

PROCLAIMER

2023 | VOLUME 25, ISSUE 3 • Telling the stories of Vision Virginia



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A Family Ministry**
Page 12

**Two Churches,
One Mission**
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SBCVirginia
You are not alone.

PROCLAIMER

Winter 2023-24 — Issue 3

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Cast Your Cares On the ONE WHO CARES for You

Fall is football season, so I was thinking about how stressful being a National Football League coach must be (or college coach, etc.). I can not remember where I came across this list, but take a moment and consider the stress of being an NFL coach:

1. He has all eyes on him on Sunday.
2. He has many personalities and players to relate to on the team.
3. He deals with a competitive environment.
4. He can be fired or on the hot seat at a moment's notice.
5. He must be careful with what he says on and off the field.
6. He has to be knowledgeable about offense, defense, and special teams.
7. He will have people play Monday morning quarterback.
8. He sees many more people who are spectators than are players.
9. He can face pressure to turn a team around quickly.
10. He has to start getting ready for next Sunday as soon as this Sunday is over.

This description is not just the pressure NFL coaches face. This is also what a pastor may feel like he is facing. So, let me ask you to pray for your pastor. Pastor, let me ask you to pray for your fellow pastors.

As followers of Jesus, we must rely on the strength of the Lord. We need to seek the

strength of the Lord. We need to read the Word and pray. We need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We need to have fellowship with the Lord and His people. We need to know we, too, can turn to the Lord.

I can only imagine the stress and worries these coaches feel and face. Whether you are a pastor or not, we all feel stress, and we can all have our worries. 1 Peter 5:7 has blessed my soul recently, and I pray it will encourage you today:

"casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7)

1 Peter 5:7 starts mid-sentence. When we go back to verse 6, we read, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you..."

How do we respond to the worries, the stress, and the anxieties we may face?

1. **Humble ourselves under the Lord.**

Pride is a real and present danger. Lord, forgive me. In my pride, I worry because of my self-sufficiency and self-reliance. In my pride, I can be anxious about the future. I need to humble myself "under the mighty hand of God."

2. **Hand off our worries to the Lord.**

If you watch a football game this weekend, notice how everyone follows the quarterback until something happens—he hands the ball off. I need to hand off my worries to the Lord. Psalm 55:22 says, "**Cast**



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your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved."

Who else but the Lord can make this promise?

3. **Trust the Lord cares for us.**

A prayer: "Father, in Your grace and mercy, you care for me. Your love is steadfast, strong, and stable. You are not surprised or caught off guard by the moments I face. I confess to You that I worry and can be anxious. I confess my pride. Thank You for Your forgiveness, for Your sanctifying purpose, and for Your presence in my life. You care for us. Therefore, I can cast my cares to you. Praise the Lord! In Jesus' name, Amen."

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature of Brian Autry in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Brian Autry

P.S. Please make plans to join us November 12–14 at The Heights Baptist Church, just south of Richmond, Virginia, for the SBCV Annual Homecoming. This edition of the *Proclaimer* contains more information, as does sbcv.org. This year's theme is "The Lord Is with You: Relying on His Strength."



Chinese FELLOWSHIP grows

Last November at the SBC of Virginia Annual Homecoming, two Chinese pastors were surprised to encounter each other, each thinking he was the only Chinese pastor there. What started as a providential encounter between two solitary pastors has blossomed into a purposeful fellowship and connections between nearly a dozen Chinese churches throughout the SBC of Virginia.

Monthly Zoom meetings in 2022 quickly developed into a longing for in-person fellowships. Several Chinese pastors met at the SBCV office in Glen Allen to prepare for various fellowships: quarterly meetings hosted by SBCV local churches, an annual summer retreat, and SBCV Annual Homecoming breakout sessions in Mandarin.

“

Thank you so much for organizing this opportunity for us to get refreshed and strengthened”

The fellowship gathering held in March 2023 included over 40 Chinese Christians from six Chinese-majority SBCV churches. They received encouragement and training in reaching the second generation. Second-generation Chinese are those born in America who have at least one parent from China.

“Thank you so much for organizing this opportunity for us to get refreshed and strengthened,” said one attendee. “I remember the first time when I got to SBCV’s website. ‘You Are Not Alone’ jumped into my eyes and tears immediately

came out. For so many years, I’ve been doing service alone.”

In addition to the encouragement and connectivity experienced by those in the fellowship, these Chinese churches have also planted two new Chinese churches with four more in the works!

Jesus’ prayer is being answered: “I...ask...that they may all be one... that the world may believe that you have sent me” (John 17:20-22, ESV). ■



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If you happened to die *today*,
do you know if you will go
to heaven?

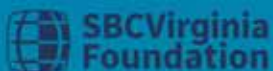
God says you must be born again.
The Bible gives us a simple plan of salvation.

**Admit that you're
a sinner who
needs to be saved.**
*"For all have sinned
and fall short of the
glory of God."
(Romans 3:23)*

**Believe that Jesus died for
you and rose again.** *"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." (Romans 10:9)*

**Commit to accepting Jesus as your Savior and
Lord.** *"For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall
be saved." (Romans 10:13)*

**Claim His gift of salvation. Believe, and you will be
saved.** All that's left for you to do is to receive Jesus
into your heart as your personal Lord and Savior. If
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PRAY FOR MISSIONARIES

around the globe

"Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18-20 (HCSB)



Owen Stoddard

📍 South Asia

Let's pray for Owen Stoddard, one of our missionaries in South Asia. Owen serves in a country where people becoming Christians are often persecuted in many ways. Believers can lose their families, their jobs. Let's pray also for Mark, a new believer who gave his much-needed food to a man who had persecuted him.



DeAron Washington

📍 New Orleans Seminary

Let's pray for DeAron Washington. He's working on a Ph.D. degree in counseling at our New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in New Orleans. He's already counseling people in need and instructing at the seminary. Let's pray for him and his ministry — now and in the years ahead.

52
SUNDAYS

Each missionary highlighted in 52 Sundays is supported by your church's giving through the Cooperative Program. Find more missionaries to pray for by visiting sbcv.org/52sundays.

VISION TRIP

Buenos Aires

Anyone who has served in Southern Baptist churches would undoubtedly appreciate how Southern Baptists do missions. They come together through the Cooperative Program (CP) to provide for missions and missionaries' needs with the International Mission Board (IMB). Many Southern Baptist pastors encourage their churches in CP giving and praying for IMB missionaries worldwide.

Travis Ingle, SBCV's regional strategist for the Southwest Region, shared that he is privileged to champion the CP and missions partnership among SBCV churches. But it wasn't until he boarded a plane for the first time in his life and traveled to Buenos Aires, Argentina, that he truly felt what the heart of the SBC partnership is all about.

Buenos Aires is a massive city with about 15 million people in the greater Buenos Aires area. It is fast paced—full of people, trains, subways, cars, motorcycles, horns honking, and dogs barking.

"When you come here, you will love it," said Derek Tucker, Buenos Aires team leader with the IMB. "You'll love the sounds, the food and, most of all, the people." Tucker and the Buenos Aires team of IMB missionaries were tremendous hosts. They know the city and their strategy well. They welcomed

the group of pastors from Virginia into their homes and the mission field. Ingle said, "It truly felt like we were with our SBCV family."

Each day, the team was introduced to pastors and church leaders from across the city. They prayerfully walked parks and communities in need of new church plants. Pastor Marc Brooks of **Gethsemane Baptist Church** in Richlands said, "The city is incredible! Living in Southwest Virginia, we might be concerned that this would be a little overwhelming, but people are people, and I'm thrilled for my church and sister churches to play a part in what God is doing here."

The Argentine pastors and churches are vital to reaching the city; however, there are 3 million people with only 42 Baptist churches in the city center. "IMB will never be able to send enough people, so we need churches, we need more individuals, we need more co-laborers with us here," Tucker explained.

