

# PROCLAIMER



## Reaching the Unreached

Through the years in Zimbabwe



## Servolution

Cultivating a heart to serve  
others in Jesus' name

## What Is Ready Church?

Opportunities to minister to your  
community

Telling About the Amazing Things  
God Is Doing Through His Church

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## Brian Autry

Executive Director, SBC of Virginia

# What Kind of Father Is God?

The SBC of Virginia is tasked with assisting churches in their task of the Great Commission. We are often known for helping churches with stewardship, church planter resources, youth camps, and mission strategies. However, in this article, I want to respond to a personal, relational, and spiritual question: What kind of Father is God?

Across America, we celebrate Father's Day in June. For some, the word *father* is painful or even meaningless. Yet it is a sacred trust and responsibility to be a father. The Lord Jesus was radical in referring to Almighty God as *Father*. Therefore, I hope to be of encouragement to earthly fathers, as well as point all people to our eternal Father.

In the entire Old Testament over thousands of years, God is only referred to as *Father* seven times. Jesus referred to God as *Father* seven times in Matthew 6 alone. In His life and in the gospels, He talked about God being our *Father* over 150 times. He said this is how God wants to relate to you.

God is a **CARING FATHER**. He is compassionate, loving, gracious, and He cares about you. In fact, He loves you more than you will ever know. He loves you more than you will be able to experience. You can't even understand how much God loves you because your brain isn't big enough to handle it. The Bible tells us in Psalm 104, "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who honor Him." God is caring. God is compassionate.

God is a **CONSISTENT FATHER**. You can count on Him every time. He never lets you down. He's always dependable—entirely consistent in who He is. God is worthy of our trust. James 1:17 says, "Every good and perfect gift is from the Father, who does not change like shifting shadows." The truth is, earthly fathers are unpredictable. God is a consistent Father. God is not moody. God never has a bad day.

God is a **COMPETENT FATHER**. He can handle any problem you give Him. Nothing is beyond His ability. Nothing is beyond His resources. The Bible says in Luke 1:37, "For nothing is impossible with God." Nothing is impossible. He can handle it all because He is competent.

May the earthly fathers in our churches and communities be strengthened as they seek the eternal Father.

To God be the glory!

*Brian Autry*



# CONTENTS

## Overflow .....04

YEC motivated students to talk about Jesus with others.

## Ironman 3.0 .....05

A “soul scientist” manages his time in three areas: family, pastorship, and soil science.

## Serving Across Virginia..... 06-07

Winners of the 2013 Christmas Outreach Idea Contest

## A Day of Encouragement.....09

More than 400 people from across Virginia, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania attended the Empowered Conference.

## Chocolate for the Soul ..... 12-13

Women gathered to fall in love with God all over again.

## Servolution ..... 22-23

Serving others is about cultivating a heart to serve in Jesus’ name. Jesus was the greatest servant the world has ever known.

## Going Deeper with God .....24

Steps that make it possible to go to the next level as a Christian, a church, or a convention.

## Birthday Greetings Encourage Billy Graham .....25

A minister of the Gospel is blessed by the encouragement of God’s people.

## features



### 10 ACTS 1:8 NETWORK



### 14 READY CHURCH



### 16 HIDDEN HEROES



### 18 PRAYER



### 20 CHURCH PLANTING



# YEC



OVER FLOW  
It is out of the abundance of the heart  
that the mouth speaks. Luke 6:45



In Luke 6:45, Jesus said, “It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.”

**When it comes to evangelism, it is not merely something we do—instead, it flows out of something we are. Too often, evangelism is viewed as merely learning and using some sort of presentation—the use of a tract or colored bracelet, etc. While these things can prove helpful, if they aren’t accompanied by the abundant life of a personal walk with Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, these tools can be perceived as a gimmick by those with whom they are shared.**

The goal of this year’s SBCV Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC) was to motivate and instruct students on how to walk with Jesus and how to talk about Him with others. The weekend featured discipleship training and a unique evangelism opportunity. Matt Lawson, student pastor at First Baptist Church of Woodstock, GA, provided excellent teaching to students and hosted an additional meeting with youth pastors and youth leaders. He challenged students by describing the difference between potential effectiveness and actual effective-

ness and how students could pursue actual effectiveness in their walk with Christ and relationships with friends.

Each of the two YEC venues (Virginia Beach and Roanoke) featured a concert with an evangelistic thrust. In the east, rising star Canon entertained guests with his speedy and rich lyrical flow. He’s a budding young hip-hop artist who has been touring with the likes of Lecrae for the past few years. In the west, Andy Mineo, hit the stage. Andy is one of the most exciting new talents in Christian hip-hop, having been voted the 2013 Album and Artist of the Year by Rapzilla.com. These concerts were not just an opportunity for entertainment, as students were challenged to invite friends to join the concert either live or via live streaming on the web. Each concert featured a clear Gospel presentation with an opportunity to respond. SBC of Virginia’s Innovative Faith Resources team set up the live streaming, which allowed the attendance to increase by 10 percent.

Citizen Way led our students in worship and shared some of their radio hits. Their love for people and the Lord was contagious as they greeted people in the foyers before each session. They were a remarkable addition to the YEC lineup, and we are so excited to welcome them to Studentz Camp this summer (James Madison University, July 21-25).

Our Virginia Beach event (YEC East) was hosted by London Bridge Baptist Church, where 983 attended and 94 more joined us via live streaming. Over the course of the event, 47 people made public decisions for Jesus.

First Baptist Church of Roanoke hosted YEC West with 525 in attendance. Another 252 joined us as we welcomed Andy Mineo in concert.

Stay tuned for next year’s YEC dates soon to be published on [sbcv.org/studentz](http://sbcv.org/studentz). Start making plans to bring a group of students from your church!

# Ironman 3.0

## At work:

Greg Hammer, a soil scientist by trade



“...IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, I GET UP AND DIG INTO GOD’S WORD, BUT ON SUNDAY, I GET TO DIG FOR SOULS.”

## He’s an ironman of sorts—

not the flying-suit kind or the tri-athlete kind, but an ironman nonetheless. His name is Greg Hammer, and he’s the pastor of Blackwater Baptist Church in Virginia Beach. As an ironman athlete excels in three areas, Pastor Greg Hammer does as well. Not only is he a part-time pastor, but he also works full time as a soil scientist with the US Department of Agriculture, a job he’s held for the past 21 years. On top of this, he has a full family life as the dedicated husband of Gay and father of Parker and Smith.

Greg began serving in ministry by preaching in a prison during the week and teaching Sunday School in his church. He later became the pastor of Blackwater Baptist, a small, vibrant country church where he has served for the past 10 years. When asked how he handles the challenges of being a bi-vocational pastor, he uses one word: investment. He realizes he can’t do everything, so he invests in sermon

preparation, praying for the body of Christ, and taking care of his family. He depends upon the deacons to carry out the pastoral care of the church during the week. When the church was considering calling him, he was upfront about what his role would be as pastor. With this understanding, the church called him as pastor and has demonstrated its support for him ever since.

Although he’s a soil scientist by trade, Greg’s work colleagues refer to him as the “soul scientist.” “I’m a person who likes to dig,” says Pastor Greg. “During the week as a soil scientist, I’m a guy who really digs (dirt) soil. During the week in the early morning hours, I get up and dig into God’s Word, but on Sunday, I get to dig for souls.”

