

# PROCLAIMER

2017 | volume 19, issue 1

telling the stories of  
visionvirginia

## POWER OF PARTNERSHIP

I always pray with joy because of  
your partnership in the Gospel.

**PHILIPPIANS 1:4b-5**

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**147 Backpacks**—That's what the poorest school in the county needed, but members in the churches of SBCV generously provided many more, bringing smiles to more than 2,300 children in Appalachia



## PROCLAIMER

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# Not Alone: PARTNERS IN PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL



## Brian Autry

Executive Director  
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**A**s a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, you have been called by Almighty God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and instructed by the Word of God to serve others and share the Gospel. But whether you are church planting, serving as a pastor, serving in another nation, teaching Sunday School, ministering to a neighbor, or leading your family to follow the Lord, we can all become fearful, anxious, and doubtful about the ministry the Lord has set before us.

Acts 18 gives insight into how the Lord encouraged the Apostle Paul as he served.

*And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."*

~ Acts 18:9-10 (ESV)

Acts 18:9-10 provide three points of encouragement for us as we serve the Lord:

### 1. DO NOT BE AFRAID.

There can be various causes for us to be fearful, discouraged, or overly cautious. A sense of threat may be from internal or external forces. Regardless, take to heart the exhortation to serve boldly and courageously. Do not be afraid.

### 2. DO NOT BE SILENT.

We must preach the Word, in season and out (2 Timothy 4:2). We are stewards of the Gospel truth.

*But how can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher?*

~ Romans 10:14 (HCSB)

### 3. YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

We are blessed with the Lord's presence. We are His Holy Spirit-indwelt and -empowered people. We are also members of the household of God (1 Timothy). We stand together on God's Word. We kneel together as watchmen of the wall. We walk

together in the grace and truth of Christ.

Personally, as I have read and studied the Bible, I have noted the numerous times the Apostle Paul mentions his co-laborers—his loved ones in Christ—by name. Paul was not perfect when it came to relationships, friendships, or partnerships. But he did seem to be persistent, purposeful, and prayerful. I pray that you will know that you are **not alone** as you serve the Lord. I pray that God will strengthen your fellowship in the church and make a place of service clear to you. I pray that pastors and church planters will have brotherhood with one another. I pray that your church will know that you are **not alone**.

Pray for SBC of Virginia churches as we seek to be a Gospel partnership that strengthens, mobilizes, plants, and revitalizes churches to make disciples of Christ.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature of Brian Autry in black ink.

# GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP & Eternity

**When a church makes a Great Commission commitment to partner with a church planter, that partnership impacts both the partner church and the new church.**



Partner church members learn to live missional lives, and the church plant and planter receive vital support. The partnership between **Pillar Church** of Dumfries and **Gilgal Evangelical Church** (a church plant reaching Ethiopians in Northern Virginia) is bearing fruit now and making an eternal impact.

The following is an interview with Pastor Colby Garman of Pillar Church of Dumfries and church planter Zack Bekele of Gilgal Evangelical Church.

## **How has your partnership with Gilgal Evangelical Church served the discipleship and missional needs of Pillar Church members?**

GARMAN: *We want the members of our church to have eyes to see the need for multiplying Gospel ministry in our region. No matter who we are, we all suffer to some degree from tunnel vision as we go about our daily lives in large population centers like North Virginia. It would be easy to remain unaware of the barriers that exist in our own communities that impede the advance of the Gospel.*

## **How has your partnership with Pillar Church changed your approach to ministry?**

BEKELE: *I [had] learned from a small church perspective. I thought that only large churches could start a new church. Pillar Church is not large but has started so many and continues to start churches. We review each worship service, and I get to sit in staff meetings when we do this. I never saw this done, so I have learned humility from the pastors. This is done with Clint [Clifton] and Colby. Following up on membership with everyone is important. Every member is taught why membership is important and why their commitment is important. Healthy membership means all members are to live missional—everyone invests in missional ministry.*

## **What has this partnership meant to you as a pastor and disciple maker?**

GARMAN: *Personally, the partnership with Zack has reminded me that God organizes and leads His people for the sake of advancing the Gospel. The partnership began with a desire on our part to impact Ethiopians in the Greater DC area with the Gospel. We began praying for the right person to train, prepare, and partner with. It was exciting to see God work and answer our prayers along the way and lead Zack to come join the work here in DC.*

## **How has your partnership with Pillar Church blessed your ministry?**

BEKELE: *We know that we are being prayed for. Pillar Church receives the needs of Gilgal.*

Pillar Church prays every week for church planters. They have also helped to meet needs. When church planter apprentice Dawit Getachew started, the leaders helped him find a job so he could have more time to help with the church plant. Pillar's Children's Ministry director,

Becky, provided guidance and help with starting Gilgal's Children's Ministry. When worship equipment was needed initially, Pillar provided equipment until SBCV could help.

## **How has Pillar Church made a difference in your family's life?**

BEKELE: *When [my wife] Hana was sick, the members of the church visited and prayed with Hana frequently. Our children needed help adjusting to the new area, and the church was patient with them and helped us with their adjustment.*

When the Bekeles moved to Dumfries, Pillar Church helped them move in and even assisted financially with the cost of the move. They spent quality time with the Bekeles and also helped them learn the culture of Northern Virginia.

## **What difference will this partnership make in the larger picture of mission partnerships in the future for the church and for the Kingdom of God?**

GARMAN: *The major difference for us is having a reliable church and partner to lead the way in reaching Ethiopians with the Gospel. We know Zack's heart, judgment, and confidence in the Gospel and can wholeheartedly support and multiply what he is doing. Really, we are just getting started, and the [exciting part] will be seeing down the road how God uses Zack to multiply Gospel laborers to reach Ethiopians here and beyond.*

Zack and Dawit have served as translators and team guides for several Pillar Church teams who've taken mission trips to Ethiopia.

## **How will you reproduce in new churches the way that Pillar Church has invested in you?**

BEKELE: *The vision is to multiply in DC the same DNA that I learned from the leaders. We have started a church at Alexandria and two mini churches, [one] at Silver Spring and [one at] Woodbridge.*

Pastor Colby and Pastor Clint, along with members of Pillar Church, have invested into Zack and apprentice Dawit a culture of a healthy church, meaningful membership, and church planting.

**GILGAL IS THE FIRST ETHIOPIAN CHURCH PLANT WITH THE SBCV** and is being developed to be a multiplying church. Pillar Church will be able to rejoice in its partnership with Gilgal to reach thousands of Ethiopians with the Gospel. Gilgal is helping Pillar members live out their faith here and internationally.



# Ensuring Our Planters Are NOT ALONE

## CHURCH PLANTER COACHING

by Jamie Limato, Pastor of Aletheia Norfolk and Associate Church Planting Strategist with the SBC of Virginia

The theme, **Not Alone**, was repeated often at the SBC of Virginia's Annual Homecoming this past November at **First Baptist Church of Roanoke**. It is the desire of our partnership of churches that those who seek to push back the darkness would feel and know that they are not alone. However, in our efforts to strengthen and mobilize churches to make disciples and plant churches, those sent out to plant new churches can feel lonely.

One way to combat that sense of loneliness is to provide each new church planter with a coach.

### WHAT IS A COACH'S ROLE?

Church planters experience some of the highest of highs, but what people don't always see is that they also have the lowest of lows. There are many reasons for this, but often times in ministry, it's easy to focus on the things that are yet to be done instead of focusing on where God is at work. Coaching brings focus to where God is leading and clarifies everything going on in a planter's mind. Having a coach helps a planter listen well to what God is saying and remember that he is **not alone**.

Coaches help clear the fog for church planters. In the fog, planters can feel lost and alone. As a church planter, I often felt that way. I knew where God had called me and what He had called me to do. I was certain of the vision He had given me. The strategies and tactics, however, to accomplish my vision to plant a Gospel-centered church weren't always as clear. Add people to this confusion, and you're driving in a thick fog. It can be unnerving



and leave you questioning, *Did I miss it? Have I taken a wrong turn? or even Should I just turn around?* Coaching clears the fog by helping church planters slow down, see clearly, and remember to step forward in faith. In all of this, the coach is there to remind the planter he is not alone.

### SPECIFIC WAYS THAT COACHES HELP CHURCH PLANTERS AND ENSURE THEY ARE NOT ALONE:




Coaches are the asking voice in the sea of telling voices

Many voices speak into a church planter's life—spouse, mentors, core team, church attenders, conferences, websites, books, denominational leaders and, most importantly, the Holy Spirit. The reality is that all voices are not equal in value and some can be negative.

The role of a coach is unique—it's not to be another voice talking to the planter (as important as some of those voices are). A coach comes alongside a church planter to draw out what is already there. A coach's voice is the asking

A GREAT  
CHURCH PLANTER  
COACH PLAYS A  
CRITICAL ROLE IN  
SENDING WELL AND  
ENSURING THAT THE  
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NOT ALONE



voice, and the coach's most basic tools are asking questions and listening well.



## Coaches provide a safe place to process the planter's dreams and plans

A church planter coach fulfills his role on the team by providing a safe place for an often-overwhelmed church planter. The coach is asking the questions that no one else is asking, like, *What does God want? What's next? What's most important now? Who can help you? When are you going to start?* These and other questions help bring clarity to the church planter.



## Coaches target the heart

No matter how much we succeed in other pursuits, nothing will ever replace five critical desires God has given us. In coaching conversations with church planters, these five concerns eventually come to the top of the list:

1. **GOD.** We want a vital, personal connection with God.
2. **FAMILY.** We want healthy relationships with our spouse and children.
3. **HEALTH.** We want to live well, sleep well, and feel well.
4. **TIME.** We want to get the most out of our days.
5. **PEOPLE.** We want to relate well to people outside of our home.

**In coaching, it is our desire to coach the person—not the goal—and the planter—not the plant.** Coaching the person means that we draw out his goals rather than prescribing goals we think would be best. A good coach will help the planter identify and define goals the planter is drawn toward. Also, coaching the person means that we intentionally press beyond the urgent church planting needs to the heart of the planter himself. The coach is not handcuffed by everything the church planter wants to be

coached through. A coach helps the planter move to a higher level of accountability for what God wants from him personally.

Jesus told His disciples, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21, NKJV). We commonly interpret this verse as inspiration to send *more*. That's a good thing, but we must also embrace the importance of sending *well* at the same time. As we send well, we will send more—healthy leaders multiply. A great church planter coach plays a critical role in sending *well* and ensuring that the planters are **not alone**.

Here are the experiences of some church planters who were connected with coaches through the SBCV:

*My coach helped me by walking me through the painful days of church planting. We went through some serious lows during our first year as well as some incredible mountaintop highs. Having a coach by my side was critical in helping me keep a balanced and healthy perspective in every situation we encountered. I can't imagine having gone through our first year of church planting without my coach.*  
~ Jason Lamb, Pastor of Rising Church, Leesburg

*I didn't really know what to expect when I received a coach, but it has filled in the gaps that a mentor or strategist couldn't provide. My mentors told me what to do, my strategist helped to resource me, but my coach filled a more proactive role in my life. My coach pressed and challenged me in a way that I needed most.*  
~ Isaac Martin, Pastor of Sojourn Church, Floyd

*My coach helped me by offering wisdom and encouragement to stay the course and trust the Lord. Church planting is difficult, and it is comforting to be paired with someone who has not only been where you are but has also succeeded in establishing the foundation of a new church. My coach is a very capable, encouraging Spirit-filled coach!*  
~ Zack Randles, Pastor of Waterfront Church, Washington, DC



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together to reach  
Onancock for Christ*



**July 13-16, 2017**



**Onancock, VA**

**REGISTER AT**  
[sbcv.org/easternshore](http://sbcv.org/easternshore)



These church planter prayer cards are available for you to view and download at [sbcv.org/planters](http://sbcv.org/planters). You may also view many other church planter profiles there.

