

a publication of the  
**SBC**  
OF VIRGINIA

# PROCLAIMER

2018 | volume 20, issue 3

telling the stories of  
**visionvirginia**



*they are  
not alone*



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*From the Executive Director*

# Who Are “They”?

The title of this **Proclaimer** edition and theme of the SBC of Virginia’s Annual Homecoming is **They Are Not Alone**. But who are “they”?

The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 10:14–15, “How then will they call on him in whom **they** have not believed? And how are **they** to believe in him of whom **they** have never heard? And how are **they** to hear without someone preaching? And how are **they** to preach unless **they** are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!’”

Paul utilizes the often-used pronoun, “**they**,” to refer to people who need to hear and respond to the Good News of Jesus Christ and also to refer to the people who proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. Many commentators infer from the context that Paul is specifically referring to his own kindred people Israel, and generally, the text points us to all people who need to hear and those who are sent as ambassadors of Christ.

SBC of Virginia and the churches that comprise this Gospel partnership believe “They Are Not Alone.” Who are the “**they**” we are referring to as we apply Romans 10:14–15 to our lives, churches, and context?

**They** are the people suffering from the impact of natural disasters. **They** are the disaster relief volunteers sent to serve in Jesus’ name.

**They** are the nations that call our neighborhoods home. **They** are the Christians who attend your churches who pray, care, and share Christ with their neighbors.

**They** are churches ready for revitalization.

**They** are the pastors and church leaders seeking a Holy Spirit revival and resurgence of ministry.

**They** are the unreached people of the world.

**They** are the missionaries and mission teams whom your churches are sending to the ends of the earth.

**They** are new church plants being started in Virginia and DC. **They** are the church planters and families who are walking by faith and serving obediently.

**They** are the churches in transition seeking their next pastors. **They** are the brothers who are being called to serve as pastors and their families who will serve alongside them.

**They** are the next generation whom Christ is calling and mobilizing for His mission. **They** are the men and women serving in your churches. **They** are the children and families you are pointing to Jesus. **They** are the children you are adopting, **they** are the hurting you are loving, they are the lost who need Jesus.

Because of the grace of God, the love of the Lord Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit at work through His churches, **They Are Not Alone!**

*Your brother in Christ,*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Autry". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.



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Winter 2018-19  
sbcv.org



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COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP,

**they are  
not alone.**

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# GO & TELL

## All Nations in Any Language

Every summer, churches across America open their doors to children of all faiths to attend Vacation Bible School (VBS), one of their largest outreach events of the year. Many times, VBS is the first time a child hears about the saving love of Christ, and it's often when he/she becomes a believer.

This past summer, a mission team from **Forest Baptist Church** in Forest, VA worked with SBCV church planter Martin Solan\* in his ministry area of Metro Washington, DC. They joined with Solan's partner SBCV church\* for a two-day VBS to reach the children of Arab immigrant families living nearby.

*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ~ Romans 10:14*

Of the Muslims in America, 42% were born in the United States\*\*. The children of this generation are raised in their parents' faith, but they are exposed to Christianity in the communities where they now live. Pastor Solan's desire in hosting a VBS was to connect with these families.

The team from Forest (made up of adults, teenagers, and children), shared LifeWay's *Go and Tell Mission Trip VBS* with the children. This new resource is designed to present the Gospel to any child anywhere, no matter the culture or language.

"Having financially supported Pastor Solan and his mission, we were excited to 'go and tell' the truths of the Gospel to a community of people who may have never before heard the name of Jesus Christ," says Joe Veres, Forest's elder of missions. "Our desire, as the Holy Spirit prepares the way, is for the seeds of truth that we planted to be nurtured in the lives of children who will eventually come to faith in

the Savior of the world."

*"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."*

*~ 1 Corinthians 3:6-7*

The children heard the Gospel through Bible story time, crafts, games, and even face painting. "It meant a lot to us," Solan says, "because these kids and families were able to hear the message of Christ through the *Go and Tell* curriculum and crafts. Some of them had never heard these stories before. This has helped the community understand more about Jesus and how to have a relationship with Him."

"I have never seen a kids' program that cared for my son," one Arab refugee mother shared. "My son enjoyed his time and enjoyed the games. He came home and shared the Bible story with me. This was one of the first times that my son clearly explained a story from the Bible. I hope next year they do it again."

"All of these people are refugees and immigrants who have recently come from places like Pakistan, Egypt, and other locations in the Middle East," shares Pastor Solan. "This has brought joy to their isolated lives and will help us to continue to reach them through our ministry here at the mission center."

For more information on how to get involved ministering to Arab refugees, contact Larry Black (lblack@sbcv.org).



.....  
\*Name has been changed or withheld for security purposes

.....  
\*\*Pew Research Center, April 17, 2018

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



# Passing the **MANTLE** of Leadership

**“This is a very big deal!** For a senior pastor to pour his heart and life into one congregation for 24 years—there are lifetime friends, powerful memories, and a deep love for the congregation he is now leaving. Watching someone else ‘take your place’ is painful, but doing this well is important,” says Pastor Ray Bearden.

In February of 1994, God led Dr. Ray Bearden from years of ministry as a church planter in Louisiana and Northern Virginia to be the senior pastor of **First Baptist Church of Woodbridge, VA (FBCW)**. The church had emerged from a tumultuous exit of the previous pastor, with a resulting decline in morale, attendance, and hope. Through Bearden’s tenure as pastor, FBCW grew to over 1,000 in weekly worship attendance, moved geographically to a central location within the community, and became involved in missions and church planting locally and internationally.

## Evaluation and Recommendation

Several years ago, FBCW’s leadership recognized that the church was plateauing. They engaged Unstuck, a congregational advisory/coaching group, to assist in evaluating the church and recommending changes to stimulate growth. Bearden recalls, “At the same time, I had a growing sense of developing a framework for pastoral transition.”



*The FBC Woodbridge congregation thanked Pastor Ray Bearden and his wife with a celebration of love for their many years of faithful service.*

God continued to confirm to Pastor Ray through prayer, private readings, family changes, the Unstuck church evaluation, and his desire to “end well” that it was time—time for him to prepare to pass the mantle to the next leader God had for FBCW.

## Search Committee

In January of 2016, First Baptist Church of Woodbridge voted to enlist the help of Vanderbloemen Search Group (VSG) to help them through the transition. “VSG,” Bearden explains, “has a defined process that allowed for clear determination of the congregation’s needs, a nationwide search, and a process for congregational affirmation and call.”

Through William Vanderbloemen’s book, *Next*, Bearden was reminded that “everybody is an interim.” With prayer, VSG’s report, and discussions with family and church elders, Bearden decided February 2018 (his 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary as senior pastor) would be his last month at FBCW. He announced this to the church in October 2016, and the pastor search process began later that year.

The search committee was primarily lay led, with ex-officio members consisting of senior staff and elders. “I participated early as things began,” says Bearden, “and then stepped away until candidates were identified and we moved toward interviews.”

The committee was careful to rely on prayer through every step of the process. After narrowing it down to six candidates by early 2017, “It was a rather easy sense of God’s leading to our primary candidate, Brad Kirby,” Bearden shares. “The interviews, site visits, and connections with key leaders all

confirmed in every way that this was God's person for our congregation."

### Candidate

Dr. Brad Kirby has served for 23 years in vocational ministry—as senior pastor in churches in Louisiana, Texas and, most recently, at First Baptist Church, Jenson Beach, FL. When the VSG consultant asked Kirby what he thought of Washington, DC, Kirby recalls saying, "I don't think of Washington, DC."

The Kirbys were involved in a thriving church in the middle of two of the most unchurched counties (Port Saint Lucy and Martin) in South Florida and were not necessarily looking to move, much less to Metro DC. Nevertheless, "If God was going to call us somewhere," Kirby reflects, "shame on us if we were going to rule it out just because of a location." Step by step, they prayed and sought the Lord and gained peace through the process.

### Transition

Having followed a long-tenured pastor at his previous church, Kirby was a little nervous about doing so again. "Following a faithful,

long-tenured pastor is not easy," he says. "[The former pastor] sets a standard for right and wrong. People are connected to his personality, and it can often take a while for them to transition." The Kirby family arrived at FBCW in August of 2017, and Pastor Bearden had committed to remain as senior pastor until February 2018. There was, therefore, a period of overlap between the two. Neither pastor had been in this unique circumstance before, and it was unclear how things would go.

"This transition has been highly successful due to Pastor Ray [Bearden]," Kirby shares. "Success in these situations is more dependent on the outgoing pastor than the incoming pastor. I could have done everything I've done and done it to the best of my ability. Yet, if the previous pastor is not committed to leaving in a way that honors Christ and doesn't have the Gospel at heart, he could easily undo everything the new pastor does."

"For the outgoing senior pastor, there has to be an awareness that he has the incredible and powerful opportunity to sabotage the process," agrees Pastor Bearden. "He has the opportunity to embody the transition of the congregation from the old to the new."

Bearden saw his primary role as facilitating a "smooth landing" for Pastor Kirby and supporting the congregation through the process.

Bearden wanted to "leave well" and "provide a strong foundation for continued Kingdom growth." He wanted the congregation to view the timing and the process of his departure positively with readiness for what was next.

One of the ways he set a good foundation was by participating in fewer church meetings over time, which allowed Kirby to be clearly viewed as pastor. Between August and December 2017, FBCW officially installed Brad Kirby as senior pastor and officially celebrated Pastor Ray Bearden's 24 years of service.

## Pastor Kirby shares about what God has done since the passing of the mantle:

### CHURCH UNITY

The church is coming together around the mission of the church—disciples that make disciples and the "Go and Tell" emphasis for the upcoming year. The church has united to impact local schools by meeting physical needs. "We were able to reach over 500 families with help, 800+ Gospel resources handed out, 139 Gospel interactions and prayer, and 34 decisions for Christ! Our church has responded!"

### STAFF

"Equally, I have seen our staff team unify together. We are all like-minded, focused on the mission, and team focused. What an incredible blessing of God!"

### FINANCIALLY

"The usual trends and stats for a major pastoral transition support a 10-15% drop in attendance and a corresponding drop in giving. God has blessed us with increases in both of those areas thus far. God only knows what the next years hold, but what an incredible blessing from God to have momentum and energy as a new pastor in a tough transition."

### PERSONALLY

"I have seen God's blessings in my own family. Moving to the Washington, DC area from South Florida is a hard transition in and of itself, but my kids love their school, they have found great friends, and my wife and I have found such wonderful community at FBCW! God is good."

*FBC Woodbridge welcomed the Kirby family by showing their commitment and support at a welcome gathering.*



### CONTACT

Want to find out more about passing the mantle? Email: **Brad Kirby:** [bkirby@fbcwoodbridge.org](mailto:bkirby@fbcwoodbridge.org) or **Ray Bearden:** [raybearden@gmail.com](mailto:raybearden@gmail.com)



Dr. Eric Thomas

Senior Pastor

First Baptist Church, Norfolk, VA

## they are not alone.

*And it happened when [Jesus] was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, You can make me clean." Then [Jesus] put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing, be cleansed." Immediately the leprosy left him. ~ Luke 5:12-13, NKJV*

**It's hard to imagine** anyone more alone than a leper during the time of Jesus. Those who had leprosy were forbidden to approach anyone. If lepers were walking down the street, they had to cry out, "Unclean!" to prevent anyone accidentally coming into contact with them. They were lonely. They were soul-sick. They were alone.

