

Where is PASTOR JAKE?

Where in the world is pastor Jake?
That's what the members of **Villa Heights Baptist Church** and the surrounding community in Roanoke, VA are asking.

When the world changed in March 2020, pastors had to find creative ways to continue ministry. After consulting with the SBCV staff for ideas, Pastor Jake Huffman began posting nightly video devotionals via social media. Pastor Huffman's vision was to find "a strategic means of continuing to make disciples. That's our calling and our mission that shouldn't cease even with a pandemic."

After weeks of using a standard format, Huffman decided to take the devotionals "on the road." He used this mobile opportunity to show his congregation the place where he trusted Christ at college. He interviewed church members and gave his nephew an opportunity to share how Jesus delivered him from addiction. He included his family's Thanksgiving dinner and even used vacation locations as a backdrop for encouragement from the Word of God.

The devotionals have been met with great enthusiasm and shared widely by the congregation with their friends and family. Everyone began to wonder daily, "Where in the world

"...Huffman decided to take the devotionals 'on the road.'"

is Pastor Jake?" Associate pastor Michael Shepherd also got in on the action and was enlisted to share weekend devotionals.

The congregation has used these video devotions to sow Gospel seeds around the area. The posts have allowed important and sometimes difficult topics to be shared in a sensitive way. Numerous guests who were reached by the video posts have attended Villa Heights. One young woman was saved out of an immoral lifestyle, and her father and family members came to watch her be baptized at the church. Many have expressed appreciation for the comfort provided by these times in the Word.

The recording schedule was enhanced by a two-year journey of planned Bible readings by the church, which Huffman often covers in his videos. His desire "is that they be 'shaped by the Word of God.'" In fact, the Villa Heights family has rallied around a unified coordinated Bible reading plan called, "Shaped by the Word," which is available through the YouVersion app.

Perhaps your church could reach out to new people and be encouraged by such a reading plan and video devotionals. Contact the SBCV to see how your church could employ these or other creative means of outreach. Remember, you are not alone. ■

