



Proclaimer

SBC
OF VIRGINIA

a publication of the SBC of Virginia

visionvirginia

Where Is the Church?

The Fight Against Human Trafficking

It's That Simple!

A Simple Sign
Was All It Took

What About My People?

Laying Down
Your Life for Others

Reaching the Persians in Virginia

Red Bag Special

A Unique Outreach Strategy

Feb Mar Apr 2014



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The Ultimate Champion!

Like many 11-year-old boys, my son is an avid sports fan. He can talk about popular athletes with the same ease as he does his own basketball teammates. The modern-day sports fan has plenty to enjoy. In February, we have the Super Bowl. The month to follow, we have college basketball's March Madness. Every day, we have multiple all-day sports channels proclaiming the greatest plays of the week, the latest stats, and promoting the current superstar. When a city's or a college's sports team wins the big game, fans fill the streets proclaiming the victory.

Of course, followers of Jesus Christ have a victory to proclaim and a Champion to celebrate that is of eternal significance. Most of us would be hard-pressed to recall from memory who won the World Series in 1972. Sports champions come and go. Yet the resurrection of Jesus Christ is forever and fundamentally life changing.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (NKJV).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that Christ is preeminent. No one and nothing can challenge Him as the ultimate Champion who has defeated sin and death. The resurrection of Christ means that Christianity has power. Read the New Testament Book of Acts, and you will see this power displayed. The resurrection of Christ means that Christians have a purpose. We are called to make disciples and plant churches because Jesus is risen.

Dr. Albert Mohler recalled that the French positivist philosopher Auguste Comte once told Thomas Carlyle that he planned to start a new religion to replace Christianity. "Very good," replied Carlyle. "All you have to do is be crucified, rise the third day, and get the world to believe you are still alive. Then your new religion will have a chance." No one and nothing compares to our risen and living Lord Jesus Christ. It's time for His churches to fill the streets proclaiming the victory! By the way, the Oakland A's won the World Series in 1972, but it doesn't really matter.

[Note: Because of SBC of Virginia churches working together and giving through the Cooperative Program and the Vision Virginia State Missions Offering, over 70 church plants will proclaim the Gospel this Sunday, thousands of missionaries are serving across the globe, and thousands of ministers of the Gospel are being equipped!]



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SBC OF VIRGINIA

Brian Autry
bautry@sbcv.org
facebook.com/brian.autry.70
@brianautry

Proclaimer

TELLING ABOUT THE AMAZING THINGS GOD IS DOING THROUGH HIS CHURCH

PUBLISHER Dr. Brian Autry
SBC of Virginia
bautry@sbcv.org

EDITOR Brandon Pickett
Innovative Faith Resources
bpickett@sbcv.org

COPY EDITOR Christina Garland
SBC of Virginia
cgarland@sbcv.org

GRAPHIC DESIGNER Patti Spencer
Innovative Faith Resources
pspencer@sbcv.org

MEDIA DIRECTOR Ishmael LaBiosa
Innovative Faith Resources
ish@innovativefaith.org

WRITERS

RANDY ALDRIDGE	SERGIO GUARDIA
SHAWN AMES	GARY HORTON
BRIAN AUTRY	RON KIDD
TAMMY BENNETT	JACK NOBLE
LARRY BLACK	BRANDON PICKETT
DAVID BOUNDS	SUE SAWYER
STEVE BRADSHAW	DARRELL WEBB

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Planting a church can be a long and lonely journey. Set your course to include a refreshing stop at a statewide CPN. There, you'll find fellow travelers on the same journey.

UPCOMING STATEWIDE CPNS:

May 9
August 14
October 23

sbcv.org/planting



THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION OF YOUR LIFE

"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 DESTINY FOR ALL 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!

First, you must realize you are a sinner and that you are condemned to death (an eternal separation from God in a place called hell). *Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death..."*

But God loved you so much that he gave His only Son to die for you, to take your place and pay your sin debt. *Romans 6:23, "but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord."*

We can see what's required for salvation in Romans 10:9, "that 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."

Basically, it's as simple 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. Remember, it's God who does the saving—not your good works, not your family pedigree, and not your church. Believe and you will be saved.

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14-15

Laying Your Life Down for Others

There are nearly 120,000 Iranians in Northern Virginia who need to know the Lord. God wants us to reach them. One man's response, with fear and trembling coupled with excitement was, "Here I am, use me, let your will be done."

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COVER LOOK

This cover features Grove Avenue Baptist's ministry fight against human trafficking. It was created by Innovative Faith Resources for the SBC of Virginia. For information on Innovative Faith Resources, email ifr@innovativefaith.org.



SBCV Internships

Embracing the Challenges and Enjoying the Benefits

There are challenges and benefits of being engaged in a Gospel partnership. The Apostle Paul outlines them in the first chapter of Philippians. He was bearing the challenge of the partnership by enduring imprisonment. The Philippians were bearing the challenge by sending material support through their emissary, Epaphroditus (who nearly lost his life due to illness in the process). The challenges are often easier to see and quantify. We usually quantify the challenges in terms of time, dollars, and risk. The benefits are somewhat more difficult to quantify but are no less real. Paul associates thanksgiving, confidence in Christ, sanctification, Gospel advancement, and affliction-proof joy as some of the benefits of engaging in Gospel partnerships.

One area in which the Gospel partnership among SBCV churches manifests itself is SBCV interns. Each year, the churches of the SBCV collect funds for state missions, called the *Vision Virginia* State Missions Offering. A portion of these offerings assists approximately 20 churches in providing 10-week paid internships for college students who are seeking a ministry vocation. Churches that request interns provide 40% of the pay for the internship, plus housing if it is needed. They also provide the oversight and training that interns need in order to be effective within the local church's ministry context.

Interns serve in a number of positions at local churches to advance those churches' mission in their communities. One week of their internship is spent serving at SBCV Studentz Camp or Fusion Mission Camp (investing 75 hours of ministry in less than a week). These interns become the "face" of Studentz Camp and Fusion while they serve as team leaders, recreation leaders, decision counselors, camp hosts, and more. They help SBCV missionaries bridge the generation gap and minister more effectively to the youth of SBCV churches.

Each party of our partnership gains from its participation. Churches that host interns enhance their ministry; interns grow in knowledge, skills, and experience; SBCV is able to staff statewide ministry events with interns who are growing in knowledge and skill under the authority of a local church; and churches that give to *Vision Virginia*, even without receiving anything in return, are growing in Christlikeness through sacrificial giving.

As SBCV churches find themselves in the depths of another Virginia winter, much of the impact of last summer's internships remains. Katie Cominski served as an intern at Enon Baptist Church in Chester, VA. Her time there took place during a challenging time personally as her husband was deployed in Afghanistan with the United States Marine Corp. Her responsibilities at

Charting the Challenges and Benefits of Gospel Partnerships

PARTNER	CHALLENGES	BENEFIT
Vision Virginia Church, <i>hosting intern</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provides 40% of pay provides oversight provides training for ministry context provides housing if needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> receives ministry assistance at a reduced cost receives short-term boost with lasting results can test-run a ministry position without a long-term commitment
Vision Virginia Church, <i>not hosting intern</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gives sacrificially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> grows in Christlikeness
College Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> commits to ministry for the summer ministers in a new context works Studentz Camp or Fusion Mission Camp (74 hours in 5 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> receives valuable ministry experience receives training and mentoring receives paid internship
SBC of Virginia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promotes <i>Vision Virginia</i> State Missions Offering promotes internships processes applications plans, staffs, and promotes Studentz Camp and Fusion Mission Camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> receives funding for state mission projects receives Studentz Camp and Fusion Mission Camp staffers who have ministry experience experiences increased effectiveness of Studentz Camp and Fusion Mission Camp gains ongoing future partnerships via stronger networking

Benefits of a Gospel Partnership

Enon included personal discipleship with several young ladies. Recalling a sleepover she hosted at her house, Katie noted a common theme among the girls—low self-esteem brought on by outside pressures from media. Katie addressed the problem by creating an environment of transparency, communication, and mutual edification. “We talked about the media’s influence, gave testimonials of coming to Christ, and built up one another in love and encouragement,” she recalls. “From this experience, the girls began bonding and understanding that their identity lies in Christ.” A highlight for Katie was her work discipling girls individually—work that has lasting impact even now, evidenced by girls going on international mission trips, leading in worship, and the like.