# PRAYER for Church Planters

*"Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"*

Matthew 28:18-20 (HCSB)



## Agape Chinese Christian Church

MEETING AT  
*Emmanuel Baptist Church*  
8006 Centreville Rd.  
Manassas, VA 20111

**BIRTHDAYS:** Tongjiang (Joshua) (September 29), Haiping Sun (Angelina) (April 1)

### PRAYER NEEDS:

PRAY for the growth of the church plant  
PRAY for Chinese university students and visiting scholars  
PRAY for ministries to immigrants  
PRAY for the provision of financial resources  
PRAY for improvement in learning English

### HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP! (needs)

- Pray for our new church plant
- Become a financial partner
- Volunteer to help with our English as a Second Language (ESL) ministry



## Discover Church

MEETING AT  
3232 Battlefield Blvd. S  
Chesapeake, VA 23322

**BIRTHDAYS:** Rob (May 21), Cheryl (August 15)

### PRAYER NEEDS:

PRAY for continued passion to reach the lost and unchurched  
PRAY for clear guidance and direction from God

### HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP! (needs)

- Provide financial support and equipment
- Partner with us for summer missions
- Partner with us for other mission opportunities





# Only Two Things Matter

A PERSPECTIVE FROM SOMEONE  
WHO FACED THE END OF LIFE

The SBC of Virginia Women's Ministry connects with women all over Virginia and Washington, DC. These women have inspired and encouraged many others. One of those extraordinary women is Lexi Judy. Here is her story.

## MY LIFE GROWING UP

*Growing up, I genuinely had the best childhood. Many kids hope for a childhood like mine. I was born into a Christian family with parents who diligently sought the Lord and instilled a deep love for Him into their children. A huge piece of that was their choice to homeschool us, which ended up being a blessing beyond what any one of us could have predicted, as my life took a significant turn at the age of 16.*

*Up until that point, I hadn't experienced any trauma. My home was safe, my family loving and supportive, and my life comfortable. I was a typical teenager, hanging out with friends, focusing on my study of music, actively playing sports. I can remember praying that God would use my life to change the world around me. What I would never have dreamed was that I would impact the world because I was diagnosed with cancer.*

## A SUDDEN TURN IN MY LIFE

*A few months before my diagnosis, I was required to write a paper for school on my testimony. I struggled because I didn't have a "180-degree moment" where my life completely changed. I had been familiar with Jesus my whole life and, because of that, I didn't have a laundry list of sins as dramatic as drug addiction, etc. Not to have a testimony is, in fact, to have one, as it still displays the grace of Jesus—just in a different way. My testimony was the subject of my paper.*

## HOW GOD USED MY CANCER

*Shortly after that, cancer gave me a platform and an ability to relate to people who are deeply suffering in a way I couldn't have if I hadn't suffered myself. There is a difference between sympathy and empathy, and your greatest pain will launch you into some of your most significant ministry work. Beyond this new capacity to minister to people, I had an entirely new perspective on life. I found myself on my deathbed at 16, and in my first moment of diagnosis before asking the doctor what the outcome would be, I had no idea how much longer I had to live. Everything shifted for me at that moment. Only two things matter in this life: your relationship with God and your relationship with people. Everything else goes away at the end of it all. I can't explain the immense blessing it is to have the ability to move forward in life having the perspective of someone who was facing the end.*

## WHAT DOES GOD HAVE FOR MY FUTURE?

*Something I am learning is that this Christian walk is a moment-by-moment choice to seek Jesus and follow Him. It's just as much about the little steps as the big ones. Following Him is a lot like following someone on a road trip. You know your ultimate destination, but you don't necessarily know the exact roads you'll take to get there. You just trust the person enough to let him/her lead the way.*

*Right now, God has me serving on staff at my local crisis pregnancy center. I am so passionate about the value of every human life and particularly about instilling that value into youth so that they understand God created them on purpose with a plan in mind for their lives. I mentor teenage girls, teach 10<sup>th</sup> grade girls at Liberty at Harbour View, and do a lot of writing and public speaking. I'm going to school for ministry, and I love teaching the Word any opportunity I get. However, I never ever want to do something that the Lord has not called me to do and the Holy Spirit hasn't anointed. I've always dreamed more than anything of being a wife and a mom, so we'll see what the Lord has in store there. I am in a sweet season of life, and it has brought me so many opportunities and such joy! My motto is, "Dying to live fully, fully dying to live." I can't wait to see His plan unfold as He lives through me!*

## RESOURCE

Check out our new SBCV women's leadership blog at [sbcv.org/wmblog](http://sbcv.org/wmblog). Be encouraged, equipped, and engaged!





Not Alone

# Collective Church Planting

**On** September 8, 2016, a team of seven SBCV pastors came together in Wytheville, VA to conduct one of several vision tours held around the Commonwealth and DC. During this tour, God stirred the hearts of every participant and affirmed the need and potential for a new church in the Wytheville area.

As the group shared and prayed together, every participant at the table committed to be involved, at some level, with the planting of this much-needed church. Since the initial meeting, the group has met several times to pray, strategize, review résumés, and interview candidates and potential plant team members. There will be a successful church plant in Wytheville—not because the perfect indigenous candidate has been found but because an indigenous partnership of local churches has taken ownership of the work to which God has called them.



**JESSE FUREY**

**Director of Church Planting and Ministry Training, Valley Bible Church, Radford**

*As we have been exploring the possibility that God might want a church planted in Wytheville, it has been encouraging to partner together with other pastors in the process. From shared meals discussing vision, to church bus rides through town, to prayer together (and apart) for God to work, it has been a good experience in churches collaborating together to plant churches. We are excited about ongoing partnership in church planting in Wytheville and are hoping to use this experience as a model for future church plants.*





## WENDELL HORTON

### Pastor, Sky View Missionary Baptist Church, Fancy Gap

*Just to sit in the meetings and hear the excitement in everyone's voices of what God may do is encouraging. To hear different perspectives of what the plant should look like is stimulating. It makes you think outside the box. A collective partnership just promotes an optimistic, positive attitude of, 'How can this fail?' I also have a personal reason to be a part of this partnership. I have family and friends in Wytheville whom I would like to see in this church plant.*



## JASON KLINE

### Hospice Chaplain

*I have met with [SBCV church planting strategist] Randy Aldridge on several occasions. Randy and I completed several interviews and came to the conclusion that God was moving our hearts to be part of a church plant in our area. It was no coincidence that an amazing team of SBCV pastors came together to also express their interest in supporting this cause. Through much prayer and searching, along with guidance from the team, we came to realize that I would not be the lead planter (due to lack of experience). I praise God for that because I embrace training, hands-on experience, and education prior to doing any task. However, through my time with Randy, the team, and prayer, I came to realize that I have a heightened sense of a missionary heart. I hope that this experience gives me the tools, education, and resources I need to eventually begin church planting/or missions work in the future. Randy has played a vital role in mentoring me and helping me realize God's plan for me. I can't wait to see how He works through us in the great venture! I am excited to be part of this growing team. To God be the glory!*



## JERRY CREAMY

### Pastor, Falling Water Baptist Church, Marion

*How wonderful to be able to live in these exciting days to be able to say that a group of fellow Christians would partner together to plant a church! We have prayed and gathered together in order to plant a church in Wytheville. The need is great. When you look at what was done in the New Testament—they planted churches—how can a church not plant as a part of seeing souls saved for Jesus? To fulfill the Great Commission, we must go, tell, and help those around the world—whether it results in 1, 100, or 1,000 souls for Jesus. Can we challenge you or the church you attend to help fulfil this commandment from Jesus?*



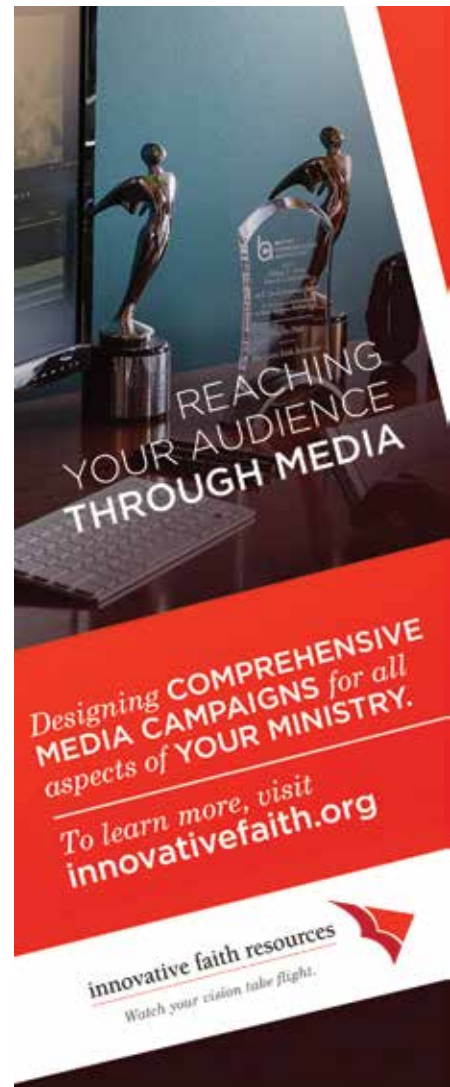
## CHRIS DOWD

### Executive Pastor, Bedrock Community Church, Bedford

*Wytheville is my hometown. When I think about my friends and family back home having increased access to the Gospel, I cannot help but get excited! To partner together with other churches to make that a reality is something that I love about being in the SBCV. We look forward to continuing to pray together, work together, and share resources together in order to advance the Gospel in that area of Southwest Virginia.*

## ACTS 13:1-4 (HCSB)

In the church that was at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen, a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to." Then after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off. Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they came down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.



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**SATURDAY, MAY 20**  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
Glen Allen



To learn more, visit:  
[sbcv.org/deafleadership](http://sbcv.org/deafleadership)

# Inspire

*A word of hope, support, and encouragement*



Milton Harding  
Pastoral Relations  
Associate

## The Trust Factor

Brothers and Shepherds,

I pray that you are encouraged in the Lord this day! I am always captured by the complete submission of the Apostle Paul's life. His walk, I believe, embodies all of what it means to be called of God. If we are truly called of God, then false accusations both in and outside of the church, persecutions, physical harm, etc. will be a part of the package Paul was not ashamed of—"the gospel" (Romans 1:15).

It is clear to me that we, the Church, face some very difficult and trying times ahead. Certainly the political unrest could give us all reason to despair, but I'm compelled to tell you that Jesus *is* still on the throne!

