

# PROCLAIMER

2020 | VOLUME 22, ISSUE 2 | Telling the stories of *Vision Virginia*

## NOT ALONE STORIES

*A special edition in the midst of troubling times*

*First Baptist Roanoke Hosts a  
Special Community Unity  
Prayer Service*

*SBCV DR Shares  
PPE with Area  
Medical Center*

*Johnny Hunt Encourages  
Evangelism - Despite  
Social Distancing*



*You are  
not alone.*

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# **PROCLAIMER**

Summer 2020 — Issue 2

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# A Unique Season

*We* normally produce an edition of *Proclaimer* this time of year, but in reality, this is a special edition. The season of life and ministry in which we have been living could be characterized with various adjectives. For simplicity, I will call this a unique season—one that warrants a special edition. In the pages that follow, you will read the real-life stories of your brothers and sisters in Christ, your neighbors, your fellow ministers and servants of the Gospel. The SBC of Virginia is a coalition of churches that seeks to stand together and serve cooperatively in allegiance to Christ and His Word. Through Christ and his people, we are not alone!

By way of introduction to this special edition that highlights some of your “Not Alone Stories” (more can be found online at [www.sbcv.org/NotAlone](http://www.sbcv.org/NotAlone)), I want to share an encouragement from the Scriptures:

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.” *Galatians 6:9*

One of the dangers and outcomes of this unique season is weariness. God’s

Word gives us encouragement not to quit when we grow weary of doing good (“well-doing” in the KJV).

**Don’t quit when weary because our service is expected.** “And let us not grow weary of doing good...” We are not commanded in this verse to do good; it is assumed. We are commanded not to *stop* doing good. “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

**Don’t quit when weary because true success is anticipated.** “...for in due season we will reap...” The time of your harvest is **specifically** selected for you. *Due* translates from the Greek word *idios*, from which we get our English terms *idiom* and *idiosyncrasy*—it relates to something that is peculiar or particular, unique. Your harvest will be different from what someone else may reap. Secondly, the time of your harvest is **sovereignly** selected by God. *Season* refers to a special occasion.

**Don’t quit when weary because the Lord’s strength is available.** “...if we do not give up.” At first it seemed that Paul was speaking to them, but now

we see he was including himself in this encouragement as he uses the word *we*. Earlier in verses 7-8, Paul states the principle that we reap what we sow. He has taught the Galatians that they are to sow to the Spirit. These dear brethren had been plagued by false teaching, religiosity, and the travails of trying to live the Christian life in their own self-effort and strength. In Galatians 5, he calls us to walk by the Spirit (5:16), be led by the Spirit (5:18) and live by the Spirit (5:25).

**Weary** is the idea of growing weak, faint, or feeling like a failure. God wants us to depend on His strength. **I pray God will strengthen you as a servant of Christ in these days.** ■

Your brother in Christ,  
Brian Autry



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## The Game Plan Has

# Changed

by Josh Turner

*SBC of Virginia Church Planting  
Team Leader and Strategist,  
Statewide*

**“The largest church one day will be the online church.”**

These words came from Elmer Towns while I was sitting in a seminary class back in 2010. While we wrestled with topics like communion, community, and baptisms, it was difficult for us to grasp just what that may look like. I don't think Dr. Towns had a pandemic in mind, but aren't we currently seeing the largest church in the world as an online church? Needless to say, the past several weeks have ushered in significant change for church planters. Here are some best practices that seem to be working during this COVID-19 crisis.

### **BEST PRACTICES DURING COVID-19**

**1. Old-Fashioned Phone Calling** — This is perhaps the concept that goes against our cultural shift of texting, emailing, and direct messaging. Many planters right now are reporting that phone calls are gaining them traction with church members. In fact, it's surprising just how long people are willing and able to talk now. Building personal relationships outside of texting and emailing is proving to be essential.

**2. Online Giving** — We've taught this in our SBC of Virginia church planting training for years—the importance of establishing an online giving option when planting. Pastors who balked at the idea of paying the fees for online giving are now rushing to figure out how to do it. For years, the only way to give financially to the church was to come to the church building or mail a check. While some folks are still driving to the church to faithfully drop off their checks, many church plants are now reporting that their online giving percentage has increased. In addition, those planters who created a culture of giving from the beginning have found that giving during this pandemic has not changed as much as they expected.

