said, we need to "stay in the flow" by being sensitive to His Presence. We need to guard our heart from hardness, excuses, and self-protection and let the fresh spring bring softness, contrition, and inner strength (Proverbs 4:23).

Ingrid Davis, a mentor and leadership coach with Global Leadership, spoke on Saturday morning on "Soul Care for Ministry Leaders." She shared from her on experiences while serving as a missionary in Mali. Often, she said, we get into a "cycle of grief" where our activity determines our identity which leads to a drivenness that forms our acceptance or condemnation. Instead, she said, we should seek a cycle of grace where acceptance and sustenance forms our identity and brings a fruitfulness in our lives.

Sanders and Davis also led two of the seminars offered during the weekend. Sanders taught on the "Power of Mentoring" while Davis' seminar focused on "Healthy Relationships/Skills for Leading, Living, and Loving Well." Other seminars were led by Warren Reeve on "When It Blows Up on the Outside what Happens on the Inside?" and Ken and Melanie Driedger on "Growing Strong Souls for International Church Leaders." Reeve and the Driedgers work with Missional International Church Network and have served in international churches in Indonesia and Kuwait.

An early morning Bible study was a new feature of MLC this year. Bob Marsh, well-known Bible teacher in the IBC, taught on "The Message of Colossians." During the study he led the group to consider "Who is Jesus of Nazareth and why is He supreme?" and "Who are you, as followers of Jesus?"

On Monday, the group had the opportunity to visit Corinth's eastern port Cenchrea and tour the ancient city of Corinth. Christian tour guides brought the sites alive by not only giving the history of the places but tying them to the biblical events.

The music team for the conference was from First International Baptist Church, Copenhagen, Denmark, led by pastor Erik Nielsen.



In his Saturday evening message, Sanders looked at "When God Heals Your Soul," based on Psalm 103. When God heals your soul, Sanders said, you are free and full and your capacity to love and be loved are expanded. God forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, and satisfies. We only have to receive and embrace God as Father – His compassion, understanding, and love.

In his third session, Sanders encouraged participants to update their views on holiness and embrace it as a theology in "New Perspectives on Holiness." Look at the lives of people, Sanders said, and you will see their gods. "Let's be the holy people," he said. Colossians 3 gives guidelines for "putting on" the best of Christ. First, Sanders said, we must put our eyes on Christ (3:1-4). Second, we need to put off the old self (3:5-11). We need to be dead to sin of flesh and tongue and be renewed from within. Third, we need to

Coaching For Multiplication



By Darryl Evetts
Director of Church
Multiplication

More than 50 people joined the “multiplication conversation” at our most recent MULTIPLY Conference. Twenty-five IBC churches were represented at the conference held just outside of Athens, Greece, on 28 March following the Ministry Leadership Conference. The purpose of the conference is to invite every IBC church into the conversation about multiplying English-language international churches around the world. The conference is a venue for discussing the many facets of international church planting, generating ideas, and discovering opportunities to inform and motivate our church multiplication efforts.



The subject of conversation for this conference was “coaching for multiplication.”

According to Steve Addison, “Coaching is the relational process of cooperating with the Holy Spirit that unlocks a person’s God-given potential so that they become more like Christ and make their unique contribution to the kingdom.” Coaching is a critical system for church multiplication as well as a valuable resource with applicability across our churches and ministries.

Coaching a church planter (or anyone for that matter) is all about being an equipper (Ephesians 4:12-13), not a solutions-giver. Coaches want to equip planters to hear from the Holy Spirit, think through options, and move forward in obedience. Coaching facilitates this process in a practical way. Coaching helps planters discern vision, determine next steps, and find solutions. As they do, they are better equipped for future ministry success. Coaching skills are essential to multiply disciples, leaders, churches, and ministry impact.

Here are just a few of the many benefits of coaching church planters (adapted from the article “The Five Benefits of Coaching in Ministry: How to Become an Excellent Coach” by Keith E. Webb, author and leader in Christian coaching):

Benefit #1: Coaching Focuses on Learning instead of Teaching.

Coaching is a form of adult learning. Adults typically learn better through dialogue and self-discovery than by someone teaching them. Consider the words of Winston Churchill when he said, “I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught.” Coaching focuses on other people’s learning rather than us teaching them.

Benefit #2: Coaching Draws Out What the Holy Spirit Put In.

Coaching is effective because it brings out a person’s best – what God has put in them. Coaching is based on the theological understanding that every believer already has an advisor – the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained the Holy Spirit’s role in a believer’s life in John 14:26: “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

Benefit #3: Coaching Uses Questions instead of Advice.

Questions promote dialogue. Good questions cause people to dig deep in their souls to find answers. Advice is kept to a minimum so that the other person can discover Holy Spirit-inspired ideas, solutions, or next steps. Advice giving can short-circuit that “discovery” process. Proverbs 20:5 says, “Though good advice lies deep within a person’s heart, the wise will draw it out.”

Benefit #4: Coaching Maximizes People’s Potential.