Argentina is a post-Christian culture, where many claim to be Christian and part of the Church but are not disciples of Jesus. Despite all the differences in

context and population, the need is the same no matter where we are. We all experience brokenness and lostness.

“We need revival—a spiritual awakening,” explained José Luis Lopez, pastor of Liners Baptist Church in Argentina. Pastor Rob Haynes of **First Baptist Church of Jonesville** recognized that “figuring out how to help and how to be most effective is the challenge.”

All IMB missionaries are sent from SBC churches. Therefore, we have a responsibility and a privilege to be able to join them in the mission—to come alongside the churches and mission team in Buenos Aires, not to teach but to partner with them as brothers and sisters in Christ and to be a part of what God is doing there.

“We can be a part of God’s redemptive plan here—to edify, to encourage, and to walk alongside our missionary team serving through the IMB. We can be a part of that,” said Allen Roberts, pastor of **Euclid Avenue Baptist Church** in Bristol.

It is a God-sized task, and you can partner in many ways in Buenos Aires. You can pray, give, and go. Could the Lord be calling you and your church to join what He is doing in Buenos Aires, Argentina? Is He calling you to take the next step in experiencing the heart of this mission partnership? ■

RESOURCE:

Want to partner with IMB missionaries in Buenos Aires? Contact Brad Russell.



brussell@sbcv.org



Bettering the Region

Serve Roanoke Teams

by Dan Nicholas



By Dan Nicholas

“Barbecue is doing the Lord’s work!” That was the appreciative comment of a Roanoke sanitation worker before he and three dozen of his coworkers sat down for a delicious lunch of pulled pork, baked beans, coleslaw, macaroni and cheese, cookies, and brownies.

Preparing the home-cooked meal was a generous act of kindness—just one of the 17 community projects that were part of **Cave Spring Baptist Church’s** July 17-20 Serve Roanoke outreach. Candace Deweber, who has been attending the church since 2009, coordinated the lunch. She and other volunteers also delivered large baskets

of cookies and brownies to fire and rescue workers.

Joyce Tennant led a group of 20 students and others to area nursing homes and retirement communities each morning. At Woodland Hills, Pheasant Ridge, Our Lady of the Valley, and the Park Oak Grove, they sang favorite hymns



like “Amazing Grace”—classics that were unfamiliar to some of the young church members.

Timothy Nuthulapati, a 10-year-old who attends the church with his parents and brother, has been playing soccer for half of his life. He especially enjoyed Soccer Nights, which was a part of Serve Roanoke. Wednesday’s soccer camp was, in his words, “a good way to meet new people and have fun. It just made me happy.” Timothy made five new friends that night. More than 125 children and church members participated.

Mia Rivera, a 15-year-old from Iglesia Gracia Redentora (Redeeming Grace Church) in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, returned for a second year as a Serve Roanoke servant. She reinflated bicycle

tires and basketballs for area children and learned that one of the bikes belonged to a young girl just learning to ride, which made Mia so happy. The churches in Vega Baja and Roanoke share a missions partnership.

The Apostle Paul urged Christians to “serve wholeheartedly as if you were serving the Lord, not people” (Ephesians 6:7, NIV). In response, church members and friends (including a team from **North Roanoke Baptist Church**) gave countless hours to Serve Roanoke.

The outreach projects “made a genuine contribution to the betterment of Roanoke County, the City of Roanoke, and its surrounding communities” said Allen James, Cave Spring’s pastor of community and missions.



“With over 65 middle and high school students (plus college interns and adult leaders) serving each day and staying overnight, we were able to serve in a variety of contexts,” explained Chip Baggett, pastor of children, students, and families.

“Serve Roanoke is an amazing churchwide effort. Church members from every generation gathered to serve together. It’s a beautiful expression of the body of Christ!” ■

Dan Nicholas—A Cave Spring Baptist Church member and a New England Baptist since 1970. Dan is managing editor of the International Bulletin of Mission Research.



A photograph of three children, two girls and one boy, lying on a bed and laughing joyfully. The boy in the center is wearing a blue shirt, and the girls on either side are also laughing. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

INTERWOVEN: *A Family Ministry*

Job 1:21

reminds us that “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away.” This verse aptly describes the journey of a single person, a couple, or a family stepping into the world of foster care and adoption. This rewarding, life-changing, difficult space can seem impossible at times. Children who are hurting coming into the lives of well-intentioned believers can create unintended chaos in the lives of those who only want to love them well. Sometimes these children leave, and sometimes they stay forever. The road of foster care can seem very lonely. However, it doesn’t have to be that way. Several SBC of Virginia churches are taking steps to stand in the gap for children and families on the foster care path.

Spotswood Baptist Church in Fredericksburg recognized the need to serve foster children and families in the church and in the community. Spotswood responded by implementing Interwoven, a foster care and adoption ministry. Interwoven is designed to advocate and raise awareness for vulnerable children. Interwoven serves families in specific ways to help the children and families feel the love and support of their church family. One major tool that Spotswood and Interwoven use is Family Advocacy

Ministry (FAM), a step-by-step coaching tool from SBCV’s partnership with Send Relief. FAM coaches help local churches identify and implement ministries to meet the needs of families, care for foster children, and provide wrap-around care for foster families.

One of Spotswood’s major goals through Interwoven is not only to see more foster families join in the journey but to create a support team for each foster family in the church. They want foster families to be able to continue the work of loving children from hard places while feeling loved and seen by their church. As part of FAM, the church family can provide such services as regular meals, babysitting, prayer time, and tangible support for the foster, adoptive, and kinship families in their church and community. Interwoven provides family picnics, online support groups, and a sense of belonging through the body of Christ.

The national average time that a foster family is able to persevere is less than 12 months. The number-one reason they decide not to continue fostering is because they are overwhelmed and don’t have the support they need to continue. When a foster family decides not to continue fostering, there is one fewer home the local agencies have as a resource for children in need of a safe and loving home. Believers can help

reduce this statistic by coming alongside foster families in their local churches and communities and demonstrating “pure religion” in tangible ways as we are all invited to do in James 1:27.

One foster family at Spotswood shared the difference Interwoven has made for them:

Because of the Interwoven ministry at our church, we have received an unprecedented level of love and support from our church family. We adopted from foster care several years ago and before becoming involved in the FAM at Spotswood, we felt unable to welcome more children into our home. However, through receiving this love and support in a tangible way, we were able to welcome home more children over the last few years. We are so grateful for our church family and Interwoven community.

You can also join the foster care journey with families in your church and community through Family Advocacy Ministry (FAM). SBCV churches can join with churches like Spotswood Baptist Church to make sure no child is without a family or the hope of the Gospel. ■

RESOURCE:

To learn more:

 sbcv.org/fam

Empowering Virginia's Aging-Out Foster Teens

Virginia, a state known for its beauty and history, holds a darker truth: it is one of the worst states in the country for aging out foster teens. More than 5,000 kids are in the Virginia Foster Care System, and a staggering 45% of them are teenagers. These young souls, already burdened by their past, face an uncertain future, as the implications of aging out of the Foster Care system can be nothing short of horrifying. Many of them are left in the shadows, battling a harsh reality that includes a high probability of homelessness, pregnancy, incarceration, addiction, joblessness, and poverty.

Fostering Champions is a non-profit organization based out of Franklin County. It is on a mission to change the narrative of hopelessness with the help of churches across the Commonwealth. With a vision to build homes, provide education, transportation, and life skills, they aim to foster these teens into champions in life.

Behind this inspiring initiative is Bobby Canipe, a former Franklin Heights Youth Pastor and a foster child himself. His 25 years of youth pastoring and fostering 12 kids have ignited a deep calling to help aging-out foster teens.

In just one year, Fostering Champions has achieved remarkable milestones, including the construction of the first foster home, granting \$15,000 in scholarships, and providing essentials like clothes and vehicles to foster teens and young adults. They have also organized joyful events, such as Kings Dominion Day, and offered vital support for education and life preparation.