Although leprosy isn't the plague it once was, people far and wide sing the litany of loneliness and feel the despair of distance. They look across the chasm to community too wide for them to cross. They long for life-shaping, heart-satisfying love and fellowship that seems just out of their reach. They are isolated. They are soul-sick. They are alone.

But Jesus came to declare, **They are not alone!**

Jesus came to bring the joy of belonging to sinners separated from God and from hope by their sin. He came to break through the barrier to belonging and remove the litany of loneliness that shouts in the soul of those far from God. Jesus left the throne room of heaven to walk this earth and die for sinners so that He might tear away every barrier between us and God and one another. Because of sin, they are isolated. They are soul-sick. They are alone.

Jesus declares to those who are far from God: **They are not alone!**

When Jesus reached out to touch the leper, the crowd must have gasped. He reached out beyond the social barriers to help the hopeless find healing—for God's glory and fame. And we must do the same. Our faith is not some pre-packaged commodity to be pulled out only on the weekends or in crisis. Our faith directs our steps through real life and meets real people with purpose on our journey.

**They Are Not Alone!** This is more than a slogan that marks a theme of an annual gathering of SBC of Virginia churches. It is the heartbeat of heaven and the mission of Jesus given to His Church. As our churches gather together, I pray that we might once again be captured by the song of God's salvation for those who are far from Him.

Lepers expect rejection, but Jesus brings cleansing. Sinners expect condemnation, but Jesus delivers forgiveness. This is the great hope that we live and share. This is our mission to the Commonwealth and to the world. We seek to honor God by connecting people to Jesus.

With Jesus, we declare to the world: **They are not alone!**



# From Disaster to REVITALIZATION



The church family huddled together and prayed in the basement while the tornado barely missed the building.

**B**rad Childres was settling into his pastorate at **Woodlawn Baptist Church** in Danville, VA. Desiring to see a revitalization take place, he joined a cohort of other SBC of Virginia pastors who were also looking to revitalize their churches. He drew encouragement from these fellow pastors and began planning.

**The Tabernacle**, another SBCV church in Danville, had a strong AWANA program for children and helped Woodlawn start its own AWANA ministry. On Sunday evening, April 15, 2018, while the children attended AWANA, Childres opened Woodlawn's front door to see a tornado coming straight for them. The church family huddled together and prayed in the basement while the tornado barely missed the building. In fact, it came so close that it bent the cross on the top of the steeple and did damage behind the church, downing several trees.

After he saw the devastation in the area, Childres recalls thinking, "This is a chance for Woodlawn to re-engage this community and show God's love to them. If we don't react with help, then we will be showing this community that we don't care about them." He understood that this tragic moment could be used for God's glory.

The Disaster Relief (DR) team of the SBC of Virginia and God's Pit Crew sprang into action, being God's hands and feet in the community. The members of Woodlawn Baptist Church became a volunteer force and mobilization

center for their community. God worked good out of this disaster, providing Woodlawn Baptist Church an opportunity to be reenergized and revitalized. The people Woodlawn had been trying to reach were the very ones they were able to reach through cleanup efforts.

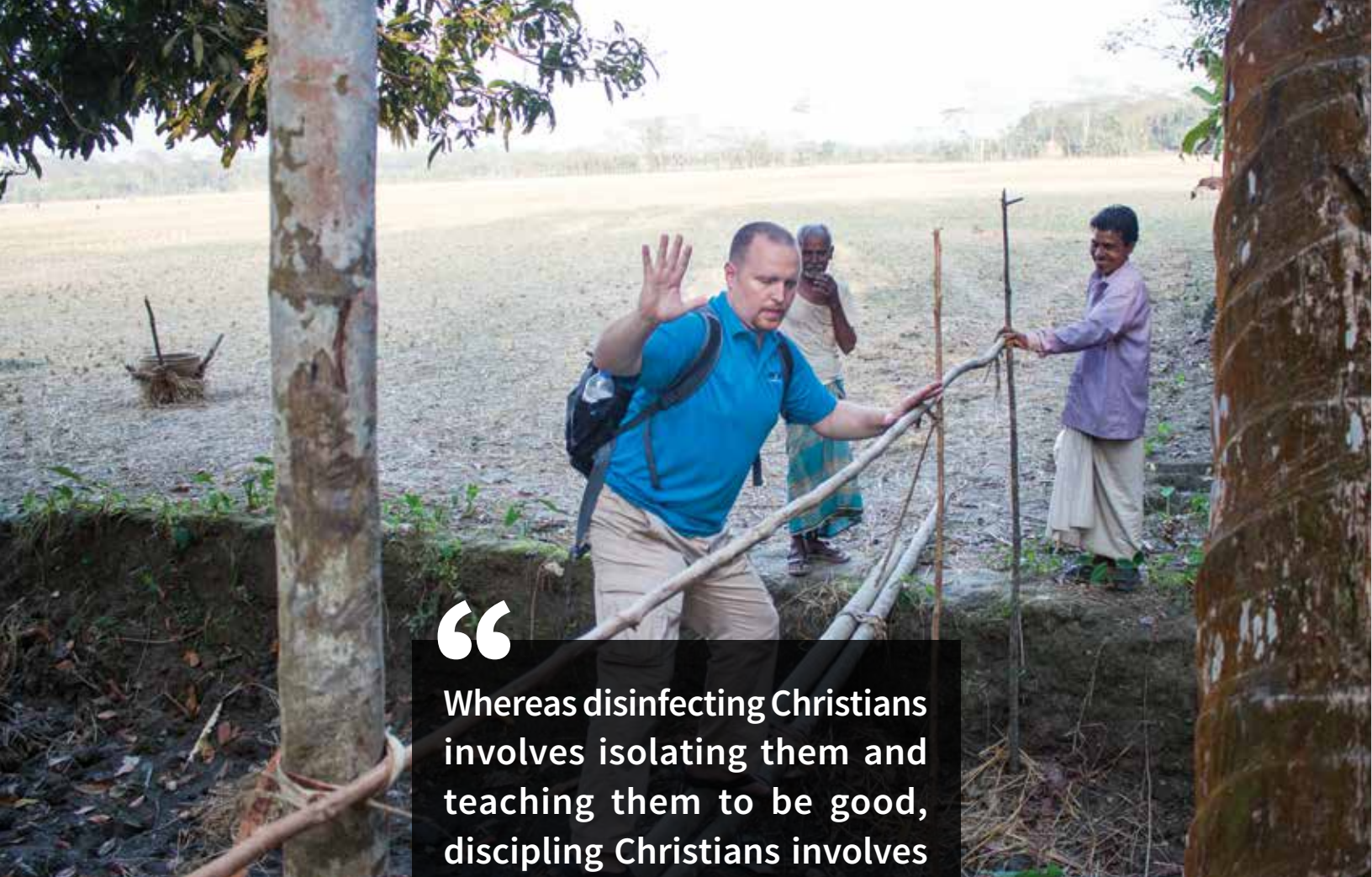
In the weeks ahead, the church and community banded together to help one another, and they developed a deep mutual appreciation. The church aided the community, and the community supported the church. After the initial aftermath of the storm had passed and cleanup efforts subsided, Woodlawn hosted several services to honor the first responders and community organizations that had made the tornado recovery possible. Many in the community attended, and Woodlawn was able to host its community and honor those who had done so much during that difficult time.

Because of love expressed in tangible ways, Woodlawn Baptist Church has seen many new faces come through its doors. They have rejoiced in five salvations, five baptisms, and a 25% increase in worship attendance.

April 2018 could have stopped the revitalization efforts of Woodlawn Baptist Church. Instead, a moment of tragedy became a moment of revitalization. Woodlawn has bright days ahead and multiple opportunities to serve its community.



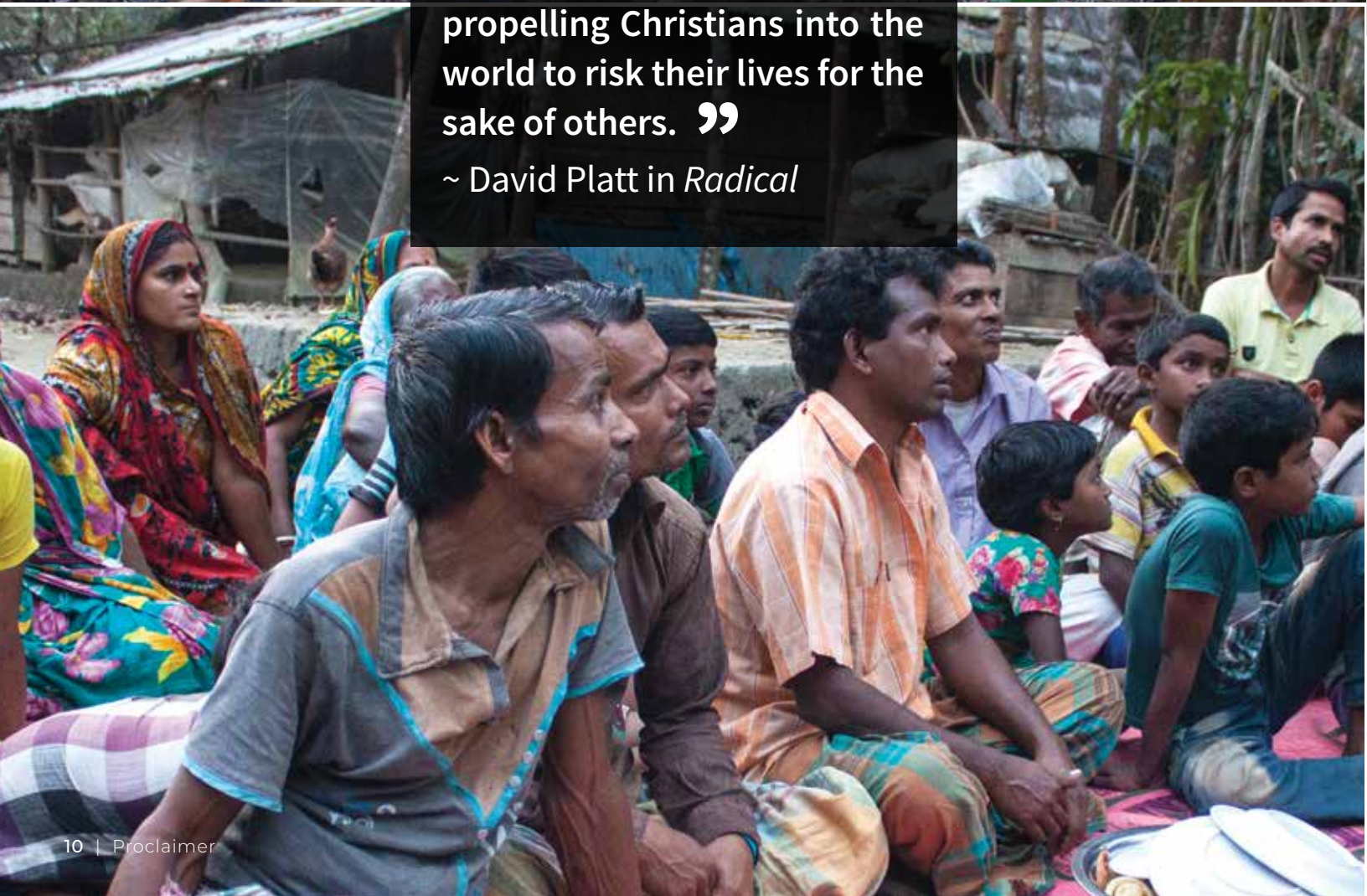




“

Whereas disinfecting Christians involves isolating them and teaching them to be good, discipling Christians involves propelling Christians into the world to risk their lives for the sake of others. ”

~ David Platt in *Radical*







# Disciple Making

## PARKWAY BAPTIST CHURCH

### PASTORING TO LIVE ON MISSION

Pastor Derek Futrell says that he went from desiring Parkway Baptist Church to “make it” as a new church to having his heart turned radically toward reaching those who would never hear the Gospel. This change in thinking came through everyday Christians at Parkway who carried a burden for the unreached everywhere.

