The Barn Christian Fellowship’s online journey with DWR

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A kitted-out Toyota Fortuner, with roof rack and mods, stands outside The Barn Christian Fellowship Church in Boskruin, Johannesburg, the days of doing missions in Zambia and elsewhere in Africa all coming to a sudden halt with the Covid-19 pandemic. But this was not going to stop the church from helping people and sharing their message.

The Barn, led by Ps Roelof Kwant along with over 25 other churches and organizations and donors in the surrounding area including Pastor Craig Rowe from Community Ministries in Muldersdrift and Pastor Andrew Christie from Willow Hill Vineyard Church, formed the Kingdom Valley LEAN (Local Ecumenical Action Network). Together they handed out close to one million meals and ran counselling support programmes, educational support programmes and a range of other initiatives reaching people in Zandspruit, Cosmo City, Kya Sands, Lion Park, Ruimsig, Honeydew, Muldersdrift and Windsor Park over the lockdown period in 2020.

At the end of October, realizing they could not provide food hampers indefinitely, the

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Kingdom Family LEAN shifted direction and started Farming God’s Way training that equips the poor to break the yoke of poverty by showing them how to grow their own food. The aim is to train 100 000 farmers over the next couple of years. “In Farming God’s Way, an exciting new project is called Garden of Faithfulness facilitated by Jaap Hesterbeek,” said Roelof Kwant from The Barn. “In this project, we have seen people discipled to cultivate small spaces, no larger than the size of a door, which will feed them continuously over a one-year period. Over 200 people have been trained in our valley so far and many more training sessions will take place in 2021.”



The Barn’s Jonathan Charles (Technical Director) and Bryce Kwant (Worship and Young Adults Pastor).

Bryce Kwant is the Worship and Young Adults Pastor at The Barn, and his work also entailed equipping the church’s crossover to live streaming earlier this year. He laughs as he unpretentiously shares how The Barn first started ‘recording’ in 2019 solely with the use of a mobile phone! “We had a couple in the church who moved to Ecuador, and that actually started the conversation, as they wanted to stay connected with us,” said Bryce. “We hadn’t even thought of having our services on-line, so initially we took a broom, taped a phone to it, and because they were so desperate, we shared the service that way until we could get it right!” The church then bought small PTZ cameras, a little controller and have been upscaling since.

As lockdown hit, it was clear that the only way The Barn congregation would be able

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to meet under the strict gatherings act was online. Thankfully the church had just upgraded its line speed in February 2020, which included a fibre link to their hall. They also rushed off to Builders Warehouse to buy floodlights and whatever items they could find to create a makeshift set.

“Seven of us moved onto the church property, just taking along our own beds from home, for the initial lockdown, which I think lasted for six weeks,” recalls Bryce. “Our families were with us, and it was like a long camping trip, while every evening we broadcast prayer meetings.”



Over this time, the team realized that they had to improve their equipment and sort out the broadcasting system. “Thankfully we had a little bit of a buffer in our bank account,” said Bryce. Annalise Hodgson, from DWR Distribution, is also a member of the church and she let them know of the service DWR could provide if needed.

The Barn contacted DWR Distribution and purchased one Robin DLF Robe Robin, which offers a smooth and even output via the front Fresnel lens, eliminating

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shadows, and two workhorses, namely a Philips Strand Rama 150 and Rama 150 PC. The DWR team also rewired the lighting system.

“We’ve worked with quite a few companies and this has been the best experience ever, with just the service we’ve received and the quick response alone,” said Bryce. “There have been times when I’ve needed something the following day, and DWR delivers. Even when we did the whole media broadcast room, which was a big job, I called Robert Izzett on Monday to ask if it could be done by the weekend. Rob said he would make a plan and I must say, everything was delivered on time.”

The church created a broadcast room in what was formerly kitchen space, with gear comprising of two computers and a vision mixer that used to be kept in the auditorium.

“We bricked up the kitchen windows, put in a security door and transformed it into a broadcast room while DWR handled the electrical and rewiring of all the SDI cabling, the power, points on stage. They virtually lived here, and I think, sometimes worked till 11:30 pm. With every little thing, I’ve seen their slogan “It’s all about the people’ carried out.”

Over the past year, The Barn has seen the value in providing a broadcast service. “We’ve learnt how much of a reach and influence you can really have. We have pockets of people in India (which is actually our largest pocket), in Cape Town and Durban, and we’ve never seen this before. We have about 60 people watching from the United States and about 90 in New Zealand, all old South Africans, and we are also looking at starting life and connect groups,” he says. “It’s interesting because while the return of people has been slow, the children’s program is pumping on a Friday night and we have really made every effort to observe the Covid-19 safety regulations. Since opening our doors again, around 60 people have visited our church, people who we have never known or met, just because they watched us online and decided to connect to a church family.”

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