

Sam S. Rainer III

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Ph.D. in Leadership Studies (2017)

Dallas Baptist University

Master of Arts in Missiology (2008)

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Double Major in Finance and Marketing (2002)

University of South Carolina



President, Church Answers (2016-present)

We provide content, consulting, coaching, and resources for hundreds of thousands of churches and leaders.

Co-Founder and Co-Owner, Rainer Publishing (2013-2024)

I sold my portion of the company 2024. They publish practical church health and church leadership books.

Pastoral Leadership Experience

- **Lead Pastor, West Bradenton Baptist Church (2015-Present)**
I serve an amazing group of believers at West Bradenton. We have seen God work in several ways, including adding a second campus and successfully completing multi-million-dollar capital campaigns to renovate both campuses. The church has transitioned from an older congregation to one of the youngest in the region. We are now multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-campus. We regathered with 300 people following the pandemic and have grown to over 700 in weekly worship with five services in two languages. Giving has more than doubled, and about a third of the church is 18 years old or younger. Neighborhood ministry and cross-cultural missions are a major focus with multiple ongoing outreach efforts and international trips.
- **Senior Pastor, Stevens Street Baptist Church Cookeville, TN (2012-2015)**
Average weekly attendance grew from 900 to 1,400. A new missions focus emphasized church planting in India, New York City, Portland, OR, and San Angelo, TX, as well as work with children in Haiti and Rwanda. The college ministry was restructured and grew from 50 to 200 faithful. Baptisms more than doubled. A new office complex was purchased and renovated for staff.
- **Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church Murray, KY (2009-2012)**
During my tenure, God blessed FBC with much fruit. Average weekly attendance grew from 500 to 700. A third worship service was started. Two new church plant partnerships and several international and national mission trips were completed. About \$1.2 million was given to missions during my tenure.
- **Campus Pastor, Sarasota Baptist Church at Lakewood Ranch, FL (2008-2009)**
A Spanish-speaking ministry was started at my campus, several new Community Group classes were started, a day school was started, and a medical community outreach program was implemented. I led the multi-site strategy team. During my tenure, Sarasota Baptist averaged 1,500 in weekly attendance between the two campuses.

- Senior Pastor, First Southern Baptist Church Floyds Knobs, IN (2007-2008)
God blessed me with the opportunity to pastor full-time while I was finishing seminary. First Southern had experienced three major splits prior to my arrival, and attendance had declined about 75%. But through God's blessings attendance grew during my tenure. A college ministry was started, and a coffee shop was built. The vision of the church was changed to focus on an outward approach for reaching the community.
- Bi-Vocational Pastor, Union Band Baptist Church Howardstown, KY (2005-2006)
Upon my arrival, the church was not holding regular services due to significant declines in the church and the surrounding rural community. We started a regular Sunday morning service, and while the congregation was small, attendance steadily grew. Several capital improvements were completed, including the installation of air conditioning and repainting the entire church.

Ministry Experience

- Board Member: One More Child (2019-2025), Executive team vice-chair, chair of finance, chair of personnel. The non-profit organization has \$95 million in annual revenue.
- Board Member: One More Child Foundation (2023-present), Now Go Network (2018-present), Care Net Crisis Pregnancy Center (2017-2023), and Manatee County YMCA (2018-2020)
- Adjunct Professor, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southeastern Seminary (2018-2021)
- Editorial Advisor and Contributor, *Church Executive Magazine* (2010-2020)
- Guest lecturer, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (2013-2017)
- Theological Review Editor, CrossBooks (2009-2015)
- Great Commission Task Force Member, Kentucky Baptist Convention (2009-2012)
- Credentials Committee, Southern Baptist Convention (2015)
- Editorial Advisor, *Building for Ministry* (2008-2011)
- Interim Trustee, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (2010-2011)
- Contributing and Consulting Editor, *Outreach Magazine* (2006-2009)
- Analyst, Rainer Group (1999-2005) and President of Rainer Research (2005-2016)
- Ordained and licensed at First Baptist Church Mount Washington, KY (2005)

Corporate Experience

- Western U.S. and Canada Analyst, Summit Energy Services, Louisville, KY (2003-2007)
As a buyer and seller of commodities (predominantly power and natural gas) in the western North American futures markets, I managed a \$100+ million energy portfolio of large industrial end-users (most within the *Fortune 1000*). I was the primary point of contact for suppliers, and I saw deal implementation from start to finish, completing 200+ power and natural gas agreements.
- Credit Analyst, National City Bank, Indianapolis, IN (2002-2003)
I was responsible for underwriting loans for large corporations ranging from \$1 million to \$1.25 billion. My role included financial analysis, deliverables to the loan committee, and client sales presentations.

Published Works

- *The Goodness of God in the Chaos of Our World* (2025)
Published by Church Answers, this book relates the story of Habakkuk to our current context.
- *Make My Church Safe* (2024)
Published by Tyndale House, this book is the first comprehensive work on church safety.
- *The Surprising Return of the Neighborhood Church* (2023)
Published by Tyndale House, this book gives a hopeful perspective on church renewal.
- *Understanding the Bible as a Whole* (2022)
Published by Tyndale House, this book gives a brief overview of every book in the Bible.
- *Church Revitalization Checklist* (2022)
Published by Tyndale House, this book provides a pathway for church revitalization.
- *7 Basics of Belonging* (2021)
Published by Church Answers, this book provides the core reasons to join a church.
- *Leading Change When Nobody Wants It* (2020)
An eBook published by Church Answers, this work prepares leaders to move their church.
- *Obstacles in the Established Church* (2014)
Published by Rainer Publishing, my book focuses on how pastors can lead when facing common obstacles.
- *Essential Church*, Co-Author (2008)
Published by B&H, my book focuses on why young people leave the church and how to get them back.
- *Church Executive*, Editorial Advisor and Contributor (2010-2020)
I wrote articles and consulted them on content. In January 2013, my ministry was the cover story.
- *Outreach Magazine*, Columnist (2006-2009)
I wrote the *Surprising Insights* column, which ran in every issue.
- *Outreach Online*, Featured and Founding Blogger (2006-2009)
My blog, *Church Forward*, was one of the featured and founding blogs by *Outreach Magazine*.
- I have written over 1,000 articles, including some for the following publications: *Outreach*, *Gospel Coalition*, *Christian Post*, *Church Growth Magazine*, *Lewis Center for Church Leadership*.

Speaking Experience

I have spoken hundreds of times across the United States and internationally. These venues include dozens of keynotes for multiple denominations and networks at annual meetings and national conventions. I have been interviewed by numerous national radio, TV, and print outlets, including Fox News with Dana Perino and Newsmax with Todd Starnes.

Personal Background

- Birth date: February 23, 1980
- I married the love of my life, Erin, on December 31, 2006. She graduated from Campbellsville University and has an M.Ed. from Southeastern University in Lakeland, FL. We have four children.
- I run marathons and ultra-marathons. My guilty pleasures include fishing and watching baseball. My team is the Tampa Bay Rays.