



Word & Way



“Why do churches decline?”

“If the church is not willing to address these elements, they can change pastors and other leaders, or spend money on buildings and programs until the money is gone, and then discover that nothing has really been fixed. The decline continues.”

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“Friendship Camp Prayer Requests”

“When we lack godly adults, we miss opportunities for gospel conversations. Would you pray about how you might be able to serve at camp this year?”

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“Why do churches decline?”

A word from the Associational Missionary

It may just be my nature, but I’ve always had a hard time with simple, easy answers to complex problems or questions. It sets up an immediate distrust of the veracity and applicability of the given answers.

When it comes to church health and advancement, the older I get and the more experience I gain, the more I appreciate just how complex the issues are that face many churches today. So, while there may not be one simple answer to the headline question, that doesn’t mean that there’s not an answer.

It is worth all the effort that may be needed to discover and apply it to stop the decline and begin to grow as a healthy church.

“Many factors of decline...are part of the DNA and culture of the church.”

Church Decline is Complex

Tony Morgan is an author, pastor, and church strategist who has assisted many churches facing decline. In his Church Leaders Intelligence Report, Morgan remarked, *“When I work with churches for the first time, sometimes they’re frustrated with me because I’m not willing to help them fix something specific... Churches can become convinced that they know why their church isn’t growing.”*

I think Tony and I agree on this point of complexity. If I had the privilege of doing an in-depth analysis of each church that is facing decline today, there would be several factors that would present themselves as culprits adding to the decline. I would also learn that many of these factors



Charles Stoops, *Associational Missionary*

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Mentioned in article: Tony Morgan



Tony Morgan, *founder and lead strategist of The Unstuck Group*

His consultant firm serves churches around the world. His group collects research on church health. Findings are published for free on the group's website.

Morgan is also the host of *The Unstuck Church Podcast* and the author of *The Unstuck Church*.

have been repeated down through the years as part of the DNA and culture of the church.

If the church is not willing to address these elements, they can change pastors and other leaders, or spend money on buildings and programs until the money is gone, and then discover that nothing has really been fixed. The decline continues.

5 Foundational Problems

Morgan presents five foundational aspects that need to be addressed first in understanding why a church is in decline.

- Lack of mission and vision clarity
- Failure to define a concise strategy to help newcomers become fully devoted followers of Christ
- A complex structure
- Inward-focus with little connection to the community
- Weak leadership, especially in the senior pastor role

Some might use the phrase, "Rome wasn't built in a day!"

And I would like to add, "And it didn't die overnight either!"

There was a long process of building up, and a long process of dying. If you think about it, there's some good news to be found in this statement.

There's Time to Act

There's time to get an understanding of what the real issues may be that are hindering the church's growth and keeping it from advancing in its God-given mission to impact its community and the world.

But there's another truth that I've observed to be almost an absolute—the engagement of a trusted outside source is vital in helping the church to address the real culprits of decline and then to initiate meaningful change that over time will help the

church make good decisions and return to health under the headship of Jesus Christ.

"If meaningful changes are not made, the church will ultimately find itself at the end of its lifecycle—death is imminent."

I know change can be difficult to navigate in a small declining church, but if meaningful changes are not made, the church will ultimately find itself at the end of its lifecycle—death is Imminent.

Speaking to the need for change, Morgan stated that he was "*surprised by the number of churches that would rather close their doors than make the necessary changes to avoid decline.*"

He concluded by saying that "*churches unwilling to address these elements will not shift their decline, no matter how hard they try.*"

Friendship Baptist Association stands at the ready to come alongside and help any church as that much needed trusted partner. Call me anytime!

Charles Stoops
Associational Missionary

Five Key Factors of Church Decline:

1. Lack of clear mission
2. No strategy to turn newcomers into devoted disciples
3. Complex structure
4. No community focus
5. Weak leadership



Friendship Camp Prayer Requests Camp Manager Report

As we prepare for the 2024 Camp season, please be in prayer with us for the Gospel of Christ to be clearly communicated and the love of Christ to be seen by all. Pray also that the Scriptures would be so prominent in our conversations that we would all be walking Bibles! **Pray that the truths of God would be communicated fully, truthfully, and lovingly.** Pray for wisdom and knowledge beyond our ability!

