



BONHOEFFER HAUS

A GREENHOUSE WHERE FUTURE LEADERS ARE GROWN

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



Pastor and Co-founder Pete Schemm

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

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

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

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



Co-founder Jesse Furey

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

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

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