Prayer support, mentorship, and sponsoring homes in strategic locations (Roanoke, Lynchburg, Richmond, and Hampton Roads) through Fostering Champions can make a lasting impact in the lives of foster teens. Trades assistance and blessing baskets filled with move-in essentials are also highly valued.

The need is urgent and your involvement can be life-changing. By partnering with Fostering Champions, SBCV churches are transforming the lives of these foster teens, empowering them to break the cycle of despair and embrace a brighter future.

Scripture reminds us of our duty to care for orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27). Fostering Champions is living out this calling, extending a compassionate hand to these vulnerable teens. Together, believers across Virginia can foster champions and empower the future generations with Gospel hope.

Join in and build a stronger community, where every young person has a chance to thrive and become a champion in life. Your church's support can make all the difference. ■



RESOURCE:

Contact Bobby Canipe to discover how you can make a difference in the lives of foster teens.

	wefosterchampions.org
	bobby@wefosterchampions.org



Mission Projects

2023

What are we *for* as followers of Christ? **Mission Projects** provide opportunities for families, small groups, and churches to engage their community and serve others *for* the glory of God.



SEPT - OCT

For Children

Sept. - Oct. • Christmas Backpacks

Churches, families, and small groups are invited to prepare ministry backpacks this fall in preparation for Christmas outreach. Backpacks will be distributed to thousands of children through SBCV churches. Make a major Gospel impact in the lives of children and families across Virginia.



NOV - DEC

For Missionaries

Nov. - Dec. • Missionary Care

Pastoral and church care is an essential element for missionary health. Your church and your pastor can encourage and serve missionaries, whether they are from your church or not. Help our IMB missionaries and their children know that they are not alone this holiday season.

sbcv.org/missionprojects

PASTORS' *prayer* GATHERING 2024

Join with other pastors for a focused time of being in God's presence, driven by His Word, empowered by His Spirit, as we seek His face together. We will praise Him, pray for one another, pray for His strength, and for revival and spiritual awakening.



January 18, 2024
Thursday




First Baptist Church,
Roanoke

sbcv.org/prayergathering

Block off some
summer time
for these 2024 NextGen events!


Student Fusion Mission Camp

Help your students move beyond their comfort zone and reach people for Christ.

 **June 17-21**

Family Fusion Mission Camp

An opportunity for families to build a legacy of missions with their children.

 **July 18-20**

Stay tuned for more details
sbcv.org/nextgen

nextgen ➤

Inspire

A word of hope, support, and encouragement

“

I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.” Psalm 27:13

Winning THE BATTLE OF DESPAIR

King David, the warrior of God, is one of my favorite examples of faith in action. Given the calling in his life, he had many distractions as he served God faithfully. Not a perfect man but a faithful man (Luke 18:8). All through the Psalms written by David, he expresses and proclaims an undying love and allegiance to the God of His faith. David said in this particular Psalm, “I would have despaired...” (27:13).

The New Oxford American Dictionary defines **despair** as the complete loss or absence of hope—the presence of desperation, distress, pain, anxiety, etc. Does this sound familiar globally right now? Our attention is often quickly drawn to “the goodness of the Lord.” We want God’s deliverance and blessings immediately but forget that our faith grows amidst trials or distress (James 1:2-3). David, whose faith was his life, allowed God’s power to sustain him as he walked by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7). He said despair would consume him “**if he had not believed He would see.**” David exercised his faith and believed in God. When times were tough, David reminded himself and delighted himself in the

things of God (1 Samuel 30:6). David knew the goodness of the Lord and fed his faith on it during desperate times.

Make this the day you *believe to see* God’s deliverance and goodness in your life. You may not see the way, or you may be waning in hope, but allow your faith to make God’s goodness your present reality! ■

Love you all!



Milton Harding

Prayer and Care Minister

✉ mharding@sbcv.org

DISASTER RELIEF VOLUNTEERS *blessed*





We often hear the stories of disaster survivors and the impact a crisis has had on them. We should also consider how disasters impact the volunteers who respond to them, as they are also affected.

In early-to-mid July 2023, Vermont experienced catastrophic flash floods across much of the state. Washouts of numerous roads and bridges resulted in significant property losses. From the aftermath of those historic floods came the following disaster response testimonies.

"This trip reminded me that everyone really is fearfully and wonderfully made by God, and each has a fascinating back story God has written for them," said Stephen Ritchie of **Maysville Baptist Church** in Buckingham. "I think God used this to show me that I should love my neighbor as myself, not just in deed but internally with genuine Christ-like love and prayer."

"This has been an awesome week with God revealing Himself through His Word and the common heart amongst the workers from several states," Joanne Booth of **Redeemer Bible Church** in Spotsylvania Courthouse reflected.

Norm Douglas of **Spotswood Baptist Church**, Fredericksburg, recalls, "I learned to thank God for the disaster because He is using it to soften the

hearts of many hardened Vermonters ... In the little town of Chelsea, VT, the people were amazed at all the yellow shirts around town and that they were all volunteers who had come to work for free for them and their recovery. God is at work!"

The flood was especially personal to Monica Tillas, a **Thomas Road Baptist Church** member in Lynchburg. She had formerly lived in Barre (pronounced "berry"), the very town where the Southern Baptist Convention of Virginia Disaster Response (SBCV DR) team was serving. She said, "We had one house we worked on all week and were able to build a relationship with this dear family whose higher power is Mother Nature. They heard plenty about Jesus, our higher power. There was a great movement of God happening here."

"I find God is so close with us in hard times," said Carol Irving of **Southside Baptist Church** in Suffolk. "One morning when I woke up with a sinus headache. I had gotten ice in a baggie and asked my crew for a bit more time lying down. I felt a hand on my shoulder. I looked around but was alone. I thanked my crew for praying for me, only to feel that check in my spirit! I had been touched by the hand of God and had not thanked Him—Praise God! Servitude is a wonderful gift, but it all belongs to God!"

We tend to measure the fruit of relief ministry from the impact on those being served. But let's not forget that when we serve others, God ministers to us at the same time. He is great to be praised! ■

Consider

12

state conventions
served in VT, giving

24,759

hours, making

1,376

significant contacts,
and sharing the gospel

214

times, and seeing

92

people make a
profession of faith.

EQUIP

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

At Equip Women's Conference, we will worship together, hear from our guest speakers, attend relevant and informative breakout sessions, and have time to fellowship with each other. Equip is totally free, and lunch is included.

This event is for all women, and it's a great opportunity for a team retreat, a girls' day out, or some time investing in your personal growth.

MAY 4, 2024

KEMPSVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
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OCTOBER 12, 2024

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Lifeway





Going Beyond
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PRISCILLA SHIRER

Worship with Anthony Evans

An Event for Women Seeking Jesus

 **October 21, 2023**  **Liberty Live Church, Hampton**

sbcv.org/goingbeyond

Engaging Local Schools



God is using SBC of Virginia churches to minister to schools throughout Virginia.

For years, SBCV has engaged local schools through its Christmas backpack mission project. SBCV churches generously provided over 1,700 backpacks in 2022, which were used by SBCV church plants for outreach and by SBCV churches in low-income areas. Children who may typically receive very little for Christmas have been blessed by these gifts of love.

Before- and after-school clubs are another way churches are serving local schools. In club settings, students are given a place to belong and hear the Gospel. This past summer, SBCV's Student Fusion and Family Fusion teams engaged a local school by clearing and building an emergency exit route and assisting with other projects.

When Pastor Matt Beagle began as the senior pastor at **Pinecrest Baptist Church** in Portsmouth, he came with eyes wide open for opportunities to serve the community. With a background in local law enforcement, Pastor Beagle knew the importance of churches in the community, and he had seen firsthand Portsmouth's need for Gospel saturation.

Pinecrest Baptist had already been ministering to a local school following the tragic shooting death of a young athlete who had left the school campus for a bite to eat before a game. Pinecrest began providing meals for the athletes so they could eat with them and build a bridge for Gospel ministry.

Pinecrest saw needs within the community and provided answers, which opened doors for Gospel ministry.

