Developing the next generation of leaders
Residency programs equip men, women to do the work of ministry within FEC.

KRISTI REIMER, FECONNECTIONS EDITOR

Multitasking: The Way Forward

It's no secret that the mission of the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches is (and has pretty much always been) to develop reproducing congregations—in other words, to plant churches that plant churches. But this process can't happen without people willing to step out in leadership and lead the planting process.

These individuals face a host of challenges that they may or may not be prepared to face and overcome, and the risk of failure is high—common church planting statistics indicate that as many as half of all church plants fail within the first year.

In light of this, FEC is making a point to train young people who feel called into ministry through intensive residency programs. These leadership residencies take place within a local church network and under the direction of an experienced church planter. Two such programs have been launched so far—one in Newton, Kansas, and one in Wauseon, Ohio—and more are in the works. The goal? To have a pipeline of trained pastors ready to take over existing churches and plant new churches.

Multiplication vs. Addition

Jay Nickless, Director of the Church Multiplication Center in Newton, Kansas (see p. 7), says the Church Multiplication Residency program he heads up grew out of necessity. "You can recruit leaders from outside, but the answer really is to develop leaders from within," he says. "It's the difference between addition and multiplication," he says.
Grace Community Church in Newton has launched two churches in the past two years, and during that process Jay himself studied the target communities, put together the launch teams and directed all planting activities. “It was kind of a ‘duh’ moment when we realized there was a better way to do it,” he says. “As long as I’m doing it, it’s addition. But if we can train others in the process, now we’re talking about multiplication.”

So now the leaders of the two upcoming church plants are participating in the Church Multiplication Residency, a highly focused program that teaches leaders how to launch a church so that they can do it themselves—and teach others. The residency consists of five phases:

1. **Exploration.** Phase one is investigational in nature. It consists of exploring the proposed target community to determine its needs and receptiveness—“like the spies in the Promised Land,” says Jay—and also determining the leadership competence of the participants.

2. **Preparation.** This phase focuses on constructing the “DNA” of the new church—its vision, values, mission and strategy.

3. **Pre-launch.** In this phase, residents develop ministry teams to help launch the church. “I can see right away in this phase who’s going to do well and who is not,” Jay says. “Who are the theory lovers, who needs to be held by the hand, and who has the key characteristic of intrinsic motivation.” To this end, the program gives participants assignments but does not prescribe a step-by-step approach. “Freedom is the best and worst thing about church planting,” Jay says. “If someone can’t get through this phase, church planting is probably not for them.”

4. **Launch.** During the launch phase, the new church focuses on evangelism efforts and also puts together a “life-giving weekend service” to officially launch the church in the community. “In Kansas, because of the culture and context, Sunday morning is still one of the best times to bring people to Christ,” Jay says.

5. **Post-launch.** This phase—which can last for years, Jay says—consists of the new church constructing and implementing the necessary ministry systems that help bring people to Christ, build them up in the faith, and eventually send them out to change the world.

While the Church Multiplication Residency program will help feed future church planting efforts around Newton, participants can and will go into FEC ministries elsewhere as well. “I would like this program to become a fishing pool for FEC,” Jay says. “There are other programs out there who can teach people to lead a church, but there’s not a lot on how to launch one. We can teach them how to launch a church and how to launch it well.”

**Holistic Mentoring**

Matt Boyers, Senior Pastor of Crossroads Evangelical Church in Wauseon, Ohio, directs the church’s Leadership Development Residency, which focuses on developing church plant leaders—especially those who will minister in rural areas. “Twenty years of my ministry have been spent in rural, small-town contexts,” Matt says. “One of the areas where we’re looking to plant next is a small town of 1,900 people, who are 85 percent unchurched. We see that a lot in communities, and that’s where my heart is.”

The strategy for Crossroads’ Leadership Development Residency relies heavily on “whole-person” mentoring in six areas: preaching, leadership, discipleship, theology, spiritual transformation, and marriage. Matt’s wife, Lanita, hosts regular meals for the resident couples and helps disciple the resident’s wife.

