

2026 · BCA WORKSHOP · MOBILE · AL



FULL STEAM AHEAD

INNOVATION · COLLABORATION · KINGDOM IMPACT



b BAPTIST
COMMUNICATORS
ASSOCIATION



WINNING COMMUNITY IMPACT



2026 BCA workshop
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DOWNTOWN

1. THE ADMIRAL HOTEL
251 GOVERNMENT ST.

2. MAMA'S ON DAUPHIN
220 DAUPHIN ST. #2718

3. DEBRIS PO-BOYS
276 DAUPHIN ST.

4. MO'BAY BEIGNET CO.
451 DAUPHIN ST.

5. DOWNTOWN CHURCH AT THE STEEPLE
251 ST FRANCIS ST.

THE ORIGINAL OYSTER HOUSE

3733 BATTLESHIP PKWY, SPANISH FORT
(9 MIN DRIVE, 5.3 MILES)



4

2026 BCA workshop MAP KEY



a word from the **PRESIDENT**



Pursuing Innovation with Wisdom

There's a line in one of my favorite movies where a young gun meets an old hound. The two banter about what their differing talents bring to the table for the mission ahead.

The young man says, "Age is no guarantee of efficiency." His elder promptly quips, "And youth is no guarantee of innovation."

These lines capture a tension we must navigate in a fallen world we don't control—one where forces drive humanity toward a brave, new technological world.

The rapid changes can be unsettling. Every turn in the digital revolution moves faster with greater implications for our personal and professional futures.

For those of us who remember life before the internet and smartphones, we look back fondly on a past without constant notifications. Our nostalgia often obscures the many ways the advancements have made our lives and work easier.

Since the changes are inevitable, we may be tempted to think that our fondness for "simpler times" is an obstacle to innovation. Our nostalgia, though, senses what we may be losing before our words can catch up.

Once we process those feelings, we can distinguish between the shallow longings and the deeper needs that our increasingly virtual world overlooks.

What's missing is a concept that the two men in the movie missed: wisdom.

Wisdom personified says in Proverbs 8:23, "I was formed before ancient times, from the beginning, before the earth began." (CSB) As Christians, we know wisdom undergirds creation, and without it, we will lose ourselves.

Without wisdom, our kingdom impact will be muted. As we collaborate, however, we can innovate in ways that make our Gospel proclamation louder for God's renown.

BRANDON ELROD

President

ENVIRONMENT



welcome from the **PROGRAM CHAIR**



Dear BCA Family,

Welcome to the 2026 Baptist Communicators Association Annual Workshop! We are excited you have joined us in Mobile, Ala., and pray this week will be a time of encouragement, learning, and meaningful fellowship. Our theme, **Full Steam Ahead – Innovation, Collaboration, Kingdom Impact**, reflects both the spirit of this historic city and the calling we share as communicators who serve the mission of Christ.

Mobile is a place that has continually looked forward. From the steamships that once filled its harbor to the aerospace innovation taking place today, the city has faced challenges by pressing ahead with creativity and collaboration. In much the same way, our work as communicators requires us to faithfully steward new tools, new ideas, and new opportunities to tell God's story in a rapidly changing world. As Paul reminds us in Philippians 3:13–14, we are called to forget what lies behind and press on toward the goal set before us in Christ.

Throughout this workshop, you'll have opportunities to hear from inspiring speakers, participate in practical breakout sessions, and connect with fellow communicators who share your passion for serving the Church and advancing the Gospel. Whether you work in writing, design, public relations, video, digital media, or leadership, our hope is that you will leave Mobile refreshed, encouraged, and equipped to move **full steam ahead** in your ministry.

Thank you for being part of the BCA community. It is a joy to gather with colleagues and friends who are committed to communicating truth with excellence for the sake of Kingdom impact.