Consider serving your church and reaching your community and local schools by:

- Providing breakfast for the school staff
- Helping with groundskeeping and flower beds
- Feeding a sports team before its games
- Collecting school supplies
- Having men volunteer to spend time with kids whose dads cannot be present
- Mobilizing your members as reading mentors
- Going above and beyond on Teacher Appreciation Week
- Praying regularly for a school's teachers and leaders by name
- Paying for lunch from a food truck for the staff on workdays
- Asking them what they need

Jesus commanded his disciples, "Let the little children come to me" (Matthew 19:14). Jesus doesn't want us just to tolerate children when they show up but to actively pursue opportunities to minister to them and share the Gospel with them.

God has strategically positioned your church to minister to your community's elementary, middle, and high school students. Let's go and make Jesus known to every generation. ■



The **LORD** *is* **WITH YOU**

RELYING ON HIS STRENGTH

Make plans to attend the SBC of Virginia Annual Homecoming this November 12-14. Join us to worship Jesus Christ through music and teaching, be encouraged through breakouts and fellowships, and learn what God is doing through the SBCV fellowship of churches in Virginia and beyond.



**Sunday,
November 12**

5:15 PM – 8:30 PM

**Monday,
November 13**

8:30 AM – 8:45 PM

**Tuesday,
November 14**

8:30 AM – 12:30 PM



**The Heights
Baptist Church**

Colonial Heights

Featured Speakers

**2023 ANNUAL
HOMECOMING**



**Hance
Dilbeck**

Guidestone
Financial Resources



**Vance
Pitman**

Send Network



**Chuck
Lawless**

Southeastern
Baptist Theological
Seminary



**Noe
Garcia**

North Phoenix
Baptist Church



**Stan
Parris**

Franklin Heights
Church



**Brian
Autry**

SBC of Virginia



Worship led by

The Heights & Franklin
Heights Worship Teams

Breakout topics include

- Children's Ministry
- Church Planting
- Digital Questions
- Evangelism
- Hispanic Ministry
- Legal Issues
- Men's Ministry
- Missions
- NextGen Ministry
- Pastoral Self Care
- Relief Ministries
- Small Groups
- Sunday School
- Women's Ministry
- Worship Ministry



Give the gift of the Gospel
with a Christmas backpack.
sbcv.org/backpacks

Register today at sbcv.org/homecoming

Live text translation available
in multiple languages for main
sessions. Please bring your personal
electronic device to use this tool.

General sessions and
select group sessions
will be interpreted
for the Deaf.

Childcare will be available
during main sessions for
children up to 4 years old
(pre-registration required).



SBCVirginia
You are not alone.



Fresh Vitality *Through* DISCIPLE-MAKING

“Hungry to grow spiritually and hungry to go missionally.”

Pastor John Hare of **Cardinal Baptist Church** in Caroline County, VA has often described his church as “hungry to grow spiritually and hungry to go missionally.” If you asked anyone at Cardinal, “What is the one question Pastor Hare always asks your church?” they would say, “How do we make disciples who make disciples who make disciples?”

Cardinal Baptist Church has grown to see that everything it does should be centered around making disciples who make disciples. Cardinal members are disciple-making people whom God has placed where they live, work, and play to be used by Him to make disciples of Jesus. As is said at Cardinal, the Gospel is not just a one-time thing that saves us—it is the very lens by which we view everything. It is also the very message that shapes everything about us.

For example, Cardinal is in year two of the *Who’s Your One?* campaign, challenging each church member to make a disciple by the end of the year. Two ladies took this challenge seriously; while working at Bass Pro Shop, they both began to share the Gospel with a fellow co-worker and kept inviting her to church. The co-worker came to faith in Christ on a Thursday, and her husband came to Christ that Sunday morning!

The church has changed how it does men’s and women’s ministries by shifting towards a discipleship paradigm. While these ministries still meet in large settings, they now have smaller discipleship groups that meet, discuss God’s Word, and pray together. Through this, people have been able to build relationships and find biblical community. These smaller groups have been an easy entry point for people seeking Christ. In fact, the women’s ministry is about to start a discipleship group for new believers, and the men are planning to launch a motorcycle ministry to reach the biker community.

Instead of asking people to come to church to hear the Gospel, outreach

often means going to the people to share the Good News. Cardinal hosted a kids’ block party in a local neighborhood and provided a back-to-school bash at a nearby elementary school, where families were engaged in Gospel conversations. Through Cardinal’s food pantry and the giving of Christmas gifts, church members were able to meet people directly and have Gospel conversations with them. In fact, a family who received Christmas gifts from Cardinal Baptist Church decided they would finally come to church!

Another outgrowth catalyst has been an emphasis on making disciples globally. Cardinal is beginning to invest in disciple-making abroad, with the hope of going to Spain in 2024. The vision at Cardinal is to lead a mission trip to a specific people group every year for the next 10 years. Their ultimate goal is for everyone who desires to go on a mission trip to have the opportunity to do so.

Cardinal Baptist Church is indeed “hungry to grow spiritually and hungry to go missionally!” ■



A Unique Perspective on Life Experiences

It's Sunday afternoon—a time when most church goers are gathering with family or sneaking in a refreshing nap. But that's not the case for the SBCV Women's Ministry blog team today because internet glitches and stubborn passwords have caused a looming deadline to approach, and all hands are on deck. At last, answered prayers and God's perfect timing lead to virtual high-fives as the *publish* button is clicked and the blog is set to "go live" in the wee hours of Monday morning. Dedication and determination are obvious as these ladies strive to share Jesus with as many women as possible.

For the last seven years, this team of eight writers from SBCV churches all over Virginia has contributed lessons, devotions, and heartfelt counsel to countless women. Each writer brings a unique perspective and life experience, which shows in the writing styles and topics covered each week. With topics ranging

from team building to pride, these blogs are authentic, unveiled, and relevant.

Because it's important to reach as many of our sisters as possible, the Ministerio de Mujeres, the SBCV Hispanic Women's Ministry, also offers a blog on its webpage. Both pages are destinations for women seeking to connect regarding leadership tools, spiritual growth, pastors' wives, and women who are hurting.

Lexi Shipp is a pastor's wife, mom, and girls' student ministry director at **London Bridge Baptist Church** in Virginia Beach. Shipp serves as the blog team lead. Together with Bailey Shepard, Caely Judy, and Dolly Mink, she knows well what it takes to present a variety of topics that appeal to a diverse and growing population of women across Virginia and beyond.

In addition to being posted on the website, the blogs are featured on SBCV's Facebook and Instagram accounts. "Socialization and influence are now taking place just as much, if not more, through social media versus face to face," said Shipp. "We have the opportunity to take the Gospel to women, literally, through a screen."

