

PROCLAIMER

2025 | VOLUME 27, ISSUE 3



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SBCVirginia
You are not alone.



A SIMPLE YET POWERFUL TOOL

It's a simple idea, yet influential as a means for outreach in the community.



CELEBRATION OF MISSIONS

Churches bearing witness and advancing the Gospel worldwide.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SBCV EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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Together We...

In the following pages, you will read of how God is at work through His people advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The mission of the SBCV partnership of churches is to come alongside local churches advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ together to reach our neighbors and the nations. These stories chronicle how followers of Christ are advancing the Gospel together through their local church. These stories describe how local churches of the Lord Jesus are advancing the Gospel together through this cooperative partnership.

Advancing the Gospel together, we obey a BIBLICAL MANDATE.

Matthew 28:18-20 is often referred to as The Great Commission. As followers of Christ, we are called to “make disciples.” We are given a biblical mandate in these Bible verses and others to make disciples of all nations, to go, baptize, and teach them.

Advancing the Gospel together we embrace a GLOBAL MISSION.

I find it interesting that someone decided at some time to begin referring to Matthew 28:18-20 as the Great Commission. The reality is that this is a GREAT commission. But it strikes me that the Great Commission is not a small suggestion! As we advance the Gospel together, the sun never sets on the ministry of local churches. We see the Lord at work through His local churches among our neighbors and across the nations.

Advancing the Gospel together we join in GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP.

The churches that partner together through the SBCV to plant and revitalize churches, reach different people

groups, send missionaries to the nations, strengthen and develop leaders, help educate ministers, mobilize students, respond to hunger, disasters, and to the needs of our neighbors and the nations. Local churches join in Gospel partnership as we pray, give, send, and go, through the SBCV’s “Cooperative Partnership.”

While the SBCV Cooperative Partnership is not coercive, it is compelling, allowing new, older, normative size, and mega-churches to have global impact.

While it is comprehensive, it is also personal, having global impact while also touching the lives of individuals across our communities and around the world.

While it is voluntary, it is necessary. All throughout the New Testament, we see churches partnering together to advance the mission. The apostle Paul mentioned giving — from one church to another — in several of his letters (Romans 15:26; 1 Corinthians 16:1; 2 Corinthians 8-9; cf. Acts 11:27-30).

Praise the Lord and thank You. “For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God. By their approval of this service, they will glorify God because of your submission that comes from your confession of the gospel of Christ, and the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others, while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God upon you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!” (2 Corinthians 9:12-15).

Your brother in Christ,

Brian Autry

Your prayers and gifts through the Cooperative Program and Vision Virginia State Missions Offering enable and empower ministries around Virginia and beyond. | sbcv.org/visionvirginia

PRAY FOR MISSIONARIES

around the globe



Nick & Anna Abraham

📍 Beach City, Ohio

The Abrahams planted Reformation Bible Church in Beach City, Ohio, where it is reaching three other nearby towns. The church purchased and renovated an old church building on Main Street. Due to economic hardships in the area, Nick hopes that this new building will serve as a beacon of hope for the community—showing them that the church intends to stay. The church also sponsors an after-school ministry.



Rebekah Lockhart

📍 Uganda

Rebekah teaches history and serves as registrar at Uganda Baptist Seminary. She experienced sudden exhaustion, which was unusual for a woman in her 40s. She received a diagnosis of leukemia. After intense, lengthy treatments—18 months—she was declared cured. Rebekah returned to Uganda because she knows her work at the seminary is vital. There, church leaders from across East Africa are trained.

"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)

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.

Building Trust

in Church Revitalization

Josh Morgan stepped onto the bright yellow footprints at Parris Island, South Carolina, on April 2, 2012, to begin a transformative journey to earn the title of United States Marine. The grueling thirteen weeks in the unforgiving swamps reshaped Morgan and embedded two Marine Corps principles deep within: “Respect and trust are earned, never given,” and “You never ‘make’ it.” The first underscores that trust must be built through actions, not assumed. The second instills humility, reminding us there’s always more to strive for, no matter the obstacles.

Today, Josh Morgan serves as a pastor and participates in the SBC of Virginia Church Revitalization Cohort. He works alongside leaders like Pastor Rusty Small and Pastor Mike Fitzgerald, who embody a passion for Jesus, the church, and shepherding. The cohort is a haven of encouragement, reflection, and accountability. Participants share their hearts, pray for one another, glean wisdom, and return to their churches revitalized. While discussions focus on glorifying God and advancing Kingdom

work, one challenge persists across all ministry contexts—especially in rural Buckingham County: trust.

Trust is often wrongly assumed due to a title or role. When Pastor Josh arrived at **First Baptist Church of Dillwyn**, with education, training, and a divine calling, he expected people to follow his lead toward a thriving church season. Yet, he faced a critical question: “Who are you, and why should we trust you?” No degree or experience guarantees trust; it must be earned. In Buckingham, a county Pastor Josh hadn’t known before, his wife’s maiden name gave him an initial advantage. Her family ties provided a foundation of trust he could build upon.

Still, genuine trust grew through personal connections. Spending one-on-one time with his congregation—whether fishing on a lake or riding in a weathered hunt truck—proved more effective than any sermon. These moments fostered love for his church and community, a depth unattainable from the pulpit. Rural ministry thrives in these unassuming spaces, where trust is built. Pastor Josh gained insight into the hearts of his people by walking alongside them in their joys and struggles.

First Baptist Church of Dillwyn, now an SBCV church, stands grateful for the support to grow alongside others who share a conviction for truth and doctrine. The revitalization cohort has spiritually fed and encouraged Pastor Josh, equipping him to earn his community’s trust. He presses on, never fully “making it,” but faithfully pursuing what God has called him to. Ministry here teaches daily: trust is earned through presence, love, and time, and the journey of growth never ends. ■

*Pastor Josh and Amanda Morgan
with their daughters.*



A Simple Yet POWERFUL TOOL for *sharing The Gospel*

Mobile Grill Walk

by Kenny Bass, Outreach Pastor, London Bridge Baptist Church

At **London Bridge Baptist Church**, we've been intentionally working to shift our church culture to become more evangelistic, especially outside the walls of the building. One of the key ways we've been doing that is through the 3 Circles evangelism training. It's a simple and powerful tool that helps people share the Gospel clearly and conversationally. But as helpful as the training is, we realized something was missing: people needed a real-life way to actually use it. That's when we discovered the Mobile Grill Walk.

The idea is simple but powerful: we attach a gas grill and serving table to the back of a vehicle, then go out into neighborhoods offering hot hamburgers—right off the grill. On the fourth Saturday of every month, we send out a group and divide them into teams of four. Each team approaches a home, introduces itself, and offers hot burgers to the entire family. As two team members return to the mobile grill to prepare the food, the other two stay to engage in a Gospel conversation.

What we've experienced through this has been truly incredible. We've witnessed people surrender their hearts to Jesus right on their front porches. Some have even come to church the very next day and brought family members who also came forward to accept Christ.