Another intern, Jake Morris, recently completed his undergraduate degree and three consecutive summers serving as an SBCV intern at CenterPoint Church in Mechanicsville, VA. When asked how the experience of serving as an intern impacted him, Jake answered, “I think the question is, how did it *not* impact me?” Jake notes the influence that his internship pastor, Mike Cauthorne, had on him. “Being a youth pastor for a long time himself, he knew what made youth ministry work—Jesus. It all starts with our relationship with Jesus, and everything else follows that.

Mike really sold me on this idea.” Jake recalls being placed into a leadership position shortly after beginning as an intern. After three summers serving under Pastor Mike’s leadership, Jake notes, “It gave me a passion for showing teenagers the ways in which they can be disciples of Jesus in their homes,

schools, and town. Mike gave me advice and tools that I truly could never thank him enough for.”

Katie and her husband have since been reunited and have moved cross-country as they continue to serve in the USMC and pursue God’s mission through the local church. Katie shares, “It was a pleasure to serve with you all, and I would not have traded this experience for anything.”

Jake has been called to serve as youth pastor at Village Church in Midlothian, VA (an SBCV church plant) while pursuing a degree in church planting from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Thank you for your faithfulness in our Gospel partnership. Though internships are only one of many applications of our partnership, they serve to highlight the practical ways that the churches of the SBCV can do more together than individually and how God uses our partnership to advance the Gospel through statewide events, through the ministry of the local church, and through individuals like Katie and Jake.



studentz
FUSION
June 22-26, 2014
Richmond

Church Registration Fee: \$250

Early Registration: \$99 per person until March 31
Registration: \$125 per person (April 1-May 26)

This mission experience combines
daily mission work with nightly
recreation and worship rallies.



The Worship Collective



Chip Luter

CONSUME

July 21-25, 2014

James Madison University, Harrisonburg

Early Registration: \$274 per person until March 3
Registration: \$299 per person (March 4-June 2)



Matt Papa



Jared Hall



Citizen Way

studentz
CAMP

sbcv.org/studentz





DANGER:

Model Church Under Construction

Over 15 years ago, as a student at Washington Bible College, Carlton Burns began to envision leading a culturally diverse church that would reach “every tribe, tongue, people, and nation” (Revelation 5:9, NKJV) with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church (PGBC) of Upper Marlboro, MD was founded in Lothan, MD in 1970 under the leadership of Rev. Edward Sellman with six members who were passionate about the work of the Lord. Although Pleasant Grove struggled for more than 20 years to grow, God was at work in the late 1980s raising up the next lead pastor from within the Pleasant Grove family. The Lord used Lavice Smoot to bring her boyfriend, Carlton Burns, to PGBC.

Burns remembers, “I had never been to a Baptist church for a regular service, but that day was the beginning of my transformation process. I wept throughout Sunday School and the worship service as the Word of God captured my heart. Two weeks later, I submitted to the lordship of Christ and accepted Him as my Lord and Savior. I have not ceased going to PGBC since Lavice invited me that Sunday morning. Lavice and I have been married for the past 20 years, and God has blessed us with three wonderful children.”

In 1997, the Lord called Rev. Sellman home to heaven. Prior to his passing, Pleasant Grove called its associate pastor, Carlton Burns, to be the senior pastor. After the first two years of his tenure, Pastor Burns was, as he recalls, “frustrated with the spiritual and numerical growth of the church and wrestling with [my] call to the pastorate.” As

a result, Pleasant Grove closed its doors that year. Later that same year, however, God placed a burden on Valerie Sellman’s heart to see the work continue that her father had begun. She approached Pastor Burns and offered to contribute a portion of the benefits from Rev. Sellman’s life insurance policy to support the rebirth of Pleasant Grove. The doors of PGBC were thus reopened in 1999. The church, says Burns, was relaunched with “a determination to glorify God and see souls won for the Kingdom.”

Monda Lambert Thomas, who became a member of PGBC after it reopened, notes, “I can only imagine what would have happened if Pastor Burns had not obeyed the call of the Lord to reopen the doors of Pleasant Grove. I am eternally grateful to God for Pastor Burns’ leadership and the people he leads. Pastor Burns has allowed God to use him as an instrument to reach the souls of many people of all ages and in the surrounding communities of Prince George’s County and beyond.”

Pastor Burns’ desire is that Pleasant Grove will become “a model church in all aspects of its ministry to set a standard for Christian excellence.” God is at work in this African-American church, and its membership has grown to 120. They’re preparing to relocate soon to build new facilities, which will enable them to fulfill their vision to have a “Christian education facility for other churches that are looking to do ministry according to the Scriptures.”

PGBC is reaching its neighbors and the nations with the Gospel. This past summer, the SBC of Virginia, in partnership with the North American Mission Board, offered the opportunity for churches to reach culturally diverse people groups in the greater Washington, DC area. Pastor Burns led PGBC to get involved in this important work. “We have already identified several African people clusters in the Maryland area,” he says. “Efforts are ongoing to reach these ethnic people groups with the Gospel.”

Pleasant Grove is partnering with The Camp of Faith Church in Stephens City, VA to host outreach events in the areas of Cheverly and Takoma Park, MD, which are densely populated with West Africans. The churches distribute candy, hand out Gospel tracts, and witness to the West Africans in these communities. In addition, PGBC has identified two African leaders to help in this work. The goal is to see God bring a church planting movement amongst West African people in these areas.

God is bringing Pastor Carlton Burns’ 15-year-old vision to fruition. “Pleasant Grove Baptist Church has a long way to go,” admits Pastor Burns, “but God is strategically putting the pieces in place for the vision to become a reality.”



Pushing Back the Darkness in VIRGINIA

Patrick County

486 The number of square miles in
Patrick County (1,259 km²)



1791 The year
Patrick County
was founded



6.6%

unemployment rate (Aug 2013)

18,451
Population
(2012)



County seat:
Stuart

“Hi. You don’t know me,
but I am looking for a
church in”

The SBC of Virginia and its missionaries often receive calls like this from people moving to an area or looking for a church to minister to a family they know. It’s heartbreaking when the caller asks about an area where there is no SBCV-partnering church, and we are reminded how many places still need a strong, biblical Gospel presence.

Several years ago, SBCV had a three-year theme of *Pushing Back the Darkness*. The need continues, as there are so many places still in spiritual darkness—all around the world and even in Virginia. Until 2006, there was not a single SBCV church in Patrick County. What may surprise you is that this rural county is not comprised solely of farmers. Patrick County also has a strong presence of “come-heres,” those who’ve moved to the area, primarily from the northern part of the US, looking for the pace and lifestyle rural Virginia provides. The unsaved in Patrick County include farmers, artists, young professionals, retirees, etc., and it will take more than one church to push back the darkness.

Since 2006, five churches in Patrick County have partnered with the SBC of Virginia. These churches demonstrate the values found in the community and are willing to serve and dream for God’s glory, doing the work of ministry themselves. The first was Grace Baptist Church, led by Ted Thisse, its founding

VIRGINIA COUNTIES WITHOUT SBCV CHURCHES

Alleghany
Bland
Highland

pastor. The believers who formed the church had experienced difficulty finding an existing congregation with their doctrinal convictions, so they began worshipping and dreaming of a new church work. They quickly caught a vision of being a bright light in the community and found a home partnering with the SBCV. The congregants pooled their resources and began the work of making a Gospel difference in their community. Grace Baptist Church recently moved to a new location at the intersection of Route 58 and Route 8 and called Mark Elkins as pastor. The church is fittingly poised upon a hilltop where it shines the light of Christ.

Another group of believers began meeting over a decade ago and formed Faith Community Church, led by Pastor Tim Hylton. Having the same values as Grace Baptist Church, Faith Community was also born out of the harvest. They saw a need and took action. For years, they've worshipped in a double-car garage and are now just months away from moving into their first building. Faith Community Church partnered with the SBCV in 2013.

