



2016 | volume 18, issue 1

ONE MISSION
THE GREAT COMMISSION

about the cover

It is truly amazing what God is doing in and through the churches of the SBC of Virginia. Especially when it comes to reaching out to their Jerusalem and beyond. In this one issue, we've tried to tell as many stories as we could fit, documenting the lives changed and the impact made through this incredible mission activity. The locations and pictures on the front cover all come from the stories on the pages inside this Proclaimer. We pray the stories you read will encourage you as you reach your world for Christ.

contents

Many seeking refuge are willing to talk openly about their search for a new life and their hope for safety and security. Opportunities for ministry are great at the border camps.



PROCLAIMER

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The *Proclaimer* tells about the amazing things God is doing through His Church in Virginia and around the world. It is provided free of charge due to your generous contributions made through the Cooperative Program. To subscribe, go online: sbcv.org/proclaimer

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from the
Executive
Director

Being Courageous in Corinth

Recently I traveled with some of our SBC of Virginia team members to the border of Greece and Macedonia to experience firsthand the ministry to refugees fleeing war-torn places like Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. Because SBC of Virginia churches partner to mobilize for the Great Commission, a compassionate ministry to refugees has been underway for months. In the words of those I met hoping for a brighter and better future, "Thank you."

While we were in Greece, one of our ministry partners took us to visit the ancient city of Corinth. We approached the city of Corinth via a modern-day highway, and I was struck by an imposing mountain overlooking the city. Our host told us that on top of the mountain stood the remains of the Temple of Aphrodite. Once in the ancient city of Corinth, I walked around the ruins of Apollo's Temple. There, in the shadow of Aphrodite's towering temple and in view of Apollo's Temple, was where the Apostle Paul

proclaimed the life-transforming, counter-cultural message of Jesus Christ.

The words of Acts 18:9–11 took on historic and personal meaning as I stood there where Paul had preached.

And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people." And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. (Acts 18:9–11 ESV)

The Lord tells Paul not to do some things: 1.) Do not be afraid; 2.) Do not stop speaking; 3.) Do not be silent.

It may seem that your ministry, your family, and the church where you serve are facing a Corinthian challenge. (Corinth was such a rough place that corrupt, sinful behavior was referred to as "Corinthian.") We may wonder how we can have courage when following Christ is counter cultural.

Courage is defined as the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc. without fear—bravery. May Acts 18:9–11 encourage and embolden us to be bold and courageous as proclaimers of the Gospel of Christ. May the words of the Lord Jesus that encouraged Paul encourage us today: *"I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people."*

Not afraid. Not ashamed. Not alone.

Prayer Summit 2016

Awakening
Let It Begin With Me

Tuesday, February 23
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

River Oak Church
Chesapeake, VA

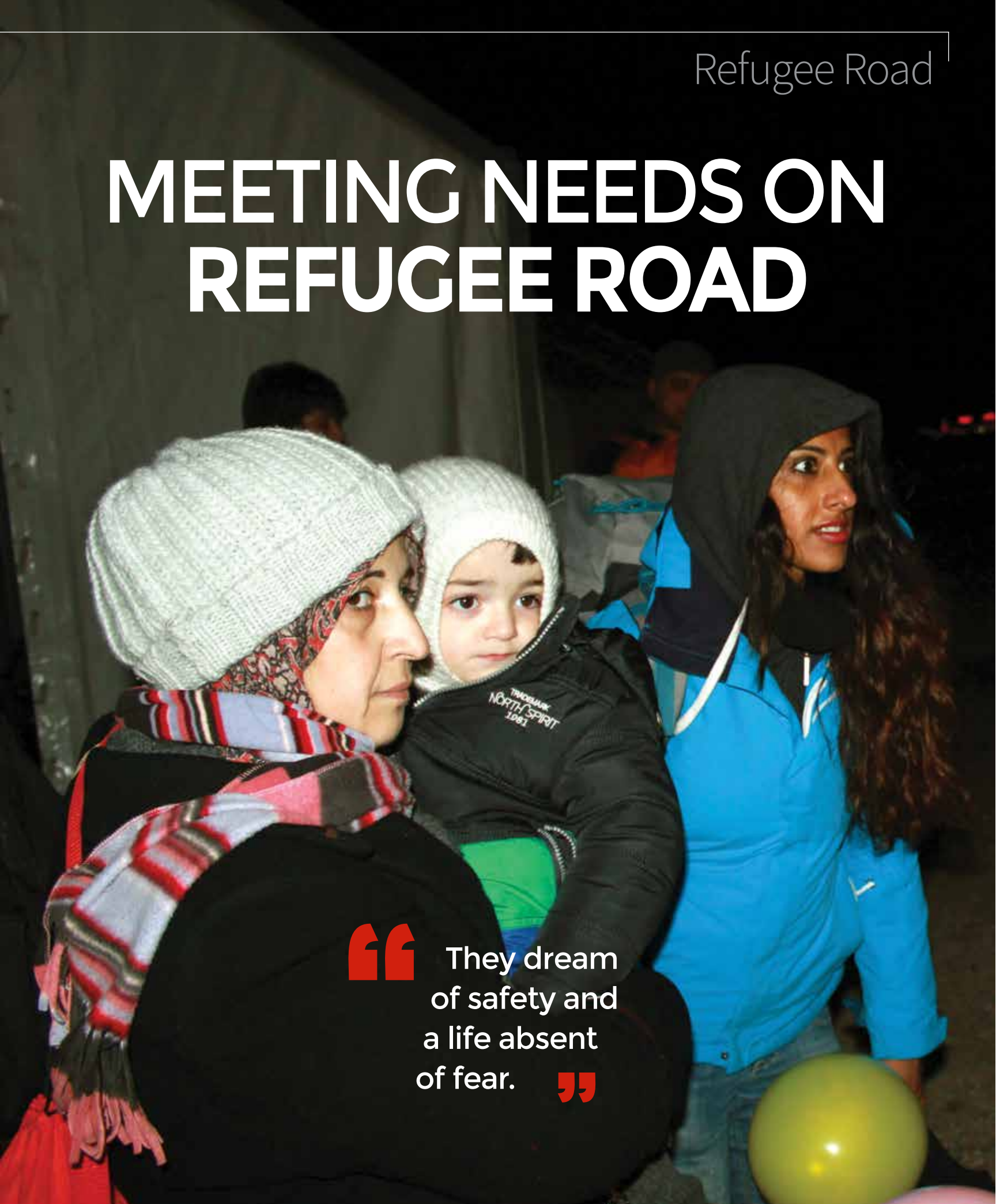
God desires to bring a spiritual awakening in our culture and in the lives of His people. At the 2016 Prayer Summit, through God's Word and prayer, you will be challenged to allow this awakening to begin in your own personal life.

With guest speakers
Bill Elliff & Byron Paulus



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MEETING NEEDS ON REFUGEE ROAD



“ They dream
of safety and
a life absent
of fear. ”



Crossing the Border

What Is Peace?

LOOKING FOR A NEW LIFE IN EUROPE: A TREACHEROUS JOURNEY JUST GETTING TO THE BORDER

Today, refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan are once again crossing the border between Greece and Macedonia. But for a time, the border was once again closed to all refugees. Just about every refugee trying to enter Europe is being funneled through the one border crossing near the town of Idomeni, Greece. Many of these people, mostly from the Middle East, are leaving family, homes, and occupations to search for a life without war, turmoil, and the threat of death.

Hadi is one of these refugees from Afghanistan—he graduated from college,

then saw nine of his friends killed by the Taliban. “I think for about 13 years was war in Afghanistan—about 13 years.

Now I am 25 years old. I haven’t yet seen peace. What is peace?”

The SBC of Virginia has had missionary personnel serving in the refugee camp every month since October 2015.

“Over the past four months, we’ve had over a ¼ million people pass through this one checkpoint,” said Jack Noble, SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief director. “Basically every refugee heading north—

A Dangerous Road

Hoping for a better life, many leave all of their possessions and head for the border to cross over into Europe.



whether they are going to Sweden or Germany—comes through this one checkpoint. In the month of December when I was here, there were over 2,000 people who were camping here because they had been rejected at the border for not being Syrian, Afghani, or Iraqi.”

Ministry Opportunities Abound

As of this story, only persons from Syria, Afghanistan, or Iraq are being allowed to cross the border to look for a new life in Europe. But the journey just getting to that border crossing is treacherous. By the time they get to the refugee camp, many are willing to talk openly about their search for a new life and their hope for safety and security. That’s why the opportunities for ministry are so great at this border camp.

