

RGINIAN

CONNECTING TO GOD AND ONE ANOTHER



IN THIS ISSUE

KEEPING THE CHURCH ON MISSION THROUGH PRAYER CHURCH WILL BE DIFFERENT MINISTRY IN THE MIDST OF CHANGING TIMES IS THE CHURCH IMPORTANT?

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

YOUTH EVENTS 2021

TALENT FESTIVAL - RIVER OAK

April 17, 2021

GUYS GETAWAY

May 14-15, 2021

EXTREME CAMP

June 21-25, 2021

VELOCITY CAMP

June 28 - July 2, 2021

ADVENTURE CAMP

July 5-9, 2021

PK RETREAT

August 20-21, 2021

GIRLS JAMBOREE

September 11, 2021



It is obvious that communication with God keeps us close to him. It is just as obvious that as we speak to our Lord daily, we stay in tune with exactly what he has called us to accomplish. Many individuals make up the church, with vast and different talents that impact and affect the world around us. The only way that we as a church can stay on mission is to stay in touch with the one who called us to that mission.

Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. Psalm 20:7.

Christ is the greatest message in the world, and delivering it is the greatest mission. But are we losing our focus? Are we being distracted, sometimes even by good things?

Zealous Christians disagree sharply today over the church's proper ministry and mission. We must go back to first things in an age of mission creep and distraction. What were we first called to do? We offer balanced wisdom and insight, but sometimes, discomfort is exactly what we all need. It is biblical sanity that we need at this moment.

The most significant distraction is that sometimes we as the church put the cart before the horse. I want someone to have an experience with Jesus Christ and be renewed in the spirit. They cannot try to change to be a better person without a personal experience with the Lord Jesus. In this way, the person emerges through sanctification, having a depth of the Word and maturity in Jesus Christ.

If we want forgiveness, we must forgive others.

Matthew 6:9-13: After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

What kind of prayer life do we cultivate? Confess your faults one

to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (James 5:16.)

- 1. Is it a selfish prayer life praying just for me?
- 2. Is our prayer life for us to pray for others, where we cannot see results from our prayers?
- 3. Are we improving or refining our prayer life to perfect it so that the mission of the church continues to move on uninterrupted? These are questions that must be answered; if we stay connected to God, they could be answered.

If we stay connected to God in our prayer life, the mission of the church is not convoluted, distracted, or indifferent. We will not water down our doctrine. We will not preach only a segment of a social change gospel. The gospel states plainly that Jesus Christ changes a man's attitude, his perspective, his prospection, his vision, his footsteps, and his pathway.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. II CORTH 5:17 (King James Version)

All scripture is given to us for our benefit. The following scripture is important to verify what I have shared with you.

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy will be the fullest possible joy" John 16:24 (NCV).

An encounter with Jesus! That's what we need for where we are. I pray that this kind of prayer life will keep us connected to God and in touch with keeping the church on mission!

Joseph Mirkovich State Administrative Bishop



CHURCH DIFFERENT

A phrase has been repeated persistently throughout the COVID-19 pandemic that must be considered by the church. People are wondering what the "new normal" will be like as the pandemic subsides. There is no way to precisely forecast what the "new normal" in a pre-COVID world. Every aspect of life will be affected by the changes in the wake of this global virus. The church will not be exempt from these changes. Some changes will be mandated by governmental authorities or health organizations. Still, some changes should be intentionally driven by the leadership of the local church. Intentional change to increase ministry effectiveness in a post-COVID era must be well thought out and clearly defined. The time for strategizing those changes is now.

Some changes have already been adopted as a result of governmental regulation and adherence to CDC recommendations. One year ago, the largest percentage of Americans were not familiar with "social distancing," but today, it is part of our regular vernacular. This societal shift must be accounted for in the church of the future. Congregational leaders should be considering how social distancing will impact the church of the future. Buildings that once accommodated 250 people will be limited to a much lower capacity. The authorities may lift the mandates; however, the constituency served by the church will most likely be leery about gathering in a confined space with a large crowd. Consideration must also be given to the mechanical systems that control the environment within the church. Air purification solutions and systems that exchange the air within the building with fresh air from outside will most likely need to be retrofitted into existing church structures. There will be physical differences required for the church to maintain and expand ministry in the future.