We know that most believers have never personally shared the Gospel, and we want to change that. The Mobile Grill Walk gives people the opportunity to share their faith or, for the first time, witness

someone else doing it. It's a ministry anyone can participate in, whether you've shared the Gospel a hundred times or never at all.

What's been so encouraging is seeing people come back from their first Grill Walk. They're excited not just because they saw someone accept Jesus, but because they realize they can do it. They saw the Gospel work in real time and now they have the confidence to keep going.

Romans 1:16 (HCSB) has been a guiding truth for us: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, because it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes..." This ministry helps us to live that out—to be bold, unashamed, and obedient to God's call to be His witnesses.

We've also seen the Mobile Grill Walk strengthen our new Hispanic ministry. As we go into bilingual communities, our English- and Spanish-speaking teams work side by side, sharing the Gospel and learning from each other. It's been a beautiful display of unity and partnership.

We've even invited other churches to join us for a Grill Walk to see how this outreach can work in their own communities. And every time, we witness the same results: lives are changed, churches are encouraged, and believers are equipped.

This isn't just about hamburgers. It's about bringing hope, building confidence, and boldly sharing the Good News of Jesus right in the heart of our neighborhoods. ■





Revitalization THROUGH PRAYER & OUTREACH

Pastor Terry Nester and his church, **Riverland Road Baptist Church** in Roanoke, are rejoicing in the powerful results of a renewed focus on prayer and outreach. Whatever we seek, God invites us to come to Him with confidence, believing that He is able to answer—and that He will answer. Pastor Nester motivates and encourages his congregation to respond to life's challenges with prayer: praying without ceasing and praying with great expectations.

He also urges his people to reach out to others by investing in relationships and inviting them to hear the Good News of Jesus.

Riverland Road Baptist is experiencing revitalization through its emphasis on prayer and evangelism. In January 2024, with support from the SBC of Virginia, the church launched a “Who’s Your One?” initiative, building on its previous ministry, “Drive-Through Prayer.”

Located near the main hospital and medical



***You never know
what God's up to,
but you need to
always be ready!***

complex in the Roanoke Valley, the church began offering designated prayer times in April 2022, when a team was available to pray with individuals who paused in the church parking lot. These times have abounded with opportunities for ministry and evangelism.

Pastor Nester testified, “You never know what God’s up to, but you need to always be ready! One afternoon, as I was leaving my office, someone was quietly knocking on the door. I looked out to find a woman standing there sobbing. Answering the door, I asked what was going on, and she began to unload her heartbreak over her young adult son, who had recently gotten married and completely cut off all communication with her—her fear is maybe he is ensnared in some kind of religious cult. After I prayed with her, I asked why she stopped by our church, and her answer was: ‘I knew I needed some godly counsel, and I had been through your drive-thru prayer.’ Taking more time, my wife and I were able to encourage her. It was a God-moment! People are hurting everywhere. I’m so glad

God has called Riverland Road to be known as a church that prays for people.”

The church is actively reaching out to guests and special friends through intentional outreach. The “Who’s Your One?” resource has equipped and challenged the congregation to be deliberate in their efforts. Riverland Road Baptist has reached new attendance highs, celebrated numerous baptisms, filled its nursery for the first time in years, and started renovating its outdated facilities. Easter services, which included baptisms, led to three guests praying to trust Christ for salvation.

God is at work bringing new life to Riverland Road Baptist in Roanoke through a renewed focus on prayer and outreach. To God be the glory! ■

Pastor Nester talking with an individual requesting prayer.

(far right) Volunteers pray with a homeless man who approached them asking for prayer.



Women's Ministry Leaders Offer Support & Strategy



One of the greatest privileges of serving in this position is coming alongside church leaders who have questions and concerns about the ministry in their church, and then offering them help and seeing them grow."

DOLLY MINK, SBC of Virginia Women's Ministry Coordinator

Whether meeting online, in person, or over the phone, SBCV church leaders know they are not alone as they navigate a variety of ministry-related challenges.

Tammie Bebout, regional representative for the Southwest Region, regularly meets with Holly Bowman and Holly Rutherford from **Rosedale Baptist Church** in Abingdon. Together, they develop strategies to reach women not only within their church but also throughout their community. This collaboration was especially impactful in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, when churches united to serve the broader community. Holly Bowman recently described her meetings with Bebout as "precious," calling their time together "encouraging."

Casey Weymouth, co-founder of The Fix Ministry with her husband, Fred Weymouth, frequently visits SBCV churches to speak about ministering to women facing trauma and addiction. A survivor of both, Weymouth brings personal insights along with advanced degrees in addiction counseling. This spring, she addressed the women of **Bethel Baptist Church** in Yorktown. Rhonda Robinson, former women's ministry leader at Bethel Baptist and member of the SBCV Executive Board, shared, "In

addition to giving her personal testimony regarding addiction, Weymouth spoke about what addictions are and ways to point women to Jesus." Robinson added, "She expanded her lesson to go beyond substance abuse, to other addictions in our lives, such as phones, social media, and relationships."

Lexi Shipp is a pastor's wife, mother, and leader of the SBCV Women's Ministry Blog Team, supports girls' small group leaders by offering strategies and insights into the mindset of adolescents. "The women who are ministering to middle and high school girls in our rapidly changing culture—they're the ones on the front lines," says Shipp. "It can be a heavy, or sometimes just confusing call. My heart is to be a listening ear, a sounding board, and the biggest cheerleader who is always in your corner!"

The SBCV Women's Ministry Team continues to serve the Lord by supporting churches and providing resources such as personal training and counseling. Whether you're starting a women's ministry, rebuilding an existing team, or training members in specific areas—you are not alone. ■

RESOURCE

For more information about resources available to your church, contact Dolly Mink at:



dmink@sbcv.org



Nations SERVING Nations

Grace Community Baptist Church in Henrico County beautifully illustrates the nations worshipping God and serving one another as a church family. The church didn't set out to become multi-ethnic, but God brought together members from diverse backgrounds to covenant together for His glory and to make disciples of Christ.

“Discipleship is something that Grace puts at the forefront of everything the church sets out to do,” said Stephen John, a deacon and children's ministry leader. The children's ministry reflects this mission, with leaders from various nations serving together. Stephen and his wife came to Grace Community from South Asia, not speaking English as their first language. The church welcomed, equipped, and empowered them. Today, they teach children about God's love for all His creation. “We're so glad we were able to grow at Grace and now mold and equip the next generation by sharing God's love through Grace!” he said.

Peter and Deepthi Ambojii also serve in the children's ministry. Having grown up in the church in southern India, they felt called to attend Grace Community when they moved to Richmond in 2006. “The words of wisdom, fellowship, and friendships gained throughout our service at Grace have been a wonderful example of God's family knit together by Christ's love,” he

shared. “We have grown closer in our walk with the Lord because of all the fellow believers from different countries and cultures who poured into us. We need the whole body of Christ to grow as disciples and to serve unconditionally.”

