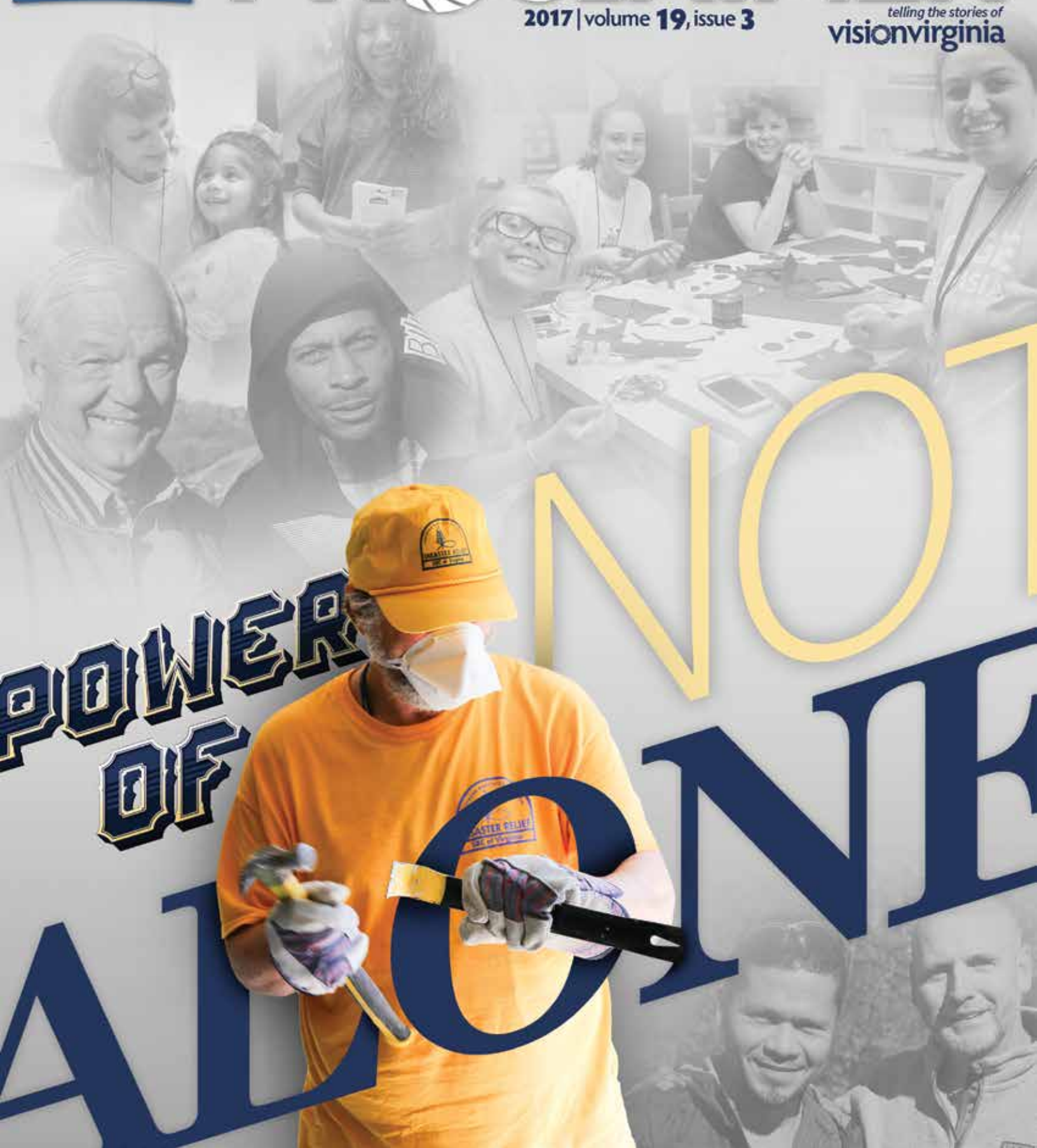


PROCLAIMER

2017 | volume 19, issue 3

telling the stories of
visionvirginia



**POWER
OF**

**NO
ONE**

ALL



Brian Autry

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A handwritten signature of Brian Autry in black ink.

The Power of Not Alone

...that which we
have seen and
heard we proclaim
also to you, so that
you too may have
fellowship with us;
and indeed our
fellowship is with
the Father and with
his Son Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:3

In the past few months, we have once again been reminded that we live in an age of lostness, darkness, and need. Since the Fall, the human story has been filled with tragedy and adversity. We respond with optimism when we see acts of human kindness after natural disasters and evil deeds. But followers of Christ are more than optimists; we are realists who have repented and believed in response to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

In this edition of the *Proclaimer*, you will read testimonies and real-life stories of God's people proclaiming the Gospel. You will see how the Spirit of God is at work in and through local churches. Over the past few months, hundreds of SBC of Virginia churches have responded by praying, giving, sending, and going to provide hurricane relief and recovery. SBCV churches have united to impact local communities. You will read of opportunities to strengthen and mobilize churches; to pray for church planters and pastors; and to engage the next generation now. You'll be reminded that in the midst of ministering to the masses, we touch the lives of individuals, families, and communities, and we pray that they will have fellowship with us because our fellowship is with the one true God.

You hold in your hands a magazine with multiples stories of God moving and the Gospel being proclaimed. But it is really one story. The story of the one true God, working through His people, proclaiming the only name by which one may be saved. **The power of Not Alone is founded in the power of one.** We have one Lord and Savior—Jesus. We have one Gospel—His Gospel. We have one mission—to make Jesus known unto the ends of the earth.

As you read the names of various places, people, churches, and opportunities, remember—they are really about one name. That name is Jesus—He is why there is power in Not Alone. “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version (ESV).



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HAVE you EXPERIENCED

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NOT ALONE: I FOUND A HOME

Christian Life Fellowship



Pastor Emery Minton and his wife, Beth

Acts 16:9 (HCSB) — During the night a vision appeared to Paul: A Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, “Cross over to Macedonia and help us!”

Christian Life Fellowship (CLF) was planted in 2009 in Jonesville, VA in the heart of the Appalachian Region. This thriving congregation is committed to evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. They accomplish this with a multi-layered strategy:

- First**, by investing in and partnering with their community by serving the needs of local people.
- Second**, by helping move people from wherever they are in their faith journey to the next level of growth or, as Pastor Emery Minton puts it, “their next step.”
- Third**, by cultivating leaders and looking for opportunities to plant new congregations.

Pastor Emery was not the founding pastor, but since he became lead pastor in January 2013, CLF has experienced phenomenal growth and has become the largest Baptist congregation in the area. They’ve also planted Locus Church in Middlesboro, KY, which has grown to 160 and continues to grow.

As evidenced by the testimonies of its members, CLF is reaching those who have no church home or no church background at all. They now have a family of faith—they are **Not Alone**.

SOME NUMBERS FROM CLF’S MOST RECENT REPORT:

309

AVERAGE WORSHIP ATTENDANCE—with

89 Children in “Kid Life.”

Nearly half of the adults are attending a weekly small group Bible study.

36

PEOPLE PROFESSED CHRIST AS SAVIOR in the past year —with 32 of them following in baptism

118

PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP THE DREAM TEAM — serving as leaders

PEOPLE INVOLVED IN OUTREACH this past year

260

23¢ OF EVERY DOLLAR goes to missions and outreach

3%

of UNDESIGNATED INCOME COMMITTED TO VISION VIRGINIA, a MISSIONS OFFERING of the SBC of Virginia

“

CLF has given me a different outlook on Christians and has embraced everyone from many different walks of life.

~ Sarah Taylor

I love that CLF allows me to truly come as I am and doesn’t judge me for being a teenager. I don’t feel that I have to dress up or act differently. I can just come and be accepted and loved.

~ Rylee Cope

CLF is the only reason I’m still in church. I was going to give up until someone took me there.

~ Taylor Burch

At CLF, I’m not alone. I’m part of a bigger family full of encouragers, teachers, and supporters. It’s a place of acceptance and love that makes my heart feel whole.

~ Amanda Honeycutt

”

Kids MINISTRY Conference

MARCH 3 2018

8:45 AM to 2:30 PM **Free Event!**

SWIFT CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
7511 North Spring Run Road
Middlesboro, VA 23112

25 VBS & Ministry Breakout Sessions

Special Guests

BILL ENEOTT
Lead Kids Ministry Specialist, LifeWay

MELITA THOMAS
VBS & Kids Ministry Specialist, LifeWay

LANDRY HOLMES
Manager, Kids Ministry Publishing, LifeWay

Website: clfchurch.net

sbcb.org/kmc



HELP

for the Hungry and Homeless

HOUSTON & FLORIDA

Vast needs are met by 13 SBC of Virginia churches

“Water started to come inside on all sides of the house. The babies were getting scared,” shares Dora Luzreyes.

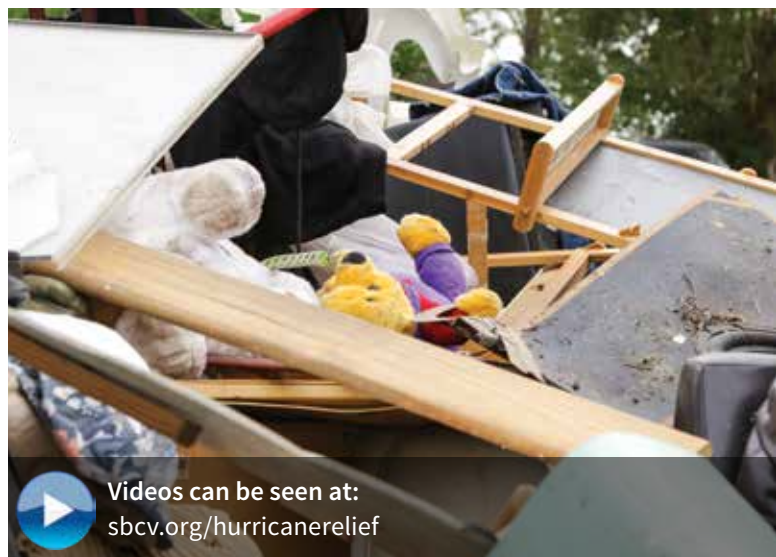
The Luzreyes family was one of many who were forced to evacuate from Hurricane Harvey. In late August, the Category 4 storm moved through Houston, TX and dumped more than 50 inches of rain in four days. There was nowhere for the abundance of water to go but up.

