

STEADFAST IN THE MIDST OF A

CULTURAL

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT ► SUMMER 2018

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Summer 2018

SAGU Today and the President's Report are publications of Southwestern Assemblies of God University, a Christian, non-profit institution of higher learning.

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of Southwestern Assemblies of God University is to prepare undergraduate and graduate students spiritually, academically, professionally and cross-culturally so as to successfully fill evangelistic, missionary and church ministry roles and to provide quality educational and professional Christian service wherever needed throughout the world.

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Help a needy and deserving student.

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CULTURAL

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Kermit S. Bridges, D.Min.
President

MOST OF US CAN REMEMBER SOME POINT IN SCHOOL WHEN WE STARED INTO A SCIENCE TEXTBOOK AND LEARNED ABOUT DNA. INSIDE THAT LADDER-SHAPED GENETIC CODE WAS EVERY INSTRUCTION FOR AN ORGANISM TO DEVELOP, SURVIVE AND REPRODUCE. GOD DESIGNED OUR BODIES WITH SUCH DIVINE CARE AND INTENT.

SIMILARLY—SAGU’S DNA (OUR MISSIONAL DNA)—TELLS US HOW WE WILL DEVELOP, SURVIVE AND REPRODUCE. OR, RATHER—HOW WE WILL DEVELOP, THRIVE AND REPRODUCE.

America has long been regarded as a Christian nation, but you and I know that Christianity isn't merely a label. Being Christian is being set apart. It is important now more than ever as we see many Christian values fall by the wayside.

It would be easy for many schools to shift from their core identities in the face of changing culture and the financial and political risks that come with it. In fact, many have.

But, I often return to SAGU's missional DNA. Who we were at our founding is the fabric of who we remain today.

As P.C. Nelson said, SAGU exists " ...to give men and women a better knowledge of the Word of God, and to bring them into closer fellowship with Christ, and into harmony with His will... whether it be to serve Him in their own homes, on the farm, in shop or store or office..."

Despite a shifting culture, our core values remain. Our vision is to be a distinguished Christian university that equips Spirit-empowered leaders with career and ministry skills by providing affordable education, hands-on training opportunities, and innovative academic programs.

I want to reiterate that.

SAGU will be a distinguished Christian university.

SAGU will remain a university that equips Spirit-empowered leaders.

SAGU will nurture that identity while we maintain affordability and drive innovation within our programs.

We are about embracing a Biblical worldview and a faith that endures. We could spend our lives letting the world or society tell us who we are. But, we won't.

SAGU is on-campus in Waxahachie and online. We are in Georgia at Valor, in California at SAGU SoCal, in Phoenix at AIC and Western, and around the country through partners and schools of ministry in over 20 states. In every context, the Bible is our cornerstone.

We have something distinct to offer this world. Our greatest testament of love to those around us is to speak God's Truth, with boldness and compassion.

In this issue, we share stories of alumni who demonstrate the values we hold dear. I hope they hold for you the inspiration they give to me.

May God's favor rest on SAGU as we remain faithful to our missional DNA! ■

OUR CORE VALUES

BIBLE-BASED EDUCATION

God is the ultimate source of all knowledge and truth and has revealed Himself in Scripture; therefore, SAGU is committed to the authority of the Bible and the integration of biblical values in all academic disciplines. The pursuit of truth and its application in every area of life comes through understanding the Word of God and knowing Christ...

PENTECOSTAL DISTINCTION

SAGU is committed to an environment that encourages students to experience Spirit baptism according to Pentecostal theology to obtain additional power for witness, personal edification through speaking in tongues in private prayer, and additional enablement through spiritual gifts, while continually pursuing spiritual formation and a Spirit-formed character...

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

SAGU is committed to fostering spiritual formation among students that produces lifelong spiritual growth and character development. Students are encouraged to develop their understanding of biblical faith, increase their desire to know and serve God, and develop personal integrity and character by applying biblical values to their lives...

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

SAGU is a university devoted, under God, to the pursuit of truth through the use of the mind. Students, therefore, are encouraged to bring their minds in submission to Christ and fulfill their responsibilities as stewards, and work for the integration of thinking and learning in the framework of a Christian worldview...