In addition to these two church starts, Tim Lavinder pastors The Ridge Community Church, an SBCV church plant, and two more churches recently partnered with the SBCV—Doe Run Baptist Church (pastored by Terry Vaughan) and Fairystone Baptist Church (pastored by Clint Conner).

So now when the call comes for a church in Patrick County, the answer will be, "Yes! We know of five excellent churches—five church partners pushing back the darkness."



WOMEN'S CONFERENCE



- MAR 9
Southside & Central-West
Regions combined
- MAR 16
North Region
- APR 6
Southwest Region
- APR 13
Valley Region (Roanoke area)
- APR 27
Central-East Region
- MAY 4
Southeast Region



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM
together

**APRIL
13
2014**

**COOPERATIVE PROGRAM
SUNDAY**



Download resources from cpmissions.net
and sbcv.org/cp.





There is Another **FOOTBALL TRAINING CAMP** in Richmond!

While the Washington Redskins found a new home for their spring training camp in Richmond, there was another football training camp taking shape just a few blocks away. “Flag football is huge in the Greater Richmond area,” says Robby Christmas, community pastor at Movement Church in Richmond, VA. “I started playing flag football for two reasons: first, because I love the sport, and secondly, because I want to hang out with people I wouldn’t see if I didn’t step out of my normal rhythm of family, work, and church.”

The Central Virginia Football Association (CVFA) has afforded Pastor Robby that opportunity. Through CVFA, he has become intentional about connecting with people, building friendships, and looking for ways to support, encourage, and add value to the league organization and its players. “After participating in the CVFA football league for three years,” says Robby, “I started to ask myself, ‘How I can be even more intentional in sharing Christ with people?’ and a dream started to develop.”

One morning while he was going through *33 The Series* with some men at his church, he started to envision taking some football players in the league through the study. After several months of thinking, praying, and discussing the idea, the day came when he realized it was time to act. Pastor Robby contacted the captain of one of the teams and made an offer: “Our church will sponsor a team for the season and pay all of the league fees. In turn, the team would bring at least 12 guys

to a one-day mentoring conference, where we would take them through the *33 The Series* material.” The captain and team accepted. The one-day mentoring and discipleship conference included breakfast and lunch provided by one of the church’s community groups and an open discussion following each video session. “It was a really great day with some very honest, gut-level discussion, including a clear presentation of the Gospel,” says Robby. “I was super encouraged by the response!”

The impact of that day continues to be seen. Pastor Robby recently followed up with two of the players on the team. One described the experience as “awesome” and went on to explain that he is now treating his fiancé differently and is much more in control of his attitude on the field. He was truly impacted by the truth of God’s Word! These two men now want to go through part two of *33 The Series* and get even more players involved. Movement Church is making plans to sponsor the team again in the spring of 2014 and offer part two of the discipleship training. They’re praying that the players will surrender their lives completely to God’s control—for His glory and their good.

Yes, Richmond, there is another football training camp in Richmond—one that guarantees positive yardage, first downs, wins, and victories!



RESOURCES



WEBSITE

moverichmond.org

RESOURCE TOOL

mensfraternity.com/33_the_series

From the creators of *Men's Fraternity*, Authentic Manhood is proud to present *33 The Series*. This series was designed to inspire and equip men to pursue Authentic Manhood as modeled by Jesus Christ in the 33 years He lived on earth. It builds on many of the timeless truths taught in Men's Fraternity but also introduces new material and practical insight on Authentic Manhood.



FEB MAR APR 2014 • SBCV.ORG 11



2014 MISSION PROJECTS

January – February
Quilting Materials for IMB Missionaries

February – March
Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

March – April
Hiker Supplies for Trail Days

April – May
Christian Libraries for Overseas

June – July
Disaster Relief Readiness Items

August – September
Adopt a Local School

September – October
Vision Virginia State Missions Offering

October – November
Christmas in Appalachia Backpacks

November – December
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

Strong churches
with a bold commitment
to the Great Commission

Raising the Bar for Church Leaders

SURVEY SAYS [from LifeWay's Research Department] ... Church leaders desire to be equipped, to be trained, and to understand the expectations of their service.

So why aren't all churches providing ministry expectations when enlisting

E412 FORMAL EDUCATION

Regional E412 Conference

In 2013, the SBC of Virginia provided regional E412 Equipping Conferences based on Ephesians 4:12. These half-day Saturday conferences were designed to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" and provided training for just about every area of ministry in the life of the church. The day consisted of a light breakfast; a worship rally that included a biblical challenge, testimonies, and special music; and two breakout sessions to equip church leaders for their roles in ministry. Breakout options were provided for: Women's Ministry, Men's Ministry, Student Ministry, Children's Ministry, Preschool Ministry, Sunday School/Small Groups, Discipleship, Member Assimilation, Evangelism and Outreach, Missions, Worship, and Pastors/Church Planters.

This year alone, we saw some 600 church leaders trained across the state. Mark your calendars now to bring your leaders in 2014: Saturday, September 20 and Saturday, September 27. Watch your media outlets for the conference in your region.

leaders? Why aren't we requiring formal training or providing our leaders with ongoing ministry equipping?

The answer could be as simple as, "We've never thought about it," "We don't know where to start," or "We don't know what tools and resources are available."

Well, now you do!

The SBC of Virginia is here to assist you and



ONLINE TRAINING

Ministry Grid

We encourage churches to take advantage of a new LifeWay Christian Resources tool called Ministry Grid. Ministry Grid is the largest library of exclusive, custom-made content for church leaders available anywhere. It provides training for church leaders in every ministry area at the time and place that are best for them.

Features include:

- **Flexibility:** web and mobile-based platform for anytime/anywhere training
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your local church with enlisting leaders, educating them, and equipping your church to have ongoing training opportunities. Your experienced, trained, and certified regional missionaries stand ready to help you get started.

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Will your church raise the bar for church leaders?

- **"We've never thought about it."**
Now you have!
- **"We don't know where to start."**
Contact your regional missionary!
- **"We don't know what tools and resources are available."**
E412, Ministry Grid, and Specialized Church Seminars



A Living Legacy

Southside Baptist Church



RESOURCE

WEBSITE sbcsuffolk.org

AT A DEDICATION SERVICE for a new 800-seat worship center, you'd expect the church to focus on the new facility and an increase in attendance. Not so with Southside Baptist Church in Suffolk. At its April 7, 2013 dedication service, Southside focused on the mission of the church, not just the building. Pastor Stewart McCarter gave testimony to the power of the resurrection in his message and in the letters he read from former members sent out from Southside who are now serving as missionaries, church planters, and pastors.

During Pastor Stewart's Titus 1:5 message, "To God's Glory," he read these "living letters" that visibly touched his heart and touched the hearts of all who attended the service.

First, there was a letter from Jon Rissmiller, pastor of Abundant Hope Baptist Church in Gates, NC. Pastor Jon used to serve as youth pastor at Southside and was sent out to plant this new work over eight years ago. He shared how Abundant Hope would not exist without the support of Southside. ... *[You] gave us people, money, and GREAT encouragement.*

Then there was a letter from John Lester, pastor of Blairs Baptist Church in Blairs, VA. ... *Today, a high school dropout [who had] no hope holds a master's degree and is a senior pastor at a church in Blairs, VA. Many people at Southside helped and encouraged me to accomplish this goal.*

Next was a letter from Martin Chappell, a missionary in Thailand, who grew up at Southside. ... *Every week I get to see God impacting the nations through our ministry. The simple fact is [that] God used Southside to lay the spiritual foundation of my life.*

There was also a letter from Ellis Prince, pastor of Gallery Church in Baltimore, a church planter Southside supports who is continuing to plant churches in the Baltimore area. ... *Because of your ongoing help, we are about to launch our third church in the city. Did you hear that? You haven't helped to plant just one church! You have helped plant a church that planted a church and is about to plant another!*

What unfolded in this service was the living legacy of the church. You don't measure a church by the size of the building but by the lives that are changed and the impact they have on other lives. By God's grace, Southside's legacy will continue for generations to come. To God be the glory!