Darkness can cause visibility issues, and sheep depend upon the voice of the shepherd to lead them to green pastures, quiet waters, and righteous paths. Paul points out something to Timothy that serves us bountifully as a daily reminder that those who are called as shepherds are to follow Jesus and

lead His Church (Matthew 16:18). In 1 Thessalonians chapter 2, verse 4, Paul states, "...but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts."

God approved us to be entrusted with the Gospel. How do you know if you've been approved and entrusted? Paul says in the next phrase, "...so we speak..." Yes, we speak to the body of Christ and to the spirit of darkness not to please man but to please God, who examines our hearts as sons and shepherds.

Paul also finishes the covenant in 2 Timothy 1:12 where he says to Pastor Timothy, "...For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day." Paul knew whom he had believed (Jesus) and was convinced (persuaded unto obedience) that God was able to guard (protect

from being lost or perishing) what he entrusted (his very life). Paul was not hindered by external or internal struggles designed to lure him off of the mark of his faith while carrying out the ministry God gave him.

There was a divine trust relationship between God and Paul that fetched a love and loyalty from Paul, the bondservant, towards God! I know this resonates with many of you, especially as we lead people through the fears and concerns of their lives. We too should be convinced that God will guard whatever we trust Him with. Here's the question—can He trust us to be faithful to speak and proclaim His Word, nurturing His sheep so as not to please men but to please God? There has to be a level of trust that is unquestionable. God gives us a pretty simple mission—"make disciples"—and provides everything we need to make that happen.

*\*Scriptures quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.*



**Monday, June 12**  
Southern Baptist Convention  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Following the evening session  
at the Phoenix Convention Center,  
North Building, Room 225B

[sbcv.org/dessert](http://sbcv.org/dessert)



# DISASTER RELIEF

## A Year of Challenge and Change

**2016** was a year of challenge and change with the Disaster Relief (DR) Ministry. The SBC of Virginia conducted five trainings in the spring and two additional trainings in the fall. More than 180 volunteers were trained in areas of spiritual first aid, evangelism, chain saw, flood recovery, mass feeding, and more.

Last year, more than 300 SBCV DR volunteers served in six states. The responses included teams to Virginia (tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods), West Virginia (floods), Louisiana (floods), North and South Carolina (hurricane), and Tennessee (wildfire).

On February 24, 2016, Mark Gauthier once again assumed the role of Disaster Relief director. On that very day, Virginia was struck with eight tornadoes.

Three people died in the small town of Waverly, and a fourth person was killed in Appomattox County, according to local officials. The Appomattox tornado was rated an EF-3 by the National Weather Service, with wind speeds estimated at 136 to 165 mph. This made it the strongest February tornado ever recorded in Virginia. The Waverly tornado was rated an EF-1 with wind speeds estimated at 100 to 110 mph.

SBCV Disaster Relief met needs in the Tappahannock area, Waverly, and Appomattox, where SBCV was asked by the local emergency manager to lead in the relief effort. Dozens of SBCV churches with 100s of volunteers worked alongside local volunteers to meet needs across the three areas.

Two flood recovery teams responded in April 2016 to Natchitoches Parish, LA. More than 28 volunteers from 13 SBCV churches completed dozens of muck-out jobs, meeting the physical needs of families who survived the flood and sharing the love of Christ.

In August, SBCV Disaster Relief was called out in response to flooding in Virginia and West Virginia. Flood recovery teams responded in Virginia, and feeding teams were sent to West Virginia at the request

of the North American Mission Board. More than 65,000 meals were served to those who were impacted by the floods in WV, and teams mucked out dozens of homes in Virginia.

In September, SBCV DR was called upon once again to respond to massive flooding—this time in Baton Rouge, LA. Well over 65,000 homes were flooded, impacting nearly a quarter of a million people. This was the largest disaster since Hurricane Sandy, and the effects were compared to those of Hurricane Katrina. SBCV responded with flood recovery teams of volunteers from across Virginia working in dozens of homes in the Baton Rouge area. Leadership was also provided at the federal and state level, working with Louisiana Baptist Disaster Relief. Additionally, many churches responded by preparing flood buckets, which provided basic cleaning supplies to be used by homeowners. SBCV teams stayed at and worked in partnership with Istrouma Baptist Church, whose pastor, Dr. Jeff Ginn, is one of SBCV's former executive directors.

In October, Hurricane Matthew struck along the East Coast, bringing with it historic floods from South Carolina up through Virginia. Additionally, thousands of trees were downed by the storm, predominantly in South Carolina. SBCV teams responded to South Carolina with chain saw recovery teams and to North Carolina with flood recovery teams. For several weeks, **First Baptist Church of Norfolk** and **Liberty Baptist Church** of Hampton led the flood recovery efforts in Virginia Beach, where more than 1,600 homes were impacted.

The final response for SBCV DR teams in 2016 was to help clean up wildfire damage around Gatlinburg, TN, where 14 lost their lives and more than 2,100 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed. Two teams responded the week before Christmas, conducting recovery work, which included chain saw work, removing damaged trees, and sifting through ashes in burned-out homes. It was in one of those



homes that team members were able to recover a lost diamond ring, which will help in bringing healing to the homeowners.

As we look forward to 2017, we are implementing several changes. To provide better maintenance of the equipment with which we have been blessed, SBCV has acquired a small warehouse in Lynchburg, where all of the units will be stationed. One other significant change is that the initial 2 ½ hours of DR training will be available online. The traditional format will still be available, but an online option will allow volunteers to conduct part of the training at home, thereby shortening the traditional classroom portion. This will also allow volunteers to receive additional training during the classroom portion for special units like that of spiritual care provider.

The focus of the DR Ministry remains the same—sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ as we provide physical relief to those impacted by disasters.

The SBCV is excited about the future of its Disaster Relief Ministry and hopes to see many more SBCV churches and volunteers involved in this critical opportunity.



 **RESOURCE**  
WEBSITE: [sbcv.org/dr](http://sbcv.org/dr)



# THE MUSIC RETURNED

## INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF—CUBA

Recovering from Hurricane Matthew

The land known for music blaring, activity in the streets, and rum flowing freely was eerily quiet when the team arrived. No soccer games were being watched, and many stores were not open. The president of Cuba had died, and nine days of mourning had been declared. During that period, a team from Virginia Global Response and Canadian Global Response came—not for the night life, music, or soccer, but to work with the Eastern Cuban Baptist Convention and coordinate how the three conventions could partner when disaster strikes.

The people of Cuba have yet to recover from Hurricane Matthew, which made landfall in early October 2016. The international news reported no deaths in Cuba and only a dozen or so homes damaged in Barocoa. However, several items went unreported. The most damage occurred 35 miles south of the extreme east coast in Punta de Maisi, which had 100% of homes damaged and at least 75% destroyed. Hundreds of families were impacted. Population statistics report that there are 315,000 people living in eastern Cuba.

The Virginia/Canada team spent two days instructing Cuban youth leaders in disaster response. Forty leaders attended the training event, five of whom were from the area most impacted by Hurricane Matthew. The Cuban churches performed at an incredible level after Matthew hit, but they felt they could have done a more efficient job in their response. They desired training so they could meet even more needs during the next response.

At the conclusion of the two-day training, the five youth leaders went back to their homes in the impacted area, and the training team prepared to visit them there. When the





team arrived, the newly trained youth leaders had already filled journals with the assessments they had made overnight. They had become advocates of their communities and could now ask for assistance in a meaningful, data-driven, compassionate way.

The youth leaders had been asked to find 30 families who were in need of new roofs. Their assessments would determine which families received new roofs from the resources sent by churches in Virginia and Canada. The training team verified the youth leaders' assessments (by a random sample) and found that they had applied their training well beyond the two-day investment.

In the remote community of Punta de Maisi, it was not hard to find a damaged or destroyed home. Therefore, the youth leaders had to look beyond the roofs and homes to the families who lived within. The leaders chose families who clearly had no opportunity for a roof unless they received assistance.

One of the most touching images was a 78-year-old man, wearing 30-year-old clothes perfectly cleaned and without a wrinkle, thanking the team for his new roof. He was a dignified man who did not gush with emotions but expressed thankfulness from his heart for the love and compassion shown to him and his family. He had never seen that kind of love before in his life. He was amazed that God's people would come from a distant land, especially from America, to care for his family. His expression of thankfulness took five minutes without a single word of repetition.

In addition to the 30 roofs purchased by the churches supporting the training team, a week's worth of food was provided for 200 families.



Teams will continue to respond to Cuba, assisting the Cuban Baptist Convention with ongoing Disaster Relief training and with responses to the devastation. Music has returned to the streets, but the need remains to assist the people in their recovery.



Mark your calendars for these  
**DISASTER RELIEF TRAINING EVENTS IN 2017!**

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**MARCH 11**  
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ONANCOCK

**MARCH 25**  
FOREST

**APRIL 29**  
CULPEPER

Get the latest information at [sbcv.org/dr](http://sbcv.org/dr)

# 147 BACKPACKS

More than 100 SBC of Virginia churches participated in the September and October 2016 mission project, Christmas Backpacks for Children in Appalachia.

These backpacks were brought to the Annual Homecoming in Roanoke in November and were processed and loaded into a North American Mission Board (NAMB) tractor-trailer, which transported them to the distribution centers in the Appalachian area. A total of 2,181 backpacks were put on the truck, while 147 made it to Appalachia another way.

Last March, Toni Jones from **Journey Christian**



After Annual Homecoming, a few churches contacted SBCV about backpacks they had not been able to get to Roanoke. They arranged to transport them to Richmond so Sue Sawyer could take them to

**Fellowship II** in Lanexa contacted Sue Sawyer, state mobilizing associate for the SBC of Virginia. Toni's pastor, Jim Pulling Jr., wanted Sue to find out how their church could not only prepare backpacks but also help deliver them to the children. Sue directed them to Bill Barker, NAMB's Appalachia Region ministry director,

to find out the best place for them to go to help. That began several months of preparation for the church and God putting His plan in place. Toni and her husband, Russ, led a group of 11 adults and youth to Manchester, KY to distribute Journey Christian Fellowship II's backpacks to the children at a local school.

the children. Bill Barker believed the greatest need for those backpacks was in Manchester, KY and asked Sue to take them there the same week that the group from Journey Christian Fellowship II would be there.

When the group arrived in Kentucky, the local pastor who had coordinated





the distribution of the backpacks asked Toni how many backpacks she had. She replied, “57.” He then asked Sue how many SBCV brought. She responded, “90.” Combined, there were 147. Nothing could have prepared them for what he was about to say. The poorest school in the county—where they were headed—had just called to say it needed 147 backpacks. They were amazed! Only God could have worked out that exact detail.

While at the school, they had the opportunity to eat lunch with the children, share the Gospel (with their parents’ permission), give them the backpacks, and provide coats and blankets (donated by another ministry). Each of the children also received a Bible.

The team is aware of one girl in the 5th grade who accepted Christ as her personal Lord and Savior. Toni’s 9th grade



daughter, Caroline, shared the Gospel with this little girl. It was a life-changing experience for the child as well as for Caroline because it was Caroline’s first time leading someone to the Lord.

Another child admired Toni’s camera and told her that she had won some awards at the school for pictures

she had taken before her camera broke. She took Toni to the library to show her the pictures. That evening, Toni purchased a camera for the child and asked the principal the next day if it was okay to give it to her. The teachers and principal were delighted that this young lady would once again have a camera with which to take pictures. She was overjoyed and gave an enormous smile when she saw the camera.

