



ARKANSAS: TRANSFORMED

Stories of Transformed Lives



Student Ministry Workers Retreat Transforms Lives and Ministries

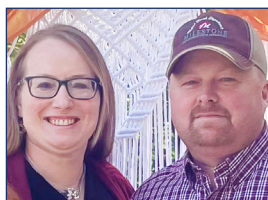
"Students in today's world have many challenges that face them. It doesn't matter what their home life is, what socio-economic background they come from, where they go to school, how many extracurricular activities they do or don't take part in or how active they are in their church student ministry. It's just a different world than it was even 10 years ago.

"For those of us who work in student ministry, that means reaching out to students is also challenging. We aren't teaching students anything new because, obviously, the Bible and its truth are unchanging. However, our students today have hard questions, and they need us to be real, honest and vulnerable. Simple answers don't cut it, and they are desperately seeking how to navigate through life. They need hope, their parents need encouragement and both need to see that we aren't just fun and games but really are ready to roll up our sleeves and fight in the battle with them.

"That is why the Student Ministry Workers Retreat is so incredibly vital! My husband and I look forward to this event each year because it provides much-needed fellowship with other student ministry workers serving in the trenches with us. It is convicting as we hear God's Word and are stirred to evaluate our own relationship with God, each other, our church family and the students we are entrusted to work with. We worship together, laugh together, sometimes shed tears and cheer each other on as fantastic door prizes are handed out. It's a day to catch our breath and to be reminded why we do what we do.

"I am so incredibly grateful for the hard work that goes into the retreat and those who help make it happen each year. We come home refreshed and ready to continue pouring into the students God brings to our ministry. We are also sent home with many resources in our 'swag bags' that not only provide encouragement and support throughout the year but also provide great study material to incorporate into our student Bible studies. If you have never attended the retreat, you are missing out on a huge blessing and should do whatever you can to make plans to be a part of 2023."

**Glenda Herron, Volunteer Student Ministry Leader
First Baptist Church, Decatur**



— photo by Abigail Weihe (A.Vivian Photography)

"If I had to summarize the Student Ministry Workers Retreat experience in a word, I would choose 'refreshing.' This retreat has challenged me to view student ministry through a different, yet biblical, lens that helps me be effective in the current cultural climate while also reminding me of the essential to successful ministry—a daily personal walk with Jesus. The Student Ministry Workers Retreat is one of the most valuable resources the BMA of Arkansas offers to youth ministers, their spouses and their volunteers. It is my belief that every church should invest in their youth ministry workers by sending them to this retreat, trusting God to provide the means and funds to do so. When you do, watch and be amazed at what God will do."

**David McEuen, Pastor of Family & Worship Ministries
Temple Baptist Church, Rogers**



"As I reflect on my time at the retreat this year, I am grateful for the opportunities it provided for our group from the University of Arkansas Association of Baptist Students to be refreshed by outside perspectives. If I had to describe the event in one word, I would choose the word 'convicting.' Our group of six attendees was impacted by the conference's theme this year, and we all walked away thinking more about how our words represent the condition of our hearts.

"The main group sessions led each of us to consider how we should not only be more thoughtful about our words in general but also in the specific context of youth ministry. The ideas shared were grounded in biblical insight and were also practical enough to be able to start implementing them right away. As our group traveled home, we all discussed how we felt the Holy Spirit convicting us to repent of some patterns of speech we had developed. Since then, we've seen that impact trickle down to the ministry at ABS, where our speech and conversations have already started to be more life-giving and kinder than they used to be.

"In addition to the impact of the main group sessions, the various breakout sessions were insightful and relevant. My wife, Hanna, was particularly impacted by Temple Carson and Rodney Fry's session on navigating issues of gender identity as they shared ways ministry workers could help their students with biblical perspectives and support in this regard. In conversations I had with Hanna after this session, I could sense that she was deeply motivated to be more thoughtful about these things in our interactions on campus and with our own children.

"In one session I attended, I was convicted by Jake McCandless' exhortation to 'play small ball,' as he encouraged us to forego the pursuit of attendance and instead strive for multiplication through intentional, small-scale discipleship. I could see how I fell into the numbers trap so often when I thought about the effectiveness of my ministry, and since then, I've started to trust that the Lord's model of ministry is not necessarily what seems best to me.

"While the day was full of conviction, that also meant the day was full of regeneration and sanctification. I'm so happy Student Ministry Matters continues to host this conference, and I am thankful for the work the Lord does through Dan and his team's efforts!"