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FLIPSIDE

KERRIE ROBERTS

KATELYN MCCARTER

LOGAN JONES BAND

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CHANGING TRACKS

RYAN STEVENSON

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What about My People?

Laying Down Your Life for Others

by Barry Ellis* (name changed for security)

We lived in Iran at the time. In Iran, if an ethnic Christian gives a Bible to a Muslim, it is punishable by death; if a Muslim accepts Christ, it is punishable by death. The government has its own religious police and its own hit men. I was six at the time and my mother would chant her Muslim prayers in Arabic as required in Islam and after her prayers, she would speak to God in her Farsi language. She would say, "I want to know who You are and how to worship You. Show me."

How we escaped Iran was nothing short of a miracle. God landed us in a townhouse in Springfield, and one night, my mother had a dream that the Holy Spirit was coming to her. She did not speak English very well, so she did not know what the word "Holy" or "Spirit" meant, but in her dream it was the "Holy Spirit." She woke up very confused wondering who the "Holy Spirit" was that was trying to come to her. That morning, our neighbor, Moreen, a Christian from Trinidad, knocked on our door to complain we had parked in her parking spot. When my mother questioned her about her dream, Moreen started crying and told us the Gospel. I was seven, and that was the first time we heard about Jesus, the real Jesus, not the one pictured in the Qur'an.

Nothing came of it until I was a senior in high school. By that time, I was a very zealous Muslim and searching hard after God, reading my Qur'an everyday seeking Allah's will. I was a wrestler in high school and was planning on wrestling for George Mason the following semester. Just like previous summers, I needed to attend a summer wrestling camp so there would be no gap in my training. Every year, there was a bunch to choose from, but not that year. Whatever camp I would try to join, the door would close. Some lady came up to me and asked, "Do you do sports?" I said, "Yes, wrestling." To my amazement, she replied, "There is a summer camp available if

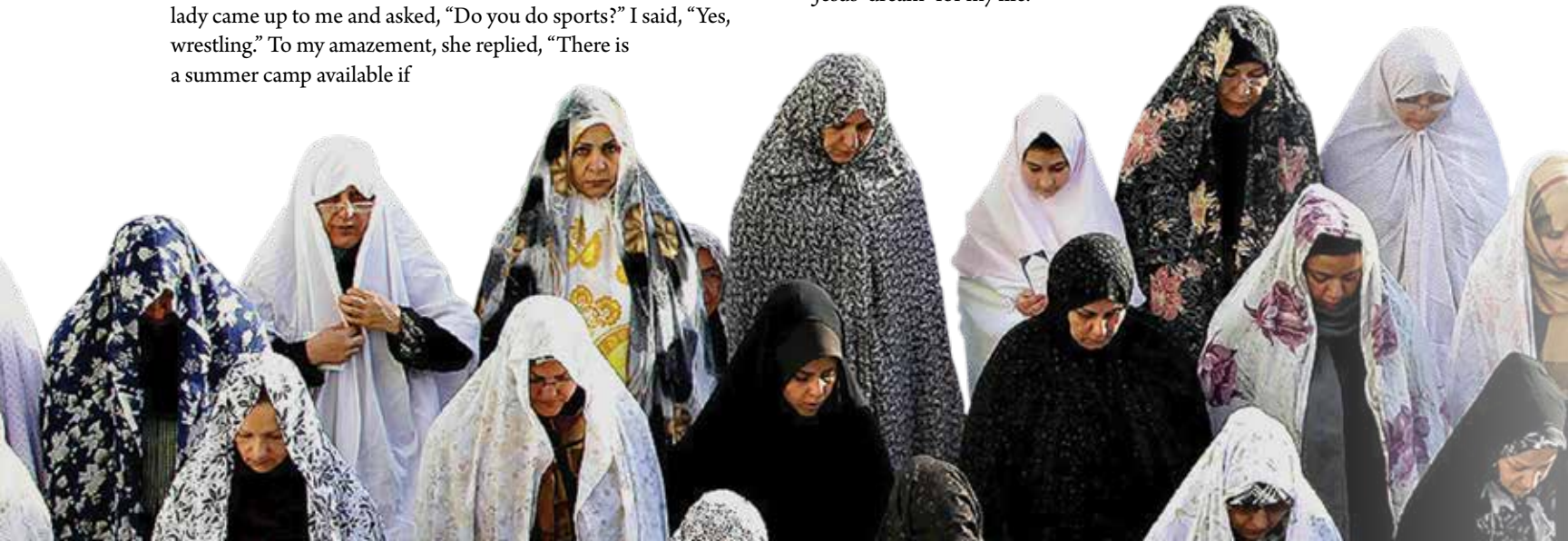
“

Here I am, use me, let
your will be done.

”

you are interested." It happened to be a Fellowship of Christian Athletes camp. The last night there, July 1, 1998, something clicked. I left my huddle and went to my room. I opened my Bible that they had given me, and it opened to Psalm 116. I started to read and, to my amazement, all of the feelings and emotions that I had at that moment that I could not express in words were written in black on white on those pages. I read until I could not see anymore due to my tears. It was then at 9 PM that I surrendered to the King of kings and gave myself to Him.

He poured His knowledge on me, and I started to grow spiritually like a weed. During college, I knew for a fact that God was calling me into His work to reach the lost. I was leading Young Life at South Lakes High School, was a huddle leader for every summer camp at FCA, and was walking with Jesus. I had placed myself as a living sacrifice for God, but very gradually after college, I started to crawl off the altar. I chose to live the "American dream" and not "Jesus' dream" for my life.




In the Bible, David prays to God, “Your rod and staff, they comfort me.” He guides His sheep with the gentle staff, yet He will use His rod’s pain if He has to. Both bring comfort because they allow the sheep to know that they are being watched over and cared for by the Shepherd. The grace of God—and the mercy of God—took away the rails of this train in my life that was taking me farther and farther away from His will for me. Within a two-year period, my business took a nosedive, my wife ran off with another man, my house and land were foreclosed on, and I had to file for personal bankruptcy.

Still using my brain rather than following God by faith, I sat down and wrote on a piece of paper four possible directions I could go to make a living. After writing them, I prayed, “Father, I will pursue these four things with all my effort. You guide me and tell me which direction is best. Please close the doors of the options You do not want for me.” After each door closed, I concluded that it seemed like a joke thinking about it, but our powerful God is in total control of everything—EVERYTHING!

Without any more of my options and knowing plain as day that He had closed all the doors, I asked Him to show me what He wanted me to do. Not one week had passed before I had a dream. In my dream, I had a very urgent matter that needed to be remedied and because I passively delayed and stalled, it was too late to fix it. The very next day, I was driving and listening to Dr. Tony Evans on WAVA, and he was speaking about Jesus’ parable of the three servants—how one was given five talents of money and another two and the third one talent. He described how all three were “servants of the master”—all three were Christians. All were given money from the master, and two invested and multiplied it, but the third wasted time and did not invest or multiply it. By the end of the parable, he was in a state of agony and “gnashing of teeth” out of regret. Right when he said that, I realized that that was exactly what I was doing in my dream. It was as if the “Master” was giving me a postcard reminding me that He would be back and I had not been using what He had given me for His purpose.

It was around this time when I first heard about Pastor Yousef Nadekhani in Iran, a man my age who was being tried for apostasy punishable by hanging. It occurred to me that God had taken me out of that closed country; given me the medicine for eternal death; set His banner over me; and placed me in a country where I can go to any church I want at any time of the day and all of the resources needed are available to advance the Kingdom of God.



“...There are hundreds and hundreds of American churches ... what about my people?”

I had been given all of this, and I had done nothing to expand His Kingdom and reach the lost, yet this man without all of these opportunities had invested all he had been given and was paying with his life because of it. A verse rang through my head: “To whom much is given, much is required” (Luke 12:48). This verse would not leave me.

God used circumstances and people to reveal that I had committed my life to the Lord but needed to surrender my will to Him. I had to repent and confess, “I am so sorry Father, You have all of me, including my will.”