Pastor Greg’s biggest challenge is time management. He spends early mornings with the Lord and working on his message for Sunday so he can be with his family when he comes home from work. He refers to his wife, Gay, as his counselor, the one who’s made the biggest sacrifice and whose job as a pastor’s wife is harder than his. “I have great support and love from my wife and kids, people at church, and others praying and encouraging me,” says Pastor Greg. “None of what I do is possible without them and, most importantly, without my Savior. I’m just trying to be faithful and obedient to a God who loves me more than I can imagine.”

Although the nature of juggling three areas of responsibility is challenging, Pastor Greg loves what he does. He wouldn’t say it of himself, but with the armor of God upon him, Pastor Greg’s truly an ironman.



## In the pulpit:

Pastor Greg giving a Christmas message at Blackwater Baptist Church





**Left to right:**

*Christian Life Fellowship serves coffee to the toy store shoppers.*

*Bridgetown Church provides a Christmas party at the Hatcher Center in Danville*

# SERVING ACROSS VIRGINIA

**“** Thank you to the network of SBCV churches and to the leadership of the SBCV for believing in us and for allowing us to be a blessing to the people of the Danville area...”

## CHRISTMAS OUTREACH Bridgetown Church

**First place winner in the 2013 Christmas Outreach Idea Contest (offered to church plants by the SBC of Virginia's Church Planting Team) went to Bridgetown Church in Danville, VA. The contest was a friendly way to encourage community evangelism and share church planters' outreach ideas.**

“[Our outreach idea was] to partner with the Hatcher Center in Danville to provide a Christmas party as a platform for sharing Christ and His love,” says Pastor Jeff Lynch. The Hatcher Center is part of the Arc of Southside and provides meaningful work for developmentally challenged individuals. Pastor Jeff learned that they were tight on funds, so Bridgetown wanted to insure that the center, which has from 150–200 adults on campus, would be able to have a Christmas party. “Now, granted,”

says Pastor Jeff, “this is not an ‘outreach’ event where we go out and put on a party with the end goal being to let people know about our church. Our goal from the very beginning was to show these people the love of Christ. So on the day of the event, we hired a DJ, catered food, and played Santa Claus for them. They had a wonderful time! You should have seen the residents dancing to the music, smiling in line for food, and their anticipation as presents were given out.”

Prior to the actual day of the event, Bridgetown leaders met with the leaders from Hatcher Center to hear their needs. They learned that the center has agents who often work “in the field” and can potentially benefit from digital tablets to assist them with their work. “With this in mind, we determined to use the \$2,000 we received from the SBC of Virginia in a two-fold manner. First, to make sure the residents

had a wonderful Christmas party; and second, we wanted to protect enough of the budget to make a meaningful financial contribution to the Hatcher Center to use at its discretion. At the end of the project, both were accomplished. We presented the leaders with a check for around \$1,400 for the needed tablets. In the end, this bought us some equity with the good people from the Arc of Southside."

"One of the things we're realizing at Bridgetown is that we are gaining a name in our community for these types of events," says Pastor Jeff. "Earlier in December, we hosted a free Brunswick stew event for the people in our community. We cooked 60 gallons of stew and gave it away as 150 people came into our church office for free stew. We have helped individuals with raking leaves, cleaning yards, and by delivering firewood. In February, we had a free hot dog and pinto bean giveaway in our community. These outreach events are being noticed."

"Thank you to the network of SBCV churches and the leadership of the SBCV for believing in us and for allowing us to be a blessing to the people of the Danville area and especially to the folks at the Hatcher Center. Mostly, thanks for allowing us to be Gospel partners with likeminded churches who also believe that Jesus Christ is the answer to the spiritual lostness in our communities."

## Christian Life Fellowship

**Christian Life Fellowship in Jonesville, VA won second place in the contest and**



*Christian Life Fellowship wraps toys as they serve the toy store shoppers.*

**hosted a toy store for the community. Pastor Emery Minton explains, "We gathered brand-new toys donated by our congregation and sold them to families in need at 10% of the cost. The actual cost of the toys was over \$16,000. Selling the toys to parents and legal guardians (often grandparents) rather than donating them gives value to the toys while allowing the parents to provide for their children a gift they couldn't normally afford."**

The event works like this: each entering family provides their contact information, receives shopping guidelines (to insure that there are enough toys to go around), and receives the plan of salvation. Parents then shop with a host who helps them select the best combination of toys for their family (they can only buy a certain amount for each listed child). The host stays with them from the moment they enter the shopping center to the time they exit the building.

The hosts were equipped to share the Gospel and pray for each shopper so that each of the 300 shoppers received a Gospel presentation and had the opportunity to pray with his/her host or other staff personnel. Each room in the church building was transformed into an age-appropriate store.

The \$1,600 raised by the toy store went to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, and the church made certain to explain to the families and everyone involved where the money would go. This event is expensive to host due to its growing popularity and

the recent economic decline in the area. Coal mines and the local hospital have shut down, causing more people to depend on the church's toy store to help provide Christmas for their children. The store is a wonderful blessing to those who participate and somewhat of a miracle to those it supports.

Thanks to the network of SBC of Virginia churches, Christian Life Fellowship was able to bless families in the Appalachian Region with a Christmas they thought they'd never be able to afford.

**"I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all." ~ Romans 1:8**

 **Resource**  
WEBSITES  
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# visionvirginia

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## But that's not all.

*Vision Virginia* is also the people that all of these ministries help—and those who serve in churches all across the state. *Vision Virginia* only exists because people do. After all, God loves people, and His mission for the Church is to love people and help them build a relationship with Him through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

*Vision Virginia* is the mission field, but it's also the mission force, called and empowered by a missions-hearted God.

Learn more: [sbcv.org/visionvirginia](http://sbcv.org/visionvirginia)





Empowered  
CONFERENCE



## A DAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

More than 400 people from across Virginia and places in North Carolina and Pennsylvania attended the Empowered Conference. This was a first annual event for the SBC of Virginia and was hosted at Liberty Baptist Church in Hampton. It was a time of fellowship and encouragement that included two nationally known speakers and music led by the Liberty Baptist Church praise team.

Dr. Brian Autry, executive director of the SBC of Virginia, welcomed guests: "How encouraging it is to see loved ones from our different churches gathered here on this one day for a great day of fellowship and encouragement and being empowered around the Word of God through prayer and by the Holy Spirit."

Dr. Fred Luter was one of the guest speakers. He serves as senior pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans and is president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Luter is the first ever African-American elected as SBC president.

"I want to finish well," said Dr. Luter, after sharing that he has only a few months remaining as SBC president. "I want to finish strong. God has blessed the first 19 months of this administration of leading this convention and just putting the focus back on evangelism and revival and bringing our churches together to bring about the Great Commission for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Pastor Grant Ethridge at Liberty Baptist Church is a close friend of Luter and personally invited him to speak. "It is an honor to have the first African-American president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Dr. Fred Luter, to meet with us," said Ethridge. "Dr. Luter has a pastor's heart.

He has poured his life into reaching his city, New Orleans, where he was born."