This family of eight fled in the midst of the storm when the water quickly reached waist level in their home. They had to

swim with small children and pets through four feet of water to find higher ground. A complete stranger took them in until the storm stopped.

“We came back home and saw everything destroyed,” cries Luzreyes. “It was a mess. Our refrigerator had been floating. All of the cars were flooded. We lost everything.”

Hundreds of families lost appliances, furniture, toys, cars, clothes, Bibles, and family mementos in a matter of hours. Everything wet had to be placed in piles on the curb. The vast needs are what drove Disaster Relief volunteers from 13 SBC of Virginia churches to make the long trip.



“This flood has impacted everybody. The waters were no respecter of person,” says Joe Veres. He serves as the ministry pastor at **Forest Baptist Church** in Forest. This was his first trip to volunteer with Disaster Relief teams. His duty was to remove wet drywall and flooring.

“We’ve been in an expensive house here doing the work,” says Veres, “and we’ve been in some really small houses that were already in bad condition with termites. Everyone needs help.”

“It’s hard work,” shares Ernie Rogers, who led a group of volunteers from **Thomas Road Baptist Church** in Lynchburg. His mission was to prepare meals before sunrise.

“Getting up early, sleeping in the gym with 100 of your favorite friends—it’s tough,” Rogers says. “But it’s so rewarding. At the end, you go home whipped, but after about a day, you’re all excited about what you did to represent your church, the SBC of Virginia, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

During the first three weeks in Houston, volunteers worked on nearly 30 different homes, provided several thousand warm meals, distributed gift cards, and shared the love and hope of Jesus Christ. The SBC of Virginia established a partnership with one of the campuses of Second Baptist Church of Houston to establish the needs and best response. It’s a partnership that helped families like the

Luzreyes family start again.

“Thank you so much,” says Luzreyes. “I’m just so grateful. It’s like angels around us that God sent to help us. For me, it means a lot. And I’m just so thankful to God for all of this.”

SBCV Disaster Relief teams have also responded this year to Florida after Hurricane Irma and Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. Continue to pray for those affected by other hurricanes this season.

EDITOR'S NOTE — As of mid October, 43 volunteers have served in Houston, TX, providing meals and conducting flood recovery operations. Thousands of meals were served and more than 19 homes were prepared for rebuilding.

58 volunteers have served or are serving in Florida doing flood recovery and chainsaw work on more than 30 homes.

24 volunteers have served or are currently serving in Puerto Rico conducting recovery work amidst difficult living conditions.

There are still many opportunities for volunteers to serve in Florida, Texas, and Puerto Rico.

Through the efforts of all Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, more than 300 individuals have come to faith in Christ.



SBC OF VIRGINIA DISASTER RELIEF | 15 YEARS



The SBC of Virginia celebrates 15 committed years of serving families in need across the country. In that period of time, more than 1,700 volunteers have responded to 56 different disasters in the United States, Greece, American Samoa, Haiti, and Nepal. Volunteers have invested 136,480-plus hours to serve 1 million hot meals, remove thousands of downed trees, and muck out hundreds of homes. More importantly, volunteers have been a part of leading hundreds of people to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

2002–2017



Mark your calendars for these
DISASTER RELIEF TRAINING EVENTS IN 2018!

MARCH 24 **APRIL 14** **APRIL 28** **MAY 5**
 📍SOUTHEAST 📍CENTRAL 📍NORTH 📍VALLEY

SEPTEMBER 29 **OCTOBER 6** **OCTOBER 27**
 📍CENTRAL 📍CENTRAL-WEST 📍SOUTHWEST

Get the latest information at: sbcv.org/dr

2003

Deployed for the first time in May 2003 to Indiana and Ohio to help after flooding.

During Hurricane Isabel, our shower unit was set up in Gloucester County to support the general public, providing an average of 380 showers per day. We purchased our first two recovery units and conducted recovery operations in Gloucester and Williamsburg, VA.



2004

Our program had 8 recovery units (5 owned by churches and 3 owned by SBCV), 1 shower unit, and 508 volunteers. We began planning and developing a new feeding unit.

We responded that year to New England, New York, and Virginia for snow, ice, and windstorms.



2005

A pivotal year for the ministry. We began building our first feeding unit and added 2 recovery units. On September 1, we were deployed to Prentiss, MS after Hurricane Katrina.

The first weekend in Prentiss, our team led 12 people to a saving relationship with Jesus! We also had the opportunity to serve in Gulfport, MS; LaPlace, LA; and Key West, FL. After 71 days, 4 feeding sites, and 464,313 meals, we came home!



2006

SBCV DR had grown to 2,000 trained volunteers. We had the opportunity to send 2 teams to Billerica, MA to support flood recovery.

We added 2 more feeding units, 1 command/communication unit, 2 bunk houses, 1 water closet unit (containing 3 complete bathrooms with heat and A/C), and 2 generator units (1 diesel and 1 propane).



2007

We had our first international response, deploying to Greece after wildfires.

Flood recovery teams went to Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Virginia.



2008

Hurricane Ike struck Texas, and SBCV DR responded to Galveston with feeding teams.



2009

Springtime brought ice storms to Kentucky, and SBCV chainsaw teams responded.

Later that year, recovery teams helped after floods in Iowa, West Virginia, Georgia, Virginia, and New England.



2010

Along with sending flood recovery teams to Georgia and New England, we were once again called to respond to international disasters—American Samoa after a tsunami and Haiti after an earthquake.



2011

Following major flooding up and down the East Coast as a result of Hurricane Irene, SBCV DR sent teams to Virginia, New York, and Vermont.

After Hurricane Lee struck the East Coast again, we were able to partner with Liberty University (LU) for a first-time collegiate partnership and mobilize over 300 LU students with SBCV DR to Binghamton, NY.



2012

We responded multiple times: Derecho—Central Virginia; Hurricane Isaac—Louisiana; and Hurricane Sandy—New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.



2013

Continued response to rebuild after Hurricane Sandy.



2014

Snowstorms across Southeast Virginia provided opportunities for DR teams to help. Teams also assisted after tornadoes in South Carolina.



2015

Floods in the Southeast led SBCV teams to South Carolina. Churches across the Commonwealth responded by collecting hundreds of flood buckets that were sent to those impacted in Louisiana.



2016

Historic tornados ripped across Virginia, and SBCV DR teams responded to Waverly, Appomattox, and Tappahannock.

Teams went to North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Southeast Virginia after hurricanes, floods, tornados, and wildfires.

We also acquired a warehouse for DR equipment that year.



2017

We celebrate our 15th year of Disaster Relief Ministry. We began using online training and developed new training. We began strategic planning to move forward in the next five years of ministry.

Teams responded for flood recovery in Illinois and to Texas after Hurricane Harvey, Florida after Hurricane Irma, and Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.



Not Alone

On a Personal Level

by Rachel Adams

SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief teams bring training and experience to relief efforts for the folks of Second Baptist Church in Houston, TX

Two years ago, I left my beloved Virginia to follow my husband to Houston, TX. He had accepted a job at Second Baptist Church, the largest church in the Southern Baptist Convention. I left behind the small Virginia town I'd called home for six years, a church plant family I adored, some of my dearest friends, and the SBC of Virginia staff, who had become like family. It was a loss I mourned deeply and pleaded with the Lord to restore.

"Days know not of what years can tell," was a phrase Marcy Carter (wife of my pastor, Jim Carter, of Riverside Church in Boonsboro, VA) would quote frequently to me and to others. Despite my healing, grinding, nail-biting, and control-craving struggle with the Lord about living in the strange and foreign land of Texas, the years have revealed His purpose, His trustworthiness, and His sovereignty. Perhaps the most tangible example of this is the work SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief teams have done alongside our Second Baptist Church: South Campus family here in Pearland, TX, just south of Houston.

No one could have predicted or prepared for the wrath Hurricane Harvey would unleash on Southeast Texas. The rain here wasn't measured in inches, it was measured in feet. Homes that had never

flooded before were filled with several feet of water. Bayous that had recently been expanded to triple their capacity overflowed to the level of filling one-story homes to the ceiling.

In the face of overwhelming loss and destruction, our pastor, Dr. Ed Young, reminded us, "It is in moments of man's extremity that God finds opportunity. Hurricane Harvey has shown us all how little control we have over our lives. The greatest revivals in Church history have all had one thing in common: desperation. Our city is desperate, and we as Christians must step up to be the hands and feet of Jesus."

On Thursday, August 31, our church staff (with very limited disaster relief experience, some of whom had flood-damaged homes themselves) scrambled to build a massive disaster relief effort from the ground up, even as the water had yet to recede from thousands of homes. By the next day, requests for assistance were pouring in by the hundreds. A single mom with five young children needed food, diapers, and help removing damaged sheetrock and possessions from her home. An elderly couple, with the wife on her second round of chemo, were still living in their flood-ravaged home





Dylan and Rachel Adams



and needed help removing water-soaked walls and possessions before mold began to grow. A church whose new-to-them building had received four feet of water needed help because 80% of its congregation had received flood damage to their homes.

We didn't sleep much those first few days. By the end of Labor Day weekend, our staff and our volunteers were exhausted, and most of our volunteer base was returning to work the next day. Meanwhile, the number of unfulfilled requests for assistance had jumped to over 400 for our church campus alone.