About a month later, it was my mother’s birthday and she had invited all of her Iranian friends (30 or so people) and a leader from her church to come and try to tell the Gospel to the people. They all sat around, listened to him, and were very silent. When he had ended his speech, it was a really uncomfortable situation, so as a confirmation to what he said, I started telling my testimony. All I can say is that the Holy Spirit started moving, all glory to God, and people started asking, “So what if someone is a murderer?” “So you’re telling me everyone can be saved?” The discussion must have lasted over an hour and a half, and that was the birth of the Bible study that God helps me lead once a month for Iranians.

There are nearly 120,000 Iranians in Northern Virginia who need to know the Lord and [there is] not one healthy church. I was grieving over this horrific fact and kept asking God, “What about my people? There are hundreds and hundreds of American churches ... what about my people?” God very clearly revealed to me that He wanted me to reach them. I know of God too much to say it can’t be done. My only response in fear and trembling coupled with excitement was, “Here I am, use me, let your will be done.”

It was my fantasy, it was my dream—I would literally daydream of what would happen if two or three American churches linked hands and came behind me to help with the church plant. My dream took on flesh in the form of an SBCV missionary. When I met him, he said he was part of an organization of over 600 churches that have linked hands and that he was here for internationals in Virginia to help them plant churches. With the churches’ help, glory be to God, Elam Church was birthed in the spring of 2013. The vision of Elam Church is to give every Iranian household in Northern Virginia a Bible in their language, a Jesus DVD, an explanation of the Gospel of salvation, and to point them to the Savior. Elam Church will multiply into 10 healthy churches spread throughout the Northern Virginia area. I will then turn my focus to the homeland. There are 75 million Iranians in Iran who do not know Jesus. I will move back and start church planting in Iran. If I die, praise God! Because my blood just fertilized the expansion of God’s Kingdom to Iran.

The Master is coming soon to see how much we have invested into His Kingdom according to the amount He has given us. As Christians living in America, we have been given much. “To whom much is given, much is required.”



Where is the Church?

Story written by Ann Lovell

At midnight on a cold Friday night in January, Loree Becton stands on a street corner along Jefferson Davis Highway—an area notoriously known for prostitution and crime. She's come a long way.

Until a few months ago, Loree—wife of Pastor Mark Becton of Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond, VA—had to whisper the word, “prostitute,” and would turn red-faced when she did. Now, here she is among them, praying for an opportunity to tell the women of the streets how much they are valued and loved.

For Loree, a ministry to human trafficking victims in Richmond began in June 2011 with a simple prayer of surrender.

“Lord, I give up!” Loree prayed. “I surrender to whatever it is you want me to do.”

FACING THE PROBLEM

Human trafficking is the illegal trade of people—especially women and children—for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor. The US State Department estimates that 600,000 to 800,000 men, women, and children are trafficked across international borders each year.

Domestically, human trafficking is difficult to quantify, explains Krystal Gandola, a spokesperson for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).

“No one knows with certainty the exact number of children victimized through sex trafficking in the United States,” Gandola says. “We believe it is a missing child issue.”

Of the 60,000 missing child cases reported to NCMEC in the past five years, 81 percent are endangered runaways. Many of these children were in the child welfare system when they ran and left home voluntarily but are unable to care for themselves. They are particularly vulnerable to the “manipulation and false promises” of traffickers, Gandola explains.

If this information wasn't alarming enough for Loree, the local snapshot was even more distressing. Until as recently as September 2013, the Polaris Project—a nonprofit organization addressing human trafficking on a global scale—identified Virginia as one of the “dirty dozen” US states that did not effectively address human trafficking within its borders. According to the Polaris definition, the state failed to provide adequate legislation against human trafficking, training on human trafficking for law enforcement officers, or a safe harbor for victims.

“Could this really be happening in my own backyard?” Loree wondered.

“Yes,” says Sara Pomeroy, director of the Richmond Justice Initiative, a nonprofit, faith-based organization involved in local anti-trafficking efforts. “The intersections of Interstates 64, 95, and 295—and the city's proximity to Washington, DC—make Richmond attractive to traffickers.”

ASKING THE QUESTIONS

Armed with this information, Loree questioned, “What do we do now?”

“For several months after that initial prayer of surrender, a number of women began approaching Loree, asking, ‘How is your church involved with human trafficking?’” Loree's response was, “We're not!”

Then she met, Ann Lovell—an international Christian worker who started a ministry to exploited women in Thailand. Ann arrived in Virginia in September of 2012 and soon met Loree at a church reception at Grove Avenue Baptist Church. As Loree and Ann introduced themselves, Ann began describing the ministry she had been involved with overseas. As she did, Loree's eyes widened with curiosity. Loree began asking questions, and soon a friendship was formed grounded in a shared vision to reach exploited women.

Soon after, Loree started gathering women for prayer. The group began meeting regularly, praying that God would show them specific steps He wanted them to take. The “Precious to God” ministry was born (based on Psalm 72:14).

*He will redeem them from oppression and violence,
for their lives are precious in His sight.*

Loree says, “That verse is a powerful promise of what God wants to do among trafficked women.”

Loree and her team began talking with local law enforcement officials and researching the work of others involved in the fight against exploitation. They learned that there are a number of churches and organizations involved in varying aspects of the fight against human trafficking—prevention, intervention, and aftercare—however, there is not one single organization coordinating efforts in order to cooperate together in a joint effort.

“We don't want to duplicate what others are doing,” Loree says, “so I see Grove Avenue as somehow playing a role in linking these organizations together.”

“We continue to pray for opportunities to share Jesus one on one.”

TAKING SOME RISKS

Loree got a glimpse of what cooperation could look like during the June 2013 “Sexpo” at a Richmond hotel—a tradeshow of porn stars and erotica exhibitors. When local churches and anti-trafficking organizations learned of the event, they began to pray together about how to best influence those attending the event.

Anastasis International Ministry, a local group that focuses on helping women who are hurting, purchased a booth at the tradeshow and offered free foot massages and gift bags provided by New Life Women’s Center, a ministry of Cornerstone Assembly of God. Others, including the team from Grove Avenue, bought tickets and prayerwalked inside the exhibit hall. To avoid drawing controversy and to facilitate quiet Gospel-focused conversations, they did not openly identify themselves as Christians or being affiliated with a church. As those from Anastasis were setting up, they heard several exhibitors say, “I wonder where all the Christians are. I thought sure they’d be here protesting.”

The women of Anastasis said nothing. They finished their setup and offered foot massages throughout the afternoon. Toward the end of the day, they heard some of the exhibitors say again, “Where are the Christians? Where is the church? I thought sure the churches would be here lined up outside with their signs.”

The women of Anastasis smiled and decided to enter the conversation. “We’re the church,” they said. “And we’ve been here the entire time.”

MOVING FORWARD

It’s this kind of face-to-face conversation that Loree desires to have with hurting women. That’s how she met Valerie Carter, associate pastor for global ministries at Bon Air Baptist Church. For several years, Valerie and a small group from area churches have been prayerwalking the red-light districts of Richmond one Friday night a month.

Over the years, Valerie and her team have had countless conversations and prayer with women and transvestites who work in the red-light district along Jefferson Davis Highway. Currently, she and a team member are regularly following up with two young women they met a few months ago. Although the number of changed lives is difficult to quantify, Valerie trusts that God is working in the lives of those she’s met.

“We never know how many women or men have sought help because of the move of God on their lives and our presence with the light of Christ in a dark place,” Valerie says.

Although Loree has prayerwalked on several occasions, she has yet to develop relationships with women on the street. In fact, she has yet to see the same person twice.

“The face to face has not gone as well as I would have liked,” Loree admits. “But we continue to pray for opportunities to share Jesus one on one.”

In an effort to facilitate more conversations in the red-light district, Loree’s team has begun prayerdriving Jefferson Davis Highway and other areas during the day.

“We realize that we must pray over the area during the daylight hours if we ever hope to reach women at night,” Loree says. “By doing this, we are trusting God’s Spirit to go before us and lead us to those He wants us to meet.”

The team is exploring other options to facilitate face-to-face discussions, including beginning Bible studies with women in the red-light districts, contacting women who advertise escort services through various websites, offering to pray with women arrested for prostitution, and meeting women jailed for prostitution as they are released.