Dr. Alvin Reid, evangelism professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, was a guest speaker and shared from the pulpit, "The way to help people understand the Gospel is not to give them as little of the Gospel as quickly as we can with people we already know but to invest in people, develop a community with them, and show them the greatness and the glory of the Gospel and how it affects everything in life, not just my church life."

"You don't get too many chances like this to hear incredible speakers," said Marty Terrell, who attended. "SBCV is doing us a great service to provide this kind of opportunity."

Joy Evans, an SBC of Virginia church planter's wife, attended the event and said, "It has changed my view on church planting. First, it was scary, and now it is exciting. So this was really encouraging. I've met a lot of church planters' wives that I wouldn't have met before if I hadn't gone to this."

"It is God's design and desire that we, as His sons and daughters, will be empowered to carry out the work and will of God," said Luter.

The SBC of Virginia is planning now the 2015 Empowered Conference with another great lineup of guest speakers and worship leaders.

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# Reaching the Unreached

## Through the Years in Zimbabwe

### Go

GraceLife works with ACTS, an Africa-based ministry that provides transportation, meals, bush camps (everything provided except your sleeping bag). Although you would be working and staying in the bush, most of your needs would be provided by ACTS.



### 2011

Minutes after his election as president of the International Mission Board on March 16, 2011, Tom Elliff vowed to challenge Southern Baptists to engage all of the estimated 3,800 people groups worldwide who still have not been touched by the Gospel. He issued a challenge for every Southern Baptist church to engage an unengaged/unreached people group (UUPG).

Pastor Tim Hight of GraceLife Baptist Church in Christiansburg, VA heard this challenge at both the Southern Baptist Convention that June and at the SBC of Virginia's Annual Homecoming that November (when Tom Elliff was installed as IMB president). After Annual Homecoming, Pastor Tim asked GraceLife to begin praying about the possibility of engaging a UUPG to see where God would lead. Jim Rice (retired IMB missionary to Kenya) came forward, sensing God's call to help facilitate the process.

### 2012

In February 2012, Jim Rice attended a Sub-Saharan Africa Base Camp Summit in Montgomery, AL, where he was exposed to the Ndau people group and a possible partnership with the Zimbabwe Baptist Convention (ZBC). After continued prayer for God's leading, GraceLife began exploring the possibility of a vision trip to Zimbabwe.

In August 2012, Pastor Tim, Jim, and Chris Webb flew to Zimbabwe to meet with IMB personnel, ZBC leaders, and several Ndau pastors to consider the needs of this UUPG. The team visited several villages looking for those with no evangelical witness.

"On our first visit to the village of Mogundi," Pastor Tim recalls, "11 village elders who heard the Gospel responded with a desire to follow Christ." The Lord has since raised up a local man to

lead the new believers. Through subsequent visits by nationals to Mogundi and by God's grace, 75 more people have given their lives to Christ and 54 have been baptized! A new church has now been planted in that remote village of about 4,000 people.

In December 2012, GraceLife voted to officially adopt or "embrace" the Ndau people of Zimbabwe and continued to seek God's leading in which village to engage.

### 2013

In March 2013, Zimbabwe leaders and IMB personnel identified the village of Zamuchiya as a well-populated area with no evangelical witness.

August 2013 marked the first GraceLife trip to Zamuchiya with a team of four to do house-to-house visitation and hold evening evangelistic meetings at the local school building. During this trip, there were 63 professions of faith,

followed by 35 more during the next trip that October. Within a couple of months, a school teacher came to live in the village who has some pastoral experience. He is now meeting regularly with 25–30 people in Zamuchiya. Another provision from the Lord and another church plant among the Ndau!

### 2014

This year, GraceLife will make four trips to the village of Zamuchiya for evangelism and discipleship among the Ndau. The last census reported that there are approximately 455,000 Ndau in this area of Zimbabwe, and there are, to our knowledge, only about 8–10 evangelical churches reaching these people.

Would your church pray about partnering with GraceLife Baptist Church to reach the Ndau or embrace a UUPG of your own? Is serving in Zimbabwe easy? No, but God did not call us to the easy—He called us to the nations.



## THE NDAU OF ZIMBABWE

**Population: 499,000**

*They are part of the Bantu/Shona people cluster.*

**Gobal population: 622,000**

**Primary language: Nda**

**Primary religion: Ethnic**

*Ethnic religion is deeply rooted in a people's ethnic identity, and conversion essentially equates to cultural assimilation.*

**GSEC (Global Status of Evangelical Christianity): 2**

*This people group is less than 2% evangelical but there has been initial or concentrated church planting among them within the past two years.*

## Resource

### CONTACT

For more information on serving in Zimbabwe, contact Mark Gauthier at [mgauthier@sbcv.org](mailto:mgauthier@sbcv.org)

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# Chocolate for the Soul

On January 4, 2014, the SBC of Virginia Women's Ministry partnered with Rosedale Baptist Church in Abingdon to host a one-day women's event, *Chocolate for the Soul*. More than 500 women gathered at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center to laugh, learn, and fall in love with God all over again. More refreshing than a box of chocolates, the day was filled with sweet fellowship, satisfying fun, and rich, biblical insight.

The guest speaker for the day was author and former Mrs. United States, Sheri Rose

Shepherd. Sheri Rose grew up in a dysfunctional home and was severely overweight as a teenager. As a young woman, she battled depression and struggled with an eating disorder. She recognizes the hurt that comes from a painful past but also realizes the healing that comes through having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. She went from being a girl from a broken home to the daughter of the King of kings and Lord of lords—as she calls herself, *His princess*. To learn more about Sheri Rose Shepherd, visit her website at [hisprincess.com](http://hisprincess.com).



IT WAS A GREAT DAY FROM BEGINNING TO END!  
Christie Christian, Tazewell, VA ”



Pastor Don Paxton and his wife, Teena, welcome women from around the Southwest Region of Virginia to the Women's Conference.





## Sweet Testimonials

*"Sheri Rose Shepherd definitely provided 'chocolate for my soul.' Because of what the Lord has brought her through, she has the ability to relay God's love to women from many walks of life."*

Kim Harold, Abingdon, VA

*"My spirit was fed and my heart was warmed by Sheri Rose Shepherd's amazing testimony. I was inspired by her arsenal of life experiences and how she could relate to and offer hope to women*

*who battle everything from a broken home to depression to a learning disorder. Chocolate for the Soul was more than satisfying—I was drenched in her sheer joy for the Lord. The conference was in a beautiful setting, and the speaker was top-notch—I left that day knowing that my Saturday morning was well spent."*

Rowena Black, Appalachia, VA

## Sweet Time to Come

Mark your calendars now for **January 10, 2015**, when Sheri Rose Shepherd will return to Southwest Virginia for a second women's conference:

***Beautiful Beginnings—  
a Time to Rejuvenate  
Mind, Body, and Spirit!***

Visit [sbcv.org/women](http://sbcv.org/women) for more details as they become available.



① Sheri Rose Shepherd had much to offer the women with her words of inspiration and hope in God's abundant love and His provision.

② *Chocolate for the Soul* began with a time of worshiping our Lord in song and preparing hearts for a touch from God.

③ Thanks go to the behind-the-scenes ladies, (l-r) Rosemary Stockley and Jan Stapleton, who worked together to make this conference become a reality for the entire Southwest Region of the state.