Grace and peace,

AMANDA SMITH
Program Chair



COLLEGE PREPARATION

2026 BCA workshop

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



LONNIE BURNETT

Lonnie Burnett has worked in education for 47 years, including 25 years as a teacher in the Mobile County Public School System. In 2004, he began a career in higher education at his alma mater, the University of Mobile, serving first as a professor of history, then dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. In 2019, he was elected as the university's fifth president – an office he held until retiring in May of 2024. After being “retired” for four weeks, he accepted a position as vice president at Coastal Alabama Community College. A historian by training, Lonnie received his bachelor's degree from Mobile College (now the University of Mobile), his master's degree from the University of South Alabama and his doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi. He has written two books on Civil War politics and has contributed book chapters and articles to scholarly publications. He and his wife Lynne have been married 45 years. They have one daughter and son-in-law, Lauren and Cody Wetzel, and one grandson, Alexander.

THURSDAY – 04.16

PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP: THE TOP TEN LIST

Focused on leadership lessons learned (sometimes the hard way) from his 47 years of experience in education, Lonnie Burnett presents critical principles that are relevant to any Christian leader, in the communications field and beyond – all structured in an entertaining and interactive play on the Top Ten List from the classic Late Night with David Letterman show. He will share key insights including leading by example, how to distinguish between being a manager and a leader, how vision is transformed into action and how leaders truly inspire.



TODD GREER

A native of Southeast Michigan who now calls Mobile home, Todd Greer serves as the executive director of Innovation Portal, a non-profit business incubator and entrepreneurship hub designed to accelerate startup growth on the Gulf Coast. It provides mentorship, workspace, and technical resources to help entrepreneurs launch new ideas. Todd's background includes roles as a startup advisor, educator, community builder, and leadership development consultant. He holds degrees from Defiance College, Amridge University, and Regent University and served in leadership positions at the University of Mobile before his current role. Todd is passionate about supporting entrepreneurs and building stronger communities. He believes in opening doors for others and genuinely cares about equipping people to succeed at every stage of the entrepreneurial journey. And fair warning: he might burst into song at any moment.

TUESDAY – 04.14

MISSION FIXED. METHODS FLEXIBLE.

The mission never changes. The methods have to. In this keynote, Todd Greer draws on the science of organizational innovation to help leaders navigate one of the most pressing challenges of our time — knowing when to optimize what's working and when to search for what's next. Mission Fixed. Methods Flexible. gives communicators and innovators a practical framework for exploration, experimentation, and scaling impact through a network rather than alone.



NATHAN HARRIS

In 2024, Nathan Harris joined the staff of the University of Mobile, where he currently serves as vice president for institutional relations. Prior to that, he was vice president of advancement at Grace College & Seminary in Winona Lake, Ind., and associate professor of biblical studies and the senior director of annual giving and stewardship at Cedarville University in Cedarville, Ohio. Nathan earned a Bachelor of Arts in youth ministry from Malone University, and a Master of Divinity, a Master of Theology, and a Doctor of Philosophy in biblical studies from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo. He has taught courses on the New Testament, hermeneutics, and theology. While at Midwestern, he also worked as director of institutional relations initiatives. The author of “A Short Guide to Gospel Generosity: Giving as an Act of Grace” (published by B&H Publishing and available on Amazon.com), Nathan has a passion for helping people understand that the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the very Gospel that saves, redeems and restores – is our foundation for living a life of radical generosity. Nathan and his wife, Kelsey, have three children: Noah, Jude, and Ruth.

WEDNESDAY – 04.15

HOLD THE ROPE: AN INVITATION TO GOSPEL PARTNERSHIP

Every communicator is inviting others to invest—through time, talent, prayer, influence, and resources. In this keynote, Nathan Harris explores Gospel Generosity as a Christ-centered framework for how we communicate that invitation. Drawing from his book “Gospel Generosity,” Harris challenges communicators to move beyond transactional messaging toward a theology of stewardship rooted in grace. With clarity and conviction, he reminds us that everything we hold belongs to God—and when we communicate from that truth, generosity becomes an act of worship, collaboration becomes natural, and Kingdom impact accelerates full steam ahead.



