

‘We Need Jesus Deeply’: Christian University Mourns 2 Cyclists Killed in Crash

Two Milligan University students were killed and seven others injured Wednesday when a vehicle struck the Christian university’s cycling team during a morning training ride in Hampton, Tennessee.

Sophomores Haylan Engdahl and Brayden Rogers died in the crash, according to The Christian Post. The injured cyclists were taken to Johnson City Medical Center, where at least four were initially listed in critical condition. Two have since been released.

“There are no words to adequately describe this level of loss,” Milligan University said in a statement. “Our prayers are with all those impacted by this tragedy. Please keep the Milligan community in your prayers.”

Eleven members of the team were riding together when they were struck around 8 a.m.



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Milligan President Stephen Waers called the university community to turn to Christ as students, families and faculty grieve.

“It is more important than ever right now that we are a community gathered around Jesus,” Waers said. “We need Jesus deeply.”

Waers invited believers to pray for the families of Engdahl and Rogers and for the students still receiving medical care.

“Lord Jesus, we need you; have mercy,” he prayed.

Authorities arrested John Alexander Benfield, 69, of North Carolina. He faces two counts of vehicular homicide by recklessness and five counts of aggravated assault by vehicle by recklessness. Additional charges remain possible.

Court documents state that officers smelled marijuana coming from Benfield’s vehicle. However, the affidavit does not say marijuana was found, provide the results of drug or alcohol testing or state that Benfield was impaired.

Investigators found no evidence that Benfield braked or attempted to steer around the cyclists after the vehicle traveling ahead of him changed lanes.

Maj. Roy Brown of the Tennessee Highway Patrol said investigators are working “to determine exactly what happened” and provide the families and university with answers.

James Lasher, a seasoned writer and editor at Charisma Media, combines faith and storytelling with a journalism background from Otterbein University and ministry experience in Guatemala and at the LA Dream Center. A Marine Corps and Air Force veteran, he is the author of *The Revelation of Jesus: A Common Man’s Commentary* and a contributor to Charisma magazine. For interviews and media inquiries, please contact media@.