Please pray with us for diligence to exhort those whom God is working in, that they may come to know Christ, be recognized and discipled, and that the Kingdom of Heaven may be benefited by their love for Christ for decades, generations, and eternity to come.

One of the beauties of Camp is a focused time of encountering the Lord through the Scriptures and an atmosphere of setting aside distractions. This is a good thing, a powerful thing, and may God increase it all the more!

I want to make you aware that as of the writing of this report, **we currently do not have leaders for Day Camp or**

for Girl's Camp. Please pray with us for the leading of the right people to those positions! **UPDATE: God has filled these positions.**

Pray also for the entirety of the camp planning process, that the result would be a God-honoring program and so much fun for the campers that they talk about it for the rest of their lives!

A Great Need

My brothers and sisters in Christ, I am telling you plainly, **we need more godly adult helpers and counselors.** When the laborers are lacking, the harvest suffers.

Please pray with us for the Lord to send more laborers into His harvest. Would you share with your churches this opportunity to serve? **Would YOU pray about how YOU might be able to serve at camp this year?**

Boys, Girls, and Day Camp are also great opportunities for godly young people to get involved in serving. They can see what the other side of Camp is like. High school students and above can find more information about serving at friendshipcamps.com.

Pray for lasting results where people encounter the Lord Jesus Christ. He alone changes lives eternally. **It is**

our desire that Christ Jesus receive the glory and honor for this coming camp year for He is worthy.

Thank you all for your prayers, and thank you for your support of the work that goes on at Friendship Camp.

In Christ,
Colten Cannady
Camp Manager

When we lack godly adults, we miss opportunities for gospel conversations. Please pray with us for the Lord to send more laborers into His harvest.

Would YOU pray about how YOU might be able to serve at camp this year?

When we lack godly adults, we miss opportunities for life-changing gospel conversations. We can't share wisdom and pour into these young lives like we wish to do.



FRIENDSHIP CAMP



Paper Goods Drive

Help us stock up on paper goods for Friendship Camp! Summer camp registration fees will go further and provide better camp programming!

Paper Towels ■ Napkins
Divided Foam Plates ■ 9"-11" Foam Plates
6" Foam Plates ■ 12 oz. Foam Bowls

Bring your collected items to the Executive Committee Meeting at
Richland Baptist Church on May 21, 2024

OR

Bring your items to the FBA Office in Ellaville May 9-24, 2024.

Across the Map Missions and Ministries Opens Local Clothing Ministry



The new Across the Map clothing ministry has a dedicated baby and toddler room.

The Across the Map clothing ministry site gives away free clothes to anyone who stops in.

The site has served 257 people since it first opened in October.

Mack and Bebe Herrington of Shiloh Baptist Church have helped people and shared the gospel on short-term mission trips to Central America and Alaska for decades.

They're the co-founders of Across the Map Missions and Ministry and long-time members of the FBA, but God recently led them to invest more of their time in serving locally.

"We decided we wanted to do something local. The trips were getting tough," said Mack.

The clothing ministry opened in Ellaville, GA back in October. Since then, 257 people have shopped the collections of clothes, shoes, and small household items.

There's no cost to any of the items and no limit to how frequently somebody can patronize the ministry either. The store is open every Wednesday and on the last Saturday of the month from 10 am to 2 pm.

There's also a prayer room and always volunteers available to talk to those who come in.



In the back, the building doubles as the ministry's headquarters for ongoing work around the world.

"No donations go to waste," explained Mack. He says that a group of women are using clothes that are too frayed for the store to braid jump ropes. The toys will go into Operation Christmas shoeboxes later in the year.

They also collect old eyeglasses to send overseas.

Across the Map also plans at least two trips to Kentucky each year, still visits Alaska, and sends supplies to a missionary in the Philippines.

Shiloh Baptist Church, Ellaville Baptist Church, and Rusty Taylor are current main supporters of the clothing ministry, but Mack says there is room for more to get involved.

"Volunteers are always helpful," he said. Next month the ministry will switch out the winter coats and long-sleeves with summer clothes that are currently stored in the back.

