



E A S T E R N  
D I S T R I C T  
A S S O C I A T I O N

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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# Eddie Cole

## District Superintendent

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Getting to know the pastors across the district as well as the rhythms and responsibilities of this role is taking some time. However, after almost two years as DS, I know this much to be true - this District has many wonderful ministries that are doing important work for the kingdom. I've appreciated the journey of getting to know the men and women of the district, including the district board of directors and our staff.

As a reminder, I believe it is important to remember that we are a part of something bigger than our District. The Eastern District is just one of seventeen EFCA Districts across the country. Our shared EFCA mission is to multiply transformational churches among all people. God wants us to plant all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people. For our District, the mission field has literally come from many countries around the world and because of this we have a historical and great opportunity before us.

Over the next several months, I plan to work with the district staff and board of directors to take the words that we use to articulate our strategy and put them together in such a way that we can paint the picture, or give vision, for how we will plant transformational churches for years into the future. By early 2018, I hope to share a refreshed district vision with you for how we can work together to accomplish more than we ever could alone.

The Eastern District office has had a good year. Our team has changed and is growing. In addition, our finances are doing well, thanks to all the churches and individuals who contribute.

The District has 3 overarching priorities and the rest of my report will speak to what has been done with these priorities and what is planned for improvement going forward. Much more detail is provided in the reports by the rest of the team. This report is only my summary.

### **Leader Care**

- What we've done:
  - Hosted more than 50 pastoral cluster meetings.
  - Hundreds of hours of consulting and coaching with pastors and elders.

- Written weekly blogs and many social media postings to inform and inspire leaders.
  - Made professional counseling available to leaders in need.
  - Our District Immigrant Hope team helped some Spanish church leaders with documents (see Roy Larsen's report).
  - Hosted several GATEWAY Theological classes (see Dave Martin's report).
  - Gathered missional leaders for encouragement and coaching (see Mike Jarrell's report).
  - Connected with Student Ministry Leaders (see David Boerema's report).
  - Helped pastors plan and take a sabbatical.
- What we're doing to grow:
 

In addition to continuing of the same works listed above, we're adding three team members to our district team:

    - **David Boerema** to train Next Generation Leaders and help us connect with and train future leaders.
    - **Carlos Belza** to care for existing Hispanic Ministries, as well as to recruit new planters.
    - **Coleman Rafferty** as an intern to help us increase our ability to provide content for our online ministry presence.
    - Hosting an **EDA Pastor's and Wives Marriage Retreat** at Hershey Lodge Jan. 26-28.

## **Church Health**

- What we've done:
  - Sent a handful of our leaders from the District to Mosaic Conference in Dallas (December).
  - Helped our district churches with a variety of situations (see Peter Johnson's report).
  - Consulted with several churches on how to be more strategic in outreach.
  - Partnered with two churches toward a full revitalization process.
  - Hired **Michael Martin to be an All Peoples and Church Planting Consultant**
  - Hosted 3 events:
    1. A Preaching Refresher with Abe Kuruvilla at Windsor Chapel in Princeton Junction.
    2. An All Peoples Gathering at Seneca Creek Community Church.
    3. Elder Training Day at Salem Church in Staten Island.
- What we're doing to grow:
  - Inviting Fritz Dale and other experienced leaders to help us develop a prayer movement.
  - Hiring according to our priorities in order to build our District ministry team.
  - Making several improvements in our Hispanic Ministry, including ministry training and providing better translation equipment and efforts at all of our District events.

- Send a group of leaders to an All Peoples East ministry gathering in Charlotte, NC (December).
- Give increased attention to EFCA credentialing and on-boarding of new District leaders.
- Hosting a missions conference in Yardley, PA at Riverstone Church (April 28).

### **Ministry Multiplication**

- What we've done:
  - Brought **Pastor Charles Wilson** to plant The Hill Church in Roanoke, VA.
  - Continued work with ongoing church plants (see Peter Johnson's report).
  - Sent pastors/planters to church planters boot camps and training events.
  - Partnered with **EFCA Creo/Mike Jarrell** to coach leaders for multiplication.
  - Paid for and sent several District leaders to the Exponential East Conference (September).
  
- What we're doing to grow:
  - Having conversations with leaders about creating a sustainable culture of multiplication.
  - Working on a plan for a **leadership pipeline** for multiplication of pastors and leaders.
  - Casting a vision that will aim for **100% of EDA church participation** in church planting.
  - Setting aside **\$300,000** into a fund dedicated to multiply churches.
  - Sending at least 15 Eastern District pastors to the Exponential East 2017 Conference.