MISSIONS-MINDEDNESS

SAGU is founded on the belief that every believer has a personal responsibility for the Great Commission. SAGU intends that students will embrace missions-mindedness as evidenced by lifelong personal involvement in world evangelism, a life of intercessory prayer for the lost, personal witness, contributing resources to world evangelism, and a willingness to go into full-time missionary work (if called by God)...

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

SAGU's mission is founded on the belief that God intends every believer be actively involved in ministry that reflects service and servanthood. Fulfilling the mission of the church requires all believers, no matter their chosen career and calling, to work in team-like fashion using their unique gifts and talents in churches and ministries around the world...

COMMUNITY AND PERSONAL WELLNESS

SAGU is committed to the understanding that discipleship occurs in community and in relationship. Therefore, students are encouraged to develop the social and relational skills needed to contribute to an affirming, loving, and giving community of believers. Additionally students are encouraged toward emotional and physical health for the purpose of long, faithful service unto God... ■

FAMILY CALLING

SAGU IS WIDELY KNOWN FOR GRADUATING MINISTERS AND TEACHERS OF THE WORD. MANY EARN DEGREES FROM THE COLLEGE OF BIBLE AND CHURCH MINISTRIES. BUT, SAGU BIBLE-BASED EDUCATION GOES DEEPER—WITH IMPACTFUL MINISTERS COMING FROM THE FIELDS LIKE BUSINESS, EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY.

For this reason, alumni Mason and Dr. Kara Rodgers, are appreciative of their time as students at Southwestern in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Chief among their reasons is the integration of biblical values in the classroom, incorporating faith in all aspects of life and building a deeper level of understanding, intentionality and purpose.

“I think if I would have gone to a secular university, especially considering my field of study, that experience would have made me question my faith,” says Kara.

Kara and Mason now serve in similar yet distinct fields. Kara is a clinical psychologist with her own practice. She also provides evaluations for the disability services for the state of Oklahoma and evaluations for military veterans. Mason is a recruitment supervisor for a state-wide recruitment unit that provides services for foster care children who are medically fragile or have varying degrees of physical or cognitive disabilities.

Though both have been blessed by the progression of their careers, they mention that secular, societal views of mental and community health often conflict with their own Christian views.

“Someone asked me once how I can be a psychologist and a Christian,” said Kara. “Going into this field with a Christian perspective and having learned from Christians experienced in this field—that helped me navigate my own profession.”

Mason says, “Kara’s and my time at Southwestern was a time of growth. At that time, they were starting to add programs in other fields and it really opened my mind to the idea that ministry is much broader than just pulpit ministry.”

Kara and Mason work with clients of diverse religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Their purpose—to demonstrate faith in all aspects of their lives—continues to drive them forward and exemplifies the importance of a Bible-based



MASON, KARA AND RODGERS FAMILY

education, especially its role in the workplace.

Even if Kara is working with someone who is not a Christian, she sees the encounter as a miracle. “I hope that in that circumstance, maybe they can also see the miracle in it and know that it is God,” says Kara.

“The end result of my work is family,” says Mason. “From one perspective, you have a child who is in need of a family. From the other, you have a willing family looking to adopt. To bring those two together is fulfilling.” ■



Reverend
Zombies

House of
Blood



Come On In
And Shop
For A Spel

ZOMB
WATCHING
YOU!

ZOMBIES

Voodoo

BEING LIGHT IN THE VOODOO CAPITAL

A MIDDLE-AGED, WELL-DRESSED WOMAN APPROACHED THE ALTAR. AS SHE DREW NEAR... SHE DROPPED TO THE FLOOR AND BEGAN SLITHERING ACROSS THE GROUND HISSING.

During their first year serving at the House of Prayer in New Orleans, Louisiana, Jon and Elizabeth Smith stood at the altars. House of Prayer was one of the few Pentecostal churches left in New Orleans following the destruction of Hurricane Katrina. It was a small church with a devoted congregation that was on fire for God and driven by the Holy Spirit. As he concluded his sermon, they opened the altars for prayer.

When congregation members came forward, a middle-aged, well-dressed woman approached the altar. As she drew near, Jon witnessed something he had never encountered during his ministry. The well-put-together woman dropped to the floor, began slithering across the ground, and made hissing noises. Right there, in front of Jon and Elizabeth, the woman began to manifest demons.