Julie Newton, Children's Ministry Director, values the opportunity to disciple the children at the church. “Working side by side with my brothers and sisters in Christ from India, Nepal, and Africa is very enriching,” she said. “Learning their stories—their lives in their homelands, what brought them to the U.S., and what led them to Christ—has shown me a different kind of faith journey. No matter what corner of the world we are in or where we come from, the Lord is the same, no matter where we gather to worship.”

Serving together across cultures demonstrates to the children of Grace Community how to live out the Great Commission:



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:19-20 (ESV)



Reach the world here.

We're helping people speak or improve their English while intentionally sharing and demonstrating the Gospel of Christ in a church-based English as a Second Language (ESL) ministry.





A Step of Faith

ESL Ministry Relunched

After building strong relationships in local schools and Spanish-speaking communities, Joel Eguiluz recognized a significant challenge: for many Hispanic adults, access to English as a Second Language (ESL) classes was limited. Eguiluz serves as pastor of **The Heights Español** congregation at **The Heights Baptist Church** in Chesterfield. Although Pastor Joel felt called to respond, he was unsure how to begin. He had never been involved in ESL ministry and had never imagined leading or teaching in one. But God was already at work. The Heights, which had offered ESL classes before the pandemic, relaunched its ESL ministry.

Former ESL teachers and new volunteers were mobilized and trained to lead various levels of English instruction. Pastor Joel was quickly encouraged as leaders began forming loving relationships with students. Volunteers were intentional in praying for students and sharing Scripture, which led to Gospel conversations. Students were invited to meals and special events outside of class, creating more opportunities to build trust and community.

One student, a self-proclaimed atheist, was invited to a volunteer's home and later to a women's event at the church. The Gospel was shared, and the relationship continued to grow. Though still seeking, the student now acknowledges that something is missing in her life after tangibly experiencing the love of God.

The successful relaunch of ESL classes grew to 65 students in the spring. Rather than

taking a summer break, Pastor Joel, his wife Sara, and other volunteers launched two unique summer language classes. Intermediate and advanced ESL students joined English-speaking church members in "Spanglish" classes—weekly gatherings where participants learned and practiced each other's languages. The setting was structured yet informal, allowing friendships to form quickly and easily. With about 80% of ESL students unchurched, the classes provided many opportunities to share the love of Christ, personal testimonies, and the Gospel.

The second summer class, "Café Con Leche Club," was designed for English-speaking members of the church who wanted to learn conversational Spanish for mission trips and workplace use. Teacher Nancy Wizer customized lessons using feedback from The Heights' mission teams to Nicaragua, helping future teams be better prepared to serve in Spanish-speaking countries.

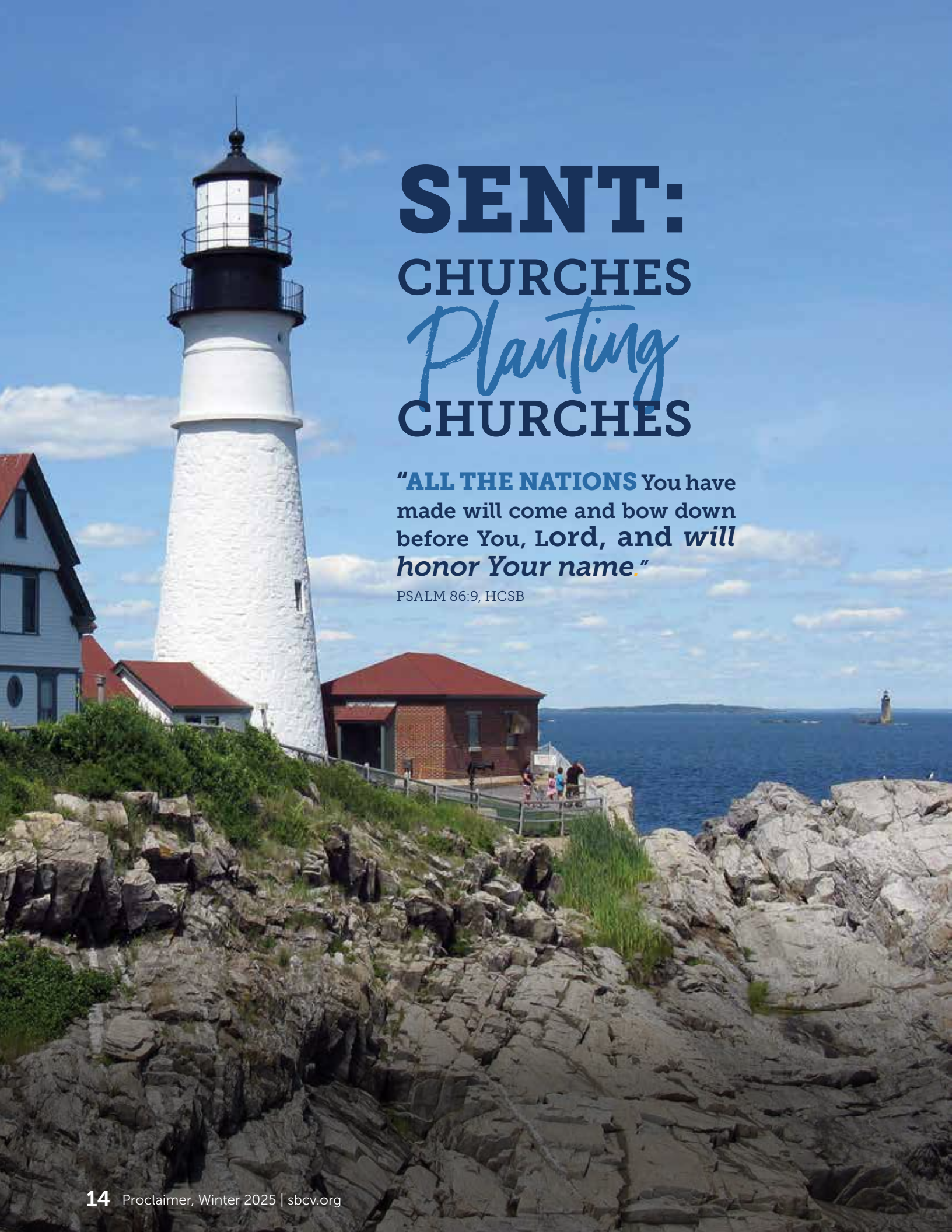
Pastor Joel is excited about the future of the ESL ministry at The Heights. Gospel seeds have been planted and watered, and he looks forward to the fruit of salvation that the Lord will provide. When asked how he would encourage a church even slightly interested in starting an ESL ministry, he says, "Just step out in faith and do it!" ■

RESOURCE

For more information and scheduling of a Basic ESL Training Workshop, contact SBCV Missions Team at:



missions@sbcv.org



SENT: CHURCHES *Planting* CHURCHES

"ALL THE NATIONS You have made will come and bow down before You, Lord, and *will honor Your name.*"

PSALM 86:9, HCSB

When church planters move to a city, their primary focus is to engage the city with the Gospel, make disciples, and plant a church. This process involves staying close to people to build relationships, walking alongside new believers, and gathering them to form a local church. Often, the public worship gathering becomes the central focus of new churches.