The journey to making Gospel impact on the 40,000,000+ people of our District will be one step at a time, but when we believe and work together, we can trust that He will bring the harvest.

For His Glory,

Eddie

# Peter Johnson

## Associate Superintendent

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### Church Plants

We praise the Lord for Charles and Tranay Wilson who moved from Dallas Texas where he was a youth pastor to start a multicultural church called **The Hill Church** in Roanoke, VA this year. They join our other current plants, **Arise RVA** pastored by Jeremy Chambers in Richmond VA; **Holy Nation Church** in Fairfax VA, pastored by Sungwa Kim; **Welling Up Church** in Teaneck, NJ, pastored by Myung Suk Oh; **South Shore Community Church** pastored by John Chestnut in Oakdale NY; **Redemption Church** pastored by Will Turner in Southern Philadelphia; and **Espiranza En Cristo / Hope In Christ EFC** pastored by Pablo Martinez in Grantville, PA.

We continue to have discussion with some of our established churches about ministry multiplication and anticipate more plants and new worship sites going into this next year. We have sent people to Exponential Church Planting Conference DC this year and have seen interesting partnerships developing between churches as a result. We hope to see more churches consider how they will fulfill the Great Commission of multiplying churches among all people in our District.

### Church Transitions

Life cycles for churches are very hard and very real. This year **New Beginning Church** has ended public services in Ashland, PA. **Muncy EFC** in Muncy PA closed its doors this year as it was merged with a large non-denominational church from Jersey Shore, PA, becoming one of its satellite campuses. In addition we continue to have one of our church buildings empty and on the market in **Rotterdam Township NY**. Pray that this building will be sold soon.

### Pastor Transitions

This year has seen several churches searching for new senior pastors. Churches that have hired new senior pastors this year include **Stillmeadow Community Church** in Baltimore (Michael Martin); **Crossway Community Church** in Manassas, VA (Kyle Brennon); **Grace Fellowship Church** in Milford NJ (Joshua Rasdall); **Grace EFC** Lake Katrine, NY (Wes Smith); **Park EFC** New City, NY (Dave Gehret), and **Valley Bible Church** in Warwick NY (Kevin McGuiness). Churches that are looking this year include **Northern Valley EFC** in Cresskill, NJ; **Bethlehem EFC** in Randolph, NJ; **Dix Hills EFC** in Huntington Station, NY; **Crossroads Community Church** in Wilmington, DE; **Cornerstone Christian Church** in Duncannon, PA; **Immanuel EFC** in York, PA and **Susquehanna EFC** in Harrisburg, PA.

## **Credentialing**

Congratulations to those who have successfully written and defended their theological paper, and been approved for an EFCA credential. They include:

- **Jeff Kliewer** Mt Laurel EFC Mount Laurel, NJ
- **David Manley** Grace Point EFC, Palmyra, PA
- **Jeremy McAlack** Riverstone Church, Yardley, PA.

With so many taking the History, Polity, Theology course we anticipate a growing need for more opportunities to get a ministry credential. We are planning on developing learning cohorts to assist our pastors in this process.

It continues to be a pleasure to assist Eddie Cole and serve the churches of the Eastern District.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Johnson  
Eastern District Associate Superintendent

# John Nesbitt

## EDA Board Chairman

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Your EDA Board considers it a privilege to serve our District, and I am personally grateful for each member's sacrificial effort on your behalf. We meet regularly to undergird Eddie, Peter, and the rest of our staff as they seek to support and lead the mission, churches and ministry servants throughout our great region. The Board is a diverse group of men and women, church staff and lay leaders, who have been enabled by God to bless you all by praying for you, and serving as a sounding board to help refine and confirm the direction of District leadership.

In this second year of Eddie's tenure as District Superintendent, his seemingly boundless energy is evident even as his vision for our future is clarifying. We are excited for the days ahead of us as that vision becomes a reality by God's empowering hand. Eddie will say it better than me, but all our efforts are invested in three distinct areas:

- **Leader Care** - the shepherding and support of our church shepherds. Pastors are people too! As do all of us, pastors need encouragement, refreshment and help to navigate the challenges of life and ministry. Cluster meetings are a great way we can help one another!
- **Healthy Church Development** - we all aspire to cultivate the healthiest churches possible! Our primary strategy for this as a District is to pursue the development of our pastors who have the responsibility to lead our churches into greater health.
- **Ministry Multiplication** - we also aspire to church growth, which translates into kingdom growth. There are multiple strategies by which we can pursue this, but we believe the best strategies are built on partnerships: pastors with pastors, churches with churches, with the District serving to facilitate and support these partnerships. Besides the obvious numerical growth as more people come to Christ, we also need to grow by more effectively reaching more diverse people groups and generations. We want to boldly reach all people of all ages, because all need to hear and respond to the gospel of Christ!