It was onto this scene that the SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief teams arrived. When I saw those familiar yellow shirts pouring out of trucks and trailers sporting "SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief," it felt as if the cavalry had arrived just in time.

Over the next two weeks, SBCV Disaster Relief teams brought their training and experience to our relief efforts. They worked alongside our church to clean out homes, share the love of Jesus with homeowners who had lost so much, and serve thousands of hot meals to volunteers and the community. In addition, they

encouraged and revived our church family and painted a beautiful picture of the body of Christ coming together.

Many of you have probably heard the phrase **Not Alone** used throughout the SBC of Virginia. It was the theme of our Annual Homecoming last year and will be again at Annual Homecoming this November. I have to admit, it wasn't until the volunteers from Virginia came to our aid that **Not Alone** resonated for me on a personal level.

Together we are **Not Alone**. We are Houston (and Virginia) strong.

Rachel Adams lives in Pearland, TX, where her husband serves as the high school pastor at Second Baptist Church: South Campus, the smallest of Second's six campuses. Rachel works remotely for the SBC of Virginia's Media Team.



RESOURCE

Website: sbcv.org/hurricanerelief



Milton Harding
Pastoral Relations Associate
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That They May Be One THE GIFT OF UNITY

In the folds of Scripture, I can see the fullness of God in the unity of His entire creation. Disobedience tainted our lens, resulting in disunity rather than unity in creation and making it hard to see life in its purest form. One area that stands out is the design of oneness or unity ordained by God in all creation! Unity not only exists within the species of creation but is interwoven through all of creation (Hosea 2:18)! Oneness is a divine attribute within the Trinity,

which is contrary to what Paul teaches us in 2 Corinthians 4:5: **“...For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord...”** Christendom is not to be like corporate America (2 Chron. 12:8). The Church is not an entity vying for customers, market shares, and revenues. A church with an entrepreneurial mindset voids the Gospel and implements best practices that pursue big crowds and brand loyalty. This approach also creates competition among churches while draining human and financial ministry resources.

Oneness within the SBCV captures our commitment to the reality that “you are **Not Alone**.” Biblically, there is no difference in Christ—no big or little; rich or poor; black or white; or any other ethnic churches—just the Church. God said we are one body with one Father, Lord, and Spirit (Eph. 4:4–7). A powerful example of a church (Jerusalem) not being alone because of the grace and fervent desire and obedience of another church (Corinth) in the “support of the saints” is found in 2 Corinthians. They practiced oneness through giving monetarily to believers in need, but the oneness principle applies to any need that arises.

Look at their actions in 2 Corinthians 8:1–4: *“...to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches...that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much urging...for the favor of participation in the support of the saints....”*

As churches of the SBCV working together, Paul would assert that we exist because of God’s grace. We accomplish nothing on our own—it is all God’s plan at work (John 15:5). His plan calls for unity, and grace abounds for unity in His name (John 17:11). In my opinion, the walls of our pride divide us more than the walls of doctrine, racism, etc. We must repent and heed Jesus’ command of oneness as He and the Father are one (John 17:11)!

The Corinthian believers, by grace, had a measure of overbearing affliction, abundant joy, and deep poverty that showed their eternal wealth—their generosity! In 2 Corinthians 8:11–12, Paul presents a major revelation as a key to oneness in giving to God: *“... For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have....”* Did you catch that? Paul says we are to have a **“readiness of desire”** to give (v 11). It’s not how much we have or don’t have but about the readiness of our desire to give.

Saints of the SBCV, oh, that we would embrace practicing this oneness principle from God’s Word and allow Him to turn our human efforts into Christian obedience as we practice oneness (1 Sam. 15:22b)! Living as “the” Church rather than “a” church glorifies God and causes the world to glorify God too (Matthew 5:16)!

May we be obedient to God’s call of unity in the spirit of oneness in the “support of the saints”—that together we would be confident and comforted when we say, “You are **Not Alone**.”

.....
All Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

ONENESS WITHIN THE SBCV CAPTURES OUR COMMITMENT TO THE REALITY THAT “YOU ARE **NOT ALONE**.”

and that oneness of God’s creation will return with Jesus as He reconciles all things back to God in the new heaven and the new earth!

Jesus’ prayer echoes the Father’s heart for oneness in His body (John 17:11)—a oneness that reflects a distinct community in the local church but with a global mindset that *lives* the oneness of Jesus. There should be an indigenous flavor in each local church as it was in the New Testament churches but not at the expense of the fellowship derived from practicing oneness. To live out oneness practically, supernaturally, and globally, we must change our thinking from being “a” church or “my” church to being “the” Church.

God requires dependency on Him and an interdependency on each another. Unfortunately, Christendom appears caught in bondage to the philosophy of branding and marketing as if a business,



The Hands and Feet of Jesus

It is early Saturday morning in the parking lot of **Coastal Community Church** in Yorktown, and there is already a long line of people waiting to get into the building. Some have slept all night in their cars so they can be near the front of the line when the doors open. They are there for the monthly food giveaway by the Coastal Community Food Ministry.

This outreach began as a small group's service project in 2011. They were challenged by a message from lead pastor Shaun Brown to get out of their comfort zone and serve. The result was sharing the love of Jesus by meeting the hunger needs of the community. In the first month, they fed 111 people. The ministry now serves between 500 and 700 a month. In December 2016, they fed 1,038 people—the highest to date.

On the third Saturday of the month from 9:00–11:00 AM, they give a week's worth of groceries to those needing assistance. According to director and co-director Paul and Courtney Schaefer, choosing the third week of the month was strategic. The people who live on assistance say the last two weeks of the month are the hardest to make ends meet. In

order to staff this ministry, the church mobilizes somewhere between 30 and 60 volunteers.

They organize and set up for distribution, pick up and deliver food, help with the screening process, and disburse the food. A volunteer even pushes the cart while the recipient shops then helps him/her take the food to the car. The impact of this ministry has been not only in meeting people's physical needs but in meeting their spiritual needs. Coastal Community Church has seen people come to know Christ and join the church. The ministry is not just about food but about relationships.

The Schaefers shared two examples of individuals whose lives have been touched:

First, there is Linda, whose husband, Jim, has many medical problems and is constantly in and out of the hospital. Linda took in her sister, Irma, who is undergoing treatment for cancer and has seven children. Linda is the only one working and is trying to keep her head above water every month so she can keep her family going. The Coastal Community Food Ministry has provided food for her monthly



and has opened a door for a greater ministry in her life.

Then there are folks in their 70s and 80s, like Sybil. We feed them on the Friday night so they do not have to come in on Saturday and wait all morning. They are alone, older, infirm, and struggling physically as well as financially. They tell us they depend on us to supplement their food so they can afford to pay for their medicines.

The Schaefers know that, of the hundreds who come each month, there may be some who don't truly need the food, but that is not for the church to judge. Their intention is to feed them physically so they can feed them spiritually and lead them to Christ. These volunteers are the hands and feet of Jesus to "the least of these" (Matthew 25:40, HCSB).

RESOURCE

Website: gocoastal.org

Share the Gospel with the world!

Outreach Bible Project

2018 Winter Olympics
PyeongChang,
South Korea

FEBRUARY
8-16 or 15-23



MORE INFO AT
sbcv.org/pyeongchang

FUSION MISSION CAMP

Instilling a Passion for Missions in Students

With 400–500 people in attendance, the church had to begin shuttling guests back and forth to off-site parking. Volunteers cooked and served over 700 hot dogs as the church welcomed visitor upon visitor.

This block party, which was hosted by **Christiansburg Baptist Church** (CBC), came to fruition through partnership. CBC was the host church for this summer's SBCV Fusion Mission Camp June 19–23.

More than 90 students from 7 SBC of Virginia churches partnered with CBC to show the love of Jesus. They performed service projects in the area and came together nightly to worship and hear from speakers who challenged them in the Great Commission. The theme of the week was *Magnify*, based on Psalm 34:3—“Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us magnify his name together!”

“We worked in a neighborhood of about 250 homes,” says Shawn Ames, SBCV Student

Ministry strategist. “We did car washes, prayerwalked, and knocked on doors to give away smoke detectors and invite people to the block party at the end of the week.”

Fusion Mission Camp is unique because its sole intention is to assist and serve the local church. “When we go to Fusion, we work through churches,” Ames explains. “Everything that we do, we try to do it through a connection that the local church has.”

This was the second consecutive year that Pastor Sean Couch and Christiansburg Baptist Church had hosted Fusion Mission Camp. The church facilitated all of the service projects through its connections.

“We decided to host Fusion Mission Camp because it has been a tremendous blessing for us,” says Pastor Couch. “The students from different churches come with an intent to help the local church, and the camp really helps us fulfill our goal of reaching the community. When

we’re reaching out...our goal is to help others see what we are about as a church—and we are about the love of Jesus.”

Many in the community were touched by the kindness and generosity of the students. “I absolutely think that this camp is opening doors for us to continue to do more ministry in the community down the road,” says Couch. “It has been a great experience for us to see what God is doing through the next generation.”

The goal of Fusion Mission Camp is to instill in students a passion for missions and for them to take that passion back to their local church and community. “Short-term numbers are great and really encouraging in the moment,” says Ames, “but the long-term results of seeing students who have attended Fusion Mission Camp multiple times have a genuine change in their lives and develop a passion for missions and the Great Commission—that’s what it’s all about.”



“

It has been
a great
experience
for us to see
what God is
doing through
the next
generation.