God has uniquely created each person to become someone special and to do something special. This is “calling.” Calling is not just for church planters. Every believer has calling in at least three areas of his or her life: calling to character or personal holiness (Eph. 1:4), calling to relationship with God (Eph. 1:5), and calling to ministry – a unique contribution to God’s Kingdom (Eph. 2:10). Coaching provides a supportive environment to help a person discover what God has for him or her.

Benefit #5: Coaching Doesn’t Take a Lot of Time and Works Great over the Long Distance.

Ministry is always done in the context of relation-



ships. Most people love to get together with other people and talk. Coaching helps us become more focused and effective, while still being relational. Most coaches meet with people more often as a result (Hebrews 10:24-25) of their coaching relationships. Coaching is very effective over the phone or Skype which makes it very practical when coaching internationally.

Benefit #6: Coaching Increases Cross-Cultural Effectiveness.

Coaching is an especially effective cross-cultural tool. A coach remains a learner, asking powerful questions and listening actively. Coaching minimizes culturally inappropriate solutions by allowing

people to develop their own solutions, in their own cultural ways. When you ask questions, people naturally answer out of their cultural context.

By the end of the MULTIPLY conference, participants walked away excited about the potential of coaching relationships in their respective contexts and ministries. We each learned a bit about the why and how of coaching well. We all had an opportunity to receive and provide a little coaching. We left the conference ready to begin our journey of becoming coaches who will help people develop their God-given potential so that they grow personally and make a valuable contribution to the Kingdom of God. 🌱



Convention Elects New 2nd VP

The International Baptist Convention held a called business meeting during the Ministry Leadership Conference on 25 March in Vouliagmeni, Athens, Greece. According to the constitution and operations manual adopted in October 2016, the IBC can hold a called business meeting to conduct any needed business between annual meetings.

The messengers elected Richmond Ofori, pastor of Hope International Baptist Church, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, as second vice president. First Vice President Jim Goforth resigned as pastor of Faith Baptist Church, Kaiserslautern, Germany, in January. Second Vice President Carsten Lotz succeeded Goforth as 1st Vice President. As required by the operations manual, the Executive Leadership Team of the convention brought the recommendation of Ofori to the business session.

The convention also approved the addition of two new members to the Council of Trustees Finance Team. Joseph Meijs from Koinonia International Christian Fellowship, Aalborg, Denmark, and Douglas Pek, Calvary International Church, Sao Paulo, Brazil, were brought as a recommendation by President Scott Chadwick.

Carsten Lotz, presiding in the absence of the president, announced the Nominations Team as appointed by the president: Lee Hanson, pastor of Koinonia

International Christian Fellowship, Aalborg, Denmark; Nick Howard, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Wiesbaden, Germany; and Dina Dressen, IBC San Jose, Costa Rica.

The messengers also heard reports from the five strategy directors of the convention. Judith Lynn Maxwell, Developing Resources, highlighted the work her team is doing with planned or legacy giving as well as a redesign of *Highlights*. Scott Corwin, Building Connections, announced the newly adopted project with the European Baptist Mission International – Turkey (see related article on page 14). David Fresch, Empowering Leaders, encouraged pastors and leaders to explore the educational and training opportunities available through BH Carroll Institute. Mike Walk and Frontline City Church in Kaiserslautern, Germany, are running the first institute classes with BH Carroll. Gary Preston, Strengthening Churches, highlighted the benefits of a transitional interim. Transitional interims can help churches understand who they are, determine what type of leader they need, and make positive steps to find that leader. Darryl Evetts, Multiplying Churches, introduced church planters who are currently raising support or newly on the field to the convention. 🌱



Gary Preston talks about strengthening churches.

Speakers and Seminars Set for Connect C



Sandi Black



Paul L. Gritz

The first newly designed Connect Family Conference will be held 3-6 August at the Lachen Gästerhäuser in Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, Germany.

Rodney Woo, pastor of the International Baptist Church of Singapore will be the featured speaker. During the worship service each morning he will be speaking on the theme of the weekend, “The body ... joined together,” based on Ephesians 4:16.

The extended weekend conference will begin on Thursday and will continue through Sunday afternoon. The schedule will feature a worship service each day, some seminars for spiritual growth, and a children’s program. Teens will have some events as well. Afternoon will be free for recreational activities or sightseeing. Evenings will feature a relaxed program geared towards families.

Seminars during the weekend will include “A Guided Tour of the Reformation” led by Paul Gritz, “Helping Families who are Struggling” led by Sandi Black, “Understanding and Parenting Teenagers” led by Wes Black, and “A Scriptural Basis for the International Church from Acts” led by Rodney Woo.

Prices for the weekend are based on the type of room selected (see table below). Prices include registration, lodging, and meals. Camping prices include three meals per day; day guest prices include two meals per day. To register, go to: <http://ibc-churches.org/our-events-services/>.