In addition to the physical changes that will be necessitated, the church will also be different from a social standpoint. The church will be forced to creatively design solutions that will satisfy the congregant's need for koinonia. This word gets used often and can mean different things to different people. For the purpose of this article, koinonia should be understood as "a sense of commonality, solidarity, and shared responsibility among households or individuals" (Lexham Theological Wordbook). Church members desire to be together and experience life together – physically and

spiritually. It is imperative that church leaders implement ministry methodologies that foster koinonia. Frequently this follows the example of the first-century church by joining together for meals. For the foreseeable future, there will most likely be some resistance to sharing food brought to a central location from the homes of members. The need for "table fellowship" will continue to exist. Wise pastors and leaders will be looking for ways to bring small groups of congregants together to share a meal in a safe environment. This can be done, but it will have to be done differently from the past.

A third way that church will be different relates to the attraction of guests. For years it has been said that the front door to the church was an online presence. When the pandemic forced a shutdown of in-person church services, many congregations began putting their services out on the internet. With little or even no investment of money, a church was able to stream their services. This made the presentation of the gospel available not only to the church member but to anyone with access to the internet. Moving forward, church leaders will have to consider a hybrid approach to the worship service. There will be those who physically come to the church, and there will be those who choose to worship virtually. This means that churches will have to consider investing resources in ensuring that their online presence is appealing. Upgrades to cameras, lights, audio, and various other things can increase the effectiveness of an online worship experience. When the online service is attractive, the chances are increased that the online viewer will visit in person later. The hybrid worship service will also need to be designed to engage those who are physically present and virtually connected.

One day this virus will be brought under control. That may happen through a vaccine, herd immunity, or some other method, but the day will come when COVID-19 is not as devastating as it has been. The church must be prepared to offer ministry in a fashion that meets the community's needs and honors the societal shifts that will occur as a result of this worldwide pandemic.

> Mark Cary State Ministries Director



MINISTRY IN THE MIDST **OF CHANGING TIMES**

I think it's safe to say that the world as we know it has changed. This global crisis we call COVID-19 has completely altered the way we live, the way we work, and the way we do ministry. It has forced us to realign, reprioritize, reimagine, and re-evaluate not only our mission but also our ministry, especially the ministry of the local church. It's been said that the Master, the message, and the mission of a church never changes, but the methods, the mindset, and the ministry are ever-evolving.

Our current culture and this modern-day society we are living in demands that we be open to a new way of doing things. If we continue to think and operate as we did prior to COVID-19, we will miss out on some amazing opportunities to impact the communities in which we live and minister.

All of us have been forced to pivot during the throes of this pandemic. Over the last several months, many have had to modify and adjust; and we've had to do so quickly.

Do we meet in the building? Do we stay strictly online? Do we have parking lot church? Do we take a few weeks off? When do we open up and start student ministry? How soon can we have children's ministry? When is the right time to reopen our nurseries and bring the babies back? What if one or more of our church members gets infected with the virus?

When we think we've returned to some sense of normalcy, another new policy or protocol forces us to change yet again. It is, without a doubt, both a new and different day that we are ministering in.

So many are asking; What does ministry look like going forward? Is this the new normal that we need to learn to accept? What about church attendance? Will everybody eventually come back? If you read and study what the prognosticators and statistics say, it will lead to some level of concern.

In Tony Morgan's Q3 UnStuck Church Report, he shares that among churches his team surveyed, in-person attendance is 36% of what it was pre-COVID. I'm absolutely confident that no leader entered 2020, saying, "I hope we're at 36% of where we are right now by the end of the year." The Q3 Unstuck Church Report also revealed that only 21% of church leaders agreed that they have a "well-defined digital ministry strategy to engage with people who are outside the church and outside the faith." In other words, almost 80% don't.

According to a Barna/Stadia survey, only 41% of Gen Z say that when COVID is over, they want to return to primarily in-person worship. Only 42% of Millennials say they prefer primarily in-person worship. Which means, of course, that the majority don't. The changes happening right now in church attendance preferences are not just cultural, they're generational. Obviously, there will be exceptions to these numbers, and I believe that gathering together for corporate worship is and will always be of utmost

I don't share these statistics to be negative or pessimistic; I only share them to remind us that changing and challenging times may necessitate a new way of doing ministry. Is it possible that God is using this current crisis to force us out of our comfort zone and push us into a different and possibly more effective way of doing ministry and reaching people?

Jesus never wasted a crisis. He always found a way to seize the moment so that people's lives would be changed. Often, He did things that were out of the ordinary. Turning water into wine, instructing 5,000 people to sit down on the grass while He said grace over a small meal of bread and fish, spitting in the mud and smearing it on a blind man's eyes, and the list goes on and on.

> "We must maximize this season we find ourselves in and be open to all that He wants to do in and through us."