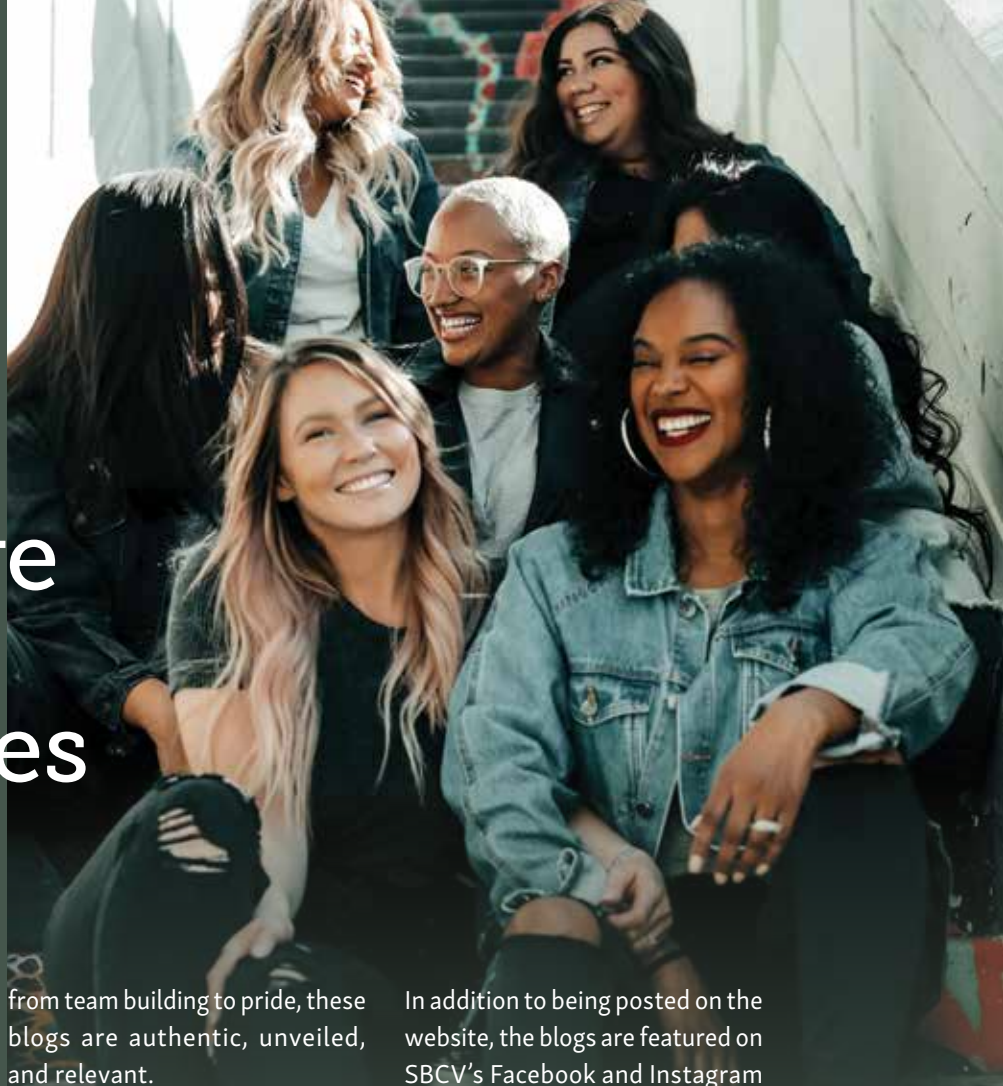
Please pray for the women who are being reached with the Gospel and for the women who serve on the blog team. ■

RESOURCE:

Take a moment to read one of the SBCV Women's Ministry blogs. Visit:



English:
sbcv.org/women
Español:
sbcv.org/mujeres





Three Tracks

**Children's Ministry,
VBS, and Spanish**

Saturday
March 2, 2024
8:45am-3:30pm
Swift Creek Baptist
Church, Midlothian

Saturday
March 9, 2024
8:45am-3:30pm
Franklin Heights
Church, Rocky Mount

40 breakouts, 70+ door prizes
free resources, and curriculum

Find out more at sbcv.org/kmc

SBCV *kids*

CONFERENCIA *equipada* PARA MADRES E HIJAS C O N E C T A T E

28 de
Octubre

Thomas Road Baptist
Church **Lynchburg**



Aixa de
López



Edyah
Barragan
de Ramos



Alejandra
Sura



Masiel
Mateo

Este evento es para niñas de 13
años para arriba y sus madres.

SBCV.ORG/CONECTATE



SBCVirginia
No estamos solos

Lifeway mujeres



+ Pre-Conference **Lifeway**
Women's Training Event!



The Heights
Baptist Church,
South Chesterfield



March 8-9
2024

Practicing the Presence of God

Register today at sbcv.org/kellyminter

In Partnership with The Heights Baptist Church



Do the Work of an *Evangelist*

The apostle Paul leveraged some of his final words to exhort young Timothy, “Do the work of an evangelist” (2 Timothy 4:5, ESV). The work of evangelism—Gospel work—was central to Paul’s ministry, and he understood its primacy in Timothy’s ministry as well. Paul would likely give modern churches the same charge: do the work of an evangelist.

On Tuesday, April 25, 2023, nearly 50 church leaders from the Southeast Region gathered at **Bethel Baptist Church** in Yorktown for a day of evangelism training led by SBC of Virginia’s executive director, Dr. Brian Autry. Pastors of established SBCV churches sat next to pastors of prospective SBCV churches, lay leaders, church planters, local evangelists, and others. The day included encouraging prayer and edification times and powerful

teaching from Autry, based on Timothy Beougher’s book, *Invitation to Evangelism*. At one point, the group gathered to pray for specific unbelievers.

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 articulates the believer’s responsibility for evangelism: “It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ” (Baptist Faith and Message 2000, Article XI).

Pastors face an ever-growing list of pressing items in their email inboxes and across their desks. Staff issues, teaching preparation, and counseling needs in the church family all call for the

pastor’s attention—and rightly so. Lay leaders give their time and energy to care for the church property and to volunteer in the church’s many ministries—and rightly so. But on this April day in Yorktown, these church leaders took time out of their schedules to refocus on the foundational task of evangelism.

Jesus said to his disciples, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19, ESV). As we follow Jesus, we have the joyful responsibility of evangelizing and making disciples as we see the Word increase and multiply.

Imagine what God might do through you in the coming months if you choose to follow Him in sharing the Gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). ■

Because of a Phone Call: *Virginia to South America*

It's true what they say: God works in mysterious ways. Jefferson Hernandez, Hispanic church planter at **Iglesia Biblica Campo Blanco** in Potomac Falls, got a call from the SBCV one day. The SBCV had received a phone call from an unknown Spanish-speaking person asking for help. Jefferson spoke with him and invited him to Campo Blanco so he could get to know him and share the Gospel with him. But the call did not come from Virginia—it came from Colombia, South America! Colombia's country code begins with +57, and Jefferson's area code in Virginia begins with 571.

Pastor Hernandez told the man that although he lived in the United States, he knew some pastors in Colombia who could help him. Hernandez called some pastor friends who were willing to help, but they realized this person lived in a different region. They contacted another pastor who lived near that area. When the pastor arrived in the town, the person did not answer the call or texts. The pastor called our planter in Virginia to inform him that he had not found the person. While they talked, a new friendship began between Pastor Hernandez and the Colombian pastor. During the conversation, the Colombian pastor expressed the need for training and shared that he had been praying God would provide training in sermon preparation and preaching.

This information moved Pastor Hernandez, and he called another SBCV church planter, Pastor Gio Ortiz

of **Iglesia Biblica Bautista Emanuel** (IBBE) in Leesburg, to tell him about it. Pastor Ortiz and his church had been praying for weeks, seeking God's direction to get involved in short-term missions in Latin America. They got together to organize the training, and another group of church members from the two Hispanic church plants in Virginia offered to go on the trip to Colombia. They also invited other Hispanic congregations in Virginia and DC.

When they arrived at their destination, they saw the need to train pastors, but they also saw the need to repair the church building. While the Virginia pastors trained the local pastors in sermon preparation and preaching throughout the week, other members of the Virginia team provided Vacation Bible School for the town's children. Others worked on repairing the building and, to the amazement of all, had it completed in a week (what would have taken 10 years otherwise)!

Like the Macedonian man in Acts 16 begging for help, these Colombian pastors had been praying for a long time to receive help from God. He responded by sending two SBCV Hispanic planters, who have been working as a team for years.

God often surprises us because He works in mysterious ways, especially in response to our prayers. What began with a phone call for help, God used to provide training to pastors in the mountains of Colombia; reach children

with VBS; repair a church building; and start a relationship between Southern Baptist churches in Virginia and brothers in Colombia. He did all of this so that the name of Jesus may be preached and exalted in all nations. ■



Todo por causa de una llamada desde *Virginia hacia América del Sur*

Dios obra de maneras misteriosas. Un día nuestro plantador de la Iglesia hispana **Campo Blanco en Sterling, Virginia**; Jefferson Hernandez de la SBCV, recibió una llamada telefónica en el 2022; era una persona desconocida, era alguien solicitando ayuda. Jefferson le invito a la iglesia para encontrarse y así compartirle el evangelio y conocer más su caso para ayudarlo, pero la llamada no venía de Virginia donde esta plantado Jefferson, si no de Colombia. El código de Colombia comienza con +57 y el código de teléfono de Jefferson en Virginia inicia con 571.