SEMINARS AND SEMINAR LEADERS

A Guided Tour of the Reformation

How do events of 500 years ago have any relevance for today? Why has 1517 become an important date in 2017? Why did Lutherans oppose Roman Catholicism? Why did a second branch of Protestants develop? Why did forming churches on the pattern of the New Testament cause problems and result in persecution and martyrdom for its advocates?

To find answers to these questions and more we will take a “guided tour” through the significant locations and individuals who shaped the Reformation. In three sessions we will explore the story of the Lutherans (*der evangelisch Kirche*), Reformed Protestants, and Free Church folks.

Paul L. Gritz retired as professor of Church History, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, after teaching for 32 years. He grew up in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, where his father edited the state’s news journal for Southern Baptists. In 1957 he professed his faith in Christ at Trinity Baptist Church. Prior to seminary, he assisted the Governor of Oklahoma for two years on health and human services issues. Paul and his wife Sharon are members of University Baptist Church in Fort Worth, and also work in its mission congregation, Luz del Mundo. Their daughter, Lydia Ruth Whitley, and her husband, Taylor, serve on the staff of IBC Stuttgart.

Helping Families who are Struggling

Often the Lord opens doors for us to be a good listener to a hurting friend or acquaintance we know at church. But how do we know when just listening and praying is not enough? What are some signs that a person might need professional help? What can we do to help if a couple needs marriage counseling? How do we help with friends who are considering or going through a divorce? What about blended family problems? What are some good resources to share with hurting people who need more help than we can give them? Learn some of these skills so that you are ready and open to the Lord using you to minister to people all around who may be hurting and not knowing where to turn.

Sandi Black is a licensed professional counselor or who works with teens, married couples, parents, and others in her counseling practice. She has written and led conferences for women, married couples, youth, parents, and youth leaders in the United States and Europe. She often speaks for women’s groups in churches. Sandi and her husband Wes are the proud parents of two grown children and one granddaughter. She is actively involved in the ministry to parents of teenagers at Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

Understanding and Parenting Teenagers

Who can understand what’s going on inside the teenage brain? Will I ever survive the teenage years? How can I rebuild the heart connection and improve communication between my teen and me? These are just some of the questions we will deal with in this conference. If you are a parent or grandparent of a teen or preteen, or if you work with youth in a church, this conference is for you.

Wes Black is retired professor of student ministry and associate dean for Ph.D studies in the School of Church and Family Ministries at Southwestern Bap-

Total Price	Multi +WC	Multi -WC	Single +WC	Single -WC	Camping (3)	Day Guests (2)
Adult	205	165	230	210	155	110
Adult – Reduced Price	175	135	200	180	125	100
Age 7-17	115	75	–	–	70	40
Age 3-6	65	65	–	–	50	25
Age 0-2	0	0	–	–	0	0

Conference 3-6 August

tist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He now serves in retirement as the minister with legacy and senior adults at his church. He has written for and taught youth and youth leaders in the United States, Europe, Asia, and the Philippines. He and his wife Sandi are the parents of two grown children and one granddaughter. He is actively involved in the ministry to parents of teenagers at Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

A Scriptural Basis for the International Church from Acts

Many believe that the 21st century is the closest to the 1st century than any other century since the beginning of the church. The book of Acts is the only book in the New Testament that tracks the movement of the Gospel from its place of origin, Jerusalem, to the capital of the Roman Empire. There is a possible new GPS system (global people system) as the church moves from a somewhat homogeneous Jerusalem church (especially in their mindset) to the internationally diverse Rome church. There are ele-

ments that we will discover from Acts that have direct parallels to the international church, especially in navigating the local church in a global direction, namely the global mission, the global makeup, and the global mindset.

Rodney Woo is senior pastor of the International Baptist Church in Singapore. Before his call to Singapore, he was the senior pastor of Wilcrest Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, and a professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Houston Baptist University. He and his wife Sasha have three sons.

As pastor of Wilcrest Baptist Church for more than 18 years, Woo led the church from an all-Anglo declining congregation into a multiracial congregation with more than 44 different countries represented. For the last five years, he has served at IBC in Singapore with 54 different nations and 121 different ethnicities represented. The church is now moving toward the full integration of the four language congregations into the English-speaking congregation.



Wes Black



Rodney Woo

Euroventure 2017

Reformed: Youth Lives Changed

Reformed, celebrating the Reformation's 500th anniversary, is the theme for Euroventure 2017, held 8-13 July in Grindelwald, Switzerland. Euroventure a week-long camp is designed for students who have completed 6th-12th grades or the European equivalents (ages 12-19 years old).

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

Euroventure is filled with a good balance of spiritual growth, physical activity, fun and games, fellowship, and worship. 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.

Speakers for the week will be **Tom and Zac Hufty**.

Tom is first and foremost a believer in and follower of Jesus Christ. At the age of 17, God captured

his attention, and Tom gave his life to Jesus. He has an unquenchable thirst for God's Word and a desire to "make Jesus look good" everyday and to everyone he meets.

Tom is husband to Rhonda, dad to Zac and Mackenzie, FIL (Father-In-Law) to Nicole and D.H., and Poppy to granddaughters Emmalyn, Kaylin, Vivian, and Pearl, and grandson Jack.

