



Breakthroughs in Basque Country

This past summer, we took six students ranging from 12-17 years and two moms to our hometown of Berne, Indiana, for three weeks in July. They all stayed with different host families, practicing English and learning about American culture. The entire experience was amazing. As one of the host dads from the FEC church in Berne said, "It was like the whole time was anointed." So many were praying before and throughout the time, and we saw amazing answers to prayer. All the students and families connected incredibly well. There were many emotions and tears when the students left, and many seeds were planted in their hearts and minds as they observed and talked with host families and others about personal faith in God and how it affects their lives.

Up to this point, we had not had many opportunities for spiritual conversations with either of our two friends that went along, but throughout this trip we had so many! One family gave our friends Bibles; they were so surprised and emotionally moved by that gesture. One said it felt as if this family was giving her all that was most valuable to them. She commented to me that she doesn't think she believes, but she likes to read and investigate. We are hoping to start a Discovery Bible study with them soon and are already planning a trip for next year! **Please be in prayer for the many seeds planted and for new breakthroughs in the weeks and months ahead.**

Three essentials of church planning

The Right Planter: Everything Rises or Falls on Leadership

by Jay Nickless, church planting field coordinator

Last month, we introduced three essentials of church planting: the right *planter, place, and plan*. This month, we'll focus on the right *planter*. You've heard the old saying that "everything rises or falls on leadership." Nowhere is this more evident than in a church-planting endeavor. While no two church planters are just alike, every planter exhibits three distinguishing characteristics. They must be *called* by God, *compelled* by the love of Christ, and *competent* ministers of the Gospel. One way to discover these characteristics is through a formal assessment, which can be extremely helpful to the planter, spouse, and sending agency alike. It's a great way to determine whether a planter possesses the evident character, gifts, and skills necessary to *bring* people into a saving relationship with Christ, *build* and equip disciples, and *mobilize* people into ministry and mission. When done well, that combination has the power to change the world!

Steady Growth Ramps Up Planned Renovations at Flanagan Community Church



Flanagan Community Church is wrapping up a months-long renovation project to its storefront property in Flanagan, Illinois. The project came just five months after a successful launch on January 29 of this year. "Our church has slowly and consistently grown numerically and in our relationship with God," says Dan Mays, pastor. "We knew we would need to continue to renovate our space," he says. "We just didn't expect it this early. We've really been blessed by God." After reinforcing ceiling joists, tearing out rotted wood flooring, and installing lots and lots of drywall, the congregation has just put the finishing touches on a new sanctuary, which will maximize the space and accommodate continued growth. They hope to add a youth ministry soon. "We want to continue learning how to engage with those in everyday life who don't necessarily believe," says Dan. [To learn more, visit www.flanaganchurch.org](http://www.flanaganchurch.org).

NEWS FROM THE FRONT

More Than Numbers

What Growth Means at River City Church, PA

It's been a little over a year since River City Church moved into its new location in Swissvale, Pennsylvania, an urban community bordering the city of Pittsburgh. In that time, the church has experienced steady growth, with two baptisms, six new members, and regular attendance more than doubling in the past year. Even more important than those numbers, however, are the stories behind them. Consider one woman who was baptized. She had grown up in the Catholic Church but never opened a Bible until she attended a River City Church women's Bible study. Through that connection, she bought her first Bible and decided it was time to make a public confession of her newfound faith. Another person came to River City Church during a family crisis, found Jesus in the process, and took the next step in his faith — baptism. [To learn more about these and other changed lives, visit www.rivercitypgh.com](http://www.rivercitypgh.com).

