

August 2021

# Together

AT DAWSON

DEBBIE  
MOSS  
Celebrates  
**20** YEARS



**CHAPEL  
CHOIR**  
MISSION  
TOUR  
IN COLORADO

EPIC SCENES  
*from*  
**SUMMER**

**MO KNOWS  
BASKETBALL**  
( & MORE! )

**FOUND  
FAITHFUL**  
Honoring the Life of  
LEE ANN PETTY

# Life's Better Together

There's a Life Group for you!

PRESCHOOL  
KIDS  
STUDENTS  
COLLEGE  
YOUNG ADULTS  
ADULTS  
SENIOR ADULTS



[dawsonchurch.org/lifegroups](http://dawsonchurch.org/lifegroups)

# Together

AT DAWSON



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 2 From Pastor David
- 3 Life Group Stories  
**Sarah Morlandt**
- 5 Fall Schedule at a Glance
- 6 Found Faithful:  
Remembering A Life Well Lived  
**Liz Cuenin**
- 10 2021 Scenes of Summer
- 12 DEVOTED: Celebrating Debbie  
Moss As She Retires
- 18 Chapel Choir Mission Tour  
**Carson Hughes**
- 22 More Scenes of Summer
- 24 Get To Know Mo's Ministry  
**Kasey Hagen**
- 28 Our Neighbors Next Door
- 32 Ten Minute Talk: College Edition

### JOIN US

Sunday Morning Worship:  
8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m. & 11:00 a.m., Sanctuary  
Hispanic Worship: 11:00 a.m., Chapel



[dawsonchurch.org/AfterThoughts](http://dawsonchurch.org/AfterThoughts)

### WATCH LIVE

[live.dawsonchurch.org](http://live.dawsonchurch.org)



From



Dr. David Eldridge  
Senior Pastor

Pastor David

Dear Church Family,

*I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.* (Philippians 1:3-5)

This fall, I am looking forward to preaching through the book of Philippians. It has always been one of my favorite books of the Bible. Looking back on my own journey as a Christian, the book of Philippians was the book of the Bible that God used to help me first see a glimpse of the glories of His work in Jesus and my calling as an ambassador of the gospel. It was the first book of the Bible from which I was challenged to memorize significant portions. This isn't surprising when you read the book because it is full of some of Paul's "greatest hits" of quotable passages.

I never tire of reading Paul's opening greeting to the church. The letter is grounded in Paul's gratitude for the church's faithfulness to the gospel mission. The joyful and grateful tone is remarkable when you realize from the outset of the letter that Paul was imprisoned during the writing. While he was facing the uncertainty of his fate, just the thought of the saints in the church provided him joy and hope, even in the darkness of his confinement.

In preparation for this sermon series, I've been thinking a lot about Paul's words to a church he deeply loved. While I cannot begin to understand the depth of Paul's situation—imprisonment and the uncertainty of his future—I share the love that Paul so obviously had for the church at Philippi. I feel that type of joy as I think through the glimpses of God's grace and activity that are contained in the pages of this issue of the *Together at Dawson* magazine.

I'm excited to share these wonderful snapshots of God's work in and through the stories of Dawson members joining God in His mission through our church. I'm overjoyed when I look back on this summer, but I also eagerly anticipate what He desires to do in the season ahead.

There are ministries that we desire to celebrate and opportunities for service that we want to pray about joining contained in these pages. But most of all, what you hold in your hands is a small reminder of God's faithfulness on display in the lives of those who call Dawson home.

So, as the summer comes to a conclusion and the fall is right around the corner, let us join God's work in and through His church.

Blessings,

Pastor David



Our Dawson Life Group story begins in 2007 when my husband, Tony, and I moved from South Texas to Homewood, Alabama, to begin his residency at UAB. Pregnant with our first baby, we settled into one of Edgewood Boulevard's quaint 1950's cottages and immediately began to look for a church to join. Only a few blocks from our house, it was a simple choice to visit Dawson first, and we quickly felt a call to unite with the vibrant congregation.

In Dawson's large buildings and robust congregation, we soon found a cherished home in Doug and Sandra Arendall's Sunday School class. Here we met other couples at similar life stages. Many, like us, were expecting their first child. Doug and Sandra led our group with humility and wisdom. Doug's teaching was not merely an academic exercise but rather an overflow of his intimate, personal time with the Lord. Once we found a restaurant open on Sundays (welcome to the South!), Tony and I spent most lunches discussing what we learned and how we felt convicted by those lessons.

Fast forward 14 years and our Sunday School classmates have dispersed into different leadership roles across the church, serving in kids ministry or teaching adult classes. Looking back at our 2007 class, I am struck with the trials we have faced over the last 14 years. Various diagnoses, disappointments, deaths, and other hardships have entered our lives, and yet our class was able to minister to one another through each trial. I am reminded of the Scripture from 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves received from God." Walking alongside and comforting in community has been a powerful outcome of our involvement in Dawson Life Groups throughout the years.

Our first-born, Ana "Sophia," arrived in the fall of 2007. As new parents we were unprepared for the chaos of our colicky

infant. Night and day, Sophia cried inconsolably, suffering with undiagnosed reflux. We cradled our squalling infant as we bounced on exercise balls to calm her, deployed white noise, and slept in short spurts. Church attendance was difficult during those newborn months, but when we returned to Dawson, nervously leaving Sophia in the nursery for just the Sunday School hour, she cried the entire time. At pickup, we were often surprised to find that she was not in her assigned room. Faithful nursery volunteers had retreated to a dark, quiet room to rock and sing hymns to our colicky newborn. I'll never forget one volunteer who greeted me with the encouraging words, "Sophia is precious! The key is finding the right way to hold her. She likes to be swaddled in tight, doesn't she?" Fast forward to today and that same colicky newborn is one of the most vocal in her Life Group.

We now have four children: Sophia, Vincent, Luisa, and Grace. We rarely eat out for Sunday lunch anymore; these days favoring takeout assembled at the kitchen table. At home, the conversation centers around topics raised in Sophia's 7th grade Life Group class or Vincent's 6th grade class. Grace, our youngest, will chime in with a simple summary of her Preschool Life Group lesson, or if we are lucky, she might sing us one of the songs she learned in her five-year-old class.

The children's chatter fills the kitchen while I cut sesame chicken into small, bite-sized pieces. While Tony facilitates conversation, my eyes focus on Luisa, our 3rd born, who is eight years old. She smiles widely and her eyes are bright as she listens to her siblings. Occasionally, she contributes to the conversation with sing-song intonation or a squeal of delight. Sometimes she uses her eye-gaze language device to engage us, forming one-to-two-word sentences in a computer-generated voice. Tony and I often know just the right questions to ask her, thanks to her Hearts and Hands volunteers who give us a full report of her morning in Life Group and Children's Worship.



My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my  
heart and my portion forever.

Psalm 73:26



After Luisa was born in 2012, we brought her home to our cottage on Edgewood Boulevard to meet her two older siblings. Luisa met all her early developmental milestones and proved to be an easygoing baby as we moved to Jacksonville, Florida, for Tony's surgical fellowship, and then back again to Birmingham as he started his oncology practice at UAB. At 16 months, when Luisa's gross motor development began to visibly slow, we became concerned and began to search for answers. After six months, we received a devastating diagnosis of Rett Syndrome, the rare, severe, and global neurological disease primarily affecting girls. Luisa, who was speaking 12 words at the time of her diagnosis, would lose all verbal speech as her body succumbed to the effects of this disease. Walking, hand use, breathing, behavior, and life expectancy are all impacted by her diagnosis.

The Sunday after Luisa's diagnosis, Tony and I stood together in Dawson's pews and sang aloud, with tears in our eyes, "Great is Thy Faithfulness," the very hymn we chose for our wedding day in 2001. God would prove ever-faithful throughout every part of our disability journey. The beautiful book of Psalms says: Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand... My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever (Psalm 73:23, 26). How did this scripture become real to us at Dawson? We saw God's presence in the form of flesh and bone people, and we witnessed His portion: bread crumb-crusting macaroni and cheese made by women, wise with age, from the Lytle Sunday School class. Women who prayed for my children as they braised the beef, baked the bread, and seasoned the soup that sustained, warmed, and fed us when we were weighted with grief, overwhelmed by endless therapies, and crushed by loss.

Dawson's **Hearts & Hands Ministry** has enabled Luisa to experience Life Group with her peers. One-on-one volunteers invest in Luisa, taking her to and from her 2nd grade class so that she might hear the Gospel story—our eternal hope that someday all will be made right. Several of Luisa's volunteers have been with her for close to five years. God, in His sovereignty, has not allowed us to know how much Luisa understands about her world. And yet, this we know for sure: He has shown His love for her through the people He has equipped to care for her, both inside the church walls, in her community, and at home.

We are thankful God placed us in Edgewood in 2007 so that we might find Christian community at Dawson Memorial Baptist Church. Now that we live across town, Dawson remains our gathering place for worship, education, activities, and family. From our colicky newborn to teenagers with questions and from new parents to grieving middle-aged caretakers; Dawson's Life Groups have ministered to our family on this beautiful, yet broken, life journey.



**Sarah Morlandt** is wife to Tony and stay-at-home mother to Sophia, Vincent, Luisa, and Grace. She holds a Masters degree from Baylor University in Communication Sciences and Disorders. Currently, she is working on her memoir, a narrative recounting of Luisa's disability journey.

# Weekly Schedule

Fall 2021 // At A Glance

## Sundays

**8:30 a.m.**

- Life Groups
- Worship in the Sanctuary

**9:45 a.m.**

- Life Groups
- Worship in the Sanctuary
- Together for Life

**11:00 a.m.**

- Life Groups
- Worship in the Sanctuary
- Hispanic Worship in the Chapel

**5:00 p.m.**

- The Gospel and Racial Unity Bible Study
- Chapel Choir Rehearsal

**6:00 p.m.**

- DSM Bible Study

## Wednesdays

**9:45 a.m.**

- Adult Bible Studies

**11:00 a.m.**

- Midweek Bible Study

**12:00 p.m.**

- Fellowship Lunch

**4:45 p.m.**

- Fellowship Dinner

**6:00 p.m.**

- Preschool Music & Missions
- Collide (Grades 1–5)
- DSM Fellowship Groups
- Adult Bible Studies
- Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal
- Sanctuary Orchestra Rehearsal
- Hispanic Bible Studies

## Tuesdays

**7:00 p.m.**

- AUXANO Worship

## Thursdays

**10:00 a.m.**

- Dawsonaires

Please see the *Together* for start dates and more information.

# Found Faithful

Remembering A Life Well Lived

By Liz Cuenin

IN A SERMON ON FAITHFULNESS THIS JULY, PASTOR DAVID SAID, "ONE OF THE WAYS WE CAN SHOW WE ARE FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST IN THIS BROKEN WORLD IS TO LIVE FAITHFUL LIVES." AS I SAT IN THE PEW AND HEARD THESE WORDS, I THOUGHT OF ONE PERSON: LEE ANN PETTY.

On December 30, 2020, my sweet friend Lee Ann passed away after courageously battling cancer for a year and a half. It would be too hard to try to capture all of Lee Ann's life in this short article, but I'd love to share about my friendship with Lee Ann and how her faithfulness to the Lord has impacted my life forever.

I've never met anyone quite like Lee Ann. She was that wonderful combination of poised and confident, yet approachable; very accomplished in her career, yet extremely humble; soft-spoken, yet full of wit and hilarious one-liners. We were opposites in so many ways, which made for such a fun friendship—she could never comprehend my lack of interest in sports and I could never comprehend her lack of a Netflix account! But mostly, our friendship was rooted in prayer and studying the Bible.

My friendship with Lee Ann began years ago in 2017 when we both decided to co-lead a women's Life Group together. Unbeknownst to us, we had both been in conversation with Kristen Torres, Dawson's Minister to Women, about the need for a new group for young women on Sunday mornings. Of course at the time neither of us realized God was calling us to start this group! So despite not knowing each other well, we both finally said "yes" to co-leading this new group. I remember the moment distinctly because we looked at each other and said, "I'm in, but only if you're in." We both knew the group would succeed if we could do it together.

If I'm being completely honest, I was always a bit dazzled by the life Lee Ann led. She spent her days working hard at her long-held job at Regions, first as a lead litigation paralegal, then a loaned executive to United Way, and most recently as



Volunteer Service Coordinator for the Community Affairs team. Her evenings were spent engaged in community work—attending charity black-tie galas, serving food in downtown soup kitchens, participating in board meetings for the many nonprofits she was connected with, and being a very active member in the Junior League of Birmingham. Simply put, she loved serving people and getting to be a small part in making Birmingham a better place.

In fact, on one Sunday morning a few months after Lee Ann had started her chemotherapy treatments, she revealed to our Life Group that she was heading downtown to help plant 5,000 flowers! We naturally thought she was kidding, since it was a very cold, wet, and dreary December day. But not even cancer or chemo could stop Lee Ann from doing what she loved most! She spent the day digging in the dirt alongside her volunteers to help bring beauty and joy to the walkways that connect Children's Hospital and Railroad Park. Since her passing, Children's of Alabama has added a plaque along the Blooming Birmingham walkway in remembrance of Lee Ann. Both Regions and The Junior League of Birmingham have established annual volunteer awards to be given in Lee Ann's name.

But even with all her accomplishments, Lee Ann never ceased to be a humble and attentive leader and friend to the women in our Life Group. She had a calming and welcoming spirit that invited visitors and group members alike to feel at ease. She was the best at remembering our birthdays, quick to ask how a sick parent or sibling was faring, and the first one to celebrate our new jobs, relationships, promotions, etc. Sunday after Sunday, in our little Life Group room downstairs in the



YET, AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT SOUNDS, LEE ANN DID NOT WAVER OR MISS A BEAT.



Family Recreation Center, we prayed together and opened our Bibles. I would often comment to the group that there is something unique about the friendships that form over studying Scripture together. None of us claimed to be Bible experts, but we all were eager for the Spirit to continue to shape and change us by the Word each week. Lee Ann's natural inquisitive nature was a gift to our class. She would continually bring questions to the table that made us stop and really think, making our discussions rich and meaningful.

During the summer of 2019, our Life Group decided to read Jen Wilkin's book *None Like Him* that examines 10 ways God is different from us and why that's a good thing. These attributes include how God is self-existent, eternal, omnipresent, sovereign, infinite, etc. What we couldn't know at the time we started reading the book was that this was also the summer Lee Ann would receive her diagnosis. To say the news was a shock is an understatement. It was a knock-you-to-the-ground, life-altering kind of shock. Yet, as impossible as it sounds, Lee Ann did not waver or miss a beat. Clear-eyed and determined, she attacked her treatment options with strength and resolve, all the while staying on top of her commitments at work and in the community. God had sovereignly immersed us in these bedrock truths of our time here on earth. In the book, Jen Wilkin writes:

*"Here is a remarkable truth: God is able to bring eternal results from our time-bound efforts. This is what Jesus intimates when he tells us to store up treasure in heaven rather than on earth. When we invest our time in what has eternal significance, we store up treasure*

*in heaven. This side of heaven, the only investments with eternal significance are people. "Living this day well" means prioritizing relationships over material gain. We cannot take our stuff with us when we die, but, Lord willing, we may feed the hungry and clothe the needy in such a way that an eternal result is rendered. We may speak words that, by the favor of the Lord, transform into the very words of life. This is the calling of the missionary, the magnate, and the mother of small children: spend your time to impact people for eternity."*

And this is the way Lee Ann lived; before and after her diagnosis. She loved and served people, knowing that kindness and love toward others were the true marks of a life well lived.

To my great surprise, one Sunday morning in October 2020 during our Life Group time over Zoom, Lee Ann enthusiastically declared that our Life Group needed to have a party! Knowing my love for hosting and for backyard movie nights, she asked if we could all come over soon. Of course, I answered with a resounding yes!

So on one chilly Sunday night in November, despite her being sick and despite the oddness of having to wear face masks and stay 6-feet apart, the Lord granted us a perfect party full of fun, laughter, food, and (much to my delight!) Lee Ann's one-and-only time to watch *You've Got Mail*. After a year of only seeing each other through a computer screen due to COVID, it felt like a soothing balm to be in person with one another. And Lee Ann was on a roll! Over dinner she got going animatedly describing to our newest group members all of our favorite "Lee Ann stories": like the time she dropped her cell phone down the elevator

SHE LOVED AND SERVED PEOPLE, KNOWING THAT KINDNESS AND LOVE TOWARD OTHERS WERE THE TRUE MARKS OF A LIFE WELL LIVED.



On February 14, on what would have been Lee Ann's 42nd birthday, her Life Group presented the Petty family with this watercolor of Dawson that included Exodus 15:13.

shaft from the top floor of the Regions building and the night she was at a black-tie gala and her ball gown got stuck in the escalator, just to name a couple. Of course, none of us realized it would be the last time we would be in a room with her. But I am forever grateful for the normalcy and fun of that night and to have the memories of her storytelling and laughter.

Even in the midst of my tears as I write this, I am filled with joy picturing Lee Ann face-to-face with Jesus, restored and healed. Her strong faith is now sight. Praise God! Lee Ann was a true servant, an encourager, and a fiercely loyal friend. And I miss her more than I can say. But what an honor it was to walk alongside her, especially during those last hard months.

The final book of the Bible our Life Group studied with Lee Ann was Exodus, specifically looking at the parting of the Red Sea. Exodus 15:13 says, *"In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling."* What a joy it is to know that Lee Ann was ushered into heaven by the unfailing love of our God and that her faithfulness here on earth was met with the kind words of her Savior welcoming her home: "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Faithful servant indeed.

Well done, friend.



**Liz Cuenin** serves as Dawson's Discipleship Ministry Associate. She is an avid reader and a big fan of exploring new places. She currently leads a women's Life Group and is pursuing her Masters degree through New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

2021  
 SCENES OF  
 SUMMER



# DEVOTED

## Debbie Moss To Retire After 20 Years Of Faithful Service

If you know Debbie Moss, Dawson's Minister of Health and Wellness, you know that there are many words that would describe her. She is energetic, creative, gregarious, and spunky, to name a few. She is also a brilliant teacher, an esteemed leader, and a loyal friend. While all of those words are true, one word, *devoted*, may fit her best of all. Debbie has spent almost her entire life devoted to Jesus and devoted to making Him known through loving and caring for others.

### HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Debbie was born in Memphis and grew up in Northeast Tennessee where she accepted Christ as her Savior at the age of seven. Coming from a very close-knit family, Debbie learned the importance of being there for one another.

*"I have memories of my Mom sitting with me after school, always ready with a bottle of Coke and cheese and crackers, wanting to hear about my day. Those conversations continued into adulthood and I often refer to her as my best friend. She always said that I could do anything that I put my mind to. I credit my Dad with my love of the outdoors—camping and gardening. He had the best garden in the community and I would see him bagging vegetables and sharing them with others. He had the most incredible work ethic."*

*"Both of my parents played basketball in school. So, my brother, Ronnie, and I grew up loving the game. Ronnie was 2½ years older and I wanted to do whatever he was doing. Can you imagine how annoying that was for a little sister to be following you around? As youngsters, teams were being selected for our neighborhood baseball, and no one wanted a girl on their team. Fortunately for me, my brother was a good athlete. He would say, "If my sister can't play, I won't play." He has gone to bat for me my whole life. To this day, Ronnie and I call each other every day just to check in."*

Debbie decided to go to college at Samford University where her brother, Ronnie, was also attending. While she and her Mom were driving to Samford to begin her freshman year, an event happened that had a huge impact on her life. As she sat wide-eyed and ready to begin a new chapter, they came upon an accident on Highway 280 where a young child had just been struck after getting off of a school bus. Debbie and her Mom were the first ones on the scene, so Debbie quickly got out of the car to see what she could do to help. Sadly, the child had died from the collision.





*"The mother came running out of her house and grabbed me while crying, "Do something!" I still remember how I felt in that moment. I wanted to help her but I was only 18 years old and I did not know what to do. I recall praying at the scene and asking God to please prepare me, that if something like this happened again, I would know what to do. I soon declared nursing as my major. Nursing became my ministry and my effort to serve the Lord through it."*

Debbie received her BS in Nursing at Samford in 1976. (Shortly thereafter, Ronnie would become a doctor and marry Debbie's college roommate, Nancy.) Debbie's love for people and for sharing the Gospel led her to take her first mission trip to Nigeria in 1980 at the age of 26. This may have been her first mission trip, but it definitely would not be the last one.

The experience of that mission trip would leave a lifelong impression on Debbie, however, the call to combine nursing and the work of the church would come years later. Debbie spent the next 25 years working in local hospitals in Critical Care Units and Cardiology before retiring. Shortly thereafter, Debbie began a new career of ministry at Dawson.



Left to right: Artifacts and souvenirs from various countries; a ceremonial baby carrier from Ethiopia; spears from the Dinka tribe in South Sudan.

### A NEW MINISTRY IS CREATED

Dawson's **Health and Wellness Ministry** began when Dr. Gary Fenton commissioned Debbie and the new ministry in front of the congregation on September 1, 2001. Debbie's vision for the ministry was to provide a variety of opportunities for promoting optimal physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Many of the initiatives Debbie implemented had never been provided before. One of these was a check-out program of durable medical equipment (i.e. wheel chairs, crutches, scooters). Not only did it provide a needed service for church members, but it also gave Debbie a chance to pray with each recipient. Local hospitals would call on behalf of non-church members who were in need.

Debbie was integral in Dawson becoming a **Disaster Relief** location for the Red Cross, even adding the distinction of pet shelter at a later date. You may also remember the LensCrafter's Vision Van when school kids came to Dawson, each leaving with a new pair of eye glasses, and the Volleyball Tournament held here in 2010 for the Special Olympics.

Over the years, Debbie has trained and worked with over **185** volunteers serving on the Health & Wellness Ministry team. To date, over **35,178** blood pressures have been recorded. This simple weekly service proved to be more than just a "check in" for some members. (See sidebar on page 16.)

### CLASSES ARE IN SESSION

Debbie knows the importance of educating individuals about the relationship between their lifestyle, attitudes, faith, and well-being. Because of this, Debbie has worked hard to make sure that opportunities to be informed were available at Dawson through programs and classes. For the past 15 years, Debbie has provided the **Healthy Lifestyle Weight Loss** program at the start of each new year. This three-month nutrition and exercise program was designed for anyone interested in becoming healthier through simple lifestyle changes. Two different studies have been published using the program as a sample group.

Each month Debbie's "Lunch and Learn" seminars welcomed accomplished speakers who covered topics from head to toe.

Debbie wanted these classes to be informative, fun, and engaging. People loved them so much that they would come back every month. Another favorite was the weekly **Strength and Balance** class for senior adults with the perfect amount of physical and mental activity. This class would exercise together, laugh together, and pray for one another. Other classes that have been offered include certification courses for First Aid, AED, and CPR, as well as, cooking classes meant to provide quick and easy recipes for healthy eating. Dawson also hosted health screenings for skin cancer, vaccine clinics, and blood drives, and sponsored various support groups including one for Caregivers, Breast Cancer, and the "Unforgettable Choir" for participants with dementia.

### MISSION-HEARTED

One of the most beloved aspects of Debbie's job has been recruiting, training, and leading mission endeavors all over the world. A peek inside her home reveals a personal collection of handmade nativities brought back from countries near and far, although Debbie's favorite is a large ceramic nativity made by her mother. The nativities sit beside unique artifacts and souvenirs collected over the years, including spears from the Dinka tribe in South Sudan and a ceremonial baby carrier from Ethiopia. So far, Debbie has set foot in **44** different countries all with one goal in mind—sharing the

Gospel and serving the Lord through the medical field. These mission projects have included medical clinics, seminars on preventative healthcare, launching mobile medical clinics with local medical teams, and more. One trip in particular was instrumental in beginning a multi-year partnership with Dawson that impacted the village of Kajo Keji, South Sudan. Debbie has experienced many exciting adventures (few people can say that they were proposed to by an African chieftain) but none would compare to the experience of celebrating on Easter Sunday in a refugee camp in Uganda.



Debbie, with Pastor Dima, celebrating Easter in a refugee camp in Uganda.

*"In 2017, my Easter was spent in a Ugandan Refugee Camp located 6 miles from South Sudan. Many of the people we had worked with for years in South Sudan were now refugees in these camps. One of the pastors, and a long-time personal friend, Pastor Edward Dima, got word to me at Dawson that they were not receiving enough food aid. My heart was just broken for the people. My decision was an easy one. With Pastor Edward as my liaison, I would fly to Uganda, mobilize trucks, purchase food in the local markets, and coordinate with people we knew and trusted in the refugee camps to meet me and help distribute the food to those in need. We gave away a total of 13,376 pounds of food. On Easter morning, the churches that had formed inside the camps came together and met under a tree for worship. We made a 7-foot cross and placed it under the tree. The music was glorious. Thirty-nine people prayed to receive Christ that day. After worship, an Easter lunch was prepared for 400+ individuals over an open fire. Those images from that day will forever be in my mind."*

### LEAVING A LEGACY

Over the past 20 years, Dawson's Health & Wellness Ministry, through Debbie's leadership, has been a bridge builder for our community, as well as an unstoppable force in sharing God's love. One of the most impactful ministries, both on and off our campus, has been the **Adult Special Education Ministry**—better known as the **Happy Class**. Every Sunday the class gathers together for their Life Group as one big family. Before the day's Bible lesson is taught, the members sing out with such joy that the "**Happy Singers**" were created. (The group can be heard performing at Christmastime on the front steps of the church.) From playing together in **Miracle League Softball** games to dressing up and celebrating at "Night to Shine" events, the love and gratitude on every face in attendance is unmistakable. Everyone is filled with such joy. Debbie most of all.

As a highly regarded member in her field, Debbie was recognized in 2012 by the Samford School of Nursing as a recipient of the **Living Legacy Award**. The legacy that Debbie leaves now is one of devoted discipleship. It would be impossible to share all that Debbie has accomplished and to recount the lives impacted by her ministry these past 20 years, but she's not done quite yet. Debbie already has plans to volunteer with Samaritan's Purse, Alabama Disaster Relief, Grace Klein Community, and the Birmingham Humane Society as she enters into "retirement." There will also be lots of traveling and gardening. When asked about her time at Dawson, Debbie's response is, "It has been the honor of my life to serve on Dawson's staff. I've been blessed beyond measure." Thank you for your faithful service and friendship, Debbie. Dawson has been truly blessed by you!

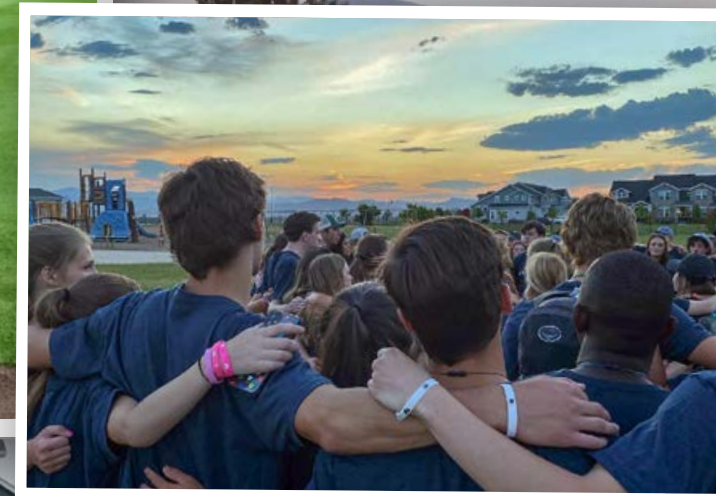


# SHOW *the* LOVE

## Chapel Choir Tour — Colorado 2021 —

By **Carson Hughes**

A few weeks ago, my final Chapel Choir Mission Tour ended with our Home Concert on Sunday, June 27. It was the end of my four years as a member of the Chapel Choir, an organization that positively characterized my entire high school experience.



As a freshman, I initially considered Chapel Choir little more than “what my sister did,” (in fact, what she did very well, as she was the president) but after I returned from our mission tour to St. Louis that year, I understood what she loved about it. It was a week-long experience of sharing God’s love through the gifts He has provided us with others—friends and strangers alike. While so many great memories come to mind when I think of that trip—going to a Cardinals game, hanging out with friends in the dorms, singing in a women’s shelter—what I remember most favorably about that trip is how I was treated by the Chapel Choir seniors. They were kind to me and to my friends when they had no reason to be. They demonstrated what it means to live in a Christ-like manner, not just with each other, but with people they really didn’t even know.

Now, as a senior myself, I am only more impressed and grateful for how they acted towards us. They set an amazing example that I and others still benefit from today. There’s plenty more that I treasure over my four years in the Chapel Choir. Even the more mundane things hold value. For instance, on our mission tour in Ecuador, I remember our bus pulling into a gas station so we could get some lunch. It was at this exact time that one of my friends decided to explain to me the entirety of the events of O.J. Simpson’s trial in 1994. What was it about the Ecuadorian countryside that brought to mind those events of that night? I couldn’t say. While a little absurd, and far from what you might expect to be remembered from a choir trip to Ecuador, those small, random moments are what have colored the quiet moments in between the harmonious singing.

It was filled  
with just  
as many  
mountain  
top moments  
as sidewalk  
moments.



The famous city planner, Jane Jacobs, once put it this way, albeit in a different context: “Lowly, unpurposeful, and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city’s wealth of public life may grow.”

When I look back on my career in Dawson’s Chapel Choir and Chapel Ensemble, I do think of the “mountain top moments.” Those times and places where, as John Woods says, “The veil between Heaven and Earth thins and we feel a touch of the divine.” Moments like singing in a decorated Cathedral in St. Louis or singing a blessing over people who have helped us throughout the week. But, just as often, I’d find myself in the hallway at school, or hanging out with my friends, and just start smiling, thinking back to those “sidewalk moments.” The same God who inspired the building of breathtaking Cathedrals, arranged the mountains of Colorado, and orchestrated the stars, is the same God who has allowed me to have been around such wonderful and inspiring people.

Truly our God is one of breadth, working in moments big and small, but He is also one of depth. In 2020, when the world turned upside down, the plans for Chapel Choir Mission Tour suddenly came much closer to home. Initially, I was hesitant. Before COVID, we had intended to go to Chicago. It was a wonderful city, and one that I knew was in need of Jesus. What replaced that trip was a local one. “What could we do in Birmingham that we weren’t already doing?” Instead, God gave us the opportunity to sing for a local family.

It was a small concert. Just us, the family, and some neighbors. The concert didn’t happen in a church. It didn’t even happen in another state. It was just a block or two away from Dawson. Singing for that family was truly one of the most profound experiences I have ever had with the Chapel Choir. God was at work there that day just as much as He was at work in St. Louis or Ecuador. His love is as deep as it is vast.

That concert was a highlight of Chapel Choir that year, and that week was a highlight of the summer in general. So much was cancelled or shut down during that time. It was difficult to see my friends, and even when I was able to, long periods of time without talking to people left me feeling uncomfortable and awkward. But being together as a group that week was a form of respite. I felt at home with the friends and family who knew how difficult life was at the time.

Our recent mission tour to Denver, Colorado, was as great as I had hoped my last choir tour would be. It was filled with just as many “mountain top” moments as “sidewalk moments.” We literally walked around the streets of Estes Park and also on top of the mountains of Lowry State Park, both of which were amazing on their own. There is one instance that will remain with me more than any other memory from any other tour. It was a conversation I had with a guy my age who came to the carnival we hosted one night. I’ll call him Daniel. Our conversation started out like any other would between two teenage boys who had just met each other—

video games. Soon, however, and without much ushering from me, the conversation turned more personal, and then, as these things often do, spiritual. Daniel had had an extremely hard time during the pandemic in ways I could never begin to understand. He talked rather nihilistically about how money was the only thing that motivated people and about how life was meaningless because, “in a billion years, we would all be dead anyways.” He was angry with the world, and maybe even himself, yet the ease at which he shared his struggles with me told me that what he truly desired was a connection.

Something that is emphasized before we go on every mission tour is to remember that we are continuing the work that God is already doing in these communities, not introducing it. It can be easy to get caught up in the packing, and the t-shirts, and the proper attire, and the buses full of kids to think that we, a big and blessed church with lots of resources and volunteers, are the ones who really know God. We might think we need to teach people to be more like us, when in fact, we need to enable them to be more like Jesus. It is for these reasons that we understand that God is already working wherever we are going, because God cares about people. He cares about you and me the same way he cares about those in St. Louis and Ecuador. He’s the reason Daniel yearned for something but didn’t know what it was. He didn’t need to connect with a person, he needed a connection with God. Happily, Daniel allowed me to pray with him that evening.

What I have learned over the past four years with Dawson’s Chapel Choir is that while our God is a God of places, at work in every corner of our broken world, He is just as much a God of people, at work in every crevice of our shattered hearts. We may find ourselves arrogantly displeased with where God has us going in life, but in doing so, we are sinning by being prideful to think that we know better than the One who created us. When we elevate ourselves, mere reflections of the divine, over the divine Himself, this horrible substitution leaves us unhappy and unsatisfied. In reality, true satisfaction is found only in Jesus. It requires that we appreciate all the work God has done for us and through us on the mountain tops and the sidewalks.

Finally, harmony, just like in a choir, is something that cannot be reached alone. We must have others join in with us working together as we lift our voices in song. Surrounded by friends, family, and even strangers, we sing for the glory of the One who knows and loves us all.



**Carson Hughes** is a recent graduate of Vestavia Hills High School where he enjoyed competing on their *Mock Trials* and *We The People* teams. He has grown up at Dawson, and has loved every moment of it. In the fall, he will be attending Mississippi College where he will pursue a degree in English.

It was filled with just as many mountain top moments as sidewalk moments.



The famous city planner, Jane Jacobs, once put it this way, albeit in a different context: “Lowly, unpurposeful, and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city’s wealth of public life may grow.”

When I look back on my career in Dawson’s Chapel Choir and Chapel Ensemble, I do think of the “mountain top moments.” Those times and places where, as John Woods says, “The veil between Heaven and Earth thins and we feel a touch of the divine.” Moments like singing in a decorated Cathedral in St. Louis or singing a blessing over people who have helped us throughout the week. But, just as often, I’d find myself in the hallway at school, or hanging out with my friends, and just start smiling, thinking back to those “sidewalk moments.” The same God who inspired the building of breathtaking Cathedrals, arranged the mountains of Colorado, and orchestrated the stars, is the same God who has allowed me to have been around such wonderful and inspiring people.

Truly our God is one of breadth, working in moments big and small, but He is also one of depth. In 2020, when the world turned upside down, the plans for Chapel Choir Mission Tour suddenly came much closer to home. Initially, I was hesitant. Before COVID, we had intended to go to Chicago. It was a wonderful city, and one that I knew was in need of Jesus. What replaced that trip was a local one. “What could we do in Birmingham that we weren’t already doing?” Instead, God gave us the opportunity to sing for a local family.

It was a small concert. Just us, the family, and some neighbors. The concert didn’t happen in a church. It didn’t even happen in another state. It was just a block or two away from Dawson. Singing for that family was truly one of the most profound experiences I have ever had with the Chapel Choir. God was at work there that day just as much as He was at work in St. Louis or Ecuador. His love is as deep as it is vast.

That concert was a highlight of Chapel Choir that year, and that week was a highlight of the summer in general. So much was cancelled or shut down during that time. It was difficult to see my friends, and even when I was able to, long periods of time without talking to people left me feeling uncomfortable and awkward. But being together as a group that week was a form of respite. I felt at home with the friends and family who knew how difficult life was at the time.

Our recent mission tour to Denver, Colorado, was as great as I had hoped my last choir tour would be. It was filled with just as many “mountain top” moments as “sidewalk moments.” We literally walked around the streets of Estes Park and also on top of the mountains of Lowry State Park, both of which were amazing on their own. There is one instance that will remain with me more than any other memory from any other tour. It was a conversation I had with a guy my age who came to the carnival we hosted one night. I’ll call him Daniel. Our conversation started out like any other would between two teenage boys who had just met each other—

video games. Soon, however, and without much ushering from me, the conversation turned more personal, and then, as these things often do, spiritual. Daniel had had an extremely hard time during the pandemic in ways I could never begin to understand. He talked rather nihilistically about how money was the only thing that motivated people and about how life was meaningless because, “in a billion years, we would all be dead anyways.” He was angry with the world, and maybe even himself, yet the ease at which he shared his struggles with me told me that what he truly desired was a connection.