The faces of those children as they received their backpacks was a sight to behold. They were all so excited to dive into them to see what was inside.

On behalf of those children, thank you, members of SBC of Virginia churches, who provided a total of 2,328 backpacks. Let’s all work together next year on behalf of the children who did not receive a backpack and try

to surpass our goal of 2,500 backpacks.

Thank you again for giving so sacrificially!

## RESOURCE

### WEBSITE:

[sbcv.org/missionprojects](http://sbcv.org/missionprojects)



# INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH

by Emily Anne Hoosier

Emily is a member of Parkway Baptist Church (Moseley, VA) and a recent graduate of Liberty University. She currently works for the International Mission Board.

“

The harvest is abundant,  
but the workers are few.  
Therefore, pray to the  
Lord of the harvest to  
send out workers in to  
His harvest.

”

Matthew 9:37-38  
(HCSB)

If you’ve ever tried to plan or join a church mission trip to a place historically rooted in Christianity, you’ve likely wondered if it’s worth it.

The name of Christ Jesus has been spoken on Argentine soil for hundreds of years. According to the latest Joshua Project data, about 10% of Argentina claims evangelical Christianity, which is well over the minimum qualification of 2% to be considered reached. We can rightfully rejoice for those in the 10%. But in a “reached” country like Argentina, over 90% of the people are still without Christ.

In a spiritual reality such as this, Southern Baptist churches continue fruitful involvement in cross-cultural evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. Missions may look different in Argentina than in other places without an existing church. But by coming alongside a local church to engage

the lost in its city, volunteer teams from Southern Baptist churches can serve an important role with a lasting impact.

## CONNECT WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH

IMB missionaries Jason and Kelli Frealy developed a relationship with a Baptist Argentine church, Iglesia Evangelica Bautista, and invited a volunteer group from SBC of Virginia churches to connect with what God was doing in Argentina.

“This allowed us to really know the people, love [them], serve with [them], and truly worship alongside each other,” said Mike Camire, student pastor at **Parkway Baptist Church** in Moseley, VA. “I do not think I have ever worked so closely with a specific congregation on [mission] projects in the past. I felt it gave a picture of biblical, Gospel partnership.”

In places like Argentina where churches freely exist, volunteer teams can share the Gospel right alongside a local church body.

## SERVE WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH

At the Argentine church’s weekly service, Derek Futrell, pastor at **Hillcrest Baptist Church** in Ridgeway, VA, thanked the church members for their generous hospitality and reiterated that the volunteer team did not come to Argentina to do the work of sharing the Gospel for this body of believers. Rather, they came to Argentina to do the work with them.

“It was incredible being able to work with the church and make relationships with the members,” said Casey Howell, 17, from Parkway.

The volunteer team of about 20 students, professionals, and pastors joined with members from Iglesia Evangelica Bautista in ministry projects throughout their city. They shared the Gospel in public plazas and in women’s groups. They shared with students and athletes—even with the mayor. On top of hosting, guiding, and interpreting, members from the Argentine church handed



*Praying over those willing to serve God.*





*Sharing the Gospel through maps*

congregation stood and walked to the front of the room. People from both the church and the volunteer team lifted up these brothers and sisters in prayer.

“It is thrilling to see believers—American, Argentine, or otherwise—acknowledge God’s work and call in their lives,” said missionary Kelli Frealy. “There is no telling what God will do with 10 committed Argentine believers willing to follow Him.”

After the service, the team said goodbye to new Argentine friends with several rounds of hugs and selfies, promising to keep in touch. Southern Baptist churches involved in this volunteer mission project

out Gospel tracts with the team and sought out spiritual conversations with their neighbors.

“We had conversations in which we shared the message of sin and salvation, possibly with people who had never clearly heard the Gospel explained before,” shared missionary Jason Frealy.

## WORSHIP WITH THE LOCAL CHURCH

The Virginia team and the Argentine church relished these opportunities to form relationships and labor together for a new harvest. Their last evening all together was spent worshipping God at Iglesia Evangelica Bautista. An international blend of singers and musicians, including Anna Eckerd, 17, from Parkway, led the congregation in worship.

“I didn’t really know what I was getting myself into,” said Eckerd, who doesn’t speak fluent Spanish. “It didn’t matter that I didn’t know [most of the Spanish]. It didn’t matter that I didn’t exactly know how the rhythm went. It was an amazing worship time.”

The congregation stood together as one body, worshipping God in two languages yet one voice.

“It reminded me of what heaven will be like, worshipping the Lord for all of eternity together with those who have trusted Him,” said Pastor Mike.

## LOVE THE LOCAL CHURCH

Fernando Mangieri, pastor of **Iglesia Bautista Conexión** in Chesterfield, VA, preached after worship and gave an invitation to pray over anyone willing to serve God in a cross-cultural context. In response, 10 from the local

not only shared the Gospel to reach the 90%—they also invested in relationships with the 10%, leaving them encouraged to live well among the harvest.

Your church will have its own story to tell as you implement these practices of connecting with, serving with, worshipping with, and loving the local church.

## RESOURCE

The SBC of Virginia is committed to mobilization and the ongoing partnership of local churches here and around the globe. Your church can partner today with the 700+ churches of the SBC of Virginia. An easy way to get started in cross-cultural ministry is to partner with one of SBCV’s ethnic church plants (contact **Larry Black at lblack@sbcv.org**). As you seek to mobilize your church, check out **sbcv.org/mobilizing** to get started or visit SBCV’s webpage for international partnerships (**sbcv.org/missionsmenu**). You may also contact **Brad Russell at brussell@sbcv.org** or **Cathy Almond at calmond@sbcv.org**.

The International Mission Board (IMB) also stands ready to serve your church as you seek to mobilize. If you would like to connect with a missionary to speak at your church or find training resources and more information on how to get started with the IMB, go to **imb.org/for-churches**. These cross-cultural ministry training resources and experiences will inspire and prepare your church to mobilize for international missions and will unite your church with the diverse global church even in your own community.



*Throughout the year, SBC of Virginia offers churches opportunities to partner in support of local, state, national, and international missions. Through Mission Projects, you and your church can have a key role in reaching the world!*



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To learn more, visit:

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MISSIONS  
MENU





## VALLEY STUDENT CONFERENCE

# Student Pastors Partner to Reach the Roanoke Valley with the Gospel

There is a line from a poem by Rudyard Kipling that says, “He travels the fastest who travels alone.” If you’ve ever tried to get to church on time with several members of your family, you will understand how true this is. A YouTuber recently added to Kipling’s proverb, “But he travels the farthest who brings others along.” It is sometimes true that doing ministry is easier when done alone. But it is also true that we can do more and go farther when we partner with others.

The Valley Student Conference was born out of a partnership between SBCV student pastors in the Roanoke Valley. For several years, the student pastors had been meeting together and helping the SBCV plan the annual Youth Evangelism Conference for the western part of Virginia. After several years, the SBCV invited the student pastors to take a greater role in planning and executing the event.

Jonathan Couch, student pastor at **GraceLife Baptist Church** in Christiansburg, recalls, “The network was the first way all of our churches got to meet each other...it allowed us to build relationships that laid the groundwork for a partnership like this.” Commenting on the value of the partnership between SBCV student pastors, Jonathan explains, “We can do more together than we can do individually. This gives us something we can bring our students to where we can trust the content and purpose of the event.”

Michael Rodriguez, student pastor at **First Baptist Church of Roanoke**, recalls his changing attitude toward partnering with others: “Out of seminary, my attitude was, ‘I am here for my church alone.’ But when I saw the benefits and got involved with other ministers, it blew the doors off!” Before he moved to Virginia, Michael saw his small town of Andalusia, AL put on an event that attracted 1,000 students. When Michael moved to Roanoke, he brought with him an enthusiasm for partnering with like-minded believers. He was immediately welcomed by other student pastors in the SBCV network.

Of course, partnering is not without its obstacles. For instance, shares Michael, “when the agenda is something other than building up the Kingdom of God.” Dan Gifford, student pastor at **Fellowship Community Church** in Salem, adds, “Ego can be a major obstacle.... When one person tries to control everything, it really hurts the unity.”

Despite the potential obstacles, Dan has come to see the value in partnering with others. “In my first 10 years of ministry, I never really experienced church partnership. Being a part of the Valley Student Conference team over the last year has shown me that partnering with other student pastors in the area has been valuable for friendship, unity, and making a greater local impact for God’s Kingdom.” Dan admits, “I have to fight against my busy schedule to make it to the meetings. It is important for the group that each person is consistent. Fortunately, we have a group of guys that work well together.”

Over the past year, the network has been working to include more student pastors of SBCV churches in the event, and it has come to be quite meaningful to each church. Jonathan recalls, “It has been great to bring together other churches to reach the Valley for the Gospel!”

“He travels the fastest who travels alone. But he travels the farthest who brings others along.”

Here’s to a year of making the effort to partner for the sake of the Gospel. Let’s do it! Let’s lose our lives for His sake and find the joy of “standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel and not frightened in anything by our opponents”(adapted from Philippians 1:27–28).

The Valley Student Conference will take place March 24–25 at **First Baptist Church of Roanoke**. It is a partnership between the SBC of Virginia and some amazing student pastors who serve in the Roanoke Valley. For more information, visit [valleystudentconference.com](http://valleystudentconference.com).



## VALLEY STUDENT CONFERENCE

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teach me, for You are the God of my  
salvation; I wait for You all day long."*

**PSALM 25:4-5**

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# Back from the Brink

## AN INCREDIBLE STORY OF HOW A CHURCH ON THE BRINK OF FOLDING HAD A BIG TURNAROUND

A church that was once on life support—literally on the brink of folding—has been brought back to life! **Deer Park Baptist Church** in Newport News has experienced a major turnaround, and the story is worth telling!

Not long ago, the church went through a difficult time, losing its pastor and experiencing conflict within. They were down to 30 members and were contemplating what to do. They knew they could not call and support a full-time pastor with such a small congregation, so they made the decision to call an interim pastor, Dwight Braswell, who pulled them together and helped stabilize the church. A year and a half later, they called another interim pastor, SBCV regional missionary Reggie Hester, who led them through the C.H.A.M.P.S. process (Church Health Analysis and Mobilization Planning Strategy) and got them ready for a new pastor.

Through this process, God was preparing a man to come and pastor the church back to health. As a matter of fact, he was one of their own who had grown up in the church but had been on the mission field for 22 years, serving as an International Mission Board missionary. God brought “from a far-off land, a man to fulfill [His] purpose” (Isaiah 46:11, NIV). Just over a year ago, the church called Randy Fields to be its new pastor.

Through the leadership of Pastor Randy, there has been a slow but steady revitalization of Deer Park Baptist Church. Over the past year, the church has grown to average 70 on Sunday morning with a high of 90. They’ve also seen six baptisms and a number of people joining the church.

What has made the difference? Pastor Randy shares the congregation’s vision of revitalization, “First, they are seeking to lead the church to love God, love others, and grow in that love as they go through this process.” In other words, they must love God and others more than having control. “Next, they want to actively take the Gospel to their neighbors and to the nations. Along with this, they want to connect with their community individually and corporately.” This is a change of perspective from just being in the community to reaching and reflecting their community. “Most importantly, they are praying for God to raise up laborers from within and from without (Matthew 9:36).” Their desire is that this would be in their DNA as a church and that they would become a church of laborers.