**3. Online Community** — Churches have often struggled with getting attendees into small group community. However, with the shift to online small groups, churches have seen more people open to gathering online from the comfort of their own homes. The real unknown is just how much community is occurring through a computer screen.

While these are challenging times for church planters, those with flexibility and an entrepreneurial passion, will see ways that God is working through this pandemic and will adapt as necessary. No one ever promised that what we planned on paper would be what would actually transpire. ■



# CHURCH REVITALIZATION *in the Midst of COVID-19*



*The Lord has offered us an opportunity and a reminder to truly be the Church and to understand that the Church is not the facility..."*



The current COVID-19 crisis has led pastors to consider how to keep their church functional and stable through his situation. Each church was at a different place before this crisis hit. Some SBC of Virginia churches were pursuing revitalization. It may appear that attempting to move a church through a revitalization process at this time would be impossible. However, several churches in Virginia are using this moment to continue to galvanize toward revitalization. One pastor doing this is Philip King at **Calvary Baptist Church** in Winchester, VA.

Two major components of revitalization efforts are often 1) MINISTRY AND MOBILIZATION to the surrounding community and 2) LEVERAGING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY. This crisis has allowed Calvary Baptist Church to see its community with fresh eyes and understand the importance of digital platforms in a world of social distancing. King said, "By the grace of God, in the middle of this pandemic, our efforts to make some beneficial changes have been propelled forward. Really, by necessity, we've had to make these moves to continue to function and stay relevant, and the

church has been supportive." Calvary has been able to upgrade its digital presence because the situation has put added attention on this important area. King believes that the enhancements of digital technology would not have moved at this pace outside of the COVID-19 situation. Upgrading the website, enhancing video streaming, and embracing online giving have been virtually automatic.

Calvary Baptist Church has been able to communicate to the community of Winchester its desire to minister to them. Through drive-through prayer, drive-in church, and organizing community-wide prayer gatherings at the Winchester Medical Center, the church has been leading in ministering to the community. King explained, "The Lord has offered us an opportunity and a reminder to truly be the Church and to understand that the Church is not the facility, but the people of God coming together to minister to one another and the community." While there was a desire within the church to minister prior to the virus, this crisis has provided a fresh enthusiasm to reach out and minister in the Winchester community. ■

# THE CHURCH: *Unable to Congregate*

**How** can a congregation not congregate? This is the question churches are considering during this time of social distancing and sheltering at home.

Many have offered worship services online through Facebook Live, YouTube, and website streaming. Providing an online option is not new for every church, but many of the results are. The almost universal utilization of online worship services has resulted in many fruits of conversion. For example, one church told of a streaming service that led to an unbelieving spouse of a church member praying to receive Christ right in his living room after years of resistance to the Gospel. This kind of scenario has been repeated numerous times!

Another new option some churches are providing is drive-in church. This is when a church invites people to gather in their cars in the parking lot for a worship service.

Here are some preliminary suggestions and reminders from more than a dozen pastors whose churches have conducted DRIVE-IN SERVICES:

- Provide assistance to direct people to designated parking spots, one space apart.
- Have the parking assistants arrive very early because many attendees will do the same to get a prime spot. Rev. Jonathan Haskew at **Henry Baptist Church** (Henry, VA) advised, "If possible, park the cars so that all can see you."
- Make sure that the service is simple—no announcements and other extras.





- Have special parking for trucks, SUVs, and vans in the back because they block everyone's view behind them.
- Keep the service short (45 minutes max) because just sitting in the car, especially with children, will limit attention spans.



- For instruction signs, use large lettering with limited text because drivers can't read a complex or small-lettered sign while driving.
- If speaking by way of FM radio, remember there is no need to project your voice as you would normally in preaching to reach the back of the room. Dr. Bryan Smith of **First Baptist Church of Roanoke** shared, "Preach for persuasion and personal appeal rather than vocal reach."
- Remind attendees not to get out of their cars.
- A drive-in service is a good supplement for an online sermon but not a substitute (online services reach far more people).
- Regarding online or streaming services, repeat the Gospel throughout because people tune in and tune out. As Dr. Stan Parris of **Franklin Heights Baptist Church** (Rocky Mount, VA) put it, "Make sure that a Gospel appeal is spread through the message rather than waiting for a final culmination."
- Model social distancing with musicians and the person preaching.
- Choose music that people know and can sing along with. Familiar music can be a significant comfort at this time.

