

✠ COVINGTON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION NEWS ✠

CORBITT'S COMMENTS

Corbitt's Comments for April 2022

This month I have a difficult subject to address, and that is the shortage of bi-vocational pastors in our county. I have been highlighting this need, literally, for several years now, and the issue in my mind is approaching a crisis level. As I write this article, 12 of our 52 churches are without permanently called pastors, and 9 of these are bi-vocational churches. And, to be totally honest, I don't know where those 9 churches are going to find a pastor.

I am not a prophet, nor am I the son of a prophet. Neither am I the Holy Spirit, so all I can do is state what I have observed over the past (almost) 10 years. I have seen a trend that the larger churches in our county are growing or holding their own, while the smaller churches are getting smaller. We have significantly more bi-vocational churches now than when I was called to be your DOM in 2012, and statistically, we have twice as many Southern Baptist churches per population than the average county across our state. This means we need more bi-vocational pastor than the average county in Alabama. And we don't have them, yet.

For years I have called for us to pray for men to answer God's call to be bi-vocational pastors. We have had a small number answer a call, but we need many more. I have also watched as our bi-vocational churches without pastors have used our pulpit supply list to fill their pulpits with a rotation of different speakers. We love our men who fill the pulpit as supply preachers; they do a wonderful job. Supply preachers are not pastors, however, and the sheep need a shepherd.

After the merger of Mount Pisgah and Philadelphia churches a couple of years ago, I went out on a limb and suggested that mergers might be a way forward for our bi-vocational churches, but, to date, no one has taken that suggestion. COVID-19 may have short-circuited that process, and I believe it is still a viable option. Again, however, we have had no further mergers. Therefore, I am going out on another limb:

One possible solution to our shortage of bi-vocational pastors might be if two churches teamed up to call a man to pastor both churches. This is common in other denominations, and it has been done in the past by Baptist churches as well. Two strong bi-vocational churches might be able to call a full-time pastor, and two smaller churches could share a bi-vocational man. In this way both churches retain their autonomy while also having a pastor of their own. We are no longer a denomination that only has 11:00am worship; we have churches with all manner of Sunday schedules now, so churches can find a mutually agreeable schedule.

Is this the only answer to our leadership crisis? No! We should still pray for men to answer the call to pastor, and we should still consider the possibility of mergers, but sharing a pastor is a possible answer. Will you pray with me about these options for our bi-vocational churches?

Every blessing, Director of Missions
Otis Corbitt

ASSOCIATIONAL NEWS

PASTOR SUPPLY

Dr. James Kilpatrick, former pastor of Sweet Water Baptist Church, is now available to serve as supply pastor, interim pastor, or to conduct revivals.

He can be reached at 334-237-0740.

Immediate Opening for Opp CSC Manager

We have an immediate and urgent need for a manager for the Opp Christian Service Center! This position is an hourly employee who will manage the Opp CSC to include:

- Recruit and manage volunteers
- Oversee receiving and sorting of donations
- Open and close the center and account for all funds to include making daily bank deposits
- Oversee the food distribution ministry and all referrals for in-kind benevolence
- Other duties as assigned

Applicants must be a member in good standing of a Covington Baptist Association church. For more information, contact Leroy Cole or Katie Cooper at 222-3840.

Praying for Each Other in 2022

In Paul's teaching about the gifts of the Holy Spirit in Ephesians 6, he told us we should be "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, . . ."

In 2022, join us in praying for a different member church each week.

MARCH

April 3: Northern Heights
April 10: FBC Opp
April 17: Southside Opp
April 24: Beulah

APRIL FOOD BANK DONORS
Conecuh River, Pleasant Grove, Victory, Mt. Gilead, Mobley Creek Damascus, Southside-Opp, Westside, Sanford, New Song

The Speak Tour is Coming to Covington County!

The student ministry of the Alabama Baptist Convention, in cooperation with the North American Mission Board, are bringing the Speak Tour to Springdale Estate in Andalusia on April 20th beginning at 6pm.

State Missionary Larry Hyche will be the speaker and the Ryan John Band will be playing. There will be games and food will be provided. Admission is free.

This will be a great event for our youth and student ministries! For more information contact Garrett Davis at Carolina Baptist Church, 222-1922.



CHURCH NEWS

MILL CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH CALLS PASTOR

Millcreek Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama has called Rev. Kyle Adams as their pastor.

Ordination services were held Sunday, March 13, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. with Rev. Billy Boles bringing the message. We welcome Brother Adams into the Covington Baptist Association

SPECIAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for the following churches who are without pastors:

Brooks
Victory
Southside Andy
Lockhart
Sweet Home
Smyrna

Oakey Ridge
Floral
Adellum
Enon
Pigeon Creek
Mobley Creek