One refugee who just arrived in Greece after a dangerous boat ride across the Aegean Sea told us about his trip. “In Turkey, there are a lot of traffickers like mafia,” he said. “They take your money and then send you on a boat. Help the

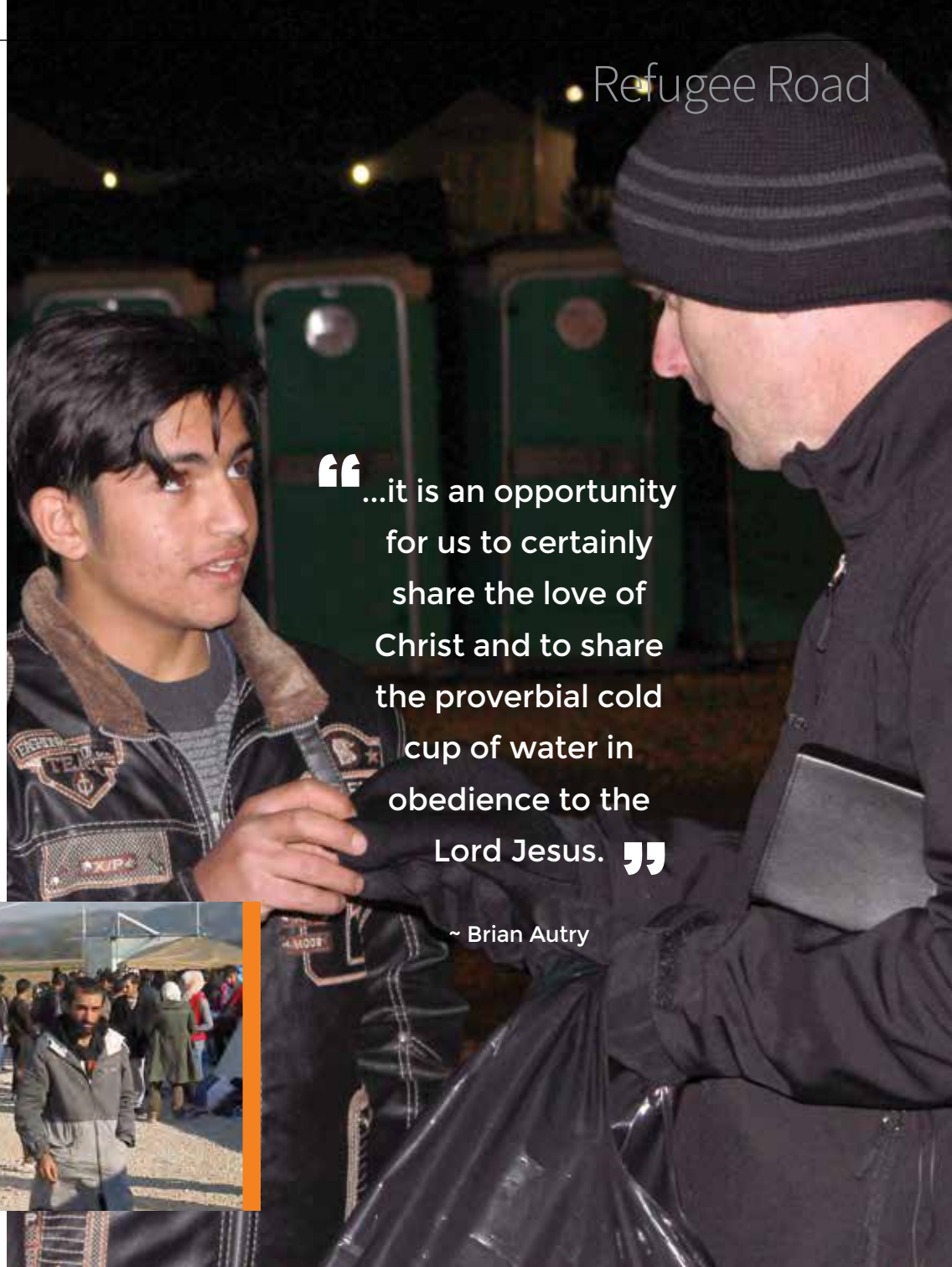
people. The people are dying. People have no money. They have nothing. So, help the people.”

“When you’re here in person, seeing the very real humanitarian need, it is an opportunity for us to certainly share the love of Christ and to share the proverbial cold cup of water in obedience to the Lord Jesus,” said Brian Autry, SBC of Virginia’s executive director. “One of the most important things we can do is pray for these people, but the most immediate needs are financial resources that we can put in the hands of missionaries and volunteers on the scene.”

The SBC of Virginia plans to continue to send mission teams and resources to the border camp for the foreseeable future. It is also working with Liberty University and its newly created LU Send NOW to help facilitate student volunteers who will serve on the front lines as soon as February.

“I have been following the refugee crisis for some time,” said Vince Valeriano, LU Send NOW coordinator, who accompanied the SBCV on its latest trip to serve refugees in Greece. “I felt very strongly that the church needed to take action to help these people who are just like you and me and have been forced to leave everything because of violent oppressors.”

“It is one thing to hear about it on the news,” said Valeriano, “but completely another being there in person with the refugees hearing their stories and seeing their plight firsthand. The refugees are begging for our help.”



“...it is an opportunity for us to certainly share the love of Christ and to share the proverbial cold cup of water in obedience to the Lord Jesus.”

~ Brian Autry

“The ministry opportunity is great,” said Noble. “Volunteers are needed here on the Greece and Macedonia border. This is a 24-hour-a-day operation. Right here, you can do a 30-second touch, and if there is more time, you can make a life-time touch by staying with them as they go through the refugee road.”

Valeriano strongly feels that this is a once-in-a-lifetime moment. “I

firmly believe this is one of the best opportunities the Church has seen to reach the Muslim world. What’s happening is unprecedented. Now, over a million people who were once extremely difficult and dangerous to reach with the Gospel are coming to open-access countries. We need to seize this golden opportunity to bring the love and Gospel of Jesus Christ to these people who have had little to no access to it.”

Seven Days ON THE BORDER

A JOURNAL PROVIDING A GLIMPSE INTO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

SBC of Virginia's Disaster Relief director, Jack Noble, traveled to Germany and Greece to ascertain the refugee crisis and what Southern Baptists can do to help. The following excerpts from his journal provide a glimpse into the heartbreaking situation and the desperate needs—both physical and spiritual.

DAY 1

Today, I traveled from Frankfurt to Greece and, within two hours of landing, I was standing among 1,200 refugees on the Macedonia border. Today, 8,000 people are expected to cross the border. They are bussed to the border after making a dangerous voyage across the sea. Everyone I talked with said the boat trip was terrifying and they would never do it again.

People of every age were in the camp—people I would gladly have as my neighbor. As I asked about their trek and their family, they returned the questions. They wanted to know about my family.

Without exception, every person was traveling to an unknown destination, at the complete discretion of the governments along his/her path. They dream of safety and a life absent of fear.

The refugees wait in the camp for a few hours as they are processed across the border. They receive food, water, tea, clothing, and shelter. There is a children's play area where laughing and giggling can be heard. It is an incredible opportunity to serve.

DAY 2

As we approached the camp this morning, we passed 60 buses lined up, each filled to capacity with refugees. The buses were waiting in line to drop people off at a food line, which served cold sandwiches and water. The refugees would then huddle in large tents to wait for the Macedonian guards to allow them to walk across the border into Macedonia to board a train. Refugees have to wait hours in the weather between the bus ride and the train.

Most days, the weather is a manageable 60 or 70 degrees. Today, it is 40 degrees with a strong, pouring rain. The road- and sea-weary refugees are now cold and wet. Their only clothes and shoes are soaked. As I write this, I have been inside for an hour, had a hot coffee, and am wearing dry clothes; yet my body still hurts from the rain and temperature. Meanwhile, there are 8,000 wet and cold refugees on trains crossing into Macedonia, most with no jackets or any other way to protect themselves from the weather. Rain is expected again tomorrow, and the supply of disposable ponchos only lasted 15 minutes today.

The bright spot of the day was when a group of six Syrian men felt comfortable enough with our group to want to have tea with us. The heartbreaking part was hearing their tragic stories of some of their mothers, fathers, and children being killed. These people are seeking not just a better





Refugee Road

an everyday experience

life but a place free of carnage. They are willing to cross a boisterous sea and stand in the cold rain to escape life at home.

DAY 3

The opportunity of the day was to distribute dry shoes. My spot was some sort of crowd control. Ninety-nine percent of the time, my size, smile, and voice control were adequate, but the refugees vented their strong emotions from time to time. No one was hurt, but I could tell the refugees are in a simmering mode with their emotions and mental health. In the press of the people, I felt someone occasionally tugging on my vest. I turned around to find a toddler girl in her mother's arms. She was playing a game with me. She didn't know her plight; she was just a child looking for a kind face. We played a game of peekaboo as their number was called to cross the border. It was a brief time of joy and laughter in the midst of the crisis. Won't you pray for this girl and her mom? (picture on the previous page)

DAY 4

I spent most of the day greeting children and their mothers as they came to the children's ministry area. It is such an incredible honor to share a smile with a child—a child never refuses a smile. Many children were crying today out of exhaustion, but the giggles started as soon as the bubbles and balloons began. Bubbles and balloons are the international symbol for "let's be kids." Children also love stickers, and we gave them out by the hundreds. These children are important to God, and they deserve to hear

about the hope of Jesus. One of the opportunities to serve is in childcare. The tent and supplies await volunteers, and children are ready to play. Will you serve?

I had one of the most unusual conversations of my life today. A younger Arabic-speaking man approached me and began to share his heart. Not a word of English was spoken by him, not a word of Arabic by me, but there was communication as I listened to his story. Our body language, the tone of our voices, and our facial expressions spoke far louder than words. When we parted, we each had tears in our eyes as we knew a connection had been made.

DAY 5

The flow of refugees is far from ending. People from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Eritrea have migrated through the camp in the last few days. This afternoon, I went to a local church made up of many nations. In attendance were people from Greece, Poland, Italy, Iran, China, and America. The world is our neighbor. We need to engage in the conversation.

DAY 6

I have been on this adventure for some time now. When I left home, it was just a simple trip to Germany to make some face-to-face connections with local German churches that have a desire to minister to refugees. I was primarily just thinking about Syrians. That part of the trip was extremely productive, and Virginia churches have some unique ministry partnerships available

to them. The opportunities range from assisting with a German Christmas party to serving in cafés. Cafés provide a place for refugees to gather outside of camps and learn German. You don't have to speak German, but you could attend and learn.

