

ARKANSAS: TRANSFORMED

Stories of Transformed Lives



Student Ministry Workers Retreat 2023 at Central Baptist College

By Dan Carson, Director

“Dan asked me to share my personal thoughts about the Student Ministry Matters Retreat and suggested that I pick one word on which to focus my thoughts. Anyone that knows me, knows that I never use just one word, but as I thought about this year’s retreat, I settled on the word ‘renewing’ to describe the retreat.

“We all know youth ministry is both rewarding and challenging, and it can often leave you feeling drained emotionally and physically. These feelings can be amplified if you are a bivocational youth worker, as I am. Between working in the public school system and in the church, I find that sometimes I feel like I am meeting myself in the hallway coming and going. I am also guilty of spending so much time during church services ‘working’ that I forget that I am there to worship. The retreat helps me to regain my focus and make necessary changes to the way I approach life and ministry. While I am being fed spiritually at the retreat, which leads to renewal, I am also being fed emotionally.

“Spending time with others in youth ministry allows me to share both blessings and concerns with those who are in the same area of life that I am. We get the opportunity to visit during breaks and over meals, and that may be the most renewing part of the conference for me. I have a great group of volunteers at my home church, but having conversations with others who are the leaders of ministries about what is working, and not working, in their ministries allows me to reframe my own methods. And sometimes, we just need to get away from everything and spend a day focusing on the beauty of what God has called us to do. The retreat allows me to do just that.

“I look forward to the retreat every year for many reasons, and I am already excited about 2023! I enjoy worshipping with friends, old and new, and I always leave feeling renewed and with an excitement about getting back to the ministry at my home church.”

**Joel Young, Youth Pastor
Summers Baptist Church, Summers**



Those of us in student ministry have to constantly be looking forward in our calendars. We must think about mission trips, conferences and camps. However, we often neglect to plan out things for our own growth and development as student ministry workers. Let me encourage you to make some plans now for this fall. We have a great one-day retreat coming together for Sept. 16 at Central Baptist College of Conway. We have kept it to one day to accommodate many of our people who are serving in part-time, bi-vocational and volunteer roles. We provide a great goody bag for the first 100 attendees, lunch for all registrants and snacks throughout the day. It is well worth the cost of registration — it is only \$23 if you are one of the first 23 people for sign up! If you miss that, it only goes up to \$30 plus online fees. Students from colleges, universities and seminaries can attend the event for only \$20, and CBC students and staff only pay \$15. It is a great day for a very minimal cost.

Our featured speaker this year is Dr. Timothy McKnight. He is a pastor, professor, author and president of Kingdom Leader, LLC, a ministry that seeks to help Christ-followers make a kingdom impact in every aspect of their lives. He is a very active speaker and writer.

Tim is the pastor of Mosaic Church of Anderson, S.C., a multi-ethnic, multi-generational church plant launching in Anderson. He has preached for churches and youth groups around the country, serving churches in West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina and South Carolina as senior pastor, associate pastor and youth pastor. Tim was also an infantry chaplain in the United States Army Kentucky National Guard, deploying on Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Enduring Freedom (Europe) in 2001-2002.

He serves as an associate professor of youth ministry and missions at the Clamp Divinity School at Anderson University, and is also the director of the Global Center for Youth Ministry there. His goal in Christian higher education is to equip Christ-followers to engage the next generation and unreached people groups with the gospel.

Tim has written/edited three books and contributed chapters in various other works. His book *Engaging Generation Z: Raising the Bar in Youth Ministry* launched in January 2021 and made the number one new release in the Youth Christian Ministry category on Amazon. He is the editor and contributing author of a youth ministry textbook that will release in 2022 entitled *Navigating Student Ministry*. Tim also wrote *No Better Gospel*, a book that focuses on the theology and methodology of evangelism of George Whitefield.

His hobbies include shooting and martial arts. He is an NRA certified pistol instructor and a martial arts instructor holding a black belt in Kenpo Karate/Jujitsu. Tim lives in Anderson, S.C. with his wife, four children, and his Siberian Husky/German Shepherd, Jackson.

Our worship leader for the day will be Nathan Dodson. Nathan is a student at CBC and has been a part of our retreat before. He serves with the Central Singers and has a big heart for ministry.