Behind the scenes this year we have made great strides in clarifying and simplifying our financial reporting, with the able assistance of Brad Mentzer, accountant and former Board member. More importantly, we are in the process of more closely aligning our

budget in support of our vision and mission. This is a work in progress which you will see further developed over the next few years.

That leads me to thank both churches and individuals in our District for their faithful and generous financial support! Income has exceeded our goals, and enabled us to plan for a greater allocation to new mission fulfilling initiatives in the coming year.

This is a thrilling time to be a part of what God is doing in our region through our churches!

Grateful to partner with you all,

John Nesbitt

# Roger Doris

# ReachGlobal Connect

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## Not Your Normal Crisis

Many of you know Mark Lewis, Director of ReachGlobal Crisis Response, from our District. He's overseen many EFCA crisis responses in the USA and overseas, but says Hurricane Harvey's impact is not normal. Relief, rehab, and development with church planting will go on for years. Here are three actionable steps churches can make:

- Mobilize 1/3 of your congregation for work or prayer teams.
- Provide funds for supplies, tools and vehicles.
- Send a church staff member for 3 months or a church-planting intern for a year.

## Save the Date - Global Outreach Summit 4/28/18

This 6-hour evangelism/missions education and networking event helps church leaders gain the tools and connections for building churches without walls. Last time 180 church leaders and pastors from 33 EDA churches attended the plenary sessions and 18 electives. The 2018 GO-Summit will have new speakers and topics and will be hosted by Riverstone Church (EFC) near Philly.

## In Case You Missed It

- The EFCA [GlobalFingerprints](#) child sponsorship program hit the 3,000 child mark and now operates in 10 countries. Nearly all the children are placed in Christian homes rather than orphanages. Our distinctive is integrating this ministry with church planting.
- [Apex](#) is the new name for EFCA's expanded program encompassing the former Bridging Urban Missions Project (B.U.M.P.) for secondary school students and Trek7 college/young adult internships.
- EFCA online missions courses are free for your church members/attenders. They include two English outreach courses and Healthy Missions Partnerships. I provide free missions workshops for your church missions leaders—some 30 topics. Email me at [roger.dorris@efca.org](mailto:roger.dorris@efca.org) if you are interested.

# Grace Mo

# Dorcas Ministry

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2017 marks Dorcas Ministry's 12th year of service in Brooklyn, NY. From 1991-2005 we served the garment factory workers in Manhattan, NY.

The services we now offer include:

1. Adult ESL classes (220 students).
2. English language help with document translation, social benefit application and renewals.
3. Help resolving cases of special needs through counseling and referral.
4. Conducting Sunday School on Saturday for unchurched children.
5. Providing Bible study for youth group.
6. Providing a place for students to do their work after school.
7. Seven weeks of Summer Splash for children around the neighborhood
8. A monthly ministry to the elderly.

We thank God for allowing us to witness the positive impact and recognition from our community.

# Roy Larsen

## Immigrant Hope

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In 2011 the Evangelical Free Church national office and our Eastern District put a stake in the ground and said we will love our immigrant neighbors. Immigrant Hope provides help for immigrants who are trying to navigate through the complexity of forms to fill out for green cards, citizenship, petitioning for other family members, marriages between U.S. citizens and foreign-born nationals, etc. We can only provide pathways that the government allows but we can love everyone and give good information.

Since 2011, our Brooklyn office has grown to where we now serve clients from over 40 different countries each year. We can pray with clients, share our faith as they allow and serve with Christ's love. Besides Brooklyn, there is an Immigrant Hope office in Clifton, NJ and in five other states in the U.S.

***The mission statement of Immigrant Hope is to build relational bridges with our immigrant neighbors, sharing the HOPE of the Gospel, HELP toward legal residency and a HOME in the church which cares for their needs.***

Our mission is evangelistic and wholistic. When we have a heart for missions, we look for opportunities to reach the nations, whether they are overseas or on our doorstep. If we let political winds drive our mission's sails, we will certainly miss many opportunities where God's Spirit has prepared hearts for the Gospel.

Pray for Roy Larsen, Renee Young and Birke Doda as they lead the ministry in Brooklyn and for Howard and Claudia Williams at the office in Clifton NJ.

# Dave Martin

# GATEWAY

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2017 was a special year for **GATEWAY Theological Institute**. We celebrated our tenth anniversary of bringing theological and leadership training to hundreds of current and prospective pastors, ministry leaders and committed lay people right in their own communities.