Tom is currently the senior pastor at First Baptist Church, Maryville, Illinois (USA). Prior to serving at FBCM, he served as vice president at Hannibal-LaGrange University, Hannibal, Missouri. Tom is the author of two daily devotional books, "Time Alone With God," and "180°."

For the past 21 years, Tom and Rhonda have served as the U.S. coordinators for Euroventure.

Tom's "Best Days" are spent with family and dear friends. He enjoys recreational activities such as golfing, skiing, beach walking, and mountain climbing. For personal relaxation and enjoyment Tom plays the piano and acoustic guitar.

To hear some of his sermons visit:



Tom Hufty



Zac Hufty

<http://fbmaryville.org/messages-overview/>
Zac Hufty gave his life to Christ at the age of 7, following a student camp service. His desire to wholly and completely follow Jesus and His direction for his life led him into full-time ministry. Since his early years, Zac has had an insatiable love for God's Word and its impact on both his life and the life of people he serves.

Zac is the husband to Nicole and father to three beautiful girls – Emmalyn, Kaylin, and Vivian.

Zac serves as the Minister of Campus Development at Houston's First Baptist Church in Cypress, Texas. His passions are proclaiming God's truth, spending time with his family, reading, sports, and St. Louis Cardinals baseball!

Euroventure has played a major part in Zac's life. He attended as a student and then served as a team leader, track time leader, and camp speaker. Zac met his wife, Nicole, while serving at Euroventure. You can follow Zac on Twitter and Instagram @zachufty.

In addition to the father-son duo Tom and Zac, we

will have a team of volunteers from Oklahoma Baptist University, Hannibal LaGrange University, and churches throughout the U.S. and Europe, supplying leadership in the roles of small group leaders, breakout session teachers, music, and drama leaders.

A special training time for youth workers and volunteers will be held 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.

COST:

After 1 May: 265 Euro

After 1 June: 285 Euro

After 1 July: 305 Euro

Two or more family members attending save 20 Euro each. All Sponsors pay 200 Euro.

Online registration is available at:

<http://ibc-churches.org>



IBC CPAC to be held in Oberursel in October

The International Baptist Convention will be conducting a Church Planter Assessment in Oberursel, Germany, on 26-27 October 2017. This will be a great opportunity for church planter candidates already living in Europe to participate.

What is an Assessment Center?

An assessment center is an intensive two-day event staffed by trained assessors to encourage and observe church planting candidates. Candidates have the opportunity to preach, cast vision, work in team settings, and meet with counselors and assessors to prepare for the potential role as a church planter. Assessors provide a personalized and thorough assessment of the church planting candidates.

Why Assess Church Planters?

The purpose of an assessment is to reduce risk and increase church planting success. We use assessment to figure out each individual's capacity to be the lead pastor on a planting team.

What are the Components of an Assessment Center?

- Multiple, trained assessors are present to observe and assess.
- The candidates work through a variety of simulations, exercises, and measurements such as MBTI and DISC.
- The elements are developed based on the character qualities and job tasks that a church planter needs to demonstrate.
- Teams of assessors interview candidates and each couple has a private session with a professional counselor.
- Based on the intensive, multi-day process, the teams of assessors discuss, evaluate, and collate their findings.

- At the end of the assessment center a recommendation is given to the church planter candidate.

What are the Possible Assessment Recommendations?

At the conclusion of the assessment center, each candidate couple (or individual) will have an exit interview and will be given one of these recommendations related to church planting:

- *Recommended* for church planting.
- *Conditionally recommended* for church planting after the candidate meets some assessment-center-determined conditions. Conditions could range from debt reductions to gaining church planting competence through study or internship.
- *Not recommended* for church planting. In the exit interview, strengths, growth areas, and contexts for ministry will be discussed.

For more information or to register, please contact us at church-planting@ibc-churches.org



Darryl Evetts, Director of Church Multiplication



Giving a Legacy Gift



By Judith Lynn Maxwell
Director of Resource Development

During my freshman year at university, I took an introductory journalism class as the first step in my journalism degree. One of the assignments was to learn to write obituaries by writing our own. While this might seem like a rather morbid assignment, it actually was rather a fun assignment as you could dream what your life might have become.

Thinking about our death is rarely a fun thing to do. But it should cause us to stop and think about what we are leaving behind – what legacy we are leaving – not only in our families or churches or ministries but in our finances as well. As you consider the future, you might want to reflect on your time in a church in the International Baptist Convention (or European Baptist Convention or Association of Baptists in Continental Europe) and consider leaving a legacy gift to the IBC in your will. Perhaps you came to faith or were called to ministry or met your spouse while in an IBC church. Perhaps the Lord used your time in an IBC church to move you to greater ministry or leadership or discipleship or missions. A great way to commemorate these events is to leave a gift that will continue to give after you are gone to ensure that others have the opportunity to experience what you have.

