

Collegians gather for BSU Fall Conference at First Church, Madison

By Lindsey Williams

Staff Writer

Mississippi Baptist Student Union (BSU) celebrated a century of ministry Sept. 22-23 during its Fall Conference at First Church, Madison.

Twice each year, the Collegiate Ministries Department at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) holds a weekend BSU conference in which students from the state's community colleges and universities gather to worship together, fellowship with likeminded believers, and hear the Gospel.



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“The main goal of the conference we hold in the Fall is twofold: one, is to encourage fellowship throughout all 29 campuses and BSU ministries.

“We had some new staff, so also just to encourage fellowship between our directors and their families, to give them a chance to be together, and for the students as well to be able to see, ‘Hey, I love Jesus and I want to live for Him on my campus.’ At the conference they find friends who do that on other campuses and have the same desires,” Ivy pointed out.

“Our secondary benefit to this conference is that we unveil our summer missions program. Last year, we sent 113 summer missionaries to serve in 19 different countries and 15 different continental states,” said Ivy, “so we started afresh with our new opportunities, and students had the opportunity to apply for 2024 summer missions at this conference.”

The students heard personal testimonies from other students and attended a missions panel during which students who previously participated in the summer missions ministry responded to questions and shared their experiences.

Blake Newsom, director of the Caskey Center and associate professor at New Orleans Seminary, served as the main speaker, expositing the Sermon on the Mount. “By doing that,” Ivy stated, “Friday night we had three students who responded by wanting to pray to receive salvation through Jesus Christ, making that first and really awesome eternal step in their lives.”

On Saturday, Jeremy Stroo, college and missions pastor at Carterville Church, Petal, led an apologetics breakout session titled, “Building Bridges to Reach Your Campus.”

Nathan Ball, college and youth pastor at First Church, Clinton, led a breakout session titled, “Called to Ministry?”

“Our breakout sessions are really to equip,” Ivy explained. “[Stroo taught] on cultural apologetics – how to reach our friends where they live, work, and play, through a myriad of sin and chaos on a college campus [and] how the Gospel penetrates that and makes a lasting eternal impact.

“We had over 400 students in the apologetics breakout, and we had over 200 in our ‘Called to Ministry’ breakout session, [for] which we’ve already gotten back 50 responses of students saying, ‘I’m called to ministry. What are my next steps? What does that look like?’”

Cory Carr, worship leader at New Palestine Church, Picayune, led worship alongside his band.

At the end of the conference, students were given a connect card as a chance to respond to the Lord’s calling. The card has six options to mark and space for prayer requests and questions.

At this conference, six of the students marked, “Become a Believer.” Nine marked a response to obey, “Believer’s Baptism.” Ninety-two marked to, “Serve as a Student Missionary.”

Eighty-eight marked to, “Serve in Local Church Ministry.” Thirty-six marked to, “Serve in Long-term Missions.” One-hundred and seventy-seven marked to, “Share the Gospel with a Non-Christian friend.”

“We’ve been receiving students’ summer missions pre-applications and full applications for the past week and a half following this conference,” Ivy said, “so that’s always a very awesome time to celebrate what God is doing and what He’s going to do in the lives of the college students.”

The next BSU Spring Conference will be held at the Mississippi State University BSU in Starkville on February 23-24.

For more information on collegiate ministries, Ivy may be contacted at sivy@mbcb.org. The author of this article can be contacted at lwilliams@mbcb.org.

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