## What Is a Crisis?

An event or situation that causes human suffering or creates human needs that those impacted cannot alleviate without assistance.

## What Does God's Word Tell Us About Being Ready?

Titus 3:1c says to be "ready for every good work," and Titus 3:14 tell us, "let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful."

## How Can We Become a Ready Church?

Email [readychurch@sbcv.org](mailto:readychurch@sbcv.org) to discover the next Ready Church training event or to schedule a consultation for your church. Individual church consultations require the attendance of at least 10 people and a decision maker/pastor. Although not everyone in the church needs to be trained, at least a few of your core leaders should be trained.

get excited as the snowplows head out and begin to clear the roads, allowing paths for traffic to move. But the road clearing can actually cause another crisis. Families with only eight inches of snow in their yards can end up with as much as two feet of snow-packed ice at the end of their driveways. Eight inches of snow is often more than the elderly and sick can handle, but two feet of ice is an insurmountable barrier.

Fortunately, Jim Redick, Norfolk's director of emergency preparedness and response, had an idea for assisting hundreds of impacted families. He asked the volunteer community to become "snow buddies" for a few days and assist neighbors in digging out of their homes. The SBC of Virginia Ready Church team joined up with Operation Blessing and provided the labor to remove the snow deposited in front of hundreds of homes. Southern Baptist volunteers came from First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Liberty Baptist Church in Hampton, and North Main Baptist Church in Danville to join Jim's snow buddies.

Two of those volunteers were high school teachers Robert Globke and Nathan Noble. Out of school for the day because of weather, they decided to use their day off as a day of service. Robert teaches technology and is close to retirement. He used this event as part of the transition into being able to provide more of his time to his community and church. Nathan is just three years into his career of teaching geometry and says, "I just enjoy getting out of the house on snowy days, serving people, and getting a good workout."

Ready Churches across Virginia not only shoveled snow but provided portable heaters and checked on at-risk people. Ready Churches are committed to meeting the crisis needs of their community no matter the temperature or the size of the crisis.

# What Is Ready Church?

**A church that commits to respond to crisis needs in its community with an equal commitment to sharing the Gospel is a Ready Church. The commitment is the critical ingredient—not resources, buildings, or talents.**

## SNOW BUDDIES

This winter, two high school teachers became Ready Church "snow buddies" in the City of Norfolk. Inclement weather has the ability to bring our modern-day transportation system to a halt. Emergency managers



## RESPONSE OPPORTUNITIES

### Go Team



A group of people at the local church who have committed to respond in times of need in their local community under the direction of the church. There is no prescribed training required, and the minimum age of those responding is determined by the church. The team members respond to the crisis or event wearing the church's name and logo.

### Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR)



Church volunteers who join others from SBC of Virginia churches who are prepared to respond across the state and around the nation. This type of volunteer is required to attend a one-day training event, have a background check, and participate in re-credentialing every three years. This team member responds under the direction of the state Disaster Relief director and wears the SBDR gold shirt, hat, and logo. An SBDR volunteer must be at least 18 years old.

### Baptist Global Response (BGR)



Volunteers who have SBDR credentials and the ability to respond in cross-cultural situations without the luxuries often found in disaster responses in the United States. These volunteers must attend a three-day BGR training event. They are dispatched by the state Disaster Relief director but are under the control and direction of BGR directors. Each particular event determines the labeling for the event. At times, volunteers may be asked to respond wearing the SBDR gold shirt and logo, a BGR logo, or a non-descript "Community Foundation, Inc." logo. BGR volunteers must be at least 18 years old.

### Southern Baptist Disaster Rebuild



Church volunteers who join others from across the nation in responding to the rebuilding efforts after significant disasters.

There is no training for this team. Call-outs for these volunteers are posted online at [www.sbcv.org/readychurch](http://www.sbcv.org/readychurch). Volunteers can expect to rebuild homes for those impacted by the crisis/event. They respond as directed under their church's logo and name; SBDR logo and gold shirt; or some name developed just for the event. The age of the responders is determined by the locale, but for the most part, those 16 years and older are eligible.

## HOW?

**How can my church minister to the community throughout the year?**

**Opportunities throughout the year to minister to your community:**

**JANUARY** – When the temperature drops below freezing, check on folks to verify their heat is working.

**FEBRUARY** – Go out into your neighborhood and remove snow and ice from the driveways of the elderly, sick, or deployed.

**MARCH** – Assist families with the removal of trees and other debris that may have fallen during the winter.

**APRIL** – Assist families in waterproofing their homes from April showers.

**MAY** – Prepare and train your Ready Church team.

**JUNE** – Discover and help children who may not get a single nutritious meal a day because school is out.

**JULY** – When the temperature becomes excessive, provide a daytime cooling shelter.

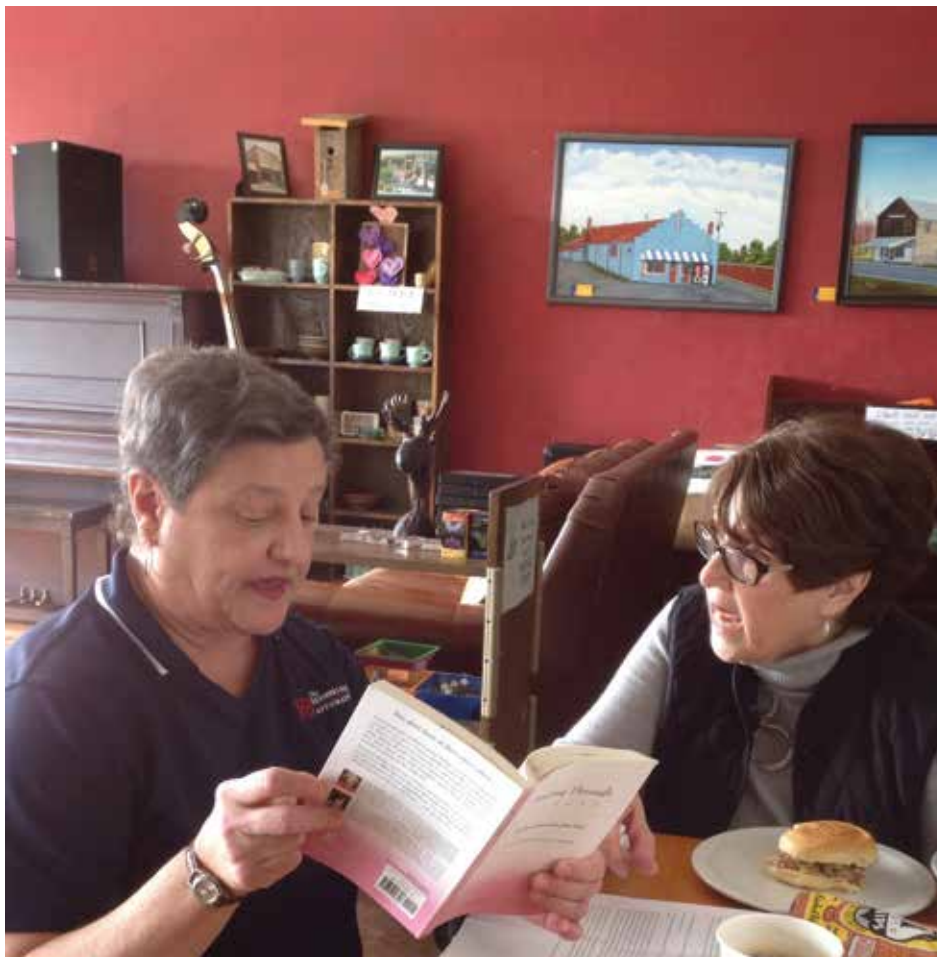
**AUGUST** – Ask the school closest to your church what needs you can help meet. Then begin meeting those needs.