The Greece adventure is a bit more strenuous—not just physically, but emotionally and mentally too. Most of the people going through the camp are just like you and me. As a matter of fact, I saw what appeared to be someone just like me: a man in his late 50s wearing the same clothing as me, even down to the blue sweater vest. I looked twice and checked my own matching clothing. The only difference was his jet black hair. I think we even had the same gait and chin-up attitude.

Gratitude oozed from the camp today. We often hear, "thank you," but today these groups raised that expression of gratitude with embraces and hugs.

I spent most of the day doing crowd control for the children's clothing distribution. I had a good number of animal stickers and, of course, I had to make the sound of the animal every time I placed it on a child. My elephant imitation was a hit with the young and old alike. It is fun to watch a dad doing all he can to keep from smiling at my antics. If he was being hard-core stoic, I would up my game and get his child to do it also. Who can resist an elephant imitation? With each child I touched, I prayed, "Please, Lord, please, may they have a family that honors You."

AFTER ARRIVING HOME

It is a tough assignment to put a mission adventure into a perspective that speaks to those who did not go—to cause them to desire to hear what God is doing and to act. This is significantly more difficult when the event is the crisis I witnessed in Germany and Greece.

In Germany, it was easy to perceive that God was present and already at work in the lives of those we met at the churches and the seminary we visited. It was clear there were great connections, we had discovered open doors, and God was at work. In Germany, volunteers arrive in a place where God's presence is clear. The key is to follow and serve. I hope you are packing your bags to go.

In Greece, I met some incredible people with the presence of the Lord in their lives, but the light did not seem to venture beyond the imprints of their shoes. The spiritual darkness was sometimes overbearing in the path of the refugees—so that the presence of Christ was difficult to sense beyond our own persons. For volunteers in Greece, we *are* the presence of the Lord in a place where no one is declaring the name of Jesus.

You can go and declare the name of Jesus. There is no need to wait to engage the refugees until they arrive in our neighborhoods. We can go now and make a difference closer to their homes. The need is great, and we must be the light.

RESOURCE

WEBSITE:

sbcv.org/reachingrefugees

BE THE CHURCH

don't just go

NORTHSTAR
Don't go to church, be the church. *church*

More than a century ago, a college student named Evan Roberts was at the epicenter of a movement of God called the Welsh Revival (1904–1905), which swept through Wales and spread to several other countries. The measurable impact included more than 100,000 making professions of faith in a five-month period, which resulted in courts being closed because there were no cases to try, police officers having no crimes to solve, the birth rate for unwed mothers dropping by almost half, and the churches being filled in every town.¹

Pastor Jeff Noble of Northstar Church in Blacksburg is at the center of a movement of the next generation that is having a sweeping impact in the New River Valley of Virginia. Like in Roberts' day, this movement began with collegiate and young adults passionately in love with Jesus and longing for God's Spirit to bring revival. The church's vision is simple: "Don't go to church, be the church." It's their way of encouraging one another to remember that being a Christian is not about being comfortable but seeking to apply the teachings of Jesus to one's life and telling everyone who will listen that they too may have real life in Jesus Christ. That vision is contagious, resulting in changed lives, a touched community, and an expanding ministry. Hundreds of college students and young adults gather each week for worship and service through Northstar.

For those who seek to reach the next generation, Pastor Noble suggests the following:

1. Love them, not just for what they can do for your church, but truly care about them. Young adults are looking for a warm and welcoming community. Riley St. Pierre, a Northstar member shared, "People invested in me as a newlywed, challenged me to grow in my faith, and gave me opportunities to serve." For Kyle Pfeifer, the church showed its care both one on one and in small groups. "Pastor Jeff mentored me privately, and others have been intentional about showing their support in my Connect Group."
2. Have a strong internet presence. Pastor Noble recommends, "Tell stories of what God is doing among the church family; update the content all the time (daily, if possible); get a creative group of volunteers who are knowledgeable and passionate; use multiple means of communication (blogs, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, a YouTube channel); and use 'evergreen' stories (which are timeless and not date-sensitive)."
3. Provide a place for young adults to serve and lead. The next generation is not the group just waiting in line to be called on later but wants to serve now. One student said, "I have learned here that the Lord has called me to invest in a church all out and get plugged in." Another said, "Serving in church and investing in others is vital—it's not about what's in it for me! Northstar has

given me a new mindset to view the church and my place in it."

4. Help people who don't know Jesus grasp why we do what we do even if they don't yet have the same beliefs.

Evin Gladin put it this way: "The church has helped me transition from high school to a faith that I owned as my own. For the first time, it was a church for me." Tara Zimak stated, "I have gained a conviction [that] the Word of God is not just stories but [is] relevant for application to life." For James Matthew McCray, the church changed his destiny: "My small group leader helped me understand who God really is."

5. Build healthy relationships with campus ministries. There are many evangelical, on-campus ministries throughout the Commonwealth that would make good Gospel partners in reaching the next generation. For many colleges, a church may not have access to being on campus unless connected with a current on-campus ministry or a campus club. Please consider Gospel partners in the work of reaching college students.

¹ *Praying for Collegians: Evan Roberts and the Great Welsh Revival (SBC Life, Winter 2015, page 9)*

 **RESOURCE**
WEBSITE: dontgo.be

REDEMPTION

God often uses the dark places in our lives to help others.

by Melissa Small, pastor's wife, Liberty Baptist Church, Appomattox

Sin can take us farther than we want to go, but God's restorative power can lead us right back to Him.

God often uses the dark places in our lives to help others. With that thought in mind, we share a story of God's power to restore a pastor's wife to Himself and to ministry.

MY LIFE AS A CHRISTIAN

Growing up in a Christian home as a pastor's daughter, I experienced truth and love. At a young age, [even] though I [had] accepted Christ as my Savior, I began a fleshly battle to win the praise of man. I found that something in me craved praise and affirmation. I served with the desire to be told that what I did was of value, and I saw love as something to be earned. I began to build my identity through acts of worth. The problem is [that] no one is perfect and no one can make everyone happy. This was a shaky, ever-changing foundation for finding worth.



Melissa Small (front row, far right) and Women's Ministry team members

LIES OF THE ENEMY

Nonetheless, I still loved God and wanted to serve Him as a pastor's wife—but my appetite for praise continued. This was ultimately a sin rooted in pride. Rather than offering the glory to God, I wanted to find value in myself. This desire led me down a road of willingness to sacrifice my faithfulness and, over time, I convinced myself that there was a greater value in the praise of man than the love of

God. It was tangible and instantly gratifying. I came to a place where I believed that the love of humans was greater than the love of God and even questioned whether or not His love was real. Ultimately, my service to God, His Church, and anything associated with His love was affected. In the context of the church, as a pastor's wife, the pressure to succeed and the opportunity to fail were too great. The hamster wheel of conditional-love-based thinking that I was on was too fast. The only way out was to jump off the wheel. To leave everything. To leave everyone.

DARK PLACES

God, in His grace and sovereignty, would not let me go. He chased me. I was meant to be His. I was His child, bought with His blood, and He reminded me of that every day I ran from Him. It was during this time when I came to believe God's love was real, it was for me, and it was more filling than the love of any human. In our darkest places, the light of Jesus shines the brightest. That light was shown through His people too, as my husband and church family supported me and showed me compassion, grace,

and patience. And in the end, God was victorious through the process.

GOD'S REDEMPTIVE POWER

Through a process of renewal and restoration, God began to reveal to me that He wanted others to know His love in a great way too. God showed me that love is not earned—it is freely given. It must be accepted and believed. God's power is real and true—it is saving grace to be embraced. And with that revelation, He brought me to a Women's Ministry leadership retreat through the SBCV. The theme of the weekend was "Surrender." I felt I had already surrendered to God, but He spoke to me about the difference in being resigned and being surrendered. Being resigned is agreeing not to put up a fight. Being surrendered is passionate proactivity to accomplish what is needed. Through godly women in my life and the Holy Spirit, God has provided forgiveness, freedom, and motivation to "press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14, NIV).

If you are a pastor's wife struggling with your identity and church expectations, you are not alone. You may not be discouraged to the point of quitting, but you may be overwhelmed by the expectations on your life. Do not be isolated in your struggle. Know that there are others who lose sight of the hope that we have at times—but that does not change the truth of the hope that is promised through Jesus Christ. We can find Him when we seek His strength.





WHAT *Happens* When A Christian Leader Falls

*A personal testimony
by Dr. T. A. Powell
Assistant Professor
Liberty University
Online, School of
Divinity*



It was on Saturday morning, January 3, 2004, when I confessed to my dear wife, Betty, that I had committed adultery—a seven-month affair with one of her best friends. She fell to her knees in disbelief. It was as if I had reached inside her heart and ripped it out...the pain was almost unbearable. Life had reached its darkest day for me—it was truly the worst day of my life. Immediately, life had changed, and everything began to take a different direction for us as we tried to somehow deal with this dreadful situation I had caused.

For almost 26 years, I had been the senior pastor of a Tidewater, VA church. We loved our people, and most all of our friends and a lot of our family members were in some way connected to that ministry. On that same evening I called a special deacons meeting and confessed to them my affair. Most of them wept in disbelief. I told them that the next day I would go before my congregation and come clean with them also. I did and also resigned. The news spread like lightning throughout the city and surrounding areas. The guilt and shame was overwhelming for me. The thought crossed my mind that death would have been a welcomed event. I had disappointed and broken trust with so many people.