Why this holistic approach? “A deficiency in our educational institutions is a failure to equip ministry couples in marriages, spiritual transformation, and how theology is relevant to all of life,” Matt replies. “We’ve been in ministry long enough to see several pastors’ marriages blow apart through infidelity, and it wreaks havoc on churches. We want to help young couples intentionally invest in their marriages and their own spiritual life for the long term.”

Like the Church Multiplication Residency in Newton, the Leadership Development Residency in Wauseon consists of several phases. Residents hold various titles as they move through the process:

1. **Intern.** This phase focuses on the resident’s personal and ministry development, with much of the work going toward spiritual formation, mentorship and instruction. “It functions as an extended interview to assess the participant’s fit,” Matt says, “and after a positive assessment, the intern is invited to participate in phase two of the program.”

2. **Resident pastor.** In this phase, the resident is fully involved in the pastoral work at Crossroads campuses (in addition to Wauseon, the church holds services in Napoleon, Ohio) to gain experience in church leadership, servanthood and discipleship while receiving training in church planting.

3. **Planting pastor.** During this period the resident prepares to plant and launch a church in a target community. He identifies and recruits a core team, relocates to the community, starts Bible studies there, and plans services. At the end of this phase, the new church is officially launched.

As in Newton, residents can stay within the Crossroads network or move on to other FEC ministries. “We are hoping that out of three residents, at least one will plant in our area,” Matt says. “We’d like to be able to plant a church within our
network, within FEC, or even around the world. And Crossroads has made a big commitment of resources to developing leaders who will plant churches."

One challenge the program has faced so far is that the process doesn’t necessarily follow a carefully laid out calendar. "Things are not going to happen in neat and tidy phases six months apart," Matt says. "We’re already involved in dialogue with a plant we didn’t think would happen for a year or two. This is a challenge to our budget, but we want to be prayerful and in step with how the Holy Spirit orchestrates connections."

But along with challenges have come affirmations of God’s hand at work. One is the congregation’s willingness to give their senior pastor the freedom to spend half his time directing the residency program.

Also, the program’s first resident “came to us from a large church that was very program-driven so the resident longed for more incarnational ministry,” Matt says. “Now he’s meeting with people in discipleship and leading a men’s group. To see his growth in six weeks and to see him realize the necessity of prayer and be compelled by the Holy Spirit in relationships has been a great affirmation.”

**FEC’S COMMITMENT**

In addition to these two residency programs and others in development, FEC has committed to allowing every church to have a summer internship program. These programs will be funded by the Jerry Boyers Scholarship (see p. 6) and also by funds allocated within the FEC budget. With the efforts of local churches and the support of FEC as a whole, the denomination is well on its way to realizing its strategic plan to train, equip and invest in the next generation.

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**FEC Convention 2014**

NORTHWOODS COMMUNITY CHURCH • PEORIA, ILLINOIS

July 31 – Aug. 2
2013 Convention quizzing results

TOP 10 JUNIOR HIGH QUIZZERS
1. Garrett Holder, Upland
2. Kitty Trudeau, Upland
3. Jodi Steffen, Eureka
4. Brad Diller, Archbold
4. Jeremy Too, Pine Hills
6. Isaac Dean, Lawton
7. Megan Weeks, Grace
8. Angela Schwartz, Berne
9. Macy Meiss, Grace
10. Lily Too, Pine Hills

TOP JUNIOR HIGH QUIZER FROM EACH CHURCH
Archbold: Brad Diller
Berne: Angela Schwartz
Brookside: Zach Williamson
Eureka: Jodi Steffen
Grace: Megan Weeks
Highland Bethel: Caleb Gerber
Lawton: Isaac Dean
Pine Hills: Jeremy Too
Upland: Garrett Holder and Kitty Trudeau (tie)

TOP THREE JUNIOR HIGH TEAMS
1. Upland 1: Emily Knight, Kitty Trudeau, Rachel Knight, Garrett Holder
2. Pine Hills 1: Daniel Moser, Natalie Neuenschwander, Jeremy Too, Lily Too
3. Lawton: Isaac Dean, Rebecca Allen, Emily Perkins