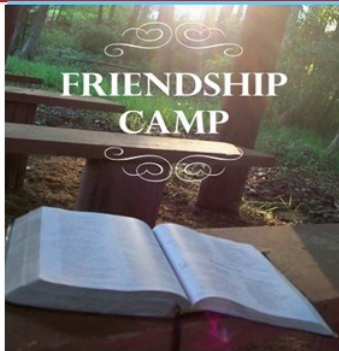
He added, "We can always use donations and financial support."

Across the Map is a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization. They can be contacted through Facebook or atmserves@gmail.com.

Please be in prayer for this new ministry. ATM invites all to stop by.

(Report and Photos by Lauren C. Moye)





June 2024

More information! Online registration!
www.FriendshipCamps.com
 All children and youth are welcome to attend



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	27 Memorial Day	28 First Day of AIM— Summer Missions	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
South Georgia Hispanic Camp						
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Friendship Day Camp 8:00—4:00 • 5-8 years old • \$ 80 Registration Deadline: May 28						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Momentum Youth Camp 6th-12th Grade • \$175 Registration Deadline: June 4						
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Blaze Girls Camp/Velocity Boys Camp Overnight camp for 2nd-6th Grade • \$140 Registration Deadline: June 11					Save \$10 Register by April 30	
30	1	2	3	4 Independence Day	5	6 Last Day of AIM— Summer Missions

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 2024	
Focus on North American Missions	
3-10	Week of Prayer for North American Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
5	Summer Camp Planning Meeting FBA Office @ 6 PM
6	Minister's Prayer Time Plains, BC @ 10 AM
13	Minister's Prayer Time Central BC @ 10 AM
17	Church Planting Emphasis Day
20	Minister's Prayer Time Whitewater BC @ 10 AM
24	Palm Sunday
24	Personal Evangelism Commitment Day
27	Minister's Prayer Time FBC, Butler @ 10 AM
31	Easter Sunday 

April 2024	
Focus on Christian Evangelism	
7	Baptism Sunday
9	Summer Camps Planning Meeting FBA Office @ 6 PM
11	Association wide Ministers Fellowship TBD @ 11:30 AM
13	FBA Men's Fish Fry FBA Camp @ 6 PM
18	Camp Development Meeting Friendship Camp @ 6 PM
FBA Meetings & Events Holidays GBMB/SBC Dates	

Pease Pray For Our Churches Without Pastors

Amazing Grace Baptist Church

Calvary Baptist Church

Ebenezer Baptist Church

Eastside Baptist Church

Faith Baptist Church, Butler

First Baptist Church, Buena Vista

Lebanon Baptist Church

New Life Baptist Church

May 2024	
Focus on Christian Education	
1	Minister's Prayer Time Plains BC @ 10 AM
2	National Day of Prayer
5	SBC Seminary Day
7	Ephesians 4:12 Leadership Development Council FBA Office @ 1:30 PM Acts 1:8 Missions Council FBA Office @ 6 PM
10	Minister's Prayer Time Central BC, 10 AM
14	Friendship Council FBA Office @ 11:30 AM Lunch Served
15	Minister's Prayer Time Whitewater BC @ 10 AM
19	Camp Missionary Orientation FBA Camp @ 2 PM
19	Children's Ministry Sunday
21	Executive Committee Meeting Richland BC @ 7:00 PM Meal @ 6:00 PM
22	Minister's Prayer Time First BC, Butler @ 10 AM
27	Memorial Day FBA Office Closed
28	AIM- Summer Missions Begins- Ends July 6



ADVANCING IN MINISTRY: SUMMER INTERNSHIP

Worship God. Serve others. Become family

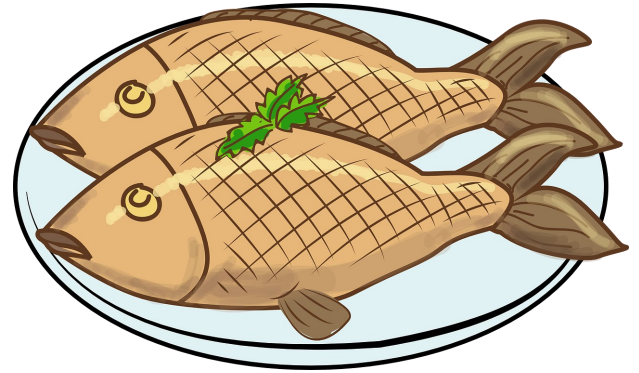
- A six week long summer missions internship
- Learn how to communicate the gospel clearly from Scripture, how to share your testimony, and Bible Study methods.
- Hands-on mission projects.
- Open to highschoolers, recent graduates, or college students.