**SEPTEMBER** – Check on families who may be suffering from an empty nest after summer weddings or school having started.

**OCTOBER** – Assist neighbors with the removal of leaves.

**NOVEMBER** – Provide a local food bank with needed supplies for the holidays or discover and meet a need on your own.

**DECEMBER** – Assist families with basic insulation for their windows and doors.



Mary Staples (holding the book) listens as Mary Ann Matthews shares encouraging words.

Cindy Bollinger, the local chairman for Relay for Life, and discovered there were a number of women in Appomattox County that had been diagnosed.

Mary and her friends decided to contact these women and offer encouragement through Bible studies and quarterly support meetings, providing each a “Joy” gift bag filled with a devotional book, *Journey* magazine, and various items to let them know someone understood and was praying for them. The bags were generously supplied by the women of Evergreen Baptist Church. “We [wanted to] let them know we had a ministry for them and that they could come to our support meetings and be ministered to by other cancer survivors,” explains Mary. “We also gave them the book, *Praying Through Cancer*.”

“Through a friend of mine,” says Mary, “we received the name of a young woman in her mid-30s who had two children and had been diagnosed with cancer. She was going through a difficult time. After being introduced to our ministry, this young woman came to one of our meetings and brought her daughter. She told our mutual friend that when she got better she would like to go to church with her. We didn’t know whether she would get better, so we asked if she would like to have a Bible study in her home. We began to have a Bible study in her bedroom, and she eventually shared with one of the women that she had trusted Christ as her Savior. When her health began to deteriorate very quickly, she was moved into hospice. We just moved the Bible study to the hospice unit, where the cancer eventually took her life.”

Mary recalls, “I remember when my grandmother was diagnosed with cancer. My own mother would never even use the word cancer. She called it the ‘Big C.’ In the book, *Praying Through Cancer*, the writers state it this way:

*Shortly after I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, I received an email from my niece, Suzanne. She was a medical student at the time and is now a surgeon. Her message was simply...“I want the ‘Big C’ (that is, Christ) to conquer the ‘little c,’ which is cancer.”*

Mary explains, “If you know Christ, the ‘Big

# The Big C

## Praying Women Through Cancer

In the last several editions of the *Proclaimer*, we have featured “Hidden Heroes,” individual church members committed to serving the Lord in a unique and often unrecognized way. Ministries have benefitted by their involvement, and many individuals have been served through the ministry of these Hidden Heroes. These men and women are serving the Kingdom in a way that not only impacts the lives of others but also glorifies the Father. So, to encourage fellow believers, it’s our pleasure to tell their stories—stories that may not otherwise be told.

One story is of a ministry for cancer survivors, *Praying Women Through Cancer*, born from the heart of cancer survivors for cancer survivors. Mary Staples has been a member of Evergreen Baptist Church in Appomattox,

VA for over 30 years. As a cancer survivor, she has empathy and a heart for ministering to women who have cancer, who are going through an ordeal she knows all too well. When Mary was diagnosed in 2009, one of her dear friends, Martha Moore (a member of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, VA), gave her a devotional book: *Praying Through Cancer* by Susan Sorensen and Laura Geist. At that time, Martha was going through her second treatment for cancer and told Mary that the book had “meant the world” to her.

Mary and Martha both felt the Lord asking them to use their illness as a platform for ministering to others. With the help of Martha and another friend, Kathryn Woodall, Mary began the *Praying Women Through Cancer* Ministry. The ladies soon contacted



**"IF YOU KNOW CHRIST, THE  
'BIG C,' THEN YOU KNOW THAT  
CANCER IS THE 'LITTLE C.'**

C,' then you know that cancer is the 'little c.' If you know Him, then cancer just becomes another bump in the road."

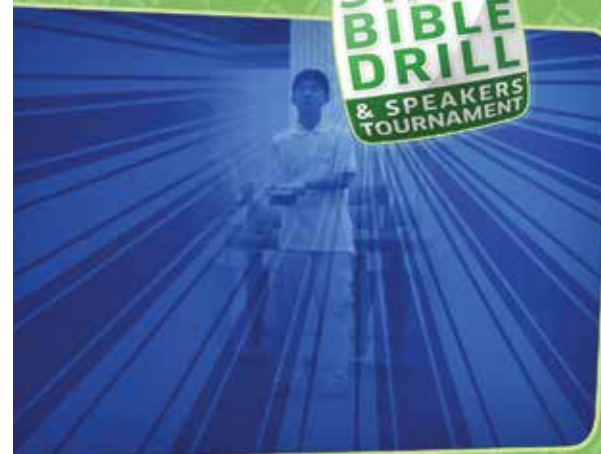
"When one comes to the realization that Christ is everything, then everything else becomes secondary. If you also come to the conclusion that if Christ is enough, then no matter the circumstances, you can survive," says Mary. "In the book, *Praying Through Cancer*, the authors ask the question, 'Is Jesus enough? If cancer does not get cured, is Christ enough?' Philippians 3:7 says, 'I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.'"

Birthered through Mary's own experience with cancer, Praying Women Through Cancer has ministered to over 30 women in various stages of cancer, some of whom have come to know Jesus Christ. Though not all survived cancer, they knew they had the prayers and support of other women who understood. For these women, Mary Staples and her friends in ministry are priceless hidden heroes.



*Martha Moore shares her testimony*

*Children's & Youth  
Statewide Bible Drill  
& Youth Speakers'  
Tournament*



**MAY 17, 2014**

*Beulah Baptist Church  
Lynchburg, VA*

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Pastor James Hinton and his family

Pastor James is passionate about what he calls “shoe leather Christianity.” If what you learn on Sunday morning doesn’t impact and transform the way you walk on Monday, then it is not worth learning.” The Gospel is not just for Sundays—it should transform our lives Monday through Sunday!

## MOSAIC BIBLE CHURCH

PRAYER

# To Live, To Labor, and **Love** for the Glory of God

“

*At Mosaic we are building a faith community that is for the single mom trying to hold it all together... for the single college student that is looking for purpose and meaning, not just success... for the person who has never gone to church and is looking for hope and healing...*

”

Without outside support or funding, Mosaic Bible Church in Winchester, VA was launched in the fall of 2013. How could this occur? It is obvious that the power of prayer is at work in the life of this church.

God led United States Intelligence Officer James Hinton and his family to the Shenandoah area to plant Mosaic Bible Church with this vision: To Live, Labor and Love for the Glory of God. The weight in the balance of the ministry of this new church plant has been placed upon “Gospel-centered masculinity.” Pastor James explains, “At Mosaic, we believe that God has called men to lead and pastor their homes. Our goal is clear and plain—to build great men! This great task is accomplished by cultivating an environment where biblical masculinity is the standard, not the exception, for men.”