Something that is emphasized before we go on every mission tour is to remember that we are continuing the work that God is already doing in these communities, not introducing it. It can be easy to get caught up in the packing, and the t-shirts, and the proper attire, and the buses full of kids to think that we, a big and blessed church with lots of resources and volunteers, are the ones who really know God. We might think we need to teach people to be more like us, when in fact, we need to enable them to be more like Jesus. It is for these reasons that we understand that God is already working wherever we are going, because God cares about people. He cares about you and me the same way he cares about those in St. Louis and Ecuador. He’s the reason Daniel yearned for something but didn’t know what it was. He didn’t need to connect with a person, he needed a connection with God. Happily, Daniel allowed me to pray with him that evening.

What I have learned over the past four years with Dawson’s Chapel Choir is that while our God is a God of places, at work in every corner of our broken world, He is just as much a God of people, at work in every crevice of our shattered hearts. We may find ourselves arrogantly displeased with where God has us going in life, but in doing so, we are sinning by being prideful to think that we know better than the One who created us. When we elevate ourselves, mere reflections of the divine, over the divine Himself, this horrible substitution leaves us unhappy and unsatisfied. In reality, true satisfaction is found only in Jesus. It requires that we appreciate all the work God has done for us and through us on the mountain tops and the sidewalks.

Finally, harmony, just like in a choir, is something that cannot be reached alone. We must have others join in with us working together as we lift our voices in song. Surrounded by friends, family, and even strangers, we sing for the glory of the One who knows and loves us all.



**Carson Hughes** is a recent graduate of Vestavia Hills High School where he enjoyed competing on their *Mock Trials* and *We The People* teams. He has grown up at Dawson, and has loved every moment of it. In the fall, he will be attending Mississippi College where he will pursue a degree in English.

It was filled with just as many mountain top moments as sidewalk moments.



The famous city planner, Jane Jacobs, once put it this way, albeit in a different context: “Lowly, unpurposeful, and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city’s wealth of public life may grow.”

When I look back on my career in Dawson’s Chapel Choir and Chapel Ensemble, I do think of the “mountain top moments.” Those times and places where, as John Woods says, “The veil between Heaven and Earth thins and we feel a touch of the divine.” Moments like singing in a decorated Cathedral in St. Louis or singing a blessing over people who have helped us throughout the week. But, just as often, I’d find myself in the hallway at school, or hanging out with my friends, and just start smiling, thinking back to those “sidewalk moments.” The same God who inspired the building of breathtaking Cathedrals, arranged the mountains of Colorado, and orchestrated the stars, is the same God who has allowed me to have been around such wonderful and inspiring people.

Truly our God is one of breadth, working in moments big and small, but He is also one of depth. In 2020, when the world turned upside down, the plans for Chapel Choir Mission Tour suddenly came much closer to home. Initially, I was hesitant. Before COVID, we had intended to go to Chicago. It was a wonderful city, and one that I knew was in need of Jesus. What replaced that trip was a local one. “What could we do in Birmingham that we weren’t already doing?” Instead, God gave us the opportunity to sing for a local family.

It was a small concert. Just us, the family, and some neighbors. The concert didn’t happen in a church. It didn’t even happen in another state. It was just a block or two away from Dawson. Singing for that family was truly one of the most profound experiences I have ever had with the Chapel Choir. God was at work there that day just as much as He was at work in St. Louis or Ecuador. His love is as deep as it is vast.

That concert was a highlight of Chapel Choir that year, and that week was a highlight of the summer in general. So much was cancelled or shut down during that time. It was difficult to see my friends, and even when I was able to, long periods of time without talking to people left me feeling uncomfortable and awkward. But being together as a group that week was a form of respite. I felt at home with the friends and family who knew how difficult life was at the time.

Our recent mission tour to Denver, Colorado, was as great as I had hoped my last choir tour would be. It was filled with just as many “mountain top” moments as “sidewalk moments.” We literally walked around the streets of Estes Park and also on top of the mountains of Lowry State Park, both of which were amazing on their own. There is one instance that will remain with me more than any other memory from any other tour. It was a conversation I had with a guy my age who came to the carnival we hosted one night. I’ll call him Daniel. Our conversation started out like any other would between two teenage boys who had just met each other—

video games. Soon, however, and without much ushering from me, the conversation turned more personal, and then, as these things often do, spiritual. Daniel had had an extremely hard time during the pandemic in ways I could never begin to understand. He talked rather nihilistically about how money was the only thing that motivated people and about how life was meaningless because, “in a billion years, we would all be dead anyways.” He was angry with the world, and maybe even himself, yet the ease at which he shared his struggles with me told me that what he truly desired was a connection.

Something that is emphasized before we go on every mission tour is to remember that we are continuing the work that God is already doing in these communities, not introducing it. It can be easy to get caught up in the packing, and the t-shirts, and the proper attire, and the buses full of kids to think that we, a big and blessed church with lots of resources and volunteers, are the ones who really know God. We might think we need to teach people to be more like us, when in fact, we need to enable them to be more like Jesus. It is for these reasons that we understand that God is already working wherever we are going, because God cares about people. He cares about you and me the same way he cares about those in St. Louis and Ecuador. He’s the reason Daniel yearned for something but didn’t know what it was. He didn’t need to connect with a person, he needed a connection with God. Happily, Daniel allowed me to pray with him that evening.

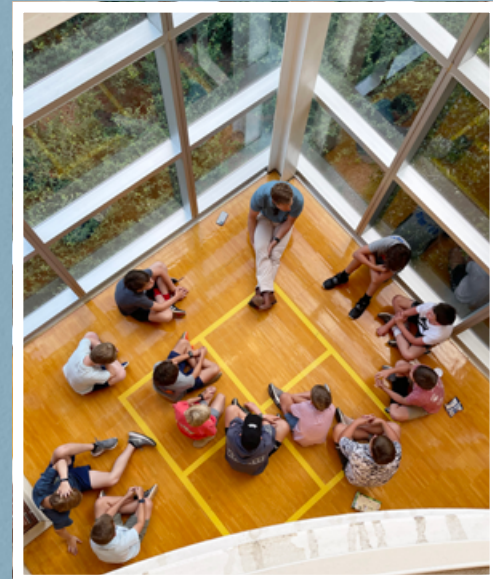
What I have learned over the past four years with Dawson’s Chapel Choir is that while our God is a God of places, at work in every corner of our broken world, He is just as much a God of people, at work in every crevice of our shattered hearts. We may find ourselves arrogantly displeased with where God has us going in life, but in doing so, we are sinning by being prideful to think that we know better than the One who created us. When we elevate ourselves, mere reflections of the divine, over the divine Himself, this horrible substitution leaves us unhappy and unsatisfied. In reality, true satisfaction is found only in Jesus. It requires that we appreciate all the work God has done for us and through us on the mountain tops and the sidewalks.

Finally, harmony, just like in a choir, is something that cannot be reached alone. We must have others join in with us working together as we lift our voices in song. Surrounded by friends, family, and even strangers, we sing for the glory of the One who knows and loves us all.



**Carson Hughes** is a recent graduate of Vestavia Hills High School where he enjoyed competing on their *Mock Trials* and *We The People* teams. He has grown up at Dawson, and has loved every moment of it. In the fall, he will be attending Mississippi College where he will pursue a degree in English.

More  
SCENES OF  
SUMMER





GET TO KNOW

MO'S MINISTRY

By Kasey Hagen

## BASKETBALL AT DAWSON

is a tradition that dates back many years. From 6-year-olds to senior citizens, the gym at the FRC has proven itself to be a great place for fun and exercise, as well as a space to share God's love with our community and minister to others. Little did **MO FINLEY**, Dawson's new Basketball Director, know how God would bring his love for basketball, along with his special skill set, to Dawson just for that reason.

Family has always been important to Mo. Originally from the small town of Lafayette, Alabama, Mo grew up with his parents, two older sisters, an older brother, and tons of other relatives who lived nearby. Being close to so many family members instilled in him the importance of having and maintaining those relationships. Today, when there's a special occasion to celebrate, Mo will say, "I just want my people around." Mo enjoys talking about his family and readily acknowledges the role his parents played in his spiritual journey. They stressed the importance of building his relationship with God and seeking Him through prayer. Now as an adult, Mo can clearly recognize times when God's provision and protection were on full display. Something that when he sits back and reflects on, he says, "I am amazed."

Lafayette may be a "small" Alabama town; but when it comes to basketball, it has a massive following. Mo and many of his friends wanted to become college basketball players. Fortunately for him, Mo's path would lead him to play basketball for the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where he would complete two B.S. degrees, one in Psychology and another in Social Psychology. UAB would also be the place where Mo would meet his wife, Tamera, outside of Bartow Arena only a few short weeks into his freshman year.





For Mo, getting to play college basketball for UAB was a dream come true in and of itself. However, being able to play in the NCAA Tournament during March Madness and making a last-second shot to defeat the number one ranked Kentucky Wildcats was beyond what he had ever imagined. That "shot" is still remembered today. Just listen in as campers arriving for basketball camp ask excitedly about the winning shot. Even the parents want to talk to Mo about it, and more often than not, they compliment Mo for his memorable character as well.

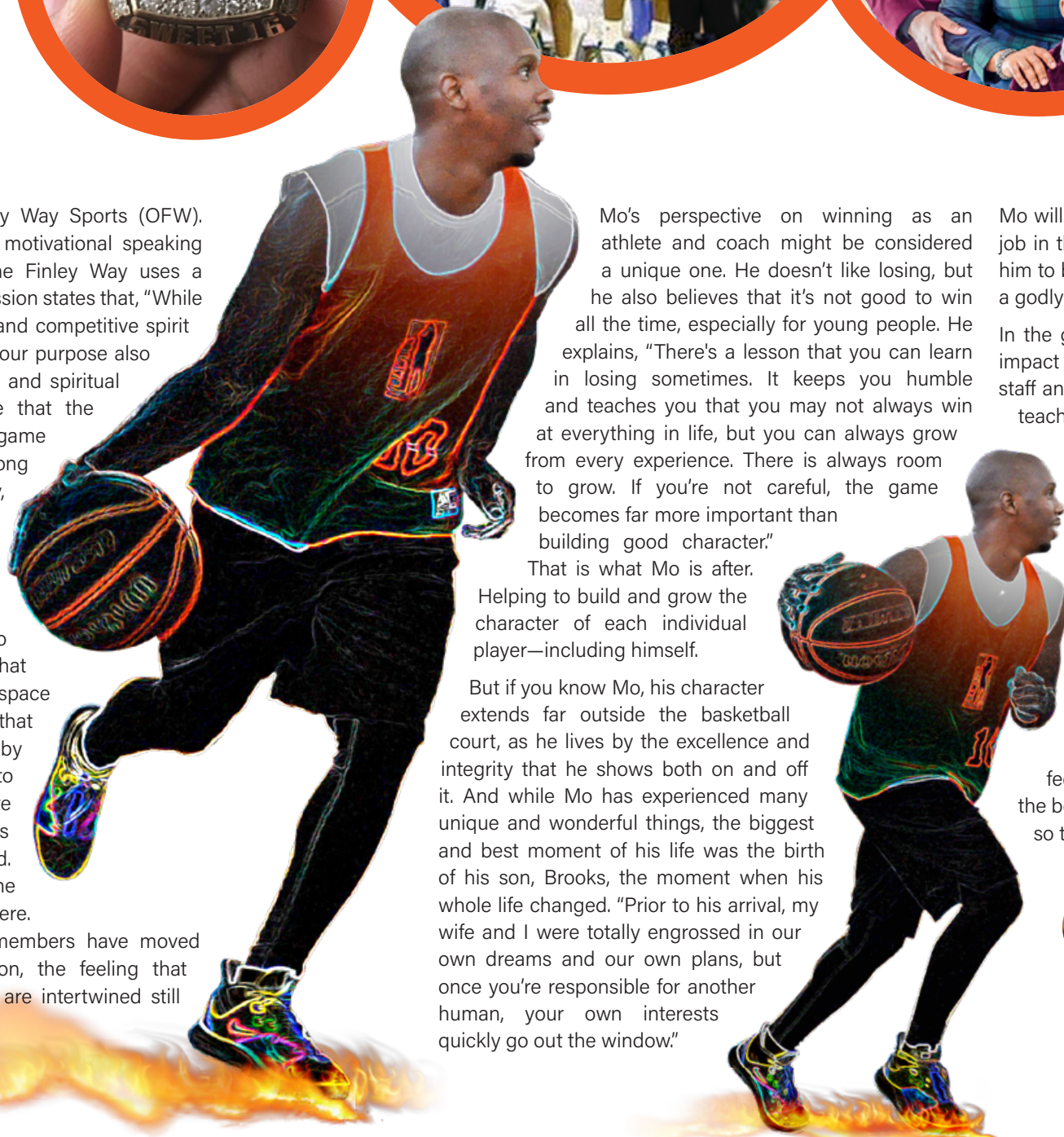
One parent was overheard saying, "My husband was at UAB with you when you made that shot, he still talks about how you were such a solid person as well as a solid player."

After college, Mo began a professional career in basketball that sent him to play in Europe. Out of all the places that Mo and Tamera lived while he played overseas, their favorite location was Milan, Italy. "It was like a paid vacation," says Mo, recognizing that few people get to do what they love while earning a living. "I was very fortunate to do it for so long. Not only was I doing what I loved but I was able to visit many different places and experience many different cultures. It was an opportunity, season, and experience of a lifetime."

Years later, after competing around the world and working with some of the most talented individuals in the game of basketball, Mo started

his own company called One Finley Way Sports (OFW). OFW offers coaching, training, and motivational speaking for both individuals and teams. One Finley Way uses a holistic approach to training. Their mission states that, "While basketball fundamentals, team play, and competitive spirit are an integral part of OFW's fabric, our purpose also includes fostering the social, mental, and spiritual growth of our players. We believe that the life lessons learned through the game of basketball help develop the strong character, sense of accountability, integrity, and humility that will aid our participants and help them thrive in every arena of life."

It is through One Finley Way Sports that Mo was introduced to Dawson's Recreation Ministry. What started out as a need for gym space quickly turned into a partnership that could have only been orchestrated by God. When asked what drew Mo to Dawson he says, "The people. Before I was ever a member of Dawson's Recreation Staff, I felt connected. I found myself spending time at the FRC even when I didn't have to be there. Even though some previous staff members have moved to different positions within Dawson, the feeling that my purpose and Dawson's purpose are intertwined still remains strong."



Mo's perspective on winning as an athlete and coach might be considered a unique one. He doesn't like losing, but he also believes that it's not good to win all the time, especially for young people. He explains, "There's a lesson that you can learn in losing sometimes. It keeps you humble and teaches you that you may not always win at everything in life, but you can always grow from every experience. There is always room to grow. If you're not careful, the game becomes far more important than building good character."

That is what Mo is after.

Helping to build and grow the character of each individual player—including himself.

But if you know Mo, his character extends far outside the basketball court, as he lives by the excellence and integrity that he shows both on and off it. And while Mo has experienced many unique and wonderful things, the biggest and best moment of his life was the birth of his son, Brooks, the moment when his whole life changed. "Prior to his arrival, my wife and I were totally engrossed in our own dreams and our own plans, but once you're responsible for another human, your own interests quickly go out the window."

Mo will tell anyone that being a father "may be the toughest job in the history of the world" but it's his son who inspires him to be the best man he can be and to set the example as a godly father and husband.

In the gym, it's easy to see why Mo makes such a lasting impact on people. Whether encouraging our own Recreation staff and various members coming through the gym, or just teaching the kids who are there for training, Mo is always looking for ways to uplift others. As he is coaching, Mo continuously talks about how God has given everyone different gifts and he encourages people to find out what those gifts are and then nurture them. The teaching doesn't stop there. Mo reminds his students, "Once you've discovered and nurtured those gifts, use them to the best of your ability to improve the lives of those around you."

If you don't know Mo, stop by the FRC and say hello. You will not be able to leave a conversation with him without feeling encouraged and uplifted. He is always seeking to make others laugh, smile, feel like they are seen and heard, and empowered to be the best they can be. That's part of Mo's ministry, and we're so thankful that he's a part of our team.



**Kasey Hagen** serves as Dawson's Associate Minister of Recreation. She grew up in Birmingham and graduated from The University of Alabama with a degree in Social Work. She has recently completed an MA in Discipleship from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Kasey is passionate about seeing the Gospel multiplied as believers are encouraged and equipped to share with their neighbors and the nations.

# OUR NEIGHBORS NEXT DOOR



Dawson provides temporary housing to missionaries who are based overseas and come state-side for respite.



WHEN A 100-FOOT TSUNAMI SURGED OVER THE COASTAL TOWNS AND CITIES OF NORTHERN SUMATRA, INDONESIA, ON DECEMBER 26, 2004, IT SWEEPED ENTIRE VILLAGES AWAY WITH IT. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES WERE LOST IN THE WAVES AND THE EARTHQUAKE THAT PRECEDED IT, ALONG WITH HOMES AND POSSESSIONS.

Charis and Paul Salem\* had been preparing to serve among the A people group who live in this area and were a mere two months away from moving to that side of the planet to join an International Mission Board (IMB) team already serving these staunch Muslims. The realities of so many people lost and the extensive damage left behind were a sobering beginning to the next phase of their lives serving as IMB missionaries.

Charis and Paul both grew up in Southeast Asia as the children of IMB missionaries, but neither of them felt called to missions. Both loved their experiences as missionary kids (MKs), but returned to the US for college and planned to remain there to pursue careers. As happens so often, the Lord had other plans. Paul attended Samford University, pursuing a degree in graphic design initially. He wanted the house with the white picket fence and the 2.5 kids—the American dream. However, one weekend during his sophomore year, he realized his chosen career wasn't his calling. A "holy discontent" fell over him, and he began pouring over Scripture that weekend, digging deep in a pursuit of God's purposes for his life. By the end of that weekend, he had changed majors, broken up with his girlfriend and determined to follow the Lord in an entirely different course

\*Names changed for security.

for his life. He knew God wanted him to work with people in some capacity, and the Lord took him through a process to realize international missions was where Paul should be.

