

BSU Celebrates 100 Years

*By Lindsey Williams
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Sam Ivy, Director of Collegiate Ministries, joined Tanner Cade, Director of Communication Services, and Jon Martin, Director of Men's Ministries, on the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's (MBCB) "Around the Table" Podcast. They discussed God's faithfulness throughout the 100 years of the Baptist Student Union (BSU), collegiate mission opportunities both domestically and abroad, and how Mississippi Baptists can impact college campuses with the Gospel.

The 2023 MS Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, held on October 24-25, marked BSU's centennial celebration. Video presentations spotlighted personal testimonies from students about their summer mission trips, illustrating the result of God's faithfulness coupled with the generosity of BSU students and staff, who raised \$113,000 for the mission fund.



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Students undergo a thorough process of interviews and

trainings to ensure they are sincerely committed and well-prepared for wherever God may lead them.

As the Lord spearheads missions abroad, He also attends to the needs here at home. Ivy shared the next hurdle for Collegiate Ministries as BSU expanded to two additional campuses: Mississippi Valley State University and Coahoma Community College. The prospect of growth is exhilarating, yet Ivy acknowledged that these BSUs must be developed from scratch.

“Mississippi Baptists have already recognized the Delta as a high Gospel-need area,” Ivy noted. “This is evident from economic, mental health, and spiritual perspectives. Our pastors are also relaying the need for greater spiritual health within the community.”

Josh Warren, the BSU Director at Mississippi Delta Community College in Moorhead, proposed an initiative to Ivy to mobilize collegiate teams to evangelize the Delta. “Christmas in the Delta,” inspired by Lloyd Lunsford, the previous Director of Collegiate Ministries, and his “Christmas in China” mission, is designed to engage the community through various activities such as church canvassing, toy drives, Rolling Fork relief efforts, assisting the Mississippi State Penitentiary, and other emerging needs that the Lord helps to identify. Ivy announced that so far, 60 students from 8 BSUs have mobilized for this campaign.

Ivy expressed his admiration for Mississippi Baptists’ century-long support of the BSU and its ongoing mission: “You can trust that you are deploying missionaries on these campuses, even when it’s impossible to be there physically.”

“The essence of the BSU,” Ivy continued, “is to provide assurance that there’s a gospel presence on the campus your loved ones attend, enabling them to be part of it, whether it’s in the northwest or down on the Mississippi Gulf Coast or anywhere in between.”

Reflecting on his decade of post-college experience, Ivy shared, “We often overlook our ability to contribute to college ministry, thinking we’ve ‘aged out.’ We forget that we have much wisdom, resources, and love to offer these students, who may not always know how to seek it out.”

“The pitfall for many college students,” he remarked, “is the belief that they must clean up their act before coming to church, akin to the flawed logic of needing to get well before seeking hospital care.”

Ivy emphasized that the BSU serves as an extension of local churches, reaching out to the hurt and broken-hearted students, and hopefully guiding them not just to the church pews but through a journey that leads to gospel conversations and spiritual commitment.

He encouraged pastors to participate in Collegiate Ministry by spending time at a BSU office, available to students wishing to delve into theological discussions.

In his concluding remarks, Ivy stressed the importance of empathy towards college students, who are often grappling with understanding life itself: “They don’t know which way to run, and that’s precisely why we need to run towards them.”

To become involved with Collegiate Ministry and the BSU, and to discover how your church can support student missions, you can contact Sam Ivy at sivy@mbcb.org or Ministry Assistant, Hannah Mullins, at hmullins@mbcb.org.

For the full episodes of MBCB’s “Around the Table” Podcasts, click here: <https://mbcb.org/podcasts/>.

To watch video replays of the Convention, click here: <https://mbcb.org/convention/>.