As families were being gathered to form the church’s launch team, seven men from these families began to fast and pray for Mosaic Bible Church. As a result, “Unceasing Prayer” became one of the four pillars upon which the church was established, and God gave them a “watchman on the wall” prayer strategy.

This new body of believers has taken to heart what they call the Watchmen Prayer Initiative, based on Isaiah 62:6-7, Ezekiel 3:17-19, and Ezekiel 22:30. “Through this initiative, prayer has become less programmatic and more organic,” says Pastor James. “We pray like we are breathing to commune with God for the lives of the church, community, and world. It is becoming the DNA of the church.”

This prayer initiative has led the church to the following actions:



# PRAYER INITIATIVES



**Intentional calendaring** for prayer and fasting over the neighborhood, families, churches, cities, the state, and the nation for the Kingdom of God



At every barrier in the life of the church, there is a call for **six weeks of prayer and fasting.**



A **Texting Prayer Ministry**, where the church family texts each other with assurance of their prayers for one another



**Prayer warriors and intercessors** standing watch in prayer each week to pray before and during the service for the pastor and the congregation



A monthly gathering of men in Winchester called the “**Gospel Fight Club**”—the group was started by the leadership of Mosaic and seeks to develop men in prayer and brokenness



**Small group prayer** meetings where members pray for the most important life issues—for the growth of believers and the souls of the lost

Participants have shared, “The small group is great, but I’m here for the prayer time. I have seen God manifest His glory and do the impossible through our prayers.”



**Impromptu prayer** whenever needed

For example, the church family paused during a worship service to call a hurting family that had recently visited. They were at a Baltimore hospital with their loved one and needed prayer. The family returned to Mosaic the following week and said, “We know now that you really love us and we can call you our pastor.” They’re now part of the Mosaic Bible Church family.

Mosaic’s focus on prayer naturally draws attacks from the enemy. “The more God pursues men’s hearts, the more fierce the spiritual battle has become,” says Pastor James. “There has been middle-of-the-night spiritual warfare. Yet we have seen Satan bound and God’s glory abound.”

Here are just a few examples of how the Lord has worked at Mosaic through the Watchmen Prayer Initiative:

- ▶ With no outside funding or support, Mosaic Bible Church is **self-supported** and knows only God could have done it.
- ▶ The spirit of prayer is drawing families to the church through **authentic relationships**.
- ▶ **Men desire to be a part of praying** for an outpouring of God’s Spirit and a grassroots revival.
- ▶ The church has partnered with the SBC of Virginia and gives **20% of its income to missions** (10% to the Cooperative Program; 5% to its next church plant; and 5% to community efforts).

So what is Mosaic Bible Church praying for God to do? “Many pastors and churches are more about praying for God’s blessings than His presence,” says Pastor James. “We do not care if there is a future for Mosaic as long as God shows up and builds His Church. The strategy of Mosaic Bible Church is to build disciples one soul at a time and to build godly families one man at a time. Our prayer is that we will focus on building the Kingdom of God.” And that’s what it’s all about.



## Resource

WEBSITE  
mosaicmission.com

# Prayer

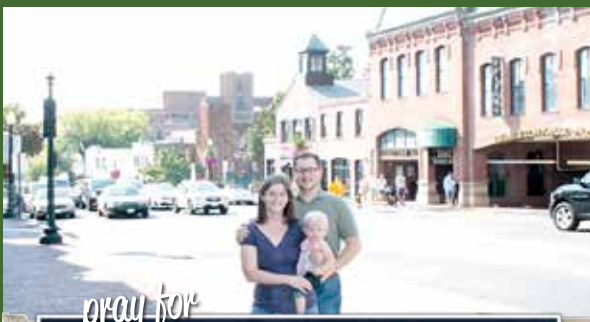
Devote yourselves to prayer... praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ... Colossians 4:2-3 (NASB)

## ► Five Great Ways you can effectively and fervently pray for your church planters\*

- 1 ► Faithfully bring them before the Father in **INTERCESSORY PRAYER**.
- 2 ► Because ministry takes a spiritual, emotional, and physical toll on everyone, pray for the **TOTAL HEALTH OF THE PLANTER AND HIS FAMILY**.
- 3 ► Church planters serve in teams with clear vision and regular accountability. Pray that these diverse **TEAMS WILL WORK TOGETHER WELL** and that their focus will always be on reaching the lost and planting vibrant, healthy churches.
- 4 ► Pray that their vision would not stop with planting their present church, but that they would, in due time, **PLANT OTHER CHURCHES**.
- 5 ► Pray that God would **PROVIDE PARTNERS** to help them fulfill this high calling by walking with them and actively participating with them in ministry and outreach, providing assistance, encouragement, and financial resources.



These church planter prayer cards are available for you to view at [sbcv.org/profiles](http://sbcv.org/profiles). You may also view many other church planter profiles there.



*pray for*  
**The Edwards Family**  
 John, Alaina, Abigail

**DC Fellowship**  
 Georgetown neighborhood, DC

**Prayer Needs**  
*Personal:* Pray for their boldness in sharing the Gospel and that God would save many for His glory.  
*Ministry:* Pray that God would provide an individual to help with worship music.

**Physical Needs**

1. People to assist in the last two weeks of August in preparation for the first public service in the beginning of September
2. Portable sound equipment

dcfellowship.com  
john@dcfellowship.com



*pray for*  
**The Taylor Family**  
 James, Jacquelin, Julia, James, Jaelynn, Joseph

**The Village Church of Portsmouth**  
 2697 Pepperwood Ct., Portsmouth

**Prayer Needs**  
*Personal:* Pray for financial partners to assist with pastoral support.  
*Ministry:* Pray for the leadership team to have strength, focus, wisdom, and discernment.

**Physical Needs**

1. Computers/laptops for middle school and high school tutoring program
2. Help with building repairs (flooring, painting, refinishing walls, shelving)

thevillagechurchportsmouth.org  
pastorjt@thevillagechurchportsmouth.org





# Church Plowing in Western Albemarle County

by **Walt Davis**

Church Planter of Life Journey Church, Crozet

**Walt Davis (SBCV church planter) and Richard Boyce (SBCV church planter apprentice) have seen the benefits of “church plowing” as they’ve planted Life Journey Church in Crozet, VA. Walt shares their story in his own words:**

In March of 2011, we sat in the SBCV office in Glen Allen, VA at Basic Training (now *PLANT*), trying to soak up as much wisdom as possible before moving to Crozet, VA, a suburb of Charlottesville. God was calling us there to plant Life Journey Church. One of the golden nuggets of wisdom that we’ll never forget is fellow planter Chris Dowd’s explanation of “church plowing.” He said that before a church can be planted in the soil of a community, the soil, very likely, will need to be plowed. As any farmer will prepare the soil for planting, the communities in which we plant churches in Virginia may also have hard soil. Western Albemarle County is no different than most counties in our state!

In order to gain trust, rapport, and build key relationships with “people of peace,” we knew that we needed to invest all of our efforts in a variety of “church plowing” initiatives.

Richard and I led our church to plow by the usual servant-focus events like block parties and helping local businesses connect with newer residents. However, one of the church plowing efforts that has yielded exceptional

results is our partnership with the boosters program at the local high school. Just a month or so after we moved to Crozet, we shared the idea of raising money from local businesses and organizations to print 1,000 “spirit shirts” for the biggest home football game of the season and then pass them out at the gate free of charge. Understandably, those in leadership at the school were not as excited as we were—they were somewhat guarded and cautious.