JAMES SPANN

James Spann is one of the most respected and recognizable meteorologists in the nation, currently serving as chief meteorologist for the Alabama Weather Network, which provides severe weather coverage across all 67 counties in the state. Launched in 2025, AWN is available 24/7 on numerous streaming services, on social media and through the AWN app and website. With an extraordinary 47-year career, Spann began his academic journey in electrical engineering before completing his degree in meteorology at Mississippi State University, where he was later named one of the department’s Top 100 Outstanding Alumni. A trusted voice during countless severe weather events, he has earned the American Meteorological Society’s Award for Broadcast Meteorology, Broadcaster of the Year from the National Weather Association, and multiple Emmy Awards. He is also a member of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Silver Circle and was among the first in the country to achieve Certified Broadcast Meteorologist status. Beyond broadcasting, Spann invests deeply in his community—visiting schools across Alabama and leading children’s worship at his church, Double Oak Community Church in Shelby County, Ala.—while sharing life with his wife Karen of 44 years and their two sons.

WEDNESDAY – 04.15

FULL STEAM AHEAD: LEADING WITH CLARITY, COURAGE, AND COMMUNITY IN ALL CONDITIONS

For more than four decades, James Spann has helped communities navigate severe weather with calm authority, clear communication, and deep care for others. But beyond his Emmy-winning career forecasting storms, he brings a perspective shaped by his faith in Jesus and his lifelong commitment to serving others. A devoted member of Double Oak Community Church in Shelby County, Ala., where he teaches Sunday School and leads children’s worship, he views every job as ministry and every message as an opportunity to serve with purpose. In this keynote, he’ll explore how communicators can embrace change, build trust, and lead with integrity and compassion—moving full steam ahead through uncertainty, complexity, and opportunity alike by grounding their work in truth, community, and Kingdom impact.



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS & BREAKOUT SESSIONS



THE ADMIRAL HOTEL

251

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MONDAY — 04.13

2 p.m.	REGISTRATION OPENS	THE ADMIRAL HOTEL, MEZZANINE LEVEL
3:30-5 p.m.	NEW MEMBER FELLOWSHIP	MO' BAY BEIGNET CO.
6-8 p.m.	OPENING DINNER	DEBRIS PO-BOYS
7-9 p.m.	JEFE PALETAS DESSERT TRUCK AND FELLOWSHIP	DOWNTOWN CHURCH AT THE STEEPLE

TUESDAY — 04.14

7:30-8:30 a.m.	BREAKFAST	MAMA'S ON DAUPHIN
8:45 a.m.	WELCOME + DEVOTIONAL Amanda Smith, <i>Program Chair</i>	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
9 a.m.	KEYNOTE: TODD GREER Mission Fixed. Methods Flexible.	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
9:45 a.m.	— — BREAK — —	
10-11:15 a.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION #1 Embracing AI Without Losing Your Soul (Part 1) <i>Mitchell Bruce</i> Crisis Communication: What to Do When a Crisis Hits <i>Brian Hobbs</i> Telling Stories of Faithfulness, Not Just Flash <i>Laura Erlanson & Diana Chandler</i>	NORTH GALLERY SOUTH GALLERY CRYSTAL BALLROOM A
11:30 a.m.	LUNCH + PANEL DISCUSSION Stronger Together: What the BCA-ASBP Alignment Makes Possible <i>Jennifer Rash + Panel</i>	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
1:15 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION #2 Moving Beyond the Narrative <i>Will Heath</i> Practicing Gospel Conversations in a Digital Age <i>Brandon Elrod</i> Make It Pop: Creative Specialty Printing to Elevate Your Brand <i>Kevin Gilligan & Laura Santos</i>	NORTH GALLERY SOUTH GALLERY CRYSTAL BALLROOM A
2:45 p.m.	— — BREAK — —	
3 p.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION #3 Scaling Kingdom Impact Through Creative Partnerships <i>Brian Harris</i> When Ordinary Becomes Unforgettable: Visual Stories That Matter <i>Jim Veneman</i> From Story to Strategy <i>Lesa Moore, Kathy Dean, & Heath Vester</i>	NORTH GALLERY SOUTH GALLERY CRYSTAL BALLROOM A
4:15 p.m.	— — FREE TIME — —	
6 p.m.	WILMER C. FIELDS AWARDS DINNER	THE ORIGINAL OYSTER HOUSE