This worldwide crisis did not catch God off guard or by surprise. It's a divine moment that God is using to change the world. We must maximize this season we find ourselves in and be open to all that He wants to do in and through us. Nothing about this time will be wasted if we will allow God to do His work in a new and fresh way. As a result, people's lives will be forever changed as we faithfully fulfill the ministry to which God has called us.

> Travis Gore State Youth and Discipleship Director



IS THE CHURCH IMPORTANT?

Today it is critical that the Church stays on Mission. When you look at the church world today, what do you see? This year, 2020, has brought change to our world completely different than anything that we have experienced in the past. It looks like America has been turned upside down. Everything appears out of control; hurricanes are in record number, winds are spreading fires burning up the west, and the pandemic of Covid-19 has taken thousands of lives. And, what about our government and all the rioting and looting that are destroying our cities. It appears that everything is out of control.

We see how it is affecting the Church. They (the government) tell us when, how many, the distance apart we must be and to wear a mask, and how we must prepare our buildings. Oh, did I mention we can have no singing (choir) or praying together? Governors in some states have overstated their authority. The right to our religious liberty is being challenged almost daily. Some pastors refused to follow their instructions and are paying a high price.

In Virginia beginning, January 1, 2021, the Virginia Values Act (SB 868) takes effect if it is not overturned in the courts. Virginia Governor Ralph Northam supports this law, which compels churches, religious schools, and Christian ministries to hire employees who do not share their stated beliefs on marriage, sexuality, and gender identity. A companion law (HB 1492) requires ministries and others like them to pay for transgender surgery in employee health care plans, a procedure that violates these ministries' convictions. These laws force Christian ministries to adopt "Government Ideology" or pay up to \$100,000 per offense.

So, I ask the question again, "Is the Church Important?" Yes, we must be *a Church of Critical Presence*, and *we must remain on Mission*. Dr. Tim Hill said the Church is on trial. We must pass the test of being a Church of critical presence. We need to continue to fulfill the Great Commission. Jesus knows the condition of the day that we are living. Revelation 3:8 "I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it."

The calling is still the same in 2020; we are to proclaim the uncompromised Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the reason we exist. We must stay focused and not let the enemy (Devil) hinder our work of reaching the lost. God is still in the

saving business. Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." Amen.

We must initially find ways to reach our community during this time of crisis. People need Jesus more today than ever before. May our lights shine bright during this dark day. Use your talents to advance His Kingdom and reach others. God is still at work.

I am thankful for a church that encourages us not only to reach the lost but also to pray for the lost. Everything comes from prayer. A praying church is a believing church, and all things are possible when prayer and faith are tied together.

God's Word teaches us that the Church has a purpose for existing.

Matthew 16:18 "...That thou are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." God set up the order of the Church. Let us realize that the Church is the "Salt of the earth." We are the seasoning that brings out the flavor of God to the unchurched, and we are the "Light of the World," so let us shine, so the lost may be found and see their way to God.

A church of Critical Presence is fulfilling Jesus' words found in Mathew 25:35 – 40, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when did we see you naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"

It will be through these principles that the Church will have *a critical presence*.

David Hagee Spirit Care Coordinator





At our church, women serve in the music department, children's department, media department, and even on the Church and Pastor's Council. In reality, these are just a few areas where women serve in our congregation. More than likely, your church is like ours in that women are a vital element of how our church operates, worships, and serves. That being said, why is it that Women's Ministries are not always well attended in number or well attended by all generations? How do we "Reach Out and Break Through" not only the barriers to Women's Ministry during the pandemic but also the challenges of creating an inclusive and diverse group of women in our churches?

In short, I don't have all the answers to those questions, but I do have a few experiences that I believe are worth sharing. As a younger (I think I can still say that) woman who grew up in church, I saw our Women's Ministry as a group that fed families during times of bereavement or decorated the church for holidays. I did not see where I would belong in that realm when I was single or even as a young married woman. However, the women in my church certainly shaped me and molded me without a doubt.

To be honest, our Women's Ministry still feeds families and decorates the church, but we make it our priority to continue to reach our young women. Just as in our church, reaching out to young and diverse groups in Women's Ministry must be fully and unapologetically intentional. One strategy that helped me in the very first Bible study I hosted as a Pastor's wife in Northern Virginia was to strategically ask three to four of our younger women to support our Bible Study for an entire year. I spoke with them about the importance of their presence and the value of their perspective. Our Bible Study was held outside of the church at different restaurants, mainly due to many of our women working late. It was easy for them to stop in on their way home, but we also streamed the event live for those who could not attend. I loved how we could interact together and plant seeds of faith and encouragement with people in our community all at the same time. Even now, I try to personally invite women of all ages as much as possible to join our meeting; and I love to make sure all generations are considered with every activity and door prize. I want all to feel included and valued. Now, in the midst of the pandemic, dining out is simply not an option, and it may not be the best solution for your group even without the pandemic.