After months of praying specifically with these church members for unreached people groups, missionaries, and open doors, “God brought us partnerships with missionaries and people groups to pray for and go to,” says Futrell. “We realized quickly that those partnerships would not last if pastors were the leaders of the partnership—so we asked God to provide advocates within our church who would be the primary partner to the missionary and become or help resource the project leader. Some of those advocates actually became missionaries on the field, and we [now] send teams to work alongside them.”

“God continues to show us His plans, and we adjust to them,” Futrell explains. “We have seen the growing number of internationals in Richmond, Virginia, and the United States, and now we are sending mission teams to these cities to reach the same people groups that we send mission teams to overseas.”

### THE IMPACT OF MISSIONS

Jesus’ timeless instruction to make disciples is the mandate at Parkway. Its leaders look for various tools and methods to make disciples, but “more than anything else, discipleship is about being on mission,” says Mac Hutton, associate pastor. “Disciple making at Parkway involves people being on mission where God has placed them.”

Hutton tells about Jay, who went on a short-term mission trip and has now stepped back into his teaching role at the local high school to be an influence there. “Classrooms and mission fields are not either/or but both/and.”

Steve, a medical researcher and analyst, tells how God moved him from being an observer to living on mission. He was involved in a project in Bangladesh. “I was sharing the Gospel in a remote village with a man who had listened intently. He stunned me when he asked, ‘Who is going to come and tell us more?’ I have not seen this man again, but how can I do less than actively pursue means to share with the Bengali peoples wherever they can be found?” Steve now coordinates the Bengali outreach for Parkway in Bangladesh, Michigan, Montreal, and Richmond.

Steve testifies, “I have come to learn that living as active participants in the mission individually and corporately can be summarized by:

**BEING READY TO GO**—*Not preparing to stay*

**NOT BEING PARALYZED BY DOUBT AND INSECURITY** *but understanding that we are sufficiently empowered for the mission*

**NOT BEING OVERWHELMED** *by the enormity of the mission, but being focused on the task*

**SHOWING UP**—*God moments are revealed when we are expectant and observant regardless of location*

**PRIORITIZING OBEDIENCE** *over results*

*Understanding that LIVING ON MISSION IS WORSHIP*

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# bold

*Share Christ's love.*

## **PARTNERING** with Next-Gen Missionaries in Northern Virginia

“The young adult volunteers were exceptional,” recalls Tim Ma, pastor of **Emmanuel Baptist Church** in Manassas.



His church was the newest location for Fusion Mission Camp this past summer, and the interns who provided mission site leadership left quite the impression—and understandably so. These interns from around the Commonwealth helped lead campers-turned-missionaries to invest over 1,300 manhours of Gospel-oriented efforts over the span of Fusion Mission Camp 2018 in Northern Virginia. What makes Northern Virginia such a special place for a camp like this is its population density and rich ethnic diversity. Census estimates reveal the city to be approximately 60% Anglo, with contingents of Hispanics, Africans, and Asians comprising the other 40%.

This rich diversity required strategies to overcome cultural and language barriers. For instance, at one grocery store, campers had signs in four different languages to communicate with the variety of patrons. With the help of ethnic pastors at Emmanuel Baptist Church, who provided cultural training from Chinese, Korean, and Hispanic perspectives, interns and staff were able to help campers think more intentionally about cultural sensitivities as they developed their mission projects.

According to Ma, this was a two-way blessing. “A huge takeaway is the effort that the SBCV made to incorporate our ethnic ministers into Fusion Mission Camp here. Many of our ethnic ministers work mainly within their own people group. The opportunity to work along with folks from a different language group is a special expression of the Gospel.”

In addition to the ethnic ministers of Emmanuel Baptist and the Fusion interns, the value of SBC of Virginia partnership was displayed when campers and staff helped SBCV church planters and received help in return. Over 1,200 water bottles and church invitations







were distributed at Vienna Station under the oversight of Brandon Hembree, pastor of **Impact Church** (Centreville). In connection with **Pillar Church of Woodlawn** (Alexandria), campers did prayerwalking and visitation and were able to lead one person to receive Christ.

All told, the combined efforts of pastors, planters, churches, staff, and SBCV interns led to 60 decisions for Christ (7 of which were for salvation) and thousands of people touched by Fusion campers. According to Ma, the impact of Fusion Mission Camp has continued several months after the event: "One very tangible thing that carried over is our Spanish minister doing a regular outreach at Mega-Mart."

With the population density and cultural diversity of Manassas (and Northern Virginia in general), it's no wonder Fusion campers found themselves face-to-face with multiple opportunities and challenges. It's also no wonder Fusion interns played such a critical role for campers and chaperones. Recalls Ma, "They modeled for us, myself included, that as we are going through life, we are to reach out to others. Being around [the interns] and seeing their zeal reminds us of the way it should be."



nextgen>

# BEYOND

## Fusion Mission Camp 2019



JUNE 17-21

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*Find out more and register at [sbcv.org/fusion](http://sbcv.org/fusion)*

# PRAYER for Church Planters

For more information on these and other church planters, go to [sbcv.org/planters](http://sbcv.org/planters). You may download these and many other church planter profiles there.

*"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)



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#### BIRTHDAYS:

Felix, July 28 / Myra, April 5

#### PRAY:

- ▶ with us as we continue to reach out to our second-generation college and high school students
- ▶ for GICC to become a hub for church planting in Fairfax and Falls Church and in training future church planters
- ▶ for new church plant in Norfolk (TRAIL of Grace Christian Fellowship—Pastor Allan Morelos)

#### HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ▶ help with prayerwalking our target areas
- ▶ we are in need of financial partners



**Rich & Christy Shipe**  
Church Planter  
**HARVEST BIBLE CHAPEL ASHBURN**  
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#### BIRTHDAYS:

Rich, August 8 / Christy, June 28

#### PRAY:

- ▶ that God would move in the hearts of people to prepare their hearts
- ▶ for boldness for our core group in sharing the Good News
- ▶ that Christians in the area would see the strategic biblical value of planting churches

#### HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- ▶ prayer and financial support are essential
- ▶ help through praywalking and summer backyard Bible clubs
- ▶ connect with us; we can inform you of specific prayer requests





## BEYOND THE FACES OF RACISM

**W**hat love, peace, and comfort our Heavenly Father bestows on us in these culturally dark and contentious times! The loud, roaring voice of racism pummels the hearing of the unsuspecting and unprotected souls who are void of truth—God’s truth. Satan loves fanning the flames of human ignorance with deception, division, and destruction. In contrast, to be steadfast, God commanded His Church to let the peace of Christ “rule” in our hearts and the Word of God to “richly dwell” (Col. 3:13-4). To attempt to reconcile human relationships with a darkened understanding using skin color as a measure is pure foolishness to God. As shepherds, we should not only know this but live and teach it (Hebrews 13:7). If we don’t, then our families, churches, and communities will not “see” God (Matt. 5:13-16). Believers everywhere would agree that we are one “race”—the human race.

If, then, we are all human beings, how can we reconcile that which is already one? The phrase “racial reconciliation” remains humorous to God, especially when that terminology almost always defaults to a black and white conflict. To my Latino, Asian, and all other blood-bought brothers and sisters in the body of Christ, I personally apologize on behalf of all Christendom and the world for anyone who intentionally or unintentionally tries to build relationship equity without you and God. You, too, my friends, are created in the image of our God. God’s plan for preserving the culture with righteousness (salt) and providing the clear path (light) for relationally walking (Matt. 5:13-14) in harmony is His Church, and we need to walk in true godly love with our neighbors and even with our enemies (Matt. 22:38).

True affection for Jesus’ work on the cross and the Gospel entrusted to us should compel us to be living testimonies—with truth oozing from our mouths as we invest our lives to help rescue those who are prisoners to racist thinking. Unfortunately, according to many, God’s Church seems as confused, misguided, and as ethnically prejudiced as the world. Racism masquerading as anything other than sin is an abomination to God! Anytime we are respecters of persons in our thinking or behaviors, for any reason, including for skin color, we’re being sinners (Rom. 2:11). To expect humans to act responsibly (verbally and physically) in the ethnic clashes in our culture is not going to happen apart from God. God already stated, “...a man’s way is not in himself nor can he direct his own steps...” (Jer. 10:23). Brothers, whenever a

body of people (church or nation) chooses not to acknowledge God in their thinking, God gives them over to debase thinking (Rom. 1:21, 28, 30) and thus, we find that racism has no conscience, social manners, or ethnic choice.

So in the cultural narrative of racial reconciliation, what is God’s biblical mandate to us about relating to all peoples? First, we must agree with God that any practice of partiality in our own hearts or with those we shepherd and with whom we fellowship is sin, and we should be held accountable for it! We must repent personally and walk in unity, bearing the fruit of repentance (Matt. 3:8). Let’s stop conducting community events or swapping pulpits, etc., attempting to show we have harmony in the Church in words but not in lifestyles. Right relationships with God and man are lifestyles sustained by the desire to live out God’s Word in intimate relationships with Him and each other. Our lives, not t-shirts or bumper stickers, should reflect the Gospel that points all people to Jesus! Jesus’ prayer for unity (John 17:21) is not based upon an outward production of man’s ideas, but the inward residency of God’s love in our hearts that anchors us in the faith while engaging the cultural confusion of racism.

Finally, brothers, let us be reminded that Jesus is the exact image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). If invisible, then what “supreme” skin color should we assign to God Almighty, God of the universe, Creator of heaven and earth and everything in it?! We are created in the image (likeness) of God—His character, not His color (Gen. 1:26). God is Spirit (John 4:24), and our lives in the face of racism should be human temples of worship, reflecting our love for God and man. In Genesis 1:31, when God completed His work, He said it was very good! Ethnic diversity and harmony, innate to God’s plan, was deemed pleasing to Him.

Brothers, may the Lord God give us the boldness to tear down the high places of racism, being obedient to His command to know, live, and teach truth. Let us hold ourselves and all of Christendom accountable to the standard of His love and let us be conduits of relational, harmonic love amidst constant ethnic unrest. As Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34-35, NASB).

Love you all!