Thom Rainer shares in *Revitalizing Churches* that “Evangelism is the work of the Holy Spirit. If we are not praying to reach people with the Gospel, our work is human-centered and ineffective.” It is important to remember that revitalization is the work of God, not man. It requires not being self-focused—instead, being focused on the mission of making disciples of the nations. Deer Park is working towards that goal.

Although Deer Park Baptist Church was once on the brink of closing its doors, God has begun a deep and abiding work within His body. Deer Park’s new motto is, “Where God makes all things new.”

### RESOURCE

#### WEBSITE:

[deerparkbaptistchurch.com](http://deerparkbaptistchurch.com)





# The Legacy of Dr. David Johnson

“

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*”

(2 Timothy 4:7, NIV)



**T**his testimony from the Apostle Paul also describes the life and legacy of Dr. David Johnson, a cornerstone leader in the fellowship

and eventually in the founding of the SBC of Virginia.

Born as an identical twin in Hartlepool, England, on August 11, 1940, David Johnson grew up in the hardship of the Battle of Britain during World War II. Hartlepool is a shipbuilding town situated on a peninsula on the northeast coast of England and was, therefore, one of the key targets of the German bombardment. Tragically, the Johnsons lost 11 family members amidst the conflict.

David Johnson loved the game of soccer. God used a coach and an opposing team goalie to persistently invite him to hear the Gospel. At the age of 19, Johnson attended a Gospel rally, where George Flemming (who would become a life-long friend) led him to Jesus. Johnson would go on to become a pastor who loved the souls of men and was used of the Lord to lead many like young Porky Jones to faith in Christ.

*I first met Dave Johnson as a kid at youth camp. From him, I heard the Gospel and learned what it meant to know and walk*

Johnson was a recipient of SBCV's Nehemiah Leadership Award

(below) Johnson's Bible and photos displayed at his memorial service



*with Jesus. When I thought about going into the ministry, I talked to Dave and found an encouraging voice. Dave counseled my wife and me before our marriage, officiated the ceremony, and [was] a sought-after voice of wisdom to us through the years. He spoke at my ordination service when I became a pastor, invited me to preach alongside him at the youth camp he founded and directed; and [was] a dear friend to me through the years. Few men have had greater influence in my life and fewer still have had as significant a voice in my decisions as Dave.*

~ Rev. Porky Jones, Shannondale Springs Chapel, Harpers Ferry, WV

As he pursued a call to full-time ministry, Johnson attended Independent Congregational Church and worked with Hartlepool Evangelistic Fellowship, ministering to young people. God used his spiritual father, George Flemming, and other mentors (like Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones, minister of Westminster Chapel in London) to lead Johnson to pursue an education at Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (WEC) Missionary Training College in Glasgow, Scotland.

He initially thought God was leading him to pursue missionary work, but after graduation from WEC Missionary Training College, Johnson married Jean Moore and pastored for 14 years in village and seaport towns in England. Many lives were transformed in those years (1964–1978).

Tim Johnson, David and Jean's youngest of three sons, testified at his father's celebration of life service, "Dad had his priorities in correct order. He put his personal relationship with Jesus above everything else, then our family, then the church—in that order. His personal relationship with Jesus drove everything that he did, and I think each of you here are a testimony to that relationship."

In November of 1978, God led David to the US to pastor a rural, 50-member congregation—**Rileyville Baptist Church** in Rileyville, VA. Both David and Jean were led to this decision through their time in the Word and in prayer.

The Johnsons' middle son, Paul, recalls, "Dad never made a life decision without a word from God: by Scripture, by the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and/or godly counsel. I've watched both of my parents live an authentic Christian life, often mak-

ing decisions that didn't seem to make much sense, but knowing where their guidance was coming from."

Shortly after the Johnsons arrived in Virginia, Pastor David quickly discovered that the local Baptist association was, "liberal as liberal could be." He was astounded when, in an association meeting, pastors of churches would openly deny the virgin birth of Jesus. David became a part of the "phone booth" group of Bible-believing men who arranged the first budget to begin a state fellowship of conservative churches—the SBC of Virginia—which would later become a new state convention.

The Lord used Pastor David to disciple many young men:

*...He was a godly man who exuded the love and heart of Christ. In my life, he took some random kid from camp and saw the best in him. [He] encouraged me, challenged me, invested in me and, to be sure, on occasion, corrected me. ...He used every opportunity as a teachable moment to point to Christ and our service to and for Him. No time was too busy for a call, no issue too small to pray over or discuss. Pastor Dave was one of the truest examples of being a follower of Christ, and I am a better teacher, pastor, and man for having had his influence in my life!* ~ Rev. Robert McTurnal, Youth Minister, First Baptist Church, Fairfield Glade, TN

Johnson pastored Rileyville Baptist Church for 27 years. It seemed that every few years, the church was outgrowing its facilities and needing to build. At the time of his retirement, membership had blossomed to 400. After retiring, Pastor David continued preaching the Gospel at area churches and assisting them right up until he went to be with the Lord on November 25, 2016.

Dr. David Johnson left behind a legacy of faith through his family, whom he loved, and in men he personally disciplined and pastored. He loved to preach the Word of God, loved the souls of men, was authentic in his faith, and stood for truth with courage and conviction.



# Not Alone

“God keeps working among our Hispanic leaders to create a unified vision of multiplying churches—disciples that make disciples. A common idea is that we are not alone,” says Sergio Guardia, SBC of Virginia Hispanic consultant and pastor of **Nuevo Amanecer Lynchburg**. “Many of our brothers and sisters have been doing God’s work alone. As a result of the SBC of Virginia’s first church planter training in Spanish (December 9-10), leaders expressed that they do not feel alone anymore. They now recognize that they belong to a network of churches that cares for them.”

Lay church planter Caleb Godoy was one of 28 registered participants for the Basic Training journey. Caleb is planting churches in Hyattsville, MD and Leesburg, VA. Caleb shares, “The activity of

praying for and with a brother [was] excellent [and] made us connect with those we do not see regularly.”

Caleb said that the training enabled him to see a step-by-step process through which he will now be able to help others understand the meaning of church planting, the biblical basis for it, and why it is necessary. He will now be able to teach others as they are developing in their church planting journey.

One of the units of instruction was about the importance of understanding your context. Caleb says that he will go back and assess his communities to better understand their needs. The needs are the points of engagement to reach the lost—find a need, meet a need, and share Christ.

For many, the training helped them know where to start. Part of the training also helped leaders hear from others and learn from their life experiences. “I love to hear the testimonies of those who serve in different churches [and] listen to the experiences of pastors,” says Caleb. “God works in different ways.” The purpose of the training was to help leaders be better equipped servants and help them know they are **not alone**.

*Today more than ever, God has guided me to prepare for local and international missions.*

~ Claudia Mendoza, Member, Iglesia Bíblica Bautista Emanuel

*The first training for church planting in Spanish was a great blessing for my life. Apart from the information and guidance received, we worked in ministerial unity, which we presented to the Christian Latino community.*

~ Raúl Santamaría, Pastor, Iglesia Bíblica Bautista Emanuel

*This last year has been hard for them in the church plant. But listening today about vision and how vision drives us encouraged me to keep going. God wants a church that cares for people and that lives out grace and has a biblical foundation.*

~ Marlon Martinez

*God keeps working among our Hispanic leaders to create a unified vision of multiplying churches, disciples that make disciples. A common idea is that we are **not alone**.* ~ Sergio Guardia, Pastor, Nuevo Amanecer Lynchburg



Basic Training leaders (l-r):  
Raúl Santamaría,  
Fernando Mangieri,  
and Sergio Guardia

Church planter  
apprentice Jefferson  
Hernandez (l) and  
church planter  
Caleb Godoy (r)





## Español

traducido por  
Sergio Guardia



el grupo de Entrenamiento Básico

# No Estamos Solos

“**D**ios sigue trabajando entre nuestros líderes hispanos para crear una visión unificada de iglesias que se multiplican, de discípulos que hacen discípulos. Una idea en común es que no estamos solos,” dijo Sergio Guardia, Consultor de Ministerios Hispanos de la SBC de Virginia. “Muchos de nuestros hermanos y hermanas han estado trabajando solos en la obra de Dios. Los líderes que atendieron el primer entrenamiento en español para plantadores de iglesias manifestaron que ya no se sentían solos. Ellos pueden ver ahora que pertenecen a una red de iglesias que se preocupa por ellos.”

Caleb Godoy, plantador de iglesias laico, fue uno de los 28 participantes registrados en el proceso del Entrenamiento Básico. Caleb está plantando iglesias en Hyattsville, Maryland y en Leesburg, Virginia. Él nos manifestó que “la actividad que tuvimos de orar unos por otros fue excelente, nos ayuda a conectar con aquellos que no vemos de manera regular, y que solamente los vemos en estos eventos.”

Caleb dijo que el entrenamiento lo capacitó para ver un proceso de paso a paso y que ahora él podrá ayudar a

otros. “Otros han estado preguntando acerca de plantación de iglesias, y porque es necesario.” Él se siente capacitado para explicar las bases bíblicas para plantación de iglesias, y también será capaz de enseñar a otros mientras se desarrollan. Una de las unidades de entrenamiento tocaba el tema de la importancia de entender el contexto.

Caleb dijo ahora piensa volver y hacer una evaluación de su comunidad para entender las necesidades que realmente tiene. Al entender las necesidades de la comunidad podrá encontrar los puntos de contacto para alcanzar a los perdidos, encontrar una necesidad que necesita ser satisfecha, satisfacerla y compartir a Cristo.

Por lo que nos compartió Caleb, “este entrenamiento me ha ayudado a saber dónde empezar.” Parte del entrenamiento era que estos líderes oyeran y aprendieran de la experiencia de los facilitadores. “Me encantó oír los testimonios de aquellos que sirven en diferentes iglesias, oír y aprender de sus experiencias como pastores. Vemos que Dios trabaja de maneras distintas.” El propósito no es llenar la cabeza de conocimiento, sino es ayudar a otros a estar más capacitados como siervos, ayudarles y que sepan que NO ESTÁN SOLOS.

*Hoy, más que nunca, Dios me ha guiado para prepararme para misiones a nivel local e internacional.*  
~ Claudia Mendoza, Miembro, Iglesia Bautista Bíblica Emanuel

*El primer entrenamiento de la iglesia en español fue una gran bendición para mi vida. Aparte de la información y orientación recibida, hemos colaborado en el ministerio, que se presenta a la comunidad cristiana Latina* ~ Raúl Santamaría, Pastor, Iglesia Bíblica Bautista Emanuel

*Este año ha sido difícil en la plantación de iglesias. Pero al oír hoy de acerca de la visión y como la visión nos guía, me he sentido animado a continuar. Dios quiere una iglesia que se preocupe de las personas, que vive la gracia y que tiene un fundamento bíblico.*  
~ Marlon Martinez

*Dios sigue trabajando entre nuestros líderes hispanos para crear una visión unida de iglesias que se multiplican, de discípulos que hacen discípulos. Una idea común es que **no estamos solos**.* ~ Sergio Guardia, Pastor, Nuevo Amanecer Lynchburg

# WHEN MISSIONARIES RETURN

What happens when missionaries return to the United States from their international assignment? Long-time International Mission Board missionaries who recently chose to take a voluntary retirement package found themselves asking similar questions: *Now what? I am newly retired but not tired—and I have been called and equipped to serve the Lord in some capacity.*

Because of our partnership with the International Mission Board in Richmond and the close proximity of the training center in Rockville, the SBC of Virginia has built strong relationships with field and support personnel. What could we do to show our appreciation for these faithful servants of the Lord who left the comfort and convenience of home, gave up lucrative careers, sacrificed personal resources, and said goodbye to family and friends to boldly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ abroad?

