

EFCA Central
Superintendent's Report for 2022 Leadership Conference
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"For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding." Proverbs 2:6

We need his wisdom, daily and moment by moment. If we have learned anything over the past few years, it is that we don't know very much about what is coming at us and how to navigate the changing winds of culture during a pandemic. The past year has taught us to rely on his sovereign will and purpose more than ever as things seemed to spiral out of control and the need for gospel clarity intensified. We have seen our God do amazing things in and through our churches for his glory and for our good. Our faithful God is at work in our EFCA Central churches for his glory and our joy!

Priorities During 2021

1. **Serve the churches, pastors, and leaders of EFCA Central.** We will always strive to keep this our primary focus under Christ.
2. **Building trust with the churches and leaders of EFCA Central.** Much time and energy were given by our staff to accomplish this goal in 2021.
3. **Listen for clarity on our mission and vision.** What a joy to have listened and heard from many of our pastors and church leaders over the past year. These leaders have helped to shape the Life-Giving Churches focus as we proceed into the future.

A few of the highlights of 2021:

EFCA Central Leadership Conference: We were blessed by being able to gather during the season of isolation we were all experiencing. We were encouraged by Scott Sauls, Ricky Jenkins, Quintin Stieff, and Nicolas Perrin as they spoke to us and opened the Word of God in ways that encouraged and blessed not only our intellect, but also our hearts. We needed this time of fellowship and respite from the daily rigors of ministry in the local church.

Churches helping churches: As the confusion of a pandemic began to clear, churches and leaders had numerous questions. Many reached out for help in tangible ways. It was encouraging to see so many leaders helping other leaders and seeing the kingdom as larger than their own local church. In a myriad of ways, 2021 was a year of questions and need for assistance with the changing landscape of a pandemic ministry. The need to collaborate in our churches, gave opportunity for gifts to be shared and the family of Christ to meet the needs of one another. "Bear one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2) became real to so many, as churches and their leaders were willing to step up and step in as various challenges battered the local church.

Staying Connected: It was imperative that our EFCA Central ministry focused mainly as an avenue to bring our shepherds and other leaders together for teaching, encouragement, help and challenge. We strived to keep our leaders connected as we know we are better together.

Travel to our EFCA Central Churches: We see the role of the EFCA Central staff as servants to our churches and leaders. Travel is a necessary part of being present and serving our local churches. We see it as a privilege to serve with great joy. Brad Wos, Paul Bauman, Larry Austin, Todd Brooks are an amazing team of Spirit led leaders who love to serve the local church.

Life-Giving Churches: This ministry focus took shape in 2021. The goal is to see every church in EFCA Central become or continue to be a life-giving church. We believe that out of the overflow of life in Christ in the local church, we will see churches revitalized, others replanted, and new church plants take root among us. What we mean by life-giving churches is exemplified in these four characteristics:

- Life-giving churches prioritize **gospel clarity**.
- Life-giving churches are **bold** as they communicate the gospel.
- Life-giving churches have **compassion** for the broken and lost.
- Life-giving churches are live in the **humility** of Jesus Christ.

Church Multiplication team (Formerly Church Planting): We know that it is time to ramp up our spiritual intensity in multiplying life-giving churches in EFCA Central. Our Church Planting board, along with staff, are working on developing a strategy of church multiplication that helps us to regionalize efforts where many churches come together to multiply in their area of EFCA Central. Long term goal is to have a gospel witness within driving distance of every person who lives in the four states we serve. In 2022, Mark Farran will be joining our team and he will serve as Church Multiplication Director for Iowa and South Dakota. We are excited about this addition to our team.

The landscape for the local church has been transformed. Bold and courageous leaders are needed as we take steps to reach our communities with the gospel. Will you pray with us that the Lord will raise up congregations and individuals who would see the fields as ready for "harvest."

In the Year Ahead:

1. **Serving the churches, pastors, and leaders of EFCA Central** will continue to be our main priority and calling as an EFCA Central ministry team. More than ever, we want to listen and respond to the needs of our pastors and churches.
2. **Deepening relationships with the churches and leaders of EFCA Central** will be a clear focus as we pursue Christ and his glory together.

- 3. Listening has given us a sense of the priorities that need our attention:** We have heard the hearts of our pastors and leaders and their priorities in this rapidly changing landscape of the local church ministry.
- 4. We will boldly begin to act:** The COVID season was an immense challenge for church multiplication. However, it has allowed us to stop and pray for the Lord's wisdom going forward. Together we will see new initiatives that will bring our churches together for church multiplication focus that will reap a harvest of blessing for many years to come.

Key Priorities for the Year Ahead:

- 1. Develop next generation leaders:** Our church multiplication team is working hard to connect churches and next generation leaders together to multiply life-giving churches in our EFCA Central.
- 2. We must increase our evangelistic fervor:** As pastors and leaders in EFCA Central we must recommit ourselves to a clear proclamation of the gospel to a lost world. Evangelistic opportunities and bold witness through deep friendships that open the door for us to share our journey in Christ need to be a priority in our own lives as well as in our churches.
- 3. All people focus:** We must re-commit to reaching all in our sphere of influence with the saving message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must cross boundaries of culture, race, and economic status to listen and respond with the love of Christ.
- 4. Gospel clarity:** As the world seems to be unraveling at a frightening pace, we must continue to emphasize our love for the Word of God and for the life transforming work of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 5. Church multiplication:** We celebrate the fact that our EFCA Central has a rich history of church planting. However, in the days to come we realize that church revitalization and replant ministry will be the core of our multiplication efforts. From those efforts, life-giving churches will be multiplied.
- 6. Renewed emphasis on dependency in Prayer:** Prayer is difficult work. Prayer is essential for gospel influence. Prayer reminds us that we are seeking the glory of the One who called us and not our own. We will seek to be dependent in prayer in all endeavors to not presume on God, the plans of people.

Psalm 90:1-2 Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.