Currently, we meet once a month for Bible Study and fellowship in our church dining facility with the necessary health and safety precautions. We stream live for those who are not comfortable at in-person gatherings and those who cannot attend. However, relationships and open conversations will lead you to the best options for your group. Those conversations need to be within your church and outside of it. In the midst of the pandemic, I listened to other pastors' wives in Virginia such as, Tammy Stigile (Real Life Church) talk about their Zoom Bible Study for Women and Deb Akers (Gordonsville - Daystar) talk about their Bible Study on Esther that culminated in a trip to "Sight and Sound Theatre." I love to see what women all over Virginia are doing to grow in God and reach others. In short, you rock!

One thing many women are missing during the pandemic is connection. We reached back in the playbook here at River Oak this year with a Secret Sister Program. (Not every idea with Women's Ministry has to be brand new.) We love that regular attendees and those who cannot be in service right now can be included and connected. *Intentional* was still the name of the game, as we encouraged the program to multiple groups.

Finally, I have found that in our serving opportunities for women and discipleship, we must realize and tackle reality. We cannot forget that among those in our Women's Ministry will be single moms, women struggling with sickness, women struggling with difficulty in marriage, and even those who are navigating a new faith or faith that needs to be refreshed. We should and can be intentional about supporting these women and offering true Godly friendship.

(Jessica Medford serves with her husband at River Oak Church in Danville, Virginia. In addition to serving alongside Eric, as they raise their two children Makenzie and Tanner, Jessica is a High School History teacher.)

Jessica R. Medford, M.Ed. River Oak Church Danville.VA

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congratulations

WE **CONGRATULATE** THE FOLLOWING BOARD MEMBERS WHO WERE ELECTED IN THE ORDER LISTED BELOW FOR STATE COUNCIL, YOUTH & DISCIPLESHIP, AND MINISTRIES BOARDS:



2020-21 / STATE COUNCIL: THURMAN COLLIER, CHAD DUNFORD, RODNEY VICKERS, JASON COOK, RICK DILL, DARRELL WALLER, FRANK ALLEN BRYAN OGLE, MICHAEL BOOKER, WILLIAM MCCARTY, DONALD JONES



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DAVE WEBB, LYNDSEY DUNN,
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TODD STIFFLER, WILLIAM WUDSKI,
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2020-21 / MINISTRIES BOARD:
RICHARD DUNN, PAUL HOLLIFIELD, GREG PAYNE
CRAIG CAYLOR, WAYNE DANIELS, ERIC MEDFORD, ANTHONY ADDINALL

MINISTRIES UPDATE

NEW MEMBERS [APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2020]

