

bold
Share Christ's love.



PARTNERING with Next-Gen Missionaries in Northern Virginia

“The young adult volunteers were exceptional,” recalls Tim Ma, pastor of **Emmanuel Baptist Church** in Manassas.

His church was the newest location for Fusion Mission Camp this past summer, and the interns who provided mission site leadership left quite the impression—and understandably so. These interns from around the Commonwealth helped lead campers-turned-missionaries to invest over 1,300 manhours of Gospel-oriented efforts over the span of Fusion Mission Camp 2018 in Northern Virginia. What makes Northern Virginia such a special place for a camp like this is its population density and rich ethnic diversity. Census estimates reveal the city to be approximately 60% Anglo, with contingents of Hispanics, Africans, and Asians comprising the other 40%.

This rich diversity required strategies to overcome cultural and language barriers. For instance, at one grocery store, campers had signs in four different languages to communicate with the variety of patrons. With the help of ethnic pastors at Emmanuel Baptist Church, who provided cultural training from Chinese, Korean, and Hispanic perspectives, interns and staff were able to help campers think more intentionally about cultural sensitivities as they developed their mission projects.

According to Ma, this was a two-way blessing. “A huge takeaway is the effort that the SBCV made to incorporate our ethnic ministers into Fusion Mission Camp here. Many of our ethnic ministers work mainly within their own people group. The opportunity to work along with folks from a different language group is a special expression of the Gospel.”

In addition to the ethnic ministers of **Emmanuel Baptist** and the Fusion interns, the value of SBC of Virginia partnership was displayed when campers and staff helped SBCV church planters and received help in return. Over 1,200 water bottles and church invitations were distributed at Vienna Station under the oversight of Brandon Hembree, pastor of **Impact Church** (Centreville). In connection with **Pillar Church of Woodlawn** (Alexandria), campers did prayerwalking and visitation and were able to lead one person to receive Christ.

All told, the combined efforts of pastors, planters, churches, staff, and SBCV interns led to 60 decisions for Christ (7 of which were for salvation) and thousands of people touched by Fusion campers. According to Ma, the impact of Fusion Mission Camp has continued several months after the event: “One very tangible thing that carried over is our Spanish minister doing a regular outreach at Mega-Mart.”

With the population density and cultural diversity of Manassas (and Northern Virginia in general), it's no wonder Fusion campers found themselves face-to-face with multiple opportunities and challenges. It's also no wonder Fusion interns played such a critical role for campers and chaperones. Recalls Ma, “They modeled for us, myself included, that as we are going through life, we are to reach out to others. Being around [the interns] and seeing their zeal reminds us of the way it should be.”