“That was our introduction to the reality of the spiritual world,” says Jon. “It was the demonic on a very real level. Not something we

read in a book. Not something we heard about in some crusade overseas. It was like a ‘Welcome to New Orleans. Welcome to the reality of the spiritual landscape of what’s taking place in this city.’”

Jon and Elizabeth’s journey to New Orleans was anything but ordinary. Jon was a college football player with no plans to pursue ministry until God intervened. He was saved during his sophomore year. The next year, he was baptized in the Holy Spirit and accepted God’s call to full time ministry. He remembers praying and speaking in tongues along the sidelines of the gridiron in the middle of football games.

“I remember that whole year continually thinking about the call of God. I was thinking about ministry and Bible college after I graduated with my business degree. I didn’t truly understand what the call of God was about, but I knew I was called nonetheless.”

Across the country in Brooklyn, New York,

Elizabeth was a successful teacher with a promising career in education. After about three years in the field, God interrupted her plans. She had a master's degree from Columbia University and planned to pursue a doctoral degree to eventually serve as a principal. Yet, she felt a greater calling and eventually left her career to pursue ministry in New Orleans.

Both Jon and Elizabeth attended Bible college in New Orleans and began evangelizing in the streets of the city's French Quarter.

"We worked so well together. It was phenomenal. When you're at Bourbon Street and Jackson Square surrounded by 75 tarot card readers, voodoo priests and priestesses, warlocks and witches... when you're in that environment, and you don't flow well with somebody, it's scary."

They married and serve as the Senior Pastors of the House of Prayer Church, where they have been for 15 years.

New Orleans is a city known for its color and expressive culture. But, it is also regarded as the voodoo capital of the United States. Jon describes the city as heavy. "It is almost if the city is weighed down by spiritual, oppressive forces. You can sense it in the atmosphere. Even people who are non-believers, people without the Holy Spirit's discernment, have flown into New Orleans and immediately described a feeling of oppression, a feeling of heaviness."

Because of the overwhelming community of witchcraft and voodoo practitioners, Jon and Elizabeth's church has had to develop tough skin to respond to spiritual attacks. Dead birds are thrust in front of the church building. Graffiti has been sprayed on the outside doors. It is not uncommon for visitors to begin manifesting demons during service.

Because of the directness of these attacks, Jon says, "It takes a keenness and a discernment of the Holy Spirit to know what you are dealing with and what you're fighting. The approaches of ministry that work in the suburbs and rural churches don't work here."

Along with the Holy Spirit's discernment,

Jon sought out the Gospels. He went through all four books of the New Testament and the book of Acts, looking at occurrences of demonic possession and manifestation. He observed Jesus' and Paul's ministry during the casting out of demons. "I was like, 'this is going to be my standard. This is what I am going to teach, and this is where I will draw information, and where we will construct our approach.'"

Jon also mentions the unique spiritual obstacles that youth in New Orleans face. "It's stories like 'yeah, we live with my grandmother and seven other

cousins in a small room and my grandmother is into Santeria. She does witchcraft.' That's the environment for these young people. As a church, we knew we had to operate in the gifts of the Spirit. We made that central to how the church functions and the role of the Holy Spirit."

"We've also taught that when you step out, we're going to respond to that act of faith and then look at how people's lives are changed so it helps to encourage the operation and the movements of the gifts of the spirit during service."

In addition to 15 years of experience as Senior Pastors, Jon and Elizabeth's experience as students at SAGU impacted their ministry.

Jon graduated from SAGU in 2013 with a master's degree in Organizational Leadership and Elizabeth received her master's degree in Biblical Theology.

During his graduate studies, Jon found a way to apply his studies directly through his church. Towards the end of the program, students must complete a final project. Jon chose to organize and structure the church's operations and ministries for his final project. The church's current structure and model of ministry is a direct result of Jon's project.

After completing his master's degree, Jon was excited to see the House of Prayer Church continue to make strides in effectively reaching a damaged city.