The day will also feature breakout groups featuring speakers sure to encourage and equip you in areas of student ministry.

We have had pastors, student pastors, volunteers and others join our event, and we would love to have you join us, too. You can register online at SMWR2023.eventbrite.com.



STUDENT MINISTRY WORKERS RETREAT



**DR. TIMOTHY MCKNIGHT
FEATURED SPEAKER**



**NATHAN DODSON
WORSHIP LEADER**

SEPTEMBER 16, 2023 | 09.00-4.00

REGISTER NOW

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CENTRAL BAPTIST COLLEGE, 1501 COLLEGE AVE., CONWAY, AR

Register at SMWR2023.eventbrite.com.

Find Dan and Co-host Chris Vines on their weekly Student Ministry Matters podcast at studentministrymatters.podbean.com or through most major podcasting platforms.

Join the Student Ministry Matters Community on Facebook.





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The Power of Resurrection Sunday

By Bryan Clay, BMA of Arkansas Missionary

In the weeks leading up to Easter Sunday, Faith Journey began to enjoy a few new faces during our weekly meetings. One young man, who has been a part of our mission, invited the young lady that he had begun dating a few months earlier. This young man had told us that his girlfriend had never attended church growing up and was not a follower of Christ. With that knowledge, we began to earnestly pray for this young lady and welcomed her with open hearts whenever we had the opportunity to speak with her. As she began to attend every week, she was quiet and reserved, with a guarded interest in the teachings that we were sharing at Faith Journey. Having never been taught about the Bible or been part of an organized church meeting, we were very aware of how difficult this setting could be for her and continued to pray that God would begin to work on her heart. During this time the young lady began to open up and ask to learn more about what she was hearing.

As I began to prepare for our Easter service at Faith Journey, God began to lay on my heart the importance of this special time in our mission. This was to be our first Easter service, and I was already anticipating God's hand moving among us. I began to share with our mission that I had witnessed God do some amazing things in years past in the lives of people, especially around the Easter season. I told them about the time, a couple of years before, the Lord convicted me one evening that I needed to share the gospel with my daughter. I knew I needed to follow what God was telling me to do, but no matter how hard I tried, I could not come up with the right words to start the conversation. But God said, "Easter! Tell her about Easter." Of course, that was the perfect story and God created the opportunity for me to share about His sacrifice and because of that, my daughter was saved!

Two weeks leading up to our mission's Easter Sunday service, I began to challenge our people to spend time talking with others about the true meaning of Easter. We wanted others to know that Easter is not about a bunny, hiding colorful eggs or a huge dinner after church. All of these things are nice family traditions, but they are not why we, as Christians, celebrate

Easter. I encouraged them to share Jesus with others and talk about their salvation with those who may not know Christ.

Resurrection Sunday dawned with so much anticipation to see what the Lord had in store for His people that day. The morning was spent worshipping with a large crowd at our sending church (Celebration, Haskell) and the room was so filled with His spirit you could feel the excitement around you. The young couple from our mission came to the service with us that morning. We could see that the young lady was focused on the worship music and the sermon that was being shared. We knew God's presence was in that room.

At Faith Journey that evening, our mission had worked hard to invite others to our Easter service. We enjoyed having our highest attendance so far that evening. Again, we could just feel the Spirit of God moving in our presence. Our time of worship with music touched the hearts of those who were there, and I was able to share God's Word and the true meaning of why we celebrate Easter with everyone that night. As I was bringing the message, I noticed the young lady was listening intently and smiling from ear to ear. I thought to myself, "I think she is ready to be saved." Afterward, we spent time visiting with each other and it was during this time that our worship leader had a chance to talk with the young lady we had been praying for. He has a gift of being able to just get straight to the point with people in a non-offensive way to ask about their relationship with Jesus, and that is just what he did with her. But, to his surprise, when he asked if she knew Jesus, her response was unexpected as she said, "Yes, I asked Him into my heart this morning at church!" We all began to pray over her and love on her for her decision to follow our Savior on this amazing Resurrection Day! You could see the joy and peace on her face because of her decision. How incredible is our God that this young lady will always be able to share how faithful our Father is because of His sacrifice on that first Easter Sunday some 2,000 years ago!

We serve an amazing God — He is the Resurrection and the Life!