Loree realizes that all of these options are fraught with danger and difficulty. “We’ve found that there is no real safe place for women to go when they are released from jail,” Loree explains. “There are a couple of organizations in the city that offer some level of aftercare to exploited women, but they are not equipped for long-term residential care.”

“Ministry is messy,” Loree explains. “I want a concrete plan, but that is not how the Lord has been leading us.”

So for now, Loree and her team continue to pray. They pray for increased awareness of human trafficking among believers. They pray for strong relationships among churches and like-minded organizations that are involved in the fight against trafficking. Most of all, they pray that God will lead them to come alongside hurting women to show them His love.

“We can only take it a step at a time.”



It's That Simple!

ESL English as a Second Language

A simple sign was all it took for people from all over the world to start calling about the English as a Second Language (ESL) Ministry at Swift Creek Baptist Church in Midlothian, VA.

Since it began over two years ago, the church's ESL Ministry has been reaching primarily Hispanics. After learning that there were about 45,000 Hispanics in Chesterfield County, Swift Creek members attended several local Hispanic events to invite people to ESL classes. Many came, and the ministry was going well. When plans began for the 2013-2014 year, the leaders began to brainstorm how to reach even more people in the neighborhood and decided to place a sign at the church entrance to publicize ESL classes.

Although the church itself is not located in an area known for any particularly large ethnic group, once the sign went up, we quickly began receiving calls from people of numerous ethnicities who live in the community and drive by the church every day. We are now reaching people from South Korea, Poland, Palestine, Mexico, Guatemala, Lebanon, Vietnam, Egypt, Morocco, and El Salvador. God has surely brought the nations to our doorstep, and it is a joy teaching them every week! They're always appreciative and eager to learn. Since Scripture and prayer are included in every class, they're also hearing and learning more about the Gospel message, and one young man recently gave his life to Christ! That's what it's all about.

While attending an ESL class, a Muslim couple mentioned how lonely they were. When Swift Creek members invited them to





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Once the sign went up, we quickly began receiving calls from people of numerous ethnicities

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come to a Sunday worship service, their response was an eye-opening surprise: “Would your people want us in their church? We are not murderers [what they think Americans believe about all Muslims].” They attended the following Sunday and followed along in the Bible from the pew rack. They later met the pastor, came to Wednesday night Bible study, and expressed a desire to have a Bible in the same translation as the pastor’s. Upon receiving a Bible, they began asking questions and obtaining answers about Jesus. They’ve also attended other activities at the church, and God is working in their lives.

The Lord is using Swift Creek’s ESL Ministry to bring the nations to know Him, and it all began with a small sign in front of the church. Our community is no different than yours. God is bringing the nations to us. What are you doing to reach them? If you’re interested in learning more about an ESL ministry, go to sbcv.org/esl.

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Contributed by Sue Sawyer, Missions Mobilization Associate, SBC of Virginia



RESOURCE WEBSITES

sbcv.org/esl
swiftcreekbaptist.org



Reach out to your non-English-speaking neighbors through ESL.

Training dates are regularly posted online.



details available at sbcv.org/esl

by Larry Black
Church Planting and People Group Strategist
with the SBC of Virginia

1st Annual SBC of Virginia

Serving Jesus with Passion

¿Sabía usted que la SBCV posee veinte Iglesias Hispánicas que sirven a alrededor de dos millones de personas en las áreas de Virginia y Washington DC? Un equipo de líderes regionales Hispánicos se convocaron con la pasión de afirmar y aportar mayor valor a cada una de sus Iglesias representadas, con el propósito de poder equipar y animar a los pastores y líderes a transmitir la visión de evangelizar y plantar Iglesias entre los cientos de miles que aun no conocen a Jesucristo.

El equipo oró y planeó el primer evento anual de la misma manera que se hace con la Conferencia Anual de la SBCV (Annual Homecoming) que realiza cada año. La jornada incluyó predicaciones muy alentadoras, talleres de entrenamiento, excelente camaradería (¡claro que sí!), también hubo acceso a materiales representados por diferentes ministerios y una desafiante y cálida comunión entre hermanos. ¿Cuán cercana estuvo esta conferencia de cumplir los objetivos esperados? Tú decides. Participaron más de 200 pastores y líderes, diecisiete Iglesias representadas incluyendo a dos que no pertenecían a la red de la SBCV. La mayoría de los pastores asistentes afirmó haber sido animado en gran manera, y así también los conseriros de sus Iglesias. Quedó una gran ánimo por más conferencias de este tipo y varios contactos se aportaron para que más Iglesias se puedan unir a la red de Iglesias de SBCV.

El equipo de liderazgo se retiró muy cansado, pero doblemente animado al ver la respuesta positiva de las Iglesias. Se fueron afirmando y desafiando hacia un compromiso a Servir a Jesús con Ganas. Agradecemos a las Iglesias de la SBCV por el apoyo. ¡Sirvamos a Jesús con ganas hasta su próxima venida!

Did you know that the SBC of Virginia has 20 Hispanic churches to serve the nearly two million Hispanic people in Virginia and Washington, DC? A team of Hispanic regional leaders gathered with the passion to affirm the great value of each of these churches and their pastors and leaders; equip and encourage them; and cast a compelling vision to evangelize and plant churches among the hundreds of thousands who do not know Jesus Christ.

The team prayed and planned the first annual Hispanic Conference, similar to SBCV's Annual Homecoming. The conference was held at Kingsland Baptist Church, North Chesterfield, on October 19, 2013. It included strong preaching, equipping breakouts, food (yes, it was a great Baptist meeting with outstanding food), ministry displays, fellowship, and encouragement. How close did the conference come to meeting each of the desired objectives? You decide. There were more than 200 pastors and leaders present. Seventeen churches participated—two of which are not even affiliated with SBCV. Almost every pastor who attended said he was greatly encouraged, his people were blessed and equipped, and they all desired more equipping conferences like this. New contacts were made for new church involvement with SBCV.

The leadership team left tired but delighted that the pastors and leaders left affirmed, encouraged, and committed to serve Jesus with passion. Thank you, SBCV churches, for your support. Let's serve Jesus with passion until He comes!

Hispanic Conference

«SPANISH

Primera
Conferencia
Anual de las
Iglesias Hispánicas
de la SBCV:
*Sirviendo a Jesús
Con Ganas*

First Annual SBCV Hispanic Conference

by Sergio Guardia
Pastor de Nuevo Amanecer, Lynchburg, VA

SIRVIENDO A JESÚS
CON GANAS



Sirviendo a Jesus Con Ganas (*Serving Jesus with Passion*) was the theme for the first annual SBCV Hispanic Conference. What does it mean for a Spanish-speaking pastor or leader to serve with passion? Hispanic pastors and lay leaders face different challenges in the land of the American dream. It is no secret that many of them come here looking for a better future for their families. Our Hispanic congregations face unique challenges that you would not normally see in an English-speaking church. For example, how do you disciple a man who has a family here in the States and a family in his homeland? When our dear pastors encounter cases like this, they often panic and don't know what to do. When situations like this are repeated often, they can get discouraged in God's labor.

This is why it is so important to provide equipping conferences for Hispanic pastors. The SBCV conference was more than just a time to hear a good speaker. It was a time to encourage and fellowship with other brothers and sisters who understand firsthand the challenges that pastors of Spanish-speaking congregations face.

People often ask, "How do you reach Hispanic people?" The answer is simply to make disciples. We are not talking about taking away their

culture—we are talking about the importance of presenting Jesus as the Healer to their souls. Many have seen terrible things on their way to the States or where they grew up. We can show them how Jesus can heal their souls and use them mightily. This concept was presented in the conference's discipleship workshop. We have to equip the pastors so they can do a better job of equipping the saints. They will be seeing difficult cases in their congregations, and that's why we offered a workshop entitled, *Counseling from and for the Soul*. We also need to teach them that they are not the final link in this chain but need to inspire and prepare the next generation, which is why we provided a mentorship workshop. Latinos are gifted in blending anywhere they go, and they are a great source for future and present missions. Therefore, we offered a workshop entitled, *Creating a Missionary Movement*.