These are just a few thoughts from the experience of many pastors. Let us remember our Gospel call "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:24-25, KJV). May God continue to multiply our Gospel efforts! ■

# Johnny Hunt Encourages Evangelism — Despite Social Distancing

by Timothy Cokes

ZOOM STATEWIDE CALL



The SBC of Virginia hosted a series of statewide zoom calls about evangelism during a pandemic, including a call featuring Johnny Hunt of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) on Thursday (June 18).

Hunt, senior vice president for evangelism and pastoral leadership at NAMB, spoke to more than 80 church leaders about the necessity of evangelism even during this time of social distancing. Hunt emphasized themes such as sharing personal testimonies and pastors emulating the type of missional living they would like to see from their congregations.

"Whatever is important to the leader is what will be important to the people,"

Hunt said. "There is no such thing as an evangelistic and missional church with a non-evangelistic or non-missional pastor. If I'm a pastor, I've got to emulate what I'd like to see modeled in my people's lives."

Among the things Hunt advocated church leaders emulate to their congregations was the sharing of personal testimonies in order to encourage not just pastors, but all believers to fulfill the Great Commission.

"Often the missing piece for evangelism is inspiration," Hunt said. "We need to inspire people through the stories and experiences that God has given us to tell. I've been inspired before by hearing stories of other people sharing the Gospel, and in my early days of



knowing the Lord all I had was my story and a changed life. You have to have a passion for the lost and have to pray that God would break our hearts for what breaks His.”

Other topics Hunt touched on included the **Annual Church Profile** report, how racial reconciliation can play a role in evangelism, the recently released ‘**It’s on Me**’ video related to a decline in baptisms, and the “**Who’s Your One?**” initiative launched last year.

Hunt said Who’s Your One is a reason to be hopefully optimistic about the future of evangelism and baptisms in the SBC.

“I would like to think that the 27,000 names that are on our big board at the North American Mission Board office are going to make a difference and be an encouraging mark,” Hunt said.

SBC of Virginia’s evangelism director, Steve Bradshaw, said NAMB’s Who’s Your One initiative “fits hand-in-hand” with the state convention’s evangelism strategy, “Bless Every Home,” a web-based resource aimed at praying for and developing relationships with neighbors in the communities surrounding SBCV churches.

Bradshaw said Virginia was one of the last state conventions to host a Who’s Your One rally before the national social distancing guidelines were put in place. The convention also was promoting Bless Every Home through in-person events before these guidelines.

After social distancing guidelines came into effect, Bradshaw worked with David Wheeler, professor of evangelism at Liberty University, to create a list of practical and contextualized service and evangelism ideas to go along with Bless Every Home. Wheeler formerly served as the state evangelism director for both Ohio and Indiana.

Wheeler and Bradshaw then organized several Zoom calls throughout the month of April talking through these ideas with pastors in different regions of the SBCV.

Bradshaw said the results of the regional Zoom calls were highly encouraging.

“We generate more participation by Zoom calls than even when we were promoting Bless Every Home in person,” Bradshaw said. “It’s convenient and people are able to use the chat room to submit questions, which resulted in quite a bit of dialogue. It was very interactive overall.”

Wheeler later partnered with the SBCV to create a downloadable PDF, “**Outreach During Covid-19**,” listing all of the different ideas for serving and witnessing to neighbors during the current pandemic. The document was endorsed by Hunt and is available for free download on NAMB’s website.

Bradshaw said he believes many of the ideas listed will be applicable even after the pandemic ends, and he hopes these evangelism Zoom calls with Wheeler and Hunt helped church leaders remember that “Evangelism is not a choice for believers; it is a mandate, even during a pandemic.”

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*Timothy Cokes is a freelance writer and graduate divinity student at Liberty University.*

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#### RESOURCES:

*For more information or to download the following resources, visit:*

##### Annual Church Profile report

 [tinyurl.com/ACPreport](https://tinyurl.com/ACPreport)

##### It’s On Me video

 [tinyurl.com/itsonme-video](https://tinyurl.com/itsonme-video)

##### Who’s Your One?

 [tinyurl.com/namb-whosyourone](https://tinyurl.com/namb-whosyourone)

##### Outreach During COVID-19 (PDF document)

 [www.namb.net/resource/outreach-during-covid-19](https://www.namb.net/resource/outreach-during-covid-19)

# First Baptist Roanoke Hosts a SPECIAL COMMUNITY UNITY Prayer Service

by Timothy Cokes

**F**irst Baptist Church of Roanoke hosted a night of prayer and worship for the local community Sunday, June 7, in response to the recent events in the nation.