There are several ways to phrase a will provision for the IBC so that it will both meet the requirements for a valid bequest and accurately document your wishes for the use of your legacy gift. We encourage you to consult your attorney for specific requirements in your area, but the following are some ways that you can give.

UNRESTRICTED BEQUESTS

Unrestricted bequests help meet our most urgent needs at the time that we receive the bequest (see the sidebar article on current needs). Such bequests give the IBC the greatest flexibility and can be made with a sum of money, a percentage of your estate, or a specific piece of property.

The following is sample language that might be used: *“I hereby give, devise, and bequeath to the International Baptist Convention, located in Frankfurt, Germany, (the sum of _____) or (_____*

percent of my estate) or (specific items of property) or (the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate). This gift may be used to further the missional objectives of the International Baptist Convention in such manner as the convention may direct.”

Designating a percentage of the residue of your estate (the remainder after specific bequests are made) allows you to allocate appropriate parts of your estate in advance, while allowing for fluctuations in the overall size. This can help simplify your future planning by making it unnecessary to change your will because of changes in specific property.

RESTRICTED BEQUESTS

If you wish to support a specific area of ministry of the IBC, we ask you to contact the IBC Office in advance to discuss the designation you have in mind. As the convention’s needs may change over time, we recommend that such restrictions be stated broadly or alternatives be included.

The IBC has received two bequests in 2017. We are grateful for those people who have left an on-going legacy so that the IBC can continue to live out its mission and achieve its vision. Others have already let us know that they have included us in their wills. Lorin Cranford, former pastor at Cologne International Baptist Church and seminar leader at the Interlaken Summer Conference, is one of those. He tells about his planned giving at www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8ldYmBy7TI. If you have included the IBC in your will, we would like to hear from you also.

CHARITABLE IRA ROLLOVER

For U.S. citizens who are 70½+ years old, there is another option for giving that does not have to wait until you die – direct charitable distribution of an individual retirement account. This charitable IRA rollover allows certain donors to exclude this direct transfer from taxable income. These gifts can also count toward the minimum distribution requirement for IRAs. Direct charitable contributions for the IBC need to go through the International Baptist Church Ministries, a recognized U.S. charitable organization. For assistance in making a contribution, contact IBCM at info@ibcmworld.org.

If you have any questions about leaving a legacy gift, please contact us at resources@ibc-churches. 

Legacy Giving to the IBC

THE NEEDS of the IBC today may not be the needs of tomorrow. However, we believe that our mission as a family of churches – “to mobilize and multiply disciple-making churches” – will remain constant. Gifts given to the IBC directed toward our mission are appropriate and helpful now and in the future. Below are listed a few of the areas of current need. At the appropriate time, the leadership team of the IBC would make decisions about the most strategic areas to apply legacy gifts.

IBC Church Multiplication

- Apprenticeships specifically designed to give potential IBC church planters mentoring and experience
- Church planting start-up funds to help new IBC church planters get off to the best possible start

IBC Church Mobilization

- Apprenticeships (Pastoral residencies) to give potential IBC church pastors mentoring and experience
- Church Assistance to provide churches in transition and/or difficulty to pay for needed repairs, rent, or temporary salary supplement
- Church health initiatives that fit the need of IBC churches

IBC Ministry Personnel

- To help fund positions (short- or long-term) in areas of strategic importance

Creating a Culture of Leadership Development



By Gary Preston
Director of Church Strengthening
and Pastor, Frontline Community
Church, Ramstein, Germany

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.
(2 Tim. 2: 2)

Developing leaders was one of the passions of the Apostle Paul. In addition to being a renowned church planter, competent pastor, and gifted evangelist, Paul loved to develop and deploy leaders for the burgeoning Christian church of the first century.

When writing to one of the young leaders he was developing, Paul told Timothy to be on the watch for other people he could develop as leaders just as Paul was doing with him. It seems that the development of leaders was never far from the apostle's mind, and he wanted it to be imbedded in the minds of other leaders as well.

I wish that developing leaders came as naturally to me as it seemingly did to Paul. I can get so engulfed in the day-to-day activities of an active church and constant preparation to preach the next Sunday that leadership development can quickly move to a back burner.

With the demands and distractions of church life and ministry, most pastors and churches I know share my challenge of trying to be intentional about developing leaders. Before we know it, we all can become more focused on harvesting leaders than developing them. The difference is that harvesting leaders is simply done by looking around and identifying the people in the church who are already leaders and then putting them into leadership roles. The liability in that approach is that most churches will quickly run out of seasoned leaders who are ready to be harvested.

Developing leaders, on the other hand, provides a continual pipeline of leadership for the church to draw upon. Unlike harvesting leaders, there is no limit to the number of people in a church who can be developed into leaders.

So, I have determined that one of the marks of my ministry at Frontline Community Church is to establish a culture in the church that fosters developing the next generation of leaders for the church and for the broader work of God's Kingdom throughout the world. Our staff and elders work hard at this, and I have tried to glean everything I can from how the Apostle Paul did it throughout his ministry in order to help us create that culture.