The Table Baptist Mission

By Clinton Morris, BMA of Arkansas Missionary

A new church-led ministry was born on the back of a coffee-fueled conversation. Gun had an idea, a ministry he had tried a few years prior, but was overwhelmed because he did not have enough help.

The idea was a board game event held at other churches, an event both targeting and encouraging the nerds that were among the congregation that would give them a reason to invite others. Our role would be to run the event, but the role of the church would be to evangelize, provide childcare, host and potentially provide food.

We began to discuss the idea in May 2022. Unfortunately, due to planning our Tablecon and the need for our attention on other matters, much of the planning for this event got tabled.

Fast Forward to December 2022. The planning committee for this event is now four people — Drew, Gun, Ian and me. All of us are sitting around a table brainstorming the possibilities. Finally, we hone in on the specifics, and we have a church that is willing to allow us to test drive the ministry. Samaritan Church does a Laundromat ministry called "Loads of Love," where they pay for the laundry of every person during a four-hour window, while also feeding them. We came in with our board games.

Gun got to lead his ministry. He had six helpers that were teaching games to kids and adults. We were getting the names of individuals and creating opportunities to pray for people. Ian got to share the gospel two different times. We were playing with Marshallese children, homeless people and other church families. I was so excited to see Gun seize the reins of the ministry and lead us.

To see God use and develop others in the ministry is one of my greatest joys — discipleship and multiplication!





God Still Answers Prayers

By Roberto Marcelletti, BMA of Arkansas Missionary

In these last two weeks, we have had a great answer to our prayers. For a few months, a sister asked us for prayer for a friend whose husband had just left. She is a woman more than 70 years old and had lost her partner of more than 40 years. We began to pray for her and, when we talked to the sister (who asked for prayer for her and has contact with her), she told us she is very attached to the Catholic religion and does not want to know anything about the Bible. But let's continue praying for living a great crisis for the loss of her husband. Our sister had invited to church her many times and never came until two weeks ago. She was in the service when I, as always, invited everyone to run to Christ in repentance and faith at the end of the sermon.



After the service, she stayed at discipleship and we were all so impressed by the hunger she showed to learn. She made the discipleship last half an hour longer than we had planned, but seeing her enthusiasm and how attentive she was to the discussion was a snack for me. What I saw in her was totally the opposite of what the sister told me about her attachment to Catholic religiosity and traditionalism. It is rewarding to see the work of the Holy Spirit when He has brought new life. This is necessary as we surround ourselves with people who attend church without any interest before they started. It is good and inspiring to see new people share that hunger and passion they have for the Savior. Glory to God for what He does!



A Mother's Prayer

By Juan Carlos Posadas, Missionary in North Little Rock

Doña Adilia always prayed for one of her grandchildren to be a missionary, and she had her hopes set on Jose Carlos and Andy. When she shared her prayer with me, she said it with such certainty that my heart sank and I thought, "If it is God's will, it will be done." Doña Adilia died, and she did not see her prayer answered.

What she never imagined was that her son would be called to the ministry. I am filled with joy today thinking that her prayer has been answered. I imagine how much she would be enjoying that her son became a missionary. Her conviction reaffirms my commitment to God and confirms my calling.

**BMA of Arkansas
State Missions
Special Emphasis
May-June
Goal — \$50,000**



Testimony from Epic Life

By Jake McCandless, BMA of Arkansas Missionary

"Matthew, have you thought about being baptized?" That was the question Brian asked his 20-year-old son in front of me at Culver's. Matthew's salvation had been on my heart, and I had been praying but I didn't think it was on the radar for him. I was the pastor/church planter, so I should have been the one to think to ask that.

Brian is a founding leader at Epic Life. It was our chance conversation on Facebook that led to starting the first Connection Group in Pea Ridge. Our conversation came from a burden the Lord had placed on Brian to start ministry by focusing on his family. He and his wife, Audrey opened their home for the Bible study. Brian's heart was that his family was his first ministry. One challenge was that his son, Matthew was estranged to him.



One of our main prayer requests was that he and his son would just regain contact. Well, God always does better. One Wednesday we showed up to find Matthew at the Bible study. He had reconnected with his father. The next week he was there, and he had moved in with his dad.