WEDNESDAY — 04.15

6:20 a.m.	RUN, BCA, RUN 5K	HOTEL LOBBY
7:30-8:30 a.m.	BREAKFAST	MAMA'S ON DAUPHIN
8:45 a.m.	DEVOTIONAL Brandon Elrod, <i>BCA President</i>	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
9 a.m.	KEYNOTE: NATHAN HARRIS Hold the Rope: An Invitation to Gospel Partnership	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
9:45 a.m.	— — BREAK — —	
10-11:15 a.m.	BREAKOUT SESSION #4 Embracing AI Without Losing Your Soul (Part 2) <i>Mitchell Bruce</i> Short-Form Video That Actually Serves the Mission <i>Heath Vester</i> Giving Voice to Vision <i>Kevin Blackwell</i>	NORTH GALLERY SOUTH GALLERY CRYSTAL BALLROOM A
11:30 a.m.	BUSINESS MEETING	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
Noon	LUNCH - TABLE TALK Special Welcome from Kevin Blackwell	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
1:15 p.m.	AFFINITY GROUPS EDITORIAL (<i>Macala Mays</i>) PUBLIC RELATIONS + MARKETING (<i>Lesla Moore</i>) ELECTRONIC MEDIA + INTERACTIVE (<i>Doug Rogers</i>) PHOTOGRAPHY (<i>Kathleen Sparks</i>) MANAGEMENT (<i>Mike Ebert</i>) GRAPHIC DESIGN (<i>Jesse Conte + René Zimny</i>)	LOCATIONS TBA
2:45 p.m.	— — BREAK — —	
3 p.m.	KEYNOTE: JAMES SPANN Full Steam Ahead: Leading with Clarity, Courage, and Community in All Conditions	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
6 p.m.	DINNER	ON YOUR OWN

THURSDAY — 04.16

7:30-8:30 a.m.	BREAKFAST	MAMA'S ON DAUPHIN
8:45 a.m.	DEVOTIONAL Kathleen Sparks, <i>President-Elect</i>	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
9 a.m.	KEYNOTE: LONNIE BURNETT Principles of Leadership: The Top Ten List	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
9:45 a.m.	— — BREAK — —	
10 a.m.	PANEL DISCUSSION You Want Me to Do What? Surviving (and Thriving) Outside Your Lane <i>Facilitated by Margaret Colson</i> <i>Panel: Jesse Conte, Adam Covington, Henry Durand, Sarah Graham, Trennis Henderson & Macala Mays</i>	CRYSTAL BALLROOM
11:30 a.m.	BCA DISMISSES (ASBP CONTINUES THROUGH FRIDAY)	

breakout SESSION 1

TUES 10-11:15 AM

EMBRACING AI WITHOUT LOSING YOUR SOUL (PART 1): FREEDOM THROUGH GUARDRAILS

NORTH GALLERY

INNOVATION

MITCHELL BRUCE, *Director of Marketing & Communications,
The Baptist Foundation of Alabama*

Artificial Intelligence is transforming communication, but ministries must approach it wisely. In this session, we'll explore the ethical, theological, and practical considerations of using AI in Christian communications. We'll consider guardrails and tools that protect your ministry's voice, maintain trust with your audience, and ensure technology serves the mission of your ministry context.

CRISIS COMMUNICATION: WHAT TO DO WHEN A CRISIS HITS

SOUTH GALLERY

COLLABORATION

BRIAN HOBBS, *Communications Director, Oklahoma Baptists*

A crisis can come in many forms and at the most unexpected times, in church and ministry life. There are some key practical principles for responding in times of organizational crisis that bring calm and focus to the situation. We will discuss how we can bring God's goodness to the forefront in a moment or season of organizational crisis through teamwork, care, and good communications.