Here in the Eastern District, God has been bringing blessing to scores of leaders, as well, through GATEWAY. We currently have some 60-70 students involved in training from **Staten Island, NY** to **Wantage** and **Freehold, NJ** to **Mount Joy** and **Carlisle, PA**. We are receiving inquiries to begin Phase One studies in the near future from as far apart as **Lynchburg, VA**, **Lindenwold, NJ**, **Urbana, MD** and **Hershey, PA**.

We offer two Phases in GATEWAY's localized training: **Phase One** is a year-long study of our Statement of Faith – the unfolding of the Gospel. It is primarily theological and is meant to deepen students' understanding of and ability to articulate the Gospel. **Phase Two** is a three year study focused on developing ministry skills for pastors, church planters and lay leaders. We are in the process of opening a brand new Phase Two site in northern NJ.

It has been my joy to meet scores of devoted followers of Christ through traveling to many different places within our District, in some cases to open new sites and in others to facilitate them. My life has been enriched and my spirit encouraged by seeing dozens of committed followers of Christ wanting to be strengthened in their faith and fortified with new skills in ministering it to others. In spite of what you might hear and see on the larger cultural landscape, God is truly and deeply at work in the lives of many to advance his redemptive cause.

If you desire to know more about **GATEWAY Theological Institute** either as a potential student or prospective facilitator, please contact me at [dvmartin1@comcast.net](mailto:dvmartin1@comcast.net) or [dmartin@edaefca.org](mailto:dmartin@edaefca.org) or call 717-689-0584 (cell). I'd love to chat with you.

For Christ and His kingdom,  
Dave Martin  
GATEWAY Theological Institute, Eastern District, EFCA

# David Boerema

## ReachStudents/Apex

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ReachStudents is the student ministry department of the EFCA. Our mission is to maximize leaders to reach and release the emerging generation with the gospel. This year we have worked together to engage, equip and expand a disciple-making movement among our leaders and the student ministries they lead through regional network gatherings and an annual planning retreat. These networks educate on issues facing today's teenagers, sharpen leadership skills and connect student ministry leaders in our district.

This past winter several churches came together to plan and lead two Winter Retreats at Camp Orchard Hill with over 400 students participating. We look forward to continuing this tradition and building on the relationship we have with COH. Don't miss the opportunity to be a part of the [Challenge Conference July 2-6, 2018](#). Thousands of teenagers will assemble in Kansas City, MO for this incredible youth conference.

Many of you have heard about a leadership pipeline partnership between ReachStudents and ReachGlobal called Apex. The aim of Apex is to serve the local church by mobilizing the next generation of gospel influencers. We believe it is our responsibility to raise the next generation of leaders for the church and its mission to reach the world.

We are fortunate to have several Apex sites in the Eastern District Association. These sites provide partnership between our churches and opportunities for youth groups to serve the needs of the local church and its community partners. Apex also provides summer long internships for college students here in the US and around the globe with our ReachGlobal missionaries. We are grateful for our growing partnerships with several EDA churches as we work together to take the gospel from here to everywhere. If your church is looking for a high quality missions experience for students that leverages one week in the city for a lifetime of ministry, please visit our display, [www.apexmissions.org](http://www.apexmissions.org) or contact David and Shawna Boerema directly.

David Boerema  
Associate Director for ReachStudents  
e. david.boerema@efca.org  
c. 440.225.4075

# Carlos Belza

## Hispanic Ministries

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As the Director of Hispanic Ministries, I have been working to visit Hispanic Pastors to find out how they and their families are doing, listening to how their ministries are going.

We are in a new stage of growth and development, seeing great opportunities and challenges. One major need is to teach church planters how to reach the Hispanic community, plant new churches, oversee pastoral and family care. We want to help them grow in the vision God has given to each of them.

Another challenge is to work in partnership with pastors and churches who see the need to start a Hispanic ministry in their area or community.

Please pray with us as we meet these challenges. We have already seen this ministry being effective and I believe that God is in that! Blessings!

In Christ Jesus,

Paulo Carlos Belza  
Hispanic's Ministry Director  
carlos@el-portico.org  
717-615-4868

# Mike Jarrell

## Missional Director

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I am VERY thankful for the privilege to journey with pastors, church planters and leaders as we seek Master Jesus for wisdom in our calling to make disciples who make disciples. As I shared last year, the critical (and usually missing component to growing as a disciple-maker is ongoing coaching, training and equipping. We should all, as Jeff Sorvik used to say, “have a hand forward and a hand back.”

