

VIRGINIA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

## MARLIN Ministries



## The Chaplain's Corner



Alumni, Friends of Marlin Ministries and Students . . . Merry Christmas!

I hope this letter finds you hopeful and grateful as we move through the Christmas season. I love this quote by W. J. Cameron: *"There has been only one Christmas -- the rest are anniversaries."*

So we are celebrating another anniversary of the coming of Christ into His world! The Apostle John put it this way, **"He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize Him"** (John 1:10 NLT). More than 2,000 years have passed and still today, many do not recognize Him! Our great desire is for college students and everyone to 'recognize Him'! When we do, we're welcomed into his family and experience the new life, the abundant and eternal life as a gift! This is the joy of Christmas!

God continues to do great things in and through the students in Marlin Ministries! It is a great privilege to build up young peo-

ple in the faith. The conversations, the insights from the Scriptures, students stepping up in leadership and hearing how God is at work among our alumni are all great sources of encouragement to me personally. There have been numerous times over the semester where I've been able to share the story of Jesus with a student who is unfamiliar with the story and in a couple cases, the students have never heard! Wow, to share the greatest story ever told is a phenomenal delight.

If you have been at one of our Christmas worship gatherings or Life Groups, you may have heard me share my favorite Christmas Carol. It is *Hark, the Herald Angels Sing*, written by Charles Wesley. As I write this, there are students next door singing it, getting ready for our annual caroling of the campus. When I was in college, the words to this marvelous hymn became reality to me, as I understood them for the first time!

Mild He lays His Glory by  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth  
Born to give them second birth  
Hark! the herald angels sing  
Glory to the new-born King

I had recently received Jesus as my Savior and my Lord as a junior at Old Dominion University. In that moment, this song that I



Farah Haldar—Marlin Ministries

Monumental Chapel at sunset.

had sung every Christmas without understanding and without the life of Christ in me, gave me understanding as to what had happened in my life! The eternal Son of God willingly set aside the glory of heaven and the glory of the presence of his Father. He came to earth! And his purpose in coming was to raise us, to give us a second birth!

This Christmas know that you are loved with an everlasting love! And the proof is the life of Jesus. I want to challenge you and your

families to read or reread the Christmas story in the Gospels. You can cover this in just five chapters: Luke 1 & 2; Matthew 1 & 2; John 1.

Consider well Christ this Christmas, His birth, His teachings, His example, His claims, His promises, His death, His resurrection and finally consider His LOVE for you and all of us . . .

then act!

A blessed Christmas to you all,

Greg West, Chaplain VWU

Follow us on social media and find us on the web



# Ministry Spotlight

## *A Captivating* time for women

BY LYDIA O'CONNOR

lcoconnor@vwu.edu

This semester a weekly women's study of the book *Captivating* by John and Stasi Eldredge was led by myself, a VWU senior and Liza Holford, a junior. Each week the women read a chapter from the book and discussed what the chapter was about as a group, sharing what the chapter has spoken to our hearts. The book is not about how a woman of God should be, but how each woman was created, unveiling the mystery of a woman's soul down to the core. The study has been a sweet time of fellowship, healing and encouragement for women in their most transitional time of life. It is our hope that the women in the study will carry the truths learned for the rest of their lives.



Farah Haidari—Marlin Ministries

Leaders of the *Captivating* Bible study Liza Holford (left) and Lydia O'Connor (right).

---

## Honors College students start Bible study

BY: JASON BRUGMAN

jbrugman@vwu.edu

Every Wednesday night, a few members from the Batten Honors College come together to discuss various religious topics. Each week a different topic is presented to the group and all have the chance to share their perspective on the topic at hand. Top-

ics for discussion have included: theism/atheism, the meaning of life, faith and hope. Ultimately, the group is designed to create a safe and open atmosphere for support and learning in genuine curiosity to take charge of our own spiritual ideals as

growing adults and college students. Every week we have around ten students participate on any given week. It's a good opportunity to hang out, learn, laugh, and talk about spiritual matters of faith as well as how they relate to everyday life.



# Where are they now?

BY ASHLEY KLINE

aakline@vwu.edu

## Wayne Credle: Class of 2011



**Wayne Credle—Courtesy**

Following graduation from Virginia Wesleyan, Wayne Credle '11 proceeded to attend Duke Divinity School where he earned his Masters of Divinity Degree with a concentration in Prison Studies and roomed with fellow VWU alumnus, Brandon

Nichols. Credle also wrote a book in 2014 titled *You Ain't Moses: Study Guide and Commentary*. Currently, Credle works as a youth pastor at First Shiloh Baptist Church and is engaged to be married. Credle says, "at this stage of my life, I am coming into my self, now, more than ever and I am happy to be doing that with the love of my life."

## Allen Bays: Class of 2014



**Allen Bays—Courtesy**

Allen Bays '14 is currently the Creative Arts & Executive Pastor at Broadcast Church in Chesapeake, Virginia. He has been involved with Broadcast Church since 2013, before he graduated. In addition to working at Broadcast Church, he is a free-lance session guitar player for local recording studios. He is married to Rachel Abreu.