The theme of the night was “Together,” and the keynote speaker was Allen McFarland, pastor of **Calvary Evangelical Baptist Church** in Portsmouth and current president of the SBC of Virginia. McFarland is the first African American to hold that position.

The service featured a diverse group of participants, including Roanoke-area pastors, law enforcement representatives, and government officials. Notable speakers included Roanoke City Chief of Police Samuel Roman Jr. and Roanoke Mayor Sherman Leah Jr.

Bryan Smith, the pastor of First Baptist of Roanoke, said he is proud of the response of the local community amid recent hard times.

“We’re so thankful for our leaders as well as our neighbors in the way that we have handled these difficult, challenging days,” Smith said. “It’s rare to see a city our size that can come together as closely, personally, and compassionately as the city of Roanoke.”

The service was held in First Roanoke’s Faith Chapel because of the sanctuary’s history. Built in 1929, Smith said for many years the building had the largest seating capacity in the city of Roanoke. This allowed First Baptist, in conjunction with a local African American church, to host a community prayer service after

the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. 52 years ago.

Smith said some church members still remember the impact of that long-ago prayer meeting.

The first portion of the service Sunday night included a time of praise and worship as well as specific prayer times led by area pastors. Each guest at the service was given a card with a topic, including prayer for the family and friends of George Floyd, for wisdom for leaders and law enforcement, and for the end of systematic racism and oppression in the country.

McFarland brought a message encouraging those gathered to look to the Bible to see how to overcome in a spiritual battle.

“We need to help people realize the spiritual battle that they are in,” McFarland said. “This world’s system is not a friend of grace, but the Bible tells us how we can be difference-makers in this world’s system.”

McFarland spoke from Revelation 12 about how Christians can overcome and make a difference for Christ through the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and loving the Lord and their neighbor more than their own lives.

“People need to know they are sinners and need a Savior,” McFarland said. “You want to march, go ahead and tell people about Jesus. Get involved if you want to, but be a witness for the Lord, and you cannot be a witness for the Lord if you don’t know His Word. We have to show our overcoming spiritual victory to others. We do this by showing love through devotion, determination, and demonstration.”

The service ended with everyone singing “Amazing Grace.” Smith said just as with the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. many years ago, these challenging days can be a source for spiritual renewal for the nation.

“Wouldn’t it be great if out of riots across this nation there would be revival?” he asked. “It could happen. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if it happened starting here tonight?”

Timothy Cokes is a freelance writer and graduate divinity student at Liberty University

## RESOURCE:

Facebook video can be seen at:

 [tinyurl.com/FR-prayerservice](https://tinyurl.com/FR-prayerservice)





# SBCV DR Shares PPE with Area Medical Center

**T**he SBC of Virginia was able to provide some much-needed resources and hope to medical facilities in the Lynchburg surrounding area. Nearly 3,700 masks and 100 hazmat suits were donated to Centra Health as doctors and nurses battled COVID-19.

These masks and suits are used by Disaster Relief volunteers with funding provided by the churches of the SBC of Virginia through the Vision Virginia Missions Offering and the North American Mission Board. When teams are responding to flooded homes and businesses in Virginia and beyond, they remove flooded drywall, flooring, and other materials. This protective wear helps shield them from black mold exposure, along with other contaminants found in flooded homes.

"I was watching the news and saw that a lot of hospitals were struggling with personal protective equipment and being able to get enough of it to protect their health care workers," shared Mark Gauthier, director of SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief. "I thought it would be a shame for this equipment to stay in the warehouse when health workers are having to deal with the coronavirus."

The Disaster Relief team works with a state feeding task force that is looking into how Virginia school children who depend on free meals and others who are at risk could be fed during this time. This could mean utilizing the SBC of Virginia mobile kitchens and teams to help distribute to families in need.

The SBC of Virginia is also working with its more than 740 churches to provide resources they need to continue min-

istry during the pandemic. Regional catalysts have been working one on one with churches, and the SBC of Virginia is providing new resources daily to help churches think through new and creative solutions for financial giving, communication, and other necessary ministry practices.

