



PRAY, PIVOT & PERSEVERE

ROB GENIN

What a decade 2020 has been. We see the weakness of human wisdom, for who other than God, foresaw what our cities, country and world have been through this year. Fortunately, our hope and our work is not grounded on the slick ice of human wisdom, but the rock-solid plan and purpose of God.

It has certainly been frustrating to minister with such limitations foisted upon the church, business, and individual people. But God is not dismayed. As we have gone through this year, the communities of YBL ministries have prayed, pivoted, and persevered.

We have prayed. Though instinctively our desire is to act and do, we need to pray first in crisis. We have fasted and prayed over the Coronavirus, the shutdown, the awful events surrounding the killing of George Floyd and other community and personal crises. God

alone controls the future and the hearts of men, and we have seen this year how deeply our ministry and the church need His wisdom.

2020 has been the year of the pivot. Many things we planned had to be modified. Large group events turned into video outreach. Small groups met via zoom and moved to larger and outdoor spaces. Service projects focused on different needs to fit our current context and situation. It has been important for our community to remain flexible, to serve and share the unchanging gospel where people really are, emotionally and practically.

We have persevered. There has been such stress on people, homes, businesses and churches this year. Our communities are weary of crisis. We grieve, but not without hope. We call to mind the words of Lamentations 3:23:

"Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Because God sustains His people, YBL has been able to keep making His Name known in the marketplace and in the city.

In this year's newsletter, come read about God's grace active in Birmingham small groups. Hear about the exciting work of WBL Birmingham's new city director, August Griffith. See the unfolding vision of YBL 2nd Half in Birmingham. Learn what our team in Huntsville has done during the pandemic, and how Jackson's ministry continues to thrive and grow in spite of 2020's challenges.

You are our partners in ministry. Come celebrate God's mercy and work in the marketplace!

"The greater your knowledge of the goodness and grace of God on your life the more likely you are to praise Him in the storm." – Matt Chandler

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PHIL REDDICK



As you can tell by the title of the letter this has been an incredible, unusual, testing, technological, stressful yet joyful year. For me I must express it in the word grateful. (see 2nd Half article).

To say it's been a hard year to minister to people is an understatement. So much of what we do connects with people in person, by touch, or in small groups. Most of the small groups have not been meeting except by Zoom. But because of Zoom we've had people from other locations join us for our events and discipleship groups.

I would use the word grateful for another reason. For the most part we have been able to do our normal ministry endeavors, just not in person. There are so many other ministries that had to be halted, adjusted, or completely shut down because of Covid-19. A final reason that I say I am grateful is because it has caused us to slow down, simplify, spend more time with our families, and seek God's face. These are never bad things.

As you reflect on 2020, I think each one of us would say "not that again". Then, let's find the good, the eternal, and the deepening of our walks with God as an opportunity to be grateful.



YBL 2ND HALF: WHAT DO I DO NOW?

PHIL REDDICK

I recently had an opportunity to catch up with my director from when I was on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ. Jim and I have not seen each other for at least 36 years. We spent a wonderful time catching up on people we knew; people we had discipled, and those who are in leadership over us.

There were many good stories of people that have served the Lord has been faithful for many years. We also talked of those that had fallen by the wayside.

As we were leaving the gym he asked me this question: "If you look back over your life, what thoughts or words come to mind as a result of what God has done?" I replied with one word: grateful. It is amazing what God has allowed me to see, do, and to be a part of His eternal plan. Jim said the same thing: his word was thankful.

That is what YBL Second Half is all about. We want to look back on our lives and be able to treasure the memories of how God, through His Spirit, used us for His glory. We want to be faithful to the finish. We want to make an impact on our family, communities, nation, and world.

We kicked off this unusual year with a rally by our local radio celebrity and good friend, Rick Burgess. We have had 4 different seminars on identity, caregiving, finances, and service. Three of these were by zoom, and one in person. We have served together bringing food and money to five different local ministries in our city, with another project this fall, praying together in Fairfield.

We are excited where God is going to take us this next year. We are planning a rally in January with Pat Morley. Come join our ranks as we all strive to finish well.

IN THE YBL LIBRARY

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PHIL REDDICK



The Steward Leader by R. Scott Roden.

It is one of the best books on leadership I have read in recent years. Instead of talking about servant leaders which we have heard of in many books, Rodin talks about the leader as a steward in his relationship with God and with others.

Dream Big by Bob Goff.

If you want stories, Bob Goff has hundreds of them. All his books are very readable and entertaining. But in the meantime, he challenges us to trust God for big things and to go after Our God-led dreams with reckless abandon.



A Resilient Life by Gordon McDonald.

To continue reading books that challenge me in the second half, McDonald's book has some great insights. His first section of the book is entitled resilient people are committed to finishing strong.

Reflections on the Existence of God by Richard Simmons III.

I have read every book that my friend Richard has written. I was one of the readers of the transcript of his first book, Remembering the Forgotten God. Every new book he writes seems to get even better. I appreciate that Richard understands me and how he writes in short chapters!

Books on World War II

The Splendid and the Vile by Eric Larson.

It is the story of Churchill, his family and his leadership during the Blitz. I love what the inside cover says, The Splendid and the Vile takes readers out of today's political dysfunction and back to a time of true leadership when- in the face of unrelenting horror- Churchill's eloquence, courage, and perseverance bound a country, and a family, together.

The Plot Against America by Philip Roth.

Philip gives us what he believes would have been the result of America not entering the WWII. Using real life characters during that time like Lindbergh, he gives a convincing and chilling account of those years.



SMALL GROUP STORIES

BOB BELLOWS: The Thursday morning Bible study has been so enjoyable and enriching. There are a number of spiritual and social benefits. Most of the 20+ attendees are of retirement age and after productive business careers are looking for a project to stay busy and to use our experience to further God's Kingdom and to reach others that are in need and can use a helping hand or a positive word of encouragement. The social interaction of the group is another positive aspect. We hold each other accountable and are supportive with prayers, counseling, and giving each other a humorous hard time whenever we are asked. We all want to finish our second half stronger than the first half. What a gift of God's Grace is for each of us to have this opportunity.

DANIEL FRIDAY: Our group is more healthy than we've ever been and really clicking with the core 6 guys who are regular and committed now. Each of us have acknowledged how life giving the group has been this year in the midst of Covid-19 and some churches still being limited/shut down. The group has taken on a more impactful role in each of our lives for fellowship, encouragement, prayer, and community.

BIRMINGHAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ROB GENIN

Adapting Marketplace Ministry in a Pandemic: The Genius of Jesus' Methodology

Jesus' ministry was one of proclamation and personal discipleship. He preached the message, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near", and he trained twelve men for three years by teaching, modeling, and encouraging the disciples in the good news of the Kingdom. When Jesus ascended to heaven, one of the marks of the ministry that He instilled into them was the ability to adapt and contextualize the good news to whatever people and situation they encountered.

This has been so important for our ministry to remember this year. The early church, under threat of arrest and execution, met in sewers and catacombs to worship. The church was not a place. This utterly befuddled Roman emperors like Diocletian, who burned many churches, and then wondered why the Christians continued to grow in number.

Likewise, we have had to continually remember the roots of YBL's ministry,

which started 39 years ago. It began with the burden of businessmen for their co-workers. It was not a burden to have public events, but a burden that other people did not know the good news about Jesus. Events have been a strategy to help connect businessmen with the gospel. But, God can accomplish what He wishes without public events.

Paul, writing to the Philippians, explained that though he was imprisoned for the testimony about Jesus, "God's word is not chained" (Philippians 1:14). Our inabilities do not limit God, but rather become the means through which God makes Himself seen and understood.

In Birmingham, small groups and mentoring continued this year, becoming a valuable place of encouragement when even many churches were not able to meet in person. The physical needs of people in our community became an opportunity to show tangible love to

those who were impacted and isolated, whether it was blood donation or food or material goods or even assisting other non-profits. We did a series of discipleship lessons and videos to keep our groups focused on the gospel. Vocational outreach to High Schools and Universities looked different – but created new opportunities to show how Jesus priorities shape our work and plans.

We are grateful for the good news of Jesus, which every person in the marketplace needs. The form and strategies of making Him known might change, but Jesus Christ is the same, "Yesterday, today and forever" (Heb 13:8).



MINISTRY IMPACT



BRANDON CLEVELAND:

Joining a YBL small group has really helped me, because it was full of men who can relate to the pressures which I face. It helps a lot when we pray together and apply our study together.

WALLACE TUTT:

Joining a group right after finishing college has really helped me see that faith in God is key to my life. I have grown in my relationship with God and I am learning to apply it daily.

BRETT OWENS:

Having moved to Birmingham during COVID, my YBL small group has been valuable in maintaining community and accountability.

ERIC PARKS:

I have been in many small groups, but there has been something special about being in a group with businessmen from other churches and denominations. These relationships serve as a constant reminder to me to live out my faith, and they help me to share the love of Christ with those I work with every day.



I would never permit someone to so demean my soul as to make me hate him.
–Booker T. Washington

WBL: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

AUGUST GRIFFITH

WBL

*"Trust in the LORD,
and do good;
dwell in the land and
befriend faithfulness."*

Psalm 37: 3



Psalm 37:3 has been a steady guide through all of the twists and turns of 2020: Trust in the Lord and do good; in isolation, in fear, in quarantine – trust in the Lord and do good.

...dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness – the land of working remote, the land of cancelled childcare, the land of racial injustice, the land of virtual schooling, the land of civil unrest, the land of sanitizing and facemasks – dwell in the land and befriend faithfulness.

God's faithfulness and our desire to faithfully serve working women has been the driving force behind many of our creative ministry efforts this year. WBL's Small Group Leaders befriended faithfulness right away, stepping up and showing up for their groups by using Zoom, Skype, Group texts, Facebook Groups, the list goes on. Small Groups have always served a vital role in our ministry. Now more than ever, they have proven to be a place of shalom for women in need. While working from home has its perks, it has blurred the lines between work and home, making many women feel "always on," like they must be available to work 24/7, impacting their productivity and mental health. For some, the burden of parenting and running a household while also working a job during the pandemic has created a pressure cooker environment and women are bearing the brunt of it.

WBL sees that woman. Through the ministry of WBL, I pray that weary woman knows God sees her too. By God's grace, WBL hosted two Online Events this year, reaching women with the hope of the gospel, in the comfort of their own homes. Both of our speakers shared powerful testimonies of God's faithfulness through their suffering. What a gift it has been to carry out this mission to love the working woman and befriend faithfulness during this wild year. The Lord has been faithful every step of the way – to Him be the glory.

WBL Testimony 1, Online Event:

"The WBL Event was so good! Thank you for helping me actually put something on my calendar! At the end, I just started bawling - I think it has been brewing but just the realization that this is so much greater than us... I was hit with feelings of hope and joy and sadness all at the same time - mostly sadness for those who don't know God and don't share in the same hope that we're able to cling to in times like this. Thank you for WBL's leadership and constant encouragement! WBL is truly a blessing!"

WBL Testimony 2, Small Group:

"Thanking God for providing women involved in this ministry to reach out to people like me! I needed this fellowship and growth opportunity for my personal walk with the Lord."

MEET AUGUST GRIFFITH, WBL'S NEW DIRECTOR

August was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia but has called Birmingham home since 2012. She graduated from Samford University with a BA in Journalism and Mass Communication. Upon graduation, August married her college sweetheart and together, they served on staff with a local college ministry, Campus Outreach. August previously worked as a Business Development Manager for Warren Averett CPA's & Advisors before stepping into this new role as WBL Director in January 2020, just 8 weeks before COVID-19 ensued.

She has been involved with the ministry for the past four years and is honored to serve working women in Birmingham as they seek to know God and glorify Him with all aspects of their lives. August lives in Bluff Park with her husband Luke and their baby boy, Calvin. Her proudest achievement of 2019 was being promoted to "Mama".



HUNTSVILLE: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

BOB BOERNER

A Season of Growth...in a Turbulent Year!

While 2020 has had its share of challenges and disappointments, for YBL Huntsville, 2020 has been a year of significant growth and blessing! In January, we hired Nathan Eldridge—a gifted and proven leader—who has been tasked to lead our efforts to reach and disciple “young” men (ages 22-38). It has thrilled my heart to see God use Nathan to develop a team of capable men who are focused on seeing the next generation reached for Christ!

Then, during the Spring, God raised up a retired banker, Scott Martin, who believed God was calling him to help YBL develop a focus towards men who were entering the second-half of

life; Scott's passion is to assist men to finish their races well! We are calling this initiative “Second Half.” Scott and I have been amazed at the interest that has arisen from our conversations with men who want to re-prioritize their lives in order to make an eternal impact for Christ! We have formed a qualified team and hope to roll out a plan for this initiative in early 2021.

As I have walked alongside these two gifted leaders this year—I have also had the privilege of overseeing YBL establish several new men's small groups—which have come as a result of our events. So far this year—even with the COVID restrictions—YBL has been

able to sponsor 5 impactful events—reaching over 350 folks for Christ! Also, we have 2 more events scheduled before the end of the year! This is amazing in light of the unprecedented obstacles we've faced in 2020! God is good, and He is building His Kingdom—even in the middle of a pandemic!



INTRODUCING: NATHAN ELDRIDGE

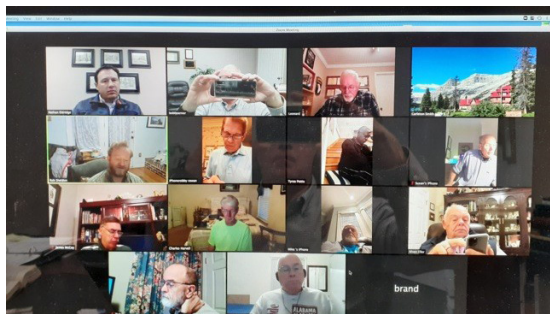
NEW DIRECTOR OF EMERGING LEADERS FOR YBL HUNTSVILLE



Scott Martin, Bob Boerner, Nathan Eldridge



Nathan Eldridge joined YBL this year. He brings a blend of experience from serving on the pastoral staff of several churches as well as in the banking industry. He is a native of Jackson, MS and a graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary. He and his wife Terry live in south Huntsville with their 6 children. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing, watching sports of all kinds, and spending time with family.



YBL Huntsville Testimony

“YBL has been a great encouragement to me. Being surrounded by the corporate culture everyday can be challenging at times for a believer. Spending even an hour each week with other Christian men holds me accountable to living out my faith in what can seem like an unbelieving environment.”

“What draws people to be friends is that they see the same truth and they share it.” C.S. Lewis

JACKSON: DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JAY FLETCHER



2020 started out as normal as every year that I have been associated with YBL Jackson. We were recruiting our annual sponsors and preparing for our Young Professionals Network Gathering in February. March came and everything stopped. We were at the very beginning of the COVID pandemic. Life stopped. School stopped. Work stopped. Most would begin working from home and homeschooling their kids.

We were living in the middle of some of the greatest change we have ever experienced. Our small groups moved to virtual meetings. Our events became virtual events. Our counseling and prayer sessions had to be done by FaceTime or Zoom.



In Jackson, we began to see the negative impact of the pandemic. COVID exposed so many things that were just under the surface. Marriage challenges were exposed. Addictions were exposed. Anxiety and depression issues were exposed.

In the midst of a crazy 2020, God has worked in ways that I could not have imagined. When everything stopped, God increased ministry opportunities. I watched as God healed marriages, walked with couples through job loss and other financial issues. I saw God deliver men from addiction.



Our groups are strong and healthy and have been a place of normalcy for so many of our men. We did not lose men in our small groups; God actually added to our groups. I saw men come to Christ and others growing through discipleship opportunities.

As we end 2020 and look toward 2021, I am grateful and humbled. Grateful to God for His work during this crazy time of change. Grateful for a board that has championed YBL Jackson, prayed hard and led well during this season. Grateful for discipleship group leaders that have shepherded so well. Finally, I am grateful for our donors that have continued to support the YBL Jackson Ministry during the pandemic.

Thank you, Lord, for a crazy 2020 and for your faithfulness to YBL Jackson.

JOHN LUCAS

"I joined YBL to try to kick start networking for business purposes and maybe attend a few cool events. YBL has changed my life and strengthened my relationship with Christ. The guys in my small group have become a second family, and people I will cherish forever."

MASON IRBY

"YBL as an organization means a great deal to me. In the business world that can be so crazy at times, it brings a sense of normalcy and an opportunity to meet with other like-minded guys that are dealing with most of the same struggles and successes that you are."



"The most powerful leadership tool you have is your own personal example." – John Wooden



Young Business Leaders
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Birmingham, AL 34243

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Please note: some photos were taken prior to Covid-19



"Truth is like a lion. let it loose and it will defend itself."—C.H. Spurgeon