The two just bought their first home in Virginia Beach and will move in later this month. Bays says, "God has been teaching us both to be patient and depend on Him for the little things so that He can bless us with bigger things."

# Alumni Spotlight

## Tyler Turner gets a promotion

BY ASHLEY KLINE

aakline@vwu.edu

With his dazzling smile and contagious energy incomparable to any I have seen before, Tyler Turner '17 certainly made an impact on the Virginia Wesleyan community. As a member of Gospel Choir and regular attendee at SOAR, the on campus worship service, Tyler's energy could be felt from across the room as his commanding, positive presence would usher all into worship. With a small chuckle and his head held humbly,

Turner said that his energy, "comes from within and I can only thank God for that." Furthermore, he was also able to make an impact on campus as a Resident Assistant during his junior and senior year.

Since his graduation, Tyler is still making an impact on the Virginia Wesleyan Community. Since graduating from Wesleyan, he put his computer programming degree to good use as a helpdesk assistant in the IT Services department from May—Aug. 2017. Additionally, he was promoted from Resident Assistant to Village 1 Coordinator which he says takes up most of his time as he is required to spend long hours in the village. Furthermore, he is currently enrolled in the Masters of Business Administration program added by the university this year along with a Masters of Education program.

Turner said that he encourages those involved in Marlin Ministries as well as alumni to, "stay connected and always remember you have a friend in Greg. Once you take part in Marlin Ministries, it's a group you'll never not be a part of. Because there will always be people you can reach out to."

Ultimately, VWU would not be the same without Tyler, and it is blessing that the community has been able to hold onto him.



**Greg West—Courtesy**

**Chaplain West (left) poses for a picture with Tyler Turner '17.**

# Being part of Marlin Ministries was an “honor”

*Mexican exchange student Luis Yerena comments on his experiences in Marlin Ministries.*

BY LUIS YERENA

I am an exchange student from Mexico. I always wanted to study abroad and it didn't really matter what country I ended up studying in. Last semester, I decided to study in the United States. To be frank, I was so excited about it. However, when somebody goes to live in another place out of their comfort zone, there must be an adaptation process. This process varies depending upon the person. Some can get adapt in 2 weeks, others in a month and some never adapt. Thankfully, I was able to get the hang of the life here.

My first week in Norfolk was difficult. I had too many things on my mind, such as anxiety, things that needed to be done, the new language and new culture. I couldn't think clearly and was experiencing culture shock.

One day I was walking in the Batten Center when I ran into Greg, the school's chaplain. He noticed I wasn't from here and said I could go to his office should I need help. Two days later I was stressed because I had been trying to make a payment online and had to make a phone call to do this. I was not able to understand the woman on the phone, so I



**Farah Haidari—Marlin Ministries**

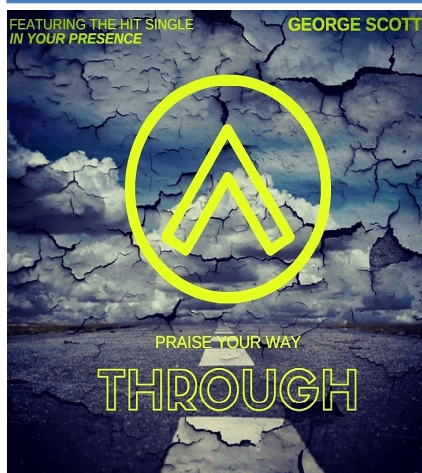
Luis Yerena, poses for his picture.

decided to go to Marlin Ministries for help. Greg was very busy, but someone else offered me her help and we ended up really good friends. I discovered in the little space that is the Marlin Ministries Lounge, you can relax and spend time. Also, the environment is really good because there are many kind and open-minded people. If I had to choose a favorite part of my time at Virginia Wesleyan University, I would definitely choose the people I got to know through Marlin

Ministries. They made my semester a great experience. For example, one of the things I love to do is travel. During my time at Virginia Wesleyan, I got the opportunity to visit Washington D.C. What I loved the most were the moments I shared with people I met in Marlin Ministries. They are great. I think my trip would not have been as interesting without them.

I also had a lot of new experiences and did things I am unable to do in Mexico. I went to a hoedown, a country themed party with line dancing, hosted by Marlin Ministries. At this event I met new people and had really good conversations that caused me to see things from different viewpoints. Now I have a more complete view of the world and improved my English.

I think that everybody should come to a Marlin Ministries event or the lounge at least once to see the environment. It is place where you can make really good friends like the ones that I made. So if somebody asks me, “what is being part of the Marlin Ministries community like?” I would say: It was quite an honor.



## *Praise Your Way Through* New album by George Scott

**\*Available electronically on: iTunes, Amazon Music and the Google Play Store.**

**\*Physical copies available for purchase through [kunaki.com](http://kunaki.com).**



# Serving the Lord locally and globally

## Floods prompt action at VWU    Tears, trials, and triumph in Niger



Janice Marshall Pittman—Courtesy

BY FARAH HAIDARI

fahaidari@vwu.edu

Hurricanes ravaged the eastern and gulf coast this year. The storms caused many to lose their homes, cars and possessions. To aid these people, the United Methodist Church developed a flood bucket project. A flood bucket is a regular bucket filled with cleaning materials and supplies that people affected by the weather could use to get back on their feet and clean up after the hurricanes.