These measures are vital to help Virginia residents and beyond know that they are not alone in these challenging days. There is help, healing, and hope found in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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#### RESOURCE:

*For details and resources, email:*



[ilabiosa@sbcv.org](mailto:ilabiosa@sbcv.org)

# Cómo ministran las iglesias de habla hispana durante la pandemia

La crisis en la que vivimos nos ha tomado a la mayoría de nosotros por sorpresa. Ha golpeado más fuerte y más de lo esperado. A medida que el COVID-19 se iba extendiendo por todo el mundo, en los EE. UU. solo escuchamos de su impacto a través de las noticias y las redes sociales durante un tiempo. Entonces llegó el día en que comenzó a afectar a nuestras ciudades y vecindarios también.

En su mayor parte, los inmigrantes y las minorías se han visto gravemente afectados por la pandemia. A muchos se les ha reducido el horario o han perdido sus empleos por completo, y la mayoría no puede acceder a la ayuda estatal o federal.

Como en cualquier otra crisis, esta es una oportunidad para que la Iglesia comparta y muestre el amor de Cristo. El norte de Virginia ha sido testigo de primera mano de esto a través de la **Iglesia Bíblica McLean** con sede en Vienna, VA. Tomaron la iniciativa de preparar cajas de ayuda, cada una con artículos de higiene personal y víveres para una familia de cinco. Sus voluntarios y personal trabajan fielmente cada semana para comprar comestibles y armar las cajas.

Nuestros plantadores hispanos de SBC de Virginia han sido parte de lo que Dios está haciendo. Raúl Santamaría, estratega de plantación de iglesias de SBCV para Ministerios Hispanos, ayudó a coordinar los esfuerzos para que los plantadores pudieran entregar cajas en las comunidades donde ya están ministrando.

Al momento de este artículo, la Iglesia Bíblica McLean había preparado más de 3,000 cajas de comida y, en coordinación con los plantadores de SBCV, ha servido a las comunidades en el área metropolitana de DC. Los plantadores de SBCV recogen las cajas y las llevan directamente a las casas de las familias necesitadas. Les muestran el amor de

Dios al atenderlos personalmente (siguiendo todas las recomendaciones del departamento de salud), presentando el Evangelio y orando por sus necesidades.

Uno de estos plantadores es Jefferson Hernández de la **Iglesia Bíblica Campo Blanco** en Leesburg, VA. Ha distribuido varias cajas a personas en su congregación y en su comunidad. También ha ayudado a distribuir bienes con otras iglesias.

Este es realmente un esfuerzo unido. La Iglesia Bíblica McLean y estos plantadores de iglesias oran para que cuando se levante la cuarentena, puedan visitar a las personas a las que han ministrado y puedan discipularlos. ■





# How Spanish-Speaking Churches Are Ministering During the Pandemic

**T**he crisis in which we are living took most of us by surprise, and it has hit harder and longer than expected. As COVID-19 spread throughout the world, in the US, we only heard of its impact through the news and social media for a while. Then the day came when it began to affect our cities and neighborhoods too.

For the most part, immigrants and minorities have been severely impacted by the pandemic. Many have had their hours cut or lost their jobs entirely, and most cannot access state or federal aid.

As in any other crisis, this is an opportunity for the Church to share and show the love of Christ. Northern Virginia has witnessed this firsthand through **McLean Bible Church** based in Vienna, VA. They took the initiative to prepare aid boxes, each containing personal hygiene items and groceries for a family of five. Their volunteers and staff work faithfully each week to buy groceries and assemble the boxes.

Our Hispanic SBC of Virginia planters have been part of what God is doing. Raúl Santamaría, SBCV's church planting strategist for Hispanic Ministries, helped coordinate efforts so that planters could

deliver boxes in the communities where they are already ministering.

At the time of this article, McLean Bible Church had prepared more than 3,000 boxes of food and, in coordination with SBCV planters, has served communities in the Greater Metro DC area. SBCV planters collect the boxes and take them directly to the houses of the families in need. They show them God's love by attending to them personally (following all of the recommendations of the health department), presenting the Gospel, and praying for their needs.

One of these planters is Jefferson Hernandez from **Iglesia Bíblica Campo Blanco** in Leesburg, VA. He has distributed several boxes to people in his congregation and in his community. He has also helped to distribute goods with other church plants.

This is truly a united effort. McLean Bible Church and these church planters pray that when the quarantine is lifted, they can visit the people they have ministered to and can disciple them. ■



# 20 LESSONS LEARNED BECAUSE OF COVID-19

This list was developed from conversations with SBC of Virginia pastors walking through the COVID-19 crisis. It includes, in no particular order, what pastors have shared they are discovering in this crisis.

- 1 A quality website and a social media presence, along with an up-to-date email and call list for church members, are of utmost importance.
- 2 There is the potential for small off-site groups to develop during this time of social distancing, which could form the basis for thriving small groups in the future. Surprisingly, in a time of social distancing, the Church is coming to terms with genuine community.
- 3 Churches are learning the best practices of online worship services, such as good sound and video work. Churches are also realizing that an online service should not be constructed like an in-person service. The congregation is not in the room; therefore, the service must be oriented to the viewing audience on the other side of the camera. An online worship service should be shorter (45 minutes max). Ministers and worship teams must say/sing more with less time.
- 4 Churches are discovering the potential for leadership development while leading closely through a crisis time. New leaders are also stepping up to meet the demands of this moment. Therefore, this is a good time for leadership identification and development.
- 5 Online worship services have a greater outreach than in-person worship services, thus there is a greater possibility for evangelism. Many unchurched people will listen to an online worship service. These views can sometimes be traced and followed-up on.
- 6 Longer intentional phone conversations are creating a unique pastoral connection between the pastor/ministry leaders to the congregation at large.
- 7 The slowing pace of ministry and the forced reduction of ministry offerings are allowing an opportunity to evaluate ministries of greatest importance. This is causing some pastors to think about simplifying ministry offerings on the other side of this crisis.
- 8 Online ministry and teaching happen beyond the Sunday morning message. Shorter online vignettes can often create more Gospel touches and online engagement.
- 9 Creative ministries are growing during this time. For example, drive-in diaper giveaways, drive-through prayer, drive-in services, and new means of mercy ministries like feeding and clothing are taking place. Furthermore, some churches and denominations are making or donating medical equipment such as masks.



- 10 The need for secure and easily utilized online giving is a must during this time. Churches are learning the need to have a financial margin in their budget and to develop a rainy-day fund. Churches are also learning that church staff need flexible responsibilities and skillsets, especially in times like these. Having a financial margin and flexible staff is critical in a crisis.
- 11 Ministers are learning the need for proper financial planning, including their own personal emergency fund and appropriate savings. Ministers are having to contemplate financial sacrifice as the crisis lingers on.
- 12 In the midst of a slower pace, some ministers have become reflective concerning their own calling and convictions when things go back to normal. Many ministers are directly or indirectly experiencing the "COVID-19 sabbatical."
- 13 This crisis is allowing a new context where church cliques and trivialities are set aside for partnership and community contribution. These new behavioral patterns could hold beyond this crisis.
- 14 Forced social media use is merging virtual groups with actual groups. This could be the start of a large-scale blending of virtual and actual groups--where in-person groups may have members who attend virtually even after social distancing is over.
- 15 Ministers have a unique opportunity to teach families in their church the discipline of family devotions and quality personal devotions. Church members report having more time for Bible study and prayer and that they feel more compelled to do so during this time of crisis.
- 16 Churches are learning about the possibility of leading evangelistic and discipleship opportunities in an online platform. This potentially will cause us to see the online platform as a key area of evangelism and discipleship. Potential new church staff positions could be created to oversee online ministry where primary and ongoing engagement will occur.
- 17 This time allows for unique alignment in the ministry philosophy between the pastor, staff, and ministry leadership while ministry is not happening as normal.
- 18 A potential pitfall is that members are learning how to participate in church online and may potentially continue to attend church online while multi-tasking other activities when schedules return to normal. Churches will need to learn how to mitigate this phenomenon.
- 19 Multi-site churches could continue to explode in numbers due to the familiarity church members now have to watch "the pastor on a screen." Multiple sites allow for church community with social distancing in small settings. The "packed-room church" may be resisted for a while after the crisis is over.
- 20 Churches are unexpectedly becoming more connected with other churches because, on Sundays, ministers and church members can now binge-watch multiple church services. Many are now more aware of what is happening in the other churches in their communities.



# BONHOEFFER HAUS

## A GREENHOUSE WHERE FUTURE LEADERS ARE GROWN

For those called to serve the Lord in ministry, there is a need for preparation—which often requires relocating for seminary training—but many cannot feasibly make the move. In addition, most churches need a means of developing leaders for the next generation. These twin challenges are being addressed in a new way by the Bonhoeffer Haus, a ministry of several SBC of Virginia churches in the Roanoke and New River Valleys.