TOP 10 SENIOR HIGH QUIZZERS
1. Caleb Andrews, Oak Bend
2. Nathaniel Mervar, Brookside
3. Carissa Diller, Archbold
3. Rebekah Coon, Eureka
5. Brett Holder, Upland
5. Erick Holder, Upland
7. Emily Armstrong, Eureka
7. Jenna Metcalfe, Eureka
9. Rebecca Lorentz, Grace
10. Ashley Steffen, Eureka

TOP SENIOR HIGH QUIZER FROM EACH CHURCH
Archbold: Carissa Diller
Berne: Chloe Zurcher
Brookside: Nathaniel Mervar
Calvary: TR Hoffman
Crossroads/Monticello: Rebecca King
Dewey: Marty Litwiller
Eureka: Ashley Steffen
Grace: Rebecca Lorentz
Highland Bethel: Hannah Steiner
Lawton: Abby Dean
Oak Bend: Caleb Andrews
Pine Hills: Amanda Hughes
Upland: Erick Holder

TOP THREE SENIOR HIGH TEAMS
1. Eureka 1: Ashley Steffen, Emily Armstrong, Jessica Metcalfe, Faith Ford
2. Eureka 2: Rebekah Coon, Jenna Metcalfe, Ty Maurer
3. Oak Bend: Caleb Andrews, Bekah Burton, Eli Haas, Nevin Haas

2012-13 Quiz year

TOP JUNIOR HIGH QUIZER FROM EACH CHURCH
Archbold: Brad Diller
Berne: Angela Schwartz
Brookside: Zach Williamson
Crossroads/Monticello: Alex Helmuth
Eureka: Jodi Steffen
Grace: Natalie Schistler
Highland Bethel: Caleb Gerber
Lawton: Isaac Dean
Pine Hills: Jeremy Too
Upland: Kitty Trudeau

TOP FIVE JUNIOR HIGH QUIZZERS
1. Kitty Trudeau, Upland
2. Jodi Steffen, Eureka
3. Jeremy Too, Pine Hills
4. Isaac Dean, Lawton
5. Brad Diller, Archbold

TOP FIVE SENIOR HIGH QUIZZERS
1. Nathaniel Mervar, Brookside
2. Carissa Diller, Archbold
3. Ashley Steffen, Eureka
4. Rebekah Coon, Eureka
5. Erick Holder, Upland

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Over the past few years, the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches has been working toward developing a new structure for ministry. This new structure, which was unveiled at the 2013 FEC Convention, begins with the heartbeat and passions of the FEC local church. The local church does the work of the ministry, sends the people, and supports the initiatives. From this starting point, the ministry of FEC and its worldwide footprint emerges. The new structure has three main components:

1. **Local churches.** The worldwide ministry of FEC begins with its local churches. These churches send and equip ministry personnel from within their bodies. These personnel are accountable to the sending FEC church and to the agency through which they and the local church are partnering for ministry.

2. **FEC Office.** The second component of FEC’s new structure is the FEC Office, which is responsible to:
   - Provide organizational support.
   - Support and nurture local leadership.
   - Keep the church healthy by working through FEC local church leadership.
   - Facilitate and enhance communication among FEC local churches.

3. **FEC Initiatives.** The third component is initiatives driven by the local church. These initiatives are the strategic plans the FEC local church or the FEC Office have made to establish reproducing churches. They grow out of the desires of an FEC local church or a partnership between multiple FEC churches.

The following pages list the 2014 FEC Initiatives that individuals and churches are encouraged to support. The focus of these initiatives is to establish reproducing churches.
EC’s Basque Initiative originally began in the early 1990s when Harry Hyde, past FEC International Director and current Executive Pastor at Brookside Church, learned that the Basques were an unreached people group.

Over the past few years, FEC and other international workers have made significant progress toward realizing the initiative’s vision of developing a reproductive church planting movement among the Basques. This is largely due to FEC’s partnership with the Amara Church, a Spanish evangelical church with a passion for reaching the Basque people, as well as solid relationships established through Summer in the USA, a program in which Basque teenagers spend a summer with an FEC family in the United States.

An ongoing objective for Hal Lehman, current FEC International Director, and Jeff and Mary Shadowen, workers serving the Basque region, is to use a multiplication model that reaches the Basques in “Basque-friendly” ways.