"We have taken a lot of spiritual blows just from fighting the spiritual warfare that we fight but that's okay because today when you drive

“MY WIFE AND I? WE ARE GOING TO LIGHT THE MATCH AND IGNITE A FLAME FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.”

into New Orleans, you don't feel the degree of demonic oppression that you felt in times past," says Jon. "Over the last 19 years, I have seen a marked difference in the presence of God in the city and the feeling of oppression being much less."

In response to what they are most excited about for the future, Jon simply says, "the next generation. Everything we are doing is building for them. My wife and I? We are going to light the match and ignite a flame for the next generation."

Smith recounts an incident in which he, his wife and her family recently went to the French

Quarter for a meal and there was a noticeable difference in the feeling of oppression and demonic presence in the region.

"You know, House of Prayer isn't the biggest church in the world but in that moment, I felt like God was saying, 'Do not discount the faithfulness and the commitment that you and your wife have had over these last 18-19 years. What you feel today is the result of the continuous showing up, the continuous praying, the continuous fasting, the continuous cultivating the presence of the Holy Spirit, the continuous operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the continuous intercession, the continuous standing in the gap.'" ■



JON & ELIZABETH SMITH



FULL HEART

Meredith Bagby was always passionate about ministry but never anticipated pursuing full-time missions. Growing up, she participated in a few short term trips with her youth group and was later involved in the Student Missions Association and Mission TEN (To Every Nation) at SAGU. The SAGU environment fostered her passion. However, it was not until a Mission TEN trip to Africa that God revealed that what was once a dream would now be her reality. After experiencing the fulfillment of missions work, Meredith was intrigued by the idea of full-time missions.

“That trip caused me to contemplate whether or not I could live in a place so different from what I knew. I told God that I could and I would. I’d go anywhere he wanted me to go.”

Meredith, who was born and raised in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, has spent her entire life serving the Lord. She always knew she wanted to attend a Christian university. Without ever visiting, it was clear to her that SAGU was where she would complete her degree. Through her years at SAGU, God repeatedly confirmed that she was where she was supposed to be.

THERE WAS NO WAITING TO BE CALLED. SHE WENT, SHE KNEW HER HEART WAS READY, AND SHE JUMPED IN HEAD FIRST. THROUGH HER FAITH AND WILLINGNESS TO MOVE, SHE FOUND HER PATH AND NOW WORKS AS A MISSIONARY ASSOCIATE IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA.

Meredith graduated in 2013 with a degree in Theatre and minor in Intercultural Studies. After attending a few Mission TEN trips, she spent a couple of months in Swaziland, Africa, where she worked with missionaries Randy and Dezra Freeman.

“I experienced missionary life for myself and learned so much from them. They knew my heart for missions and kept in contact.”

The missionaries became her mentors and this particular trip gave her





MEREDITH BAGBY

the opportunity to experience life on the mission field. She knew this was no longer a side passion, but she became overwhelmed with this burning desire to share the gospel overseas.

Through keeping close contact with the missionaries in Africa, she was soon presented the opportunity of a lifetime.

“When God put it in their (the Freeman’s) hearts to plant a church in Durban, they asked me to join. God confirmed it was the right opportunity, and now I’m here working under them again.”

There was no waiting. She went. She knew her heart was ready, and she jumped in head first. Through her faith and willingness to move, she found her path as a Missionary Associate in Durban, South Africa.

Not knowing what the future holds, she says, “I am certain it will be an adventure! I know the season I am in and the people I am ministering to.

They are beautiful people.”

Although the future is unclear, there is much to look forward to. “It’s a joy watching them grow! I cannot wait for my friends that don’t know the Lord to come into relationship with him.”

When asked what advice she would give to those who feel called to missions, she had a lot to say. “The world of missions isn’t reserved for those who have proven themselves righteous. It’s simply doing ministry in another cultural context.”

Meredith adds, “Cross-cultural ministry isn’t just clothing orphans and feeding the homeless. Every person needs Jesus, rich or poor. Not only do we need highly trained pastors, we need highly trained teachers and businessmen. We need musicians, videographers, doctors, and politicians. Find the area you are gifted in and use that as the vehicle for your ministry.” ■

LONG ODDS

“IF I COULD GIVE ANY ADVICE TO ACCOUNTING MAJORS, I WOULD SAY JUST BECAUSE IT’S BUSINESS, DOESN’T MEAN YOU HAVE TO SEE IT AS ‘JUST BUSINESS.’ SEE IT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE FAITHFUL AND TO DO THINGS THE WAY GOD WANTS YOU TO DO IT.”