MENT HEI IDENS [AI KIE - SEI 1	LI IDLIN ZUZUJ		
CHURCH & PASTOR	NEW MEMBERS	CHURCH & PASTOR	NEW MEMBERS
MAY 2020		AUGUST 2020 CONTINUED	
ROANOKE-WORD OF LIFE, BEVERLEY JACKSON CENTER CROSS,	3	ROCKY MOUNT, ROBERT SHAWN MEREDITH	I
JAKE ALLEN AFFELDT DUTTON-LIVING WATERS FAMILY, DAVID HINSEN	2	SEPTEMBER 2020	
CHARLOTTESVILLE-LUZYVIDA, YOLANDA ESTHEL PEREZ G	1	GORDONSVILLE-DAYSTAR WORSHIP CEN DAVID AKERS	NTER,
JUNE 2020		WINCHESTER, DARRELL W WALLER HOPEWELL-CITY POINT RESTORATION,	8
RICHMOND-VICTORY TABERNACLE,	12	THURMAN WADE COLLIER MIDDLEBROOK,	6
SAMUEL LUKE GLADE SPRING, JAMES LEE WALLS	4	LARRY STRICKLER PLASTERCO, CHARLES WILLIAMS	3
CALLAWAY-MOUNT ZION ASSEMBLY, WILLIAM NICHOLAS PAGEN WINCHESTER,	2	RICHMOND-VICTORY TABERNACLE, SAMUEL LUKE WOODBRIDGE-CAMINO DE SANTIDAD,	3
DARRELL W WALLER	2	ISRAEL MURCIA HERNANDEZ WOODLAWN,	2
JULY 2020		SIDNEY A TURNER DANVILLE-CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, DAVID BRYANT	2
FREDERICKSBURG-ENCOUNTER, JEREMY DEAN HYDE	8	NEWPORT NEWS-PARKVIEW, TERRY SWINEY	I
CHESTERFIELD-CITY OF REFUGE, DAVID HINDMAN STERLING-FAITH FOR LIVING,	6	RICHMOND-NEW LIFE WORSHIP CENTER JEREMY SCOTT DAY ALEXANDRIA-CRISTO ES LA VERDAD,	λ,
NOEL ALFREDO DE LA ROSA ALEXANDRIA-CRISTO ES LA VERDAD, WILL VANEGAS	2	WILLVANEGAS	I
RICHMOND-NEW LIFE WORSHIP CENTER JEREMY SCOTT DAY	•	PASTORAL TRANSITION	NS
AUGUST 2020		Edgar "Tommy" Lindsey Manassas-Soul's Harbor	August 2
RICHMOND-VICTORY TABERNACLE, SAMUEL LUKE	9	David Price Charlottesville-Covenant	August 30
WOODBRIDGE-CAMINO DE SANTIDAD, ISRAEL MURCIA HERNANDEZ MANASSAS-SOUL'S HARBOR,	4	Dustin Creasy Gloucester-	
EDGAR THOMPSON LINDSEY PEARISBURG-NEW LIFE WORSHIP CENTER	3,	New Life Ministry Center Eric Allen	September I
DOUGLAS ELWOOD DUNCAN WINCHESTER, DARRELL W WALLER	3	Weber City Marcus Heffinger	October 4
ALEXANDRIA-CRISTO ES LA VERDAD, WILL VANEGAS ROANOKE-CELEBRATION,	2	Ashland David Bryant	November 9
SAMUEL BELISLE	2	Ridgeway-Kingdom Point	December 14

*Because of the current pandemic, our attendance records are skewed and so we have excluded the stats pages from this issue of The Virginian.

REVIVAL FIRES

I. SAVED 2. RECLAIMED 3. SANCTIFIED 4. HOLY GHOST 5. WATER BAPTISM 6. ADDED TO CHURCH 7. HEALED * GOOD CHURCH REVIVAL

EVANGELIST	CHURCH	PASTOR	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Cliff West	Chester Bluefield Center Cross Pearisburg Elkton West Point Madison Dublin Warsaw Dumfries	J.R. DeHart Tony Ellis Jake Affeldt Doug Duncan Sam Sponaugle Wayne Groome Joe Austin Craig Caylor Dave Metz Brad Lewis	*
Cliff West Cliff West Cliff West Cliff West Cliff West	Chester Pulaski East Radford Rocky Mount Hampton-Greater Discipleship	J.R. DeHart Donald Jones Wayne Poston Robert Meredith Lance Bacon	* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *



TITHE BREAKERS

April 2020

Center Cross, Jake Allen Affeldt

Anthony Yul Miller

June 2020

August 2020

Pennington Gap, Bobby Wells South Hill-Centro de Adoracion,

Lazaro Rayo Calderon Woodbridge-Camino de Santidad, Israel Murcia Hernandez

Terry Marvin Shaw Waynesboro-River of Hope, Lyndsey Andrew Dunn

Winford D Jones Jr Martinsville-The Church at Mercy Crossing, Timothy M Nuckles

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APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2020

A SMOKY MOUNTAIN GATHERING

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THE NEW SPEER FAMILY









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BEGINNING NOVEMBER IST REGISTRATION \$75

WALK-ON REGISTRATION \$85

SPECIAL EVENTS:

SPIRIT CARE BANQUET WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29 AT 4:30 P.M. (RETIRED MINISTERS AND WIDOWS - FREE, IF REGISTERED)

VETERANS BREAKFAST, APRIL 30 AT 7:30 A.M.

FEATURES:

DOLLYWOOD AMUSEMENT PARK \$70

OPTIONAL: INCLUDES ONE MEAL, CONCERT & AFTERNOON IN THE PARK.

DOLLYWOOD COST NOT INCLUDED IN REGISTRATION

ACTIVITIES:

TALENT SHOWCASE, GAMES, COMPETITIONS,

ART CLASSES, PRIZES, GIVEAWAYS AND MUCH MORE.

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APRIL 27-29, 2021