Recently supporters have renewed their commitment to saturate the Basque country with prayer, resulting in a new receptiveness among some Basque young people. In addition, the Shadowens have begun training workers in church-planting strategy, have initiated a multiplication discipleship program, and are discipling a church-planting team from the Amara Church. This team is planting a bilingual church (Spanish and Basque) in the city of Tolosa.

There has also been encouraging news from Courtney Mosier, a Basque Initiative intern who has had numerous discussions with Basque friends about the gospel. Through her established relationships with the Basque teens who participated in Summer in the USA, she is able to more effectively share the good news of Jesus Christ.

The Boyers Scholarship Fund was established in 2012 to honor the memory of Jerry Boyers, who served on the board of Christian Service Foundation for 33 years, including roughly 25 years as chairman. The initial gift to establish the fund was given by Jerry’s wife, Jan, with the support and approval of their children, J.C. Boyers, Nadine Magee, and Matt Boyers.

The fund was established to provide financial assistance for the creation of internship positions in FEC churches and affiliate corporations. It is the Boyers family’s hope that having this internship program in place will help FEC leadership identify and educate potential future pastors, missionaries, and leaders of FEC. Having funds available for internship positions will allow young men and women to work in a church or affiliate corporation of FEC under the supervision and mentorship of established leaders. These internships will nurture aspiring church leaders and build the characteristics necessary for strong future leaders who will champion the ministries of FEC worldwide.

Churches and individuals interested in the mission of this scholarship fund may contribute money to the fund. All money received will go toward making internships available to future church leaders.
**Christ the King—Mount Washington**  
*Cincinnati, Ohio*  
**DUSTIN NIMMO**

In 2009, the Nimmo family moved to Mount Washington, the farthest-east neighborhood of Cincinnati, because they couldn’t afford to live any closer to the affluent community where their previous church had been located. It was while serving at this church that Dustin learned that Mt. Washington was the least-churched neighborhood in Hamilton County. This knowledge, along with his passion to pastor in the neighborhood in which he lived, led Dustin to spend nine months praying for clarity. At the end of the nine months, God gave Dustin a clear vision to plant the Mt. Washington campus of Christ the King Church.

The vision of Christ the King—Mount Washington is to see people reconciled to God and to one another, to see people who don’t know Christ come to know Christ, and to see people who do know Christ grow in Christ. Dustin believes this happens through the whole gospel forming the whole church going out into the whole world.

When asked about fears he encountered during the Christ the King—Mount Washington church plant, Dustin shared, “The whole process of planting a church is scary. It quickly beats any arrogance out of a man. There is no way I could orchestrate what God has already done in this process. It is so humbling to see that He really is the one who plants His church; my task is simply to be obedient to His guiding. I used to say this in a very clichéd way ... but I mean it now more than ever.”

Throughout the process of planting this church, God has demonstrated His faithfulness over and over again, Dustin says. He has met the needs of Dustin’s family around every corner. He has shed light on people’s sins that could have ended the church plant. And he has given Dustin an amazing team to help him lead Christ the King—Mount Washington.

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**Church Multiplication Center, Grace Community Church**  
*Newton, Kansas*  
**JAY NICKLESS**

Grace Community Church in Newton, Kansas, is working to develop an FEC Church Multiplication Center (CMC) in Kansas. The church has launched two plants in the past 18 months and has more planned for the future.

The vision of Grace Community Church’s CMC is to plant and multiply life-giving churches locally, regionally, nationally, and globally (Acts 1:8) that bring people to Christ, build them up in the faith, and send them out to change the world.

The two newest church plants will be located in Park City, Kansas, and Lindsborg, Kansas. They are each being headed by a team of two leaders who were trained in Grace Community Church’s initial Church Multiplication Residency process. The Park City plant will be led by Landon Jordon (lead planter) and Robert Palmer (ministry coordinator), and the Lindsborg plant will be headed by Alex Ruhter (lead planter) and Briana Nickless (ministry coordinator). All planters attend Church Multiplication Synergy Sessions on Monday mornings where they are trained, tracked, and coached in their respective church planting phases.