ROLANDO HERNANDEZ

Since receiving his college diploma just two years ago, Rolando Hernandez has been blessed beyond belief. Still, in the midst of his success, Hernandez has never forgotten where he came from. As a high school dropout, Hernandez remembers being skeptical of ever having the opportunity to go to college. But, a bold statement from his high school soccer coach rang in his ears and drove him to persevere through any adversity. “You’re going to go to college, and you’re going to graduate.”

No one in Hernandez’s family had ever gone to college. After dropping out of High School his senior year, the odds were stacked against his pursuing higher education.

“In high school, I never thought I would go to college. In the Hispanic and Mexican culture, you get through high school, get a job in construction—or really any job—and that’s it,” says Hernandez. “I knew the odds were not in my favor.”

Despite his circumstances, former SAGU soccer coach Aaron DeLoach believed in him. Coach DeLoach pushed Hernandez to complete his GED so he could play soccer for SAGU.

After being accepted, Hernandez recognized the opportunity he had been given. He was relentless in and out of the classroom.

“I had fun and enjoyed having time with my friends when we were in soccer, but I was also focused on schoolwork. That’s how I balanced—by putting aside things that didn’t really matter because I was determined to graduate. You just have to be willing to sacrifice your time for something greater.”

Along with being a full-time student and athlete, Hernandez worked two jobs. Though he had received an athletic scholarship to play soccer, he knew he needed to work to help pay for tuition.

“I would get up and go to work at 5 a.m. at Chick-fil-A, work until 9:00 a.m., go to classes, go to practice, and then work at Johnny Carino’s from 5:30 to 11:00 p.m. and that was basically it,” says Hernandez. “Every semester I made sure I was doing my part.”

Hernandez diligently worked to pay off his school bill, but he owed a remaining balance after each semester. His faith remained strong and he would apply for the HANDS Scholarship. “After paying everything that I could, the HANDS Scholarship helped me.”

Today, Hernandez is a debt-free college

graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting.

“Some days I think to myself ‘How did I do it?’ I just had a motivation. I knew I needed to do it because I’m the first one in my family to actually go to college and graduate,” says Hernandez. “I feel like my story has pushed others to pursue graduating high school and go to college too. In a way, I feel like I set the bar for my family. I broke the cycle.”

A week after graduating, Hernandez was offered a full-time position as an Inventory control accountant with Sewell, a luxury automotive company. A year later, he was promoted to Lead Billing Accountant where he

“IN HIGH SCHOOL, I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD GO TO COLLEGE... I KNEW THE ODDS WERE NOT IN MY FAVOR.”

managed his own team of accountants. After only three months in the new position Hernandez received another promotion and moved up to Staff Accountant. He works directly with the financial team responsible for the sales of Sewell’s European cars like BMW, Mercedes and Audi.

“All of the hard work and sacrifices I made throughout college are paying off now,” Hernandez says.

Hernandez is now pursuing a master’s degree in Accounting at Texas A&M-Commerce and is working towards his CPA license. He is also in training to become the lead accountant for an entire Sewell Store in the DFW area.

“If I could give any advice to accounting majors, I would say just because it’s business, doesn’t mean you have to see it as ‘just business.’ See it as an opportunity to be faithful and to do things the way God wants you to do it—the right way,” Hernandez says.

“I have so many stories where God came and said, ‘I got you.’ and ‘I’m right here. Stop worrying.’ He always took care of me, because I was trusting him and trying to do the right thing. My faith is what got me through.” ■

WITHOUT A DOUBT



From the age of four, Bethany Wommack was on the mission field with her parents who lived sacrificially and ministered to the lost throughout the Middle East.

“I grew up surrounded by people who did not know Jesus. So, from a young age I was aware of the severe need for the Gospel to be shared with a lost and dying world,” she says.

She remembers having a deep appreciation

for full-time missions. She even felt called to the mission field. Still, she was doubtful. She feared that she was just following in the footsteps of her parents and that God may not have called her personally. Despite her doubts, she remained confident that the one thing she loved the most was missions.