”



These church planter prayer cards are available for you to view and download at 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)



The Bekele Family

**Gilgal
Evangelical
Church**

MEETING AT
6315 Beulah St
Alexandria, VA 22315

BIRTHDAYS: Zack (December 10), Hana (April 3)

PRAYER NEEDS

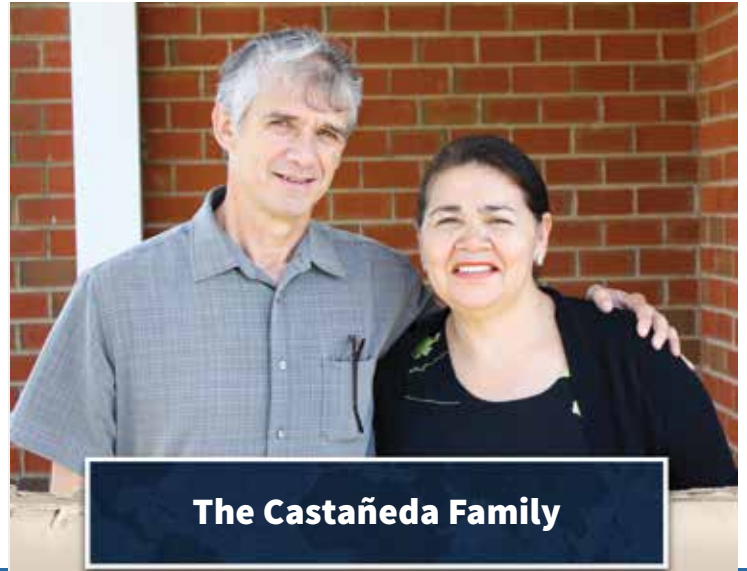
PRAY for the salvation of Ethiopians in the community.

PRAY for the maturation of the believers.

PRAY for the unity of the church.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP! (needs)

- Additional financial partners
- Mission teams
- Worship equipment, other church equipment, etc.



The Castañeda Family

**Nuevo Amanecer
Collinsville**

MEETING AT
The Community Fellowship
2674 Virginia Ave
Collinsville, VA 24078

BIRTHDAYS: Reinell (April 26), Mirian (December 28)

PRAYER NEEDS

PRAY for Hispanic immigrants in the US.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP! (needs)

- We are currently seeking training and help for our 2nd-generation Hispanic ministry.

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Does God Hold It Against You If You Can't Read the Bible?

MEETING MORE THAN PHYSICAL NEEDS

EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Food pantry and clothing closet ministries meet more than physical needs. They open doors for spiritual needs to be met—for the Gospel to be shared and received.

Bread of Life Ministries, the food pantry ministry at **Emmanuel Baptist Church** in Manassas, has been in operation for many years but is now even more intentional about sharing the Gospel. Ministry leader Sarah Fletcher attended the SBCV Hunger Summit in 2016 and learned how other ministries were incorporating the Gospel into food distribution. Sarah became inspired to have Bread of Life share Christ even more diligently with all of its visitors.

*Bob started visiting Bread of Life in October 2016. At the time, he was homeless. Several church members started helping him with shelter and meals. He began attending the church and a small group taught by one of the elders. It wasn't long before he expressed an interest in joining the church and began attending the New Believers Sunday School class. In February 2017, Bob accepted Christ into his life, professed his faith publicly, and was baptized. Working with local agencies, he is now attending a trade school in the hope that he will soon be back on his feet and able to provide for his own needs. This is all a result of church members at a hunger ministry, loving him right where he was and sharing the Good News of Jesus with him.

Miss Rita has been coming to Bread of Life Ministries for a long time. She is a delightful, 80+-year-old who loves Jesus. Ruthann Barton (ministry assistant at Emmanuel) and the other workers noticed that Miss Rita almost always had questions about the Bible and wanted the workers to share verses with her. They suspected she could not read but didn't want to ask and make her feel awkward. One day she told them she had an important question. "Does God hold it against you if you can't read the Bible?" They assured her He does not. Ruthann set to work, trying to locate a CD player and the Bible on CD for Miss Rita to listen to God's Word. Miss Rita is thrilled. Even though she cannot read, she is diligent in telling others about Jesus and what He has done for her.

If your church has a hunger ministry, take the opportunity to share Christ with everyone who comes through your doors. God has brought them to you for a reason, and you could be the one to lead them to Christ.

**name has been changed*



RESOURCE

Website: ebcnva.org

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A Bridge for the Gospel

by Emily Anne Hall

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.

IN VIRGINIA, THE CENSUS BUREAU RECORDS A STEADILY INCREASING PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS IN THE STATE—FROM 5% IN 1990 TO 8.1% IN 2000 TO 11.5% IN 2013. **NATIONAL AND STATE TRENDS MIRROR THE NEED THAT SWIFT CREEK SAW IN ITS OWN BACKYARD.**

It was the first night David and June Peat left home to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) at **Swift Creek Baptist Church** in Midlothian. The drive felt long—not only because they live half an hour away but also because they were, says David, “scared to death.”

“We didn’t know whether what we were going to do would work. We didn’t know how [or if the] students would receive us. Are we going to be able to understand them? Are they going to be able to understand us?”

After a positive experience the first night, it was easier to go back the next week.

“Each time, it gets better and better,” says June. “We absolutely love it.”

The Peats are retired. He owned a trucking company, and she was a nurse. June was quick to mention, “We’re working harder now than [when] we were working for a living.”

SAYING YES TO SERVING A NEED

The couple started teaching ESL at Swift Creek in 2011, and now David is the church’s ESL director. They also lead training workshops, certifying others to teach ESL. It all began with Rob Brewer, Swift Creek’s then associate pastor of missions and evangelism, working with Sue Sawyer at the SBC of Virginia to start a church ESL ministry. When Brewer invited the congregation to get involved, the Peats said yes.

The church’s ESL ministry grew out of a service project initiative called Swift Creek Cares. In a nutshell, Swift Creek Cares “focused on reaching the needs of the community around our church,” says Brewer.

According to data from the Census Bureau and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), the need for ESL ministry is and will continue to be great. MPI conducted a 2015 survey, which found that half of all 43 million immigrants struggle to speak English or don’t speak English at all. In Virginia, the Census Bureau records a steadily increasing percentage of foreign-

born residents in the state—from 5% in 1990 to 8.1% in 2000 to 11.5% in 2013. National and state trends mirror the need that Swift Creek saw in its own backyard.

FROM SPEAKING ENGLISH TO SPEAKING THE GOSPEL

David says the fun part of teaching ESL is watching students who were initially nervous and insecure grow and develop in English skills and in relationships with the teachers and the other students.

The Peats work creatively so their students will have fun learning a new language, but ESL can be hard for both the teacher and student. Practicing patience and adjusting expectations have helped David and June push through rough times. They also keep their main goal in mind. While they teach ESL to help their immigrant neighbors learn English, they



David and June Peat



“Our goal is for everybody to come to know Jesus.”

ultimately do it to share the Gospel.

“When you’re teaching new vocabulary, there are always opportunities to [use] a word that has a biblical meaning,” David explains. Missions can include going overseas or sharing the Gospel with those in your community. David emphasizes, “This ESL program is a mission.”

“Our goal is for everybody to come to know Jesus,” says June. “We incorporate [the Gospel] a lot in the beginning and make sure the student understands what it means.”

TEACHING ESL IN THE CLASSROOM OR THE HOME

Casey and Megan Cagle, both 25, taught ESL to African and Middle Eastern immigrants on a mission trip to Barcelona, Spain. Upon returning home, they realized, like the Peats had, that they could reach the lost through ESL in the US too.

Megan and her husband, Casey, had earned their certification to teach ESL after attending a training workshop at **Old Powhatan Baptist Church** in Powhatan a few weeks prior to their trip. After they came back, Megan’s schedule allowed her to gain experience teaching small classes. She volunteered for a few months with a local Middle Eastern pastor, who was hosting ESL classes with his wife in their home. It gave her experience and

helped build her confidence. Then an opportunity arose for both Casey and Megan to tutor an immigrant family in their home.

ADJUSTING EXPECTATIONS

Both nervous, Megan and Casey walked towards the family’s apartment door for their first evening of class. They didn’t know much about the students’ culture, and they were still new to ESL. Expecting a couple with little to no English language, Megan prepared for a simple first lesson. Then a woman opened the door and said with a smile, “Hello, welcome to our home.” Needless to say, the Cagles had to think on their feet and adapt their plan quickly.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE THE GOSPEL

Over time, the Cagles have gotten to know the couple, and they’ve become friends. Discussing cultural differences, food, and holidays has helped them bond and has opened the door to Gospel conversations. “They have been very interested in learning about what we believe as Christians,” says Megan.

Focusing on the Gospel in class began at Christmas. As Megan prepared for the week’s lesson, she took a risk by assigning the story of Jesus’ birth as homework. The couple liked it, and they wanted more. Megan explains,

“Now we’ve gone from creation through the resurrection of Jesus.”

Talking about the Gospel was not easy for Megan at first. Watching her husband engage the couple in spiritual conversations helped Megan grow bolder. “It’s a lot more natural than you think it would be, but you still have that moment where you have to decide, *Am I going to say something or am I going to let this moment go by?*

“They are much more open than I would have expected,” Megan shares. “As much progress as they make, you also [wonder], *Are they ever going to see Jesus for who He is?* It seems to be so obvious [God is] working in their lives.”

ESL is an open door to plant seeds and let the Lord work. “Ultimately,” says Megan, “He’s going to be the one to save them.”