Charis, growing up in Thailand, had dreamed of working as a journalist. She attended Auburn University, majoring in journalism, and never wavered from that goal. As she approached graduation, she realized that she wasn't quite ready to settle down into "real life" and a career. She applied with the IMB (for an adventure as much as anything) for a two-year position and moved to Uzbekistan in 1996. After the first year, she knew that God was calling her to work in international missions long-term and, more specifically, with Muslims. She ended a four-year, long distance relationship and committed herself to serving the Lord abroad.

Paul and Charis both knew that seminary would be an important next step for preparing for the mission field. They both landed at Golden Gate Seminary (now Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention) in the Bay Area in the fall of 1998. As they struggled through Greek and Hebrew classes together and bonded over their similar backgrounds as MKs from Southeast Asia, the Lord drew them together, and affirmed His plan for their marriage both through their similar callings and through the whole-hearted affirmation of many friends and family members.

While in seminary, they ministered among international students in San Francisco, and led a house church within a house church network in the Bay Area. The Lord used these unique opportunities to prepare them for the upcoming challenges of serving among Muslims in a highly restrictive environment in Indonesia. Their amazing team of American and Indonesian Christians buoyed them up during discouraging times. Their two sons were born during their years serving among the A people. They were not only a joy to raise, but also a great entry into local people's homes, given the A people's love for children.

After four years serving among the A people, the Lord opened up a door in 2010 for the Salem family to shift to serving in a large, multicultural and multi-ethnic city (Delta City\*) that

was geographically close to their previous location but vastly different in terms of culture and daily life. While Islam was the official religion of the country they moved to, Delta City was a multicultural hodgepodge of cultures, ethnicities, and religions. Life on Sumatra had been like living in a megavillage, but life in this new city was full of the unexpected. People from all across the globe came there to work, study, seek refuge, and even to retire. People from highly restricted countries were coming into Delta City, many of them as refugees. Because of the new environment in which they found themselves, some of these refugees were more open to the Gospel than they would have been in their home environments.

A few months after moving to Delta City, Charis went to get her hair cut. The stylist was from Iran, a country she only knew as being very strictly Islamic. As they chatted, she felt the Holy Spirit prompting her to share the parable of the pearl of great price with him. However, each time she tried to steer the conversation in a spiritual direction, he appeared distinctly uninterested. She gave up and followed his lead on the conversation topics. When she got up to go pay, she felt the Holy Spirit urging her to try again. So, as she pulled out her wallet, she quickly rushed through the parable, ending

with, "And Jesus is this pearl of great price. If you ever want to know any more about him, my husband and I would love to talk to you." The young man leaned across the counter and said in a low voice, "Yes, I would like to know more about Jesus." Shocked, Charis gave him her phone number. She realized later that, coming from a country as restrictive as Iran, this young man was probably just nervous to talk in any public setting about Christianity.

A week later, she and Paul met with him. Through this initial relationship, they began connecting with more and more Iranians who were working or studying in Delta City. Some had even come as refugees, fleeing the harsh rules of the regime in their country. Eventually they baptized this young man and several others. They started a church with some of these refugees and had opportunities to disciple several of them. Paul and Charis also felt God calling them to be part of a church plant among college students. Young people in

their late teens and twenties proved to be fertile soil for the Gospel. A number of these initial young people now serve as elders and leaders in this church.

The opportunities in Delta City drew more people to serve on Paul and Charis's team, some as fully-funded IMB missionaries and others as team associates. The team associates came in a variety of capacities—as college students, career professionals, teachers, even retirees. They found multiple areas in which they could serve, and Paul and Charis began overseeing six teams in their city. Paul also began networking with local pastors and church planters in Delta City to create awareness and strategies for reaching the lost in the city.

Paul and Charis and their two sons returned for a state-side assignment in July 2019, anticipating a return to the field in July 2020. However, the global pandemic has temporarily closed the doors of their country to most foreigners, so they are waiting for the border to re-open, and are living in Birmingham in one of the mission houses that Dawson has provided. In the meantime, they continue to remotely oversee teams in Delta City, as well as in another global city in Southeast Asia. Paul also teaches seminary classes via Zoom at two different seminaries in Delta City. It's hard to know exactly what God's plans will be for them in the future, but they remain prepared and eager to return when God opens that door.

## THEIR AMAZING TEAM OF AMERICAN AND INDONESIAN CHRISTIANS BUOYED THEM UP DURING DISCOURAGING TIMES.

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT GOD IS DOING WITH THIS TIME, BUT THEY REMAIN PREPARED AND EAGER TO RETURN WHEN GOD OPENS THAT DOOR.





**BLAKE JENKINS**  
MINISTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS



**COLLEGE EDITION**

Blake and Kara work perfectly together with Dawson's College Ministry, but are they always on the same page? Keep reading to learn more.



**KARA FINCHER**  
ASSOCIATE MINISTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

**What do you like to do for fun?**

Read. Play board games. Family walks. Disc golf. Grill.

**What kind of music did you listen to in college?** Alternative rock.

**Were you in a fraternity?** No.

**Favorite class you took in college?** Critical Decision Making.

**What food could you eat every day?** Barbecue.

**Greatest accomplishment?** Being a husband and a dad.

**How do you take your coffee?** With a splash of milk. Just a splash. Just barely enough to change the color.

**If you could go back in time, what era would you choose?** Reformation. I'd be buddies with Luther and Calvin.

**What was your first job?** I was a daycare worker for a two-year-old class at church.

**Do you have any pets?** Leroy Jenkins. A 75-pound golden retriever.

**What was the last movie you saw?** *Space Jam: A New Legacy*.

**What's your nickname?** My high school nickname was "Delta."

**Dream travel location?** Probably New Zealand, for *Lord of the Rings*, obviously.

**Favorite book?** In Christian books, probably *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott. If we're talking fiction, *The Name of the Wind*.

**French fries or potato chips?**

Fries, all day.

**Sleep in or get up early?**

Get up early. I can't sleep in anymore. I try, but even on days that the kids are at the grandparents house or we're on vacation, my body is just on a clock now, and I just wake up.

**What are you looking forward to?**

I'm going to Mexico in three days. It's the first trip my wife, Becca, and I have taken just by ourselves since the boys were born.

**If Cinderella's shoe fit perfectly, why did it fall off?** That's a good question. Sweaty feet?

**Favorite Christmas movie?** *A Muppet Christmas Carol*.

**What trend do you just not get?** Dance routine videos. I don't get that.

**Favorite board game?** We're big board game people. I have a closet full. I would probably say "7 Wonders."

**What job would you have if you didn't work in ministry?**

I can't think of one. I know that sounds super spiritual, but I really don't want to be doing anything else!

**Is cheesecake a cake or a pie?** Cake!

**What TV show makes you laugh?** *Parks and Recreation* and *The Office*. Always.

**What do you like to do for fun?**

Make music. Sing songs. Play guitar. All things music.

**What music did you listen to in college?** Need To Breathe and Kari Jobe were my top two.

**Were you in a sorority?** Yes, I was a Phi Mu.

**Favorite class you took in college?** Christian Hymnody.

**What food could you eat every day?** Bread. Anything bread. Goat cheese and bread.

**Worst purchase you ever made?** Crocs.

**Greatest accomplishment?** My Beeson degree.

**How do you take your coffee?** Black.

**If you could go back in time, what era would you choose?** What's the one with the flapper dresses?

**What was your first job?** Does babysitting count? I was also a nanny.

**Do you have any pets?** No, but I treat my houseplants like pets.

**Five second rule?** Yes!

**What was the last movie you saw?** *Black Widow*.

**What trend do you just not get?** TikTok.

**French fries or potato chips?** French fries.

**Sleep in or get up early?** Get up early.

**Dream travel location?**

I hate to travel. I could stay at home for the rest of my life. I love the beach, but I don't want to go further than that.

**Favorite book?** Can the Bible count? That's honestly my favorite book.

**What's your next favorite book?** *Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers.

**What are you looking forward to?** Another year of ministry. New college students coming in. Also Jesus coming home.

**What's your nickname?** My friends just call me K, but I think it's kind of weird.

**If Cinderella's shoe fit perfectly, why did it fall off?** She was sweaty. She was nervous. She was nervous and sweaty.

**Favorite Christmas movie?** *Elf*.

**Favorite board game?** I love to play Spicy Uno. It's a card game. It's Uno but it's got added rules.

**What job would you have if you didn't work in ministry?** I think I would be a nanny.

**Is cheesecake a cake or a pie?** Pie!

**What TV show makes you laugh?** Not *The Office*. That's not my sense of humor.

**Anything else we should know?** Sometimes I start talking in different accents. I don't know what accent it is, but it just comes out.

AUXANO

COLLEGE + YOUNG ADULT SERVICE

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

TUESDAYS | 7:00 P.M.

SANCTUARY @ DAWSON

DAWSONCHURCH.ORG/AUXANO



**DAWSON**  
Family of Faith

Dawson Memorial Baptist Church  
1114 Oxmoor Road  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
(205) 871-7324  
dawsonchurch.org

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Permit No. 2963  
Birmingham, AL

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

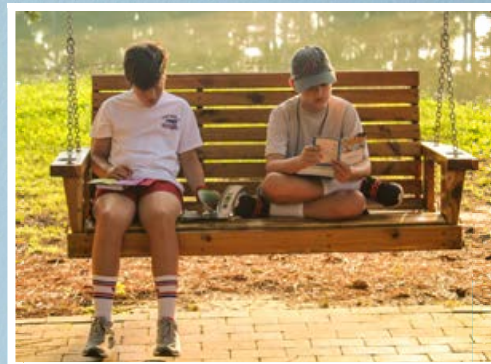
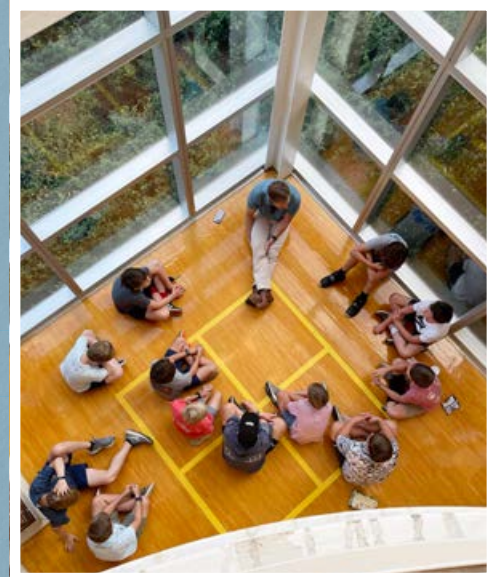
# PROVERBS

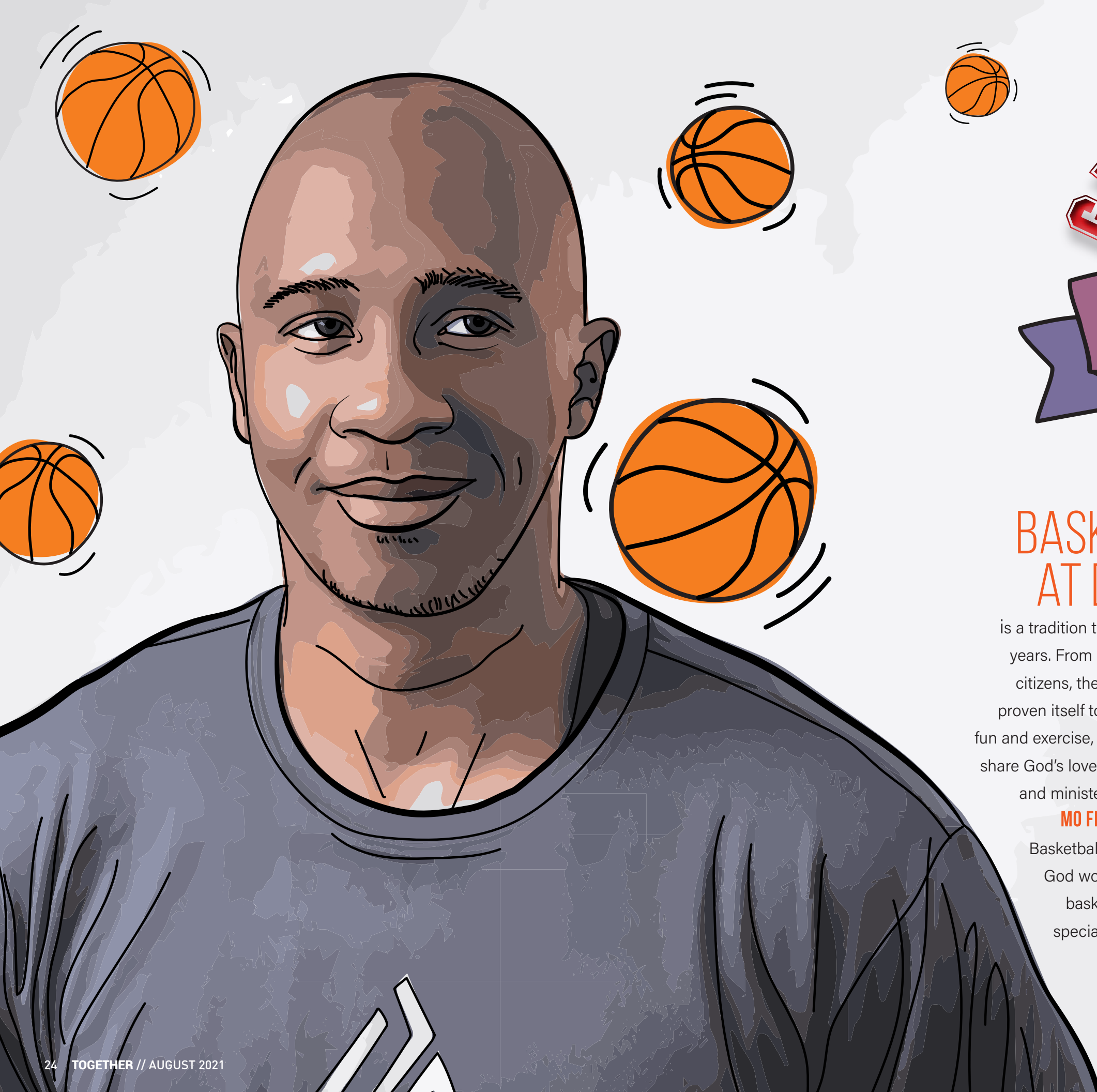
BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

WEDNESDAYS AT 11:00 A.M. & 6:00 P.M.

[dawsonchurch.org/proverbs](http://dawsonchurch.org/proverbs)

More  
SCENES OF  
SUMMER





GET TO KNOW

MO'S MINISTRY

By Kasey Hagen

## BASKETBALL AT DAWSON

is a tradition that dates back many years. From 6-year-olds to senior citizens, the gym at the FRC has proven itself to be a great place for fun and exercise, as well as a space to share God's love with our community and minister to others. Little did **MO FINLEY**, Dawson's new Basketball Director, know how God would bring his love for basketball, along with his special skill set, to Dawson just for that reason.

Family has always been important to Mo. Originally from the small town of Lafayette, Alabama, Mo grew up with his parents, two older sisters, an older brother, and tons of other relatives who lived nearby. Being close to so many family members instilled in him the importance of having and maintaining those relationships. Today, when there's a special occasion to celebrate, Mo will say, "I just want my people around." Mo enjoys talking about his family and readily acknowledges the role his parents played in his spiritual journey. They stressed the importance of building his relationship with God and seeking Him through prayer. Now as an adult, Mo can clearly recognize times when God's provision and protection were on full display. Something that when he sits back and reflects on, he says, "I am amazed."

Lafayette may be a "small" Alabama town; but when it comes to basketball, it has a massive following. Mo and many of his friends wanted to become college basketball players. Fortunately for him, Mo's path would lead him to play basketball for the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where he would complete two B.S. degrees, one in Psychology and another in Social Psychology. UAB would also be the place where Mo would meet his wife, Tamera, outside of Bartow Arena only a few short weeks into his freshman year.



For Mo, getting to play college basketball for UAB was a dream come true in and of itself. However, being able to play in the NCAA Tournament during March Madness and making a last-second shot to defeat the number one ranked Kentucky Wildcats was beyond what he had ever imagined. That "shot" is still remembered today. Just listen in as campers arriving for basketball camp ask excitedly about the winning shot. Even the parents want to talk to Mo about it, and more often than not, they compliment Mo for his memorable character as well.

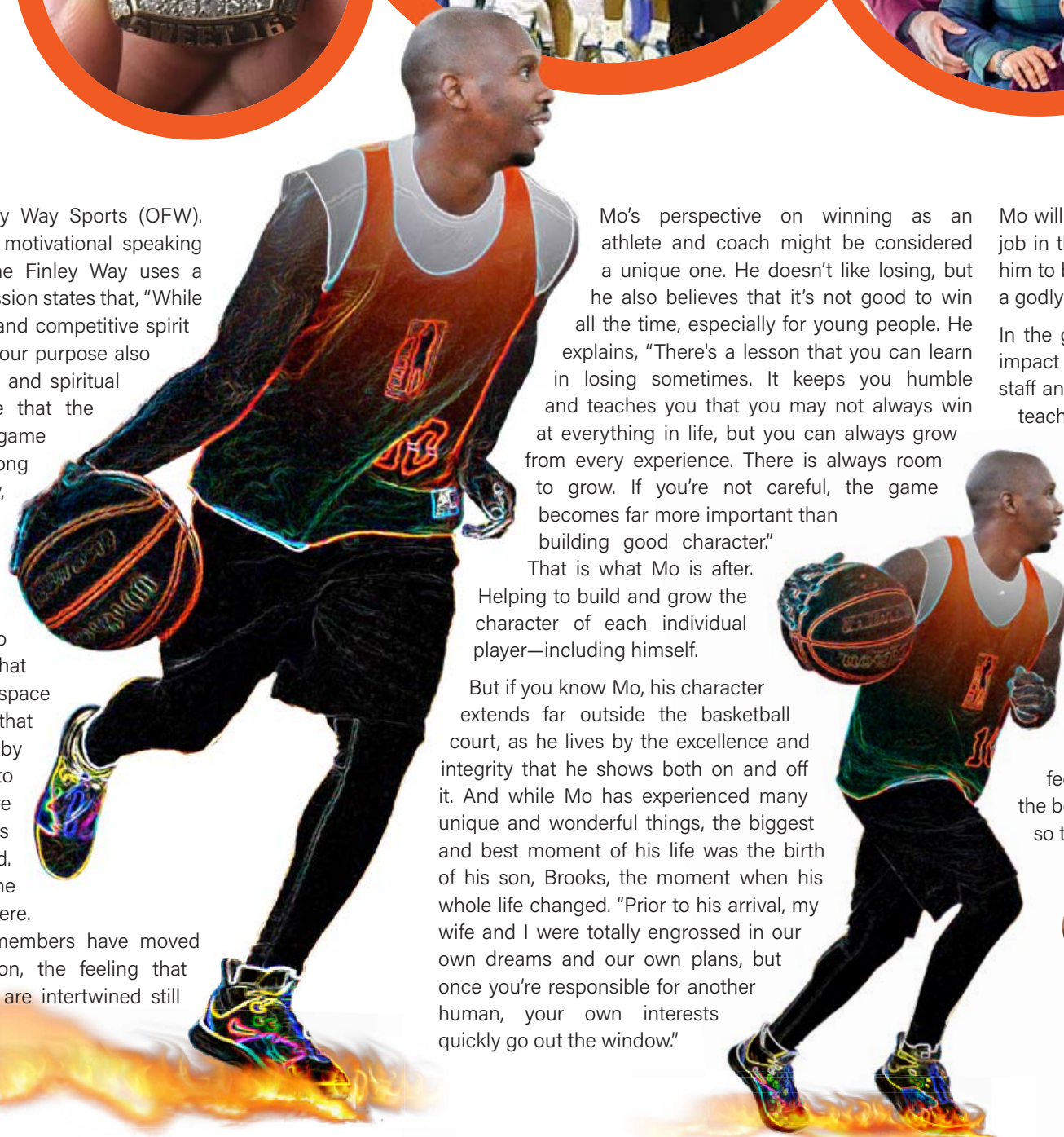
One parent was overheard saying, "My husband was at UAB with you when you made that shot, he still talks about how you were such a solid person as well as a solid player."

After college, Mo began a professional career in basketball that sent him to play in Europe. Out of all the places that Mo and Tamera lived while he played overseas, their favorite location was Milan, Italy. "It was like a paid vacation," says Mo, recognizing that few people get to do what they love while earning a living. "I was very fortunate to do it for so long. Not only was I doing what I loved but I was able to visit many different places and experience many different cultures. It was an opportunity, season, and experience of a lifetime."

Years later, after competing around the world and working with some of the most talented individuals in the game of basketball, Mo started

his own company called One Finley Way Sports (OFW). OFW offers coaching, training, and motivational speaking for both individuals and teams. One Finley Way uses a holistic approach to training. Their mission states that, "While basketball fundamentals, team play, and competitive spirit are an integral part of OFW's fabric, our purpose also includes fostering the social, mental, and spiritual growth of our players. We believe that the life lessons learned through the game of basketball help develop the strong character, sense of accountability, integrity, and humility that will aid our participants and help them thrive in every arena of life."

It is through One Finley Way Sports that Mo was introduced to Dawson's Recreation Ministry. What started out as a need for gym space quickly turned into a partnership that could have only been orchestrated by God. When asked what drew Mo to Dawson he says, "The people. Before I was ever a member of Dawson's Recreation Staff, I felt connected. I found myself spending time at the FRC even when I didn't have to be there. Even though some previous staff members have moved to different positions within Dawson, the feeling that my purpose and Dawson's purpose are intertwined still remains strong."



Mo's perspective on winning as an athlete and coach might be considered a unique one. He doesn't like losing, but he also believes that it's not good to win all the time, especially for young people. He explains, "There's a lesson that you can learn in losing sometimes. It keeps you humble and teaches you that you may not always win at everything in life, but you can always grow from every experience. There is always room to grow. If you're not careful, the game becomes far more important than building good character."

That is what Mo is after.

Helping to build and grow the character of each individual player—including himself.

But if you know Mo, his character extends far outside the basketball court, as he lives by the excellence and integrity that he shows both on and off it. And while Mo has experienced many unique and wonderful things, the biggest and best moment of his life was the birth of his son, Brooks, the moment when his whole life changed. "Prior to his arrival, my wife and I were totally engrossed in our own dreams and our own plans, but once you're responsible for another human, your own interests quickly go out the window."

Mo will tell anyone that being a father "may be the toughest job in the history of the world" but it's his son who inspires him to be the best man he can be and to set the example as a godly father and husband.

In the gym, it's easy to see why Mo makes such a lasting impact on people. Whether encouraging our own Recreation staff and various members coming through the gym, or just teaching the kids who are there for training, Mo is always looking for ways to uplift others. As he is coaching, Mo continuously talks about how God has given everyone different gifts and he encourages people to find out what those gifts are and then nurture them. The teaching doesn't stop there. Mo reminds his students, "Once you've discovered and nurtured those gifts, use them to the best of your ability to improve the lives of those around you."

If you don't know Mo, stop by the FRC and say hello. You will not be able to leave a conversation with him without feeling encouraged and uplifted. He is always seeking to make others laugh, smile, feel like they are seen and heard, and empowered to be the best they can be. That's part of Mo's ministry, and we're so thankful that he's a part of our team.



**Kasey Hagen** serves as Dawson's Associate Minister of Recreation. She grew up in Birmingham and graduated from The University of Alabama with a degree in Social Work. She has recently completed an MA in Discipleship from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Kasey is passionate about seeing the Gospel multiplied as believers are encouraged and equipped to share with their neighbors and the nations.



# OUR NEIGHBORS NEXT DOOR



Dawson provides temporary housing to missionaries who are based overseas and come state-side for respite.



WHEN A 100-FOOT TSUNAMI SURGED OVER THE COASTAL TOWNS AND CITIES OF NORTHERN SUMATRA, INDONESIA, ON DECEMBER 26, 2004, IT SWEEPED ENTIRE VILLAGES AWAY WITH IT. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES WERE LOST IN THE WAVES AND THE EARTHQUAKE THAT PRECEDED IT, ALONG WITH HOMES AND POSSESSIONS.

Charis and Paul Salem\* had been preparing to serve among the A people group who live in this area and were a mere two months away from moving to that side of the planet to join an International Mission Board (IMB) team already serving these staunch Muslims. The realities of so many people lost and the extensive damage left behind were a sobering beginning to the next phase of their lives serving as IMB missionaries.

Charis and Paul both grew up in Southeast Asia as the children of IMB missionaries, but neither of them felt called to missions. Both loved their experiences as missionary kids (MKs), but returned to the US for college and planned to remain there to pursue careers. As happens so often, the Lord had other plans. Paul attended Samford University, pursuing a degree in graphic design initially. He wanted the house with the white picket fence and the 2.5 kids—the American dream. However, one weekend during his sophomore year, he realized his chosen career wasn't his calling. A "holy discontent" fell over him, and he began pouring over Scripture that weekend, digging deep in a pursuit of God's purposes for his life. By the end of that weekend, he had changed majors, broken up with his girlfriend and determined to follow the Lord in an entirely different course

\*Names changed for security.

for his life. He knew God wanted him to work with people in some capacity, and the Lord took him through a process to realize international missions was where Paul should be.

Charis, growing up in Thailand, had dreamed of working as a journalist. She attended Auburn University, majoring in journalism, and never wavered from that goal. As she approached graduation, she realized that she wasn't quite ready to settle down into "real life" and a career. She applied with the IMB (for an adventure as much as anything) for a two-year position and moved to Uzbekistan in 1996. After the first year, she knew that God was calling her to work in international missions long-term and, more specifically, with Muslims. She ended a four-year, long distance relationship and committed herself to serving the Lord abroad.

Paul and Charis both knew that seminary would be an important next step for preparing for the mission field. They both landed at Golden Gate Seminary (now Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention) in the Bay Area in the fall of 1998. As they struggled through Greek and Hebrew classes together and bonded over their similar backgrounds as MKs from Southeast Asia, the Lord drew them together, and affirmed His plan for their marriage both through their similar callings and through the whole-hearted affirmation of many friends and family members.

While in seminary, they ministered among international students in San Francisco, and led a house church within a house church network in the Bay Area. The Lord used these unique opportunities to prepare them for the upcoming challenges of serving among Muslims in a highly restrictive environment in Indonesia. Their amazing team of American and Indonesian Christians buoyed them up during discouraging times. Their two sons were born during their years serving among the A people. They were not only a joy to raise, but also a great entry into local people's homes, given the A people's love for children.

After four years serving among the A people, the Lord opened up a door in 2010 for the Salem family to shift to serving in a large, multicultural and multi-ethnic city (Delta City\*) that

was geographically close to their previous location but vastly different in terms of culture and daily life. While Islam was the official religion of the country they moved to, Delta City was a multicultural hodgepodge of cultures, ethnicities, and religions. Life on Sumatra had been like living in a megavillage, but life in this new city was full of the unexpected. People from all across the globe came there to work, study, seek refuge, and even to retire. People from highly restricted countries were coming into Delta City, many of them as refugees. Because of the new environment in which they found themselves, some of these refugees were more open to the Gospel than they would have been in their home environments.

A few months after moving to Delta City, Charis went to get her hair cut. The stylist was from Iran, a country she only knew as being very strictly Islamic. As they chatted, she felt the Holy Spirit prompting her to share the parable of the pearl of great price with him. However, each time she tried to steer the conversation in a spiritual direction, he appeared distinctly uninterested. She gave up and followed his lead on the conversation topics. When she got up to go pay, she felt the Holy Spirit urging her to try again. So, as she pulled out her wallet, she quickly rushed through the parable, ending

with, "And Jesus is this pearl of great price. If you ever want to know any more about him, my husband and I would love to talk to you." The young man leaned across the counter and said in a low voice, "Yes, I would like to know more about Jesus." Shocked, Charis gave him her phone number. She realized later that, coming from a country as restrictive as Iran, this young man was probably just nervous to talk in any public setting about Christianity.

A week later, she and Paul met with him. Through this initial relationship, they began connecting with more and more Iranians who were working or studying in Delta City. Some had even come as refugees, fleeing the harsh rules of the regime in their country. Eventually they baptized this young man and several others. They started a church with some of these refugees and had opportunities to disciple several of them. Paul and Charis also felt God calling them to be part of a church plant among college students. Young people in

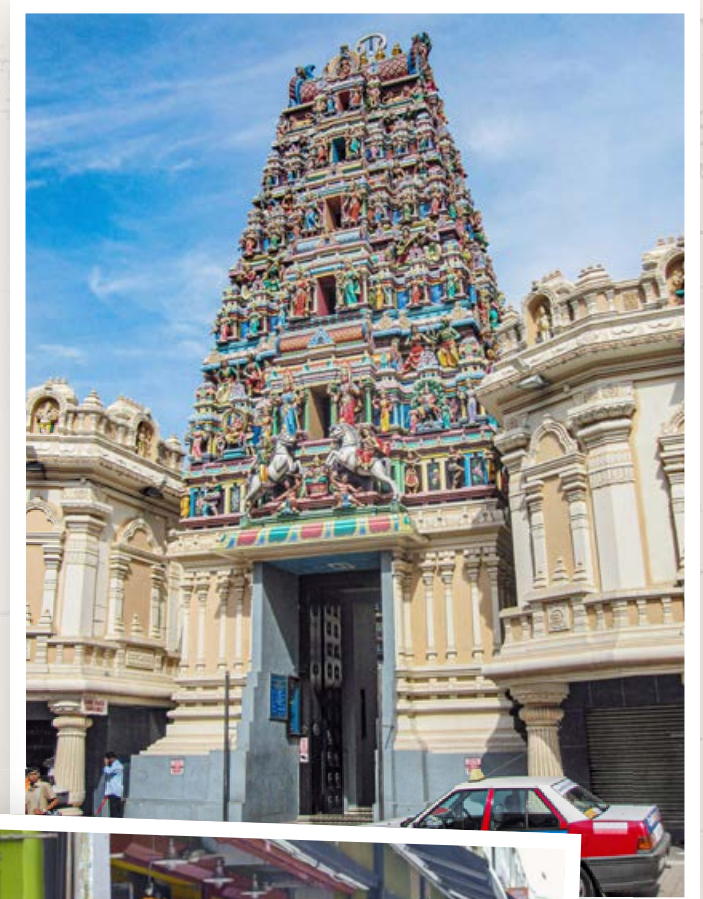
their late teens and twenties proved to be fertile soil for the Gospel. A number of these initial young people now serve as elders and leaders in this church.

The opportunities in Delta City drew more people to serve on Paul and Charis's team, some as fully-funded IMB missionaries and others as team associates. The team associates came in a variety of capacities—as college students, career professionals, teachers, even retirees. They found multiple areas in which they could serve, and Paul and Charis began overseeing six teams in their city. Paul also began networking with local pastors and church planters in Delta City to create awareness and strategies for reaching the lost in the city.

Paul and Charis and their two sons returned for a state-side assignment in July 2019, anticipating a return to the field in July 2020. However, the global pandemic has temporarily closed the doors of their country to most foreigners, so they are waiting for the border to re-open, and are living in Birmingham in one of the mission houses that Dawson has provided. In the meantime, they continue to remotely oversee teams in Delta City, as well as in another global city in Southeast Asia. Paul also teaches seminary classes via Zoom at two different seminaries in Delta City. It's hard to know exactly what God's plans will be for them in the future, but they remain prepared and eager to return when God opens that door.

## THEIR AMAZING TEAM OF AMERICAN AND INDONESIAN CHRISTIANS BUOYED THEM UP DURING DISCOURAGING TIMES.

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT GOD IS DOING WITH THIS TIME, BUT THEY REMAIN PREPARED AND EAGER TO RETURN WHEN GOD OPENS THAT DOOR.





**BLAKE JENKINS**  
MINISTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS



**COLLEGE EDITION**

Blake and Kara work perfectly together with Dawson's College Ministry, but are they always on the same page? Keep reading to learn more.



**KARA FINCHER**  
ASSOCIATE MINISTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

**What do you like to do for fun?**

Read. Play board games. Family walks. Disc golf. Grill.

**What kind of music did you listen to in college?**

Alternative rock.

**Were you in a fraternity?**

No.

**Favorite class you took in college?**

Critical Decision Making.

**What food could you eat every day?**

Barbecue.

**Greatest accomplishment?**

Being a husband and a dad.

**How do you take your coffee?**

With a splash of milk. Just a splash. Just barely enough to change the color.

**If you could go back in time, what era would you choose?**

Reformation. I'd be buddies with Luther and Calvin.

**What was your first job?**

I was a daycare worker for a two-year-old class at church.

**Do you have any pets?**

Leroy Jenkins. A 75-pound golden retriever.

**What was the last movie you saw?**

Space Jam: A New Legacy.

**What's your nickname?**

My high school nickname was "Delta."

**Dream travel location?**

Probably New Zealand, for *Lord of the Rings*, obviously.

**Favorite book?**

In Christian books, probably *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott. If we're talking fiction, *The Name of the Wind*.

**French fries or potato chips?**

Fries, all day.

**Sleep in or get up early?**

Get up early. I can't sleep in anymore. I try, but even on days that the kids are at the grandparents house or we're on vacation, my body is just on a clock now, and I just wake up.

**What are you looking forward to?**

I'm going to Mexico in three days. It's the first trip my wife, Becca, and I have taken just by ourselves since the boys were born.

**If Cinderella's shoe fit perfectly, why did it fall off?**

That's a good question. Sweaty feet?

**Favorite Christmas movie?**

*A Muppet Christmas Carol*.

**What trend do you just not get?**

Dance routine videos. I don't get that.

**Favorite board game?**

We're big board game people. I have a closet full. I would probably say "7 Wonders."

**What job would you have if you didn't work in ministry?**

I can't think of one. I know that sounds super spiritual, but I really don't want to be doing anything else!

**Is cheesecake a cake or a pie?**

Cake!

**What TV show makes you laugh?**

*Parks and Recreation* and *The Office*. Always.

**What do you like to do for fun?**

Make music. Sing songs. Play guitar. All things music.

**What music did you listen to in college?**

Need To Breathe and Kari Jobe were my top two.

**Were you in a sorority?**

Yes, I was a Phi Mu.

**Favorite class you took in college?**

Christian Hymnody.

**What food could you eat every day?**

Bread. Anything bread. Goat cheese and bread.

**Worst purchase you ever made?**

Crocs.

**Greatest accomplishment?**

My Beeson degree.

**How do you take your coffee?**

Black.

**If you could go back in time, what era would you choose?**

What's the one with the flapper dresses?

**What was your first job?**

Does babysitting count? I was also a nanny.

**Do you have any pets?**

No, but I treat my houseplants like pets.

**Five second rule?**

Yes!

**What was the last movie you saw?**

*Black Widow*.

**What trend do you just not get?**

TikTok.

**French fries or potato chips?**

French fries.

**Sleep in or get up early?**

Get up early.

**Dream travel location?**

I hate to travel. I could stay at home for the rest of my life. I love the beach, but I don't want to go further than that.

**Favorite book?**

Can the Bible count? That's honestly my favorite book.

**What's your next favorite book?**

*Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers.

**What are you looking forward to?**

Another year of ministry. New college students coming in. Also Jesus coming home.

**What's your nickname?**

My friends just call me K, but I think it's kind of weird.

**If Cinderella's shoe fit perfectly, why did it fall off?**

She was sweaty. She was nervous. She was nervous and sweaty.

**Favorite Christmas movie?**

*Elf*.

**Favorite board game?**

I love to play Spicy Uno. It's a card game. It's Uno but it's got added rules.

**What job would you have if you didn't work in ministry?**

I think I would be a nanny.

**Is cheesecake a cake or a pie?**

Pie!

**What TV show makes you laugh?**

Not *The Office*. That's not my sense of humor.

**Anything else we should know?**

Sometimes I start talking in different accents. I don't know what accent it is, but it just comes out.

AUXANO

COLLEGE + YOUNG ADULT SERVICE

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

TUESDAYS | 7:00 P.M.

SANCTUARY @ DAWSON

DAWSONCHURCH.ORG/AUXANO



**DAWSON**  
Family of Faith

Dawson Memorial Baptist Church  
1114 Oxmoor Road  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
(205) 871-7324  
dawsonchurch.org

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Permit No. 2963  
Birmingham, AL

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

# PROVERBS

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

WEDNESDAYS AT 11:00 A.M. & 6:00 P.M.

[dawsonchurch.org/proverbs](http://dawsonchurch.org/proverbs)

It was filled with just as many mountain top moments as sidewalk moments.



The famous city planner, Jane Jacobs, once put it this way, albeit in a different context: “Lowly, unpurposeful, and random as they may appear, sidewalk contacts are the small change from which a city’s wealth of public life may grow.”

When I look back on my career in Dawson’s Chapel Choir and Chapel Ensemble, I do think of the “mountain top moments.” Those times and places where, as John Woods says, “The veil between Heaven and Earth thins and we feel a touch of the divine.” Moments like singing in a decorated Cathedral in St. Louis or singing a blessing over people who have helped us throughout the week. But, just as often, I’d find myself in the hallway at school, or hanging out with my friends, and just start smiling, thinking back to those “sidewalk moments.” The same God who inspired the building of breathtaking Cathedrals, arranged the mountains of Colorado, and orchestrated the stars, is the same God who has allowed me to have been around such wonderful and inspiring people.

Truly our God is one of breadth, working in moments big and small, but He is also one of depth. In 2020, when the world turned upside down, the plans for Chapel Choir Mission Tour suddenly came much closer to home. Initially, I was hesitant. Before COVID, we had intended to go to Chicago. It was a wonderful city, and one that I knew was in need of Jesus. What replaced that trip was a local one. “What could we do in Birmingham that we weren’t already doing?” Instead, God gave us the opportunity to sing for a local family.

It was a small concert. Just us, the family, and some neighbors. The concert didn’t happen in a church. It didn’t even happen in another state. It was just a block or two away from Dawson. Singing for that family was truly one of the most profound experiences I have ever had with the Chapel Choir. God was at work there that day just as much as He was at work in St. Louis or Ecuador. His love is as deep as it is vast.

That concert was a highlight of Chapel Choir that year, and that week was a highlight of the summer in general. So much was cancelled or shut down during that time. It was difficult to see my friends, and even when I was able to, long periods of time without talking to people left me feeling uncomfortable and awkward. But being together as a group that week was a form of respite. I felt at home with the friends and family who knew how difficult life was at the time.

Our recent mission tour to Denver, Colorado, was as great as I had hoped my last choir tour would be. It was filled with just as many “mountain top” moments as “sidewalk moments.” We literally walked around the streets of Estes Park and also on top of the mountains of Lowry State Park, both of which were amazing on their own. There is one instance that will remain with me more than any other memory from any other tour. It was a conversation I had with a guy my age who came to the carnival we hosted one night. I’ll call him Daniel. Our conversation started out like any other would between two teenage boys who had just met each other—

video games. Soon, however, and without much ushering from me, the conversation turned more personal, and then, as these things often do, spiritual. Daniel had had an extremely hard time during the pandemic in ways I could never begin to understand. He talked rather nihilistically about how money was the only thing that motivated people and about how life was meaningless because, “in a billion years, we would all be dead anyways.” He was angry with the world, and maybe even himself, yet the ease at which he shared his struggles with me told me that what he truly desired was a connection.

Something that is emphasized before we go on every mission tour is to remember that we are continuing the work that God is already doing in these communities, not introducing it. It can be easy to get caught up in the packing, and the t-shirts, and the proper attire, and the buses full of kids to think that we, a big and blessed church with lots of resources and volunteers, are the ones who really know God. We might think we need to teach people to be more like us, when in fact, we need to enable them to be more like Jesus. It is for these reasons that we understand that God is already working wherever we are going, because God cares about people. He cares about you and me the same way he cares about those in St. Louis and Ecuador. He’s the reason Daniel yearned for something but didn’t know what it was. He didn’t need to connect with a person, he needed a connection with God. Happily, Daniel allowed me to pray with him that evening.

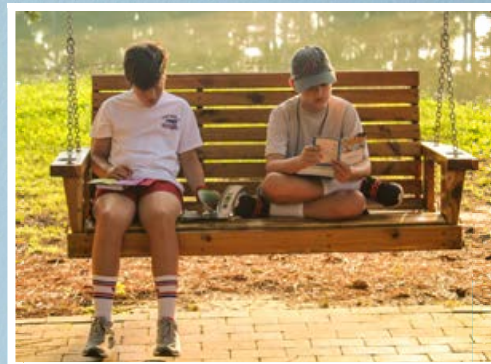
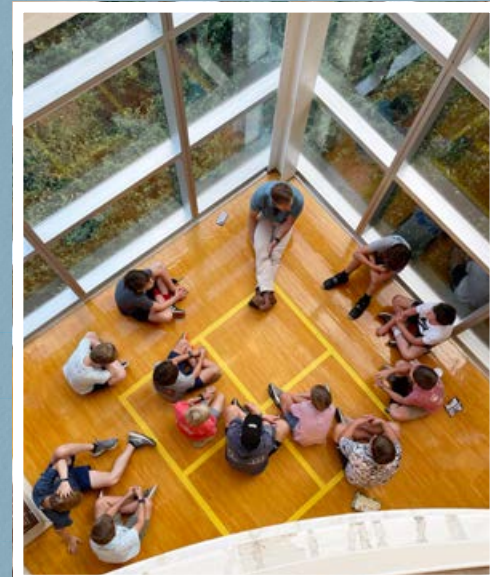
What I have learned over the past four years with Dawson’s Chapel Choir is that while our God is a God of places, at work in every corner of our broken world, He is just as much a God of people, at work in every crevice of our shattered hearts. We may find ourselves arrogantly displeased with where God has us going in life, but in doing so, we are sinning by being prideful to think that we know better than the One who created us. When we elevate ourselves, mere reflections of the divine, over the divine Himself, this horrible substitution leaves us unhappy and unsatisfied. In reality, true satisfaction is found only in Jesus. It requires that we appreciate all the work God has done for us and through us on the mountain tops and the sidewalks.

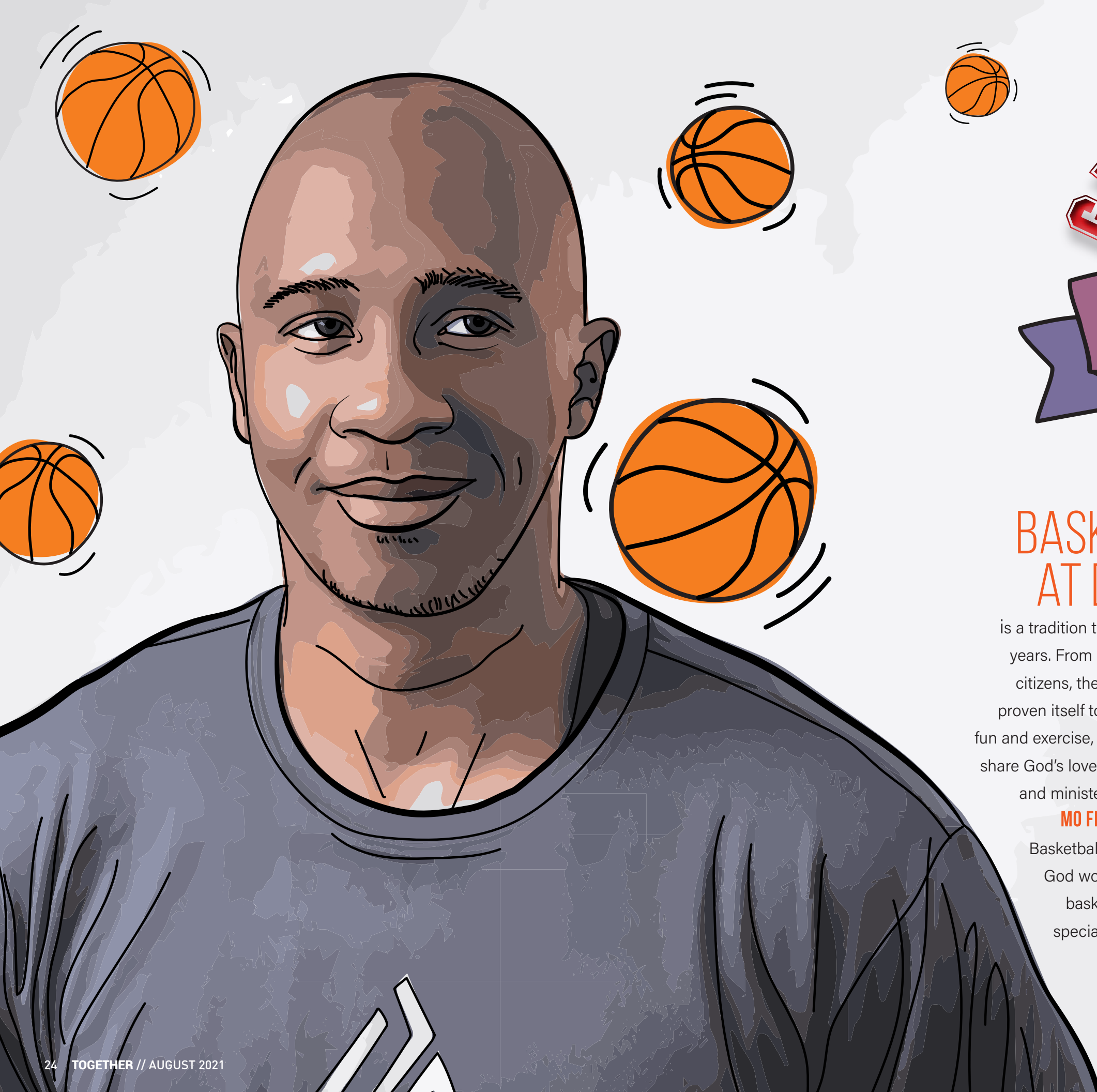
Finally, harmony, just like in a choir, is something that cannot be reached alone. We must have others join in with us working together as we lift our voices in song. Surrounded by friends, family, and even strangers, we sing for the glory of the One who knows and loves us all.



**Carson Hughes** is a recent graduate of Vestavia Hills High School where he enjoyed competing on their *Mock Trials* and *We The People* teams. He has grown up at Dawson, and has loved every moment of it. In the fall, he will be attending Mississippi College where he will pursue a degree in English.

More  
SCENES OF  
SUMMER





GET TO KNOW

MO'S MINISTRY

By Kasey Hagen

## BASKETBALL AT DAWSON

is a tradition that dates back many years. From 6-year-olds to senior citizens, the gym at the FRC has proven itself to be a great place for fun and exercise, as well as a space to share God's love with our community and minister to others. Little did **MO FINLEY**, Dawson's new Basketball Director, know how God would bring his love for basketball, along with his special skill set, to Dawson just for that reason.

Family has always been important to Mo. Originally from the small town of Lafayette, Alabama, Mo grew up with his parents, two older sisters, an older brother, and tons of other relatives who lived nearby. Being close to so many family members instilled in him the importance of having and maintaining those relationships. Today, when there's a special occasion to celebrate, Mo will say, "I just want my people around." Mo enjoys talking about his family and readily acknowledges the role his parents played in his spiritual journey. They stressed the importance of building his relationship with God and seeking Him through prayer. Now as an adult, Mo can clearly recognize times when God's provision and protection were on full display. Something that when he sits back and reflects on, he says, "I am amazed."

Lafayette may be a "small" Alabama town; but when it comes to basketball, it has a massive following. Mo and many of his friends wanted to become college basketball players. Fortunately for him, Mo's path would lead him to play basketball for the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where he would complete two B.S. degrees, one in Psychology and another in Social Psychology. UAB would also be the place where Mo would meet his wife, Tamera, outside of Bartow Arena only a few short weeks into his freshman year.



For Mo, getting to play college basketball for UAB was a dream come true in and of itself. However, being able to play in the NCAA Tournament during March Madness and making a last-second shot to defeat the number one ranked Kentucky Wildcats was beyond what he had ever imagined. That "shot" is still remembered today. Just listen in as campers arriving for basketball camp ask excitedly about the winning shot. Even the parents want to talk to Mo about it, and more often than not, they compliment Mo for his memorable character as well.

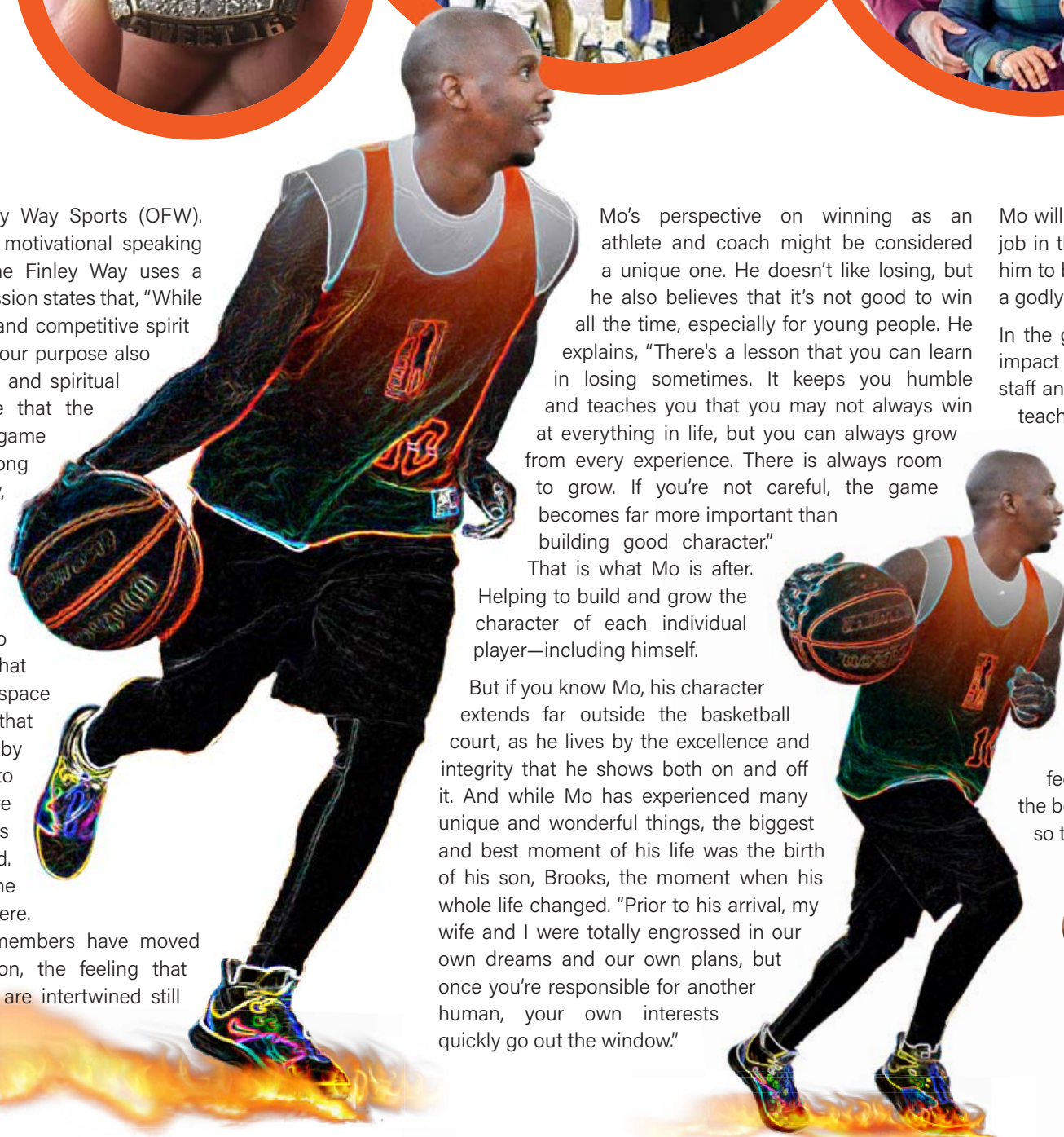
One parent was overheard saying, "My husband was at UAB with you when you made that shot, he still talks about how you were such a solid person as well as a solid player."

After college, Mo began a professional career in basketball that sent him to play in Europe. Out of all the places that Mo and Tamera lived while he played overseas, their favorite location was Milan, Italy. "It was like a paid vacation," says Mo, recognizing that few people get to do what they love while earning a living. "I was very fortunate to do it for so long. Not only was I doing what I loved but I was able to visit many different places and experience many different cultures. It was an opportunity, season, and experience of a lifetime."

Years later, after competing around the world and working with some of the most talented individuals in the game of basketball, Mo started

his own company called One Finley Way Sports (OFW). OFW offers coaching, training, and motivational speaking for both individuals and teams. One Finley Way uses a holistic approach to training. Their mission states that, "While basketball fundamentals, team play, and competitive spirit are an integral part of OFW's fabric, our purpose also includes fostering the social, mental, and spiritual growth of our players. We believe that the life lessons learned through the game of basketball help develop the strong character, sense of accountability, integrity, and humility that will aid our participants and help them thrive in every arena of life."

It is through One Finley Way Sports that Mo was introduced to Dawson's Recreation Ministry. What started out as a need for gym space quickly turned into a partnership that could have only been orchestrated by God. When asked what drew Mo to Dawson he says, "The people. Before I was ever a member of Dawson's Recreation Staff, I felt connected. I found myself spending time at the FRC even when I didn't have to be there. Even though some previous staff members have moved to different positions within Dawson, the feeling that my purpose and Dawson's purpose are intertwined still remains strong."



Mo's perspective on winning as an athlete and coach might be considered a unique one. He doesn't like losing, but he also believes that it's not good to win all the time, especially for young people. He explains, "There's a lesson that you can learn in losing sometimes. It keeps you humble and teaches you that you may not always win at everything in life, but you can always grow from every experience. There is always room to grow. If you're not careful, the game becomes far more important than building good character."

That is what Mo is after.

Helping to build and grow the character of each individual player—including himself.

But if you know Mo, his character extends far outside the basketball court, as he lives by the excellence and integrity that he shows both on and off it. And while Mo has experienced many unique and wonderful things, the biggest and best moment of his life was the birth of his son, Brooks, the moment when his whole life changed. "Prior to his arrival, my wife and I were totally engrossed in our own dreams and our own plans, but once you're responsible for another human, your own interests quickly go out the window."

Mo will tell anyone that being a father "may be the toughest job in the history of the world" but it's his son who inspires him to be the best man he can be and to set the example as a godly father and husband.