In order to try to further plow, we volunteered to paint one of the concession stands at the football stadium (which sort of stuck out like a sore thumb with its brown paint) in a sea of blue and gold. They permitted us to paint the concession stand and, with some limitations, agreed for us to give away the shirts. Once they saw the success and effect of the event with 1,000 students and fans in the same yellow shirt that was promoting the school and supporting businesses, they were eager to have us repeat it a second year! We have since done it a third year, and it’s now an annual event on the school calendar known as the “Free WAHS Spirit Shirt Giveaway Day.”

Because of the tedious plowing those first years, the school requested to become a part of the event this year. Therefore, we partnered with a division of the Guidance Department, using the t-shirts to focus on the theme of “Students Making Wise Choices as It Relates to Alcohol.”

Further, seeing a need for concession stand volunteers at the game, we coordinated with Liberty University, and they sent 13 of their students to serve concessions during the game, all while wearing Life Journey Church shirts! As if it couldn’t get any better, two of the administrators at our last “plowing game” went out of their way to find us and thank us for the t-shirts and the concession volunteers. One of them even invited me to their home.

There’s much plowing yet to do, but as we stood there watching Life Journey Church serving from the inside of the concession stands (whereas just two years ago we were only serving on the outside as we painted the stand), we were overwhelmed with emotion seeing how God had done a work of plowing soil. Now, we are *in* and *a part* of the community, serving it from the inside out rather than being outsiders trying to get in. There are now several families associated with the football program who call Life Journey Church their home! We know that God is the one who does the plowing of the heart, but He certainly uses us in the process to prepare the way for His Spirit to bring forth life.

“**Now we’re serving from the inside out rather than being outsiders trying to get in.**”



### Matthew 5:16

Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

chair ramp for a widow in need, while another team begins working on a new playground for families in an apartment complex. Throughout the day, different LifeGroups deliver to a local food bank the food they've collected/donated. Then in the evening, a group of ladies provides a night of pampering for women in a local shelter.

What do these various happenings have in common? They are all a part of Servolution, a week-long community service initiative led by BridgePoint Church in Gloucester, VA. Yet, according to Eric Ashley, lead pastor of BridgePoint, Servolution is about much more than a single week of projects.

"Servolution was never meant simply to be an isolated event. Instead, we see it as a way to help the heart of servanthood become a part of the culture of our church. Ultimately, it's about cultivating a heart to serve others in Jesus' name. Jesus was the greatest servant the world has ever known. He not only met the physical needs, but He met our greatest spiritual need by dying in our place for our sins. We want to reflect that same servant heart to our community."

The initial idea for Servolution came after Pastor Eric and his wife, Amy, read a book by the same name, *Servolution: Starting a Church Revolution Through Serving* by Dino Rizzo. "From the start of the church plant, we already knew that serving our community would be an essential part of our strategy to reach Gloucester for Jesus.

# Servolution

Serving others—it's about cultivating a heart to serve others in Jesus' name. Jesus was the greatest servant the world has ever known.

by Eric Ashley

Lead pastor of BridgePoint Church, Gloucester

it's

5:30 AM and a team arrives at a local hospital to serve breakfast to the nurses, doctors, and employees. Hours later, different teams scatter throughout the community in order to serve in various ways. One team works to build a wheel-





As Amy and I read through the book, we were inspired and equipped with practical insights about how we could start our own revolution of serving through our local church.”

“It is so rewarding to see how our people are always on the lookout for ways to serve those outside and inside of the church,” says Pastor Eric. “The love of Jesus is being broadcast through their lives each day.”

In Matthew 5:16, Jesus calls for each of us to “let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven” (HCSB). Here are some steps you can take in order to lead your church to start a Servolution in your church and community:

### 1. IDENTIFY NEEDS

Look around your community to see needs your church can help meet. Ask your congregation and community leaders for ideas. It won’t take much time before you realize that there are many ways you can serve your community.

### 2. SHARE THE VISION

Help your church understand why serving is so important. Preach a sermon series about serving and outreach. Have your leadership team read a book about community service. Lead a small group study. Write a newsletter article. Use whatever means you have in order to communicate the heart behind serving others.

### 3. TAKE A STEP

Servolution does not have to begin with a week-long initiative filled with hundreds of service opportunities. Instead, it can begin with a single church-wide service project or by encouraging each of your small groups or Sunday School classes to participate in a service project. No matter where you start, the important thing is that you take a take a step.

## Resource



#### BOOK

*Servolution: Starting a Church Revolution Through Serving*, by Dino Rizzo

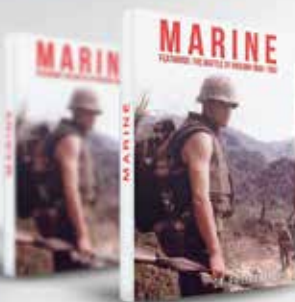
#### WEBSITES

[bridgepoint.cc/paintthetownblue](http://bridgepoint.cc/paintthetownblue)  
[bridgepoint.cc/servolution](http://bridgepoint.cc/servolution)  
[servolution.org](http://servolution.org)

#### ADVERTISEMENT

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GRANT ETHRIDGE

Senior Pastor  
Liberty Baptist Church, Hampton

## A Word from the SBC of Virginia President

# Going Deeper with God

I love the story in Luke 5 where Jesus challenged the disciples to launch out into the deep. If we want to go to the next level as a Christian, a church, or a convention, we must take three steps found in this passage.

### Learn More...

No one has arrived! Jesus was not afraid to try something new! When the crowd grew too large, he improvised. Our Lord preached from a boat! Jesus did what had never been done. He was on the cutting edge! We should make it our goal to be lifelong learners. Go to [sbcv.org](http://sbcv.org) and take advantage of all of the events and resources provided by the SBCV to grow and learn more.

Every church will either have growing pains or dying pains. Whatever the problem, the answer is to kneel at the feet of Jesus. These fishermen were tired, discouraged, and defeated. They had fished all night and caught nothing! No fish meant no food and no money. Washing their nets was a sign that they had quit. Are you tired and exhausted? Sit at the feet of Jesus.

### Launch Out...

It is wonderful to sit at the feet of Jesus, but we listen to launch and grow to go! Peter had to overcome his excuses. They had never done it this way before! Launch out of your comfort zone! Speaking at the Empowered Conference, Dr.

Alvin Reid said, "If 1950 ever comes back, a lot of churches will be ready!"

The SBCV attempted a new approach with the one-day Prayer Summit and the one-day Empowered Conference. Both events were a huge success! I want to commend our executive director, Brian Autry, for being willing to take a "risk" and do something new. The SBCV is a model in the new paradigm shift in the way state conventions have pastors' conferences, evangelism conferences, and the annual meeting.

Peter said, "We have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." You may be tired of fishing in the same spot, or same water, for the same fish. Pastors sometimes get tired of fishing in the same church or same community. They want to move on to different waters. However, God blesses obedience, and the disciples got their net broken! God will not do by miracle what you can do by muscle! They had to let the net down, but only God could fill the net up! We need to launch out in faith and get our net broken! Their boat began to sink. What a way to go down! I challenge SBCV churches to launch out into the deep. Get more boats! Throw the net! Be fishers of men!