Now accepting applications!




Save the Date: Fish Fry

The FBA Men's Ministry is planning a fish fry for April 13. Last year's fish fry was a time of great fellowship and ministry. Save the date and watch for more information on our Facebook page.



Georgia Baptist Women's
SPRING EVENT

Saturday, April 27, 2024 at First Baptist Church, Jonesboro

Featuring

Chrystal Evans Hurst

AUTHOR & SPEAKER

Most of us want to hear clearly from God but how do we prepare and position our hearts to hear from Him? How do we discern his leading and appropriately respond to what he is calling us to do? Chrystal Evans Hurst will help us take an inward look at the heart and explore how to do our part in preparing to hear from God.



REGISTRATION

Includes all worship sessions, activities, lunch and T-shirt.

\$69 by March 15 | **\$79** by April 8

Make it an overnight experience! Arrive on Friday, April 26 for missions activities, dinner and Missions Celebration. | **\$25** by April 8

georgiabaptistwomen.org/springevent



FBA Youth Leader makes spring plans

Tyler Taylor is the current youth pastor of Ellaville Baptist Church and the new Association Youth Leader. He's served in different ministry positions since he was age 18. He's excited to share two association-wide events that he is planning for this spring.

EZEKIEL 36:26-27. "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes and be careful to obey My rules."

EPHESIANS 2:17-19-: And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to you who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father, by one Spirit, then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21-: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. [a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 18 All things are from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

GALATIANS 2:20- I have been crucified with Christ. I now live, but Christ who lives in me. And I do not live by flesh, but by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and himself for me.

RESOURCES
BY YM360

UNIDENTIFIED

Night of Worship

Date: March 22nd
Time: 6:00- 10:00
Location: Friendship Camp-2404 GA-30, Americus, GA 31719

Youth Night of Worship: Unidentified

March 22, 2024 | 6:00pm-10:00pm
Friendship Camp Gymnasium

This is a free event open to all youth.

Associational Youth Leader Tyler Taylor says, "This is a great night of worship that you come together and learn about the Lord."

Any church in the association can participate. Tyler asks that churches do provide a headcount for food and planning purposes. You can email him at tyler@ellavillebaptist.com



Association-Wide family day

May 4, 2024 | 4:00pm-7:00pm
Friendship Camp

This family day is open to all churches in the association and is for all ages. This fun afternoon will feature food, field games, a band, and a speaker.

Dog-lovers will especially enjoy a gospel presentation that involves dogs.

Friendship Baptist Association
504 E. Oglethorpe Street
Ellaville, GA 31806

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Return Service Requested

Come by our office:
Monday– Thursday, 8:00 am—5:00 pm
Closed on Friday

Call us at:
Phone: 229-937-2350
Fax: 229-937-2351

Email the Associational Missionary:
FriendshipDOM@windstream.net

Email the Ministry Assistant:
FBA@windstream.net

Check out our websites:
www.FriendshipBaptistAssociation.org
www.FriendshipCamps.com

Together We Build Friendship



2024 Beginning Balance	\$	27,270.25
Gifts Received	\$	7,292.00
Expenses	\$	0.00
Balance as of 2/26/2024	\$	34,562.25

- In Honor of Paul Mott by** Paul & Lorna Riley
- In Memory of Lance & Tina Fendley by** Paula & Johnny Heath,
Tammy Crumbley, Angie Kauffman
- In Memory of Wilson Weathersby by** Weathersby Family Estates
- In Memory of Vicki Williamson Crew by** Friendship Baptist Association,
Charles & Janet Stoops, Richard & Linda Wicker, Jeff & Cindy Schaeffner

Remember you can make donations *In Honor of* or *In Memory of* someone. Just make checks payable to "Friendship Baptist Association" and on the memo line write "TWBF" Include a note specifying who and why, including acknowledgements to be sent to family, etc. We'll also print it in the next issue of the Word & Way.



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