At 12 years old, Bethany had a vision. She was surrounded by beautiful children with dark

FIVE YEARS LATER, SHE WAS PRAYING AND HEARD THE WORD “CAMBODIA” SPOKEN TO HER. AT THE TIME, SHE WASN’T SURE WHAT THE WORD MEANT AND WAS UNAWARE THAT IT WAS EVEN A COUNTRY.

skin and the biggest smiles she had ever seen.

Five years later, she was praying and heard the word “Cambodia” spoken to her. At the time, she wasn’t sure what the word meant and was unaware that it was even a country. She performed an internet search and when the results appeared, she was overwhelmed. The pictures of the beautiful faces of Cambodians were identical to the faces in the vision she had when she was 12.

God had confirmed His calling in her heart. Bethany started as a student at the Oaks School of Leadership. From this point, she sensed that God was guiding her to continue her studies at SAGU. She graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Human Services with a focus in Counseling.

From there, she raised funds to become a Missionary Associate in Cambodia, a country where 95% of the population is Buddhist. The country’s motto is, “Nation, Religion, King,” which gives off the impression that Buddhism is very important to the people. Over the past centuries, Christianity has been introduced many times but has failed to take root due to loyalties to the Buddhist faith.

Bethany’s ministry involves teaching English and working with children and teenagers in poor areas and abusive situations. She also enjoys the opportunity for deep conversations with students.

Her journey in fulfilling her ultimate calling was not short of challenge. Bethany understands that faith is what sustains her and what gets her through challenging times.

Bethany went on to share an encouraging message for those called to full-time missions. She says, “Don’t worry about the finances, they will come in God’s timing. Know that even though you have definitely been called by God to go, it will be challenging and you will have moments where you want to give up and quit, but press on because it is worth it. The joy of loving people and sharing the Gospel far outweighs the difficulties and challenges that you will face.”

“SAGU has significantly impacted my life. My relationship with the Lord grew so much during my time there and I know I would not be who I am today without the friends, teachers and experiences I had at SAGU. I learned things there that I use today in my ministry, such as leading discipleship studies and working with women and children from abusive backgrounds.” ■



BETHANY WOMMACK



AMY MADRID

AMY WALKED INTO THE NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT WHERE PREMATURE BABIES AND SICK NEWBORNS ARE SENT FOR SPECIALIZED CARE. GRIPPING THE GUITAR TIGHTLY IN HER HAND, SHE LOOKED AT THE CRYING INFANT, WHO WAS ATTACHED TO SEVERAL WIRES AND TUBES. SHE TOOK A DEEP BREATH, STRUMMED A FEW CHORDS, AND BEGAN TO SING.

As she played, a miracle began to take place. The monitor began to show signs of a steady, slow heart rate, and the baby began to relax.

For alumna Amy Madrid, a calling to serve others accompanied by a strong passion for

music has served as the focal point of her career as a music therapist.

According to Madrid, music therapy is defined as “the use of music interventions to address individualized, therapeutic, non-musical

FAITH APPARENT



goals.” Music is a multipurpose tool used to treat mental health, physical goals, speech goals, and more.

At two and three years old, Amy was captivated by music. According to her parents, she was always singing and playing the piano. “I don’t remember ever not wanting music to be a part of my life,” she says.

As a child, she wanted to be a doctor and a musician. Then, at 15 years old she discovered music therapy and realized that it was the perfect career for her to use her calling and passion for music to serve others.

Amy later graduated from SAGU with her Bachelor’s in Piano Performance. “It helped me to be excellent in my field and in music in general,” she says.

After leaving SAGU, Amy pursued an equivalency degree for Music Therapy at Sam Houston State University. Amy had a six-month, full-time internship which was broken into two parts. The first involved working for a private practice in DFW called Heart and Harmony. Amy worked with special needs clients in their homes, which provided insights into what it is like to have special needs relatives that require specialized care. She mentions that sometimes families can feel the difficulties of going to churches that lack a special needs program, going out to eat, or simply spending time with friends.

“That opened my eyes to some of the isolation and the importance of supporting the family and being an outside source of

encouragement,” she says.