Within seven days of my confession, at the invitation of Dr. Johnny Hunt, Betty and I pulled into the parking lot of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, GA to enter the City of Refuge, a ministry for pastors and full-time Christian workers who have been burnt out, forced out, or have struggled with some addiction or immorality. For 17 months, Betty and I received intense counseling and encouragement, which started a new journey of trust, transparency, and vulnerability in our lives. In addition to that, the sweet people at First Woodstock loved on us and offered us grace, safety, and love like we had never experienced in our entire lives. We were loved unconditionally. It was during that time that my dear wife offered me unconditional grace, forgiveness, love, and renewed trust. Our marriage and our home environment slowly became truly a place of genuine love, openness, and transparency.

The above is only a thumbnail of my 12-year journey, and I share it openly because pastors and church leaders (as well as laymen) are struggling with addictions and sexual sins. The fallout is at epidemic levels. We hear about it almost weekly, and there is very little help offered for pastors and churches who are experiencing such adversities.



The devastation that happens to pastors, deacons, and Sunday School teachers who have fallen morally is felt by their family, friends, church, and community. No one is ever the same. The question is, “How can we prevent this from happening?” and “How can we be a part of restoring the one that fell and bringing defeat to the enemy?”

Carey Nieuwhof recently listed the following in his blog, *5 Signs I Might Be Headed for a Moral Failure* (careynieuwhof.com):

- 1. I've chosen isolation over community.** *Sin usually happens in secret. And the only way to keep secrets, well, is to cut yourself off from true community. Solitude is a gift from God. Isolation is a tool of the enemy.*
- 2. I've stopped confessing my sins.** *As a leader, I have to make sure that I continue to confess my sins before God daily. When I confess my sins, I need to not only look for the obvious, but for the cracks. For small sins that could become much bigger. For motives that aren't pure. For thoughts that run off in dangerous directions. Confession is designed to stop what sin starts.*
- 3. I'm not thinking of the consequences.** *When you sin, you desire the action but not the consequences. But sin always has consequences. Keeping the consequences in mind can be so, so healthy. I can't imagine having to explain to my wife, my kids, our elders, our staff, our team, and to the hundreds (maybe thousands) of others who trusted me, how I betrayed their trust. Thinking about the consequences of a sin is a great way to ultimately avoid committing a sin.*
- 4. I think the rules don't apply to me.** *Perhaps this is why leaders fall more frequently than others. Leaders who avoid accountability still eventually have to give account for their actions—when they get caught. Accountability and transparency are vital in leadership. And if you cultivate a great inner circle (point 1), you will be a far better leader day to day.*
- 5. I see failure as my best escape.** *The bottom line is this. If you're burning out, an affair or a rash, irresponsible decision is NOT the only way out. Nor is it even a good way out. There are many other healthier options.*

T. A. Powell asserted that the desperate need is to prevent moral failure: “We must create safe places with openness and accountability for pastors to share without condemnation and judgment.”

I am a blessed and grateful man who realizes that God has strategically placed people and circumstances in my journey to help me understand what biblical grace is all about. My mess has become my message. I never want to forget the pain and disillusionment that I caused my wife, my family, my church, and my friends; however, my past no longer defines me. My vision and desire are to see the entire body of Christ understand grace, spiritual freedom, and healthy living out of our identity in Jesus Christ as mature Christ followers.

RESOURCES

BOOKS:

Preventing Ministry Failure, by Michael T. Wilson and Brad Hoffmann

Proven Men: A Proven Path to Sexual Integrity, by Joel Hesch

Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No, by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend

The Cure: What if God Isn't Who You Think He Is and Neither Are You? by Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, and John Lynch

ORGANIZATIONS:

Truefaced (truefaced.com)

City of Refuge, a ministry of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, GA (fbcw.org/community/city-of-refuge)



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A BIG FIESTA IN HEAVEN

Congregations Working Together to Reach the Unreached

What happens when four congregations work together to reach an unreached population right here in Virginia?

Nuevo Amanecer Campus Church (Lynchburg), Iglesia Bautista Nueva Esperanza (North Chesterfield), Thomas Road Baptist Church (Lynchburg), and Kingsland Baptist Church (North Chesterfield) joined people and resources to reach an unreached Mexican indigenous population in Richmond.

The Mixtecos are an indigenous community originally from Mexico. They are considered an unreached people group even in their own country. Some time ago, Pastor Fernando Mangieri (Iglesia Bautista Conexión) shared with me that there were an estimated 3,000 Mixtecos living in the Richmond area and how difficult it was to reach them because their main language is neither English nor Spanish, but Mixteco. Pastor Fernando mentored a leader from that community, Odilon Mendoza, but he needed more hands.

God truly works in mysterious ways. I shared with Fernando that we had three leaders in our congregation (Nuevo Amanecer) who were from that area. I then shared with our congregation the great need and opportunity we had.

One of our Mixteco leaders began driving to Richmond every two weeks to join and support a Bible study of 15 Mixtecos. God also spoke to Daniela Ortega's heart about this mission opportunity. Daniela is from Colombia, is an optometry doctor, and is currently getting her master's degree in public health at Liberty University.

Daniela began organizing a medical fair in Richmond, for which we would need to send volunteers from Lynchburg.

The event had three main purposes:

- 1) Medical Service — Daniela recruited general doctors and nurses to do screenings for blood pressure, body mass index, optometry, cholesterol, and bone density;
- 2) Community Service — This group prepared a basketball tournament and food and recreation for the children;
- 3) Evangelism — This group met every Sunday to learn evangelism tools to reach the Mixtecos.

A group from Lynchburg traveled every week for three months to the neighborhoods where the Mixtecos live and invited them to the medical event. They also spread the information through radio and newspapers. These weekly visits helped the group from Lynchburg understand even more the great need among the Mixtecos.

Daniela shared, "They live in extreme poverty. Their average household has eight children living with only one income. The children go to school, which is where they have their most nutritional meals. We found a trailer where 20 people lived, and that was eye opening. These people need help urgently. Most of them have never visited a doctor because of lack of money."

Finally, on December 5, the efforts paid off. Brothers from Nueva Esperanza and Nuevo Amanecer were working as one church to welcome the Mixteco community. Kingsland Baptist Church opened its building for the event. The gym became a medical facility, the kitchen was busy all morning, and the other rooms were used for evangelism and children's lessons. Thomas Road Baptist Church provided transportation for 70 volunteers from Lynchburg to come to Richmond. The service team prepared food for 200, but amazingly, all 400 who attended from the community were fed. Many decisions were made for Christ! There was surely a big fiesta in heaven!

Pastor and coach Fernando Mangieri and lay church planter Odilon Mendoza (and his wife) are following up with those who attended, and a small group Bible study has begun. The group has grown so much that they are no longer able to meet in their current space. To God be the glory!



por Sergio Guardia

Pastor de Nuevo Amanecer, Lynchburg, VA

Español

¡Hubo un Fiestón en los Cielos!

Congregaciones trabajando unidas para alcanzar a los no alcanzados

¿Cuál es el resultado de que cuatro congregaciones trabajen juntas para alcanzar a los no alcanzados en Virginia?

Este fue el resultado cuando las congregaciones de Nuevo Amanecer Campus Church (Lynchburg), Iglesia Bautista Nueva Esperanza (North Chesterfield), Kingsland Baptist Church (North Chesterfield), y Thomas Road Baptist Church (Lynchburg) unieron sus recursos y su gente para alcanzar a la comunidad Mixteca, una comunidad indígena mexicana, y que ahora hay 3000 de ellos en Richmond.

Los Mixtecos son considerados como una comunidad no alcanzada. Hace un tiempo el pastor Fernando Mangieri compartió conmigo su deseo de alcanzar a los que ahora radican en Richmond. La primera lengua de ellos es el dialecto Mixteco, y esto crea barreras comunicacionales junto con otros desafíos. Fernando discipuló a Odilon Mendoza, un líder en la comunidad, para que sea el líder encargado de alcanzar a esta comunidad, pero estaban necesitando más ayuda.

Realmente Dios trabaja de maneras increíbles ¡Nuestra congregación tiene tres líderes en preparación que son de la comunidad Mixteca! Cuando compartí la necesidad con nuestra congregación Dios tocó el corazón de Daniela Ortega para que se una a

esta oportunidad misionera. Daniela es una doctora optometrista colombiana y en este momento está haciendo una Maestría en Salud Pública en Liberty University.

Uno de nuestros líderes Mixtecos comenzó a viajar cada dos semanas para apoyar al grupo pequeño que se hace en el barrio de esta comunidad. Daniela organizó una campaña médica para que sea llevada a cabo en Richmond. Necesitaríamos movilizar voluntarios desde Lynchburg.

El evento estaba dividido en tres áreas principales: 1) Servicio Médico: Daniela reclutó voluntarios y el evento tuvo medicina general, enfermeras, medida de la presión, del colesterol, volumen del cuerpo, densidad ósea y optometría. 2) Servicio a la Comunidad: Este grupo preparó un torneo de basquetbol, comida para todos los asistentes y recreación para los niños. 3) Evangelismo: Este grupo se reunió cada domingo para aprender a evangelizar con el camino romano, el método de los tres círculos y evangelismo general.

Un grupo de Lynchburg viajó cada semana por tres meses para visitar los barrios e invitar a los mixtecos al evento de Diciembre, también se invitó a través de la radio y los periódicos. Estas visitas semanales ayudaron al grupo de Lynchburg entender las necesidades de los Mixtecos. Daniela luego compartió lo siguiente: “Viven en pobreza extrema. Como promedio viven

8 niños en una casa sostenidos con un solo sueldo. Sus comidas principales eran provistas en las escuelas públicas donde asisten. Encontramos un tráiler donde vivían 20 personas ¡nos abrió los ojos! Esta gente necesita ayuda de manera urgente. Muchos de ellos nunca han ido al doctor porque no tienen el dinero.”

Finalmente, se pudo ver el resultado de todo el esfuerzo el 5 de Diciembre. Los hermanos de Nuevo Amanecer y Nueva Esperanza estaban trabajando como una sola iglesia para recibir a la comunidad Mixteca. La iglesia de Kingsland Baptist abrió sus edificios para el evento, y el gimnasio se convirtió en una unidad médica, la cocina estuvo trabajando toda la mañana, y los otros cuartos se convirtieron en lugar de reunión para los niños y para evangelismo. La iglesia Thomas Road Baptist proveyó los buses para transportar a los 70 voluntarios desde Lynchburg. El equipo de servicio había preparado comida para 200 personas ¡pero ese día pudieron alimentar a 400 personas que vinieron desde la comunidad Mixteca! Muchos pudieron oír el evangelio, y hubieron muchas decisiones de fe. ¡De seguro que se armó un fiestón en los cielos!

El Pastor Fernando Mangieri, junto con Odilon y su esposa están haciendo el seguimiento del evento y continúan con el estudio bíblico en Mixteco. Recientemente nos compartieron que el grupo ha crecido tanto. ¡A Dios sea la gloria!



MAN OF GOD Are You Ashamed?

There is a fierce wind blowing in our culture—a philosophical gust that goes against the Word of God and His children. Believers must tolerate, include, and accept any and everything regardless of what God says. Any violation of this squall, and you will be charged with being insensitive or racist. As pastors, depending on the depth of our own faith in Jesus Christ, this could be a scary time to proclaim the Gospel. It will take courage to stand as the darkness increases.

In Romans 1:16, the Apostle Paul states his status: “I am not ashamed of the gospel.” He knew the righteousness therein and was seeing its transforming power in his own life. Paul was convinced and confident. He goes on to say that the righteous shall live by faith. That’s you and me! As men of God who minister, we too should never be ashamed of the Gospel, but we can’t just declare

TAKE COURAGE

to stand as the darkness increases.

it, we must also wear it. The power of the Gospel provides a supernatural witness that only the Holy Spirit can produce in us

(Phil. 2:13). A glance at Paul’s faith in

action is captured in 2 Cor. 11:24-25: five times beaten with lashes, three times with rods, and once stoned because of the Gospel. Doesn’t sound like a man who was afraid or intimidated by man or the culture, does it? In essence, Paul’s life consisted of a commitment to proclaiming and living Christ with a humbled boldness that said, “I’m not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16, NASB).

From the front, are we shepherding as pastors who are unashamed of the Gospel? If not, have you considered why?

Editor’s Note:

This is a new, recurring feature for anyone in ministry. The goal of this section is to do what the very title suggests: Inspire. It is written by Milton Harding, someone who truly inspires and encourages everyone with whom he comes into contact. Milton has served on the staff of Centreville Baptist Church and now serves SBCV churches across the state of Virginia in the role of pastoral relations and encouragement.



Milton Harding

SUMMER + 2016

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Steps of Faith

ON MISSION TO WEST AFRICA

A closed door, a brand-new pastor, and a vision trip—each one of these, a step of faith. Yet each one, a step toward an amazing mission opportunity for an individual family and an entire church family.

Josiah Lutrull serves as worship leader at Nansemond River Baptist Church in Suffolk and is also a high school teacher. Josiah and his wife, Stephanie, have been appointed by the IMB as missionaries to West Africa. Along with their children, Liam and Cade, they will embark on their assignment in January 2016.

“It has been quite a process for us discerning God’s will,” says Josiah. “Stephanie and I met on a mission trip, so a desire for missions has always been part of our relationship.”

The Lutrulls actually received an IMB appointment a little over a year ago, but it was originally for Asia, not West Africa. “We went on the vision trip to Asia, came home, and just did not have a peace about going there,” explains Josiah. They shared this with IMB leadership and continued the appointment process for another location to be determined. “I had already sold my house and quit my job. They had filled my position by the time I figured out we were not going.” A year later, the Lutrulls received an appointment to West Africa.

During their time of waiting, Josiah and Stephanie were confused, having walked through the process but not feeling God’s leading to go to Asia. However, they now see it as His providential delay.

Nansemond River was without a lead pastor at the time. When it became clear that Josiah would not be going to the mission field right away, he was asked to serve on the Pastor Search Team. The team worked through its process, presented Ryan Brice to the church in June, and the

church voted unanimously to call him as its new lead pastor.

After learning of the Lutrulls’ new IMB appointment to West Africa, Pastor Ryan felt called to lead the church in a West Africa partnership.

His first day in the church office was July 6, 2015, and he and Josiah boarded a plane August 9. They were headed to West Africa to explore ways Nansemond River could partner with the Lutrells and others serving there.

What causes a pastor to take a mission trip to West Africa only five weeks into his pastoral tenure? For Pastor Ryan, it was only natural.

“I clearly communicated to the Pastor Search Team and to the church during the candidate process that missions was a passion of mine. God took my passion for missions and fused it with a church that was ready to discover what a missions partnership would look like. God provided the perfect opportunity for it all to come together since He was calling a couple [whom everyone loved] out of the church to the field.”

Nansemond River plans to send two teams in 2016 to West Africa. Their long-range goal is to work up to sending four to six teams a year by 2018.



RESOURCE
WEBSITE:
nansemondriver.com

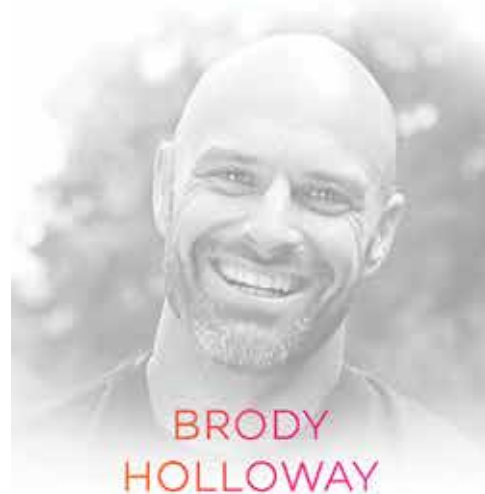
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**BRODY
HOLLOWAY**

Creative Thinking Increases Offering

Situated in Southwest Virginia's rural Carroll County, Freedom Baptist Church didn't let its small size interfere with giving to the *Vision Virginia* State Missions Offering. Led by Pastor Charles Bunn, they decided to discuss creative ways to increase their offering.

While first considering yard sales, bake sales, or special meals, "We decided to think of something we could do that would reach out a little farther and put some fun into this project," says Pastor Charles. "Knowing how popular cruise-ins are in this area, we decided to go that route."

"We also had concessions, gave away Bibles (provided by the Gideons), and played bluegrass music for entertainment. To provide fun for the children while their parents viewed the cars, trucks, motorcycles, and classic tractors, we gave out school supplies and utilized the playground. The concessions, along with a donation box, were the means of

fundraising. We found people do like to eat and donate to a good cause." People came from all around, enjoyed the show, and helped Freedom raise money for missions.

Freedom Baptist Church was prompted last year to starting giving to *Vision Virginia* after receiving promotional materials from the SBCV and reading *Proclaimer* stories of how the offering is used. "We wanted to be part of this work and decided to participate in this offering. We want to make a difference in our community, our state, and around the world for Christ," shares Pastor Charles. The members of Freedom were challenged to give above and beyond their tithe to support missions through *Vision Virginia*.

After not reaching their goal at the August 2015 car show, they decided to host another one in October. "I am pleased to say we surpassed our goal," says Pastor Charles, "and we give God all the praise."

Because of Freedom's participation in the *Vision Virginia* State Missions Offering, Pastor Charles testifies, "We have a renewed outlook on missions and giving...and are now also supporting a local mission center called Hope House." The mission of Hope House is to provide a Christ-based recovery program for the homeless and hurting to help them be healthy, happy, productive, and self-sufficient.

"We feel that starting [the car shows] has also brought a witness to our rural community," says Pastor Charles. "There is joy in serving the Lord. We were given many opportunities to speak with people and to share the message of God with them."

Will you challenge your church to participate in the *Vision Virginia* State Missions Offering? It may be the catalyst the Lord uses to inspire your church to be more involved in missions!





visionvirginia

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Sharing the Love of Jesus with Children from Appalachia

Can a backpack lead someone to faith in Jesus Christ? Yes. As a result of the Christmas Backpacks for Appalachia mission project last year, we are aware of over 700 people who invited Christ into their lives. Seeds were planted in many others' lives too. SBC of Virginia (SBCV) churches were a vital part of these people hearing the Gospel and receiving Christ.

At a birthday party for Jesus outside of Harrogate, TN, Christmas backpacks were distributed, and the children ran back to their seats to open their bags and examine the contents. One young boy, upon opening his backpack, pulled out a gift and ran across the room with it, screaming at the top of his lungs and crying, "Daddy, there is a God! Daddy, there is a God!" over and over again.