Jesus' response to Peter was, "Fear not." Too many churches say they want to catch fish but fishing is messy. They don't want their church or small group to smell like fish! Fish are slimy, but if Jesus

is big enough to catch them, He is big enough to clean them!

### Leave All...

It was not, "Look what we did," but "Look what Jesus did!" Every believer can witness and win others to Jesus! We are here for those who are not yet here! Be willing to change! Fishing for men and casting the net involves doing some things differently.

To some people, fishing is just a hobby. To others, fishing is serious business. It is their livelihood. For the Church of Jesus Christ, fishing is serious business. All a church has to do to go out of business is keep meeting and never win souls.

They "forsook all and followed Him." Are we willing to forsake all tradition, personal preference, and pride in order to launch out and go deeper with God? My prayer is that each of us will learn more, launch out, and leave all for the sake of the Gospel. There is truly no greater calling!

It is a joy to serve alongside you as your SBCV president. I look forward to all that God has in store for this convention in the coming year!

Because of Jesus,

*Dr. Grant Ethridge*  
President, SBC of Virginia





# Birthday Greetings

## Encourage Billy Graham

As a college student in Virginia, I remember reading several biographies on evangelist Billy Graham. Our family would watch his television specials. This past December, I took my family to visit his library in Charlotte.

Now, I think we must always be cautious of putting any person on too high of a pedestal. After all, Billy Graham is a sinner saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. He has shared examples of what he would do differently. He has shared examples of his own shortcomings. However, I do admire a number of his character traits and his heart for the lost.

This past fall, SBC of Virginia churches were equipped and encouraged to participate in *My Hope* with Billy Graham. We remembered the 95<sup>th</sup> birthday of this world-renowned evangelist. The SBC of Virginia compiled birthday greetings from leaders and members of churches and presented them to Dr. Don Wilton, who is considered to be Billy Graham's personal pastor.

After receiving these birthday greetings at the SBC of Virginia Annual Homecoming held at First Baptist Church in Roanoke, Don told me that he would personally deliver them later that week. Afterwards, I received

**by Brian Autry**

Executive Director, SBC of Virginia

a note of appreciation from Billy Graham. On the back was a handwritten note from his assistant describing Rev. Graham's reaction to the notes of prayer, affirmation, and appreciation from hundreds of SBC of Virginia churches. I was told that as Rev. Graham held the book of notes, he commented that this gift was unlike any he had ever received and had the notes read to him.

I know that Billy Graham received thousands of birthday greetings. A famous personality like him draws admirers from many walks of life. However, may we be blessed to know that a minister of the Gospel is always blessed by the encouragement of God's people. Thank you for being a blessing. Let us remember that the Lord can use us to be a blessing to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Not only does Billy Graham take note, but more importantly, our Lord Jesus is honored.

CHURCH PLANTER NETWORK (CPN)

## a chance to meet with Church Planters

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 CPN:  
Friday-Saturday, August 8-9



**Connect.**  
Statewide CPN

**CROSSOVER BALTIMORE**

Crossover is a Southern Baptist evangelism initiative that takes place each year in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Crossover 2014 will be:  
**June 7**  
Baltimore, Maryland

As you and your church make plans to attend the Southern Baptist Convention, consider whether or not the Lord may be calling you to join other Southern Baptists in reaching this great city for Christ.

Get the latest info online at  
[sbcv.org/crossover2014](http://sbcv.org/crossover2014)



**Brandon Pickett**  
bpickett@sbcv.org  
facebook.com/brandon.pickett  
@brandonpick

# Passion & Pollen

One of my favorite times of year has to be the holiday we just celebrated—Easter, or as some call it, Passion Week. For the Christian, there is no better time to shout your praise to the Lord for all He has done and is continuing to do both personally and in His Kingdom. I've heard dozens and dozens of testimonies from SBC of Virginia churches of souls saved and the darkness around Virginia impacted with the light of Christ. Praise the Lord!

I think the term *Passion Week* is interesting. It sure is descriptive of what Jesus went through and what He gave. But the question I started asking is, "He had such a passion for me—do I have a real passion for Him?" (Ps. 63:1)

Recently, I was with the Innovative Faith Resources video team in Florida shooting a promotional video for a prep school. One of their main descriptive words they wanted in the video was *passion*. They talk about it all the time. Their aim is to instill a passion for education, career, and life in each student. And the evidence is clear that, at least on a secular level, it's working. Many of their graduates attend the top universities in the country and go on to have very successful careers. But again I had to ask myself a question, "Are we as churches of the SBC of Virginia instilling a passion for Christ (which is a much higher calling) in every aspect of the lives of our members?"

You know, this season is full of new life. Just look around at everything blooming, budding, and bursting. But you can't have new life without dramatic change (2 Cor. 5:17). In fact, this change affects me (and a lot of people I know) very personally every year through something called...pollen. Oh yes, I'm changed to my very core with allergies for about six weeks every year. This springtime explosion—or passion—changes everything with which it comes into contact. Why? Because it's in the very air we breathe. I liken pollen to the Gospel. To some, pollen and everything it brings is exciting and encouraging because it heralds a new spring. But to others, like me, pollen is offensive and we do everything we can to combat its itchy effects (Gal. 5:11, 2 Cor. 2:14-16).

As we hear reports of how God is working throughout Virginia, North America, and the world, I'm excited that so many of our churches really do have a true passion for Christ and sharing that passion with others. As you rejoice in what happened in your church during the week of Easter and enjoy the new life of springtime, don't forget that our passion for Christ should continue to infuse every aspect of our lives so that it can't help but be noticed. It will then become as evident of new life as the pollen on our cars (Rom. 6:4-5).

*Brandon*



## Calendar

### MAY

*Regional Pastor Fellowships*  
*IMB House Church Leaders Institute (May 1-4)*  
*Mission Project: Christian Libraries for Overseas*

- 2-3 *PLANT*, Part A
- 3 Disaster Relief Training (Valley)
- 5-6 Executive Board
- 6 SBCV Open Golf Tournament
- 9 Statewide Church Planter Network
- 13 Pastors of Smaller Congregations Leadership Summit
- 17 Children's and Youth Bible Drill and Youth Speakers' Tournament, Beulah BC, Lynchburg
- 22 Intern Training

### JUNE

*Mission Project: Disaster Relief Readiness Items*

- 7 Crossover Baltimore
- 8-11 Southern Baptist Convention, Baltimore
- 10 Dessert Reception at the SBC
- 20-21 *PLANT*, Part B
- 22-27 Acts 1:8 Families, Wise
- 22-26 Fusion Mission Camp, Richmond
- 28 Disaster Relief Training (Central-East)

### JULY

*Mission Project: Disaster Relief Readiness Items*

- 21-25 Studentz Camp, James Madison University, Harrisonburg
- 23-29 Acts 1:8 Families, Montreal, Canada

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## 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!

It's as simple as A-B-C!

**A** **A**dmit 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** **B**elieve 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** **C**ommit 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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**Hebrews 2:1-4**

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**sbcv.org/studentz**



**Speaker: Matt Papa**



**Band: Citizen Way**



**Illusionist: Jared Hall**