The second segment of her internship was through the Cook Children’s Hospital. At Cook Children’s Hospital, she worked in trauma, the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Neuro-Rehabilitation, and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). In the NICU, she therapeutically sang to premature babies.

“As I was singing, they would actually show signs that they were calming down, and their heart rate would come down,” she says. “Being able to help them sleep was amazing.”

Currently, she lives in Arlington, Texas. She has two contracts, one for working with special needs clients, and the other for people with mental illnesses. She loves meeting clients and witnessing breakthroughs.

“Probably the most rewarding thing about working as a music therapist is the relationships that you build with your clients and the clients’ families,” she says.

Her faith is apparent in her work as she demonstrates a servant’s heart and consideration

through her daily interactions. In a career that requires a lot of patience and compassion, she handles obstacles with grace and tries her best to provide a listening ear.

Amy is also eager to further her education to equip her with the knowledge and training to serve trafficking victims. “It’s about being the absolute best I can be in my career and constantly learning more about my field.”

1 Peter 5:3 describes leadership as being examples to the people that are entrusted to us. Servant Leadership exemplifies this essential quality of leadership through actions that reflect service and servanthood. Fulfilling the mission of the church requires all believers, regardless of their chosen career or calling, to demonstrate servant leadership.

“From the very get-go, it was my goal to work with people with mental illnesses. I wanted to work specifically with people who are trafficking victims,” she says. ■





CADE LEUSCHNER

FORERUNNER

Physical training professional Cade Leuschner has dedicated his career to guiding others in their pursuit of a healthy and balanced lifestyle. For Leuschner, this commitment was fostered during his time at SAGU.

“I remember at that time, SAGU was emphasizing the importance of ‘leaving your mark.’ I thought, ‘If I died today, what kind of impact have I made?’ For me, it made me look back and think about what kind of impact I want to leave.”

Leuschner was passionate about physical health and ministry. He felt that the Lord gave him a thirst for knowledge in both areas during his time as a student. After graduation, Leuschner realized these two areas of focus should be integrated rather than separate categories

of wellness. He focused on exemplifying his own spiritual values by implementing Biblical principles into his training regime.

In February of 2017, he began training people with special needs at Special Strong, a Christian physical training organization that serves clients with special needs in North Texas. Leuschner provided client-specific training to people with Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy and Autism. During this time, Leuschner was able to truly invest in the overall health of his clients by ministering to them and demonstrating Christ’s love on a daily basis.

“I remember the way Jesus spoke to me. The principle is that Jesus is attentive and compassionate towards everyone. I took that principle and demonstrated Christ’s love and



“IT’S NOT JUST BEING GOOD AT A SPORT, BUT THEIR SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND WHERE THEY END UP WHEN THEY DIE. SPORTS FADE AWAY AND I WANT THEM TO SPEND ETERNITY WITH JESUS.”

character at Special Strong. When the Word of God is manifested through a vessel, there is greater impact.”

In the fall of 2017, Leuschner launched Forerunner Fitness. The name is derived from Luke 1:17. “He will go as a forerunner before Him... so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

“My goal through Forerunner Fitness is to prepare athletes for their sports and to prepare athletes for the coming of Jesus,” says Leuschner. “At the end of all this, it comes down to ‘Is the athlete ready for eternity?’ It’s not just being good at a sport, but their spiritual health and where they end up when they die. Sports fade away and I want them to spend eternity with Jesus.”

Since launching his training business less than one year ago, Leuschner has seen his clientele continue to grow beyond what he had ever anticipated. “It’s Jesus,” simply stated Leuschner.

Along with Forerunner Fitness, he is also the Physical Training Director at Wiley Preparatory Academy. “It is a Christian school in which I am able to freely integrate Biblical Principles and minister to all the Christian athletes.”

Community and spiritual health play just as big of a role in Leuschner’s life as his dedication to physical health. He leads worship and weekly

prayer meetings at the Meleah House of Prayer, a 24-hour prayer community located in McKinney, Texas. The House of Prayer has Saturday night services but is primarily focused on weekly corporate, prayer meetings.

“We share in the value that when we have corporate prayer meetings, hearts and minds are engaged in prayer throughout the week. We build a stronger bond and unity as far as church growth, retention and more people experiencing God for themselves.” ■





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