Through the partnership of SBC of Virginia churches, the following opportunities were offered to returning missionaries:

*Free training through LifeWay's Transitional Pastor Certification*

*A free résumé workshop*

*A listing of possible missionary houses, vacation houses, and ministry getaway locations*

*Assistance with finding transportation*

*A call-out system to make churches aware of the missionary needs*

*Counseling service referrals*

*Inclusion in listings for pulpit supply, interim pastors, and transitional pastors*

*Résumé referral for full-time and part-time ministry positions, including senior pastor, associate pastor, bi-vocational pastor, missions pastor, preschool/children's minister, etc.*

*Referrals to enhance ethnic relationships and advance local ministries*

*Referrals to the SBCV Church Planting Team for consideration for planting or assisting ethnic church plants*

Tom and Cindi Melvin, who served in Southern Africa for almost 10 years, took advantage of these provisions. Cindi shares, "We chose to participate in many SBC of Virginia opportunities, which continues to help us get adjusted back to the States. It's not easy coming back to your native land after serving in your heartland and home for 10 years."

"The SBC of Virginia helped us network with other local churches," adds Tom. "As a matter of fact, they helped reintroduce us to **Kingsland Baptist Church**, who made long-term provisions for us to live in their mission house until we could find more permanent housing."

"Our connection with the SBC of Virginia has given us many speaking opportunities," says Cindi. "We have been invited to make IMB and Lottie Moon presentations, we have been invited to mission emphasis Sundays to do what we love—and that's to tell God's story."

Now that the Melvins are back in the US, instead of focusing on the lostness of one people group, they have come to realize that their passion has expanded for all nations. The Melvins have recently joined the SBC of Virginia team as state mobilization associates. Tom explains, "Our heart's desire is to train and equip churches to be on mission." They have recently participated in a Four Fields Training for international church planters and are devising a boots-on-the-ground training opportunity (based on their own experiences) that will help prepare those who are interested in going on short-term mission endeavors.

What happens when missionaries return? They see where God is at work, join Him in the mission, and keep telling the story of Jesus.

## RESOURCE

**CONTACT:** For more information, email the Melvins at [tmelvin@sbcv.org](mailto:tmelvin@sbcv.org) or [mobilizing@sbcv.org](mailto:mobilizing@sbcv.org).



# How Can I Pay for School?

## THE ANSWER HAS BEEN HERE ALL ALONG!

One of the biggest hurdles in pursuing higher education is the question, “How am I going to pay for it?” Getting a master’s or doctorate degree at a university or seminary is expensive.

“I first heard about it in 2007 when I was pursuing an M.Div. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY,” says Nathan Cecil, associate pastor for Family Ministries at **Bacon’s Castle Baptist Church** in Surry, VA. You may not have known about “it,” but much-needed help is available for Southern Baptist students who choose to study at certain Southern Baptist schools.

The Charles B. Keesee Educational Fund was established in 1941 by the late Mr. and Mrs. Charles B. Keesee of Martinsville, VA. Their desire was to make sure pastors and ministry leaders received the education they needed to better represent the Gospel. The couple started with \$279,000, an amount that has now grown to \$67,000,000 in total assets.

“I applied for and received a grant from the Keesee Foundation each and every semester throughout my entire M.Div.,” Cecil shares. “I completed my M.Div. in 2011 and can honestly say that other than the Cooperative Program, no other organization or individual played a more significant role in funding my seminary education than the Keesee Educational Fund.”

The fund distributes more than \$3 million in grants annually to 700 applicants planning to attend select schools with a Baptist affiliation. In the past, grants have ranged up to \$8,000 per year for a maximum of

four years for students at the master’s degree level and up to \$3,000 per year for a maximum of three years for students pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree. The amount of the grant can change from year to year. This year, the maximum grant amount per student will be \$7,000.

Dr. Brian Autry, SBC of Virginia’s executive director, is not only a proponent of the Keesee Educational Fund, he was also a two-time recipient: “Several generations of pastors and missionaries have been blessed by Keesee, enabling students to receive a first-class education.”

Dr. Chuck Lawless, dean and vice president of graduate studies and ministry centers at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC, agrees with Autry, “The Keesee Educational Fund, especially when it’s combined with the contributions of the SBC Cooperative Program, allows many of our students to attend Southeastern Seminary for minimal cost. This fund not only helps our students earn degrees debt free, but it also frees them up to focus on their training to take the Gospel to their neighbors and the nations. Our partnership with Keesee greatly assists us in preparing Great Commission-focused ministers and missionaries.”

The Keesee Fund grants are administered by a board of trustees who review students’ applications and eligibility for aid. Applicants must be residents of Virginia, North Carolina, or South Carolina (they must prove 12 months of residency prior to beginning their degree). They must also be a member of a Baptist church and have the intention to enter the Baptist ministry upon graduation.

The Keesee Fund recently made a big announcement. Its board has now approved students in Liberty University’s Rawlings School of Divinity to become eligible for grants

*Ceremony signifying Liberty University’s acceptance by Keesee Fund’s board into the foundation*



*Prospective students signing up for the Keesee Scholarship*

“I’M THANKFUL THAT WE HAVE STRONG SEMINARIES AND SCHOOLS, AS WELL AS SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES AVAILABLE.”

to pursue graduate training in ministry. Liberty is one of two institutions to be newly approved this year—the first to join the program in 11 years. Students pursuing Liberty’s residential Master of Divinity degree, select Master of Arts degrees, or a Doctor of Ministry degree will be eligible to apply.

Dr. Ed Hindson, dean of the Rawlings School of Divinity, is thrilled for this opportunity: “We are truly honored to know that [Keesee has] added Liberty to its list of schools because of our commitment to training Baptist students for the ministry.”

“A new generation of pastors and missionaries are being called out,” adds Autry, “and I am thankful that we have strong seminaries and schools, as well as scholarship resources available.”

“I can’t help but thank God when I think about the Charles B. Keesee Educational Fund,” concludes Cecil. “The ministry of the Keesee Fund has not only laid a foundation for my life and ministry but continues to build upon that foundation. It continues to offer significant financial aid in the completion of my doctoral degree. Three semesters in, I can confidently say that the Keesee Fund continues to be a significant source of financial support for my family and me.”

### RESOURCE

**WEBSITE:** [cbkeesee.net](http://cbkeesee.net)

Liberty University’s Rawlings School of Divinity ([liberty.edu/divinity](http://liberty.edu/divinity)) has a direct email address for information: [keesee@liberty.edu](mailto:keesee@liberty.edu).



# Masculine Truths

## What does it mean to be a godly man?

### MOSAIC BIBLE CHURCH AND THE GOSPEL FIGHT CLUB

“Today more than any other time in history, the gender battle rages against a man’s soul,” says Pastor James Hinton of **Mosaic Bible Church** in Winchester, VA. “[The] culture has been trying to say for decades that there is no real difference between a man and woman. Our culture today would have you believe that the differences seen between a man and a woman are culturally driven. Nothing could be further from the truth. God made it clear from the very beginning in Genesis that man is made in His very image.”

True masculinity is defined in Scripture, but “When these biblical masculine truths are taken out or

not given their proper emphasis in the local church, men begin to check out and become passive,” says Pastor James. “Their power to stand and live boldly for Christ, their family, and their community is emptied of the necessary muscle and endurance to succeed.”

*Love Jesus, Fight Hard, Lead Well!*

These words appear on every email that Pastor James sends out. They are directed to the men in his community, and they are his battle cry. James is passionate about reaching men and teaching them that, through the power of the Gospel and with help from the Lord, they can be the leaders God has called them to be, leading their communities and families well.

On the first Saturday of each month, Mosaic Bible Church hosts its Gospel Fight Club at a local hotel. This is where men gather to discuss what God’s Word has to say about the role of men in their families, the church, and the community.

When inviting men to the first Gospel Fight Club of the new year, Pastor James encouraged them to start the year off right: “Learning how to play offense with our lives can make a big difference! This month we will begin to see some of our roles and how the Gospel empowers us as men to live them out for the glory of God and the good of others....”

Gospel Fight Club is a time where men can be open and honest about their relationship with God and with their families. Nothing is out of bounds during these meetings. They discuss questions like:

- *What are the qualities of manhood?*
- *What should we consider masculine features?*
- *When you hear the term, man, what images should it conjure up in your mind?*

#### ■ *Does the Bible speak to the conduct and character of manhood?*

What Pastor James teaches the men at Mosaic Bible Church and at Gospel Fight Club is based in God’s Word, from Adam to Jesus.

Author Stu Weber affirms, “Those Genesis markers stood up well for centuries, even millennia. But as the traffic in recent years has increased, we’ve lost sight of them in the blur. The high-speed traffic of our culture roars past them as though they do not exist. Consequently, by ignoring those ancient signposts, we’ve taken a number of serious wrong turns along the road. These roads are man-killers.”

In his book, *The Bravehearted Gospel*, Eric Ludy writes, “An emasculated church might smell sweeter and look nicer, and may even get in a whole lot less trouble, but ultimately, it is a church that is impotent. And while it might be less offensive, it is powerless to break through to the souls of the lost or to radically recue the overlooked and the oppressed.”

Mosaic Bible Church and its Gospel Fight Club are making a difference in Winchester. Gospel-centered masculinity is empowering these men to be men of God, leading their families and communities well.

Pastor James not only desires to see these results at Mosaic but at other churches too. He is working with a number of churches throughout Virginia to empower men to live out this biblical mandate. So far, he has worked with seven other churches to help them develop their own Gospel Fight Clubs.

#### ● RESOURCE

**WEBSITE:** [gospelfightclub.com](http://gospelfightclub.com)

**CONTACT:** Pastor James Hinton  
at [james@gospelfightclub.com](mailto:james@gospelfightclub.com)







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# SBC of Virginia Looks Ahead While Celebrating 20 Years

The 2016 SBC of Virginia Annual Homecoming, held at **First Baptist Church of Roanoke** on November 13–15, was historic for many reasons. It celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1996 vote in Richmond to make the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia a state convention. This year's Homecoming brought a large crowd of more than 1,200. Messengers unanimously elected the SBC of Virginia's first Hispanic officer. This time of fellowship, encouragement, and reporting focused on the theme that we are **Not Alone** in our Gospel partnership of churches.

Dr. Bryan Smith, president of the SBC of Virginia and host pastor, shared, "This year's convention theme, **Not Alone**, was a wonderful description of the special celebrations and thanksgivings which helped to make this year's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary Homecoming so very special for all of us who were blessed to attend."