When Jim and Stephanie Boyd moved from Soldotna, Alaska, to Lynchburg in June 2022, they left behind a church they had planted years earlier. They arrived without knowing how God would use them to launch K12 Collective in Lynchburg.

They began the missionary task of engaging their community with the Gospel—primarily college students. Jim and Stephanie immediately started evangelizing and making disciples among the students they met. Many of their public gatherings took place in living rooms and coffee shops.

Every staff member raised their own support for their role at the church. Jim explained, “This reduces overhead expenses, which allows us to focus more of our financial resources on disciple-making. Each of these leaders

receives partnership development training followed by weekly coaching until they are fully funded. Each of these harvest workers is gathering ministry partners to provide monthly support and a prayer covering over their ministry.”

Each staff member uses the North American Mission Board’s (NAMB) Missionary Service Corps status to raise support, which also provides official endorsement from NAMB.

Even in these early stages of planting, K12 Collective is sending out missionaries around the world. Sven is being sent through the International Mission Board (IMB) to South Asia. Boyd tells the story of how God allowed Sven to meet another missionary in South Asia who was sent from a church they planted more than two decades ago. “Two people, sent from two different churches we planted 22 years apart, have found each other coincidentally on the mission field. What are the odds?”

K12 Collective is planning to send another missionary to plant a church in Maine through the Send Network. What an amazing picture of churches planting churches! We thank God that He is raising up missionaries to send out to the nations through church planting. ■



Photo: International Mission Board (IMB)



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Acts
1:8

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FEATURING CHIP LUTER, RED LETTER SOCIETY, & JARED HALL

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UNITED GENERATION

How Worship Nights Are Connecting Churches and Young Adults

Reaching college students and young adults is often described as one of the most difficult tasks in ministry. However, in two Virginia cities—Richmond and Roanoke—God is creating a new story of connection, collaboration, and community.

Churches in both cities are joining forces to host regular young adult worship nights. These gatherings offer space for worship, teaching, and genuine relationship-building among a demographic that often feels isolated or overlooked.

In Richmond, Hanna Cauthorne helps organize these gatherings every other month. Her passion stems from personal experience. “After college, I struggled to find community,” Cauthorne shares. “That inspired me to help create the very thing I needed—a space for young adults to connect, grow, and worship together.”

Each event rotates between churches, often combining worship teams, speakers, and volunteers from multiple congregations. “The goal isn’t to replace the local church,” Cauthorne explains, “but to bridge young adults into it by reminding them they’re not alone.”

In Roanoke, a similar movement has grown from a small Bible study on a dock to citywide gatherings. Thomas Brown, who leads the effort, disciples young men through his Deeper Waters ministry. “It grew fast. We saw that these young adults were hungry—not just for fun, but for spiritual depth and connection,” Brown says.

Like Richmond, Roanoke’s gatherings rotate between churches and intentionally keep things simple: worship, a short message, and time to connect. “I always challenge people to meet three new people before they leave,” Brown says. “That one step often leads to friendships, accountability, and even salvations.”

Both leaders emphasize the importance of collaboration. “Most churches only have a handful of young adults,” Cauthorne explains. “But when we work together, we create something much more impactful than we could do alone.”

The fruit of their collaboration is evident. From spontaneous worship nights to baptisms, to young adults finding local church homes and stepping into leadership, these gatherings are becoming catalytic spaces.

As Brown puts it, “The local church is where discipleship happens. These nights give young adults a glimpse of the greater Church and send them back into their congregations with renewed faith and purpose.” ■

RESOURCE

For more information, contact Ethan Callison, SBCV Collegiate Ministry Coordinator:

 ecallison@sbcv.org



Now may the God of hope fill you with *all joy and peace* as you believe so that you may *overflow* with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13



Overflowing with Purpose

Every summer, the SBC of Virginia NextGen Ministry hosts Student Fusion Mission Camp, a unique experience designed for student ministries. This camp blends the energy of a traditional summer camp with meaningful mission and ministry opportunities. Students receive evangelism training and put it into practice, all while enjoying Bible study, worship, and fun.

Kyle Byrd from **Sherlynd Baptist Church** shared, “Student Fusion for sure exceeded all my expectations and is a great way for leaders to introduce their students to ministry and missions in an effective way!”

This year, Student Fusion was held in Colonial Heights, Virginia, with ministry opportunities stretching from Petersburg to the City of Richmond. More than 230 students and adults from 19 churches gathered at **Mount Pleasant Baptist Church** from June 16–20 for a week of worship and missions. The theme was “OVERFLOW,” based on Romans 15:13. Pastor Jordan West from **The Heights Baptist Church** served as the guest preacher, and worship was led by a team of leaders from **Parkway Baptist Church** and **Kingsland Baptist Church**.

It was a powerful week of life change and mission. Luke Johnson from **The Way Church** shared, “The highlight of Student Fusion for our students was undoubtedly being immersed in a Great Commission lifestyle from sunup to sundown. Intentional time spent in the Word, prayer, worship, and serving on mission sparked a renewed passion to serve God more deeply.”

Praise the Lord that during the week, more than ten students trusted Christ for salvation! Johnson added, “For me personally, the most powerful moment was witnessing the Spirit move in two of our students who gave their lives to Jesus!”

At Student Fusion, students are trained in evangelism and challenged to step outside their comfort zones to share the Gospel with those who need to hear it. Jared Snead of **Grace Community Baptist Church** shared, “Our students were nervous and apprehensive about some of the service projects, especially ones that meant talking to strangers or praying for them, but I was encouraged at how their boldness grew over the week. Many of them stepped out of comfort zones for the sake of Christ to pray with people, serve them, and be a light for Christ.”

Byrd also noted, “The teens in our group were very young and for sure hesitant, but they were able to really step into some confidence with it—not confidence in themselves but in God. Several teens shared with me how God calmed their nerves and gave them the words to say when they prayed with others. It really was a great way to help push them into trusting God more and walking by faith regularly.”

Student Fusion offers a great and affordable opportunity for churches. Snead said, “It allows a smaller church like mine to invest in students in ways that we wouldn’t be able to do otherwise if the location was far away or the price was higher. Student Fusion fills that gap for our group, and I’m very thankful for that.”

Johnson concluded, “God has used Student Fusion to open my eyes to what these students are truly capable of. They are not just the church of the future but the church right now. Beyond that, Student Fusion is simply a fun camp to be a part of! There’s never a dull moment.”

We are grateful and blessed for all that God has done, is doing, and will continue to do through Student Fusion Mission Camp! ■



A Celebration of Missions

Churches bearing witness
and advancing the Gospel
worldwide.