Embarrassed, the father went up to the event's host and explained, "I am a construction worker and have been unemployed for two years. I have been unable to find any steady employment of any kind to support my family. Last week, my son and I were buying groceries at Wal-Mart, and he came over to the buggy carrying a game that he wanted for Christmas. I explained to him that this year there would be no Christmas gifts at our house since I was barely

able to feed him and his sisters." He went on to explain that his son had cried and said, "But all I want is this game, Daddy. Please!" The man shared, "I told him to put the game back on the shelf and to pray, and if there was a God, then perhaps He would send him the game, but Daddy could not afford it." With tears running down his face, the man said, "There is a God." The little boy received the exact game he had prayed for God to give him. The father did not respond to the Gospel message that evening, but the seed was sown in his heart and definitely in that little boy's heart.

Only by God's hand can a mother in Virginia take her child shopping to fill up a backpack and have that

particular backpack, after all of the handling, shipping, and distribution, end up in the hands of a little boy in direct answer to his prayers.

Through the generosity of SBCV churches, 1,500 backpacks were collected at our 2015 Annual Homecoming and shipped to Kentucky in time for Christmas. Thank you! Thank you on behalf of the many children who had smiles on their faces Christmas morning and the many children and parents who will come to know Jesus because you showed Christ's love by packing a backpack.

We will be collecting backpacks again in 2016. Start planning now so your church can share Christ's love with the children of Appalachia.

**“
Daddy, there
is a God!
”**

SBCV churches provided backpacks for nearly 1,500 impoverished children. They were all delivered by Christmas.



Watch the video at:
sbcv.org/backpacks



LITHUANIA VISION TRIP

Pastors Embrace a Missions Connection Opportunity

When Pastor Brent Hobbs of New Song Fellowship in Virginia Beach learned of the opportunity to join an SBC

of Virginia vision trip to Lithuania, his heart was stirred. He had attended an SBCV Pastor Fellowship luncheon at River Oak Church in Chesapeake, where the guest speaker was Milton Magalhaes, IMB missionary to Lithuania. Milton made a passionate plea to the pastors in attendance, “Please come to Lithuania and help us reach people with the Gospel.”

Almost a year earlier, SBCV Executive Director Brian Autry and Eddie Urbine, CFO and director of Ministry Support, had taken an exploration trip to Lithuania. It was out of that trip that SBCV’s partnership with Lithuania was birthed.

“As I listened, I felt drawn,” recalls Pastor Brent. “As Milton explained what he wanted churches to come and do in Lithuania, I thought, ‘This is something

we can do!’ So many of the other mission connection opportunities I had heard about in the past involved commitments that I was hesitant for our smaller church to make.”

“I was amazed how much the church in Lithuania reflects the early church.”

The October 7–14 vision trip included Brent Hobbs and three other SBCV pastors: Micah Voight, Western Branch Baptist Church in Suffolk; Paul Martin, Fairview Heights Baptist Church in Portsmouth; and Pat Fiordelise, Kingsland Baptist Church in North Chesterfield. Voight and Martin had

heard about the vision trip at the very same luncheon as Hobbs.

Pastor Micah shares, “I was amazed how much the church in Lithuania reflects the early church. The church there is full of new Christians with very little in the way of formal training.” Lithuania is less than 1% evangelical Christians. There is a great need to equip leaders in the churches since many of them are new converts. “We are working on plans to see how our church might be involved in God’s work in Lithuania in the future,” says Pastor Micah.



CHANGING HEARTS

HELP IN A DAMAGED NEPALI VILLAGE

by Casey Watson, writer for Baptist Global Response

A young woman in a bright orange sweater peered intently at four American Christians while her tiny son squirmed on her hip. Armed with shovels and crowbars and covered in dirt, the foreigners demolished her old, Nepali village school, pounding its cement walls into pieces. A 7.8-magnitude earthquake had damaged the structure in April, and it needed to come down so another could take its place.

But why did Americans fly halfway across the world to do the work?

Intrigued, the Nepali woman couldn't stop watching. Virginia volunteers Kathryn and Michael Tolliver say she kept dropping by, carrying her baby and asking questions about the team. She wasn't the only villager to express interest.

"They're just real curious and now they see Christians in a little bit different light, I think," Kathryn says.

During the first two weeks in October, the Tollivers, members of The Heights Baptist Church in Colonial Heights, VA, traveled to a

small village in Nepal with two other members of their church. SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief had adopted this village and committed to help it recover. With logistical help from Baptist Global Response, SBCV had been sending teams to the community for about five months to teach math, science, and English and to perform Disaster Relief work.

As volunteers flew in and out, life for Christians in the Nepali community started to change. Only a few believers had lived there before. While their numbers

were few, the Tollivers say local believers possessed a beautifully strong faith. They had suffered persecution before the quake. They told volunteers their neighbors had threatened them, and once, villagers kidnapped



SBCV Disaster Relief plans to continue sending teams to Nepal until the quake's first anniversary in April and then will turn any further efforts over to individual American churches. Before that time, the SBC of Virginia will help tear down more damaged buildings, rebuild houses, conduct English as a Second Language courses, and, hopefully, reconstruct the school.



and questioned their pastor.

But when disaster struck, God gave these Christians an unprecedented chance to show love, compassion, and forgiveness. They teamed up with the Baptists from Virginia to help the community rebuild. By the time the Tollivers arrived in Petku, the persecutors' hearts had begun to change.

"We were very welcome," Kathryn says. "Even the [school] security guys and the older men, by the end there, were smiling and welcoming and gracious. Disaster Relief really opens hearts and minds. ... It's such an opportunity. God really works in these times, and it was so obvious."

The Lord's touch was, in fact, so evident that the young mother who kept visiting the team eventually accepted prayer from one volunteer.

Director of SBCV Disaster Relief Jack Noble says this warm response resulted, in part, from the volunteers' willingness to listen to villagers' needs.

"The community accepted [the volunteers] quickly, and it enjoyed them being in the community because they did the things the community wanted done," he says. The volunteers put aside their own relief priorities to work on the village's favored projects.

SBCV Disaster Relief plans to continue sending teams to Nepal until the quake's first anniversary in April and then will turn any further efforts over to individual American churches. Before that time, Noble says, the SBC of Virginia will help tear down more damaged buildings, rebuild houses, conduct English as a Second Language courses and, hopefully, reconstruct the school. Noble encourages those interested to volunteer their time and efforts to helping the Nepalese. He also suggests believers give toward relief efforts in Nepal through their local churches.

RESOURCE

WEBSITE:

sbcv.org/nepal

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

disasterrelief@sbcv.org

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sbcv.org/familyretreat

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.

PRAYER for Church Planters

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

At the 2015 SBC of Virginia Annual Homecoming, we focused often on the Great Commission:

“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)

Dr. Brian Autry, our executive director, reminded us that “the Great Commission is **not a small suggestion**, but a **Great Commission**.” Unfortunately, in the day in which we live, for many in the body of Christ, it has become not just a small suggestion but a “**Great Omission**”! We must not forget what Christ commanded us to do. He has given us our marching orders, and they are very clear: “make disciples”! It is in obedience to this command that the two church planting

families below are faithfully following God’s call on their lives and making disciples and planting churches.

Would you, your church, community group, Student Ministry, or Senior Adult Ministry adopt one of these church planter families and **fervently pray** for them? Or, better yet, would you adopt them as your missionaries and partner with them in their vital but difficult ministry?



CHURCH PLANTER
The City Church

MEETING AT
Fairview Heights Baptist Church
4704 Deep Creek Blvd.
Portsmouth, VA 23702

BIRTHDAYS: Louie (December 18), Shenel (January 31)

PRAYER NEEDS:

Pray for men and women to join our team and help us reach our community for Christ.

Pray for parters in the Gospel to intercede on our behalf that we might have an effective ministry built on fervent prayer.

Pray for volunteers and people to participate and help us with our outreach efforts.

HERE’S HOW YOU CAN HELP! (needs)

- Pray
- Become a new ministry partner through financial giving
- Assist with worship equipment needs (wireless microphones, keyboards, drums, and sound equipment)



CHURCH PLANTER
Sojourn Church

MEETING AT
251 Parkway Lane South
Floyd, VA 24091

BIRTHDAYS: Isaac (August 4), Kate (February 14)

PRAYER NEEDS:

Pray that we, as a body, would be bold and loving in proclaiming the Gospel.

A new system for overseeing church outreach is being put in place. Pray that we would be faithful and that the Lord would bless and use this process to reach the lost.

HERE’S HOW YOU CAN HELP! (needs)

- For our worship gatherings, we need a projector and an iPad for use with our sound system and musical equipment.
- We need a small, covered trailer to use for our local outreach ministry and for transporting musical and sound equipment.

GOSPEL TRAVELS FROM VIRGINIA TO VIETNAM

by Marie Curtis, writer for the International Mission Board
Reprinted with permission.

As the sun set in Fredericksburg, Virginia, it rose in Vietnam, heralding another day. The jet lag was wearing off for Jerry and Mary Logan, and they were ready to explore the unknown territory of Ho Chi Minh City with their friends, Chum and Coi Truong.

Since fleeing Vietnam as refugees in 1979, the Truongs have made numerous trips back, but the trip in July 2015 was different. Not only were their American friends joining them, but this was their first time to return as believers in Jesus Christ.

Before leaving on the trip, Chum said he didn't know how his family would react to the news that he and Coi had become Christians. He said it might take some time for them to consider the Gospel, but the uncertainty didn't stop him from speaking boldly to family members and neighbors in two villages.

Many years ago, Jerry and Mary Logan reached out to Chum and Coi Truong when they came to the US as refugees from Vietnam. The Truongs eventually gave their hearts to the Lord, and now they want the Logans to tell others in Vietnam the Good News of Jesus Christ. Will the Logans go to Vietnam despite their age? Will they take that step of faith and share the Gospel in a communist country where they will not know anyone except the Truongs? What would you do?