Nuestro plantador le comento a esta persona que él vivía en Estados Unidos pero que conocía a unos pastores en Colombia que le podían ayudar, Jefferson llamo a unos amigos pastores y estos se ofrecieron en ayudar, pero la región donde la persona llamo no es la ciudad donde son los amigos pastores de Jefferson, así que ellos se contactaron con otro pastor que vivía cerca de la región, pero al llegar al pueblo, la persona no respondió la llamada ni los textos. El pastor llamó a nuestro plantador en Virginia para

informarle que no había encontrado a la persona, así que mientras conversaban, inicio una nueva amistad entre el pastor en Colombia y Jefferson, en medio de la conversación este le expresó de la necesidad de capacitarse y que había estado orando para que Dios proveyera entrenamientos en preparación de sermones y predicación.

Esto conmovió a Jefferson y llamo a otro plantador; Gio Ortiz, para contarle lo sucedido. Gio y su iglesia IBBE Leesburg, habían estado orando semanas atrás buscando la dirección de Dios para involucrarse en misiones de corto plazo en Latinoamérica. Ellos se reunieron para organizar los entrenamientos y otro grupo de hermanos de las dos plantaciones de iglesias hispanas en Virginia se ofrecieron a ir a este viaje de corto plazo a Colombia, invitando también a otras más congregaciones hispanas en Virginia y DC. Cuando llegaron a su destino, no solo vieron la necesidad de entrenar a los pastores colombianos sino también de ayudar a reparar el templo.

Así que mientras Jefferson y Gio entrenaban a los pastores locales en preparación de sermones y predicación,

los otros hermanos de Virginia ofrecieron VBS a los niños de ese pueblo durante toda la semana, otros se dedicaron a reparar el templo y para maravilla de todos; lo que en Colombia tardaron en 10 años en reparar el templo ¡Ellos lo habían completado en una semana!

Esto nos recuerda al varón Macedonio en Hechos 16, rogando por ayuda, así mismo estos pastores colombianos estuvieron orando durante mucho tiempo para recibir la ayuda de Dios y Él les respondió enviando a dos de nuestros plantadores hispanos de la SBCV que trabajan en equipo desde hace años.

Dios siempre nos sorprende ya que obra de maneras misteriosas, aunque al principio era ayudar a una persona, Dios utilizó todo esto para proveer a los hermanos en la sierra de Colombia entrenamientos, alcance a los niños en VBS, reparación de un templo e iniciar una relación con nuestras Iglesias Bautistas del Sur de Virginia y los hermanos en Colombia y todo esto para que el Nombre de Jesús sea predicado y exaltado en todas las naciones. ■



TWO CHURCHES

One Mission

It might be hard to imagine that two churches with two different cultures and languages could blend as one to go on mission together. But God can do it! In August of 2019, under the leadership of Pastor Giovanni Ortiz, **Iglesia Biblica Bautista Emanuel** (IBBE) of Leesburg was birthed. God granted favor to Pastor Ortiz and to IBBE when the leadership of a very small but willing **Crossroads Baptist Church** (CBC) in Leesburg offered space for worship services to this infant church.

By 2021, the relationship between the two churches began to blossom as CBC asked Pastor Ortiz to become its associate pastor. In September 2022, the need for a lead pastor at CBC arose. This predominantly older, Anglo congregation approached Ortiz and asked if he would consider becoming the pastor.

Ortiz immediately began to pray and seek godly counsel. He wondered what CBC would expect from a lead pastor. “They were looking for a pastor who preaches the Gospel, who disciples, evangelizes, and shepherds the congregation,” Ortiz

recalled. “That response brought confirmation to my life since that is what I love and have been called to do.”

In the past year, Crossroads Baptist Church and Iglesia Biblica Bautista Emanuel of Leesburg have functioned as one church on mission together. The two churches have fellowshiped through combined Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas services. They have sung praises simultaneously in English and Spanish and preached the Gospel with translation at each combined service. Pastor Ortiz currently disciples 6 members from Crossroads, ranging from 50 to 82 years of age.

The churches prayed and prepared for a month for an outreach opportunity to their community. On May 7, 2023, 50 people from the churches (some doing so for the first time) took the Gospel to their community in Leesburg. The Lord supernaturally gave them the opportunity not only to evangelize area apartment complexes but to receive permission from an area Latino Festival coordinator to share

the Gospel with 400–500 people in Spanish and English.

In the summer of 2023, a church in Texas sent 40 volunteers to help CBC and IBBE with a Vacation Bible School. They were able to engage more than 60 children from the community through this Gospel outreach.

What does the future hold for these two churches on mission together? “As we celebrate our fourth anniversary this coming Sunday, we are looking forward to doing more mission Kingdom work together with Crossroads Baptist Church,” Pastor Ortiz shared. “We are planning a combined service every first Sunday of the month and will celebrate communion together as one church. We are praying that God will continue to guide us where He wants us to go. If, in the future, His will is for us to merge as one church to continue to reach English and Spanish speakers for His glory, we will do so as one church. Our purpose is to preach the Gospel and make disciples that make disciples.” ■





“...we are *looking forward* to doing more **MISSION KINGDOM WORK** together with Crossroads Baptist Church.”





Impacting The 804

The area code for much of Central Virginia is 804. When churches consider reaching their Jerusalem with the Gospel and ministering in their local area, their area code often becomes a geographical boundary. In some cases, it is an avenue to set a God-sized goal, to broaden the reach of the local church, and to partner with other churches to accomplish more than they could alone.

The Heights Baptist Church in Colonial Heights has heeded the call to love and reach the residents, schools, and first responders and to partner with compassion ministries in the 804 area code. While this is an ongoing churchwide endeavor, they set aside particular days throughout the year for a larger impact.

The Heights' missions pastor, Wes Rose, reported that on one Saturday, 36 projects were completed with 564 church volunteers involved. The projects were divided among various ministries to show the love of Jesus in their community.

Projects included packing 1,560 bags of food for the Chesterfield Food Bank; preparing 674 food bags and 200 toiletry bags for the unsheltered; and making over 600 sandwiches. Donation sites collected two van loads of food, Gatorade, and water for a local ministry and three carloads of men's clothing to benefit a local clothes closet for the unsheltered. Another truck was filled with supplies for the Pregnancy Help Center of Chesterfield. Yet another truck was filled with school supplies and treat bags for teachers. The church delivered 720 handwritten notes to encourage teachers for the upcoming year. They also provided a barbecue meal for 110 first responders throughout Hopewell, Petersburg, and Richmond and for local DMV employees.

The day also included ministering to shut-in church members and neighbors in need with around 30 baskets of goodies. The church family helped refurbish homes, provide lawn care, do yard work for local schools, and clear trails at a local Christian campsite. They visited nursing homes, and the sewing ministry made goods for upcoming international mission trips.

Pastor Rose said, "Work in our community doesn't end here. We have more opportunities to serve in other ways throughout the year." As a matter of fact, The Heights Baptist Church has a designated missions desk in the foyer for people to learn of opportunities and sign up to meet the needs.

SBCV Student Fusion Mission Camp Convenes in the 804

SBCV's 2023 Student Fusion Mission Camp brought 183 students, chaperones, and volunteers representing 18 churches to **Bethany Place Baptist Church** in North Chesterfield June 19–23. The days were filled with morning devotions, a sendoff rally into the mission field, mission projects, free time, evening worship, and church group time. **Parkway Baptist Church** (North Campus) in Chesterfield provided worship music, and Josh Weatherspoon, pastor of **The Way Church** in Glen Allen, was the guest preacher.