*God commanded His Church to let the peace of Christ “rule” in our hearts and the Word of God to “richly dwell”*  
~ Colossians 3:13-4

# All For the Sake of the **Gospel**

**THROUGH PRAYERFUL DELIBERATIONS,**  
ACCESS CHURCH AND 17<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
BAPTIST CHURCH BECAME **ONE CHURCH**

**J**ohn and Michelle Hayden, along with their three children, live in Roanoke where John is the pastor of the newly merged **Access 17th Street Baptist Church**. The story of the Hayden family and this church vividly displays partnership, mentoring, and perseverance—all for the sake of the Gospel.

While John was serving in the US Navy as a corpsman at Portsmouth Naval Hospital, the Haydens lived in Smithfield, VA, where they were active members at **Harvest Fellowship Baptist Church**. Through serving at Harvest and being mentored by Pastor Randy Green, John and Michelle discerned God's call to ministry and ultimately to plant a church in Roanoke. After serving as a church planter apprentice at Harvest for two years, John and his family moved to Roanoke in August 2010 and had their first small group meeting at a Hardee's restaurant that month.

Hayden recalls, "Harvest Fellowship provided an excellent environment for me to mature spiritually and to learn skills in starting ministry. ...I matured through being in an environment where I could spend a great deal of time in one-on-one mentoring with Pastor Randy Green, while also receiving encouragement from many peer believers." Part of the hands-on ministry preparation

Hayden received at Harvest came through an assignment to start and grow a collegiate ministry from scratch. The Lord enabled Hayden to grow the ministry from 1 student to over 20 in two years in a non-college town. His ministry preparation was further enhanced by the mentoring of Pastor Green, who led Hayden through guided reading assignments and exposed him to his personal philosophy of ministry. Harvest Fellowship



*Pastors John Hayden and Randy Green*



*Pastor John and his wife, Michelle*



continued to partner with the Haydens even after they moved to Roanoke to plant Access Church.

“Harvest has stuck with us through thick and thin and always believed in us. This consistency and commitment has given us the support and base to continue ministry through some very difficult times.” One such occasion was Thanksgiving weekend of 2012, just two years after they arrived in Roanoke. A fire started in the basement of the house the Haydens were renting, and they lost all of their material possessions. Harvest led the way, along with other churches, family, and friends, to come to their aid. “Within two weeks after the fire, we were in another rental house, completely furnished with donated items... amazed at the way that God provided.” In the midst of recovering from this trial and other difficulties along the way, Hayden says, “God has taught us to pace ourselves for the marathon, not the sprint, and to keep priorities that will keep us healthy spiritually, emotionally, and physically.”

Eight years after the Haydens’ move to Roanoke, Harvest Fellowship is still walking alongside them in partnership. “Harvest has consistently come and provided physical support through annual mission trips—[they’ve] helped with community events, various ministries, and building renovation. Each year, these mission trips give us enough manpower to do as much in a week as we could in one summer alone. These trips also provide direct encouragement from pastoral staff, as well as rejuvenation from renewed friendships that remind us of the family we have in Harvest.”

Hayden learned in 2016 that a small church nearby was without a pastor and was contemplating its ability to continue ministry

with limited resources. After prayerful deliberations, Access Church and 17th Street Baptist Church united as one church on May 21, 2017.

“Merging churches has been a healthy and Kingdom-minded experience for both churches,” says Hayden. “The benefits have included 1) combining work and facilities, 2) infusing life into a struggling church through a younger, vibrant church, 3) providing stability to the younger church through an established location, and 4) [being] a witness to the community that we were willing to put behind our desire for our individual churches’ ministries for the benefit of God’s Kingdom.”

For Hayden, embracing and respecting the heritage of an established church with many years of Kingdom service was the key. “We valued each other as believers, continued to emphasize that everyone’s opinion and feelings were important, and we knew as individual churches what we were willing to compromise on [and] what hills we were willing to die on.”

Now just a few months past their first anniversary as one church, Access 17th Street Baptist Church has hit its stride in reaching its community with the Gospel. Harvest Fellowship sent a team of teens and adults in the summer to tackle some remodeling projects in the church facility and assist with outreach ministries.

Perseverance in their calling has been a theme in the Haydens’ story. The crucible of consistent ministry in the face of trials has brought seasoning and growth in their lives. “There are some ways the Potter has shaped us over time that have helped us continue to do ministry,” Hayden explains. The Lord has taught them the lessons of contentment when the fruit of their labor wasn’t readily apparent; dependence on God for all things, including strength, joy, peace, and fulfillment; the need for genuine, loving relationships among those in their community; and finally, humility—something Hayden says, “helps open the door for encouragement from other partners in ministry from which a planter/pastor will benefit greatly, especially when it comes to persevering hardship.”

It has been said that perseverance is long obedience in the same direction. The perseverance of the Hayden family in their service to the Lord and the perseverance of a dedicated partner church are yielding lasting, eternal fruit.



**Kids MINISTRY Conference**

**MARCH 2 2019**

8:45 AM to 3:30 PM **Free Event!**

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

**38 VBS & Kids Ministry Breakout Sessions**

**Special Guests**

**BILL EMEOTT**  
Lead Kids Ministry Specialist, LifeWay

**MELITA THOMAS**  
VBS & Kids Ministry Specialist, LifeWay

**DELANEE WILLIAMS**  
Kids Ministry Specialist, LifeWay

**sbcv.org/kmc**



# The Triangle

ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE NEIGHBORHOODS IN ALL OF CANADA

“ We are so thankful for the partnerships God has allowed us to have through churches in the SBCV...Thank you for the continual reminders that we are **Not Alone!**”

Second only to Paris as a primarily French-speaking city, Montreal's metropolitan area is home to more than 4 million people. English is widely spoken there too and so are other languages that represent the area's diverse cultural backgrounds. Christianity has almost disappeared in this part of the world, with only 0.7 percent of the population identifying as evangelical. In fact, the Quebecois—natives and residents of this province—are the least-reached people group in North America.

In 2014, God began redirecting Ben and Alyssa Fleet's heart for ministry, and they quickly felt burdened for church planting in North America. As they began seeking where God might be leading them, statistics pointed them to Montreal, Quebec. After praying and researching, they saw the need for Bible-based churches there. Their one constant

prayer throughout this time was Peter's prayer in Matthew 14:28 (ESV), “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” They simply wanted to follow Jesus wherever He called them. In October of 2014, they were able to clearly to see what Jesus was leading them to do for Him.

The Fleets moved to Montreal to begin the work of plowing in preparation to plant a church. Their first year was spent working with Renaissance Church. During that time, they continued to seek God's direction to reach the 99.3% of the population who have no relationship with Christ.

In June of 2017, the Fleets moved to the Cote-des-Neiges borough of Montreal, where they have been focusing on planting Voyage Church: Montreal in a neighborhood known as The Triangle. Just 10 years ago, the population of The Triangle was about 2,000 people, but due to a massive influx of high-rise apartment complexes, it will soon swell to nearly

Montreal, Quebec, Canada



10,000. Through this explosive growth, The Triangle has become one of the most diverse neighborhoods in all of Canada.

Ben shares, “A recent survey found that 85% of the people who use our metro stop to commute to work were born in another country outside of Canada! So while we are surrounded by a French-Canadian province, due to the makeup of our community we are preparing to launch an English-speaking church in this extremely multi-ethnic community.”

Ben and Alyssa have spent the last year building roots in the area, and God has provided opportunities for outreach. “I spent this past year volunteering as a school tutor at our local community center,” says Ben, “and as a result, was asked to serve on the Board of Directors at the center for this next year. We believe that God intends to use this opportunity as a way to further build relationships with our neighbors, serve the needs, and ultimately share the Good News of Jesus with them.”

At night, many low-income, immigrant neighbors will bring their families to the local park to allow their houses to cool down. “This summer,” says Ben, “we took advantage of that time by hosting free BBQs [at the park] in partnership with mission teams from SBCV churches. As a result, we have connected with many unbelievers and even a few believers!

“One of the craziest interactions we had was with a believer from Cameroon who, at one point, lived in Radford, VA at the same

time I did, and now we live in opposite buildings from each other in Montreal.”

Through these connections, the Fleets are building their launch team and gaining allies in the community for Voyage Church: Montreal. They are preparing for the first of five preview services in April 2019 and anticipate publicly launching Voyage Church on September 8, 2019.

“We are so thankful for the partnerships God has allowed us to have through churches in the SBCV, and we pray that as we continue to grow, more partnership opportunities present themselves! Thank you for the continual reminders that we are *Not Alone!*”

If your church would like to partner or participate in serving alongside the Fleets in Montreal, contact the Mobilization Team or check out upcoming trips at [sbcv.org/partnership-missions](http://sbcv.org/partnership-missions).

#### Dates for the 2019 trips:

*April 4–8*

*May 2–6*

*May 30–June 3*

*July 4–8*

*August 1–5*

*September 4–9*

*If you are interested in any of these trips please contact Brad Russell at [brussell@sbcv.org](mailto:brussell@sbcv.org)*

The need is obvious, and the choice is simple. Please join us in taking the Gospel to the most unreached people group in North America.

FEBRUARY 8-9, 2019  
**Great Wolf Lodge**  
— WILLIAMSBURG —

STUDENT  
**PASTOR**  
FAMILY  
RETREAT

Cost: \$75 per family

**A time for student  
pastors to get  
away for fun and  
spiritual renewal  
with their families.**

For more info  
and to register,  
visit [sbcv.org/spfr](http://sbcv.org/spfr)



# ANNUAL 2018 HOMECOMING

BECAUSE OF GREAT COMMISSION PARTNERSHIP,

# *they are not alone.*

HEAR WHAT GOD IS DOING AROUND THE  
WORLD AT ANNUAL HOMECOMING 2018!

► **Libertylive.Church**  
LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH  
(HAMPTON)

📅 **November  
11-13, 2018**  
SUNDAY - TUESDAY



**A**NNUAL HOMECOMING brings our fellowship of more than 720 churches together to celebrate all that God is doing in and through us. Find resources online that recognize our collective impact and cooperative partnership to boldly share the Gospel to the nations. *They are not alone!*

Updates and  
livestream at

**[sbcv.org/ah2018](http://sbcv.org/ah2018)**

**[#sbcvhome](https://twitter.com/sbcvhome)**

Childcare for up to 4 years of age during general sessions (pre-registration required).  
General sessions and select breakouts will be interpreted for the Deaf.





## Inspiring Speakers



**David Platt**  
Teaching Pastor  
McLean Bible  
Church, Vienna, VA  
*Sunday Evening*



**Danny Akin**  
President  
Southeastern  
Baptist Theological  
Seminary  
*Monday Afternoon*



**Brian Autry**  
Executive Director  
SBC of Virginia  
*Monday Evening*



**Fred Luter**  
Senior Pastor  
Franklin Avenue  
Baptist Church,  
New Orleans, LA  
*Monday Evening*



**Ben Gutierrez**  
Professor, School  
of Divinity  
Liberty University  
*Tuesday Morning*



**Eric Thomas**  
Senior Pastor  
First Baptist  
Church, Norfolk, VA  
President  
SBC of Virginia  
*Tuesday Morning*

## Equipping Breakouts Monday Morning

See the  
website for  
additional  
details!

- ▶ Disaster Relief
- ▶ Church Planting
- ▶ Men's Ministry
- ▶ Pathway to Missions
- ▶ Great Commission
- ▶ Children's Ministry
- ▶ Ministering to Women
- ▶ NextGen
- ▶ Legal Hotspots
- ▶ Church Security
- ▶ Hispanic Ministry
- ▶ Outreach
- ▶ Crisis Communication
- ▶ Discipleship/Small Group/Sunday School
- ▶ Revitalization

## Military Recognition

Join us in recognizing and honoring the brave men and women who have, or are currently, serving in our armed forces.