**Stuart Estes, Ministry Team Leader
Association of Baptist Students (University of Arkansas)**



— photo by Abigail Weihe (A.Vivian Photography)

The 2023 Student Ministry Workers Retreat is scheduled for Sept. 16 and will again be held at Central Baptist College of Conway. The speaker for the sixth annual event is pastor, professor and author Dr. Tim McKnight. He is the editor of *Navigating Student Ministry* and author of *Engaging Generation Z*. He is the pastor of Mosaic Church of Anderson, S.C., a multi-ethnic multi-generational church plant and serves as associate professor of youth ministry and missions at the Clamp Divinity School at Anderson University. You can register for next year's event at SMWR2023.eventbrite.com.





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God Is Still Saving People

By Clinton Morris, Missionary • The Table Mission, Northwest Ark.

God has been doing beautiful things at The Table Church Plant in Northwest Arkansas. We were led to start a neutral community event at our house, which for us was a board game event every Monday. Because of this event we have seen over 250 people come to our house, and over 1,000 collective attendees. So many people to be praying for and relationships forming.

One of those relationships was with Gio. He started coming to our board game event in April and building relationships. He invited people from the Board Game event to come to his house on a Saturday to see MMA Fighting with him and his family. It was because of this interaction that he, his wife and his daughter began coming to The Table. It was so good to interact with them and to begin leading them toward Christ.

Near the middle of August, they moved 40 minutes away. The church family kept in contact, sending sermon notes and encouragement. We did a housewarming party and are trying to find some stable ways of keeping our connection.

Gio was stopping off at my house on Mondays to meet with me and discuss the Bible. One Sunday right before our service, Gio called me and said that he wanted to get baptized and that he was ready to take Christianity seriously. I told him that we needed to have a conversation about that and I was excited to hear this news. On Monday, we were able to discuss his beliefs, and he accepted Jesus Christ. He also understood that baptism was an outward sign of an inward work and was excited to be able to publicly demonstrate his faith. He also said that he was going to have a long conversation with his wife about what Baptism actually meant and why he was going to do it. We put a date on the calendar to perform the baptism.

The week before he was to be baptized he called me on Sunday. He said that he had good and bad news. First, he told me that he wasn't going to get baptized that Saturday, then he told me that as he had discussed getting baptized with his wife and daughter, and they came to faith in Jesus Christ. He said that he now would like to wait to be baptized with his family.

God is still saving people! Praise God for how He has worked in these events!

The Power of a Testimony

By Bryan Clay, Missionary • Faith Journey Mission, Benton

A few years ago, I was at a men's Bible study at Celebration Baptist Church in Haskell. The pastor, Allan Eakin, challenged the men to write out their testimony. I got up early the next morning and began to write my story. I was saved at the early age of 9 and, after almost 45 years, I couldn't remember a whole lot about that day. I started to pray and ask God what to write and He revealed to me that I should just tell the story of my childhood and how I came to be saved.

I titled my testimony "God's Grace and Two Pieces of Bubble Gum." My story starts with Mary Palmer. Mrs. Mary was a bus captain for First Baptist Church in Springdale. Mrs. Mary would travel the neighborhood streets of Springdale on Saturday afternoons looking for homes that had kid's toys out in the yards. If she saw a house that looked like kids were living there, she would walk up and knock on the door and offer to come by on Sunday mornings to take them to church. Each week she would bring my older brother and me two pieces of bubble gum and take us to church on the bus. My family life was changed through that bus ministry.

The first time I was asked to tell my story in church, I was so nervous I could only read it straight from the notebook paper that I had written it on. The Lord started giving me more opportunities to speak. I began to slowly get more comfortable speaking in front of people and my confidence began to grow. This summer, I was asked to speak during Vacation Bible School at a church in the area. I had never visited this church before, much less given my story to this many people, so I was excited about the opportunity.

When my wife and I pulled up in front of the church, the first thing we saw was a bus full of kids pulling into the parking lot. The church was investing in their community with all they had to reach the youth in their city. I was able to share with the kids that night that I was just like them when I was their age. I would have a bus take me to church also so that I could learn



Divine Appointment

By Roberto Marcelletti, Missionary • Sovereign Grace Mission, Northwest Arkansas

We are very excited because we are very close to starting our Sunday services, specifically in November, we already have almost seven months on the field since we arrived, and God has pleasantly surprised us by opening doors unimaginable for us. When we arrived, we did not know anyone, and we began to seek the direction of the Lord through prayer and fasting.