*Pastor and Co-founder Pete Schemm*

As Pete Schemm of **Cave Spring Baptist Church** in Roanoke (and co-founder of this ministry) put it, “We are seeking to build a discipleship community—a ‘greenhouse’ where future church leaders are grown. It is a unique seminary experience in a local church context. It’s a place where a discipleship director is grounding his leadership in theology...where a woman is building a foundation for her future biblical counseling ministry...where a pastor learns how to shepherd and preach in a community of others who become life-long friends.”

In 2012, a small group of pastors began to pray and plan for a way of training church

planters and pastors with a model from the past—patterned after Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s way of training pastors in Nazi Germany. Bonhoeffer, a pastor, began and directed a small “haus seminary” (*haus* is the German word for house) to train men through “life together under the Word.” The students lived, worked, studied, and prayed together. They received rigorous theological training in a manner that yielded character formation rather than merely the transfer of information.

At present, the Bonhoeffer Haus in Virginia has groups, called cohorts, that focus on three foundational principles. These three pillars include 1) apprenticeships; 2) discipleship formation in community; and 3) theological formation. Apprentices serve under a pastor from a partner church in a mentoring relationship. While serving in a variety of local churches, each cohort shares Christian community through regular times of study, prayer, training, and fellowship. They take classes together and share monthly dinners with their families. Theological formation is done in partnership with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary to craft an academic plan for apprentices to complete their education from a distance. This is done through a combination of online courses, on-campus intensives, and live courses offered by a credentialed faculty member.