“The amazing thing that happens to each church planter is that, once they officially begin the planting process, all of their fears and insecurities rise to the surface,” shares Jay Nickless, CMC director. “‘Do I really have what it takes?’ ‘Where will the resources come from?’ ‘What if I totally bomb?’ You name the fear and I guarantee that the church planter has experienced it. The two that really stand out are familiar to most Christians: fear of failure and fear of rejection.”

According to Jay, one of the biggest factors in overcoming real and perceived fears in the context of church planting is the input from other planters involved in the Synergy Sessions. The CMC currently has two high-level pastors leading new churches in the area: Adam Utecht in Hillsboro, Kansas, and Jason Rains in Moundridge, Kansas. They’ve been where the next church planters will be going, and Jay says it’s amazing to watch them encourage each other and “kick each other in the rear” when needed.

Some other encouraging things that have arisen as a result of Grace Community Church’s CMC include how Landon Jordan and Alex Ruhter have followed God’s call on their lives: both men sold their businesses to become church planters. Since officially coming on board in July of 2013, Landon has already secured a meeting facility, found office space, and recruited more than forty adults for his launch team. Alex Ruhter will be officially coming on board in October of 2013, but he has already recruited several people for his launch team.
When Sam Andres and his wife, Chelsea, were asked to consider leading the King’s Cross church plant, it didn’t take long for them to see that God had prepared them for the job and that He was drawing them to Defiance, Ohio. Although Sam had not foreseen living in Defiance, he and his wife now genuinely love their small city and the people they serve there.

The vision of King’s Cross is to be a gospel-centered church that multiplies by forming disciples who make disciples. To this end, the church prioritizes two things:

1. **The gospel:** The church’s greatest need and the world’s greatest need is to hear the good news about Jesus proclaimed clearly, boldly, and from all the Scriptures.

2. **Discipleship:** The church prioritizes relational discipleship and equipping every Christian to understand that he or she is called to be a disciple-making follower of Jesus.

King’s Cross plans to achieve this vision through prayer, preaching, and equipping everybody to make disciples. When asked about his fears associated with the King’s Cross church plant, Sam shared, “As believers, most of the fears we face are self-generated. I’ve struggled with fear because I’ve put too much on myself—thinking that the responsibility of this church plant rests on my shoulders. But the spiritual reality is that Jesus builds His church. The burden of the church ultimately rests on Him, not us. He tasks us simply to make disciples. Slowly realizing this truth over the past year has freed me up to be more courageous in ministry. A certain freedom comes from recognizing that God’s work is just that—God’s.”

As the church has begun weekly worship gatherings in September, it has been exciting for Sam to see a love and cohesion develop within the church’s core group. This core group understands they are all called to be disciple makers, Sam says. Being slow to start services has helped the team build a discipleship culture, so they have many people who are eager to walk alongside the new believers among them.

LiFE Church of Lorain County
Elyria, Ohio
JEFF AHLGRIM

LiFE Church of Lorain County is an Ohio church plant led by Jeff Ahlgrim, a Lorain County native. The church was planted after Jeff and his family realized that church attendance in Lorain County was declining rapidly, especially among people younger than 30.

The mission of LiFE Church can be summed up in three statements: “Find it. Live it. Give it.” The church exists to help the people of Lorain County find life by finding the creator of life and the giver of eternal life. It exists to help people live the life that only faith in Christ can provide. Finally, LiFE Church exists to give to others what God has given the people who follow Him: mercy, grace, forgiveness, and new and eternal life. The key words of LiFE Church’s mission statement provide the church with a guide for accomplishing this mission: “We find God and new life in the Word of God, which is the focus of our Sunday gatherings and group life.”

Like all church plants, LiFE Church has seen people come and go, some struggle and some grow. “Jesus told us this is how it would be in the parable of the seeds and the sower,” Jeff says. “We’ve seen people come to faith and others run from faith. We’ve seen relationships grow and people commit themselves to a life together and other relationships fall apart and fail. We are glad to be more than twice the size we were when we launched LiFE Church, but we mourn the loss of a third of the people who, at one time, were part of us but now no longer are.”

