

# Family Leadership Summit draws packed crowd

A standing-room-only crowd of over 600 ticketed guests, plus media, speakers, and staff, filled the halls of Hy-Vee's Ron Pearson Center in West Des Moines July 12 for the 8th annual Family Leadership Summit.



Attendees included pastors, church and community leaders, elected leaders, and everyday Americans yearning for cultural transformation and a revived America that honors God and blesses people.

The FAMiLY LEADER's Vice President of Church Engagement Greg Baker welcomed the capacity crowd with a warning and a promise: "You're going to feel like you're drinking from a firehose, but you're going to be SO encouraged today!"

Both the warning and the promise came true.

The Summit's speaker list featured nationally prominent leaders in the church, government, business, and entertainment fields, including U.S. Sens. Tom Cotton, Joni Ernst, James Lankford, Ben Sasse, and Tim Scott, as well as actor and comedian Brad Stine, BlazeTV personality Steve Deace, MyPillow CEO and executive producer of the film "Unplanned" Mike Lindell, former U.S. Congresswoman Marilyn Musgrave, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, Rob Roozeboom of Rise Ministries, and Bob Vander Plaats, president and CEO of The FAMiLY LEADER.

The 2019 Summit also brought significant national and local sponsors, including the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Embrace Life Chiropractic, Focus on the Family, Informed Choices of Iowa, Iowans for Tax Relief, the Liberty University Helms School of Government, and Susan B. Anthony List.



The ongoing theme of the Summit is "Principle Over Politics," a theme Vander Plaats stressed in his first opportunity.

“Do we know what the victory is?” Vander Plaats asked. “Is a victory re-electing [President] Trump? Is victory having a Republican majority? Is victory winning the argument of the day? Or is it ... to think bigger, look higher?”

“What is our victory?” he continued. “Politics, elections, policy – they are downstream from culture. We need cultural transformation. We need revival.”

Several of the speakers highlighted tangible ways to impact culture.

Mike Lindell, CEO and inventor of MyPillow, testified to how God redeemed his life from cocaine addiction. And he described his new effort, Lindell Recovery Network, which links addicts to real recovery stories and to vetted, Christ-based recovery centers that have a 70 percent success rate, versus the national average of 20 percent success.

In an interview on stage with Vander Plaats, Sens. Lankford and Scott told the story of Solution Sundays, their racial reconciliation effort, which challenges people with a simple question – “Have you ever invited someone of another race into your home for a meal?”



Racial discord, the senators insisted, won't be solved by politics or policy, but by people.

"I don't believe Washington changes the country. I think the country changes Washington," said Lankford. "And there should be no prime mover stronger than the Church for engaging the gospel throughout a community."

"Division starts in our own hearts," added Scott. "To pastors and leaders, the first thing we should do is check our hearts."

Iowa's U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst and Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds both championed the sanctity of human life.

Iowa's Heartbeat bill – passed in 2018 to protect the lives of unborn children from the moment their heartbeats can be detected – has "ignited a movement," Reynolds said. "Due to Iowa's leadership, [several] states passed bills to protect innocent lives."



BlazeTV host Steve Deace and Christian comedian Brad Stine brought both laughter and a challenge to Christians seeking positive change in America.

“Don’t try to save America; try to save Americans,” Deace said. “When we turn sinners into saints, the culture will take care of itself.”



One of the biggest highlights of the day, however, was the spotlight put on The FAMiLY LEADER's Church Ambassador Network and its spread to other states through a program called The Daniel Initiative.

TFL's Greg Baker explained how pastors are changing the spiritual temperature at the Iowa Capitol and restoring the voice of the Church in the halls of government. He revealed how TFL has facilitated over 1,300 pastor visits to the Capitol in the last few years – not to fight for passing laws, but to minister to those making the laws. And by deliberate, non-partisan prayer and ministry, TFL has seen members of both parties come to faith in Jesus Christ.

The Summit then welcomed to the stage representatives of five other states who are engaging Church Ambassador Networks in state capitols across the country.



For many in the capacity crowd, it was just the kind of encouraging report and inspiring vision that makes The Family Leadership Summit a can't-miss event and an annual tradition.

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