Executive Director Brian Autry said, "In celebrating the SBC of Virginia's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we now have more than 700 Southern Baptist churches partnering together—smaller churches to some of the largest SBC churches from across Virginia and Metro DC—united with a bold commitment to the Great Commission and God's Word."

Autry announced in his Executive Director's Report on Monday night three major initiatives: 1) a challenge for every church to adopt a local school; 2) Virginia Global Response; and 3) church revitalization. Virginia Global Response is a ministry initiative of the SBC of Virginia that provides a humanitarian and compassionate ministry platform for churches and individuals to be mobilized for rapid response and ongoing ministry. Autry said, "Because of our Gospel partnership, churches are being strengthened, Christians are being mobilized, churches are planting churches, and disciples are being made." Regarding church revitalization, he stated, "Our goal is that no church be left behind as we seek to advance the Great Commission."

Messengers approved 27 new churches for affiliation with the SBC of Virginia, which brought the total number of SBCV churches to 707.

A special reception was held Sunday before the evening session to honor founding members and former presidents and reflect on 20 years of ministry. "To be a part of the SBCV has been one of the richest, most rewarding blessings of my life," said Pastor Carl Weiser from **Hyland Heights Baptist Church** in Rustburg.

"You know people ask us, 'How did it happen?' To be perfectly honest, we have to say it was a God thing from beginning to end," said David Johnson, former pastor of **Rileyville Baptist Church** in Rileyville, who went home to be with the Lord just a couple of weeks after Annual Homecoming.

"If you want to look at the history of SBCV, you've got to take into consideration the lay people—they played a major role," said Doyle Chauncey, SBCV's first executive director.

Evangelist Bob Davis, one of the original founders, said, "It felt really good to see what God did with a handful of men

*Former Executive Director Doyle Chauncey and his wife, Sharon, pray at the beginning of Homecoming*



*Honoring the many who were at the forefront of the SBC of Virginia*





Dr. Dave Earley giving an invitation

remaining 49% for the ministries of the SBC of Virginia. The 2017 MIP amount and the allocation are the same as the 2016 MIP. (For the full financial report, go to [sbcv.org/2016financereport](http://sbcv.org/2016financereport))

Annual Homecoming keynote speakers included Dr. Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, who shared Sunday night. Dr. Dave Earley, lead pastor of First Baptist Church of Grove City, OH, shared Monday afternoon, and Dr. J.D. Payne, pastor for Church Multiplication at The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL, wrapped up the afternoon session. Pastor H.B. Charles Jr., pastor-teacher of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church in Jacksonville, FL, preached Monday evening. Tuesday morning messages began with Dr. Bryan Smith, and Pastor Dharti Lewis, lead pastor of Blueprint Church in Atlanta, GA, completed the session by giving the challenge for SBC of Virginia churches to embrace the theme of **Not Alone** and to also consider those with whom they were ministering. The message brought pastors to the altar and Lewis to tears as the challenge was shared to pray for God to reconcile our divided nation.

Charles Billingsley, music artist and worship leader of **Thomas Road Baptist Church** in Lynchburg, led worship throughout Homecoming. Sunday night included the music group, Not Easily Broken. The First Baptist Church of Roanoke choir and praise team, led by Marty Hamby and Kory Van Matre, also sang on Sunday night. LU Praise from Liberty University performed Monday night, along with choirs from **Franklin Heights Baptist Church** in Rocky Mount and **Cave Spring Baptist Church** in Roanoke.

Pastor David Slayton from **South Norfolk Baptist Church** in Chesapeake said he is already looking forward to next year. "Homecoming 2016 was a great encouragement! The messages spoke to where I am both in life and ministry."

Mark your calendar for the next Annual Homecoming, November 12–14, 2017 at **The Heights Baptist Church** in Colonial Heights!



LU Praise from Liberty University

who met in a hotel room to pray for God to do something unusual through them."

Statistics from the 2015 Annual Church Profile were reported, which showed that there were 6,896 baptisms that took place—a 3.3% increase from 2014. Nearly 80,000 people participated in missions—a 20% increase. In addition, 59,675 young people were enrolled in Vacation Bible School—a 20% increase.

Since October 2015, 18 new church planters and 9 church planter apprentices were approved. The total number of SBCV church plants and small groups is currently 89, and slightly more than 10% of SBC of Virginia churches partnered with SBCV church planters in 2016 alone.

Seven resolutions were unanimously approved, including *On Revival and Spiritual Awakening*, which encouraged churches to unite and to pray for spiritual healing for our nation. Another resolution that spoke to the current culture, *On Transgenderism and the Public Schools*, called for churches to minister to those who self-identify as transgender and to their families. (For a full transcript of the resolutions, go to [sbcv.org/2016resolutions](http://sbcv.org/2016resolutions))

Dr. Bryan Smith, pastor of **First Baptist Church of Roanoke**, was elected for a second term as president; Rev. Greg Brinson, pastor of **London Bridge Baptist Church** in Virginia Beach, was elected as first vice president; Rev. Carlos Payan, pastor of **Iglesia de las Americas** in Lynchburg, was elected as second vice president; and Rev. James Ford, discipleship pastor of **The Heights Baptist Church** in Colonial Heights, was elected for a second term as secretary.

"It is an honor and privilege to serve as the second vice president of our state convention," said Payan. "I am proud of the multicultural openness of our convention. I pledge to represent our convention responsibly to the churches of our state and to continue promoting the conservative values that our convention supports, both in the new churches and those that are to be added."

The 2017 Ministry Investment Plan (MIP) in the amount of \$9,200,000 was unanimously approved, with 51% of funds allocated to the Southern Baptist Convention and the

#### 2017 OFFICERS (left to right)

President: *Dr. Bryan Smith, Pastor of First Baptist Church, Roanoke (2<sup>nd</sup> term)*  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: *Rev. Greg Brinson, Pastor of London Bridge Baptist Church, Virginia Beach*  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: *Rev. Carlos Payan, Pastor of Iglesia de las Americas, Lynchburg*  
 Secretary: *Rev. James Ford, Discipleship Pastor of The Heights Baptist Church, Colonial Heights (2<sup>nd</sup> term)*



# A Vision Virginia Gift

## CommUNITY Church of Salem

**C**ommUNITY Church of Salem, VA, in gratitude to the SBC of Virginia, made an \$8,000 donation to Vision Virginia in December 2016. The gift stemmed from an incredible story of God bringing life from death.

One year ago, Tabernacle Baptist Church, meeting on Main Street in Salem, chose

to close its doors due to a declining and aging congregation. With the help of the SBCV, the church chose to give its property to another SBCV congregation—CommUNITY Church, pastored by Tom McCracken. Today, that area of Main Street bustles with activity as CommUNITY Church reaches people with the Gospel. God has truly brought life from death.

Pastor Tom McCracken shares, “This Easter will mark our one-year anniversary at our new location, and we have already seen over 75 new members. The most satisfying aspect of this relocation is to see the former Tabernacle Baptist Church members, who were in tears when I first met them, now so excited about God using them to advance His Kingdom and grow His Church.”

All of this took place because the mission of the SBCV is to strengthen and mobilize churches to make disciples and plant churches for Jesus Christ through Gospel partnership. Pastor Tom explains:

*The passion the SBCV has for revitalizing churches is very evident, especially to our congregation. Thanks to our SBCV regional missionary serving as a consultant through the dissolution of Tabernacle Baptist and facilitating the relocation of CommUNITY, we now have the potential to go where we have never gone, do what we have never done, and be who we have never been! Since moving, our congregation has filled our 500-seat sanctuary to capacity more than once, and the baptistery waters are constantly being stirred by both the young and older. Additionally, once our former building is sold, we will be debt-free, freeing up thousands of dollars a month for missions and ministry in this community and around the world!*

Gifts like this to Vision Virginia allow interns to serve our churches, impacting both the interns and the churches where they serve. Vision Virginia funds also help churches assist the less

fortunate through hunger ministries. Gifts to Vision Virginia help students receive seminary training in order to fulfill their calling. Funds go to churches to be ready to serve their communities through Disaster Relief, Ready Church, and Baptist Builders ministries. They help fund ministry in Appalachia—which touches the Commonwealth—and through Virginia Global Response—which impacts the world through global Gospel partnerships. Gifts to Vision Virginia also help evangelize those who are learning English as a Second Language (ESL). They help provide worship equipment and land grants for church plants and other new churches, where the Gospel can be shared with those who may have never heard it.

While the gift came from CommUNITY Church, Tabernacle Baptist Church gave the gift of Gospel legacy, and its impact carries on. To God be the Glory!





# Tent Meeting

## USING AN OLD-FASHIONED METHOD IN A CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

Finding meeting places for church plants is known to be a challenge, yet church planters are known to be creative.

But what do you do when the school where you're meeting in your first year plans to perform maintenance over the summer, making major areas of the school off limits? Do you stop having services? Do you find another place to meet? Where could 150 people meet for worship?

How about meeting in a tent? Tent meetings are not a new concept—the first tent meetings took place in July 1800 at Gasper River Church in southwestern Kentucky.<sup>1</sup> But would this old-fashioned method work in a contemporary culture, especially in a church plant?

Church planter Robert Hampshire and **Village Church** in Churchville, VA decided to give it a try. “We really didn’t have a plan B,” recalls Pastor Robert. “We began to pray and ask around.”

That’s when Pastor Robert connected with SBCV regional missionaries Don Cokes and Steve Bradshaw, who connected him to Pastor Zack Zbinden of **Salem Baptist Church** in Crozier, VA. Pastor Zack agreed to loan Village

Church a tent for the summer. For 10 weeks, Village Church suspended its Sunday morning children’s ministries and met in a tent, where attendees brought their own camping chairs.

“The first half of the summer, [there was] a lot of excitement. The mornings were cool, and we even had a lot of extra visitors,” shares Pastor Robert. “Eventually, as the temperatures rose, we had to bring in big fans to get the air moving and, on some mornings, we had to push rain off of the tent.” The Lord provided the blessing of a summer with no major weather events, though. In addition, He drew people to Himself, and Pastor Robert was able to baptize three people in Jennings Branch, a well-known river behind the tent where many locals played as children.

Not only did meeting in a tent solve the space problem, it also saved the new church a considerable amount of money not having to pay rent to the school. But this concept was not without its trials. Pastor Robert recalls, “At around 11:30 AM every Sunday, the sun rose and the tent heated up. It got brighter, and it was time to wrap [things] up.”

Nevertheless, “It was a great experiment,” says Pastor Robert.

“There was (in the beginning) more excitement and freshness and newness because of how it was laid out. The people felt closer. It worked out well, but everybody is glad to be back in the school.”

It’s encouraging to witness the ingenuity of church planters like Robert Hampshire who aren’t afraid to try new things or even old things in a new culture, and it’s a blessing to hear of SBC of Virginia churches connecting and networking to bring the Gospel to the lost.

<sup>1</sup> Reference: [www.appalachianhistory.net/2016/07/that-old-time-tent-revival](http://www.appalachianhistory.net/2016/07/that-old-time-tent-revival)



### RESOURCE

WEBSITE:  
[villagechurchva.com](http://villagechurchva.com)



**SAVE THE DATE!**

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**Faith  
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[sbcv.org/rally](http://sbcv.org/rally)





from the EDITOR

**Brandon Pickett**

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A handwritten signature of Brandon Pickett in cursive script.