## Give the Gift of the Gospel

Give the gift of love to a family in need this Christmas through collecting Christmas Backpacks. Find out more by visiting [sbcbv.org/backpacks](http://sbcbv.org/backpacks)



# Jesus Is *The Fix*

“

We've seen several men come to Christ. Lives are being changed.

”

Every Sunday night in the parking lot of 17<sup>th</sup> and Grace Streets in Richmond, VA, you'll catch a glimpse of heaven on earth. The promise of every type of people and tongue gathered to proclaim the glory of God is foretold in Revelation. Yet that promised reality—of a beautifully diverse, radically different, inexplicably mixed group of people—is hard to find most Sundays in the here and now. But not so on the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and Grace.

In a parking lot each week gather suburban church-goers and well-educated professionals with drug addicts, prostitutes, and the homeless. Black, white, and tan hands—needle-scarred and manicured hands—all reach toward heaven in praise and around each other in support. “Jesus is our common ground,” says Fred Weymouth, the shepherd of the ministry. But this picture of heaven—this taste of the peace that is yet to come—didn't come easy. It came through death.

## I ASKED GOD TO LET ME DIE

Lying behind a gas station dumpster in New Kent County, Weymouth had asked God to let him die. He no longer wanted to live the way he'd been living, and the only way out he could see was to die. Strung out on heroin with nowhere to go, he ended up on the streets. Jobs and relationships closed as addiction took over. Over the years, he walked in and out of nine rehab facilities, and nothing seemed to work. Eventually, he found himself in jail. And there, God answered his prayer—he died.

## CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

“I just went to kill time,” Weymouth confesses of going to Pastor Jim Pulling's church service at the jail (Pulling is the pastor of **Journey Christian Fellowship II** in Williamsburg). But as he went, Weymouth became curious as to what made Pulling tick. “I could tell he really believed what he was saying,” Weymouth recalls. “And he wouldn't stop either. The guards always had to tell him to wrap up.” Weymouth's curiosity about Pastor Pulling's bold faith led him to open up a Bible for the first time. “I opened the Bible one night in my jail cell, and I haven't put it down since.”

The truth of that statement is apparent with any time spent with Fred Weymouth. His conversation is saturated with principles and passages from Scripture. “Faith comes by hearing,” he quotes upon thinking of listening to Pastor Pulling. Evident in Weymouth's life is the passage, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God...” (Galatians 2:20, NIV, 1984). God answered Weymouth's prayer. He died. He died to himself and to sin. And



*Fred and Casey Weymouth*





now, by the power of God, he lives *in* Christ and by faith.

### IN CHRIST, BY FAITH

By faith, Weymouth went back to the places where he once lived as a homeless addict. For over a year, he talked, walked, and prayed as he earned the trust of his previous community. Soon, a handful of men joined him under the canopy of an outdoor farmers' market for a Tuesday night street Bible study. Not too long after that, a newfound pastor friend encouraged him to begin preaching. And so, by faith, he did. "God uses the foolish of the world to confound the wise," Weymouth muses when thinking of his calling. First Corinthians is a favorite of his, as it speaks of

God's transformative power over addictive strongholds in a city.

Now, after about two years of ministry, a group of over 50 faithfully meet each week to feast on the Bible and share a meal. When asked about what God has done, Weymouth gets emotional. "We've seen several men come to Christ," he chokes out. "Lives are being changed." Once while Weymouth was preaching, a man got up from the crowd and emptied his pockets of heroin and needles. "He put it right before me and said he was done. Glory to God. Glory to God."

### JESUS IS THE FIX

Fred Weymouth and his wife, Casey, have added to their ministry and now operate a recovery center called The Fix. Persons seeking recovery in Christ can join The Fix for the next steps of counseling, housing, job training, and discipleship. When asked about the name, Casey and Fred smile and say, "Because Jesus is The Fix."

"Nothing worked for me until I found Jesus," Fred Weymouth proclaims. "He's The Fix."

So if you happen to be in Richmond one Sunday night, don't be alarmed if you see a large crowd gathered on the corner of 17<sup>th</sup> and Grace. It's just a foretaste of what's to come—transformed lives from all walks of life giving glory to God.

## 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!

**A 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."*

**B 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."*

**C 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.**

# NEW LOOK NAME LAUNCH SAME MESSAGE

## BERMUDA BAPTIST CHURCH | MISSION COMMUNITY CHURCH

**W**hat would cause a church to change its name, change its brand, renovate its facilities, and relaunch? There is only one reason for **Mission Community Church**, formerly Bermuda Baptist Church in Chester, VA—for the spread of the Gospel.

When they looked at the definition of branding as a form of communication and the promotion of an organization's product or service, they came to realize that the name Bermuda Baptist Church defined them by their geographical location, not who they were as a church. They had so much more to offer—Jesus, most importantly, and ministries to help believers grow and be the hands and feet of Jesus in Chester and throughout the world.

Pastor Pete Hypes shares, “While we celebrate what God has done here and through Bermuda Baptist Church in the past, we also have to face current realities and be a church of vision. We had to ask ourselves two important questions: 1) Who are we? and 2) Who are we trying to reach?”

Associate Pastor Shaun Hypes requested a demographic study from the SBC of Virginia to help them better understand the composition of their community. Through the study, the leaders discovered that within a 5-mile radius of the church, there are 2,100 households total—1,500 households have some college education, 415 have children under age 15, and 62% of the population is married.

“We also enlisted the aid of local agencies to determine the projection for our community, and we discovered that it is going to change and grow whether we like it or not,” Shaun adds. “A developer has plans to build 45 homes within walking distance of the church site, 385 apartments are projected nearby, and there is an anticipation of one mega manufacturer bringing hundreds of jobs to the area.”

With the current realities and the potential for future growth, the church leadership polled the congregation about a name and branding change that would better reflect the church's identity. Two words kept appearing in the survey—community and missions. These priorities are







*Pastor Hypes baptizes Skye Kark, a new believer, who also serves in MCC's AWANA program*

"just part of our DNA," says Pastor Hypes. Needless to say, the name Mission Community Church was adopted unanimously.

"We believe the Great Commission of making disciples is for everyone. In our community, there is a diversity of people who do not look like us, dress like us, talk like us—some of whom have never heard of Jesus and some of whom have never gone to church," explains Pastor Hypes.

The new website reads: *We love people and think we grow best when we grow in community with one another as we are focused on the Great Commission. For Mission Community Church, this means we are intentionally missional in all we do and our approach is shaped by these core values:*

**MISSION:** Taking the Gospel to Chester and around the world

**COMMUNITY:** Creating an environment of love, encouragement, unity, and accountability as we exalt Jesus

**CHURCH:** Making disciples who live the Greatest Commandment and the Great Commission

**DIVERSITY IN DISCIPLESHIP:** Desiring all followers of Jesus from every age and background to be welcomed and fully accepted into the family of God

**SOUND DOCTRINE:** Affirming the Baptist Faith and Message and the Apostle's Creed and remaining faithful to the truth of Scripture in all that we live, teach, and preach

**CREATIVITY IN WORSHIP:** Celebrating all forms of genuine worship as reflections of the image of God being displayed through the church

**BIBLICAL HUMILITY:** Lowering ourselves to serve others as Jesus served us

**KINGDOM COLLABORATION:** Recognizing our mission must fit within the greater purposes of God as we work alongside other believers in the faith

**WISDOM IN MINISTRY:** Exercising good judgment by preparing and strategizing to be an effective sending church

**SPIRIT-FILLED:** Depending on the power of God to help us fulfill our mission

So why the new look, new name, new brand, renovated facilities, and a relaunch on Easter Sunday 2018? One reason—to build the Kingdom through mission in the community.

#### CONTACT

Find out more about this remarkable group of believers at [missionco.church](http://missionco.church) or [facebook.com/missioncochurch](https://facebook.com/missioncochurch)



## PRAYER SUMMIT TOUR 2018

### APR 2

KEMPSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH  
VA BEACH

### APR 3

PARKWAY BAPTIST CHURCH  
MOSELEY  
NORTH MAIN BAPTIST CHURCH  
DANVILLE

### APR 4

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY CHURCH  
SALEM



Guest  
Speaker:

**Dr. Chuck LAWLESS**  
Southeastern Baptist  
Theological Seminary  
Wake Forest, NC

[sbcbv.org/prayersummit](http://sbcbv.org/prayersummit)





SKY VIEW MISSIONARY  
BAPTIST CHURCH  
SERVING FANCY GAP  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE

*Judy Williams, Sky View Missionary Baptist Church member, enjoying a book with a Fancy Gap Elementary School student*



*Dr. Jeanne Edwards (r), the school's principal, shares information with Tinsell Fink (l), the school's secretary*

Since everything rises and falls on leadership, it's no wonder that **Sky View Missionary Baptist Church** lives up to its mission-focused name. Led by a pastor who has a servant's heart and a desire to serve the Fancy Gap community, Sky View is making a difference with the love and power of the Gospel.

Pastor Wendell Horton had been praying over the idea of adopting the local elementary school, so when church member Judy Williams approached him with a desire to serve the community through the church, he knew it was time to take action.

With the church's support, Judy was ready to make a difference in the lives of the students at Fancy

Gap Elementary School. But when she first reached out to the school, Sky View was only given a few things to do—some yard work and taking care of a memorial garden. Eventually, they were allowed to come into the office to help make copies for teachers. As the volunteers served in the school, they looked for needs and prayed for opportunities to further serve the students and staff. It wasn't long before they were able to begin providing food to go home with students in need. Then they were able to provide a clothes closet and school supplies from the church family at Sky View. Strong relationships aren't made overnight, and it's taken eight years to build the relationship to the point that the school now asks the church for help.

With the school's reading program struggling, Judy went to work organizing the Volunteer Readers Program. Church members spend time each day with students, assisting them with reading and allowing students to read to them. This program has had such a positive impact on the students' reading levels, that the Carroll County School Board recognized the Sky View Missionary Baptist Volunteer Readers Program with

a certificate of appreciation for their work and positive impact on the students at Fancy Gap Elementary School.

Before this school year began, Judy had volunteers ready to help the teachers decorate their classrooms and prepare for the first day of school. Sky View volunteers are on the front lines, greeting students in the car line, helping cover morning bus duties, making copies, and volunteering in the reading program.

One of the reasons these volunteers make such an impact is the joy they have in serving. Over the course of eight years with approximately 20 volunteers each week, Judy and the folks from Sky View have a genuine joy in being a part of the school.

"Fancy Gap Elementary is very blessed to have them for the children's benefit, and it is heartwarming to see the effect on students," says Dr. Jeanne Edwards, the school's principal.

In fact, the school secretary, Tinsell Fink, says she doesn't know what they would do if it weren't for the volunteers from Sky View. "They keep the school running."



# SBCV Hispanic Conference

## RENOVADOS CONFERENCE 2018

### ENGLISH

Being able to worship in your own language can be taken for granted when you do it often. But when you don't have the opportunity often, it becomes a treasure for the soul. Some years ago, when leaders of different Hispanic churches got together, they decided to provide two conferences for the Spanish-speaking congregations. The first one was held in Lynchburg, and the second was held in Richmond. Due to the central location, the Richmond conference kept growing every year. What started with a conference of 7 churches grew to 23 churches at the October 2018 conference!