We started working and people have accepted Christ, others have been reconciled to God and we have also gotten a person of peace (Luke 10:5), a Hispanic woman from the area who has introduced us and helped us get to know the area and people. At this time, we have 3 discipleship groups that meet each Monday, Thursday and Friday with a total of 14 people who come every week and are growing in their love and devotion for the Lord.

We are praying for another 10 people who have begun to attend the meetings but for different situations have not persevered. Every Monday and Tuesday I am going out to evangelize, to continue with the plan to proclaim the gospel, disciple the converted and then establish them in the church. Our goal is to become a community formed and transformed by the gospel. We have so many testimonies of God's grace in the midst of each family that has joined the Sovereign Grace mission. We are very grateful to the Lord to be able to humbly participate in what he is doing in the midst of Hispanics in Northwest Arkansas.

Here is the testimony of an adult woman who, since she moved from Florida to Northwest Arkansas, wanted to serve the Lord but was very discouraged. She had visited several churches, but she wanted to be more than a spectator. What she heard in the places she visited did not satisfy her. It was more of the same and she felt that she was dry and only received milk. She did not feel part of the places she attended. She had decided to leave the state and go live with her son in Colorado since she is a widow, and he is her only family.

Three months ago, a woman who gave herself to Christ invited us to eat at her apartment. She invited several acquaintances since she works in a bank in the city and it was an opportunity to introduce us to other people. We met this woman and, after lunch, we began to know each other more. They asked us what we were doing in the city, and the Lord gave us the opportunity to witness to them and to hear from the woman who was about to leave Northwest Arkansas next month to go live with her son in Colorado.

She shared, "When I heard about the mission and the leadership formation project, I accepted the invitation to join them for the presentation of the project at the church of Pastor Kenneth Strickland." At the end of the service, she approached us crying and told us that our arrival was an answered prayer for her since she needed a family and a community centered on the gospel, where the Great Commission is the central work of the church. She joined the mission project and gave up her idea of moving to Colorado.

She is very faithful in every discipleship and event we have and eager to be a useful instrument in the hands of the Lord. This woman has become part of our family. During these few months, the gospel has been transforming her into a woman who rejoices and delights in the Lord and is an example for those who are coming of love and fidelity.

about the Bible and be taught about Jesus. I told them of how God saved my family and what a huge change He made in our lives. As I was talking, you could see the conviction in their eyes. They were soaking in the words that God had laid on my heart through my story. The Lord had given me a testimony that they could relate to in their lives. Through God's grace (along with two pieces of bubble gum), many were saved that week of VBS!

Since that special week, I have had several more times to help spread the gospel by sharing my testimony. Every time I give it, a different part of the story reaches someone in a way that they are needing to be touched at the time. There are so many that can see themselves in the people in my testimony like the family members who are lost, the church workers or even the bus captain that is picking up the kids from the neighborhoods.

Someone's personal testimony is just that... their story. God has uniquely equipped each Christian with their own story to tell and our testimonies are given to us through the grace of God, and He means for us to share them with others so that others may begin to have their own story to share when they are saved and start a faithful relationship with Christ.

I challenge every Christian to take some time, sit down and write out their testimony and begin sharing it with others about the saving grace of God. Testimonies are powerful!



Full Circle (and I Mean Full Circle)

By Jake McCandless, Missionary
Epic Life Mission, Pea Ridge

I absolutely enjoy every time I share the story of how my family came to be BMA of Arkansas state missionaries in Pea Ridge, the town in which we've lived for five years. I don't think of myself as an emotional guy, but each time I've shared the story before a church I've gotten choked up and teary-eyed. The emotions come from seeing God work in those I deeply care about in Pea Ridge, but also in seeing part of the fruition of a sojourn of faith our family has been on since 2016. I also get emotional because to steal a line from the SEC, "It just means more" to us. Now I know that's not fair to say, but I think you would at least agree it should mean a lot to us when you finish this article.

There are several stories of how we got here, which I usually share before a church or anyone willing to listen. Stories such as how we ended up in our house in Pea Ridge or how, thanks to Wade Allen, I ended up on the Missionary Advisory Board which I knew nothing about.

Then there's the response to COVID at Epic Church NWA where we decided to focus on reaching people in our neighborhoods and personal networks through Discovery Bible Studies. Which led to an unexpected conversation on a less-than-ideal Facebook post that then led to 24 near strangers gathering in the home of someone I had met twice.

There's also the email from BMA of Arkansas Executive Director of Missions Paul White asking if I knew of someone to recommend to be a missionary in Pea Ridge.

All good stories. All part of God bringing this thing together. All, hopefully, reminders to you that God is at work

and a reminder to me that I'm where I'm supposed to be.

But there's one more story that takes the cake. (What does that even mean?) It's the origin that my family has recircled to. My wife, Amanda and I grew up on opposite ends of the state. Her in Rogers and me in Ashdown. We met at CBC and have done ministry together ever since.

In Rogers (well, actually Little Flock, but it's basically Rogers) she grew up on Hilltop Dr. which emptied out to Little Flock Dr. In the early 90s, Larry Morrison left south Arkansas to become a state missionary in Rogers. He came to what later became Unity Baptist Church which sat on Little Flock Dr.

Bro. Larry immediately began going door to door sharing the gospel, inviting people to the new mission and leaving tracks. One of the doors he knocked on was 4406 Hilltop Dr. There he visited with Amanda's mom as her dad slipped out the back door to avoid the preacher. After visiting, Bro. Larry left a track. Since the track had Bible verses on it, Amanda's mom didn't feel she could throw it away, so she put it on the refrigerator with a magnet. Day after day every time she walked by the fridge, the track would inevitably fall. Each time she'd pick it up and put it back on the fridge. This went on for what she says was forever.

Finally, it fell one too many times and Amanda's mom took it as a sign that she needed to go to church. She had made a profession as a teenager, but there hadn't been any follow-up. Twelve years later God was continuing to draw her to Him. That Sunday, Amanda and her mom went to what Amanda says, "this thing that was called church."

Amanda was 11 at the time and hadn't been to church before. She tells how she went in and was taken onto "this thing called children's church" and they kept talking about "this man named Jesus." At age 11 she did not know about Jesus. After "this thing called children's church," she was led out to the sanctuary where the church was gathered at the altar around her mom who was crying. Everyone was ecstatic, but Amanda was scared, for crying didn't make this seem like a good thing.

That morning Amanda's mom rededicated her life to Christ. A couple of weeks later Amanda would be saved and baptized. After Amanda and her mom had heard the gospel and had their lives transformed, they set their prayers toward Amanda's dad. He refused to go to the mission with them. He continued to slip out the backdoor when Bro. Larry came by. As they went to church, he'd take an ice chest of beer to the river and fish.

After a year of praying, one Sunday night as Amanda and her mom were headed to church, they met her dad on the road. Surprised, they stopped and asked what he was doing. He replied he was going to church with them. Amanda says her mom told him no at first for he had been drinking and smelled like fish. Amanda then reminded her mom this is

what we have been praying for.

That afternoon on the creek bank, Amanda's dad had an encounter with the Lord and gave His life to Christ. Amanda says she can still remember her dad walking into that mission for the first time all the while her Mom was pulling a stringer out of his back pocket and fishing line out of another. That night Amanda's dad shared his salvation. A year later through the discipleship from Bro. Larry and the members of Unity, he overcame his lifelong battle with alcohol.

From that point on the trajectory of Amanda's family and her life changed forever. So much so that her teacher held a parent-teacher conference to see what had changed her behavior. And from that point, they haven't looked back.

Amanda would later feel called to commit her life to be a pastor's wife. I was the lucky pastor. She turned down other opportunities to go to CBC. Her mom has continued from that point on working with children and many other ways within churches they've been a part of. For a long time, her dad would run vans picking up children to come to "this thing called church" and hear about "this man called Jesus." He is now a deacon.

This amazing transformation came because you gave to state missions and a missionary came to their area. As you can see, BMA State Missions means a lot to us. We're so thankful to be able to give back in some way as serving in the same way. As you can also see, we've come full circle. From being reached through a new mission to now launching a new mission, but the circle goes around further.

The mission in Pea Ridge isn't there because of me or even the decision of the Missionary Committee. It's there because of that once-state missionary, Larry Morrison who retired to Pea Ridge and prayed that there would be a BMA work there. He may have also persistently reminded Bro. Paul that Pea Ridge should be the next target.

Full circle was when Bro. Larry prayed over our "Commitment Night." He prayed over the core of Epic Life which included Amanda, me, our daughters, her mom and her dad.

Though that's about as full circle as it can get. I look forward to when we can also tell of a young girl who comes to Christ and has the trajectory of her life transformed.



Former BMA of Arkansas State Missionary Larry Morrison praying over the core group at Epic Life Mission's "Commitment Night."



Unity Baptist Church Building

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Mustang Message

"I Knew I Wanted to Be a Mustang"

By Tabitha Ward

My name is Tabitha Ward, and I was born and raised in Conway. I am the Public Housing Manager for the Conway Housing Authority/HUD and several years ago I graduated from the CBC PACE program with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree.