We need to stand side by side with Hispanic pastors and let them know we are here—with our resources, but most of all with a real and tangible friendship. Language can be a barrier, but love can transcend any language. And they will know that you love them when they see you there next to them, understanding their hearts. Let's do it with "ganas"!

Primera Conferencia Anual de las Iglesias Hispanas de la SBCV

El tema de nuestra Primera Conferencia de las Iglesias Hispanas fue "¡Sirviendo a Jesús con ganas!" Pero, ¿que significa para un pastor o líder Hispano servir con ganas? Los líderes Hispanos en general enfrentan distintos desafíos en la tierra del sueño americano. No es ningún secreto que la mayoría de los Hispanos han venido buscando un mejor futuro para sus familias. Nuestras congregaciones Hispanas enfrentan desafíos distintos a los que normalmente se ve en una congregación de habla inglesa. Por ejemplo, ¿cómo disciplinar a un hombre que tiene su familia aquí en los Estados Unidos, y además tiene una familia en su tierra natal? Cuando nuestros queridos pastores encuentran casos similares a este pueden atemorizarse, y cuando se repiten casos similares a este, pueden desanimarse en la obra de Dios.

Es por esto que es importante presentar herramientas de capacitación como la Primera Conferencia para las iglesias hispanas. Es más que un tiempo de oír a un buen predicador, es un tiempo de compañerismo con otros hermanos y hermanas que entienden de primera mano los desafíos que enfrentan los líderes de iglesias Hispano hablantes. Encuentran hermanos que ya pasaron por ello, y se pueden animar mutuamente.

Muchas veces nos preguntamos "¿cómo puedo alcanzar a los hispanos con el evangelio?", la respuesta es sencilla: haciendo discípulos. No nos

referimos a cambiar sus rasgos culturales, nos referimos a presentar a Cristo como el Sanador del alma. Muchos han vivido cosas terribles en sus países, o en su camino a llegar este país. Debemos mostrarles como Cristo puede sanar su alma, y usarlos poderosamente. Esto fue presentado en el taller de "Discipulado transformador." Debemos equipar a los pastores para que ellos a su vez puedan equipar a los santos para la obra del ministerio. Ellos enfrentarán casos muy difíciles en sus congregaciones y por eso les enseñamos acerca de "Consejería del alma y para el alma." Pero también es importante que entiendan que no son el último eslabón en la cadena y necesitan preparar a otros, por eso hicimos el taller de "Mentorado: Inspirando a la siguiente generación." Los hispanos tienen el don de "encajar" donde van, son una fuente de recursos humanos para las misiones en el presente y en el futuro, y por ello es que hicimos un taller de cómo crear un movimiento misionero en las iglesias hispanas.

Necesitamos pararnos junto a estos pastores y dejarles saber que estamos ahí para ellos, con nuestros recursos, pero más que nada con una amistad real y palpable. El lenguaje puede ser una barrera, pero el amor trasciende cualquier barrera del lenguaje. Ellos sabrán que usted les ama, cuando le vean allí junto a ellos, entendiendo sus corazones. Vamos a servir juntos "¡con ganas!"

ENGLISH

SPANISH



Church Planters Wives Retreat

The first-ever Church Planters' Wives Retreat was held last summer in August. Its purpose was to renew and refresh the body, mind, and soul of these precious women.



CHURCH PLANTING

On the Journey Together

What a joyful event as 39 church planters' and church planting strategists' wives greeted each other at the first-ever Church Planters' Wives Retreat on August 23-24, 2013. Planter dads held down the fort at home as their wives spent precious time away to be renewed and refreshed in body, mind, and soul. The retreat was offered at no cost to the ladies because of SBCV churches' generous giving through the Cooperative Program and the *Vision Virginia* State Missions Offering.

The guest speaker was one of our very own—Christine Hoover, who serves alongside her husband, Kyle, at Charlottesville Community Church. Christine has just published her first book, *The Church Planting Wife: Help and Hope for Her Heart*, in which she shares her first years as a “newbie” to church planting.

Comments from the planters' wives who attended best describe how invaluable the retreat was to them:

“The weekend was so good—I was able to fellowship with several women I'd never met before but felt welcome to learn, encourage, and take away wisdom to come home better equipped for the mission field.”

“Again I want to express my appreciation to you and the team for offering the retreat free of charge. This played a significant role in my decision to attend. The retreat revealed that I'm not alone in my challenges, struggles, and disappointments. The retreat came at a critical time when I struggled to trust God's love and care amidst recurring personal and ministry challenges.”

“As a newcomer to this church planting endeavor (started in July 2013), I was immensely blessed and encouraged by the time with the other church planters' wives. In many ways,



**Disaster
Relief**

details
available
at
sbcv.org/dr

2014 Training Dates

Equipping volunteers to confidently respond in times of crisis, our training provides the credentials necessary to serve on the front lines as we partner with FEMA, The Salvation Army, Red Cross, IMB, NAMB, and other SBC state conventions.

Here's a list of regional training opportunities in 2014:

- March 1 - Lynchburg
- March 8 - Bristol
- March 15 - Centreville
- March 22 - Hampton
- May 3 - Boones Mill
- June 28 - Richmond





encouragement

God used it to help me reevaluate my thinking in terms of support to my husband and my roles/responsibilities in these early days/months. The event also was a wonderful opportunity to connect with other women who live near us. I have already met up with one of them and hope to connect again with others. I praise the Lord for the SBCV's generosity and thoughtfulness in hosting this event. May God bear much fruit from it in the years to come!"

"The retreat was a wonderful and much-needed retreat for me. It was spiritually and emotionally refreshing to meet and room with other church planters' wives. I frequently communicate with a few of the wives I met at the retreat. I pray that the SBCV would consider doing this again. We so appreciate their kindness and thoughtfulness."

"We are not in this alone..." We are doing this, sacrificing for a greater purpose. We can't always see the big picture, but there is one and God sees it. Trust Him."

"For me, one of the highlights of the weekend was the time spent with the women at our table in discussion. I really liked Christine's format—listen for a bit then share around our tables. I think it was just encouraging to hear what God is doing in each of these new churches and to get ideas from one another as well as perspective. I'm so glad it was set up in this way and that I was able to connect to three other church planters' wives in the Northern Virginia area!"

Old friendships were renewed, new friendships were established, and everyone returned home to their husbands, children, and the ministry to which He has called them. They were encouraged and refreshed, truly knowing that they are not alone in this church planting journey. Thank you for your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the *Vision Virginia* State Missions Offering that made this retreat possible.

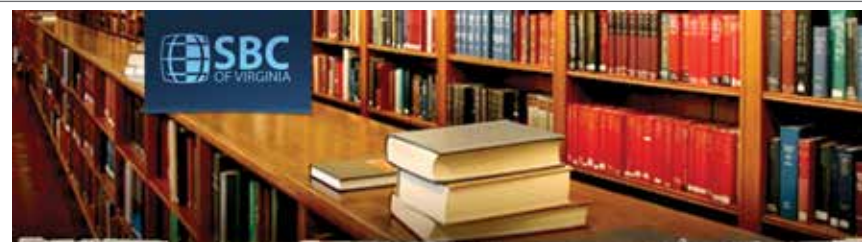
The retreat came at a critical time when I struggled to trust God's love and care amidst recurring personal and ministry challenges. ”



HIKER SUPPLIES FOR TRAIL DAYS

March-April

details available at sbcv.org/do



CHRISTIAN LIBRARIES FOR OVERSEAS


April-May

details available at sbcv.org/do



Red Bag Special:

Fellowship Community Church Salem



James and Stacy Howard were ecstatic when their son, Conner, walked to the front of the church and picked up a red bag. A member of the Red Bag Team, Conner's dad was nearby and took the opportunity to lead his son to receive Christ as his Savior. Remembering that moment, he says, "I can't think of a greater experience for a parent."


Most churches work hard to get non-believers into their worship services to hear the Good News but struggle with "drawing the net"—leading them to receive Christ. Fellowship Community Church, where Ken Nienke serves as senior pastor, has found a strategy that's seeing great success.