As a starter, I've outlined for our staff, elders, and leaders 7 STEPS we must consistently take to establish a church culture that develops leaders. These

steps aren't an exhaustive list, but we have found them to be a helpful guide for the task.

1. VISION

The vision of the church must be so large and compelling that everyone realizes that additional leadership is essential to accomplishing the vision. In fact, we have made developing leaders an integral part of our church's vision so that it doesn't get lost in the weekly hustle of church life. Now, one of my responsibilities as a pastor is to model leadership development and keep the vision for it before our staff and leaders.

2. IDENTIFY

The next generation of leaders is all around us. They are people from every walk of life, every age group, every ethnic background, every gender. So, the next step is always to be praying and watching for people who show signs of leadership. This passion for identifying new leaders must flow from the lead pastor through every ministry leader (paid and unpaid) and board member so that it becomes a 24/7 focus of every leader in the church.

Our worship director told me last week that she finally has her leadership team in place and they are functioning like a cohesive unit. Then her next sentence was, "So now I can focus on identifying the next wave of leaders we'll need to replace them!" I could relate to her challenge! And I was also encouraged by her understanding that developing leaders never stops.

So, what are the "signs" we look for in potential leaders? Chapters could be written on that subject, so I'll only add a thought I gleaned from a friend in The Navigators ministry many years ago. He referred to these potential leaders as F.A.T. They are Faithful, Available, and Teachable. My friend always looked for those characteristics in a person or sought to develop them because they mark a person as a potential leader.

3. INVITE

I tell our staff, "When you find a F.A.T. person, make it a point get to know him or her." Invest some time in their lives so you can validate your inclination that they are Faithful, Available, and Teachable or so you can help create those characteristics. Once that is validated, invite them to join you in the process of becoming a spiritual leader.

Even when He ministered to the crowds to the point of exhaustion, Jesus constantly had His eye on developing leaders who would carry on the ministry after He was gone. The Apostle Paul likewise was

never without an apprentice leader he was mentoring and developing.

I'm always amazed at how many potential leaders in our church are just sitting there, not engaged in any leadership responsibility, until someone invites them to step forward into a leadership role. I believe we too often underestimate the power of an invitation to someone to join us in leadership.

I admit that when I hear someone say that their ministry has a shortage of leaders, my response isn't very sympathetic. Instead I say something to the effect, "Well then, it's time to get back to the task of developing the leaders you need!"

Recently I've noticed that I don't hear that lament nearly as much as I used to. I believe it is because our staff is getting more adept at developing new leaders rather than that they just don't want to hear my same response again!

4. DEFINE

Once you identify and invite a potential leader, you must know what kind of leader you want to develop. An effective leadership development culture in the church requires that everyone knows what a competent leader looks like. This profile will include some common qualifications in terms of a leader's character, competency, and values.

Then, beyond those common traits of leadership, there should be a corresponding description of what competent leadership will look like for specific areas of ministry. For example, what specific characteristics are needed in a small group leader or servant ministry leader or staff member or elder?

Something that has helped us in this regard is that we have developed a written description for every leadership position in our church. This has made us think through exactly the kind of person we are looking for and the skills and character traits we want to develop in those leaders.

5. INSTRUCT

I believe that leadership can be taught. I also understand that not everyone agrees with me on that. Some believe that you either are a leader or you are not. You either have the skill or you don't.

I believe all F.A.T. people can be developed into effective leaders. So, the next step we take in developing leaders is to establish a strategy for how to train and instruct new leaders. One of the most effective means for instructing and training new leaders that I've experienced is through a leadership Triad group. Leadership Triads consist of three individuals who share life and leadership development together. Normally a triad will consist of one person



Leadership training is part of every meeting.

who is farther down the leadership road than the others, who will be the primary guide or facilitator of the group, though not the resident expert. A second triad member will often be someone who is engaged in the process of developing as a leader. And the third member can be the rookie who has exhibited the signs of a leader.

In addition to a Triad, a more formal leadership core group can be helpful. This provides an opportunity for prescribed learning and coaching. It also offers a chance to learn from others in a small group setting. The way we do this is to design all our leadership meetings with some coaching component that helps our current leaders and potential leaders learn more about leadership. We never gather a leadership team together just to discuss business or coordinate schedules or plan an event. We always include a training element.

Leadership training is ongoing and not just a class that is completed. It's important to discuss leadership competencies and character continually, in formal, informal, and on-the-job settings.

6. DEPLOY

Coupled with the instruction received in a leadership Triad or core group, deploying new leaders into practical opportunities to exercise leadership is essential. These leadership opportunities become the on-the-job training aspect of leadership development. What a new leader is learning in the "classroom" of a Triad or core group gets to be practiced in real life.

Of course, the leadership opportunities need to be tailored to the leadership level of the developing leader. Early on, the leadership opportunity will be engaged alongside a more skilled leader so there

can be guidance and direction provided. Eventually, the developing leader will be given opportunities that are more independent as their leadership skills grow. One church (Community Christian Church of Naperville, Illinois (USA)) outlines this in a five-step process you may find helpful:

- I do, you watch, we talk
- I do, you help, we talk
- You do, I help, we talk
- You do, I watch, we talk
- You do and invite someone else to watch and repeat the process

7. MENTOR

A final step in leadership development is ongoing mentoring and coaching. Churches that are serious about developing leaders don't drop leaders once they are deployed in a leadership position. These intentional churches reject the Daniel in the Lions' Den approach: throw them into a leadership position (the lions' den) and then check back in a few months to see if they are still alive!

Leadership development churches are committed to helping new leaders achieve success through on-going coaching and mentoring. While coaching is more skill-oriented, mentoring adds the broader element of whole-person development, includ-

ing the spiritual life. Good mentoring provides consistent and honest feedback and offers coaching on how to refine and develop specific leadership skills. Effective mentors believe that failure isn't fatal, so they are willing to accept poor performances as opportunities for learning and growth.

Good mentors are not afraid to engage other skilled leadership coaches who can also impart good training to developing leaders. This step of mentoring models humility to new leaders. It also calls upon young leaders to evidence a teachable spirit as they are open to and solicitous of on-going coaching.

Mentoring and coaching also show new leaders that their primary responsibility is not to execute a program or conduct a ministry by themselves. True leaders develop other leaders who can engage together in doing the ministry.

Certainly there are other steps and techniques that foster leadership development. These seven are offered as a manageable place to start. Incorporating these seven leadership development steps will require intentionality, perseverance, focus, and prayer. The payoff will be an endless pipeline of new leaders who are raised up from within in an inexhaustible culture of leadership development. 

IBC Adopts EBM Project

The International Baptist Convention has been a member of the European Baptist Mission International for many years now and has supported the work of EBMI through its Global Missions Offering. Now, under the direction of Director of Building Connections Scott Corwin and with the encouragement of EBMI, the IBC has selected one of EBMI's projects to focus on – Turkey. The hope is that this will be a many-faceted partnership with not only financial support but also active mission projects.

Since 2011, the small Baptist church in Izmir (biblical Smyrna) has been under the leadership of Pastor Ertan Cevik, EBMI missionary. The church does not want to be known as an “underground” church and so it does not hide. Through its businessmen breakfasts, open-door days for university students, and refugee assistance programs, it tries to be a visible and helpful presence in the city.

There are actually two churches which meet in Izmir – a Turkish Baptist Church with 35 members and an Iranian church with close to the same number of members. Cevik holds New Believers Courses for the Iranian refugees who are interested in becoming believers and being baptized.

From this small church, seven other churches in Turkey have been founded. EBMI has helped the church in Istanbul rent a small conference room in which to meet; prior to that for several years their church services were held in an apartment.

Syrian refugees still come to Turkey, especially after the recent events in Aleppo. Last year with the help of EBMI, the European Baptist Federation (of which the IBC is also a member), German Baptist Aid, and other organizations, the Baptist churches of Turkey were able to give lunch bags, wood, coal, shoes, clothes, toys, and cosmetics to more than 10,000 refugees, mainly in Adana and Izmir.

The small churches in Turkey can use your help. Begin to plan now for ways that you might be able to help. They need help with a youth camp and their first convention and evangelism meeting as well as financial support for room rental and salaries.

For more information, please contact the IBC Office at admin@ibc-churches.org. 



Ramstein, Germany

A SIMPLE INVITATION: “Would you like to come to a Christmas Party?” Such an ordinary thing. Most of us take such an invitation for granted and even receive more than we can accommodate during the holidays. And yet a simple Invitation can also be a wonderful gift and a mighty tool in the hands of God.

Frontline Community Church in Ramstein, Germany, issued just such invitations this past Christmas. In the fall, several members of Frontline began teaching a beginning German class to immigrants and refugees at a local center. As Christmas approached, God planted in their hearts the idea of inviting all the refugees and immigrants who attend the German classes to come to a Christmas Party and to bring their families. We also gathered names and ages of all the children in these families so our congregation could provide them with their first Christmas gifts ever.

Under the guidance of Chris Carson and the Missions Team, the party planners from the church came out of the



woodwork and provided snacks, crafts, games, and gift bags for all the prospective guests. Each gift bag also had a copy of *The Invitation*, a simple tract in German from SGM Lifewords. Though invitations went out weeks ahead of the party, on the big day we had no idea how many, or if any, would come. Would we have 2, 20, or 50 guests? So we prayed for God to use our simple invitations and to breathe His life into our efforts.

God took our humble offering of “loaves and fishes” and turned it into something wonderful for His glory! We had approximately 50 guests attend – ages 2-60 and 90% of them were Muslims. Chil-

dren made crafts, played games, and sang songs. Near the end of the party, everyone received a gift bag of items their new church friends had provided. But the most stunning thing to witness was the love of God that was poured out to people from different continents, ethnic groups, and religions. Their smiles and ours revealed how much everyone enjoyed the party and the new friendships. For that single hour these refugees experienced a taste of the joy that Jesus brings to the world and the peace He provides. Our hearts were filled with joy at seeing so many displaced children and students and moms and dads showered with God’s love.