I've always had an appreciation for CBC because of the relationship/partnership that my family has had with the school. My family established the Ward Family Singers Scholarship at CBC. Over the years, I had heard my family talk about the student success stories of those who received our scholarship and how genuine and caring the faculty was. When it became time for me to choose a college, I was instantly drawn to see what CBC had to offer me.

After my initial meeting with Amy Reed, the PACE Enrollment Director at the time, and a lot of praying, I knew that I wanted to be a Mustang! For most people, choosing which college they will attend can be one of the scariest times of their lives but for me, it was coming together just as God had planned it. I knew it would be difficult at times to juggle a full-time job while being a single parent and a full-time student, but I also knew that with the flexibility of the PACE Program that it was possible. I was able to go at my

own pace and comfort level. During my time in the PACE program, I even managed to find the time to buy my very first home.

One of my favorite experiences was the fabulous people that I met along the way. My professors went above and beyond to help in any way they could. They genuinely cared about my success in the program, it was like having my very own set of cheerleaders. The professors understood that most of the students had just left an 8-hour job and they were very understanding with any needs or concerns that we might have.

I formed some of the most amazing lifelong friendships. To this day, no matter how busy life gets, we still find time to catch up with either a phone call or a lunch date. One memory that really stands out to me is during our graduation ceremony. Chad Linn, former PACE Director, presented me with the Greatest Contribution Award. I was in complete shock that I was chosen for this award and that CBC valued its students by giving such an award.

CBC led me to my career and, more importantly, my calling. When I first started in the PACE program, I was working at a commercial insurance company and had been there for around 11 years. As my time at CBC progressed, I realized that I wanted to pursue a different route. I wanted a job that was more fulfilling. I wanted to be where I could help serve others and try to implement faith, guidance and hope in the crazy world of business. After I graduated, I started praying that God would lead me to a job where I could use the business administration knowledge I gained and combine that with the God-given talents that I already possessed.

The business degree I received from CBC has helped me tremendously in navigating through the ever-changing world of government housing. My career has provided many rewarding experiences that I do not believe I would have fully appreciated if it were not for my love of Christ, and the heart I have to serve others. During my attendance at CBC, I had the opportunity to understand how much the world around us needs more Christian people that want to make a difference in the business world.

CBC embodies compassion, integrity, camaraderie, a sense of warmth, faith and a solid foundation, just to name a few. So, to answer the question what does CBC mean to me? A sense of gratitude for all that CBC has given me: an education, life lessons, lifelong friendships, a closer walk with God and a realization that, even though I may only be one person in the giant world, there are still numerous ways I can leave my godly imprint on the work I do every day.

Tabitha is just one of the many students that have graduated from CBC's PACE program. CBC is currently offering a one-time \$1,400 tuition discount for first-time entering or transfer students. President Terry Kimbrow said, "Adult students are often reluctant to go back to college. It is a huge decision to take on college classes, but we know it can transform your life. But it can also be expensive. We want to make that decision much easier for adult learners by offering this \$1,400 scholarship." "There are many reasons that prevent adults from obtaining a college degree. Sometimes it is family and job obligations, but our flexible degree options in PACE can accommodate busy schedules. Sometimes it is the cost, or it could be the fear of going back to school. If either is the case, we can help overcome those issues by offering a \$1,400 scholarship. Let CBC pay for your first class and let us help you achieve your dream of earning a college degree," said Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Gary McAllister.

To take advantage of the one-time \$1,400 tuition discount, first-time entering or transfer students should apply for admission and complete the registration process. The registration deadline for our next block is Monday, Jan. 2 with classes set to begin Jan. 10.

To learn more or to complete an application for admission visit cbc.edu/pace or contact the Admissions Office at (501) 329-6873. Use the code "MUSTANG" when you apply to claim your scholarship.

PACE offers an Associate of Arts in General Education and Business and an Associate of Science in Military Technologies degree. Bachelor of Science degrees offered are in Church Administration, General Studies, Human Resource Management, Leadership, Leadership and Ministry, Management Information Systems, Organizational Management and Psychology. CBC also offers a Bachelor of Business Administration. These include Business Administration, Business Analytics and Business Information Systems.

TABITHA
WARD



"I am now in a career field which wouldn't have been possible without a college degree. It's an exciting time in my life and I feel like my road to success is endless."



PACE
PROFESSIONAL
ADULT College
EDUCATION

CBC is committed to transforming lives by providing an education that integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment.