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SBC DIGEST: Discussion with Bryant Wright; WMU meetings canceled; LifeWay virtual choir

by Staff, posted Wednesday, April 01, 2020 (26 days ago)

Bryant Wright discusses ways Southern Baptists are helping amid pandemic

By Staff

NASHVILLE (BP) -- Southern Baptists are involved in about 50 ongoing compassion projects in COVID-19 hot spots around the world, according to Bryant Wright, president of Send Relief.

Send Relief, a Southern Baptist compassion ministry, is a joint initiative between the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board. Compassion ministries win Christians "the right to be heard in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ," Wright said.

Wright joined Jonathan Howe, vice president for communications at the SBC Executive Committee, to discuss the way Southern Baptists are helping amid the global pandemic.



15:05



WMU Missions Celebration canceled, Blume postponed

By Staff

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) -- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WMU Executive Board voted March 25 to cancel the WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting scheduled for June 7-8, 2020, in Orlando; and to postpone Blume, a missions event for girls scheduled July 8-11, 2020, at Germantown Baptist Church in Tennessee until the summer of 2021.

"I am saddened we aren't able to go forward with these events this summer as planned," said Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of national WMU. "However, based on the uncertainties of the ongoing global pandemic crisis, this is a necessity. The health, safety, and welfare of those entrusted to our care is of the highest priority."

The next WMU Missions Celebration is scheduled for June 13-14, 2021 in Nashville, Tennessee. Updates on Blume in 2021 will be posted as available on blumeforgirls.com.

LifeWay Worship to host live virtual choir event

By Carol Pipes

NASHVILLE -- In an effort to provide some much-needed connection during a time of social distancing and shelter-at-home orders, the LifeWay Worship team is coordinating a virtual choir for Palm Sunday.

Being physically apart has served as a reminder of just how truly connected we are as a society and especially as the Church, said Mike Harland, director of LifeWay Worship.

"We realize choir members and worship teams miss singing together on Sundays," he said. "We thought it would be nice to bring some joy to a hurting world by coming together to create a virtual choir from our own homes."

On March 20, the LifeWay Worship team put out an all call for people to lend their voices to the familiar hymn "'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus," arranged by LifeWay Worship's Charlie Sinclair and Craig Adams.

Singers and musicians were asked to download music charts and tracks and record a video of themselves singing or playing along to the music. The LifeWay Worship team will then collect videos of the performances and mix the sound and videos to produce a virtual choir, said Harland.

LifeWay Worship plans to livestream a watch party on Palm Sunday, April 5, at 7 p.m. (CDT) on its Facebook page [Facebook.com/LifeWayWorshipDotCom/](https://www.facebook.com/LifeWayWorshipDotCom/).

Harland said he's been somewhat surprised by the number and types of submissions they've received.

"We've had people from across the country and around the world send in videos -- even as far as South Korea and Australia," Harland said. "We've even had some musicians lend their musical talents. We have video of a woman playing her flute and a high school student playing the cajón. It's great to see people connecting in different ways."

LifeWay Worship has received 40 video submissions so far with many more people having expressed interest. Harland expects to have a 100-voice choir by the time all the submissions are in. Videos are due by midnight (CDT) tonight (April 1).

Harland said they chose "'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus" for the virtual choir because he believes the song has a timely message.

"We're trusting Jesus to see us through this crisis," he said.

Harland also believes lifting voices together during times like this is important for the Church.

"I think the biblical admonition to sing is one of the most common commands in Scripture," Harland said. "Very often in Scripture we find the command to sing being a corporate one. For instance, in Psalm 95:1, the English translation could be translated 'Let us all sing.' The singing described there is distinctively corporate in nature. And it's something the Church can only do together."

Harland admits the only way we can all sing together is to be together, which is seemingly impossible while we are physically separated through social distancing.

"Through the virtual choir, we're hoping to use technology to accomplish singing together even though it will be different from being physically together," Harland said.

"In this time of isolation, the Church is running to virtual ways to gather because I think instinctively the body of Christ longs to be together to experience worship together. This is one way we're trying to help that happen," Harland said.

"We can't wait to see this massive virtual choir come together to sing this wonderful song."

Carol Pipes is director of Corporate Communications as LifeWay Christian Resources.