RESOURCE

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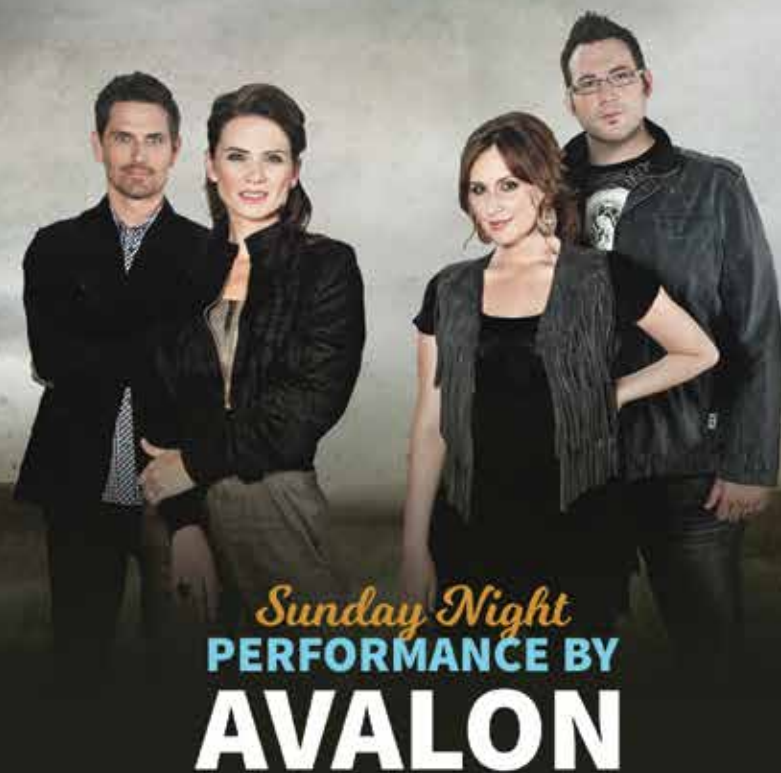


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CHRISTMAS BACKPACKS FOR CHILDREN IN APPALACHIA

JAMIE LIMATO

"It's crazy the journey that Jesus has taken me on since moving to Norfolk in July/Aug. of 2008."



Tagging All the Bases

When Jamie Limato came through the enlistment process to serve as an SBCV church planter apprentice, the year was 2007. Limato had been serving as a children's minister when God began to lead him in a direction that would multiply the reach of the Gospel beyond anything he could have imagined.

He served for a year under the direction of two SBCV church planters—Clint Clifton at **Pillar Church** in Dumfries and Dave Proffitt at **Aletheia Church** in Harrisonburg. Apprenticing with Clifton and Proffitt was a formative experience for Limato. Their coaching influenced him in ways that are still evident in his ministry 10 years later.

In 2008, Limato made the shift from apprentice to

church planter. He moved to Norfolk with his family and another apprentice to begin planting **Aletheia Norfolk**, a church focused on reaching students at Old Dominion University (ODU). As he began to look for available locations for the new church to worship, he thought about the future. He told Mark Custalow, SBCV's Church Planting Team leader, "I can see us meeting one day in the Ted Constant Center" (ODU's 9,100-seat basketball arena). Every week, he'd faithfully strap on a backpack full of Gospel pamphlets, bring one or more students with him, and share Christ on campus. Students came to repentance and faith in Christ; small groups started on and off campus; students were disciplined in their faith and became evangelism and ministry leaders; and the church met weekly for worship.

Limato shifted from church planter to catalytic church planter in 2011. A catalytic church planter makes a commitment to plant at least one church every two years. Limato adopted the model of enlisting church planter candidates and investing in them as Clifton and Proffitt had done for him.

In 2012, Aletheia joined with **Bethel Baptist Church** of Yorktown as it commissioned and sent out its student pastor with a launch team to start **Catalyst Church** near the campus of Christopher Newport University in Newport News. Limato's role was to provide coaching to Catalyst planter Jeff Mingee. In 2015, Limato began to



“
**MY DESIRE IN
 ALL OF THIS
 IS THAT NO
 CHURCH PLANTER
 WOULD EVER
 BE ALONE AND
 THAT HE WOULD
 HAVE A WALK-
 ALONGSIDE, SIDE-
 BY-SIDE COACH
 DURING THE
 FIRST TWO YEARS
 OF CHURCH
 PLANTING.**
 ”

uniquely gifted him, NAMB began to utilize Limato to equip other church planting coaches. His help was instrumental last year in assisting the SBCV to add another layer of nurturing to its church planters—by training enough SBCV pastors to provide a coach for every SBCV church planter in his first two years of planting.

Limato accepted a part-time position with NAMB at the beginning of 2017. He serves as NAMB’s East Coast coaching coordinator, leading the church planter coaching system for Detroit, Cincinnati, Columbus, New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, and Miami. In this role, he contributes regularly to the NAMB church planter coaching podcast and the Send Network coaching blog. He is helping develop the leadership pipeline and training materials for the national coaching system. Limato continues to pastor Aletheia Norfolk, where the mission is to make disciples and multiply leaders. He also works together with Jeff Mingee to assist the SBCV in continuing its focus on collegiate church planting.

Limato writes,

My desire in all of this is that no church planter would ever be alone and that [he] would have a walk-alongside, side-by-side coach during the first two years of church planting. My desire is that through the systems that provide training, development, and multiplication of coaches, that we truly will be able

invest in church planter apprentice Charles Shannon. The next year, he led Aletheia to send out Shannon and a team to start **The Mission Church** in Norfolk with a partial focus of reaching students at Norfolk State University.

It was during this period of investing in planter candidates that Limato found a new facet of what God created him to do. He found great joy in coaching church planters. Through God’s providence, leaders at the North American Mission Board (NAMB) invited Limato to participate as a coach for NAMB church planters.

Recognizing that God had



Jamie Limato coaching church planters

to deliver great coaching to every church planter.

It’s crazy the journey that Jesus has taken me on since moving to Norfolk in July/August of 2008. Back then, I would have most certainly thought I would have had a big, “successful” church plant [by now] and would have had no time for things like this. God most certainly had different plans.

It was through the path of pain and frustration that God allowed me to find my greater contribution to the Kingdom of God. I am learning to accept that sometimes our idea of success may not be God’s idea and He may use us to help others to be successful—and that is success.

Although Aletheia has yet to meet at the Ted, God has certainly extended the Gospel on the campus and in the community surrounding ODU. Aletheia is still making disciples, and there is yet another church planter apprentice learning the ropes of ministry at Aletheia to be commissioned and sent out to plant. Moreover, there are scores of church planters today who are grateful that God’s plan for Jamie Limato extended beyond his immediate community.

RESOURCE

Website:

aletheianorfolk.com

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Pastor Adam Schwenk

Sent People Send People

Sent people send people. In Acts 11:22, the Bible tells us, *“The report of this [a great number of people believing] came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.”* Shortly after, we read about the new church at Antioch in Acts 13:3: *“Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.”*

Once again, people who had been sent starting sending others to different geographic locations. It’s the story of how new churches are started and people are reached with the Gospel.

This is also the story of **Legacy Church** in Stanardsville, a new church plant led by church planter Adam Schwenk. Since starting public services in February 2016, Legacy Church has seen God work in amazing ways—with over 55 baptisms and people continuing to come to faith in Christ. This past Easter, Legacy gathered with over 650 in attendance to celebrate the resurrected Jesus!

Pastor Adam initially served on staff at **The Point** in Charlottesville with church planter Gabe Turner. As they both grew in their desire to reach surrounding communities, Greene County came to mind.

“We had a significant core from Greene County attending The Point—[people who were] driving 45 minutes or more to church each week,” says Pastor Gabe. “While they were more than happy to continue the drive, the unchurched of their community were reluctant to attend [The Point] because of the distance. The best solution to continue to reach the unreached was to plant a life-giving body in that neighborhood.”

With a location identified, it was time to find a church planter. When Adam and Lynn Schwenk came to The Point to serve on staff, they already felt called to plant a church one day. The Point hired Adam with the intention that he would learn valuable church planting

skills on staff and would be sent out to plant a church. It was only fitting that he would be the planter for the Greene County plant.

“My time working with Pastor Gabe and the remarkable pastors, staff, and group leaders at The Point has been one of the most formative and rewarding seasons of my life,” says Pastor Adam. “Their love, camaraderie, and passion have developed my devotion to Christ’s bride and my understanding of Christ’s servanthood.” He adds, “For me, it goes back to my personal ambition to glorify God with my life. He doesn’t call everyone to lead a church plant, but we are really good at making excuses for reasons we shouldn’t.”

This DNA of church planting did not happen by accident. The Point had also been sent out by a partnership of churches—**New Life Community Church** in Louisa and **Thomas Road Baptist Church** in Lynchburg—who pooled financial resources and people to plant a church in Charlottesville. These churches are leaving a legacy by creating pipelines of leaders and planting new congregations to reach the unreached.

Advice for Churches Desiring to Plant

“Sometime the journey to follow His leading requires us to release treasured ministry and responsibility in order to pursue Christ with greater abandonment. This is one of those moments for me.” ~ Pastor Schwenk

“Sending people to plant is a very scary and beautiful step to take. It’s like welcoming a baby into the world—you experience everything from the joy of new life to fear of changes that are required. Prepare yourself to experience a range of emotions as you take the step and allow God to sanctify your heart through the process.” ~Pastor Turner

All Scripture references are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

RESOURCE

Websites: thepointva.com
visitlegacy.org

Things to consider when SENDING:

1. Is there a potential church planter in our church right now whom we could identify and train?
2. Is there a geographic location from which people may be driving that could be the location for a future church plant?
3. How will I prepare my congregation for sending?





Deep Creek Baptist Church

A Vibrant Gospel Witness

Deep Creek Baptist Church in Chesapeake has seen significant growth over the years under the leadership of its senior pastor, Ernie Myers. As Pastor Ernie prayed about the future of Deep Creek's Gospel impact in Hampton Roads, he felt impressed to consider moving to a multi-campus model. Pastor Ernie shared the vision with key leaders in the church and received positive feedback. The congregation got on board and raised over \$100,000 over the next several months to fund either the purchase or lease of a property to house their extension campus.

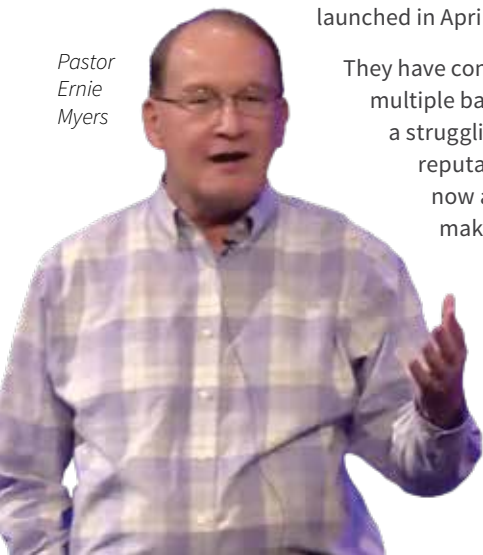
As they began researching the ideal location, Pastor Ernie heard there was a church in Portsmouth that was struggling. Multiple factors over time led to a decline at Western Branch Baptist Church, which put its future in jeopardy. The last major blow to the church was a moral failure of a church staff member, which received publicity in the local media. Not only did the church lose people, but anyone who Googled the church name saw news reports about that incident. Western Branch found it difficult to recover with such a tarnished reputation in the community. With only a handful of folks remaining, they were contemplating their next steps.

Pastor Ernie reached out to the leadership at Western Branch. After multiple discussions and a church vote, Western Branch Baptist Church became Deep Creek Baptist Church's Portsmouth Campus.

Deep Creek made adjustments to the facilities, including a major overhaul of the sanctuary. Children's facilities were updated to appeal to younger families. Deep Creek Portsmouth Campus launched in April 2017 with over 100 present.

They have continued to grow and have had multiple baptisms. Where there was once a struggling church with a damaged reputation in the community, there is now a vibrant Gospel witness that is making disciples of Christ.

Pastor
Ernie
Myers

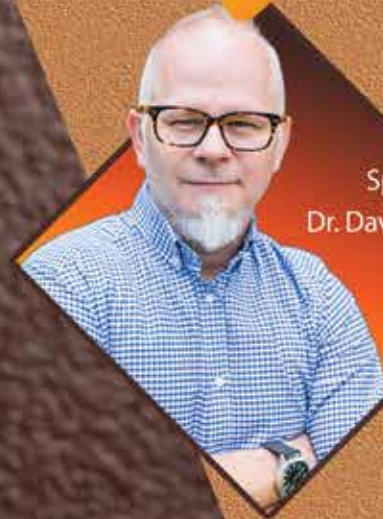


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APRIL 26 / 10 AM-2 PM

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ANGIE'S STORY

Women's Ministry Conference with Angie Smith

“

When you hear of another mother who has experienced the grief of the loss of a child, to me, it is not just a sad story that grips your heart and then you move on, it is an insurmountable grief that you also carry in your heart and is present every single day.

”

The SBC of Virginia Women's Ministry hosted Angie Smith, author and speaker, at our May 2017 Women's Ministry Conference. Angie captured the hearts of those in attendance at **London Bridge Baptist Church** as she shared her journey through the death of her newborn daughter, Audrey, and the grieving process that followed.

Angie's story brought comfort to many in the audience, especially those who had also suffered the loss of a child—women like London Bridge member Diana Dilkes.

Diana, could you share a little background about your son's death?

"Three years ago, I lost my precious

24-year-old son, Nicholas, suddenly to a brief illness of the flu and an upper respiratory infection. The doctors referred to it as the perfect storm that the two viruses created in his body that caused his death. It was devastating, it was unbelievable, and it is heartbreaking."

How did you relate to Angie's journey through grief?

"When you hear of another mother who has experienced the grief of the loss of a child, to me, it is not just a sad story that grips your heart and then you move on—it is an insurmountable grief that you also carry in your heart and is present every single day. Naturally, there is a bond with that mother that you really wish you didn't know and experience firsthand, one you would have



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rejected if you'd been given the opportunity."

How did God use Angie's story to bring encouragement to your life?

"She shared her heartfelt story of the loss of her daughter with transparent honesty. She told us with great imagery about the cherry blossom trees—and then related them to the quietness and magnificent power of a Holy God. She pointed to the miracles that the Lord gives us if we will take the time in our greatest sorrows to stop looking down and to look up to see God working all around us. Some of the Lord's greatest moments are not done on the stage or in front of large crowds but in a single moment, with a single whisper, to a single heart in a still, quiet, intimate place called Grief. I am so thankful for my loving God's mercy and grace. He understands my grief and heartache and meets me there. He provides me beauty in the midst of my sorrow, tears, and pain each day through his Son, Jesus Christ. I am also thankful for my Christian sister who was there to comfort me without saying a word, by putting her loving arms around me when my tears were abundant during Angie's story. Angie just reiterated to all of us that God knows our story, He know our hearts, and He knows what we need right when we need it. Praise the Lord!"

The SBC of Virginia provides statewide events like this to inspire, equip, and encourage the women in our state. To find future events, visit our website: sbcv.org/women.



RESOURCE

Websites:

sbcv.org/angiesmith



Truth Matters

WOMEN'S TRAINING EVENT

October 28 2017

London Bridge Baptist Church
Virginia Beach 9 AM-2 PM

February 3 2018

Spotswood Baptist Church
Fredericksburg 9 AM-2 PM

April 28 2018

Rosedale Baptist Church
Abingdon 9 AM-2 PM

For more information: sbcv.org/fit2lead



Kingdom Expansion

FOLLOWING THE BIBLICAL PATTERN

There is a Hispanic church planting movement underway in Virginia and DC, and God has provided leaders of vision and passion. Fernando Mangieri and Raúl Santamaría are two catalytic church planters whose role is to develop and send out leaders to plant churches.

Just as Scripture teaches us to do, these men:

LEAD WITH VISION based on obedience to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20)

REACH THE LOST AND MAKE DISCIPLES (John 15:5,7)

DISCIPLE MULTIPLYING LEADERS (2 Timothy 2:2)—teaching leaders who will faithfully multiply sound biblical teaching to other leaders

SEND OUT leaders after prayer and fasting (Acts 13:1–3)

Romans 16 provides a list of disciplined leaders who were part of Paul's church planting ministry. There is a similar pattern in the growing network of churches through these leaders' ministries.

Fernando Mangieri planted **Iglesia Bautista Nueva Esperanza** (North Chesterfield) in 2009 and established a training center at **Kingsland Baptist Church**. Since that time, the following new churches and leaders have been developed:

- Ronaldo Muñoz was disciplined and became the pastor at Nueva Esperanza in North Chesterfield
- Muñoz, Mangieri, and disciple Paco Valencia planted **Iglesia Bautista Nueva Esperanza** in Petersburg
- Paco Valencia became the pastor of Iglesia Bautista Nueva Esperanza (Petersburg)
- Mangieri then planted **Iglesia Bautista Conexión** in Richmond (now meeting in Moseley) and is now developing the following:
 - Iglesia Bautista Amelia
 - Discipling Oscar Sosa to lead CESI-Antioquía in Chesterfield
 - Discipling Odilon Mendoza to plant a church for Mixtecos (an unreached people group) in Richmond

Raúl Santamaría planted **Iglesia Bíblica Bautista Emanuel** (Ashburn) in 2010 and established a training center in Chantilly. Since then, the following new churches and leaders have been developed:

- José Mazariego was disciplined and sent to start a church in Woodbridge. He is now planting a second church in Dumfries.
- José Osorio was disciplined and sent to start a church in Strasburg. He is now planting a second church in Stephens City.
- Joao Rocha was trained and is starting a church in Silver Spring, MD.
- Caleb Godoy is planting a church in Germantown, MD and is planning to plant a second church in 2018 in Falls Church.
- Yecferson Hernandez has been disciplined as an apprentice and is preparing to plant a church in 2018 in Sterling.
- Santamaría is assisting with the development of a church in Vienna.

In addition to the church planting activities above, Mangieri and Santamaría have great influence in the Hispanic community. Ministries and churches look to them for guidance and direction. They also provide training for leaders who are not even a part of their network of churches. They do this because their ministry is not about them—it's about the Great Commission. To God be the glory!



Fernando Mangieri

Starting new churches should be a fundamental part of the local church if we love the Lord and obey His Word. By starting new churches, we are all blessed—the non-believers, the city, the local church, the leaders, the denomination...and the Kingdom grows.

The joy that is in my heart is indescribable—to see lives being transformed and equipped, ready to share their faith. It is a matter of giving, of allowing the disciples to grow, preach, evangelize, disciple, make mistakes, learn, and experience serving God in planting new churches.

Raúl Santamaría

[It has been a] blessing and joy seeing what God has done in my brothers: their conversion and baptism, then discipling them and equipping them to proclaim the praises of the One who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9). From the beginning, I have seen the future planter or apprentice as...a potential new servant for the glory of God. In my experience, the essential thing to starting a church is to have a clear call from God and clearly understand what the Gospel is in the life of the planter.

[Churches are planted by] disciples trained in local churches with biblical and intentional leadership. These leaders seek the lost and make disciples. ... Soli Deo gloria!



Caleb Godoy

We need to reach more people for Christ, and we are not only talking about evangelizing, but that we must disciple, train, and teach our communities the biblical truths, which are of great importance so that people are not deceived.

Paco Valencia

We have the assurance that the work is of the Lord and that He is the only one who can help us grow in numbers and in spirit. We have our confidence and faith fully placed in Him.

A LIGHT IN THE DARK

Deaf Church at DC

In 1856, Amos Kendall gave two acres of his estate in northeast Washington, DC to establish what would later be called the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb and Blind. The school hired as its superintendent Edward Miner Gallaudet, the son of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, who founded the first school in the US for the Deaf. Congress approved the institution to give college degrees in 1864, and the college arm of the school was renamed Gallaudet College in 1894. Gallaudet University now has an enrollment of over 1,500 students and is known worldwide as the high standard in Deaf education and resources.

"Gallaudet today is very dark as opposed to my time there," says SBCV church planter Cameron House. "There are posters or banners promoting sex and choosing alternative lifestyles. When I was attending Gallaudet back in 1999, it was quieter or not so revealing.

"We did a prayerwalk last year before school started," explains Pastor Cameron. "God urged us to do a walk like [the Israelites did around] Jericho. ...There were three of us who actually walked seven times around Gallaudet's campus before I even started the ministry [there]."

Pastor Cameron is leading **Deaf Church at DC**, an SBCV church plant, which meets on campus and

averages about 20–30 students on Sundays. They also meet on Wednesday evenings and average about 10.

Cameron and his family (wife Meghann and daughters Sama and Josie) attend Gallaudet's chapel service every Saturday night, which is led by Gallaudet's chaplain. Attending the chapel service helps build positive connections with other Deaf leaders and helps the Houses connect with students. Most of the Deaf students who come to the chapel service have strong ethnic backgrounds. Some are Asian, which provides Pastor Cameron the opportunity to use Chinese Sign Language (CSL) with them to communicate the Gospel. Cameron and Meghann learned CSL when they served as International Mission Board missionaries in China.

During Easter weekend 2017, Deaf Church at DC partnered with **Living Word Deaf Church** of Forest, VA. Pastor John Wyble and Living Word came to Gallaudet and performed a play about the Lord's Supper. There were 110 in attendance.

To a spiritually dark campus, God is bringing light through Deaf Church at DC. "I am thankful to the Lord for allowing me to be here to share His Gospel," says Pastor Cameron.

RESOURCE

Email: cameron@deafchurchdc.org



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PARTNERING

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Partnerships bring home the meaning of Not Alone

Partnerships make the work possible. As SBC of Virginia churches plant new churches in Virginia and Washington, DC, we have been blessed to enjoy partnerships with other SBCV churches and churches from across the US. As we start new churches in Northern Virginia and Metro DC, the North American Mission Board partners with us too.

The Lord has now provided new partners one wouldn't expect—two local associations from Missouri! Through their connection with SBCV church planting strategist Vince Blubaugh, these new partners heard about the needs in Northern Virginia and DC and wanted to help.

The Concord Baptist Association (CBA) in Missouri's capital of Jefferson City is comprised of 44 Southern Baptist churches. CBA has sent several teams to support **Pillar Church of Woodlawn**, an SBCV church

plant in Alexandria. Pillar Woodlawn has been blessed with an existing church building that can house mission teams of up to 49 people. This space provides churches with affordable housing for short-term mission trips to help church plants in Northern Virginia and DC. CBA churches have helped with essential renovations to the facility.

The Twin Rivers Baptist Association (TRBA) just west of St. Louis is also an association of 44 Southern Baptist churches. TRBA has committed to partner with three SBCV plants for the next three years with short-term mission teams, prayer, and financial assistance. Its executive director, Brent Campbell, has led several teams of pastors to work on the building at Pillar Woodlawn. Several TRBA churches have also committed to partner with two other SBCV church plants.

With the variety of people groups in Metro DC, partnering with SBCV church

The Concord Baptist Association has sent several teams to support Pillar Woodlawn, a church plant in Alexandria, VA.

plants is a way to reach internationals with the Gospel. SBCV church plants in the area are currently reaching 54 nations.

Campbell says of TRBA's partnership, "[It] allows us the unique opportunity to help evangelize the nations and not even have to use a passport or leave the country."

The CBA agrees. "[Our] partnership with the SBC of Virginia and Pillar Woodlawn allows our churches to work toward accomplishing the Great Commission where we can help reach the nations," says CBA's director, Dr. Calvin Brown.

These types of Gospel-centered partnerships are essential to reaching the lost in Virginia and our nation's capital. New partners are always needed. Will your church commit to partner with an SBCV church plant?

“
**Partnering
with SBCV
church plants
allows us
the unique
opportunity to
help evangelize
the nations
and not even
have to use
a passport
or leave the
country.”**



The Twin Rivers Baptist Association has also helped renovate the facilities at Pillar Woodlawn and is planning to send future teams to the region to support church planting efforts.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

DENNIS RAINEY

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Combining VBS and Fuge Camp

Fuge Camp

It's a beautiful thing when a pastor sees an answer to prayer, especially if the answer comes in an unexpected way.

Pastor Matt Meservy watched as kids and families from surrounding Lynchburg neighborhoods entered the building to attend **Beulah Baptist Church's** Vacation Bible School.

Many of the neighborhoods surrounding the church include families with an Indian background, who are rarely receptive to church invitations. To see children from some of those families come to VBS was a miraculous blessing. Total VBS attendance increased to four times that of the previous year.

Pastor Meservy serves as the director of children and families at Beulah. For the successful outreach to those families, he credits campers from Fuge Camp.

"Seeing these families and their kids at VBS was amazing," says Meservy. "And the students from Fuge Camp played a big part in that. Without their service, I don't know if we would have accomplished that."

Two weeks of Fuge Camp brought hundreds of campers to Liberty University. LifeWay and SBCV NextGen Ministries hosted the camp.

Summer camp for high schoolers and VBS for children are two vital but usually unrelated church ministries. In this case, however, connecting the two bore much fruit.

Some church groups at Fuge Camp chose the missions option (MFuge), which included participating in projects to help local SBCV churches. Beulah received two groups for each week (four groups total). Some groups invited children to a playground, where they led a backyard Bible club. One group worked inside the church building, helping decorate for VBS.

Meservy was amazed at the willingness and dedication of the students and interns. "We wanted [them] to help us with inviting neighborhood kids to the backyard Bible club, and the students very much exceeded my expectations."



God used the backyard Bible club to draw families to VBS. Many who attended the club ended up attending VBS too.

"Our church family is even more excited [now] about Children's Ministry," says Meservy. "The church really received a breath of fresh air because of the work of Fuge Camp students this summer."

Pastor Meservy encourages other churches to take advantage of SBCV resources and opportunities. "Your reach as a church will grow if you utilize the SBCV," he says. "And to me, it's just a no-brainer to utilize good help when it is offered to you. Churches can do a lot more using one another, which is the goal of the SBCV."

RESOURCE
Website: beulahsbc.org

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Come and See

In the small town of Shenandoah, VA, people are asking, "What is going on at **Shenandoah Baptist Church**?" This little church in the middle of town had declined to the point of nearly dissolving. Now it is experiencing a life-giving, transforming work of God!

In 2015, Shenandoah Baptist Church was at a crossroads whether it would live or die. God used the surrendered and willing

God used the surrendered and willing hearts of a small remnant of members to keep hope alive...

hearts of a small remnant of members to keep hope alive, and He brought Dr. David Johnson

to serve as interim pastor. According to new pastor Paul Strassner, "Pastor Dave laid the foundation to prepare Shenandoah for what God was going to do. He brought to the church a hunger and thirst for God and for reaching people with the Gospel." After nearly one year of serving Shenandoah and many years struggling with his health, Pastor Dave went home to heaven. Like their former interim, this small congregation had a feisty spirit. They were not going to quit but were ready and willing to move forward with God.

In 2017, God brought Paul Strassner, a mentee of Pastor Dave's, to become the next interim pastor and eventually



the senior pastor. Pastor Paul's authentic leadership has brought a renewed excitement and has led to a strategy of growth for Shenandoah Baptist Church. He has received tremendous support from church leaders as he has encouraged and equipped them. He began his ministry at Shenandoah by leading the church to partner with Harvest North America, a ministry that helps churches grow. God used this evangelistic strategy to revive the church with a renewed love for the Gospel and for people.

Before long, six people surrendered to Jesus and professed their faith publicly through baptism. These were the first baptisms the church had experienced in years. Four of these new believers were couples living together outside of wedlock. They requested that Pastor Paul perform their wedding ceremonies and, by doing so, welcome them into the fellowship of Shenandoah Baptist Church. A church that had dwindled to less than 10 people in 2015 saw an attendance of over 80 just two years later, Easter Sunday 2017.

With renewed excitement, church members have worked together to remodel their building (for which they received the Community Enhancement Award from the town of Shenandoah); begin a youth ministry; host a community block party; and reach local children through Vacation Bible School (with **Rileyville Baptist Church**).

Town leaders recently invited Pastor Paul to their vision team meeting, and the mayor asked him to offer a prayer at the town's Memorial Day ceremony. People in the town are taking notice of what's going on. A man who lives next door to the church said he senses the presence of the Lord each time he walks into the church.

"When the church becomes the church and does what it is supposed to do," says Pastor Paul, "the watching world will take notice and come and see."

RESOURCE

contact: paulstrassner@me.com

website: harvestnorthamerica.org/



Shenandoah Baptist Church, partnering with Rileyville Baptist Church, reached local children through Vacation Bible School.



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2017



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River Oak Church in Chesapeake hosted a mid-winter 2017 gathering of Women's Ministry leaders from several cities in the Southeast Region. In addition to participating in a workshop about the use of technology and social media in ministry, the leaders had the blessing of learning about the ministry of the Crisis Pregnancy Center (CPC) of Tidewater.

Lexi Judy, the CPC's community outreach coordinator, shared how the CPC's purpose expands beyond saving the life of the baby. Parenting classes allow couples, as well as single parents, to discover ways to care for, nurture, and provide the best for their children. It is at these classes, called Great Expectations, that the parents are presented with the Gospel. As Lexi puts it, "This is where most moms and dads accept Christ and how the journey of discipleship begins."

The Women's Ministry leaders came prepared with baby gifts from their respective churches to shower the CPC and its participants with love. All of the donated items will go directly to parents who participate in programs through the Crisis Pregnancy Center.

It takes all of us working together to make an impact in our communities. As the CPC strives to be a resource for the local church, it would not exist without partners. The SBC of Virginia Women's

Ministry considers it a great privilege to have been able to bless the CPC of

Tidewater in this way! Find out how you can help the closest Crisis Pregnancy Center or Pregnancy Resource Center in your area.



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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.

Homegrown

“ And when He had got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you. ”

Mark 5:18-19 (NKJV)



In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (KJV). That “Kingdom-first” perspective is seen in the ministry and growth of First Baptist Church of Grottoes, VA. They opened their building this summer to host a joint VBS with New Life Baptist Church, a new church plant. Two churches doing VBS together? What a powerful testimony of unity!

Pastor Mark Wingfield, who has led the growth and expansion of FBC Grottoes’ ministries, explains, “We’d never done it like this, but it helped us understand the big picture of what God is doing in the Shenandoah Valley. ...Our VBS this year was a testimony to the unity found in the Gospel.”

Leading up to VBS, the two churches held planning meetings. Both contributed financially and by providing volunteers. “It was great to work together and learn from [FBC] how it’s done,” shares Danielle Smallwood, wife of church planter Corey Smallwood.

Would your church be willing to partner with another church for a summer outreach like VBS? Contact your regional missionary or another church in your area to explore the possibility.

Who says you can’t go home again?

Every now and then, God calls a leader to return to and reach his hometown. Church planter Corey Smallwood is one such man. He grew up in Augusta County, VA and graduated from Fort Defiance High School, where he played football and was known as part of the New Hope community. He was saved at the age of 15 and called into ministry shortly after. In 2008, he accepted a position as the youth/associate pastor at **SherLynd Baptist Church** in Lyndhurst, VA. This is where he has grown and developed over the past eight years, serving with Pastor Allen George.

Even as a 17-year-old, Corey felt God wanted him to plant a church in New Hope. In 2014, the Lord began moving in his heart to bring that vision to fruition.

“Corey and I prayed about it for almost a year,” says Pastor Allen. “And then we had the deacons pray about it for another six months before we went to the church. As God began to solidify the idea that SherLynd Baptist Church would plant a church out of our [own] church, it helped us think differently about church planting. As a small rural church, we thought church planting was for larger churches or [that we] didn’t have the ability or the knowledge to plant a church.”

Corey, Pastor Allen, and SBC of Virginia church planting strategist Josh Turner met to discuss the possibility. Eventually, Corey and his launch team attended PLANT training with the SBCV, and Corey was approved as an SBCV church planter.

With a population of 842, New Hope isn’t exactly bustling with people, but it’s where Corey felt called to plant.

I feel like this was done in the total opposite way in which the ‘experts’ would say to do this. I didn’t pull out a map to find the biggest city with the biggest need. I didn’t have all the logistics or statistics for the area [where] God called me to plant. I didn’t know what the numbers were, how many were unchurched, what the population was. I only knew that I had a deep, burning desire to plant in my hometown. There was never a doubt on this location—the only doubt was, ‘God, are you sure I’m the right guy?’ Once I knew God was calling me to plant in New Hope, I began the research. I quickly realized that there was a great need for a church plant here.

From the time I was about 17, I felt the call to plant a church in my hometown. God gave me

a very clear vision of where He wanted me, down to the very building we are in. Now 15 years later, I am a church planter in my hometown in the exact building God prepared for me 15 years ago. I live three houses down from the church, and it’s like I am living out a dream.... We serve an amazing God!

With the support and partnership of SherLynd Baptist Church and the SBCV, **New Life Baptist Church** began holding public services in January 2017. Since that time, they’ve had 17 baptisms. In July 2017, just six months into its existence, New Life Baptist Church had 167 in attendance at its largest service to that point.

SherLynd Baptist Church took the risk to send people and resources, and now more souls are being saved. For churches hesitant to plant, Pastor Allen encourages them to “think Kingdom. What difference does it make if you have 1,000 people in your church or in 4 different churches? It’s all about advancing the Kingdom, and being Kingdom minded is crucial when planting a church.”

RESOURCE

Websites:

nlbva.com and sherlynd.org



from the EDITOR

Brandon Pickett

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Brandon

Not Alone Hits Home

The cover of this edition of the *Proclaimer* reemphasizes a theme we unveiled at this time last year. **Not Alone** is now becoming part of our lexicon, and I couldn't be happier. At the 2016 Annual Homecoming, we talked about how you as a pastor, staff, or lay leader in your church are **Not Alone** because of our Gospel partnership. This year, we will focus on the fact that we are **Not Alone**...stronger together for evangelism and missions than we could ever be alone.

Believe it or not, this is the 15th anniversary of one our most vibrant ministries—Disaster Relief (DR). This ministry continues to be a tremendous blessing to both those we help and those who have the privilege and opportunity to serve.

Even as I write this article, we continue to see millions of our fellow citizens struggle to survive and regroup after multiple hurricanes (Harvey, Irma, Maria, etc.). SBC of Virginia DR teams heed the call to go, serve, and share the Gospel. We—together—have sent multiple teams to Houston, Florida, and now Puerto Rico. The stories of how God has used them and continues to use them are still flowing back from the field. One such story is from Rachel Adams, one of our SBCV graphic artists, who lives in Houston. Her husband, Dylan, serves as the high school pastor at Second Baptist Church of Houston's South Campus in Pearland. She wrote an article about her experience after Hurricane Harvey (you can read that on page 10), but I wanted to pull just an excerpt so you can read in her own words how the truth of **Not Alone** is so powerful.

When I saw those familiar yellow shirts pouring out of trucks and trailers sporting "SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief," it felt as if the cavalry had arrived just in time.

Over the next two weeks, SBCV Disaster Relief teams brought their training and experience to our relief efforts. They worked alongside our church to clean out homes, share the love of Jesus with homeowners who had lost so much, and serve thousands of hot meals to volunteers and the community. In addition, they encouraged and

revived our church family and painted a beautiful picture of the body of Christ coming together.

*Many of you have probably heard the phrase **Not Alone** used throughout the SBC of Virginia. It was the theme of our Annual Homecoming last year and will be again at Annual Homecoming this November. I have to admit, it wasn't until the volunteers from Virginia came to our aid that **Not Alone** resonated for me on a personal level.*

I love to see examples of service through partnership in Scripture. 2 Corinthians 8:3–5 is one such passage, where Paul shows through the example of the Macedonian believers how needed and powerful partnership can be.

For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. (ESV)

May we also continue to have that spiritual attitude—to first give ourselves to the Lord and then, by His will, to those around us who need to hear the Good News of salvation. Then they will know firsthand that because of Jesus and His free gift, they, too, are **Not Alone**!





ENGAGE DANVILLE

3-Day Community Outreach

Picture hundreds of people gathered on a summer Sunday afternoon, enjoying snow cones, inflatables, popcorn, music, and fellowship.

This was the scene at Carrington Pavilion in Danville at the end of Engage Danville, a three-day community outreach. On the weekend of June 8–11, 15 churches and more than 300 volunteers worked on service projects around the city. Projects included prayerwalking, distributing food and water, providing lawn care, and delivering appreciation gifts to safety personnel.

The idea began with Pastor Scott Randlett at **Dan River Church** and quickly gained support from other local SBC of Virginia churches. “Our goal from the beginning was Mark 10:45, ‘For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many,’” Randlett shared. “When we serve and when we give, it opens up the door to share the love of Jesus.”

Dan River Church began hosting monthly prayer and planning meetings last February with area pastors, church leaders, and community leaders. Among those who attended some of the prayer meetings was Danville’s mayor, John Gilstrap.

“I am a Christian and proud of it, and I just think this is marvelous what Engage Danville is doing for our community,” Gilstrap said. “Sometimes change occurs and you do not recognize it

immediately, but I think this is a great start to unifying our community. I hope this is the first of many programs that are going to reach out and show people that citizens really care about each other and they care about God, and God has to come first.”

Pastor Randlett explained, “People want to feel engaged. People would rather engage in authentic relationships than be entertained, and so we want to simply engage our city through conversations, missions—and engage with churches in serving and connecting with our community. I think that we saw God move, we saw a number of Gospel conversations, and we had churches standing arm and arm saying, ‘We’re going to stand for what we’re for and not what we’re against, and we’re for the name of Jesus.’”

The participating churches were grateful for SBCV’s partnership and support in planning and coordinating an event of this scale. “Having someone like [SBCV regional missionary] Shawn Ames on our side has been a huge support for us,” Randlett emphasized. “The SBCV knows things about this community that we don’t know, and they know where people are hurting. We were able to do prayerwalks in areas of our city that SBCV was able to help us with specifically. It is huge to have the support of our local convention.”



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Randlett echoed the sentiment of the mayor—that Engage Danville will continue to be used to reach the city of Danville in the future. “This past summer was the beginning of Engage Danville, and there is no telling what God can do in this community when we simply come together.”



Calendar

view the online calendar at sbcv.org/calendar

JANUARY

- 12-13 Four Fields Training; The Heights BC, Colonial Heights
- 12-13 Youth Evangelism Conference; London Bridge BC, Virginia Beach
- 23 Leadership Summit; Mount Pleasant BC, Colonial Heights
- 26-27 PLANT A

FEBRUARY

- 3 Fit 2 Lead; Spotswood BC, Fredericksburg
- 23-24 NAME Affinity Summit
- 27 Empowered Conference; First BC, Norfolk

MARCH

- 9-10 PLANT B
- 10-19 Daytona Bike Week
- 10 Kids Leadership Conference; Swift Creek BC, Midlothian
- 16-17 Valley Student Conference; First BC, Roanoke
- 16-17 Women's Ministry Conference; River Oak, Chesapeake
- 20 Next Level Church Summit; Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen
- 24 Disaster Relief Training; Southeast Region

APRIL

- 13-14 Church Planter Network
- 14 Disaster Relief Training; Central Region
- 17 Youth Ministry Roundtable; Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen
- 21 Hispanic Conference; Lynchburg
- 24-26 Prayer Summit Tour
- 28 Disaster Relief Training; North Region

MAY

- 5 Disaster Relief Training; Valley Region
- 7-8 Executive Board Meeting
- 11-12 PLANT A
- 19 Deaf Leadership Roundtable
- 19 Fit 2 Lead; Rosedale BC, Abingdon
- 24 Intern Training; Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen

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