The worship quality and the stellar speakers helped with this growth. Churches come to be inspired and reminded that they are *Not Alone* when it comes to expanding the Kingdom. We interviewed different leaders during the conference to get their feedback.

Samuel Prado is one of Iglesia Bautista Conexión's church leaders, and this was his fourth conference. He highlighted the opportunity to worship together and be inspired by the speakers to go and be the Church wherever God is calling. Evelyn Perez, from the Nuevo Amanecer campus in Lynchburg, said this was her first conference in Richmond. She was excited to be able to worship with brothers and sisters from other congregations. She mentioned that today's Christian culture emphasizes to go and seek the Lord on your own, but there is an actual encouragement in the Scriptures to seek God as one body and one Spirit. The conference encouraged her to seek the Lord as one, and not just as an individual.

The conference is meant to inspire the *What*, but it also provides answers and tools to be able to do the *How*. We have seen new leaders inspired to take church planter training after attending previous year's conferences. This year, we had visiting churches that communicated with us, asking what they needed to do to be part of the SBCV network. They were inspired and fed!

Our Spanish-speaking congregations value fellowship and relationships. The conference provides a time to break bread with others and to work together to do outreach. These congregations also value quality, and the leaders had to come to a decision on which church's band would lead worship. It had to be a practical choice and they also had to be able to lead the rest of the congregations into God's presence. Fernando Mangieri and his team had led in the past, and they incorporated others to be part of an assembled band from the Richmond area. Every year, the worship time has become increasingly richer.

The churches have seen that the SBCV is with them. They felt it through financial support and through the presence of SBCV leaders coming and spending time with them at the conference. They know that they are *Not Alone* and that we can do so much more when we do ministry together.

What is coming next? Our Hispanic leaders will move our spring conference from the Lynchburg area to Northern Virginia. There are multiple churches and leaders there who need this kind of encouragement. The Hispanic population in the Washington, DC area continues to swell, and we need to strengthen our churches there to do outreach and plant more churches. This will allow us to have two strong conferences, one in the Richmond area and one in the Metro DC area. We will do this together because we can do so much more when we are connected as one.

### ESPAÑOL

Poder adorar en tu propio idioma puede darse por sentado cuando lo haces a menudo. Pero, cuando no tienes estas oportunidades a menudo, se convierte en un tesoro para el alma. Hace algunos años, cuando los líderes de diferentes iglesias hispanas se reunieron, decidieron ofrecer dos conferencias para las congregaciones de habla hispana. La primera se llevó a cabo en Lynchburg y la segunda en Richmond. Debido a su ubicación estratégica para el estado, Richmond siguió creciendo cada año. ¡Lo que comenzó con una conferencia de siete iglesias creció a 23 iglesias representadas en la conferencia de octubre de 2018!

El hermoso tiempo de adoración y los oradores de alta calidad ayudaron con este crecimiento. Las iglesias se inspiran y recuerdan que no están solas cuando se trata de expandir el Reino. Entrevistamos a diferentes líderes durante la conferencia para conocer su opinión.

Samuel Prado es uno de los líderes de la iglesia de Conexión, y esta fue su cuarta conferencia. Él destacó la oportunidad de adorar juntos y ser inspirados por los oradores para ir y ser la iglesia donde Dios nos está llamando a ir. Evelyn Pérez, de la Iglesia Nuevo Amanecer en Lynchburg, dijo que esta era su primera conferencia en Richmond. Estaba emocionada de poder adorar con hermanos y hermanas de otras congregaciones. Ella mencionó que la cultura cristiana de hoy enfatiza ir y buscar al Señor por su cuenta, cuando en las Escrituras hay un estímulo para buscar a Dios como un cuerpo y un solo Espíritu. La conferencia la animó a buscar al Señor como un solo cuerpo, y no solo como individuos.

Las conferencias están destinadas a inspirar en el *Qué*, pero también proporcionan respuestas y herramientas para poder hacer el *Cómo*. Hemos visto a nuevos líderes inspirados para tomar entrenamiento de plantadores de iglesias después de asistir a las conferencias del año anterior. Este año, tuvimos iglesias visitantes que se comunicaron con nosotros preguntándonos qué deben hacer para ser parte de la red SBCV. ¡Fueron inspirados y alimentados!

Nuestras congregaciones hispanas valoran el compañerismo y las relaciones. La conferencia proporciona un tiempo para partir el pan con los demás y para trabajar juntos para realizar actividades de evangelismo en equipo cuando viven cerca uno del otro. Pero, las congregaciones hispanas también valoran la calidad, y los líderes tuvieron que tomar una decisión sobre qué banda de iglesias lideraría la adoración. Tenía que ser una decisión práctica y además que pueda guiar al resto de las congregaciones a la presencia de Dios. Fernando Mangieri y su equipo estuvieron a cargo de la adoración los últimos años, e incorporaron a otros para formar parte de una banda unida del área de Richmond. Cada año, la adoración ha ido en mejora continua.

Las iglesias han visto que la SBCV está con ellos. Se sintieron apoyados a través de la inversión financiera, pero también a través de la presencia de nuestros líderes que vienen y pasan tiempo con ellos durante la conferencia. Ahora saben que no están "solos", pero también que podemos hacer mucho más cuando ministramos juntos.

¿Qué viene después? Nuestros líderes trasladarán nuestra conferencia de primavera del área de Lynchburg al norte de Virginia. Hay tantas iglesias y líderes que necesitan este tipo de estímulo allí. La población hispana es enorme en el área de Washington DC, y necesitamos fortalecer a nuestras iglesias allí para realizar actividades de extensión y planificar más iglesias. Esto nos permitirá tener dos conferencias sólidas, una en el área de Richmond y otra en el área de Metro DC. Haremos esto juntos, porque podemos hacer mucho más cuando estamos conectados como uno solo.



# How Long, O Lord?

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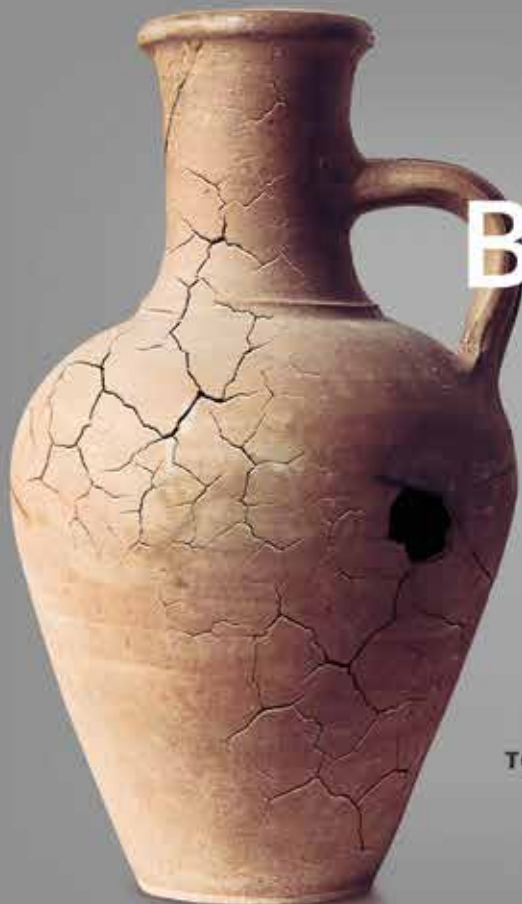
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# A Disciple's Life

EVERYONE IS CALLED TO LIVE ON MISSION!

Jerry and Mary Logan, members of **Spotswood Baptist Church** in Fredericksburg, VA, have taken God at his word and have chosen to simply obey. Mary tells of living a life on mission.

"We were invited to an open house and dinner for some of our Vietnamese friends who had just moved. There were quite a few people there, many of whom are not believers. The couple asked Jerry to pray, and then the wife prayed in Vietnamese. The husband mentioned that their new home was open for Bible study. Since God had given the home to them, they now wanted to use it for His glory."

Through Bible study and hearing the Gospel, the three non-Christians accepted the Lord. The Catholic mother and her 13-year-old daughter prayed together one evening, soon after attending the Bible study. Mary met with a Buddhist woman after a Bible study, and she prayed to receive Christ.

## EVERYONE CAN BE A DISCIPLE MAKER!

*"If you have Christian habits in your life worth imitating, you can be a disciple-maker. It doesn't require years of training. You just teach others to follow Christ as you follow Him."*

~ J.D. Greear

The Logans are doing outreach in practical ways. Jerry likes to fish, and fishing connects both American and Vietnamese cultures well. He took the men fishing as an outreach. Mary combines her gifts of hospitality with evangelism and does outreach during the holidays. She writes, "Jerry and I hosted our annual Christmas dinner in December for the fifth year in a row. One family drove from Woodbridge and got to make some new friends. The wife accepted the Lord over a year ago, but her husband has not. Two Buddhist

men attended and enjoyed the fellowship. One gentleman asked the blessing in Vietnamese. There were 23 of us in attendance that evening, and 11 of them were here for the first time!"

In their Bible studies, Mary discerned that it would be helpful to have the books of the Bible on a poster in English and Vietnamese. This enabled those not familiar with the Bible to find where the group was studying.

After five years of Bible studies and loving and serving the Vietnamese people, God formed a church. "Reaching the Vietnamese people and starting a church is a work of God," the Logans testify. "This was not something we planned to do, but serving the Lord was." Ken Tran and Phuong Phan built on the ministry of the Logans, and the home Bible study developed into a healthy church. Grace Church now meets on the campus of Spotswood Baptist Church.

## BEING A DISCIPLE MAKER MAY COME AT A COST BUT WITH BLESSINGS!

The first followers of Christ from the Bible study were the Logans' longtime friends, Coi and Chum Truong. After Chum came to faith in Christ, he asked the Logans to go with him to tell his family in Vietnam how they could become Christians. "We traveled to the home of one of Chum's brothers," Mary recalls. "He and his extended family were there. After [we met] everyone, Chum began to tell his family about his love for them. In his clear and eloquent presentation of the Gospel, Chum clearly stated that there is only one way to God and that is through Jesus Christ." Many among Chum's family, friends, and neighboring villages came to faith in Christ during this visit.

"To follow Jesus means to become a fisherman. In the Bible we find no gap between the call to follow Jesus and the call to engage in mission."

~J. D. Greear



Jerry Logan (top left) and Mary Logan (bottom right) serve the Vietnamese people

# A Christian Home for Every Orphan

## THE GOAL OF TWO ROANOKE AREA CHURCHES



Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world.”

*James 1:27*

Sam<sup>★</sup> now a student at Liberty University, began life as an orphan and got into a lot of trouble growing up. He eventually attended a public high school in the Roanoke area, where a teacher took an interest in his well-being. This teacher, who attended an SBCV church in Salem, became concerned with his situation and that of others like him. She began attending regular informational meetings about orphan care. She sought training and approval to become a foster parent, then an adoptive parent to this young man. During the process, which had to remain discreet, the young man talked with this teacher about the discovery of an adoptive family, not knowing it was her. One day, he came into her class and said, “There’s someone who wants me... and it’s you, isn’t it?” She confirmed it was, and thus began her family’s ministry through foster and orphan care.

Two SBC of Virginia churches in the Roanoke area are actively engaged in making a difference in the lives of children like Sam—orphans in need of foster care and adoption. The biblical mandate to do so is clear in James 1 and Psalm 82:3-4. The need is clear with more than 400,000 children in the US without families to care for and nurture them. In



fact, as of April 2018, there were more than 5,000 in Virginia.

“This is a challenge the church can meet!” says Warren King, associate pastor at **Fincastle Baptist Church** (Fincastle, VA). “The body of Christ can fulfill the command found in James 1:27 and elsewhere to care for the orphan and provide for the least of these.”

This past spring, Fincastle began an Adoption/Foster Care Community Initiative. As part of the initiative, Fincastle developed resources and provides them to churches to help them begin their own adoption/foster care ministries. In addition, Fincastle is developing partnerships with the local Department of Social Services and foster care facilities to provide training and mutual support services. This kind of approach could be taken by any church that has a heart to minister through foster care and adoption.



Eight years ago, **Fellowship Community Church** (Salem, VA) began a ministry called The Empty Chair, which brought awareness to families who have extra room at their tables and in their hearts for children in need of a family. Led by Ray and Kelli Moore, The Empty Chair serves approximately 100 adopting and fostering families, has two global partnerships, and has an established mentoring program. This past spring, they created an independent non-profit called 127 Place, which recognizes the need to help other churches effectively engage and resource this kind of work. It is aptly named after James 1:27. The goal of 127 Place is to engage and support churches and individuals to answer God's call to serve the fatherless. It is the place where the church can come together to serve vulnerable children most effectively.

Fincastle and Fellowship are two churches demonstrating to their communities that children should not be alone. For one adoptive father, the Gospel summed up his own experience: "Becoming an adoptive parent has helped me understand the Gospel and my own adoption as a child of God."

As one pastor put it, "The deepest and strongest foundation of adoption is located not in the act of humans adopting humans, but in God adopting humans—it is at the heart of the Gospel."

*When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ~ Galatians 4:4-5*

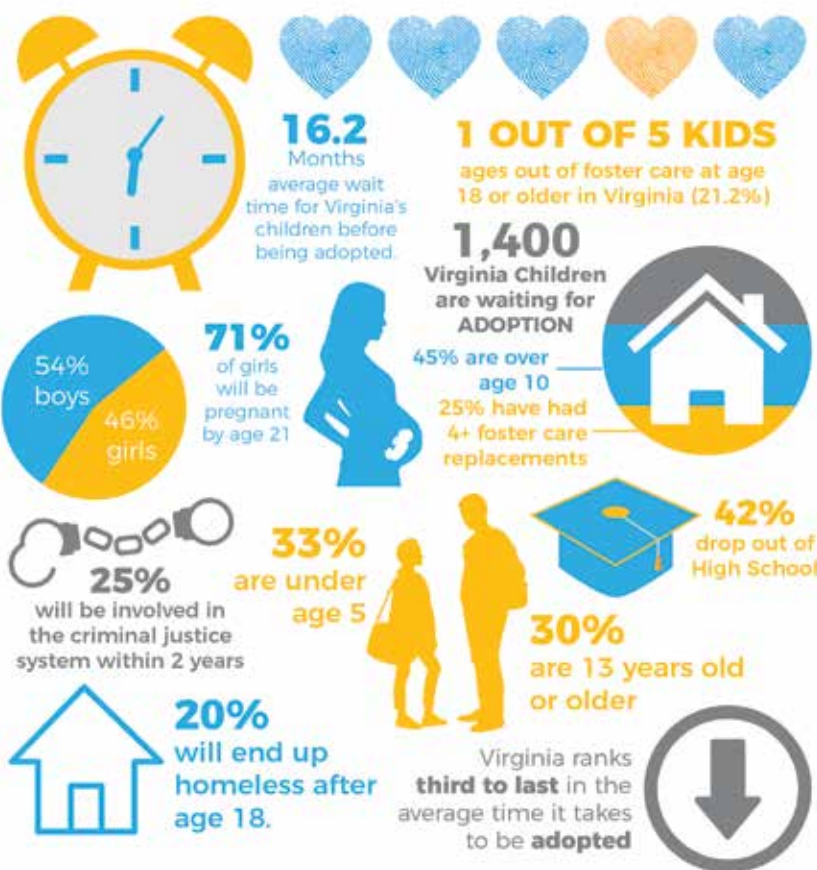
*For all those led by God's Spirit are God's sons. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father!" ~ Romans 8:14b-15*

*Adoption is not just about couples who want children — or who want more children. Adoption is about an entire culture within our churches, a culture that sees adoption as part of our Great Commission mandate and as a sign of the Gospel itself.*

~ Russell D. Moore  
Adopted for Life, and  
president of the Ethics &  
Religious Liberty Commission, SBC



## VIRGINIA ADOPTION FACTS



## FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION summit



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More than 1,000 children in Virginia are ready but await adoption. Having been adopted into God's family, shouldn't Christians be on the front lines of this critical ministry?

All Scripture passages are from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB).

\*Name has been changed

### MORE INFO

If you are interested in learning more about the SW VA Christian Alliance for Orphans, please go to: [127place.org](http://127place.org)



# When We Walked In, **WE KNEW** Mount Ed Baptist Church



Les and Zae Fink

**W**hat would cause Les and Zae Fink to travel some 30 minutes through the valley of western Albemarle

County every Sunday? This Lyndhurst couple testifies, "When we walked in the doors of **Mount Ed Baptist Church** in Batesville, we knew this is where the Lord wanted us. We sensed His presence here and experienced a sweet fellowship."

Betty Clayton, a resident of Crozet and a member for several years, agrees, "The experience here is worth the short drive."

Jack and Donna Brown, new members from Waynesboro, affirm: "Pastor Ron is one of the best preachers [we] have ever heard preach. But not only is he good in the pulpit, he is a caring pastor. He is genuine, real, and relational."

Pastor Ron Nickell, who succeeded his father at this church that dates



Jack and  
Donna Brown

back to 1788, had a model pastor in his dad. For many churches, this transition would be considered a succession plan, but Nickell explains, "Being the senior pastor was not my intention. I was content being a lay leader until I prayed and until the Lord made it clear to me." He adds, "There is no way I can fill the shoes of my dad. I can only build upon the foundation that has been laid."

**What are some of the ministry practices you have continued?**

*A time of shaking hands and greeting one another during the worship service. I believe that this practice has become an art form at our church. We hear this comment all the time: "I've never been in a friendlier or more welcoming church!" There is a genuine love openly*



Betty Clayton

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Passing the mantle of leadership—former pastor, Ron Nickell Sr., and his wife, Mary



Pastor Ron Nickell Jr., and his wife, Patty

expressed for anyone who walks through our church doors. The style of music continues to be a blend of praise and worship and classic hymns, which seems to work for us. But more importantly—and a core value of our church—is our stand on the inerrant, infallible Word of God. My father left a legacy of consistent adherence to the doctrines of the faith, and we have not wavered from that.

### What are some of the things you have changed since becoming pastor?

The very first thing God led me to try and change was the attitude and spirit of the congregation. For the first few months, our main focus was personal revival. I realized that if we were going to be an evangelistic body of believers, we had to recommit ourselves to a closer, more personal relationship with our Lord. We had to stop meandering through the stagnant waters of complacency and begin to pray for the Holy Spirit to rekindle our passion to grow in Christ and to get excited about His church again. We also changed the way we view Sunday School classes. They are not just for children, so we now call it “Adult Bible Study.” Studies centered on personal revival and personal issues, and as the participants started to

recommit themselves to the Lord, the temperature of the church began to change.

Other visible additions that have taken place at Mount Ed Baptist Church include a children's worship time, an outreach team, service greeters, visitor welcome packets, a mission opportunities board, a renewed emphasis on missions, and partnerships with other local Christian organizations.

Building on the foundation and core values and implementing some new ministry ideas have led to monumental growth at Mount Ed. In just three years, attendance and giving have increased by 250% and the number visiting the church by 200%. In the same time period, Mount Ed has received 43 new members and baptized 25.

### Why do you think the church has grown?

I believe the growth is directly connected to obedience. I have constantly taught and preached that obedience must come before the blessing, and when God's people begin to obey Him, there is a renewed sense of urgency for the lost, an injection of vitality, and a strengthened bond of unity, which brings about the blessing of growth.

### Where does Mount Ed Baptist Church go from here?

I asked God to give us a mission statement for the church. One that, in a few words, would embody all that we stand for as believers. I found it in Ephesians 4:15—“Standing On Truth, Speaking It In Love, Living It In Life. That sums it up.”

Pastor Nickell's heart's desire is to see the church become even bolder witnessing for Christ, further evangelize the community through outreach, have a greater urgency to reach youth with the Gospel, and have a strengthened commitment to serve the Lord.

No wonder when people walk into Mount Ed Baptist Church, they “know”—the Lord is present through His Holy Spirit, and visitors experience the love and warmth of His people.



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For we are his workmanship,  
created in Christ Jesus  
**FOR GOOD WORKS,**  
which God prepared beforehand,  
that we should walk in them.

EPHESIANS 2:10 (ESV)



# A Celebration of New Life

**“There were times** early on when I wondered if what I was doing was making a difference,” says Pastor Steve Johnson of **Oak Chapel Baptist Church** in Orange, VA. But God was at work.

“I came to Oak Chapel and found a warm, welcoming congregation that was wounded and needed to be loved.” Through God’s perfect timing and the partnership of the SBC of Virginia, God led Johnson to this small church in February 2016. Pastor Johnson stepped into a congregation of 40-50 people and was transparent with them. He loved them, was patient with them, and lived what he taught and preached to them.

Oak Chapel Baptist Church was established in 1891 and, as with any church, has had its ups and downs. Recent years have brought a difficult season of division, tension, and lack of vision. Although a former pastor planted seeds of Gospel commitment and dedication to God’s Word, the people did not realize the extent to which they needed to grow in spiritual health. The church endured a long season without a pastor before Johnson arrived.

Pastor Johnson was grateful for the help of SBCV regional missionary Darrell Webb. “Darrell was instrumental in identifying what he saw as the key challenges and weaknesses of our church,” says Johnson, “such as the need to develop relational skills.” Because many people needed to forgive, and some needed to be forgiven, Johnson led the church through a study of Paul Tripp’s book, *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making* (with supplemental material from *Forgiveness* by John MacArthur). His leadership over the past two years has been marked by Gospel-centered preaching, a focus on discipleship, and a dedication to God’s Word for the answers to every issue.

Through one church member’s testimony, God showed Pastor Johnson that He was indeed at work. A woman shared how her young adult daughter had noticed the changes she’d observed in her mother’s life. She was able to tell her daughter that it was through the power of the preaching and teaching of the Word of God at Oak Chapel. Her daughter has been faithfully attending ever since and has invited friends to join her.

Due to a growing hunger for the Word, mid-week Bible study was extended from 30 minutes to an hour. Johnson has led the congregation through specific Scripture verses to mark in their Bibles to help them share the Good News. This renewed passion for the Gospel in recent months has drawn people to repentance and to put their faith in Jesus.

On Sunday, June 3, 2018, Oak Chapel Baptist Church had a “Celebration Service” where six people followed Jesus in believer’s baptism. It was a celebration the likes of which the church had not seen in years!

Prior to the service, Pastor Johnson taught a one-session intensive (now offered once per quarter) for these and other seekers as a prerequisite to baptism. The class format included:

**AN EXPLANATION OF THE GOSPEL** from the Bible

**AN EXPLANATION OF BAPTISM** from the Bible

**QUESTIONS FOR THE BAPTISM CANDIDATES TO ANSWER** about the Gospel, repentance, substitutionary atonement, and commitment to discipleship

One of the six baptism candidates was Hope Kidwell. She came to the baptism class as a seeker, but put her faith in Christ through the class.

In order to disciple these and other believers, discipleship opportunities are now offered on Wednesday evenings, Sunday mornings, and Thursdays at noon in Charlottesville (where many church members work). Between these classes, 15 are currently being disciplined. Pastor Johnson’s wife, Andrea, now leads a women’s class, which is reaching seven women, six of whom were not previously involved in Sunday School.

Although Oak Chapel is still relatively small in size, new life is springing up as disciples are being made and growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The baptism candidates wrote out their testimonies, which were edited and read at the Celebration Service.







### **PHILLIP ROBERTS**

Phillip has overcome his own physical setbacks (along with his wife, Julia) earlier this year and is grateful for his family, this church, and God. He believes the Gospel is true, that Jesus was the only person qualified to make him right with God because “He never sinned” and [believes] that you should respond to the Gospel with faith in God. Phillip’s generous nature is a demonstration that his repentance is real. (Lord Jesus, help Phillip to grow in his knowledge of You, all that You did for him, and why it was necessary.)



### **CARLY JENKINS**

Carly is the most inquisitive person we know at Oak Chapel. She is curious both for herself and wants to know how to answer questions she encounters from friends at school who don’t share her faith in Jesus. Carly believes Jesus “died on the cross for our sins” and that anyone who merely claims to believe in the Gospel hasn’t discovered what faith is or who they truly are. (Lord Jesus, we pray that You grant Carly victory over sin as she becomes more holy through the process of obeying Your Word.)

### **HOPE KIDWELL**

Hope has been coming as often as possible since last December. She has a humble spirit and a tender heart. Hope believes Jesus loved her enough “to save” her and send His Spirit to live within her. She says, “you must walk the walk to be a Christian, to receive the Holy Spirit to change your heart, and turn away from all worldly things.” (Lord Jesus, lead Hope in all ways to be filled with Your power and not live in fear but believe in Your goodness and perfection. Amen!)



### **MASON BROOKING**

Mason has matured more than anyone else at Oak Chapel over the past couple of years. Mason says God’s Word shows “how He sent His Son to die on the cross for us and our sins.” Mason believes the Gospel is true and “feels very bad” for those who claim to believe in the Gospel but continue to live according to sinful, selfish desires. (Lord Jesus, we pray that Mason would develop an even stronger relationship with You.)



### **CHRISTINE KENNEDY**

Christine has been a friend of Steve Johnson’s wife since they moved to Virginia over seven years ago and has been coming to Oak Chapel for about a year now. Last fall, Christine expressed repentance and an interest in making a formal commitment to follow Christ and join His church. Christine believes that Jesus “was born in order to die for our sins and, through Him, we have a path to salvation.” Through her physical setbacks this winter, Christine felt Christ’s presence and knew she was not alone. (Lord Jesus, we thank You for giving Christine faith in You and for sending Your Spirit to dwell in her as Your abiding presence.)



### **KEN TYBURSKI**

Ken has been coming to Oak Chapel since this past fall. He is kind and quiet, but if you take the time to talk to him, you will discover a man with genuine depth of understanding of the Christian faith. Ken believes this: “The Gospel is the Good News of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins and our rebirth if we believe in it. It was necessary as a means of our redemption for our sin, and it is our duty to spread this news with others and reaffirm it often.” (Lord Jesus, help Ken to change in ways that would conform to Your way of life.)

#### **CONTACT**

For more information, contact Steve Johnson at [steve@stevepiercejohnson.com](mailto:steve@stevepiercejohnson.com)

#### **RESOURCE**

The idea for the discipleship lunch and the curriculum (*Christianity Explained* by Michael Bennett) came from Mark Dever, and the idea for the baptism class from Matt Chandler (free class outline at [tinyurl.com/baptism-class-outline](http://tinyurl.com/baptism-class-outline)).

# FIRST BAPTIST NORFOLK

SERVING HAMPTON ROADS TO CHANGE THE WORLD



312 Kempsville Road, Norfolk



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## EMINENT DOMAIN

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, NORFOLK

#### First Baptist Church of Norfolk

was bursting at the seams, holding three Sunday morning services and having parking issues, when the Virginia Department of Transportation came calling. By means of eminent domain, the Commonwealth would be taking possession of the portion of First Norfolk's property adjacent to Interstate 264, which is the northern boundary of the property. The land was needed to expand the exit ramp off of I-264. This seizure meant the loss of over 40% of the church's parking

spaces and a large building the church used for storage. The new exit ramp would come within 56 feet of the back of the sanctuary.

Dr. Eric Thomas, who recently celebrated 15 years as senior pastor of First Norfolk and who currently serves as president of the SBC of Virginia, led the church to adopt a fresh vision for the future in light of the new reality.

As the leaders of First Norfolk prayed and sought the face of the Lord, a 10-year plan, containing a missional

vision for the future of the church, began to unfold. It became clear that God was leading First Norfolk to expand its ministry beyond the walls of the current facility.

"God's vision for our church runs deeper than just these numbers," Thomas says. "When it is all said and done, God's vision for our church is more profound than numbers on a piece of paper or a spreadsheet. It is ultimately about reaching people for Christ!"



They established a **VISION PLAN** with some quantifiable goals.

**15,000**  
Followers of Christ to call First Baptist Church of Norfolk their church home

**Small Groups**  
**1,500**

**10** **10** **7**  
**Locations** **Years** **Cities**  
10 locations in 10 years in the 7 cities that make up the Hampton Roads area  
FEB 2018, FBCN launched its first satellite in Greenbrier, Chesapeake

**20** **additional church plant partners**  
First Norfolk currently has 15 church plant partners



### Big Serve

Tues., Sept. 27, 2018, FBCN put on a roof for a sweet homeowner. God illustrated His perfect plan when she told the team that it was her birthday!



### Beach Baptism 2018

Pastors Thomas and Herring baptized 1 of 36 new believers in the Atlantic ocean. It was an amazing afternoon of celebration. Many publicly professed that they are followers of Jesus!



**"As the Father has sent me,  
I also send you." - Jesus**

**Featuring Fish Robinson, Bon Ray,  
and Far From Ordinary**

Virginia Beach • January 18-19  
London Bridge Baptist Church

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from the EDITOR

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*Brandon*

# Two Words Come to Life

## Not Alone

We have been talking about this theme for about three years. But even though it's on banners and ProPresenter slides and on the cover of this magazine, it's much more than just a theme. **Not Alone** has really taken hold. We are hearing over and over how pastors, church staff, and church members understand more and more how they are *Not Alone*. This **Not Alone** power of Gospel partnership is seen in so many ways. One distinct area is our Disaster Relief (DR) teams currently serving in Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia. Just in 2018, SBCV DR has had 11 responses from 550+ volunteers who have come from 42+ SBCV churches. They've volunteered 21,000 hours of service. And the best thing of all—13 people have made salvation decisions for Christ!

### Not Alone

We've seen this in the fact that 93 SBC of Virginia churches are partnering to plant new SBCV churches in Virginia. That means that more than 13% of SBCV churches are working together to reach the mission field through church planting. The number of churches partnering to plant outside of Virginia is even higher!

### Not Alone

We've seen this in how churches are coming alongside other churches in the area of revitalization. Whether it's helping with VBS, AWANA, evangelism outreach, or construction projects, this two-word theme has come to life. To see this in living color, watch the video about Woodlawn Baptist Church in Danville at [tinyurl.com/woodlawn-revitalization](https://tinyurl.com/woodlawn-revitalization).

### Not Alone

Finally, I was personally able to see this played out in front of my eyes in two different transitional pastor roles. In both situations, SBCV regional missionaries supported the pastor search team in their process. And as we welcomed the next pastor (Stewart McCarter at Calvary Baptist in Staunton and Jamie McClanahan at Wayne Hills Baptist in Waynesboro), you could see in real time SBCV churches coming together to bless an outgoing staff member while another church welcomed an incoming pastor. In each commissioning service, multiple churches came together to celebrate and praise God for what He was doing.

**Not Alone.** This theme is not just two words that go well together—it's really who we are and why we continue to minister.



Wayne Hills Baptist Installation Service for  
Pastor Jamie McClanahan



## WOMEN'S MINISTRY CONFERENCE *with*

# Lysa TerKeurst

The Heights  
Baptist Church  
Colonial Heights

## MARCH 22-23

For more information or to register:

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

## East Coast Men's Bible Conference March 8 & 9, 2019



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Dr. Herb Reavis, Jr.



Dr. James Merritt



Dr. Walter Strickland



Musical Guest: The Akins

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Rocky Mount, NC 27803  
(252) 937-8254

Registration \$30  
if received by 2/25/2019

Register at [www.Englewoodbaptist.com](http://www.Englewoodbaptist.com)

Sponsored by: Englewood Baptist Church & Bob Pitman Ministries



## 2018-19 Calendar

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

### NOVEMBER

- 10 Crossover: Bless Portsmouth
- 11-13 Annual Homecoming; Liberty BC, Hampton
- 22 Thanksgiving

### DECEMBER

- 2-9 Lottie Moon Week of Prayer for International Missions
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 25 Christmas Day

### JANUARY

- 8-11 Missions College (American Peoples Affinity Summit); International Learning Center, Rockville
- 10-12 VBSI, Ridgecrest
- 15 Young Pastors Summit
- 18-19 Youth Evangelism Conf.; London Bridge BC, Virginia Beach
- 24-26 PLANT A—Church Planting Team Training
- 26 Equip Women's Conference; Great Bridge BC, Chesapeake
- 29 Leading Noble Men; Richmond

### FEBRUARY

- 8-9 Student Pastor Family Retreat; Great Wolf Lodge, Williamsburg
- 15-16 GO Conference; SEBTS, Wake Forest, NC
- 21 Church Planter Interviews
- 22-23 Central Asian & European Peoples Affinity Summit; Movement Church, Richmond
- 23 The Noble Man Conference, Roanoke

### MARCH

- 2 Kids Ministry Conference; Swift Creek BC, Midlothian
- 3-10 Annie Armstrong Week of Prayer for North American Missions
- 8-9 PLANT B — Church Planting Team Training
- 9-17 Daytona Bike Week
- 9 The Noble Man Conference; Fredericksburg
- 16 Disaster Relief Training; Central-West & Southside Regions
- 22-23 Women's Ministry Conf. w/Lysa TerKeurst; The Heights BC, Colonial Heights
- 22-23 Valley Student Conference; Roanoke
- 23 The Noble Man Conference, Richmond
- 30 Disaster Relief Training; Southeast Region
- 30 Equip Hispanic Women's Conf.; Spotswood BC, Fredericksburg





**PROCLAIMER**

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