In March of 2013, Fellowship's outreach/missions pastor, Bill Fuller, led the church to initiate the Red Bag Ministry as a comprehensive witnessing and assimilation tool. Red bags containing information about the church, a New Testament, next-step information, and a *Steps to Peace with God* tract are placed at the front of the worship center, and those wanting more information are encouraged to pick up a bag on their way out. Red Bag Team members are strategically placed and trained to notice who takes a bag, intercept the person, and offer to explain what's in the bag.

Pastor Bill points out, "Using the Red Bag Ministry during the worship service makes perfect sense because the most difficult barriers have already been overcome." The visitor has already attended the service, listened to the sermon, and walked forward to pick up a bag. As team members strike up conversations with those carrying red bags, it's natural and easy to use the tract to share the Gospel and collect contact information. Team Leader Joel Kirby, also known as "the red bag junkie," testifies, "I have never had a single person refuse to give contact information after praying to receive Christ."

"The success of the ministry," explains Pastor Bill, "is that non-staff church members are responsible for implementation. They are taught how to use the materials and empowered to lead unsaved people to Christ." The new believer makes a new acquaintance and will later be contacted by another member with encouragement and opportunities to connect with the church. "We understand that evangelism is about making disciples, which requires follow-up designed to connect the new believer to the church through ministry."

With nearly 100 baptisms at Fellowship Community Church in the first eight months of the Red Bag Ministry, this approach to evangelism and assimilation is seeing bountiful fruit. To God be the glory!



RESOURCE

WEBSITE
fclifesalem.org



BREAKOUT SESSIONS

- Backyard Kids Club*
- Evangelizing and Follow-up Counseling of Children
- Including Children with Special Needs in Your Children's Ministry
- VBS Administrative Leadership for Pastors and Directors
- VBS Bible Study (Grades 1-4)*
- VBS Bible Study (Grades 5-6)*
- VBS Crafts*
- VBS Mission Rotation*
- VBS Music*
- VBS Preschool*
- VBS Recreation*
- VBS Snack Rotation*
- VBS Students*

*VBS breakouts use LifeWay's Agency D3 curriculum.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- AWANA Leaders
- Children's Church Leaders
- Children's Ministry Leaders
- Pastoral Staff
- Special Event Leaders
- Sunday School Teachers
- VBS Teams (no matter what curriculum!)

WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Worship rally with children's praise team
- Breakouts
- Make & takes
- Drawings for Children's Ministry-related gift cards, VBS starter kits, and more...



sbcv.org/kidz

MARCH 29, 2014
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM

GROVE AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH
8701 RIDGE ROAD, RICHMOND, VA 23229

On December 20, 1896, a small group of Christians in the Attoway community established a church when they recognized the need for a place for worship and the support of missions. Over 117 years later, Falling Water Baptist Church in Marion, VA is still supporting missions because, as Pastor Jerry Creasy points out, “it’s a command from God.”

About three years ago, the Women’s Ministry at Falling Water started feeding the patients and staff at the Smyth County Free Clinic once a month. “This is a little mission of the church,” says Pastor Jerry. “We’re trying to help people. Jesus said to his disciples, ‘you feed them,’ so here we are.”

“Falling Water Baptist Church was so thoughtful in providing food for the staff and patients,” says Nurse Lisa Mitchell, who works at the clinic. This past December, the church went even further and also provided coats, hats, and gloves for the patients.

Falling Water Baptist Church

reaches out to the needy by cooking meals and doing light repair and yard work. They

have also hosted backyard Bible clubs in rural areas of Kentucky, South Carolina, Maryland, and West Virginia, sharing the name of Jesus and the wonderful salvation story wherever the Lord takes them.

This past year, Falling Water held a baby shower for the Abortion Alternatives and Crisis Pregnancy Center in Bristol, TN. The director of the center and a client attended to receive the gifts. Church members donated blankets, diapers, wipes, bottles, toys, and baby clothes. These items will help those who have chosen to bring their babies into the world and will let them know they are not alone.

Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 25:35, “For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in” (HCSB). In the same way, the members of Falling Water are seeking to meet the needs of the hurting people in their community. Will you do the same in yours?

MATTHEW 25:35, “For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in.” (HCSB)



visionvirginia calendar

FEBRUARY

Regional Pastor Fellowships

Mission Projects: Quilting Materials for IMB Missionaries/Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

- 6 Church Planter Network (Statewide)
- 18 Prayer Summit
- 22 Iron Sharpens Iron, First BC, Roanoke
- 28–1 PLANT, Part B

MARCH

Regional Pastor Fellowships

Mission Projects: Annie Armstrong Easter Offering/Hiker Supplies for Trail Days

- 1 Disaster Relief Training (Central-West)
- 7–8 Wildfire Men’s Conf., Thomas Road BC, Lynchburg
- 8 Iron Sharpens Iron, Spotswood BC, Fredericksburg
- 8 Disaster Relief Training (Southwest)
- 11 Empowered Conference with Dr. Fred Luter, Liberty BC, Hampton
- 15 Women’s Ministry Conference, Richmond
- 15 Disaster Relief Training (North)
- 21–22 YEC West, First BC, Roanoke
- 22 Disaster Relief Training (Southeast)
- 25–26 Metro DC Vision Tour
- 29 VBS Super Conference

APRIL

Regional Pastor Fellowships

Mission Projects: Hiker Supplies for Trail Days/Christian Libraries for Overseas

- 8 Ministry Assistants’ Luncheon—East
- 10 Ministry Assistants’ Luncheon—West
- 11–12 Disaster Relief Training (Pennsylvania)
- 13 Palm Sunday
- 20 Easter
- 23 Ministry Assistants’ Day



Brandon Pickett

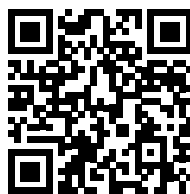
bpickett@sbcv.org
facebook.com/brandon.pickett
@brandonpick

ARE YOU READY?

Anyone else have trouble keeping up with your email inbox? It seems just as quickly as I get one email answered, another two pop up. Add to that keeping up with social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.), and it seems we are on a giant merry-go-round of digital questions and conversations. Recently, as I was lamenting the exponentially rising number of emails coming in, I saw something that caught my attention. It had to do with a non-profit that went to Haiti and had some people there read exact quotes from people in America who were commenting on their pet peeves or concerns. It's called, "First World Problems Aren't Problems." If you'd like to watch it, you can follow the link or scan the QR code on this page.

At the exact moment I was thinking about the "First World problem" of my email inbox, this video convicted me. Watching those who have next to nothing read the things we say really put things in perspective. Not long after that, during what's been called the "Polar Vortex" around Virginia and the country, I was concerned about our house, family, vehicles, and things like that. Then SBC of Virginia's Disaster Relief director, Jack Noble, sent out an email (I know, another email, right?) that reminded us to think of those in our community who may need help and heat during the extreme cold. It jerked me out of thinking of my own world and made me take inventory of those around me to see if I could be of help to them.

When we have our eyes and thoughts on ourselves and our "First World problems," it's very hard to think of how we could help anyone else. But when we realize how much God has given us and how we could use those resources to be a blessing to others, true contentment takes place (Phil. 2:3-5).



tinyurl.com/HaitiQuotes

During the next year, you'll see and hear more about "Ready Church." It's a ministry that helps churches and church members make themselves ready to help those in their community. While Disaster Relief volunteers help those who are directly impacted by natural disasters (floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.), Ready Church volunteers are always on alert for what their neighbors and community may need (food, clothes, help after a fire or a weather event, etc.). It's being the hands and feet of Jesus to those in our neighborhoods as we share the love and Gospel of Jesus (Matthew 25:35-40).

"First World problems" may not really be problems when we compare them to the struggles of the rest of the world. But if it's a disaster to a neighbor, it should be a disaster to us. We have the opportunity to share the Good News and show our community how the body of Christ cares.

innovative faith resources



VIDEOS
BRANDING
INNOVATIVE SITES
INNOVATIVE APPS

WATCH YOUR VISION TAKE FLIGHT



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Featuring
**Dr. Fred Luter &
Dr. Alvin Reid**

EMPOWERED conference

March 11, 2014

Liberty Baptist Church, Hampton

*A conference for pastors, staff,
and church leaders*

get the latest info online

sbcv.org/events