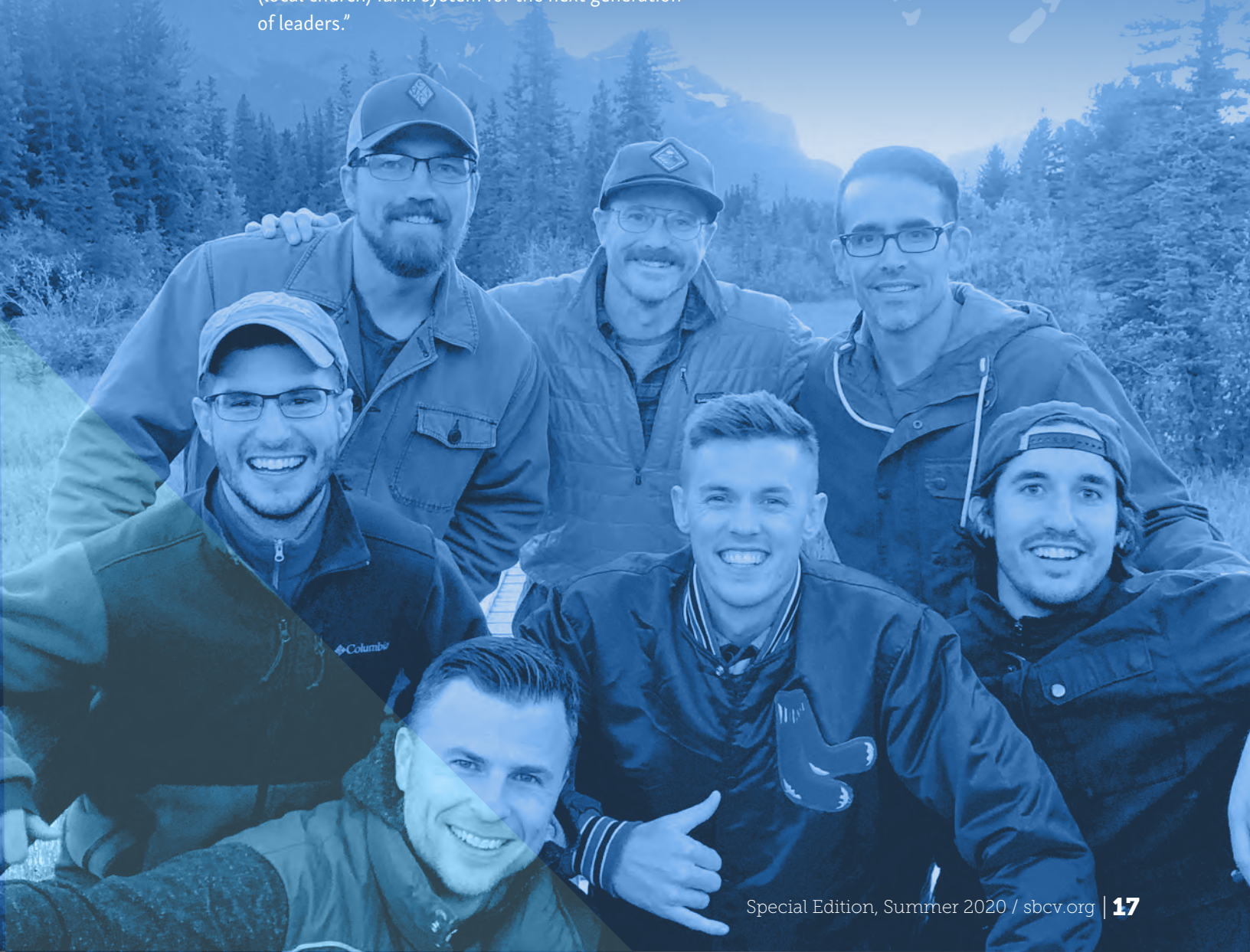


Co-founder Jesse Furey

The Bonhoeffer Haus is committed to strong partnerships with like-minded SBCV churches. Jesse Furey, co-founder of the ministry, serves as its executive director, having come to lead this ministry in 2013. Furey served alongside his wife, Jenny, as a missionary with CRU for 10 years before founding the Bonhoeffer Haus. Furey was one of the founding elders of **Valley Bible Church** of Radford, where he still serves as an elder and oversees church planting and pastoral training. He summarized the vision by saying, "We want people to get their ministry preparation in the context of a mentor who loves them and a community where growth is nurtured. This is the opportunity to have an in-house (local church) farm system for the next generation of leaders."

The Bonhoeffer Haus has trained and sent church planters to Floyd, Richmond, and as far as Canmore, Alberta in Canada. They believe that to have a generational impact for the Kingdom, local churches need to work together to raise up the next generation of leaders. Their hope is to see more cohorts and future plants born out of those.

For more information, visit their website: [www.bonhoefferhaus.com](http://www.bonhoefferhaus.com) and check out their podcast *Hammer & Quill*. The podcast is meant to serve churches and show how each special guest pursues the good, true, and beautiful in the way they fulfill their vocations. The podcast can be found on any podcasting app, but the direct website is [www.bonhoefferhaus.com/hammer-and-quill](http://www.bonhoefferhaus.com/hammer-and-quill). ■





## Editor's Letter

**BRANDON PICKETT**

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# 2020

There are certain years that just sound momentous. I remember anchoring the news when the calendar turned to the year 2000. It sounded so incredible, like we were going to be living in another dimension.

Since 2000, we've been looking forward to 2020. There have been all kinds of vision statements positively anticipating this year (usually with the word "vision" in front of 2020). We knew this was going to be a pivotal year. But I never saw or heard any reports that resembled anything like what we've seen so far! It's said that if March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb. But is there anything that says that if a year comes in like a lion, it will turn into a fire-breathing dragon??

Soon after COVID-19 hit the Commonwealth, we started hearing stories—stories that inspired, encouraged, and enlightened us. They caused us to praise the Lord and celebrate what He was doing in and through the many churches of the SBC of Virginia. Just about every weekday morning for the past three months, we've been sharing these "Not Alone Stories" with you through email and social media. Many of you have let us know that

# “

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.”*

Romans 12:15





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you have looked forward to waking up and hearing these true God stories every day.

We have also expanded our coverage to include poignant conversations regarding racial unity. This focus didn't start just this spring but has been an ongoing part of our convention discussions for a while. You can see some of those conversations and resources at [sbcv.org/racial-unity-conversations](https://sbcv.org/racial-unity-conversations).

This *Proclaimer* that you're reading is really a compilation of these incredible stories in written form. It allows us to put into practice Romans 12:15,

"Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep."

God continues to move in and through the churches of the SBC of Virginia. Let us continue to pray for His blessing as we remain faithful to Him, live in His freedom, and love one another.

"For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love."

Galatians 5:13

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RESOURCE:

*Conversations regarding racial unity:*



[sbcv.org/racialunityconversations](https://sbcv.org/racialunityconversations)

 **The Heights Baptist Church**  
17201 Jefferson Davis Hwy, Colonial Heights

 **November 8-10, 2020**  
Sunday - Tuesday\*

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# ANNUAL HOMECOMING

2020

*Don't miss this time to*  
CELEBRATE WHAT  
**GOD IS DOING**  
THROUGH HIS  
SBCV CHURCHES

*\*Details are subject to change*



*You are  
not alone.*

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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