A few weeks had gone by and Brian, Matthew and I took a random road trip to hang out and see a Christian film some friends were releasing. It was just meant to be a fun trip. We stopped at Culver's, and the conversation was better than the burger.

Brian asked knowing the answer. His son had trusted Christ! Easter weekend we baptized him — the first baptism for Epic Life!



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Mustang Message

PACE Graduate Spotlight — James Garrison (2015)

James E. Garrison, Sr. is a 2015 graduate of CBC's Pace Program, where he received his B.S. in Leadership and Ministry. We were able to meet with him and ask him a few questions about his life and his time at CBC.

Can you tell us a little bit about your family?

My wife, Shirley (Brooks), and I have been married for 38 years. We have one son, James E. Garrison, Jr.; a daughter, Desiree' Thompson, and a son-in-law, Christopher Thompson. Desiree' and Christopher have blessed us with two grandsons — Dominic (age 5) and Charleston (3 months).

Tell us about your time in the military:

I was in Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) at Little Rock Central before I graduated from high school. After that, I enlisted in the United States Air Force and was ranked as an airman. I served five years (1974-1979) as a munition specialist (MMS). I was assigned to three different bases during that five-year stint — New York, New York; Okinawa, Japan; and Abilene, Texas.

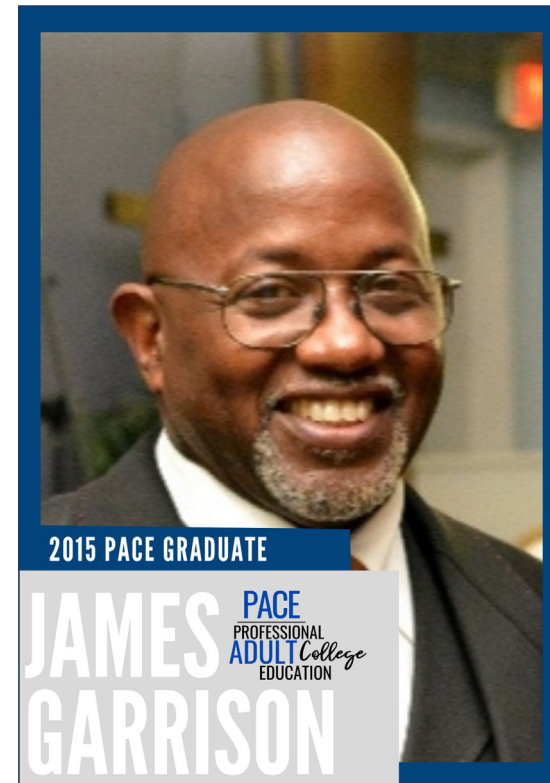
What about your career after the military?

I became a Little Rock Firefighter in 1983. I served for 28 years with the city of Little Rock before retiring in August 2011. I worked in two areas of the department. In the beginning, it was my duty to serve the public by responding to fire or medical calls. Later on, I moved to the administration side where I was a training officer. As a training officer, my duties were to ensure that the firefighters were trained in the latest techniques, procedures and hazards that would impact their job. I also trained new candidates and taught them how to maintain their firefighter certification as an EMT basic.

What made you want to get involved in the PACE program at CBC?

My brother, William Givens, was a graduate of CBC. I was interested in taking some bible classes and he recommended that I check it out. I met with a CBC personnel admissions officer, and they encouraged me to enroll, so I did. Many years ago, I sensed that the Lord was telling me that He had something for me to do. Every time, it was the same vision and the same message. In 1983, after much prayer, God showed me that He was calling me into ministry. When I submitted to him, it was as if a burden was lifted. My desire to pursue religious studies was to enhance the gift God had given me.

My degree from CBC helped me in many ways as I served my church. I was a member of Mount Pleasant Missionary Baptist Church in Little Rock where I was assistant to the pastor. Under this role, I got to preach on occasion, I led the Wednesday Bible Study and oversaw the Benevolence Ministry. My wife and I now attend St. John Missionary Baptist Church where I am the Servant-leader of the Celebration of Life Ministry. I am in the Union District Congress of Christian Education for the Union District Baptist Association. I am a certified instructor for the COP program with the Sunday School Board. I lead workshops, seminars, and act as an advisor/counselor for those going through the program.



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