Watch the video at:
sbcv.org/vietnam



“I want you to know that I have read the Bible and I believe that it is true,” Chum told family who gathered to hear him. “I know that there is only one way to heaven and that’s through Jesus.”

For the Logans, listening to Chum and Coi share their newfound faith with their family in Vietnam was an answer to many prayers.

THE BEGINNING OF FRIENDSHIP

Though they recently went to Vietnam, Mary points out that this journey really began 35 years ago when her church helped the

When someone says that they are good friends, Coi is quick to correct, “We are best friends.”

For many years, Mary assumed that Coi and Chum were believers because they often came to church. But when Coi said they weren’t Christians, Mary became burdened for her friends.

“From then on, my goal was to reach out to my friend and her husband with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ,” Mary said.

So she started praying, asking God to do something great for His Kingdom and let



Mary Logan was getting her hair done when Coi Truong said that she was still Buddhist. “From then on, my goal was to reach out to my friend and her husband with the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ,” Mary says. (Photo © 2015 IMB / Meg Rushing)

Truongs, who were refugees, relocate to the United States..

“That’s when Coi, Chum, and I became friends,” Mary said. “Our children were close to the same age and they were able to play together. Coi would come to my house and make egg rolls, which we loved. We just developed a great relationship.”

When Coi opened a beauty salon, Mary started going regularly. To Mary, this was one more way to stay involved in Coi’s life, and their friendship grew. Today they enjoy the easy kind of relationship where Coi can pick the onions off of Mary’s salad or tease her because she doesn’t like hairspray.

her be a part of it. That’s exactly what He chose to do.

A NEW CHURCH

Mary read a couple of books that encouraged her—one was *Radical* by IMB President David Platt. Wanting to best know how to witness in the Vietnamese community of Fredericksburg, she called IMB.

Minh Ha Nguyen, a manager in IMB’s research department, suggested Mary start a Bible study group among Vietnamese in a home—which was proving to be an effective way to multiply the Gospel among unreached people



in the US. When Mary asked Coi if she would be interested in studying the Bible, she immediately agreed, and they made plans to meet weekly in Coi’s home.

“About that time, some friends walked in that she knew who were Christians—other Vietnamese friends,” Mary explained. “I asked [them] if they would like to join our group if we started a Bible study, and they agreed.”

So the group began with the Logans and two Vietnamese couples. In time, it grew as Coi and Chum invited their friends. Vietnamese teenagers who were Christians interpreted Bible stories told by Jerry and Mary.

“Our hearts knew this was God’s will and that He would accomplish His purposes through our obedience. We had no idea what to do or how to do it but trusted God to do through us what we could not do on our own,” Mary said.

Both Truongs were interested in reading the Bible but were hesitant to make a decision to surrender to Christ. The faithful witness of friends led Coi to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior in March 2014.

“She was just a brand-new creature in Christ. She wanted to share her faith, she was so bold, and she would just tell people,” recalled Mary.

Chum took longer to consider the Gospel, though he would stay up at night reading



The Vietnamese house church that Mary Logan started in Fredericksburg meets at Chum and Coi Truong's house. Regular attendees include Christians and non-believers. (Photo © 2015 IMB / Meg Rushing)

through the books of the Bible. He said that he wanted to know for sure that it was truth, a fact he could no longer deny by February 2015. He had read the Bible for himself, studied the Bible in a group where he could discuss it in Vietnamese, and spent time with Christian friends. God used every encounter to reveal Himself to Chum, who said that now he is changed and knows that Jesus is the only way to heaven.

THE GOSPEL REACHES VIETNAM

Soon after making their decisions to follow Christ, Coi and Chum began to share with family and friends in Vietnam. Over a video

cell phone call after Bible study one night, Coi led her brother to the Lord, repeating what Mary encouraged her to say. Already they witnessed the Gospel reaching their home country.

As summer 2015 approached, Chum and Coi invited the Logans to travel with them to Vietnam. Jerry and Mary immediately encouraged them to make plans to share their faith with family and agreed they would be a part of that.

Mary found clips from the *Jesus* film in Vietnamese that she downloaded to a computer. They practiced sharing the Gospel and coached Chum and Coi in how to share their testimonies. For them, this trip was about watching God move in the lives of their friends and spread His Word to unreached peoples of Southeast Asia.

For Mary, this was another answer to her continued prayer for God to do something great in His Kingdom.

"If we pray fervently and consistently for God to give us direction that many might come to know Him through us, He will make our path clear," said Mary. "He shows His power as we step into the unknown with only faith to uphold us. We then experience the working of the Holy Spirit in us. To God be the glory!"

For more information, contact IMB, International Community Church in Richmond, Virginia, or visit peoplegroups.info.

Marie Curtis is a writer and editor for IMB, who traveled with the Logans to Vietnam.



In his home village in Vietnam, Chum Truong told his family and neighbors, "I have read the Bible and I want you to know I believe it is true." Most people in the village cling to their belief in ancestor worship. (Photo © 2015 IMB / Marie Curtis)



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

MARCH

Hikers' Supplies for Trail Days

APRIL

Bedding for Students in Guam

MAY

Military Appreciation Month

JUNE – JULY

Shoes for Barnabas Global Link

AUGUST

College Connection and Move-In Day

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER

Christmas in Appalachia Backpacks

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER

Bibles for Homeless Women

Why not involve your church in Mission Projects this year?

Learn more & get involved at:
sbcv.org/missionprojects



Daniel Ethridge, worship pastor



Dalton Stoltz, campus pastor



Spencer Helm, student pastor

Liberty Is Alive!

A new chapter is being written in the story of Liberty Baptist Church in Hampton, where “It’s Not Just Church, It’s Life.” Pastor Grant Ethridge shares that “It’s Life” is more than attending church on Sunday morning—it’s about being a devoted follower of Christ every day and carrying the light of Jesus everywhere you go. At Liberty, God is at work in the church and in individual lives. According to Pastor Grant, the church has a vision of “wrapping their arms around Hampton Rounds” through multi-site locations. Unlike church plants, these multi-sites are extensions of the main campus, each with a campus pastor, a praise band, and a simulcast of Pastor Grant’s message.

It’s been a journey to get to this point, beginning with the congregation’s move 15 years ago to Big Bethel Rd. and what is now known as the Hampton campus. About two years ago, Liberty opened up its first multi-site location—the Harbour View campus—

which is thriving in that community. Liberty has recently launched its newest location, the Greenbrier campus in Chesapeake. Liberty Baptist Church is one church in three locations with the simple mission of “Changing Lives, Communities, and the World.”

The Greenbrier campus opened on October 4, 2015 with a full staff and a core group of 150 members from the Hampton and Harbour View campuses. Despite bad weather from a large storm that weekend, there were 997 in attendance across two services. Since then, they have averaged 640 in attendance each Sunday and an amazing 400 in Connect Groups (small groups that meet in homes).

Liberty Greenbrier’s campus pastor, Dalton Stoltz, shared the following stories of changed lives, which can’t be seen by numbers.

First, there is Lindsey, a single mom who worked for the construction company that built the Greenbrier facility. She was drawn to the Lord through the staff of Liberty Greenbrier and is

presently being discipled by one of the staff members.

Next is Chris, whose wife begged him to come to church on numerous occasions, but he found ways to avoid going or created excuses why he didn’t like the church they had just attended. Through an invitation from his wife’s sister, Chris’ family attended Liberty Hampton and liked it. His excuse for not returning, however, was the 40-minute drive. That excuse disappeared when Liberty Greenbrier opened up a block from his home. Chris came to know the Lord through the prayers of his wife and the outreach ministry of Liberty Greenbrier.

Then there is Rod, a longtime member of another church, who came to the opening of Liberty Greenbrier and joined a Connect Group. This changed his life. He shares, “At Liberty, I know people on a more personal level primarily because of the Connect Group. Our multi-generational Connect Group is incredible. Different life experiences and wisdom acquired



“...these multi-sites are extensions of the main campus, each with a pastor, a praise band, and a simulcast of Pastor Grant’s message.”

through long life make for interesting and positive group dynamics.”

There are many more stories like that. “It’s Life” is not just about what has happened in the past but also the stories yet to be told. Looking ahead, there are more chapters to be written in Liberty’s story. Liberty may be one church in three locations, but every campus’ mission is still the same: “Changing Lives, Communities, and the World.” Liberty is alive!



RESOURCE

WEBSITE: libertylive.com

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8:15 AM - 2:30 PM

SWIFT CREEK
BAPTIST CHURCH
MIDLOTHIAN

sbcv.org/kidz

3 Churches 1 Mission

In the small Ecuadorian village of Daular, farmer Eduardo Ludena and his wife, Luisa Sotonayor, have faithfully sown the seeds of the Gospel for years through the village's children's mission. Due to a loss of support, the mission was no longer able to fund a Bible teacher for the children. Eduardo and Luisa began praying that God would send a teacher to help them reach the boys and girls for Christ.

In Manassas, VA, three churches bonded with one mission. Although each church has a different primary ethnicity, they united around a singular calling to take the Gospel to Ecuador. The congregation of Emmanuel Baptist Church is

primarily Anglo; Iglesia Bautista Hispana Emanuel, primarily Hispanic; and Called by Jesus Baptist Church, primarily Korean.