*“And you will be my witnesses in
Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the Earth.” Acts 1:8*



(left) **Bethel Baptist Church** ministered in the Republic of Georgia and Columbia.

(below) **Calvary Hill Fellowship** lead children to Jesus in Ecuador.



(left and below) **Cave Spring Baptist Church** witnessed in Puerto Rico, Vancouver, and Roanoke, Va.



Fellowship Community Church witnessed in Zambia.



The Community Fellowship ministered in Cuba.



(left) **Forest Baptist Church** sent a ministry team to Puerto Rico.

Impact Fredericksburg witnessed in Korinthos, Greece.

Franklin Heights Church shared the Gospel in Japan and through VBS in Puerto Rico.



Hillsboro Baptist Church ministered in Mexico.



(right) **Fincastle Baptist Church** ministered in Guatemala.



(below) **Old Powhatan Baptist Church** shared the Gospel in the Czech Republic and Puerto Rico



(below) **Red Lane Baptist Church** held baptisms in a church plant, Aaibonito, in Puerto Rico.

(below) **Pillar Church** ministered in Iceland.



Shenandoah Community Fellowship and **Seaford Baptist Church** partnered together to send a team to Spain to share the Gospel.

SEND NETWORK
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Un taller práctico de dos días para pastores y líderes de iglesias que desean desarrollar intencionalmente y enviar futuros plantadores de iglesias.

Send Network *Connect*

Gather with church planters, their wives, and local pastors across Virginia to build relationships and gain timely, practical training for our church planting mission.

Bring a pastor friend and come join the conversation beginning January 2026.

Glen Allen

JANUARY 20
MARCH 17 • MAY 19
Ministry Support Center

Roanoke

JANUARY 20
MARCH 10 • MAY 19
The Hill Church

Springfield

JANUARY 20
MARCH 17 • MAY 19
First Baptist Church

Norfolk

JANUARY 22
MARCH 12 • MAY 21
First Baptist Church



Answered Prayers

GIFTING AN ENTIRE VBS

You are not alone. That truth was powerfully experienced this summer by **Misión Bautista Hispana de Rivermont** in Danville and its pastor, Manuel Rodriguez, during Vacation Bible School (VBS).

Each summer, the church plant welcomes around 100 children from the community. With the area's growing Hispanic population, the need for volunteers and resources has also increased. Now in its second year, the congregation lacks the means to fully fund certain ministry activities.

While Pastor Manuel and his wife, Martha, prayed for God's provision for VBS, Pastor Pedro Alvarado and his congregation at **Primera Iglesia Bautista Hispana de Roanoke** were also seeking the Lord, asking which church plant they could come alongside and support. In His perfect sovereignty, God brought them together.

Pastor Pedro shared, "Every year, our church commits to supporting a church planter or missionary. Through our convention, we were able to identify new church plants in our area that might be in need of support. As a pastoral team, we presented this project to our church leadership and staff, and the response was immediate—we wholeheartedly embraced it. In fact, there was complete unity in agreeing to support Pastor Manuel Rodriguez and his church."

After connecting with Pastor Manuel and learning about the needs of Rivermont Church, Pastor Pedro and his church donated all the VBS decorations and gave a generous offering, making their entire VBS possible.

"Every year, the members of our church prepare with much love, enthusiasm, and hope for the VBS, through which God allows us to reach many families in our community,"

Pastor Manuel shared. "As we pray for God to work spiritually in the lives of each attendee, we also pray for His financial provision to make it possible."

The church's VBS budget was \$5,800, but as the start date neared, only \$1,200 had been raised. They kept praying and trusting God—then came the call from Pastor Pedro.

"[Pastor Pedro] and his daughter kindly visited us in Danville, provided all the decorations, and gave us an offering of \$2,000 from the children of their church," Pastor Manuel said. "With their help, we were able to carry out our VBS without any problems. We confirmed that God is faithful and hears our prayers, and that neither our convention nor the churches that are part of it leave us alone. We truly realized that we are not alone."

A total of 111 children and youth attended. Thirteen made professions of faith, including seven from the church's own youth group—four of these requested baptism.

The impact of this partnership went beyond Danville. "Becoming aware of the needs of other churches has been very meaningful for our congregation," Pastor Pedro said. "It has motivated us to take action and look for ways to help. This time, our members were so generous that we exceeded our original goal of \$600. Our church has been so encouraged by this experience that we are currently collecting additional funds and exploring new opportunities—whether with church plants or missionaries—that we can bless. We are becoming a generous church."

Through the prayers and generosity of God's people, He provided for His church, changed lives, and made His faithfulness known. ■

HISPANIC BAPTIST NETWORK

Newly elected leaders of the Hispanic Baptist Network. Pastor Vernig Suarez (left) was unanimously chosen to serve as president for a two-year term.



The *mission* of the Hispanic Baptist Network is to work together in unity, connect through mission efforts, share resources, and celebrate what God is doing among Hispanics.

Southern Baptist churches fellowship and collaborate for the glory of God by reaching Hispanics across the United States, which now has a population of more than 64.5 million, according to the 2024 census.

Recognizing this growing reality, the Hispanic Baptist Network elected new leaders for its executive committee, ahead of the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting held in Dallas on June 8–9, 2025. Pastor Vernig Suarez was unanimously chosen to serve as president for a two-year term.

Pastor Vernig Suarez, originally from Venezuela and now a naturalized U.S. citizen, trusted Christ as his Savior in 1989. He brings approximately 30 years of experience in pastoral ministry, leadership, and church planting in Florida, Texas, and Virginia. He currently pastors **Iglesia Bautista del Camino**,

the Hispanic ministry of **First Baptist Norfolk**, where Dr. Eric Thomas serves as senior pastor.

The mission of the Hispanic Baptist Network is to work together in unity, connect through mission efforts, share resources, and celebrate what God is doing among Hispanics. This mission is based on the biblical vision in 1 Kings 8:60 (CSB): “May all the peoples of the earth know that the LORD is God. There is no other!”

The Network's core values include clear communication, mutual respect, personal integrity, sound doctrine, cross-cultural work, and ongoing restoration.