In the gym, it's easy to see why Mo makes such a lasting impact on people. Whether encouraging our own Recreation staff and various members coming through the gym, or just teaching the kids who are there for training, Mo is always looking for ways to uplift others. As he is coaching, Mo continuously talks about how God has given everyone different gifts and he encourages people to find out what those gifts are and then nurture them. The teaching doesn't stop there. Mo reminds his students, "Once you've discovered and nurtured those gifts, use them to the best of your ability to improve the lives of those around you."

If you don't know Mo, stop by the FRC and say hello. You will not be able to leave a conversation with him without feeling encouraged and uplifted. He is always seeking to make others laugh, smile, feel like they are seen and heard, and empowered to be the best they can be. That's part of Mo's ministry, and we're so thankful that he's a part of our team.



**Kasey Hagen** serves as Dawson's Associate Minister of Recreation. She grew up in Birmingham and graduated from The University of Alabama with a degree in Social Work. She has recently completed an MA in Discipleship from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Kasey is passionate about seeing the Gospel multiplied as believers are encouraged and equipped to share with their neighbors and the nations.



# OUR NEIGHBORS NEXT DOOR



Dawson provides temporary housing to missionaries who are based overseas and come state-side for respite.



WHEN A 100-FOOT TSUNAMI SURGED OVER THE COASTAL TOWNS AND CITIES OF NORTHERN SUMATRA, INDONESIA, ON DECEMBER 26, 2004, IT SWEEPED ENTIRE VILLAGES AWAY WITH IT. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES WERE LOST IN THE WAVES AND THE EARTHQUAKE THAT PRECEDED IT, ALONG WITH HOMES AND POSSESSIONS.

Charis and Paul Salem\* had been preparing to serve among the A people group who live in this area and were a mere two months away from moving to that side of the planet to join an International Mission Board (IMB) team already serving these staunch Muslims. The realities of so many people lost and the extensive damage left behind were a sobering beginning to the next phase of their lives serving as IMB missionaries.

Charis and Paul both grew up in Southeast Asia as the children of IMB missionaries, but neither of them felt called to missions. Both loved their experiences as missionary kids (MKs), but returned to the US for college and planned to remain there to pursue careers. As happens so often, the Lord had other plans. Paul attended Samford University, pursuing a degree in graphic design initially. He wanted the house with the white picket fence and the 2.5 kids—the American dream. However, one weekend during his sophomore year, he realized his chosen career wasn't his calling. A "holy discontent" fell over him, and he began pouring over Scripture that weekend, digging deep in a pursuit of God's purposes for his life. By the end of that weekend, he had changed majors, broken up with his girlfriend and determined to follow the Lord in an entirely different course

\*Names changed for security.

for his life. He knew God wanted him to work with people in some capacity, and the Lord took him through a process to realize international missions was where Paul should be.

Charis, growing up in Thailand, had dreamed of working as a journalist. She attended Auburn University, majoring in journalism, and never wavered from that goal. As she approached graduation, she realized that she wasn't quite ready to settle down into "real life" and a career. She applied with the IMB (for an adventure as much as anything) for a two-year position and moved to Uzbekistan in 1996. After the first year, she knew that God was calling her to work in international missions long-term and, more specifically, with Muslims. She ended a four-year, long distance relationship and committed herself to serving the Lord abroad.

Paul and Charis both knew that seminary would be an important next step for preparing for the mission field. They both landed at Golden Gate Seminary (now Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention) in the Bay Area in the fall of 1998. As they struggled through Greek and Hebrew classes together and bonded over their similar backgrounds as MKs from Southeast Asia, the Lord drew them together, and affirmed His plan for their marriage both through their similar callings and through the whole-hearted affirmation of many friends and family members.

While in seminary, they ministered among international students in San Francisco, and led a house church within a house church network in the Bay Area. The Lord used these unique opportunities to prepare them for the upcoming challenges of serving among Muslims in a highly restrictive environment in Indonesia. Their amazing team of American and Indonesian Christians buoyed them up during discouraging times. Their two sons were born during their years serving among the A people. They were not only a joy to raise, but also a great entry into local people's homes, given the A people's love for children.

After four years serving among the A people, the Lord opened up a door in 2010 for the Salem family to shift to serving in a large, multicultural and multi-ethnic city (Delta City\*) that

was geographically close to their previous location but vastly different in terms of culture and daily life. While Islam was the official religion of the country they moved to, Delta City was a multicultural hodgepodge of cultures, ethnicities, and religions. Life on Sumatra had been like living in a megavillage, but life in this new city was full of the unexpected. People from all across the globe came there to work, study, seek refuge, and even to retire. People from highly restricted countries were coming into Delta City, many of them as refugees. Because of the new environment in which they found themselves, some of these refugees were more open to the Gospel than they would have been in their home environments.

A few months after moving to Delta City, Charis went to get her hair cut. The stylist was from Iran, a country she only knew as being very strictly Islamic. As they chatted, she felt the Holy Spirit prompting her to share the parable of the pearl of great price with him. However, each time she tried to steer the conversation in a spiritual direction, he appeared distinctly uninterested. She gave up and followed his lead on the conversation topics. When she got up to go pay, she felt the Holy Spirit urging her to try again. So, as she pulled out her wallet, she quickly rushed through the parable, ending

with, "And Jesus is this pearl of great price. If you ever want to know any more about him, my husband and I would love to talk to you." The young man leaned across the counter and said in a low voice, "Yes, I would like to know more about Jesus." Shocked, Charis gave him her phone number. She realized later that, coming from a country as restrictive as Iran, this young man was probably just nervous to talk in any public setting about Christianity.

A week later, she and Paul met with him. Through this initial relationship, they began connecting with more and more Iranians who were working or studying in Delta City. Some had even come as refugees, fleeing the harsh rules of the regime in their country. Eventually they baptized this young man and several others. They started a church with some of these refugees and had opportunities to disciple several of them. Paul and Charis also felt God calling them to be part of a church plant among college students. Young people in

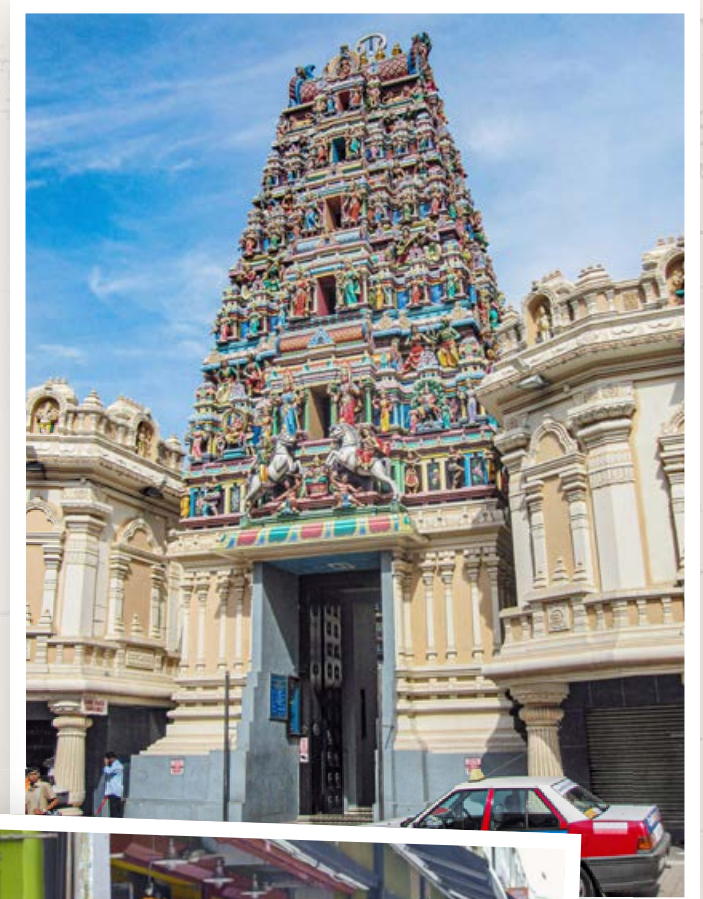
their late teens and twenties proved to be fertile soil for the Gospel. A number of these initial young people now serve as elders and leaders in this church.

The opportunities in Delta City drew more people to serve on Paul and Charis's team, some as fully-funded IMB missionaries and others as team associates. The team associates came in a variety of capacities—as college students, career professionals, teachers, even retirees. They found multiple areas in which they could serve, and Paul and Charis began overseeing six teams in their city. Paul also began networking with local pastors and church planters in Delta City to create awareness and strategies for reaching the lost in the city.

Paul and Charis and their two sons returned for a state-side assignment in July 2019, anticipating a return to the field in July 2020. However, the global pandemic has temporarily closed the doors of their country to most foreigners, so they are waiting for the border to re-open, and are living in Birmingham in one of the mission houses that Dawson has provided. In the meantime, they continue to remotely oversee teams in Delta City, as well as in another global city in Southeast Asia. Paul also teaches seminary classes via Zoom at two different seminaries in Delta City. It's hard to know exactly what God's plans will be for them in the future, but they remain prepared and eager to return when God opens that door.

## THEIR AMAZING TEAM OF AMERICAN AND INDONESIAN CHRISTIANS BUOYED THEM UP DURING DISCOURAGING TIMES.

IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT GOD IS DOING WITH THIS TIME, BUT THEY REMAIN PREPARED AND EAGER TO RETURN WHEN GOD OPENS THAT DOOR.





**BLAKE JENKINS**  
MINISTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS



**COLLEGE EDITION**

Blake and Kara work perfectly together with Dawson's College Ministry, but are they always on the same page? Keep reading to learn more.



**KARA FINCHER**  
ASSOCIATE MINISTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

**What do you like to do for fun?**

Read. Play board games. Family walks. Disc golf. Grill.

**What kind of music did you listen to in college?**

Alternative rock.

**Were you in a fraternity?**

No.

**Favorite class you took in college?**

Critical Decision Making.

**What food could you eat every day?**

Barbecue.

**Greatest accomplishment?**

Being a husband and a dad.

**How do you take your coffee?**

With a splash of milk. Just a splash. Just barely enough to change the color.

**If you could go back in time, what era would you choose?**

Reformation. I'd be buddies with Luther and Calvin.

**What was your first job?**

I was a daycare worker for a two-year-old class at church.

**Do you have any pets?**

Leroy Jenkins. A 75-pound golden retriever.

**What was the last movie you saw?**

Space Jam: A New Legacy.

**What's your nickname?**

My high school nickname was "Delta."

**Dream travel location?**

Probably New Zealand, for *Lord of the Rings*, obviously.

**Favorite book?**

In Christian books, probably *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott. If we're talking fiction, *The Name of the Wind*.

**French fries or potato chips?**

Fries, all day.

**Sleep in or get up early?**

Get up early. I can't sleep in anymore. I try, but even on days that the kids are at the grandparents house or we're on vacation, my body is just on a clock now, and I just wake up.

**What are you looking forward to?**

I'm going to Mexico in three days. It's the first trip my wife, Becca, and I have taken just by ourselves since the boys were born.

**If Cinderella's shoe fit perfectly, why did it fall off?**

That's a good question. Sweaty feet?

**Favorite Christmas movie?**

*A Muppet Christmas Carol*.

**What trend do you just not get?**

Dance routine videos. I don't get that.

**Favorite board game?**

We're big board game people. I have a closet full. I would probably say "7 Wonders."

**What job would you have if you didn't work in ministry?**

I can't think of one. I know that sounds super spiritual, but I really don't want to be doing anything else!

**Is cheesecake a cake or a pie?**

Cake!

**What TV show makes you laugh?**

*Parks and Recreation* and *The Office*. Always.

**What do you like to do for fun?**

Make music. Sing songs. Play guitar. All things music.

**What music did you listen to in college?**

Need To Breathe and Kari Jobe were my top two.

**Were you in a sorority?**

Yes, I was a Phi Mu.

**Favorite class you took in college?**

Christian Hymnody.

**What food could you eat every day?**

Bread. Anything bread. Goat cheese and bread.

**Worst purchase you ever made?**

Crocs.

**Greatest accomplishment?**

My Beeson degree.

**How do you take your coffee?**

Black.

**If you could go back in time, what era would you choose?**

What's the one with the flapper dresses?

**What was your first job?**

Does babysitting count? I was also a nanny.

**Do you have any pets?**

No, but I treat my houseplants like pets.

**Five second rule?**

Yes!

**What was the last movie you saw?**

*Black Widow*.

**What trend do you just not get?**

TikTok.

**French fries or potato chips?**

French fries.

**Sleep in or get up early?**

Get up early.

**Dream travel location?**

I hate to travel. I could stay at home for the rest of my life. I love the beach, but I don't want to go further than that.

**Favorite book?**

Can the Bible count? That's honestly my favorite book.

**What's your next favorite book?**

*Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers.

**What are you looking forward to?**

Another year of ministry. New college students coming in. Also Jesus coming home.

**What's your nickname?**

My friends just call me K, but I think it's kind of weird.

**If Cinderella's shoe fit perfectly, why did it fall off?**

She was sweaty. She was nervous. She was nervous and sweaty.

**Favorite Christmas movie?**

*Elf*.

**Favorite board game?**

I love to play Spicy Uno. It's a card game. It's Uno but it's got added rules.

**What job would you have if you didn't work in ministry?**

I think I would be a nanny.

**Is cheesecake a cake or a pie?**

Pie!

**What TV show makes you laugh?**

Not *The Office*. That's not my sense of humor.

**Anything else we should know?**

Sometimes I start talking in different accents. I don't know what accent it is, but it just comes out.

AUXANO

COLLEGE + YOUNG ADULT SERVICE

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

TUESDAYS | 7:00 P.M.

SANCTUARY @ DAWSON

DAWSONCHURCH.ORG/AUXANO



**DAWSON**  
Family of Faith

Dawson Memorial Baptist Church  
1114 Oxmoor Road  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
(205) 871-7324  
dawsonchurch.org

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Permit No. 2963  
Birmingham, AL

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

# PROVERBS

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

WEDNESDAYS AT 11:00 A.M. & 6:00 P.M.

[dawsonchurch.org/proverbs](http://dawsonchurch.org/proverbs)



GET TO KNOW

MO'S MINISTRY

By Kasey Hagen

## BASKETBALL AT DAWSON

is a tradition that dates back many years. From 6-year-olds to senior citizens, the gym at the FRC has proven itself to be a great place for fun and exercise, as well as a space to share God's love with our community and minister to others. Little did **MO FINLEY**, Dawson's new Basketball Director, know how God would bring his love for basketball, along with his special skill set, to Dawson just for that reason.

Family has always been important to Mo. Originally from the small town of Lafayette, Alabama, Mo grew up with his parents, two older sisters, an older brother, and tons of other relatives who lived nearby. Being close to so many family members instilled in him the importance of having and maintaining those relationships. Today, when there's a special occasion to celebrate, Mo will say, "I just want my people around." Mo enjoys talking about his family and readily acknowledges the role his parents played in his spiritual journey. They stressed the importance of building his relationship with God and seeking Him through prayer. Now as an adult, Mo can clearly recognize times when God's provision and protection were on full display. Something that when he sits back and reflects on, he says, "I am amazed."

Lafayette may be a "small" Alabama town; but when it comes to basketball, it has a massive following. Mo and many of his friends wanted to become college basketball players. Fortunately for him, Mo's path would lead him to play basketball for the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), where he would complete two B.S. degrees, one in Psychology and another in Social Psychology. UAB would also be the place where Mo would meet his wife, Tamera, outside of Bartow Arena only a few short weeks into his freshman year.



For Mo, getting to play college basketball for UAB was a dream come true in and of itself. However, being able to play in the NCAA Tournament during March Madness and making a last-second shot to defeat the number one ranked Kentucky Wildcats was beyond what he had ever imagined. That "shot" is still remembered today. Just listen in as campers arriving for basketball camp ask excitedly about the winning shot. Even the parents want to talk to Mo about it, and more often than not, they compliment Mo for his memorable character as well.

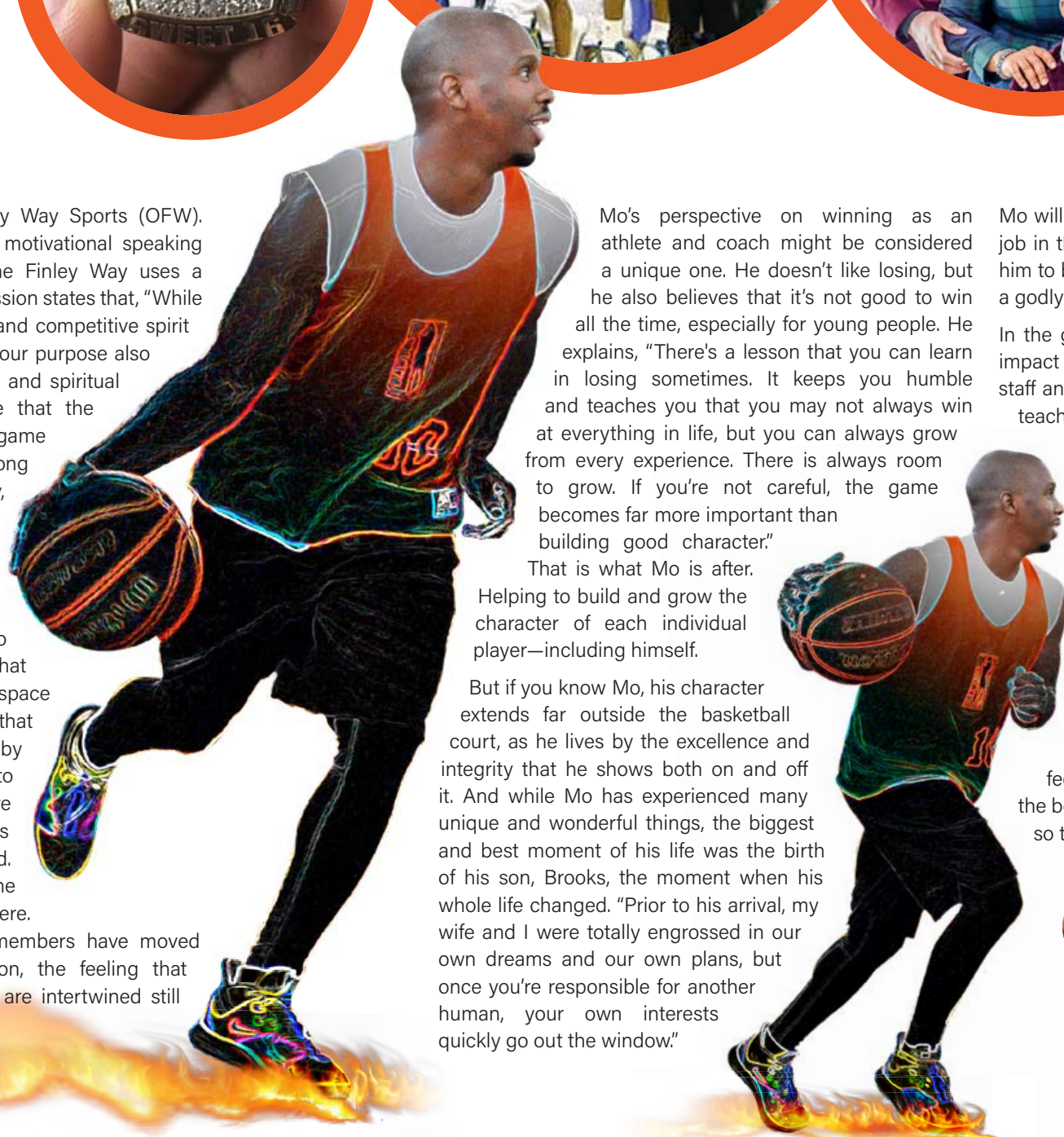
One parent was overheard saying, "My husband was at UAB with you when you made that shot, he still talks about how you were such a solid person as well as a solid player."