I’ve been blessed with the role and responsibility to coach people who are trying to think more strategically about mission/discipleship amongst people who don’t yet know Jesus and seeing these people not just become church attenders but disciple-makers themselves. Over the past year we’ve hosted a Missional Action Group (MAG) school with about 40 church leaders from within the District and around the country to provide training and coaching. I’ve continued the journey with over a dozen individuals with whom I have a regular coaching relationship.

These leaders are from a combination of established churches and church plants and it’s been very encouraging and rewarding for me to see both church plants and existing churches form relationships with friends who don’t know Jesus and begin to share their hope in the context of relationship. This is becoming the rule, not the exception. We’ve gone on prayer retreats together and have huddled up for one day trainings/ conversations together.

I would like to extend an invitation to anyone who would love to think more strategically about mission/discipleship to please call or text me. I would love to discuss the potential for a coaching relationship. I am being coached myself and I think every church leader should always be in a coaching relationship with someone who is regularly challenging them. I would love to pass on all that has been passed to me so that our communities and homes would be filled with people who don’t yet know the love of the father but are starting to experience it around our tables and fire pits.

Mike Jarrell  
michaeljarrell@me.com

# Jim Payne

## Camp Orchard Hill

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God continues to grow and expand the ministry of Camp Orchard Hill for His honor and glory! Beyond the traditional summer camps and retreats, God continues to expand our vision to reach our community for Christ and to serve “the least of our brothers.” This has led to year-round ministry in the low income housing developments in our area, serving homeless men at Christmas and Easter and serving special needs campers through our inclusive day camp.

Allow me to share what one grandmother wrote about the impact of camp on her special needs granddaughters: *“Your program for special needs children has had a very positive impact on my granddaughters. It has given them the opportunity to interact with other children in a safe and structured environment. The greatest gift Camp Orchard Hill has given the girls is the joy of just being able to run, swim and play with others who do not judge them because of their disabilities.”*

Here are some amazing facts from the past year:

- 2,122 WinterBlast campers from 67 churches.
- 67 homeless men served at Christmas and Easter.
- Over 300 scholarships given totaling nearly \$90,000.
- 86 special needs campers served in our inclusive day camp.
- 54,230 total meals served.
- 2,748 summer campers at day, overnight and leadership camps.
- 12,000 total guests served.
- Most importantly, countless lives transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Here is what one camper wrote about what a scholarship means to her: “I feel camp allows me to understand God’s purpose and what his word means exactly. Every year I grow closer and closer to even understanding what I mean to God and what purpose I have to serve on this earth. It is such an amazing experience to see my own personal growth and witness other campers grow spiritually within themselves.”

After a full year's worth of use, we are thanking God for the new Lakeview Terrace dining and meeting center. It has eliminated our need for meal shifts in the summer and winter which has added two hours of program time to each day. And, it has opened a new avenue of ministry to our local community and churches through banquets. Next on the improvement list is new cabins with indoor bathroom, showers and meeting space.

In addition to the summer and winter programs for children and youth, we have Men's and Women's retreats and Family Camps. The camp is also available for churches to rent to hold their own retreats. And, we freely offer our facilities for pastors and leaders to get away for planning and personal retreats.

We are excited about all that God is doing through the Orchard Hill ministry and we appreciate the opportunity to serve and partner with district churches to reach people for Christ! Thank you for your prayers, support and encouragement.

On behalf of the board and staff,



Jim Payne

Executive Director

# Jack Kroeze

## Pastoral Care

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This past year has been a year of transition for the Pastoral Care Ministry. At the 2016 Conference, Eddie and Jessica Cole, Peter and Karen Johnson, and Jack and Eva Kroeze were presented as a pastoral tri-team in caring for our pastors and their wives.

Each couple oversees cluster groups within specific regions of the District. During this past year many of these cluster groups met regularly providing community, time of encouragement and prayer as well as accountability with others. Wives are gathering together in various venues: meeting when the clusters meet, getting together in small groups at other times, gathering for a dinner as cluster couples. Many individual contacts are made for the purpose of encouragement and support. New contacts are being made all the time and old ones are being sustained. We are excited to see how God will continue to develop this ministry as it unfolds.

We see in our pastors and wives a deep desire to be servants to their congregations, to be faithful to their call, and to love the people that God has given them. We are certainly blessed within the Eastern District with wonderful pastoral couples.

This year our pastoral team goal will be to have at least one dinner gathering in each cluster. Our three regional couples will facilitate these. Also, there is a Pastors & Wives Retreat at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, PA planned for the weekend of January 26 – 28, 2018.

We are grateful to God for the faithful pastors and wives within our District. We see ourselves as a valuable resource. The team is seeking to be available to every pastor and wife in the District who would want us to come alongside them.

Jack Kroeze  
Pastoral Resource Team

“Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else.” Galatians 6:4