One of Jeff’s greatest fears and biggest challenges is the growing disinterest in God and the church that many of his friends and family exhibit. This does not make growing and sustaining a church an easy task, but LiFE Church has seen people become involved after previously “quitting” church for more than a decade. Other members of the congregation who were unable in the past to find a church where they felt comfortable feel right at home at LiFE, Jeff says.

For example, a recent college graduate who was soured on church became a part of LiFE Church earlier this year and recently announced that he was looking into urban ministry opportunities. Where there are some, there are more! Spiritually disconnected and struggling people are the kind of people LiFE Church was created for.
Tim Knowles started Moss Brook Church 10 years ago in South Paris, Maine. The church grew out of several small groups of believers who had a passion for their friends who were far from God. From the beginning, Moss Brook has been focused on seeing lost people become reproducing disciples of Christ. These disciples have a vision for making new disciples and planting new churches.

Moss Brook plans to achieve its vision of planting churches through small groups and Life Transformation Groups (LTGs). Right now, Tim has a vision for a church plant in Westbrook, Maine, a suburb of Portland. Last fall he had the privilege of seeing Jeff, a friend from hockey, come to Christ. In January of last year, Tim was able to start an LTG in Westbrook with Jeff and his wife, Line, who also came to faith.

Many encouraging things have happened as a result of Moss Brook’s founding, Tim says. In addition to Jeff and Line becoming Christians, their family and friends have become open to starting a small group in September. God is at work in Maine, and it is exciting to see what He will do in the future of Moss Brook Church.

God has placed a desire in the hearts of Eric and Leah Baldwin to reach cities with the gospel. The Baldwins chose to plant River City Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for two reasons: 1) With few evangelical churches, there was a huge need for new churches, and 2) they thought they would fit in well with the blue-collar culture of sports and food.

In response to the grace of God shown in the gospel, River City Evangelical Church of Pittsburgh exists to bring glory to God by making reproducing followers of Christ Jesus who love God in worship, love others in community, and serve the world in love. “Our relationship with God was changed because of the grace that was shown in the person and work of Jesus Christ,” Eric explains. “God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). As a church, we want to be people who have experienced God’s grace and desire to show grace to one another.”

According to Eric, accomplishing this vision begins at the end of the mission statement. “As Christians, we are intentionally a part of the community in which we live,” he says. Fueled by the grace of God, Eric and his family want to serve their neighborhood and city in love. As they do so, they will share the good news that Jesus Christ came to save sinners by His death and resurrection.

God has blessed the Baldwin family more than they could ever have asked or imagined, Eric says. He has brought in money and pulled resources together that they hadn’t expected. This has been a truly challenging and faith-building time for Eric and Leah. River City Church is 80 percent funded and has passed the go/no-go phase. The final 20 percent still needed is to help cover the church launch. It’s amazing to see how God has been at work already, Eric says, both by providing the financial resources and by pulling people together for the launch team. The Baldwins are excited and encouraged about this new work that God has called them to.
The Real Tree Church
Farmington, Minnesota
Shon McIntyre

The Real Tree Church is a church plant led by Shon McIntyre. He chose to base the church plant in Farmington, Minnesota, because it’s where he lives—it’s the place where God led him to get married and raise a family. When he looks around Farmington, he sees hundreds—if not thousands—of people in his community perishing.

The vision of The Real Tree Church is to equip the saints for ministry through weekly expositional teaching and preaching of the Word of God and through discipleship. This enables the church to function as a unified body to seek and save those who are lost in its community. Shon plans to achieve this vision through faith in God in all things and by boldly and unapologetically proclaiming the truths found in Scripture.

As he has begun his work on this initiative, Shon has encountered fears of inadequacy and failure. “The fear of inadequacy,” he says, “is not all that bad of a thing. It forces a guy to fully rely on God. To think that I can do anything without God is sheer foolishness.” Shon’s fear of failure is not about the success of the church but about his ability to lead it and continue in his walk with the Lord. God has helped Shon overcome these fears though His Word. He explains, “My faith is built through study and prayer. When I look back, I am able to see the things that God has brought this work through already. I have no doubt that He will see it through to the end.”