This semester I was a communication intern for Marlin Ministries. The first project Greg assigned me to work on was to launch the flood bucket idea on campus. Hourigan Construction, which helped construct the Greer Environmental Sciences Center, donated seventy-five buckets to the effort. Then, we encouraged members of the Virginia Wesleyan community to pick up and fill with needed supplies. Ultimately, sixty of the seventy-five buckets were filled in a week's time. The project brought members from all aspects of campus life together, with buckets being donated by athletic teams, sororities, clubs, and various offices

around campus. I am personally very happy that I was in charge of this project. Even though it was a lot and at times I felt overwhelmed, it made me happy that Greg trusted me enough to be in charge of this.

People were so happy about the flood buckets because they wanted everyone who was hurt to get back on their feet. I think mostly everyone who helped with the flood buckets learned a very important lesson, that people will always need help. It doesn't matter if we know the individuals that need help personally, it matters that we help those in need. God calls us to love one another as our neighbor, and that is exactly what we are doing when we take part in an effort like this one. Even though our campus is small, I am grateful for how many flood buckets we ended up donating. It was a nice reminder that God is always here for each and every one of us, helping us and being their for us when we least expect it. This is one of the things that makes Him so loveable and so special.



Emily Testroet—Marlin Ministries

A picture of the women attending the conference.

BY EMILY TESTROET

ectestroet@vwu.edu

"I'm never going to Niger." This is what I told myself after hearing my pastor's initial report following his first trip to Niger, Africa. Little did I know that four years later, I would be on a plane to Niger. Never question what God is doing for He is "the author and perfecter of our faith" according to Hebrews 12:2. My faith is still in the works, but in the four years leading up to this trip, God grew it in unexpected ways to prepare me for the work He wanted to do in me and through me.

In January 2017, after yet another team returned from Niger, I was listening to their stories in church and asking the Lord when it would be my turn. Just then I heard in my heart, "you're going next." It took all that was within me not to jump out of the chair and

shout for joy. I had never planned on going to Niger, but God did. In May, I filled out my application and moved forward in the process of going to Niger.

A lot of prayer and many phone calls later, I boarded the plane to go to the country that would soon steal part of my heart. After landing in Niger and getting to our resting place, we went to sleep in anticipation of what was to come in the next few days. Thursday, our first official day in Niger, began a women's conference. During this conference, God did some amazing things. The first day was full of introductions, testimony from team members, prophetic words spoken over the Nigerian women, a time of question, answer and a salvation.

SEE NIGER Pg. 6



**Emily Testroet—Marlin Ministries**

**Those who travelled to Niger serve the women by washing their feet.**

Day two of the conference consisted of worship, encouragement, more prophecy, baptism in the Holy Spirit and sharing the gospel with kids who may never have the chance to hear it again. Day three was powerful. These women had gone through the first two days with an admirable hunger. When day three of the conference

tears, God brought healing and broke through the walls she built around her heart. In Niger, women do not express emotion through tears. Many of these women, maybe all of them, had become hardened, but God had been preparing their hearts for this day. After Pastor Heidi shared, she asked the women which

arrived, these women were ready to receive and the Lord brought a feast. We started off with a little bit of worship and then I was invited up to share some encouragement I received from the Lord the night before. My older sister spoke after me followed by another woman, Kaitlin. While Kaitlin shared, the metaphorical feast was served. Pastor Scott, the leader of our team, called my sister back to the front and told both her and Kaitlin that there was more the Lord had given them and instructed them to not hold back. They both shared a powerful word about a well that was about to burst open with living water, a well that will never run dry.

After this word, the Lord began to burst through in the lives of these women. After these prophetic words were shared, another member of our team, Pastor Heidi, shared part of her story. Through

of them wanted emotional breakthrough in their lives and for the Lord to bring healing to their hurt. Many stood up to receive prayer. After Pastor Heidi's prayer, I felt led to hug one of the women who I had prayed over. As I hugged this woman, she latched on and began to weep in my arms. While she sobbed, I could feel the walls crashing down in her heart. We wept together, and I called on the name of Jesus, praying over her as He brought healing. In the last few moments of our embrace, she began to laugh. This laugh was not casual, but a deep, belly laugh that could only come from the Lord as joy rung in freedom and healing. In this moment, I understood why the Lord had me come to Niger. Sometimes all you need to do is follow what the Lord is prompting you to do and watch what He does through your obedience.

For years, I have lived with eyes only partially opened to the things of God. Even then, my eyes have been glazed over with my pride and limited perspective of who God is. But God has a way of leading you into places where you have no other option but to open your eyes wide open. He did just that while I was in Niger.



**Emily Testroet- Marlin Ministries**

**Some of the women on the trip minister to a group of children.**