



You Will Never Understand Until *You Go!*

On Monday night, August 31, 2020, nearly four inches of rain quickly fell in the mountains of Buchanan County. As the water from the torrential rains rushed toward the residents below, it brought with it mud, rocks, and debris. The water came with such force, it pushed houses off of their foundations, washed out roads and bridges, and left many stranded with no utilities.

"I heard the thump of a couple of rocks rolling, and as I looked, it was like a river of chocolate milk coming down the mountain," Tim Ramey said as he recalled that night. Ramey's driveway and many of his belongings were washed away, his vehicles were totaled, and his house was filled with the muck of rocks, silt, and water. There were many like him, waking up to the reality of devastation and loss. Over the next couple of days, a steady flow of people and organizations came to assess the damage and film the story. For many homeowners, there were only waves of helplessness and hopelessness.

By mid-week, SBC of Virginia Disaster Relief (DR) team members from across the state were preparing to come to

Southwest Virginia. Partnering with Pastor Shea Shrader of **Harman Memorial Baptist** (Grundy) and Pastor Eric Fannin of **Vansant Baptist** (Vansant), SBCV DR made arrangements for the relief teams to stay at Vansant Baptist Church. The following Monday, September 7, just one week after the downpour, folks in Grundy were beginning to see a steady stream of yellow shirts and long hard days of mud-out.

While the Lord doesn't send downpours or cause damaged homes to crush or destroy people, He does use them as opportunities for the Gospel and His glory to be displayed through the Church as His hands and feet.

"You see these events on TV, you see the chaos, you see what the cameras want you to see. You can walk away and say, 'That looks really bad,' and go pop open a Coke, have a burger, and not even think about it the next day. But then you come on a trip like this and see someone's life altered like this," SBCV DR team member Jeff Slaughter shared with emotion. "And when God gives you the opportunity and the privilege to be His hands and feet, to love on these people and help...you will

never understand what it is like until you go do it."

Team member Pete Covell explained that it is tough when people have an earthly disaster but that it is a joy to come and encourage and help. But the most exciting thing, he said, is being able to see folks come to know the Lord as the team shares the love and Gospel of Christ with them.

Thanks to the partnership of churches that make up the SBC of Virginia, the residents of Grundy are **Not Alone** in the aftermath of downpours and mudslides. Instead, they experienced showers of blessings.

"There have been a lot of people to come and take pictures," said Buchanan County resident Ralph Ratliff, "but your organization is the only one who has actually done anything and who cares about the people. I prayed for help, and I got help." ■

RESOURCE:

To find out more about SBCV's Disaster Relief, visit :

 sbcv.org/dr