TELLING STORIES OF FAITHFULNESS, NOT JUST FLASH

BALLROOM A

KINGDOM IMPACT

LAURA ERLANSON, *Managing Editor, Baptist Press*
DIANA CHANDLER, *Senior Writer, Baptist Press*

At times, it seems like we live in a world that is increasingly becoming all flash and no substance. How can we gain and keep the focus of people with short attention spans and no time to spare? Learn from two award-winning writers how to tell stories that honor long-term ministry, incremental growth, and unseen faithfulness in a culture addicted to immediacy.

TUES 1:15-2:30 PM

breakout
SESSION 2

**MOVING BEYOND THE NARRATIVE:
SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM AND
FAITH-INFORMED STORYTELLING**

WILL HEATH, *Media & Professional Development Advisor,
Communication & Media, Samford University*

In a media environment often shaped by crisis, conflict, and cynicism, how can communicators of faith tell the truth while also pointing toward hope? This breakout introduces Solutions Journalism—an innovative reporting approach that holds the powerful accountable not only by exposing problems, but by rigorously examining effective responses. Drawing from experience presenting this model within faith-based academic and professional settings, Will Heath explores how editors, writers, and communicators can move full steam ahead with storytelling that is ethical, collaborative, and rooted in Kingdom values. Participants will gain practical insight into reframing stories to reflect both journalistic integrity and redemptive impact—offering a constructive alternative to incomplete or harmful media narratives.

NORTH GALLERY

INNOVATION

**PRACTICING GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS
IN A DIGITAL AGE**

BRANDON ELROD, *Public Relations Consultant, NAMB*

Sharing your faith can feel intimidating, especially when conversations involve unfamiliar beliefs or difficult questions. This session introduces Share the Gospel, an AI-powered web app that allows believers to practice gospel conversations with simulated partners from various worldviews. Learn how this tool can help you build confidence, think through common objections, and sharpen your ability to communicate the Gospel clearly and graciously in real-life conversations. You'll also learn some of the backstory behind NAMB's development of the tool.

SOUTH GALLERY

**INNOVATION &
KINGDOM IMPACT**

**MAKE IT POP: CREATIVE SPECIALTY
PRINTING TO ELEVATE YOUR BRAND**

KEVIN GILLIGAN, *CEO, Red Paper Plane Specialty Printers*
LAURA SANTOS, *Marketing Director, Red Paper Plane Specialty Printers*

In a world flooded with digital noise, how do you make your message tangible, memorable, and shareable? Join the team from Red Paper Plane to explore how specialty printing solutions can help communicators, designers, and marketers bring brands to life in ways that digital alone can't match. From interactive pop-ups and dimensional mailers to video-enhanced print and standout direct mail pieces, Red Paper Plane's innovative formats create experiences that stop the scroll and start conversations. In this session, you'll see how tactile, visually striking print formats can complement your strategy, amplify engagement, and forge deeper connections with your audience—helping you move full steam ahead in capturing attention, fostering loyalty, and driving real-world impact.

BALLROOM A

COLLABORATION

breakout SESSION 3

TUES 3-4:15 PM

SCALING KINGDOM IMPACT THROUGH CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

BRIAN HARRIS, CEO, *Dogwood Media Solutions*

What happens when ministry vision is no longer limited by your internal “to-do” list? In this breakout, Brian Harris from Dogwood shares how a strategic creative partnership allows organizations to stop managing tasks and start leading a movement. We’ll explore the practical side of collaboration—from brand strategy and social media to graphic design and your website—and show how an outside perspective brings fresh innovation and measurable results your mission deserves. Discover how shifting from a solo effort to a partnership model can extend your reach and strengthen your message without burning you out and allow you to still remain on budget!

