

Church mourns pastor electrocuted during baptism

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Kyle Lake (left),
pastor of
University
Baptist Church
in Waco, was
killed after he
grabbed a
microphone
while in a full
baptistry. He is
pictured with
University's
community
pastor, Ben
Dudley, and
worship leader,
David Crowder.
(Photo by
Duane
Lavery/Waco
Tribune-Herald)

Church mourns pastor electrocuted during baptism

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

WACO-Kyle Lake, 33-year-old pastor of the innovative University Baptist Church in Waco, was electrocuted and died Oct. 30 after he grabbed a microphone while in a baptistry full of water.

Eyewitnesses reported Lake grabbed the microphone to adjust it while standing in the baptismal waters. He was shocked and collapsed.

More than 800 people witnessed the event, which happened on the same weekend as Baylor University's homecoming. Doctors in the congregation tried for 40 minutes to revive Lake. He was sent to Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead at 11:30 a.m. The woman Lake was to baptize survived the incident.

In the days following the accident, a technical crew and local authorities continued to try to pinpoint the exact cause of Lake's death.

Lake and his wife, Jen, have a daughter and twin sons.

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In an Internet blog, one Baylor student mourned the loss of “a dear friend and spiritual guide to so many people in the community who have struggled with faith.”

“Besides the loss itself, many in the church are traumatized because

everyone there actually saw him get electrocuted,” the student wrote on www.theooze.com. “Please do pray for everyone involved. The community is really struggling.”

The church's website—typically full of color—provided a stark, simple statement Oct. 31 expressing grief over the loss of a pastor and friend. It also affirmed his faith.

“We are confident that Kyle is in heaven today because of his trust in Jesus Christ as his savior,” the site read.

Members of the David Crowder Band, the congregation's worship band, also left a simple expression of their feelings.

“We are deeply saddened by the loss of our great friend and pastor, Kyle Lake. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Lake family, as well as our entire church community at UBC.”

The church held a service of prayer and reflection Oct. 30 to remember its pastor.

University Baptist was founded in 1995 by David Crowder and Chris Seay, now pastor of Ecclesia Church in Houston. Lake led University Baptist, a congregation comprised largely of college students, seven years.

A graduate of Baylor University and Truett Theological Seminary, Lake was one of the up-and-coming voices of the “emerging church” movement, which seeks to reconnect younger generations to the gospel.

Seay characterized Lake as “remarkably endearing” and said he cared deeply for his congregation.

“He loved students so much,” Seay said. “He'd sit down and laugh and joke and also be able to speak truth into their lives.”

Milfred Minatrea, missional church consultant for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, called Lake a “bridge person” because he cared deeply for traditional churches but was passionate about sharing the gospel with younger generations.

“Kyle's contemplative in many senses,” Minatrea said. “He meditated on the Scriptures and tried to tell the message in fresh ways.”

Lake was the author of two books, *Understanding God's Will* and *[Re]Understanding Prayer*. News of Lake's death spread across the country within hours of his passing through phone calls, e-mails and Internet blogs.

Greg Warner of Associated Baptist Press contributed to this article.

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