This happy event has become the seed of an ongoing ministry to refugees at Frontline Church, and we are excited to see where God will take it. And it all began with a simple invitation.

Gary & Suzanne Preston

Rome, Italy

WHEN IS A CHURCH doing its greatest work? Is it in the midst of building projects, large numbers in attendance, or catchy events with bright lights and entertainment? These can all be great things, but they are not what makes a church THE Church.

My wife, Jana, and I left the U.S. in January 2016 to explore Europe and discover how the church around the world functions similarly and differently to churches we had experienced. While we’ve found that many expressions of church are simply cultural extensions, we’ve seen two main priorities that are common amongst churches doing great work all over the world:

1. A commitment to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission
2. A commitment to biblical community

And it’s because of these two commitments that we now find ourselves at Rome International Church.

After spending seven weeks in Rome last summer (and attending RIC), we genu-

inely felt like a real part of this community and found ourselves longing to return. God, in His sovereignty, paved a way, and now we are back, being stretched in our faith, challenged in our commitment to the Gospel, and loved like family.

Our experience is similar to so many others:

- Refugees fleeing persecution and war have found a home at RIC.
- Professionals outside of their home countries for career opportunities have found a home at RIC.
- Italians and local residents who embrace a Gospel that is for ALL the nations have found a home at RIC.
- Those young in their faith, and some still lacking faith, have found a place to voice their doubts, express their concerns, and wrestle with their questions – here at RIC.

So as we celebrated the 2nd anniversary of Rome International Church on 29 January, we didn’t simply celebrate successful events or growing numbers. Instead our



RIC celebrates its 2nd anniversary.

guest speaker Scott Chadwick reminded us that our past gives us real reason to hope in God’s continued faithfulness, and that we can continue to trust Him with our future, believing that He will continue (and ultimately complete) His good work in us.

When, then, is a church doing its greatest work? When it’s actively trusting God to do what only He can do – transform lives and make His glory known in the world.

Brett Aplin

Sao Paulo, Brazil

THE LEADERSHIP at Calvary International Church in São Paulo, Brazil, got together in January for their first Refresh meetings with Gary Preston (Director of Church Strengthening and Pastor, Frontline Community Church, Ramstein, Germany). It was a wonderful time of prayer, discussion, and fellowship. During the sessions Gary encouraged and challenged

Calvary to review its past, face its present, and dream God's dreams for its future under Pastor Nathanael Fawcett's leadership. At the end of the sessions the leaders also took time to pray, commissioning Calvary's new president Joel Rast and his wife Cindy for the task ahead of them.

Douglas Pek



Buenos Aires, Argentina

OUR YEAR at the International Baptist Church, Buenos Aires, Argentina, has started with a bang as we hosted two seminars on consecutive weekends.

On Saturday, 4 March, we hosted the first-ever Global Leadership Summit event in English, ministering to the English-speaking leaders from government, education, business, and church.

The response was very positive as the event served as a tremendous encouragement to those who work in these sectors but who rarely can attend such an equipping event in Argentina that caters for them. We had a good representation from all sectors and saw a couple of leaders who almost never attend any kind of church event. We are planning to host an-

other such event in October.

On Saturday, 11 March, we hosted an Esther Conference for women. The event was bi-lingual and was well-attended by women from various cities around Buenos Aires.

The event was hosted by IBC Buenos Aires with Adél Swart being the speaker but was held at our partner English-speaking church, United Christian Fellowship. It coincided with the day Purim is celebrated internationally.

This seminar was just the beginning as the vision is to walk with women in a year-long equipping process that would give way to healthy women's ministries in different communities.

Werner and Adél Swart



Women from around Buenos Aires attend the Esther Conference.

Darmstadt, Germany

HAVING FUN AND REACHING OUT! Converge International Fellowship, Darmstadt, Germany, held its first Board Game Night on Saturday, 25 March. The organizers took over four interconnected rooms at the top of the church building used each week for their Sunday services. Several tables were set up, each with a different board game. A valiant team of helpers provided snacks and drinks to sustain the players through the evening.

Nearly 40 people attended the event, around one third of whom were not regular church members. They enjoyed a wide range of games, including Settlers of Catan, Ticket to Ride, Galapagos, Camel Up, and Carcassonne. There were also several

comfy sofas in the eating area where people just sat and chatted.

Most of the visitors were young adults living in Darmstadt or studying at one of the universities in the city. Apart from enjoying a fun social event, several meaningful conversations took place, particularly towards the end of the evening. Since the Board Game Night, two or three of the participants have also come along to church, meeting up again with their fellow games players.

"The event more than lived up to our expectations," said Adam Williams, one of CIF Darmstadt elders. "We were excited to meet new people, who through this event found an English-speaking church in the middle of their city." He also ex-



Photo by Matheus Vitti Santos

pressed his gratitude to the many people within the church who had made the event possible.

A second Board Game Night is planned for the autumn.

Adam Williams