**VIRTUAL REVIVAL RECORDS REAL-LIFE MIRACLES**

by  [**DAN VAN VEEN**](https://news.ag.org/en/authors/dan-van-veen) on October 2, 2020

It was May when Jerry Jessie approached his pastor, Dick VanHuss of [**New Life Church**](https://winchesternewlife.com/) in Winchester, Kentucky, with an idea that wouldn’t go away — the church needed to hold revival services. The problem was, there was this thing called a pandemic . . .

VanHuss, an executive presbyter for the Kentucky district, was intrigued when Jessie suggested it be an online revival as that resonated within his heart. What VanHuss couldn’t know was God was going to answer one of his great desires for his church through the revival.

“I just had a deep desire for revival,” says Jessie, who has attended the church since 2004 and is currently a board member. “Since we’ve been doing a lot of online since March because of the COVID, I thought it would be a great opportunity with so many people stuck at home and to possibly even reach people we wouldn’t reach otherwise.”

Reaching out to churches in their section to broaden the audience, VanHuss proposed the virtual revival and, if the circumstances permitted it, allowing people to attend while maintaining whatever distancing guidelines were being recommended.

Two additional churches agreed to be co-hosts of the newly named Red River Revival, held Sept. 13-20. [**River of Life**](https://riveroflife-ministries.com/) in Paris (Krista Hampton, pastor) and [**Real Life Community Church**](https://myrealchurch.org/) in Richmond (Chris May, pastor) joined in.

River of Life and Real Life each hosted the revival for three days, while New Life held two of the services.
“We’re kind of a rural church (post-COVID attendance is about 50) and the other two churches have video capabilities better than ours,” VanHuss explains. “That’s why we made the decision for those churches to host three nights — we didn’t have enough high-speed bandwidth, and can experience drops.”

Each of the evening’s revival services offered music, prayer, and a special speaker, which featured a mix of local ministers, missionaries, and district superintendent Joe Girdler. Perhaps the most innovative message, however, came on Friday when three young ministers and VanHuss — a self-described “older” minister — each were given eight minutes to progressively walk through a specific passage.

In VanHuss’ evaluation, the revival was a strong success.

“After an opening service where we saw 100 people in attendance, most nights had 60 to 80 people physically attending,” VanHuss says. “However, what blew me out of the water was we consistently had about 1,000 people attending online each night!”

Throughout the weeklong revival, there were nine confirmed decisions of individuals accepting Christ as their Lord and Savior, three confirmed healings — including one woman healed of what doctors identified as Stage 4 cancer — and three others received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, even though that topic was not preached upon.

A personal “miracle” was also granted to VanHuss. It has been his desire to see New Life Church become an international church, ministering to a wide range of ethnicities. However, in a relatively rural community that’s roughly 90% white, it didn’t seem that dream would be fulfilled anytime soon.

But as VanHuss reviewed the statistics and comments of those viewing online, he began to notice that viewers weren’t just from their Kentucky section — they had people tuning in every night from the West Coast and viewers from Europe and South America had posted comments.

“It’s clearly a God thing — something we couldn’t do,” VanHuss says concerning the revival and its far-reaching impact. “I’ve been praying for an international church, and God has now given us an international church.”

Jessie recalls a message delivered to the church several months ago that God was going to do a new thing in a new way.

“When you’re preaching a message in Kentucky and a person in England gets saved, I think that pretty much fits the bill,” Jessie states.

VanHuss says that the church is already considering teaming up with other churches for another revival, possibly in late October.

Jessie gives his full support to the idea. “I don’t think we’ve reached everyone God wants us to reach yet,” he says. “I hope they do another week or two or five!”

However, VanHuss again points out, that the revival would not have taken place if it wasn’t for Jessie speaking up about what the Lord had laid on his heart.

“If people can take anything out of this, it’s that when God gives you a vision or passion to do something, don’t sit on it — you don’t have to be the pastor to get an idea and make something happen,” VanHuss says. “You may not be able to pull it off yourself, but take it to others who can help, and who knows what God will be able to do out of it.”