Dr. Bruno Molina, executive director of the Hispanic Baptist Network, celebrated Pastor Suarez's election with the board. He pointed out that one of the greatest challenges facing Hispanic congregations is the need to develop strong leadership to reach second- and

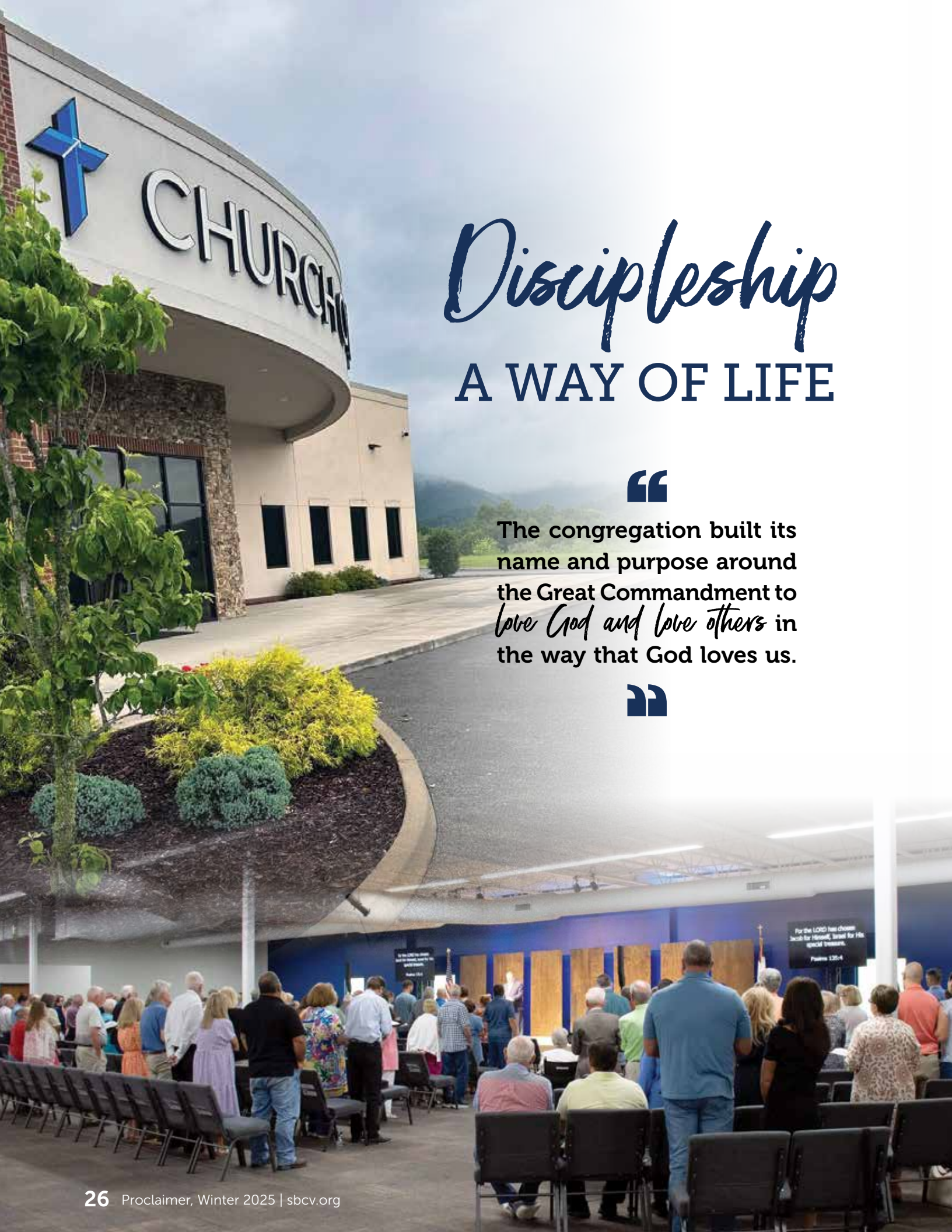
third-generation Hispanics, who are growing rapidly and are at risk of leaving the church in adulthood.

This concern has been known for years and was highlighted at the Hispanic Leaders Celebration held prior to the SBC annual meeting in Nashville in 2021. There, it was shared that seven out of ten young Hispanics from the second and third generations leave the church before age 30—representing a generational loss of 70 percent.

Pastor Suarez has connected with Hispanic ministry leaders from the SBC of Virginia (SBCV) to explore ways to advise Hispanic leaders in other states within the network who lack ministry structures. Thanks to the generous support of *Vision Virginia* offerings in recent years, the network has been able to provide training, coaching, advising, and support for church planting, as well as care for the wives of Hispanic pastors and planters across the state.

We celebrate the election of Pastor Vernig Suarez as president of the Hispanic Baptist Network, representing churches within the SBCV family and beyond across the United States! ■





Discipleship

A WAY OF LIFE

“

The congregation built its name and purpose around the Great Commandment to *love God and love others* in the way that God loves us.

”

The **Church On The Way** held its first meeting as a Virginia-based church on December 22, 2024, just under a year ago. Throughout most of 2024, the congregation met at the beautiful Marriott Meadowview Resort and Convention Center in Kingsport, Tennessee, before relocating to its new home in Scott County, Virginia. The church is now housed in the former Teletch building in Weber City, originally built as a call center for Amazon and Citibank. Church On The Way is a lively congregation with the Great Commission at its heart.

Dr. Tony Crisp, pastor of Church On The Way, is a seasoned leader, professor, and a familiar figure in Southern Baptist circles. He has served on various national committees and the Executive Committee for Southern Baptists. He explains, “The congregation built its name and purpose around the Great Commandment to love God and love others in the way that God loves us. And the Great Commission as it appears in Matthew 28:18-20.”

Dr. Crisp continues, “There is one command that Jesus gave to His followers in verse 18, which is ‘Make disciples.’ To be clear, it is not ‘Go!’ The word ‘go’ is a participle that defines a verbal adjective that tells you when, where, and how to do the action that is being commanded. A more accurate and expanded translation of the Great Commission

would be, ‘...Therefore make disciples of anyone of any ethnicity... as you are going, whenever you are going, wherever you are going... immersing those who are followers of Jesus in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.’ As followers of Jesus Christ, both individually and as the Church collectively, we are called to love God with all our being and to make disciples by baptizing them and teaching them to live in obedience to God’s Word.”

Church On The Way is named to reflect this truth. Discipleship is a way of life—not something we do only occasionally or in a place separate from where we live and work every day. The church is the anchor of a new development, Riverside, scheduled to begin in Scott County in the coming months. It is also developing a childcare ministry, Riverside Academy, to serve Scott County and the Tri-Cities area. Currently, there are no daycare facilities in all of Scott County, so this ministry will allow the church to play an important role in reaching families throughout the region.

The church is working closely with Travis Ingle, SBCV Regional Strategist for Southwest Virginia, to encourage and partner with like-minded churches, impacting the region with the life-changing message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. ■



Inspire

A word of hope, support, and encouragement

“

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. COLOSSIANS 2:8

Spiritually Sinking FROM WORLDLY THINKING

The apostle Paul delivers a vital truth to us that is the lifeblood of all disciples. Paul urges us to be responsible for staying alert and protecting our thinking from being taken captive by manmade ideology and empty deception (Jeremiah 2:5). We don't have the luxury to pick and choose what sounds logical or good and add it to our walk of being set apart to God's glory (Ephesians 2:10).

We are set apart by and for the righteousness and holiness of Christ, thereby glorifying God. We must guard our hearts and minds (Proverbs 4:23) by holding fast to God's Word, to remain unblemished and untainted by worldliness.