After college, Mo began a professional career in basketball that sent him to play in Europe. Out of all the places that Mo and Tamera lived while he played overseas, their favorite location was Milan, Italy. "It was like a paid vacation," says Mo, recognizing that few people get to do what they love while earning a living. "I was very fortunate to do it for so long. Not only was I doing what I loved but I was able to visit many different places and experience many different cultures. It was an opportunity, season, and experience of a lifetime."

Years later, after competing around the world and working with some of the most talented individuals in the game of basketball, Mo started

his own company called One Finley Way Sports (OFW). OFW offers coaching, training, and motivational speaking for both individuals and teams. One Finley Way uses a holistic approach to training. Their mission states that, "While basketball fundamentals, team play, and competitive spirit are an integral part of OFW's fabric, our purpose also includes fostering the social, mental, and spiritual growth of our players. We believe that the life lessons learned through the game of basketball help develop the strong character, sense of accountability, integrity, and humility that will aid our participants and help them thrive in every arena of life."

It is through One Finley Way Sports that Mo was introduced to Dawson's Recreation Ministry. What started out as a need for gym space quickly turned into a partnership that could have only been orchestrated by God. When asked what drew Mo to Dawson he says, "The people. Before I was ever a member of Dawson's Recreation Staff, I felt connected. I found myself spending time at the FRC even when I didn't have to be there. Even though some previous staff members have moved to different positions within Dawson, the feeling that my purpose and Dawson's purpose are intertwined still remains strong."



Mo's perspective on winning as an athlete and coach might be considered a unique one. He doesn't like losing, but he also believes that it's not good to win all the time, especially for young people. He explains, "There's a lesson that you can learn in losing sometimes. It keeps you humble and teaches you that you may not always win at everything in life, but you can always grow from every experience. There is always room to grow. If you're not careful, the game becomes far more important than building good character."

That is what Mo is after.

Helping to build and grow the character of each individual player—including himself.

But if you know Mo, his character extends far outside the basketball court, as he lives by the excellence and integrity that he shows both on and off it. And while Mo has experienced many unique and wonderful things, the biggest and best moment of his life was the birth of his son, Brooks, the moment when his whole life changed. "Prior to his arrival, my wife and I were totally engrossed in our own dreams and our own plans, but once you're responsible for another human, your own interests quickly go out the window."

Mo will tell anyone that being a father "may be the toughest job in the history of the world" but it's his son who inspires him to be the best man he can be and to set the example as a godly father and husband.

In the gym, it's easy to see why Mo makes such a lasting impact on people. Whether encouraging our own Recreation staff and various members coming through the gym, or just teaching the kids who are there for training, Mo is always looking for ways to uplift others. As he is coaching, Mo continuously talks about how God has given everyone different gifts and he encourages people to find out what those gifts are and then nurture them. The teaching doesn't stop there. Mo reminds his students, "Once you've discovered and nurtured those gifts, use them to the best of your ability to improve the lives of those around you."

If you don't know Mo, stop by the FRC and say hello. You will not be able to leave a conversation with him without feeling encouraged and uplifted. He is always seeking to make others laugh, smile, feel like they are seen and heard, and empowered to be the best they can be. That's part of Mo's ministry, and we're so thankful that he's a part of our team.



**Kasey Hagen** serves as Dawson's Associate Minister of Recreation. She grew up in Birmingham and graduated from The University of Alabama with a degree in Social Work. She has recently completed an MA in Discipleship from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Kasey is passionate about seeing the Gospel multiplied as believers are encouraged and equipped to share with their neighbors and the nations.

# OUR NEIGHBORS NEXT DOOR



Dawson provides temporary housing to missionaries who are based overseas and come state-side for respite.



WHEN A 100-FOOT TSUNAMI SURGED OVER THE COASTAL TOWNS AND CITIES OF NORTHERN SUMATRA, INDONESIA, ON DECEMBER 26, 2004, IT SWEEPED ENTIRE VILLAGES AWAY WITH IT. HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF LIVES WERE LOST IN THE WAVES AND THE EARTHQUAKE THAT PRECEDED IT, ALONG WITH HOMES AND POSSESSIONS.

Charis and Paul Salem\* had been preparing to serve among the A people group who live in this area and were a mere two months away from moving to that side of the planet to join an International Mission Board (IMB) team already serving these staunch Muslims. The realities of so many people lost and the extensive damage left behind were a sobering beginning to the next phase of their lives serving as IMB missionaries.

Charis and Paul both grew up in Southeast Asia as the children of IMB missionaries, but neither of them felt called to missions. Both loved their experiences as missionary kids (MKs), but returned to the US for college and planned to remain there to pursue careers. As happens so often, the Lord had other plans. Paul attended Samford University, pursuing a degree in graphic design initially. He wanted the house with the white picket fence and the 2.5 kids—the American dream. However, one weekend during his sophomore year, he realized his chosen career wasn't his calling. A "holy discontent" fell over him, and he began pouring over Scripture that weekend, digging deep in a pursuit of God's purposes for his life. By the end of that weekend, he had changed majors, broken up with his girlfriend and determined to follow the Lord in an entirely different course

\*Names changed for security.

for his life. He knew God wanted him to work with people in some capacity, and the Lord took him through a process to realize international missions was where Paul should be.

Charis, growing up in Thailand, had dreamed of working as a journalist. She attended Auburn University, majoring in journalism, and never wavered from that goal. As she approached graduation, she realized that she wasn't quite ready to settle down into "real life" and a career. She applied with the IMB (for an adventure as much as anything) for a two-year position and moved to Uzbekistan in 1996. After the first year, she knew that God was calling her to work in international missions long-term and, more specifically, with Muslims. She ended a four-year, long distance relationship and committed herself to serving the Lord abroad.

Paul and Charis both knew that seminary would be an important next step for preparing for the mission field. They both landed at Golden Gate Seminary (now Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention) in the Bay Area in the fall of 1998. As they struggled through Greek and Hebrew classes together and bonded over their similar backgrounds as MKs from Southeast Asia, the Lord drew them together, and affirmed His plan for their marriage both through their similar callings and through the whole-hearted affirmation of many friends and family members.

While in seminary, they ministered among international students in San Francisco, and led a house church within a house church network in the Bay Area. The Lord used these unique opportunities to prepare them for the upcoming challenges of serving among Muslims in a highly restrictive environment in Indonesia. Their amazing team of American and Indonesian Christians buoyed them up during discouraging times. Their two sons were born during their years serving among the A people. They were not only a joy to raise, but also a great entry into local people's homes, given the A people's love for children.

After four years serving among the A people, the Lord opened up a door in 2010 for the Salem family to shift to serving in a large, multicultural and multi-ethnic city (Delta City\*) that

was geographically close to their previous location but vastly different in terms of culture and daily life. While Islam was the official religion of the country they moved to, Delta City was a multicultural hodgepodge of cultures, ethnicities, and religions. Life on Sumatra had been like living in a megavillage, but life in this new city was full of the unexpected. People from all across the globe came there to work, study, seek refuge, and even to retire. People from highly restricted countries were coming into Delta City, many of them as refugees. Because of the new environment in which they found themselves, some of these refugees were more open to the Gospel than they would have been in their home environments.

A few months after moving to Delta City, Charis went to get her hair cut. The stylist was from Iran, a country she only knew as being very strictly Islamic. As they chatted, she felt the Holy Spirit prompting her to share the parable of the pearl of great price with him. However, each time she tried to steer the conversation in a spiritual direction, he appeared distinctly uninterested. She gave up and followed his lead on the conversation topics. When she got up to go pay, she felt the Holy Spirit urging her to try again. So, as she pulled out her wallet, she quickly rushed through the parable, ending

with, "And Jesus is this pearl of great price. If you ever want to know any more about him, my husband and I would love to talk to you." The young man leaned across the counter and said in a low voice, "Yes, I would like to know more about Jesus." Shocked, Charis gave him her phone number. She realized later that, coming from a country as restrictive as Iran, this young man was probably just nervous to talk in any public setting about Christianity.

A week later, she and Paul met with him. Through this initial relationship, they began connecting with more and more Iranians who were working or studying in Delta City. Some had even come as refugees, fleeing the harsh rules of the regime in their country. Eventually they baptized this young man and several others. They started a church with some of these refugees and had opportunities to disciple several of them. Paul and Charis also felt God calling them to be part of a church plant among college students. Young people in

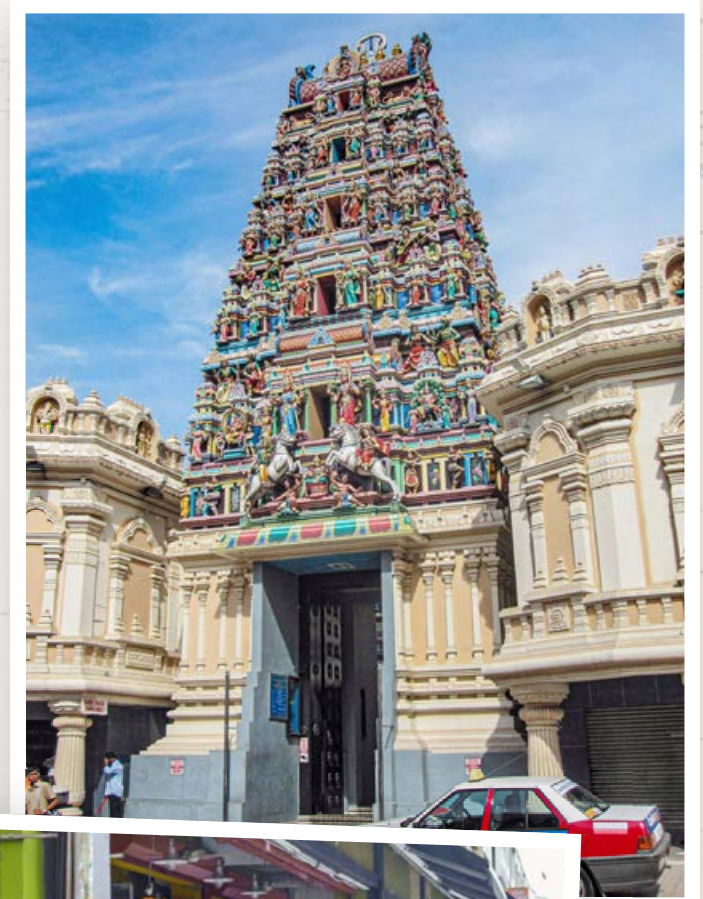
their late teens and twenties proved to be fertile soil for the Gospel. A number of these initial young people now serve as elders and leaders in this church.

The opportunities in Delta City drew more people to serve on Paul and Charis's team, some as fully-funded IMB missionaries and others as team associates. The team associates came in a variety of capacities—as college students, career professionals, teachers, even retirees. They found multiple areas in which they could serve, and Paul and Charis began overseeing six teams in their city. Paul also began networking with local pastors and church planters in Delta City to create awareness and strategies for reaching the lost in the city.

Paul and Charis and their two sons returned for a state-side assignment in July 2019, anticipating a return to the field in July 2020. However, the global pandemic has temporarily closed the doors of their country to most foreigners, so they are waiting for the border to re-open, and are living in Birmingham in one of the mission houses that Dawson has provided. In the meantime, they continue to remotely oversee teams in Delta City, as well as in another global city in Southeast Asia. Paul also teaches seminary classes via Zoom at two different seminaries in Delta City. It's hard to know exactly what God's plans will be for them in the future, but they remain prepared and eager to return when God opens that door.

## THEIR AMAZING TEAM OF AMERICAN AND INDONESIAN CHRISTIANS BUOYED THEM UP DURING DISCOURAGING TIMES.

IT'S HARD TO KNOW  
WHAT GOD IS DOING  
WITH THIS TIME,  
BUT THEY REMAIN  
PREPARED AND EAGER  
TO RETURN WHEN GOD  
OPENS THAT DOOR.







**BLAKE JENKINS**  
MINISTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS



**COLLEGE EDITION**

Blake and Kara work perfectly together with Dawson's College Ministry, but are they always on the same page? Keep reading to learn more.



**KARA FINCHER**  
ASSOCIATE MINISTER TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

**What do you like to do for fun?**

Read. Play board games. Family walks. Disc golf. Grill.

**What kind of music did you listen to in college?**

Alternative rock.

**Were you in a fraternity?**

No.

**Favorite class you took in college?**

Critical Decision Making.

**What food could you eat every day?**

Barbecue.

**Greatest accomplishment?**

Being a husband and a dad.

**How do you take your coffee?**

With a splash of milk. Just a splash. Just barely enough to change the color.

**If you could go back in time, what era would you choose?**

Reformation. I'd be buddies with Luther and Calvin.

**What was your first job?**

I was a daycare worker for a two-year-old class at church.

**Do you have any pets?**

Leroy Jenkins. A 75-pound golden retriever.

**What was the last movie you saw?**

Space Jam: A New Legacy.

**What's your nickname?**

My high school nickname was "Delta."

**Dream travel location?**

Probably New Zealand, for *Lord of the Rings*, obviously.

**Favorite book?**

In Christian books, probably *The Cross of Christ*, by John Stott. If we're talking fiction, *The Name of the Wind*.

**French fries or potato chips?**

Fries, all day.

**Sleep in or get up early?**

Get up early. I can't sleep in anymore. I try, but even on days that the kids are at the grandparents house or we're on vacation, my body is just on a clock now, and I just wake up.

**What are you looking forward to?**

I'm going to Mexico in three days. It's the first trip my wife, Becca, and I have taken just by ourselves since the boys were born.

**If Cinderella's shoe fit perfectly, why did it fall off?**

That's a good question. Sweaty feet?

**Favorite Christmas movie?**

*A Muppet Christmas Carol*.

**What trend do you just not get?**

Dance routine videos. I don't get that.

**Favorite board game?**

We're big board game people. I have a closet full. I would probably say "7 Wonders."

**What job would you have if you didn't work in ministry?**

I can't think of one. I know that sounds super spiritual, but I really don't want to be doing anything else!

**Is cheesecake a cake or a pie?**

Cake!

**What TV show makes you laugh?**

*Parks and Recreation* and *The Office*. Always.

**What do you like to do for fun?**

Make music. Sing songs. Play guitar. All things music.

**What music did you listen to in college?**

Need To Breathe and Kari Jobe were my top two.

**Were you in a sorority?**

Yes, I was a Phi Mu.

**Favorite class you took in college?**

Christian Hymnody.

**What food could you eat every day?**

Bread. Anything bread. Goat cheese and bread.

**Worst purchase you ever made?**

Crocs.

**Greatest accomplishment?**

My Beeson degree.

**How do you take your coffee?**

Black.

**If you could go back in time, what era would you choose?**

What's the one with the flapper dresses?

**What was your first job?**

Does babysitting count? I was also a nanny.

**Do you have any pets?**

No, but I treat my houseplants like pets.

**Five second rule?**

Yes!

**What was the last movie you saw?**

*Black Widow*.

**What trend do you just not get?**

TikTok.

**French fries or potato chips?**

French fries.

**Sleep in or get up early?**

Get up early.

**Dream travel location?**

I hate to travel. I could stay at home for the rest of my life. I love the beach, but I don't want to go further than that.

**Favorite book?**

Can the Bible count? That's honestly my favorite book.

**What's your next favorite book?**

*Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers.

**What are you looking forward to?**

Another year of ministry. New college students coming in. Also Jesus coming home.

**What's your nickname?**

My friends just call me K, but I think it's kind of weird.

**If Cinderella's shoe fit perfectly, why did it fall off?**

She was sweaty. She was nervous. She was nervous and sweaty.

**Favorite Christmas movie?**

*Elf*.

**Favorite board game?**

I love to play Spicy Uno. It's a card game. It's Uno but it's got added rules.

**What job would you have if you didn't work in ministry?**

I think I would be a nanny.

**Is cheesecake a cake or a pie?**

Pie!

**What TV show makes you laugh?**

Not *The Office*. That's not my sense of humor.

**Anything else we should know?**

Sometimes I start talking in different accents. I don't know what accent it is, but it just comes out.

# AUXANO

COLLEGE + YOUNG ADULT SERVICE

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

TUESDAYS | 7:00 P.M.

SANCTUARY @ DAWSON

DAWSONCHURCH.ORG/AUXANO



**DAWSON**  
Family of Faith

Dawson Memorial Baptist Church  
1114 Oxmoor Road  
Birmingham, AL 35209  
(205) 871-7324  
dawsonchurch.org

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage

**PAID**

Permit No. 2963  
Birmingham, AL

MIDWEEK BIBLE STUDY

# PROVERBS

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 8, 2021

WEDNESDAYS AT 11:00 A.M. & 6:00 P.M.

[dawsonchurch.org/proverbs](http://dawsonchurch.org/proverbs)