God prompted Dr. Sun Young Chung, pastor of Called by Jesus, to approach Pastor Kleber Jimenez of Iglesia Emanuel about the possibility of partnering to go on mission to Jimenez's hometown in Ecuador. With the help of Emmanuel's education pastor, Dave Melander, the three churches began to pray together, fund the trip together, and gather a team together (three from Emmanuel, three from Iglesia Emanuel, and four from Called by Jesus). According to Dr. Chung, Korean churches in the Manassas area were in awe of how the three

churches came together for this partnership.

While in country, the team worked with Love of Christ Baptist Church in Guayaquil. God empowered them to preach and to share a pictorial Gospel tract to present the message of Jesus. They went door to door and shared in school assemblies, where the school directors welcomed them. One couple from Called by Jesus felt intimidated because they could not speak Spanish—but through the pictorial Gospel tract, they were able to see children come to faith in Jesus.

“One of the most exciting moments of my life,” shares Pastor Dave from Emmanuel, “was to see children who could not speak my language come to Christ.”

While there, the team saw 40 Ecuadorians accept the Gospel message. God also used the team to encourage the Ecuadorian

Ecuadorian girls praying



Mrs. Jimenez sharing the Gospel.



churches, which often feel alone in a culture where Catholicism is predominant. The believers in Ecuador were amazed that this group from Manassas would come to such a poor place to show them love and to share the Gospel.

The three-church team also made their way to the village of Daular (about an hour from Guayaquil), where they met Eduardo and Luisa. God answered the prayers of this couple by sending Pastor Kleber from Iglesia Emanuel to teach the boys and girls at the mission about Jesus' love for them. Before leaving, the team promised to send back the necessary financial support for a Bible teacher to minister at the children's mission.

The results of the trip did not end when the team returned home. God is continuing to work:

The three churches have a rekindled excitement for missions and evangelism.

God has drawn the churches into a mission partnership and to be, as Dr. Chung says, "one family in Christ," desiring others to join them.

The churches continue to support the mission work in the little village of Daular.

They plan to return to Ecuador with a larger team in May of 2016.

God has given them a vision to carry the Gospel to all 14 countries represented in Iglesia Bautista Hispana Emanuel.

RESOURCE

For more information on this partnership for Ecuador, contact Dr. Sun Young Chung:

EMAIL: sychunglee@yahoo.com.

Preparing to Respond

The weather radio went off numerous times throughout the day that flooding was eminent from Bristol to Virginia Beach. Churches around Virginia prepared to respond to their communities and host Disaster Relief volunteers from across the state. But the volunteers would have to come from some other states, as the weather forecasters were projecting flooding across the Commonwealth. SBC of Virginia churches were ready and eager to respond. The churches spent time getting supplies, lining up volunteers, and obtaining permission to use buildings. The threat of flood waters was significant across the state, and churches were planning accordingly.

As the different weather systems collided, the storm reached historic levels just

a few hundred miles away in South Carolina. The devastation that had threatened Virginia landed just south of us. It was a chance for churches across Virginia to take a short breath.

They quickly turned their minds, though, to the needs in South Carolina. Over 170 Virginia-trained volunteers responded in those first few days after the storm. Of those, 100 were Liberty University students who had received SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief training.

The teams deployed to do some of the hardest crisis work, Flood Recovery. Flood Recovery includes removing every item from the house; deconstructing sheet rock, cabinets, and flooring; washing everything in sight; and sanitizing anything touched by water. It is hard, smelly work. Liberty Baptist Church (Hampton) volunteer Dayna Austin speaking for one of the



teams said, “We all agreed that we would never do this work for money. No one could pay us enough, but we would do it to glorify Christ and help someone get to know Him.”

And helping someone get to know Him is exactly what they did. While the volunteers worked on a house in Hemingway, a young man named Chris watched intently from the sidelines. Conversations slowly began, and it wasn’t long before Chris accepted Jesus’ offer of a clean heart. His cousin

followed suit just a little while later. Another team from Virginia who served near Charleston had the honor of sharing with a lady who also accepted a clean heart.

Flood Recovery is not for the weak. There is just something about people who will pull up and out wet, moldy drywall, carpet, insulation, and furniture for free, expecting God to do great things and clean hearts along the way.

SBC of Virginia churches had prepared for the worst at home but responded to the worst in South Carolina. Through our Southern Baptist partnership at work, God changed lives.

RESOURCE

EMAIL:

disasterrelief@sbcv.org

WEBSITE:

sbcv.org/dr

Mark your calendars for these **TRAINING EVENTS!**

MARCH 5, 2016
Wayne Hills Baptist Church, WAYNESBORO

MARCH 11-12, 2016
Cornerstone Baptist Church, FREDERICKSBURG

APRIL 8-9, 2016
Preston Oaks Baptist Church, ROANOKE

APRIL 22-23, 2016
Liberty Baptist Church, HAMPTON

MAY 14, 2016
Sky View Missionary Baptist Church, FANCY GAP

get the latest information at **sbcv.org/dr**



Calendar

view the online calendar at sbcv.org/calendar

FEBRUARY

Mission Project:

Church Plant Equipment for Lithuania (January/February)

- 10 Church Planter Interviews
- 20 Women's Ministry Fit 2 Lead Conference (Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen)
- 23 Prayer Summit (River Oak Church, Chesapeake)
- 26-27 PLANT Part B

MARCH

Mission Projects:

Hikers' Supplies for Trail Days

Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

- 5 SBCV Kidz Leader Conference and Super VBS Clinic (Swift Creek BC, Midlothian)
- 6-12 Daytona Bike Giveaway
- 6-13 Annie Armstrong Week of Prayer for North America
- 11-12 Mega DR Training (Liberty BC, Hampton)
- 11-12 Church Planter Network – Statewide
- 17 Ministers of Discipleship & Education Roundtable
- 17 Sub-Saharan Africa Affinity Meeting
- 27 **Easter**

APRIL

Mission Project:

Bedding for Students in Guam

- 8-9 Mega DR Training (Preston Oaks BC, Roanoke)
- 12 Ministry Assistants Appreciation Luncheon
- 19 Empowered Conference (Spotswood BC, Fredericksburg)
- 26 Europe Affinity Meeting
- 28 Church Planter Network – Regional
- 29-30 Women's Ministry Conference, **Living Proof Live** with Beth Moore (Norfolk)

MAY

Mission Project:

Military Appreciation Month

- 2-4 Executive Board Meeting
- 6-7 PLANT Part A
- 10 Pastors of Smaller Congregations Summit
- 14 Ready Church and Disaster Relief Training (Sky View Missionary BC, Fancy Gap)
- 14 Bible Drill
- 17 NAME (Northern Africa Middle East) Affinity Meeting
- 20-21 Bi-vocational Pastors' Roundtable
- 21 Deaf Affinity Leadership Conference
- 24 Next Level Church Roundtable
- 25 Church Planter Interviews
- 26 Intern Training (Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen)



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

Please partner with other SBC of Virginia churches as we come together and pray for these missionaries.

Download the booklet & other resources at
sbcv.org/52sundays



Don't miss out on upcoming events!

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from the **EDITOR**

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Brandon



Prayer and Passion

“PRAY FOR ME. I’M A CHRISTIAN.”

Most of us wouldn’t think twice if we heard that request in our day-to-day lives. And we are probably never afraid to ask someone to pray for us either in person or even on Facebook. But the woman who whispered that urgent request to Dr. Brian Autry at a refugee center in Greece was taking a huge risk. After weeks on the “refugee road” from the Middle East, she asked for prayer and stated her belief in Jesus to a stranger in the midst of hundreds of Muslim refugees. She could have asked for many things—clothing, food, or money—but she asked for prayer.

I’ve been thinking a lot about prayer and passion. Should we have one without the other? Can we really make a difference in the world without both? The answer is an emphatic *no*! We need both.

Passion without prayer is of no value. I remember Dr. Jerry Falwell Sr. telling us as Liberty University students that we would never do anything of eternal significance without prayer. But we also need passion for a world that is lost and literally searching in the dark for hope. My mind goes back to those thousands of refugees who—if

“
...THE WOMAN WHO
WHISPERED THAT
URGENT REQUEST TO
DR. BRIAN AUTRY AT
A REFUGEE CENTER
IN GREECE WAS
TAKING A HUGE RISK.
”

they get through the checkpoint at the Greece-Macedonian border—have more than a mile to walk in the blackness of night. Talk about searching in the dark for hope of a new life! Where is our passion to reach them? Where is our passion to reach those around us every day who are just as lost and without hope?

We all need encouragement in this area, and I’m so thankful that the SBC of Virginia is emphasizing both the how-to’s and the resources for an effective prayer ministry. One such resource is the Prayer Summit coming up at River Oak Church in Chesapeake on February 23. Both Bill





Elliff and Byron Paulus will challenge us in personal, regular prayer and in developing a prayer strategy.

The other resource that can help your entire church is *52 Sundays*. This one little book allows you to share both an engaging story from the mission field and a timely devotion to any size group. Each week lists a different person and mission field for which to pray.

At the very end of a short interview with a refugee, I asked if there was anything else he wanted to add. He asked me to relay this very simple message to you, the churches of the SBC of Virginia: “Pray for us.” I am. I pray you will.

RESOURCE

PRAYER SUMMIT AT RIVER OAK

see information on page 4

52 SUNDAYS

sbcv.org/52sundays





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President, Ethics & Religious
Liberty Commission



JIMMY SCROGGINS
Lead Pastor, Family Church, West
Palm Beach, Florida

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

including

FREE LUNCH

REGISTRATION

9:00 AM

April 19, 2016

Spotswood Baptist Church
Fredericksburg

sbcv.org/empoweredconference