



MARSHALL BAPTIST NEWS

271 BAPTIST CAMP ROAD, GUNTERSVILLE, AL 35976

Website: www.marshallba.com
Email: taylor@marshallba.com
Dr. Eric Taylor, AMS



MBA Office:
256-582-2882

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Retreat Center:
256-582-4994

WHEN CHURCH AND CULTURE COLLIDE

Recent **LifeWay Research** reveals a hopeful trend: over half of Protestant churches in America report some growth in attendance in the past two years. But growth brings new questions: How do we remain faithful in a culture that is loud, divided, and often distracted? How do we anchor ourselves in Christ when the voices around us are pulling in different directions?

A great example came recently at the **funeral of Charlie Kirk**, where tens of thousands gathered in Phoenix, Arizona for the memorial service. But what unfolded was more than a memorial service — some tried to spin it to reflect a mere political rally. There were certainly elements of that. But as I watched, I saw worship leaders lead 70,000 people in attendance and millions at home in singing songs that glorified the Lord Jesus Christ. The speakers, many of which held political positions, not only memorialized a young man some are calling a martyr, but they gave a clear and compelling presentation of the Gospel for the watching world to see and hear. That was what was so awesome about it. And the greatest reflection of the Gospel was demonstrated when Erika Kirk, Charlie's widow, publicly extended forgiveness to the man who killed her husband.

Like many, I have sensed that this is a defining moment in our culture. Not to seek to sway people to "our side" politically. Not to use a horrible death to push an agenda or vilify others. But this defining moment, I believe, can be a catalyst for a culture shift. Too often the church has kept quiet about the culture around us, except to condemn it for its bankrupt morality. But we, the church of the Living Lord Jesus, have a unique opportunity in the days ahead to lean into what I believe can be a catalyst for true revival, especially among young adults.

The question remains... "What will we do now?"

After the funeral service is over, after we have gotten on with our busy lives, after the emotions fade. (And they always fade... think of the last hurricane, tornado, etc. We don't still "feel" the same as we did when it first happened.) That's just the normal pattern of life. But what I want to encourage you to do, considering this most recent horrific national tragedy, is to **EXEGETE THE CULTURE**. That word is a word we preachers use to describe our sermon preparation process. We exegete the text. *Exegesis means that we carefully draw out meaning and truth.* Pastors study the text to be able to explain and help people apply the truth to their lives and take steps toward Jesus and following Him as His disciple. We, as individual Christians and collectively as the church, **must EXEGETE the Culture**, to discern what stories, events, and activities shape a person's hopes, fears, actions, and decisions. We must EXEGETE the Culture to understand what stories and narratives compete with the Gospel, and, how we can bring the Good News of the

Gospel to this world. And there is no better time than now because so many people are paying closer attention to this Gospel that Charlie Kirk preached, and they are open to hearing about this Jesus that Charlie Kirk followed.

The Bible gives us an example in **1 Chronicles 12:32**: "*The men of Issachar, who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.*" These leaders not only knew God's Word, but they also understood the cultural moment. They acted wisely as they combined God's Word and the Cultural Opportunity. That is the kind of discernment needed today if we're going to continue to push back darkness. Church, like the Men of Issachar, we must EXEGETE THE TEXT AS WELL AS THE TIMES. We must hold fast to Biblical truth while remaining culturally aware so that we can make the greatest impact with the Gospel.

I want to give you four encouragements from these recent events that will help us individually, as disciples of Jesus, and collectively, as the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, that will help you live as Christ's witness in a Culture that's spiraling out of control:

1. Make sure your anchor is in Christ Jesus, not personalities. Culture will elevate leaders and causes, but we must keep our anchor locked in on Jesus. As the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:2- "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

2. Lead with forgiveness. There will be people who just "PUSH YOUR BUTTONS". But just as Erika Kirk modeled forgiveness, Christians must live out "*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you*" (Ephesians 4:32).

3. Engage with wisdom, not fear. Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount — "*You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world*" (Matthew 5:13-14). **The church must shape culture more than it is shaped by it.**

Keep an outward focus. LifeWay reports that personal invitations remain the most effective way to reach the unchurched. Would you look for someone this week that you can invite to come to church with you this coming Sunday?

Church, we must continue to pray for the Lord to use the horrific death of Charlie Kirk, to allow Christians to impact the culture with the clear, compelling message of the gospel. And will you pray for our **Marshall Baptist Association** as we go about each week — **ENCOURAGING PASTORS, EQUIPPING LEADERS, and ENGAGING CHURCHES** — so that we can push back the darkness in our culture that the light of Jesus Christ can shine brightly through you.

Blessings,

Dr. Eric Taylor, AMS
Marshall Baptist Association

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, October 12, 2025

4:30 p.m.

First Baptist Church, Arab
Arab, AL

Please RSVP here:

<https://tinyurl.com/43eadb5j>

ACPS ARE DUE

Please submit your

Annual Church Profiles

as soon as possible. If you have any questions, contact us at 256-582-2882, or email eric@marshallba.com and taylor@marshallba.com.



THIRD THURSDAYS

Mark your calendars on the **THIRD THURSDAY** of EVERY MONTH for **Pastor Leadership Luncheons!** This is a time of prayer, worship, equipping and encouragement from high capacity leaders. To learn more, please email eric@marshallba.com.

SCHEDULE YOUR FALL 2026 PICNIC AT MBRC

The opportunity to reserve the Marshall Baptist Retreat Center (MBRC) for your church's 2026 Sunday picnic or outdoor service is now open! Schedule your events from now through November to secure your preferred date.

www.marshallbaptistretreat.com

Check out our MBA website for more information on upcoming events and opportunities, as well as open church positions!

[Marshall Baptist Association | Home](http://MarshallBaptistAssociation.com)