In the year since The Real Tree Church was launched, the McIntyre family has seen many lives changed and many eyes opened to the Word of God for the first time. Some are coming to faith for the first time even though they always thought they were believers. Some are coming to faith out of other religions, like Mormonism. Through online service broadcasts, The Real Tree Church is touching lives as far away as rural India. God is using The Real Tree Church to reach people in its community and around the world.

West Africa Initiative
Mali, Africa, and Senegal, Africa
Steve Nelson

After Steve Nelson and the rest of FEC’s International Ministries Board began praying for God to show them an area of Africa where people had not yet heard the good news of Jesus Christ, God led them, through a series of events and connections, to the Yalunka people of West Africa. As the IM Board began to explore the need among the Yalunka, they discovered that no other mission group had yet targeted these people in the southwest corner of Mali. This realization led to an exploratory trip, during which Steve and the rest of the team discovered that the Yalunka villages were already hungry for the gospel. The FEC team promised they would return with people who would teach them God’s Word.

The vision of the Yalunka Initiative is to establish reproducing communities of Christ followers among the Yalunka and beyond. FEC plans to achieve this vision by placing missionaries in the area who are trained to do oral translation of God’s Word. These missionaries will teach the stories of God’s Word to the natural storytellers and men of peace in each village. In this way, they will intentionally teach the storytellers to teach others to teach others.

One of the fears Steve has faced during the development of this initiative has been placing missionaries on the ground in a new and strange environment, many of the missionaries being on their own during their immersion and language learning. But throughout this scary situation, God has continued to show Himself faithful and, through His provision and timing, continued to confirm the paths the missionaries have taken. God continues to give the workers faith and courage to stand strong, leading them each step of the way.

There have been many encouraging developments throughout the preliminary stages of the initiative, Steve says. During the initial exploratory trip, and continuing through each subsequent trip, several Yalunka men and women have become Christ followers. Even in the missionaries’ absence, these new Christ followers are walking with Jesus as they wait for our workers to return to teach them God’s Word. Steve has also been encouraged by the budding friendships he and other missionaries have begun to form with the Yalunka people of villages they’ve visited.
### 2014 FEC Ministry Initiatives

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<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
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<th>Personnel</th>
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<th>Percent Funded</th>
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<td>$90,000</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Real Tree Church</td>
<td>Farmington, Minnesota</td>
<td>McIntyre</td>
<td>$96,000</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa Initiative</td>
<td>Mali, Senegal (Regional)</td>
<td>Nelson, Masters, Sprunger, Freytag, Hughes</td>
<td>$346,000</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Our Vision**

By the grace of God, the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches will intentionally expand the visible body of Christ by establishing reproducing churches worldwide.

We will embrace a common vision to reach the unchurched and trust the Holy Spirit to breathe a fresh wind of spiritual vitality through our local bodies of believers.

To this end, we dedicate ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ and to growth, obedience, and any change that results from our commitment.

- **We dedicate ourselves to establishing and strengthening churches nationally and globally.**
- **We dedicate ourselves to developing our church leaders.**
- **We dedicate ourselves to teaching the Bible for spiritual maturity and for equipping people for ministry.**
- **We dedicate ourselves to structuring for efficiency.**
In John 4:35 it says, “Don’t you have a saying, ‘It’s still four months until harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.” I may be taking a little liberty with the intention for this text, but I don’t think this is very far off to say this passage is speaking directly to FEC today.

At “Awakening,” our 2013 annual convention, we were not only challenged by passionate speakers, we also made some decisions that will affect the way we do and resource ministry for years to come. The challenge for the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world clarifies how we attempt to bring glory to God through establishing reproducing churches worldwide. We seek to accomplish that vision through multiple strategic initiatives.

I believe the unanimous approval of the new structure, fiscal year, and office budget also commits us to invest the monetary resources to sustain the initiatives and the ministry personnel that make up our FEC footprint around the world. Our new structure gives us a clear plan for funding future personnel and initiatives; however, we must transition the funding for all of our current initiatives over these next four months. We are asking each church to make commitments designated specifically to one or more of these existing strategic ministry initiatives that we have highlighted in this issue of FEConnections.

The fields are ripe. The time is now. Let us ensure that nothing delays the harvest!

Rocky Rocholl, FEC President