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January Kingdom Ledger: Momentum, Leadership & Building What Lasts

1 message

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Kingdom Ledger - January 2026 Edition



ENGAGING BUSINESS LEADERS & INVESTORS FOR CHRIST

Kingdom Ledger In This Issue ~ A Splash and Dash video goes viral, capital and top-tier innovation leaders double down on Birmingham, a national Lion's Den pitch window opens for founders, and a powerful Alabama leadership story reminds us what Kingdom impact really looks like.

Marketplace Leader Spotlight



This 1:36 video did something we didn't expect.

In one week, it drove nearly **40% growth** on our Facebook page and reached **10x** the usual views we see. Same business, same message — just showing up together.

Last month, Kayla and I shared a short video introducing **Splash and Dash**—a membership-based dog grooming and care concept we're launching in Vestavia Hills, produced by our venture studio, Oasis.

The difference wasn't production quality or clever marketing—it was **simply showing up together**. Kayla and I will celebrate **27 years of marriage next year**, and we've been **business partners for over 20 of those years**. People resonate deeply with seeing married couples build something real together—especially in business—because it quietly communicates trust, alignment, and long-term stewardship.

For leaders and founders, there's a subtle but important takeaway: **authentic family presence isn't a distraction from your brand—it can be a multiplier**. If you're building something meant to last, don't underestimate the credibility that comes from letting people see who you're building it with.

✓ Watch the Video



🌟 **Welcome to the Kingdom Ledger** — Birmingham's trusted monthly briefing for faith-driven business leaders and Kingdom-minded investors. 🌟

This month's edition opens with real stories—builders showing up together, leaders stewarding capital with care, founders stepping forward again after hard lessons, and faith quietly shaping how work gets done across Birmingham.

We don't begin this year assuming the road will be easy. We begin it confident that **the Lord our God is with us**, attentive to our decisions, and faithful to walk with those who lead with humility and courage. That assurance allows us to build steadily, invest wisely, and show up authentically—especially when outcomes aren't guaranteed.

You're part of a growing community choosing that posture. Let's start the year well.

— Martin



EVENTS

Leadership rooted in faith is often forged long before the spotlight.



Winter Breakfast

20th

FEBRUARY

The Harbert Center
2019 4th Ave N,
Birmingham, AL 35203

6:30 AM – 7:45 AM

Ticket \$30 | Sponsored Table \$240
Breakfast serving line opens at 6:00am.

with Brodie Croyle

To register, visit the link here: bit.ly/2026WinterBreakfast



Brodie Croyle was raised at **Big Oak Ranch**, the Christian home his parents founded to care for children from difficult circumstances. A record-setting quarterback at the **University of Alabama Crimson Tide** and former NFL player with the **Kansas City Chiefs**, Brodie's journey through success and setbacks shaped a deep faith and a servant-leadership mindset. Today, as CEO of Big Oak Ranch, he continues that mission—providing Christ-centered homes, hope, and healing to children facing abuse, abandonment, and neglect. Brodie will be featured at the **YBL Winter Breakfast**, hosted by [Rob Genin](#), on **February 20, 2026**.

☒ Register for the YBL Winter Breakfast

LEADERSHIP

That same steady leadership is also reshaping how capital is being deployed in Birmingham.



Kim Lee (left) and Shegun Otulana (right) — prominent business leaders helping deploy public capital to drive real economic growth in Birmingham.

Birmingham is quietly seeing a meaningful shift in how economic development is being done: **public capital is being placed in the hands of proven private leaders to drive real outcomes.** [Shegun Otulana](#), Founder & CEO of Harmony Venture Labs—and featured speaker at the [YBL 2025 Fall Breakfast](#)—recently announced a **\$5M Innovate Alabama commitment** to launch a venture [studio and fund](#) focused on building scalable, corporate-driven startups across Alabama, while [Kim Lee](#), Founder & CEO of Forge, secured a [City of Birmingham Bold Grant](#) to launch a 12-week Small Business Accelerator, fully funding 10 local businesses to strengthen operations using the *Traction* framework. Together, these moves signal a growing model where public funding activates private expertise to produce durable businesses, stronger operators, and long-term regional impact.



I get asked often about **when the right time is to apply for Lion's Den**—and with [applications now open in Dallas](#) and **Birmingham on the horizon**, for many founders that time is now. The **Lion's Den DFW 2026 Pitch Competition** is currently accepting applications, making this an ideal moment to step forward if you're building a faith-driven, redemptive venture with real traction.

For those focused on **Birmingham**, the local [The Lion's Den](#) application portal is expected to open **around May**, making this season especially valuable for preparation and positioning. If you'd like guidance on fit, timing, or next steps for either event, [Andrew Clark](#) of **Jeremiah Fund** is the best local point of contact.

COMMUNITY

Some Kingdom work is quiet, difficult, and costly — and still worth doing.



James Harris — courageously tackling food insecurity one store at a time, starting in Birmingham.

Food insecurity is a very real and noble problem to address—but as Birmingham has seen firsthand, it is also one of the most difficult challenges to solve sustainably. Even with support from churches, philanthropy, and now public incentives, survival is never guaranteed. **James Harris** is stepping back into this hard work with a renewed vision for **Carver Jones Market**, giving it a second go with added public support and hard-earned lessons from the first attempt. As a Kingdom Ledger community, we want to recognize the courage it takes to try again—and we ask you to **pray for James, his team, and this effort**, that wisdom, provision, and endurance would meet this work as they seek to serve communities where access to food truly matters.

ledger enclosure



Thanks for reading the January 2026 edition of the Kingdom Ledger.

As you finish this January edition, my hope is that you noticed a common thread running through each story: **faithful presence matters**—in family, in leadership, in business, and in the decision to try again when something important doesn't come easy.

This year won't be defined by how favorable conditions are, but by **who we trust and how we respond**. When our confidence rests in the Lord—not outcomes, capital, or recognition—we're free to lead with steadiness, generosity, and courage.

Thank you for building alongside us as part of the Kingdom Ledger community. I'm grateful to begin this year with you.

P.S If one story stood out to you this month, consider forwarding this edition to a leader who should see it.

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