Our standard of measurement is God's Word, not the elementary principles of the world. If your thinking aligns with the world, then your thoughts, principles, and practices are influenced by Satan (1 John 5:19). This may seem harmless on the surface, but in the light of the Word of God, the deception becomes obvious. Paul says our captivity, enslavement, and servanthood should be in accordance with Christ! Jesus is the full embodiment of truth (John 14:6). Knowing the truth and choosing to live by it provides

us with the omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient power of protection every minute of every day.

May we be steadfast as our spirits soar in Christ, because of the sanctifying work of truth He has accomplished in our lives!

PRAYER: Father of all creation, thank You for shepherding me and keeping me alive in You, making me useful to You through Christ and not the thinking of man. I give You praise. In Jesus' name, Amen

Love you all!



Milton Harding

Prayer and Care Minister

✉ mharding@sbcv.org

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?

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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 that is your sincere desire, then talk to God from your heart. Contact us today to let us know your decision and any questions you have: info@sbcv.org.



LEADER'S CONFERENCE

FEATURING SPEAKERS
Dr. Robert Smith & Dave Wilson

**SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH
MANAKIN SABOT**
January 27

noblewarriors.org

From Michigan to Appomattox

Small Town/Rural Church Pastors and Leaders Workshop

Isolation.

Limited resources.

Potential burnout.

Pastor Jim Wells and his wife, Karen Wells, have seen these challenges firsthand among pastors serving in rural churches. So when they discovered a conference in Appomattox, Virginia, addressing these very issues, they were thrilled, even though the Small Town/Rural Church Pastors and Leaders Workshop was more than 700 miles from their home.

The Wells were excited to attend a conference that highlighted both the unique challenges and rich opportunities of rural ministry—a focus they hadn’t seen highlighted before.

With 48 years of ministry experience, mostly in rural settings from New England to their current church outside Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Wells believe it’s essential for church planters—a calling they feel deeply burdened for—to understand rural church dynamics. As Jim Wells explained, “While urban communities may be more densely populated, the majority of America’s churches are in small, rural areas.”

“

While urban communities may be more densely populated, the majority of America's churches are in rural areas.

That’s exactly why this workshop was created. Pastor Rusty Small, revitalization strategist for the SBC of Virginia and pastor of **Liberty Baptist Church**, where the event was held on August 12, described its purpose: “Part of the responsibility

of this workshop is to begin to tell the story of successful, faithful, small-town rural church ministry ... which is literally everywhere."

Through Q&As, panel discussions, and six breakout sessions, the event offered resources, encouragement, and enrichment for small-town pastors and their wives.

The day began with a powerful session on spiritual warfare led by Dr. Steven Wade. "Many Baptists are afraid of this topic," Karen Wells noted with enthusiasm. "But he called the problem right out at the very beginning. He talked about how to recognize it and be on your guard."

Pastor Wells especially appreciated the breakout session titled "Developing a Strategy of Evangelism in the Small Town/Rural Church." He explained, "Most methods of evangelism are developed for urban settings, but those are not necessarily transferrable to a rural community. Rural evangelism is often built through relationships...and that can take more time." Still, he and Karen were encouraged by reminders of the many strengths rural churches offer.

As Small shared, "The church is often the hub of their rural communities. The small-town/rural ministry has a story to tell and can be championed. We see you, and we acknowledge your uniqueness."

The Wells left feeling refreshed and inspired. "We have a newer perspective and sense of community," Karen said. Jim added with a smile, "I just wish it had gone on longer!" ■



Redeemer's House

Only God's supernatural power could save Kenneth Jones in prison, set him free to plant **Redeemer City Church** (RCC), and use him to lead a church that helps other formerly incarcerated men.

In 2019, five years after planting Redeemer City in Washington, D.C., Pastor Kenneth Jones was deeply moved by God's heart for justice. Through Scripture, prayer, and his own life story, God gave him a burden and vision to lead RCC in opening a transitional house for formerly incarcerated men. This house would serve as a place of restoration where men could live for nine months, begin the re-entry process into society, and experience the love of Jesus through His church.

Pastor Jones began praying, "Lord, where do we find a house close to our church in Washington D.C., and how will I find the time to search

for it?" God was already at work. He provided a renovated home just two miles from the church, available to rent at an affordable price. Amid the global pandemic, God brought together local partnerships and significant financial support from organizations and individuals both within and beyond the church. As the church grew in discipleship, they also grew in their understanding of God's justice and Jesus' compassion for former prisoners.

In August 2021, Redeemer City members, supporting churches, and local organizations donated furnishings for the house. While RCC continues to give generously each year, God has also provided funding through the federal government and other organizations to support staffing and upkeep. Only God!

The first resident moved into Redeemer's House in January 2022. Every other Wednesday

night, Redeemer City and partner churches prepare dinner and host a Bible study for the residents. While attendance at church is not required, several residents have visited RCC—and some now attend regularly.

Pastor Jones shared, "One resident who came to saving faith in prison prayed upon release that God would lead him to a solid church. He came to Redeemer's House, found a loving family through RCC, and was baptized on Father's Day in June 2025. He is now out of the house, employed, and was gifted a vehicle by an RCC member."

In recent months, another man came to Redeemer's House and came to saving faith in Christ through a Wednesday dinner and Bible study. He will soon be baptized. Praise the Lord for continuing to provide for this ministry, raising up leadership and laborers, and drawing the hearts of these residents to Himself. ■



Pray for:

the continued ministry through Redeemer City Church and the Redeemer's House.

- PRAY **against the spiritual darkness** that enters Redeemer's House.
- PRAY **for the salvation of all who come** to reside in the house.
- PRAY for wisdom and discernment **for the future of this great ministry.**





Serving with Purpose

My Summer with SBCV Disaster Relief

By Aidan Wolfgang

My name is Aidan Wolfgang, and I was extremely blessed by God to be given the opportunity to serve as a summer intern with the SBC of Virginia (SBCV) Disaster Relief ministry. My passion for disaster relief began when I joined a mission trip to Perry, Florida, where my team and I served residents impacted by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. While I was there, I experienced a sense of fulfillment and a calling like never before. That trip sparked a desire to get more involved, which eventually led me to meet Shawn Ames, Relief Ministries Director. When Shawn offered me a summer internship, I was beyond excited.

Throughout the summer, I was entrusted with a variety of responsibilities—from managing equipment reservations to organizing the disaster relief warehouse and assisting with numerous other tasks. I was able to see and take part in many different aspects of the ministry. One thing that's very important to me is having the opportunity to contribute meaningfully. This internship gave me just that. I felt useful, needed, and thankful to play a fundamental role in the mission.

Spending time in the Disaster Relief office opened my eyes to an entirely new side of this ministry—one I hadn't fully appreciated before. There's an incredible amount of

behind-the-scenes work involved in organizing a disaster response. From recruiting and coordinating volunteers to preparing and transporting heavy-duty equipment, the logistical demands are huge. The level of preparation and ongoing communication required is something I had definitely taken for granted before.

Working alongside experienced disaster relief leaders also gave me insight into the unique challenges this ministry faces. All ministry has its tough moments, but this work comes with its own set of difficulties. I had the privilege of sitting in on team discussions about real-life issues they were navigating—an invaluable experience that

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From recruiting and coordinating volunteers to preparing and transporting heavy-duty equipment, the logistical demands are huge.

gave me a deeper appreciation for the work they do.

Towards the end of my internship, I was blessed to participate in one of SBCV's Disaster Relief Rebuild trips. It was a joy to engage in hands-on construction work, but even more so, it gave me the opportunity to connect with other team members. I had several meaningful conversations and built relationships with people I had just met—connections that I'll carry with me beyond this summer.

All in all, this internship blessed me more than I could have

imagined. It confirmed and strengthened the calling I feel toward disaster relief ministry. What I love most about this work is that it gives us, as followers of Christ, the opportunity to meet people's needs in some of the most tangible, practical ways. When disaster strikes, people are broken. They're reeling, and their lives may never look the same. They've lost the small comforts and securities of daily life.

When we step in as Disaster

Relief workers, whether on a Relief or Rebuild trip, we're given the chance to restore, encourage, and minister to them in a moment when they are deeply aware of life's fragility. Above all, we get to share the hope of the Gospel with those who need it most. ■

RESOURCE

For more information about Disaster Relief and how you can get involved and be trained, visit:

 sbcv.org/DR





BRANDON PICKETT

Renovados

An Amazing Picture of the Kingdom

Just a few weeks ago, I had the joy of attending the Renovados Conference at **Swift Creek Baptist Church** in Midlothian. More than 500 people—pastors, church leaders, families, and children—gathered together to fellowship, worship and hear God’s Word. The atmosphere was alive with life and renewal. Songs of praise rose from hundreds of voices and many different instruments. Children laughed as they learned about Jesus, and families worshiped side by side. It was more than just a conference—it was a glimpse into what God is doing across Virginia.

As I looked around the room, I was struck by the beautiful diversity of God’s

Kingdom. This wasn’t just one people group or one church family—it was the nations gathered together in our own Commonwealth. And it reminded me that Virginia is changing before our very eyes. Families are moving here from Central and South America, from Africa, from Asia, and from the Middle East. In fact, every nation recognized by the United Nations is here. Hispanic brothers and sisters now make up 12% of Virginia and live in every county. One in four households speaks a language other than English.

The Great Commission is clear: we are called to make disciples of all nations. And when God brings the nations to our doorstep, He is entrusting us with that





God has brought the **NATIONS TO VIRGINIA.** Will we be *faithful* to reach them?

mission in a very tangible way. The mission field is not just across the ocean anymore—it is across the street, in our schools, in our workplaces, and in the very neighborhoods where we live.

I am encouraged to see that the SBC of Virginia is stepping into this moment with boldness and faith. Right now, there are over 60 Hispanic churches in our network—each one faithfully proclaiming the Gospel and reaching its communities. Beyond that, there are 26 other ethnic church plants that represent God’s incredible creativity in building His Church: Chinese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Deaf, Haitian, Oromo, and Arabic congregations—just to name a few. Each of these churches is a living testimony that the Gospel truly

is for all people, in every language and culture.

At the SBCV, we are committed to coming alongside local churches to help them reach their mission field for Christ. You are not alone in this work. Whether your community is predominantly Hispanic, African, Asian, or Middle Eastern—or whether you are simply beginning to notice more diversity in your own neighborhood—we want to walk with you, encourage you, and equip you to share the hope of Jesus with every person God has placed around you.

Renovados was not simply an event or highlight on the calendar; it was a reminder of what God is calling us to do together. We can welcome families from around the world with Christ’s love. We can stand shoulder to shoulder with our Hispanic and ethnic brothers and sisters, not only celebrating what God is doing in their churches but also joining them in the work of evangelism and discipleship.

God has brought the nations to Virginia. Will we be faithful to reach them? The harvest is ready, the workers are here, and the Gospel is powerful enough to transform every life.



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OCTOBER 23

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MARCH 7 • 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Swift Creek Baptist Church
Midlothian

MARCH 14 • 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Northstar Church
Blacksburg

MARCH 28 • 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM

Great Bridge Baptist Church
Chesapeake

Details at sbcv.org/kmc

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MINISTRY & EVENTS

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2025 & 2026

NOVEMBER

- 1
Crear Una Cultura De Evangelismo (Evangelism Kit Training),
Primera Iglesia Bautista, Roanoke
- 9-11
Annual Homecoming, *First BC, Roanoke*
- 30-December 7
Week of Prayer for International Missions/Lottie Moon
Christmas Offering

DECEMBER

- 25
Christmas Day

JANUARY 2026

- 16-17
Youth Evangelism Conference, *London Bridge BC, Virginia Beach*
- 15-22
London Collegiate Ministry
- 20
Send Network Connect, *offered regionally*
- 27
Noble Warriors Leader's Conference, *Salem BC, Manakin-Sabot*

FEBRUARY 2026

- 3-4
East African Fellowship, *Ministry Support Ctr, Glen Allen*
- 6-7
Student Leaders' Family Retreat, *Great Wolf Lodge, Williamsburg*
- 7
DR Training and IMT Refresh, *Ministry Support Ctr, Glen Allen*
- 8-10
Korean Church Fellowship, *Ministry Support Ctr, Glen Allen*
- 10
Winter Bible Conference, *Libertylive.Church, Hampton*
- 21
Discipulado Bíblico Relacional, *North*
- 21
Noble Warriors Men's Conference, *Southeast*
- 24
Sending Lab, *Nanesemond River BC, Suffolk*
- 28
Refresh, *First BC, Woodbridge*

MARCH 2026

- 6-7
Residency Builder en Español, *Ministry Support Ctr, Glen Allen*
- 7
Kids Ministry Conference, *Swift Creek BC, Midlothian*
- 7
Noble Warriors Men's Conference, *Roanoke*
- 14
Kids Ministry Conference, *Northstar Church, Blacksburg*
- 14
Disaster Relief Round Up
- 17
Send Network Connect, *offered regionally*
- 21
Noble Warriors Men's Conference, *Richmond*
- 23
Send Network Virginia Residency Retreat, *Liberty University, Lynchburg*
- 24
Send Network One Day, *Liberty University, Lynchburg*
- 28
Kids Ministry Conference, *Great Bridge BC, Chesapeake*



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To see details and updates on these events and more, scan this QR code or visit sbcv.org/calendar.

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SBCV WINTER BIBLE CONFERENCE



FEBRUARY 10TH 10 AM - 3 PM

Libertylive.Church, Hampton



Fred Luter, Jr.

Senior Pastor
*Franklin Avenue Baptist Church
(New Orleans, LA)*



Hershael York

Dean, School of Theology
*The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
(Louisville, KY)*



Shane Pruitt

National Next Gen Director
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