Student Fusion is designed to involve students in local missions. While gathering in the 804 area code, youth groups partnered with local churches and plants to minister to their members and the local community.

This year, Student Fusion included 10 projects, such as landscaping and cleaning at 3 public schools; maintenance projects at homes; prayer walking and canvassing

neighborhoods for 6 local churches; working with 2 partner ministries (The Fix Ministry and Noble Warriors Men's Ministry); and helping an international missionary family move into a mission house.

With the International Mission Board office located in the 804 area, students received a special treat—a tour of the headquarters in Richmond and the opportunity to learn about IMB's new initiative, Project 3000, from staff member, Kelly Zbinden (imb.org/missionary-explorer).

Bless the Tri-Cities of the 804 Preludes the SBCV Annual Homecoming

The 2023 SBCV Annual Homecoming will also take place at The Heights Baptist Church in Colonial Heights November 12–14. The day prior, Saturday, November 11, is set aside to partner with area churches and plants in mission projects for their church members and community. Because Annual Homecoming will be in the 804 area code this year, the mission focus will be on the tri-cities of Colonial Heights, Petersburg, and Hopewell, where many people live under the poverty level and/or are in need of food and shelter. Many in these cities are unreached, unsaved, and unchurched.

Bless the Tri-Cities Mission Day will encourage churches from around the state to partner with a local church or church plant in its ongoing ministry efforts. There are already 10 churches planning for this designated day of missions. If your church would partner with one of these churches in the 804, it would double the impact in the tri-cities. ■

Serving a Community & Impacting Lives

*“Thanks for coming to us.
I had never heard of Jesus
until you came.”*

The words above are from a little girl who was impacted by the Good News Club at her school. They remind us of the impact we can have on our communities.

Having a heart and love for your community is vital to being the people of God. This is a key principle behind the efforts of **Fairmont Baptist Church** and the leadership of Pastor Tom Nestor.

Soon after Pastor Nestor arrived at Fairmont in Franklin County in 2019, he began looking for opportunities in the rural community of Boones Mill to love neighbors as Jesus called believers to do. That's when the opportunity to help with a Good News Club (resourced by Child Evangelism Fellowship) arose. Nestor plugged into the group through Callaway Elementary School. Soon, the church was leading the group and connecting to local families.

In the fall and spring semesters, volunteers from the church and school staff led six weeks of an after-school club. Those six weeks make a difference in children's lives.

The little girl who hadn't heard of Jesus until the Good News Club put her faith in Christ and began boldly proclaiming the Gospel to her classmates. One day on the bus, a boy said, "God is mean," but this little girl spoke up quickly. "God's not mean! He sent Jesus to save us." She proceeded to share what she had learned at the Good News Club.

The Good News Club is just the beginning of Fairmont's community impact. Pastor Nestor and Fairmont have become known for their heartfelt service. "Because we are there, the school called me about a distraught parent who needed help," explained Nestor. "My wife





and I ended up counseling the couple to reconcile their marriage. We continued our relationship with periodic contact. I didn't hear from them for a while until, one day, the man rang my doorbell. He stated they were moving away to another state for a good job. He just wanted to thank me and said that their marriage was now on solid ground and [they are] searching for a church in their new town. Sometimes availability is the most important *ability* we need."

Serving the community also impacts the church making the investment. "Good News Club gives an outlet for our church to minister outside our four walls," Nestor said. "Fall Festival, VBS, and this club bring people into the Kingdom of God, not just our church. Local schools are low-hanging fruit."

Reach out to your local schools. Ask how your church can help. Have the heart of a servant and go out into the community to make a difference.

Praise the Lord for Fairmont Baptist Church in Boones Mill and many other churches that love their community in the name of Jesus! ■



PASTORS Supporting PASTORS

We have all felt lonely at some point in our lives. But what happens when loneliness is not only an emotional problem, but also a geographical one? Geographical loneliness adds to the ministry burdens that already exist for pastors, church planters, and ministry leaders.

God called Pablo Hernández and his family to plant **Iglesia Cristiana Sigüeme** (Follow Me Christian Church), a Hispanic church in the city of Harrisonburg, VA. According to 2020 statistics, more than 10,000 Hispanics live in that area, and there was no Baptist church.



Pastor Pablo Hernández (center) with Pastors Julio Peredo and Julio Velandia

With no other Hispanic SBCV church nearby, they felt isolated geographically. Two new church planters from the southwestern part of the state met Hernández at an SBCV event and learned about his situation. These brothers decided to pray for and visit the Hernández family.

Pastor Julio Peredo of **Fellowship Community Church Español** in Salem and Pastor Julio Velandia of **Franklin Heights Church** in Rocky Mount coordinated a visit. They contacted Pastor Hernández and began meeting periodically to encourage each other.

As the two pastors visited Pastor Hernández and his family in Harrisonburg, they got to see where the church meets, pray together, share food, and spend time at the Hernándezes' home. They ended the evening with prayer. "We went to bless our brother with a visit, and I think I was the most blessed one," recalled Pastor Peredo. Hernández also went to Roanoke to spend time with Peredo and Velandia. Pastor Hernández told us that these times are special to talk about all topics—not just about ministry, but to talk like brothers who are strengthening friendships.

Pastor Peredo explained, "Being a friend implies breaking down certain barriers that we naturally or intentionally build around ourselves; it implies going beyond the comfort of an agenda or location; it means showing ourselves

to be trustworthy and friendly with brothers who are not a competition but a complement for the expansion of the Gospel."

"Serving the Lord makes us increasingly busy serving people, and we can neglect ourselves and our families," said Pastor Velandia. "Loneliness is a silent monster that, in the ministry, consumes us from the inside out, drying us up, subtracting from us to the point of abandoning ourselves, our families, and perhaps considering abandoning the most beautiful experience in our lives—that is, to serve our God. It can also sink us into the sin of depending on ourselves. Prevention is better than a cure, and I consider that friendship between pastors and their families is a preventive practice that will help us share in a safe environment based on trust and respect."

These meetings have resulted in the desire to support each other's ministries. Julio Peredo and Julio Velandia have already exchanged preaching opportunities, and Pablo Hernández will soon visit Salem to preach there. Pastor Hernández explained that these relationships help them know that the SBCV's *not alone* motto is a practical reality. "Our churches are learning from this. How good it is when we pastors share together in the harmony of the Gospel and support each other in our lives!" ■

PASTORES Apoyando PASTORES

Todos hemos sentido soledad en algún momento de nuestra vida. ¿Qué sucede cuando la soledad no es solamente un problema emocional, sino que además es geográfico? Esto agrega a la carga normal que el ministerio trae sobre los pastores, plantadores de iglesias y líderes de ministerio.

Este es el caso del pastor Pablo Hernández. Dios llamó a Pablo y a su familia a plantar La Iglesia Cristiana Sígueme, una iglesia hispana en la ciudad de Harrisonburg. Según estadísticas del 2020 más de 10,000 hispanos viven en esa área, y no existía ninguna iglesia bautista en la zona. En esta misma necesidad planteada es donde se encuentran los desafíos para esta familia.

No existe ninguna iglesia bautista hispana que este cercana a ellos, por lo tanto, hay un aislamiento geográfico. Hace unos meses dos nuevos plantadores de la zona suroeste del estado oyeron de esta situación al encontrarse con Pablo en uno de los eventos de la convención. Estos hermanos decidieron orar por la familia Hernández, pero, además, decidieron hacer algo al respecto. El pastor Julio Peredo de la **Iglesia Fellowship Community Español** en Salem contactó al Pastor Julio Velandia de la **Iglesia Franklin Heights** en Rocky Mount. Se comunicaron con Pablo y comenzaron un proyecto de reunirse periódicamente en un lugar equidistante para animarse mutuamente.

Julio Peredo nos contaba de lo importante que fue para ellos visitar a



Los pastores Pablo Hernandez, Julio Peredo, Julio Velandia y sus familias disfrutando de una comida juntos

Pablo “Vinimos para bendecir con una visita a nuestro hermano y creo que el más bendecido fui yo.” Pablo visitó Roanoke para que los tres se reunieran y él nos contaba que este tiempo es especial para hablar de todos los temas, no solamente los ministeriales, sino charlas de hermanos que están formando una amistad.

Este concepto fue expandido por el Pastor Peredo, “Mostrarse amigo implica derribar ciertas barreras que natural o intencionalmente construimos sobre nosotros, implica ir más allá de la comodidad de un horario o una ubicación geográfica, implica en mostrarnos confiables y amistosos con hermanos que no son una competencia sino un complemento para la expansión del Evangelio.”

Julio Velandia opinaba de la soledad en el ministerio: “La soledad es un monstruo silencioso que en el ministerio nos consume de adentro hacia afuera, nos va secando, minimizando, restando al punto de llegar a abandonarnos a

nosotros mismos, a nuestras familias y considerar quizás abandonar la más hermosa experiencia en nuestra existencia que es el servir a nuestro Dios. También nos puede llevar al pecado de sumirnos en el pecado de depender de nosotros mismos.”

El fruto ha sido inmenso al ver la cooperación mutua. La congregación de Julio Velandia apoyará a la Iglesia Cristiana Sígueme en su servicio dominical con su congregación, con música especial y predicación. Julio Peredo y Julio Velandia ya han intercambiado oportunidades de predicar, y el pastor Pablo pronto visitará Salem para predicar allí.

El pastor Hernández nos dice que todo esto nos ha confirmado el sentir de nuestro lema “*no estamos solos*” es una realidad práctica. “Y nuestras iglesias están aprendiendo de esto. Qué bueno es cuando los pastores compartimos juntos en la armonía del evangelio y nos apoyamos en nuestras vidas.” ■



“

I am the vine;
you are the
branches. If
you remain
in me and I in
you, you will
bear much
fruit; apart
from me
you can do
nothing.”

John 15:5

From the Editor

Staying Connected

Several weeks ago, after a pretty big rainfall, a walnut tree fell in our backyard. And when I say this was a massive tree, I am not exaggerating. It hit a few other trees on the way down and caused a major mess. I knew it was going to take a while to chop up. But I noticed that because it was on a little knoll or hill, some of it was still partially in the ground even though it had fallen. I started cutting it up little by little as I had the time. After a few weeks, I looked at some of the branches I had not cut yet and saw where new walnuts had grown! I kept cutting and kept cutting. And even after most of it was cut up, even after more weeks, there were new shoots coming out of part of the tree.

The new growth is not just a physical principle; it's a spiritual principle. Jesus tells us in John 15 that HE is the true vine, and His Father is the gardener. He wants us to not only stay connected to Him, but produce much fruit. I have read this verse many times but never thought of how even when life knocks us to the ground (like my walnut tree), if we stay connected to Him and remain in Him, we can continue to produce fruit. So many times, we feel that when the storms of life rock our world and humble us, we can not continue to serve the Lord or be of use to His church or His Kingdom. That is not true at all! We have seen time and time again how Jesus continues to use those who have been knocked down and humbled.

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 *"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken, struck down, but not destroyed."*

This past year, especially in the last few months, we have witnessed tremendous growth amid trials and hardship. Churches are coming alongside some of the most vulnerable by providing foster care and adoption. Mission teams have traveled to places like Buenos Aires to care for and support our missionaries, who are at times lonely and looking for help. And even as I write this, SBCV Disaster Relief teams are in the midst of the aftermath of major storms, providing help, comfort, and the Gospel to those trying to recover.

As you read this issue of the *Proclaimer*, you will find that I've just scratched the surface of all that God is doing through the incredible churches of the SBC of Virginia.

Our theme for this year's Annual Homecoming on November 12-14 at The Heights Baptist Church is *The Lord is With You: Relying on His Strength*. Remember, as you stay faithful to the Lord and serve him in Virginia and beyond, He desires for you to produce not just fruit—but MUCH fruit. It's not up to us to produce. Our job is to stay connected to our true vine. Let us encourage one another to lock into Jesus and see how that no matter what happens in your life or ministry, as you rely on His strength, He will do what He says and produce much fruit.

John 15:4-5 *"Remain in me, and I in you. Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit because you can do nothing without Me."*



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The JOY of MAKING DISCIPLES

by Mark Wingfield, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Grottoes

Of all the wonderful, glorious things that God calls Christians to do, I can think of none more important, difficult, challenging, or rewarding than the call to make disciples. Making disciples, simply stated, means helping those who have professed faith in Christ look like, think like, and live like Jesus Christ. It is the opposite of handing a newborn a bottle and expecting him to feed himself — it is recognizing the need for that spiritual newborn (or in some cases those who have never grown because they were never discipled) to receive spiritual nourishment and nurturing so that one day they will be equipped and fully mature in Christ, sufficiently able to feed their self as well as others.

The reality is that not all who profess Christ as Savior seem fully interested in serving Him as Lord. I have learned that my time and energy are best spent when I learn to identify those who truly desire spiritual growth and then pour most of my efforts into them. This isn't to say I don't love others and wouldn't run to their side in a time of pastoral

need, but I believe the best model to follow would be that of our Lord Jesus who spent most of His time and energy molding and shaping those who were committed to following Him.

Making disciples of the willing will look different with each new, potential disciple, but in all cases, the greatest growth will happen when there is a balanced emphasis on acquiring Biblical knowledge, functioning in fellowship with other believers, and ministering alongside others in a way that helps the person walk into his own spiritual giftedness.

I love one-on-one conversations in my office when that is appropriate. I love bringing the growing believer to one of the small groups I meet with regularly or directing him to one that will best aid his transformation. I love taking a new Christian to a local revival service or giving him the chance to serve in one of our church ministries or bringing him along when I go to share the gospel with a non-believer.

All Christians grow at different rates, but all who grow will eventually reach the point where they need to be released to serve on their own. Reaching this place doesn't eliminate the need for continued guidance and accountability, but it is important to release a person to some kind of ministry when he demonstrates a level of spiritual maturity. Too often we forget this important step, but if we ignore it, the Christian's spiritual growth will inevitably slow down or stop.

Not all who we tag as potential disciples will develop into fully mature followers of Christ, but we can be sure that the likelihood that they will is much higher when an effort towards discipleship is intentional, consistent, and central. I encourage us to pray that God would lead us to those under our care or in our circles of influence who are eager to grow in understanding, ready to learn how to serve, and committed to doing the work it takes to become a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. ■





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CALENDAR

To see up-to-date details on these and future events, visit sbcv.org/calendar.

OCTOBER

6-7

Pastors, Staff, & Wives Retreat, *Kingsmill Resort, Williamsburg*

7

Entrenamiento "Iglesias en Desarrollo," *Richmond*
Disaster Relief Training Opportunities

16-17

Sunday School Essentials with Ken Braddy, *SBC of Virginia Ministry Support Center, Glen Allen*

20

LifeWay's You Lead Women's Leadership Conference, *LibertyLive.Church, Hampton*

21

Going Beyond Live with Priscilla Shirer, *LibertyLive.Church, Hampton*

28

Conferencia Equipada para Madres e Hijas, *Spotswood BC, Fredericksburg*

NOVEMBER

4

Entrenamiento de Liderazgo, *Norte*

12-14

SBCV Annual Homecoming, *The Heights BC, Colonial Heights*

23

Thanksgiving Day
Día de Acción de Gracias

27-30

Pastors Mission Vision Tour, *Puerto Rico*

DECEMBER

3-10

Lottie Moon Week of Prayer for International Missions

24

Christmas Eve
Noche Buena

25

Christmas Day
Día de Navidad

JANUARY 2024

1

New Year's Day
Visperas de Año Nuevo

12-13

Youth Evangelism Conference (YEC), *London Bridge BC, Virginia Beach*

18

Pastors' Prayer Gathering 6, *First Baptist Roanoke*



SBCVirginia

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12-13
2024**



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