NORTH GALLERY

COLLABORATION & KINGDOM IMPACT

WHEN ORDINARY BECOMES UNFORGETTABLE: VISUAL STORIES THAT MATTER

JIM VENEMAN, *Photojournalist*

What if the most powerful ministry stories are unfolding in the simplest moments? Many of the stories we’re called to tell don’t look dramatic at first glance. They happen in fellowship halls, hospital rooms, youth camps, and quiet Sunday mornings. Yet within those everyday, ordinary moments are extraordinary visual opportunities. In this session, we’ll explore how visual storytellers can recognize, anticipate, and capture the moments that move audiences from simply seeing ... to truly feeling. We’ll consider practical ways to transform the common into visual stories that engage hearts and last long after the moment has passed.

SOUTH GALLERY

KINGDOM IMPACT & INNOVATION

FROM STORY TO STRATEGY: TURNING MOMENTS INTO MULTI-PLATFORM MINISTRY IMPACT

LESA MOORE, *Vice President for Marketing & Public Relations, University of Mobile*
KATHY DEAN, *Associate Vice President for University Communications, University of Mobile*
HEATH VESTER, *Associate Vice President for Creative Services, University of Mobile*

Great stories are only as powerful as their reach. Once you’ve captured a meaningful moment, how do you steward it well across every channel—without starting from scratch each time? In this breakout, communicators will learn how to take a single story—whether written, photographed, or filmed—and develop it into a cohesive, multi-platform communication strategy. From articles and social posts to video clips, email features, and campaign messaging, we’ll explore practical ways to extend the life and impact of your content. Discover simple frameworks that help teams collaborate more effectively, reduce duplication of effort, and ensure every story moves full steam ahead toward greater Kingdom impact.

BALLROOM A

INNOVATION, COLLABORATION & KINGDOM IMPACT

WED 10-11:15 AM

breakout SESSION 4

EMBRACING AI WITHOUT LOSING YOUR SOUL (PART 2): PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATORS

MITCHELL BRUCE, *Director of Marketing & Communications,
The Baptist Foundation of Alabama*

With the right guardrails in place, AI can become a powerful partner in ministry, one that will help you amplify your message and dedicate more time to the ministry God has given you. In this breakout, you'll explore how to weave AI into your communication work and discover practical use cases that will benefit your ministry and the work God is doing.

NORTH GALLERY

**INNOVATION &
KINGDOM IMPACT**

SHORT-FORM VIDEO THAT ACTUALLY SERVES THE MISSION

HEATH VESTER, *Associate Vice President for Creative Services, University of Mobile*

Short-form video is trendy and here to stay, but does it convey the message at the heart of your organization's purpose? In this session, learn how to create reels, shorts, and clips that inform and inspire—not just chase trends.

SOUTH GALLERY

INNOVATION

GIVING VOICE TO VISION: THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP AND THE COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

KEVIN BLACKWELL, *Executive Director, Mobile Baptist Network*

Strong collaboration between executive leadership and the communications team is a must for transforming the CEO's vision into compelling, mission-driven messaging. Drawing from his experience as a pastor, assistant to the president at Samford University, and now executive director of the Mobile Baptist Network, Kevin Blackwell will highlight some practical strategies for aligning your organization's leadership priorities with clear, effective communication across diverse platforms, leading to Kingdom impact.

BALLROOM A

COLLABORATION

2026 BCA MISSION PROJECT

Christmas

MOBILE BAPTIST



SEAFARERS MINISTRY

SCAN TO
MAKE YOUR
GIFT TODAY!



Every year the Mobile Baptist Network, through the Mobile Baptist Seafarers Ministry (MBSM), blesses some of the thousands of seafarers who visit the Port of Mobile with special Christmas gifts. Throughout the year, the MBSM collects donations to assemble gift kits containing toiletries, a Christmas card, a knit hat, a tract, and most importantly a copy of the book of John.

Their goal this year is to provide gifts for 1,200 seafarers or 55 ships (with an average of 22 crew members per ship), and we can help!