# Exceedingly Abundantly

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS SHOWN THROUGH THE GIVING OF HIS PEOPLE

**COOPERATIVE  
PROGRAM MISSION  
GIVING IS THE  
LARGEST IT HAS  
EVER BEEN IN SBCV'S  
HISTORY—TOPPING  
\$9.2 MILLION!**

Every year comes with excitement, anticipation and, for some, a little anxiety. Perhaps 2017 has started like that for you. Last year may have been a great year, and you're hoping this year will be just as nice. But maybe 2016 wasn't so great and you want 2017 to be just a little nicer—a little sweeter.

When we start to go down that road of the "if only's" of the past and the "what if's" of the future, it's good to reset our minds back to higher things. These things aren't easily seen but are the best things to think about and strive for in a brand-new year.

In Ephesians 3, Paul, while in prison, reminds the Ephesians that though they are Gentiles, they are fellow heirs with him in Christ. Paul tells them that there are incredible riches in Christ. And even better than that—they now can have boldness and access to God through faith in Jesus!

He ends the chapter with a challenge of encouragement—that they would be strengthened and rooted and grounded in godly love. And the last two verses are fantastic verses for all of us to remember, not just at the beginning of the year but all year long:

*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the*

*church by Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

*Ephesians 3:20-21 (NKJV)*

We've seen the truth of these verses just in the faithfulness of God's people giving through SBC of Virginia churches in 2016. God continues to amaze us and do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think. The financial report for 2016 shows that Cooperative Program mission giving is the largest it has ever been in SBCV's history—topping \$9.2 million! On top of that, both the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and the Vision Virginia Missions Offering exceeded their 2016 goals (see chart on next page). Praise the Lord!

Through your generous giving, God provided for the SBC of Virginia to host 30 encouraging opportunities across the state with about 7,000 people in attendance.

It's easy to read it, but please ponder this for a moment:

***He wants to do more in you  
and through you than you  
can even ask or think.***

Wow! May this incredible promise guard your heart and mind and encourage you as you continue to serve and glorify Him in 2017.





Revitalization Conference

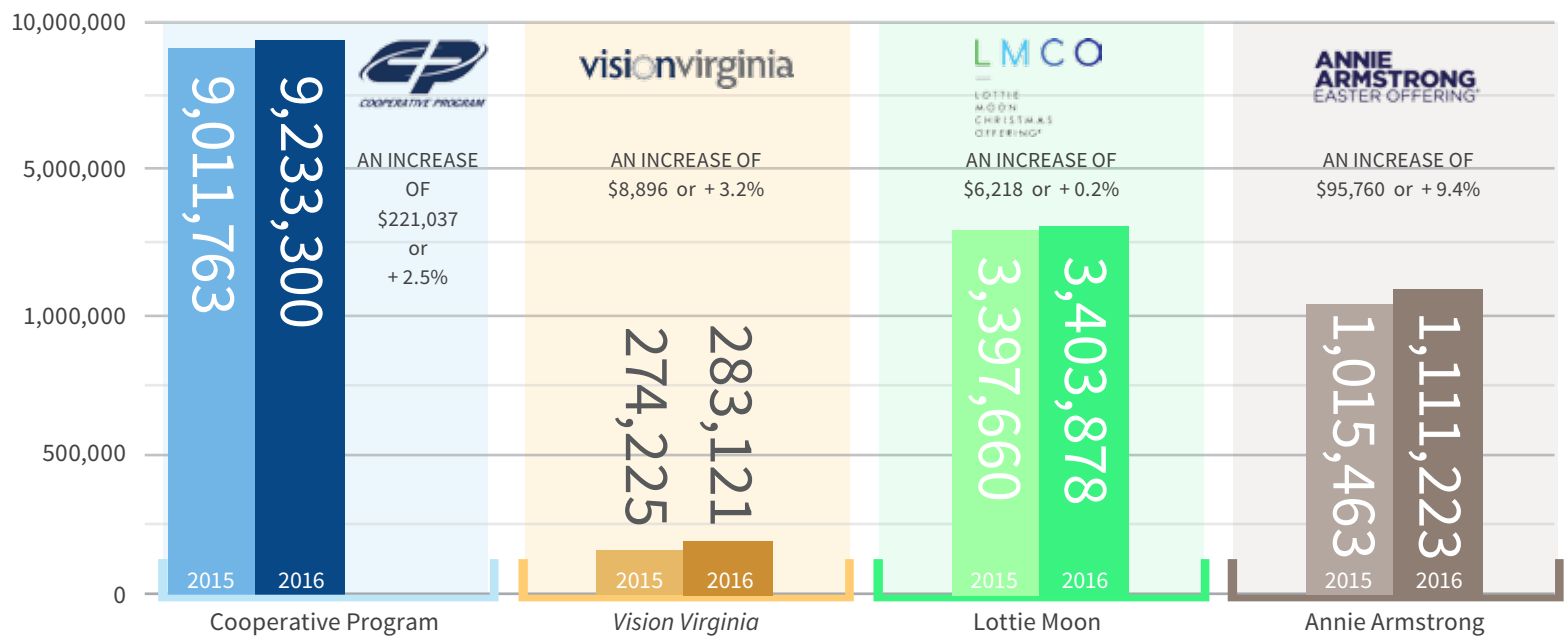


Empowered Conference



SBCV / LU Worship Technology Conference

## YOUR GENEROUS GIVING





# Sharing the Gospel

## Crossover Roanoke

As the the SBCV prepared to gather for its 2016 Annual Homecoming to celebrate 20 years of Gospel partnership, the first-ever SBCV Crossover event took place Saturday, November 12—the day before meetings began. Volunteers from across Virginia descended on the Roanoke Valley to participate in projects where the Gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed.


Seven block parties and two gas buy-downs were scattered in different locations throughout the region. Some of the events were hosted by church plants and some by existing churches. Approximately 1,600 people from the community attended one of those events. In addition, there were three separate door-to-door campaigns that preceded block parties. Crossover participants went through neighborhoods, inviting people to the block parties and sharing the Gospel when and where God opened the door of opportunity.

The 325 Crossover Roanoke participants represented 30 SBCV churches. Through the day's events, 31 people were recorded as making a decision to trust Christ as Savior. Over all, 480 Gospel conversations took place—each conversation planting seeds for God to grow.

Another notable outcome from Crossover Roanoke was the emphasis on prayer. There were prayer tents at several of the block parties and designated prayer areas at the gas buy-downs, where attendees could ask a volunteer to pray for their needs. Throughout Crossover Roanoke, participants from SBCV churches prayed with and for 350 people who attended an event.

"I can't think of a better way to celebrate 20 years of Gospel partnership as a coalition of churches than to come together to saturate the Roanoke Valley with the Good News of Christ," says SBCV executive director, Dr. Brian Autry.

Many thanks go out to all of the churches who organized projects and to the churches who sent volunteers to help!





*52 Sundays is a powerful missions resource filled with weekly devotions and highlights of missionaries connected to our SBC Great Commission partners. Each week, coupled with a devotion, is a challenge to pray boldly for those on the local, national, and international mission field.*

*May SBC of Virginia churches come together to strengthen one another in God's Word and pray for these bold missionaries.*

**2017**

**DOWNLOAD THE BOOKLET & OTHER RESOURCES AT**  
[sbcv.org/52sundays](http://sbcv.org/52sundays)



## IF YOU HAPPENED TO DIE TODAY, DO YOU KNOW IF YOU WOULD GO TO HEAVEN?

It's **THE most important question of your life** because YOUR ETERNITY depends on your answer. God says that in order to go to heaven, you must be born again. He gives us a plan of salvation, how to be born again, in the Bible. His plan is simple!

It's as easy as A-B-C!

**Admit you're a sinner who needs to be saved.**

*Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

**Believe that Jesus died for you and rose again.**

*Romans 10:9, "If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

**Commit to accepting Jesus as your Savior and Lord.**

*Romans 10:13, "For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

Would you be willing to pray this prayer with a heart of faith, trusting and believing what the Bible says about Jesus and His love for you?

*"Oh, God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross for me. I believe His shed blood paid the price for my sin, and that His death, burial, and resurrection were all for me. I now receive Him as my personal Savior and Lord. Thank you for forgiving me of my sins and for the gifts of salvation and eternal life. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."*

Take God at His Word and claim His gift of salvation.  
Believe and you will be saved.





# Calendar

view the online calendar at [sbcv.org/calendar](http://sbcv.org/calendar)

## MARCH

### Mission Projects:

#### Hikers' Supplies for Trail Days / Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

- 2-3 Women's Conference "You Lead" (Centreville BC, Fairfax)
- 4 SBCV Kidz Leaders' Conference and Super VBS Clinic (Swift Creek BC, Midlothian)
- 4 Disaster Relief Training (Onancock BC, Onancock)
- 5-12 Annie Armstrong Week of Prayer for North America
- 7 Prayer Summit (The Heights BC, Colonial Heights)
- 10-11 PLANT B
- 11 Disaster Relief Training (Smyrna BC, Dinwiddie)
- 16 Ministers of Discipleship (Ministry Support Ctr, Glen Allen)
- 17-18 Ignite Men's Conference (Lynchburg)
- 24 Adopt A School Training (Fellowship Community Church, Salem)
- 24-25 Valley Student Conference (First BC, Roanoke)
- 25 Disaster Relief Training (Forest BC, Forest)
- 31-Apr 1 Statewide Church Planter Network (Stonewall Jackson Hotel, Staunton)

## APRIL

### Mission Project: Children's Hygiene Kits for ARM

- 31-Apr 1 Statewide Church Planter Network (Stonewall Jackson Hotel, Staunton)
- 1 Iron Sharpens Iron (The St. Paul's BC, Richmond)
- 8 Disaster Relief Training (Christiansburg)
- 16 Easter
- 25 Empowered Conference (Fincastle BC, Fincastle)
- 29 Disaster Relief Training (Open Door BC, Culpeper)

## MAY

### Mission Project: Military Appreciation Month

- 5-6 Women's Conference with Angie Smith (London Bridge BC, Virginia Beach)
- 5-6 Disaster Relief Leadership Conference (Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen)—by invitation only
- 8-9 Executive Board Meeting (Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen)
- 12-13 PLANT A
- 16 Next Level Pastors Roundtable (Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen)
- 20 Deaf Leadership Roundtable (Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen)
- 25 Intern Training (Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen)

## JUNE

### Mission Project: Shoes for Barnabas Global Link (June/July)

- 7 Church Planter Interviews
- 12 Dessert Fellowship, SBC Annual Meeting (Phoenix, AZ)
- 12-15 SBC Annual Meeting (Phoenix, AZ)
- 16-17 Motorcycle Evangelism Ministry (New River Valley)
- 19-23 Fusion Mission Camp (New River Valley)
- 22 Church Planter Network (Regional)
- 23-24 PLANT B
- 26-30 Fuge Camp (Liberty University, Lynchburg)



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# Empowered CONFERENCE



THEME  
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SERVING OTHERS**

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**APRIL 25, 2017**  
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it's an evangelism investment to  
strengthen churches with a bold  
commitment to the Great  
Commission through dynamic  
speakers in the faith. **Be equipped.  
Be empowered!***



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