If every registered BCA member contributed at least \$13, we could sponsor three ships. What an amazing thought that our presence here in Mobile this week could have a global impact as we provide a tangible Gospel witness to thousands of seafarers from around the world who will then carry that message back to their home countries.

To make your gift via PayPal, Venmo or credit card, scan the QR code provided or visit mobilebaptists.org/christmasatsea. You might even wish to send the QR code to colleagues who are not here this week, to give them the opportunity to participate as well.

For up-to-date information about the ministry, visit facebook.com/MBNSeafarersMinistry.

at Sea



2026 BCA

LIFETIME MEMBERS



TRENNIS HENDERSON

Trennis Henderson, a former president of Baptist Communicators Association, has been an active member of BCA since 1982.

Serving as the organization's president in 1995-96, Trennis also served terms as BCA's awards chair and program chair; served on the planning committee for four BCA annual meetings in St. Louis, Glorieta, Louisville and Little Rock; was a member of various BCA study committees; and was a BCA Fall Forum speaker.

Trennis has been involved in the ministry of Christian communications for more than four decades, including serving as editor of the *Arkansas Baptist News* and *Kentucky Western Recorder* and vice president of communications at Ouachita Baptist University. He and his wife, Pam, served most recently as traveling correspondents for National Woman's Missionary Union and The Baptist Paper.

He earned numerous BCA awards over the years, including the 2020 Leonard Holloway Award for Exceptional Achievement in Feature Writing. He also is a past president of the Association of State Baptist Publications.

Trennis holds degrees from College of the Ozarks and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and Pam retired in 2024 and now live in Fishers, Ind., where he is an elder at Grace Fishers Church. The Hendersons are the parents of two adult daughters and have five adorable grandkids, ages 4 to 10.



ELIZABETH YOUNG

When Elizabeth Young first began telling the stories of God's work among Arizona Southern Baptists as a newswriter and journalistic consultant, she was a new college grad grateful the post allowed her an electric typewriter.

After almost 46 years and plenty of changes, Elizabeth, director of communications for the Arizona Mission Network of Southern Baptists, is retiring at the end of June 2026.

About eight years after starting the job, Elizabeth became editor of the convention's newspaper, the *Baptist Beacon*, making her the first female editor of a state Southern Baptist newspaper that published weekly or biweekly.

Known as a trailblazer, Elizabeth also led one of the first transitions of a Baptist paper to a feature magazine format, overseeing the transition from the *Baptist Beacon* to *Portraits* magazine and finally *Connect*. Along the way and always ready to adapt how she communicated, she also launched *Network News*, the convention's e-newsletter.

Another first in Elizabeth's trailblazing legacy came in 2002 when she served as the first female president of the Association of State Baptist Publications. Elizabeth has been an active member of Baptist Communicators Association since 1983, serving as secretary in 1990-91, program chair in 2008-09 when the annual workshop was held in Tucson, and treasurer in 2018-22.

Elizabeth inherited her journalistic instincts and drive from her father, J. Terry Young, a retired minister and professor of theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, who also served as editor of *The California Southern Baptist* during Elizabeth's elementary school years.

"There's a little bit of printers' ink in the blood," Elizabeth reflected. "I'm very proud to be my dad's daughter and following a little bit in his footsteps."

As a journalist known for her nurturing and caring spirit, Elizabeth has demonstrated time and time again how to ask the tough questions to get needed answers.

Even after 46 years of storytelling, Elizabeth has never lost her wonder about how God works in individuals' lives as well as in her own life.

"There are stories where it's just obvious that God has worked in someone's life or has pieced things together. Those kinds of stories still amaze me. We have such a personal God who cares for us, and it's nice to be reminded of that and to see how He is working in other people's lives as well as my own," Elizabeth said.

2026 BCA

WORKSHOP SPONSORS

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ALABAMA ENTITIES



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Baptist Press



THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS
LIBERTY COMMISSION
OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION