

# The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

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## *“In The Shadows of Darkness Oklahoma is Crumbling”*

By Chris Gonthier

Exodus 20:16 “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” It seems to be the simplest of commands, yet in our society this command is quite often ignored.

We have all faced situations where slander and falsehood have caused pain and suffering. Understand that while sometimes we know who is spreading lies, sometimes the talebearers may be unknown.

Even though we may never see justice served upon those who play the role of talebearers, rest assured God will faithfully pass judgement. We must accept that this judgement may or may not occur this side of eternity.

“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape.” Proverbs 19:5.

“A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall perish.” Proverbs 19:9.

Some reading this may not accept the teachings of scripture, but rest assured, it will not change the inevitable outcome. Most of us can remember back on the days of school and realize the cruelty of intentionally misspeaking words. Attacks on character or purity often caused the recipient to retreat into the shadows hiding the shame that was heaped upon them.

It does not matter if something spoken is true, only that the hearer believes it to be true.

The saddest thing about gossip is people’s willingness to believe what they hear without investigating the truthfulness of what was spoken.

Even as adults we face outright lies in the workplace as well as in our day to day lives. Families have been destroyed, jobs have been ruined and lives lost because of gossip.

God’s word clearly gives wise counsel as to how to approach these matters.

2 Corinthians 13:1 says, “This is the third time I am coming unto you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”

As our own government was established, this became an integral part of our judicial system. There needs to be witnesses and the accused has the right to face his accusers. We should never place judgement on someone who was accused in the cloak of secrecy. We must always consider the source of an accusation and the credibility of the source.

In school, children were emotionally destroyed because someone used words as a weapon. We call it bullying and there have been lives lost because of hateful discourse. One would hope that we would outgrow such evil behavior, but unfortunately this isn’t so.

Before I address the main purpose of this article, I want to point out something that is often overlooked. That is the people who enable and

empower the people who wish to deceive and lie.

If people would not listen to, or respond in ways that give the talebearers power, they would eventually go silent. Imagine their shock if they would be called out on their gossip and hate speech.

Furthermore, if we would quit repeating unverified and/or unnecessary information many reputations and emotions would be spared.

So I implore you, do not start or spread gossip, nor give gossip space in your mind’s garden affording it the opportunity to grow.

Now getting to the heart of this article and that is how lies are destroying our state, and our nation. I am particularly referring to lies in the political arena.

Somehow people think just because someone is a public figure, they are open targets or fair game for character assassination.

If people were held accountable for what they say, and the ads that are run, maybe they would stick to the facts. This year we had incumbents who were stellar, absolutely fantastic in their voting records. They were defeated because of lies and character assassination.

We had some really qualified candidates who ran for office, and they were defeated because of untruthful ads.

Let’s now look at a concept that is referred to as dark money. If individuals run political ads, they must disclose who they are and whether the ad was approved by a candidate.

In this country we have the right to free speech, however, we cannot speak lies that will slander someone. Understand the Constitution protects God given rights that were given to the individual.

Now we have corporations and other groups that are assuming they can say whatever they want, with impunity. There is a level of accountability if a corporation is known, and the members are known.

This is also true for groups that have known memberships and a record of those who give financially. We must know

(“Shadows of Darkness,” cont on pg 7)

# Latest News From New Generation, Norman

We plan to move our services Sunday morning September 11 to Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Blanchard, to give our parent church an update on how we are doing. It's been around 10 years since they sent us to Norman to plant a church and we continue to work in that field. I must say that it has been and continues to be tough, but we are persevering.

We are planning for a great day on September, 25. We are planning to have an ordination service for two of our young men, Chris Lorenz and Luis Santos. Both are to be ordained as preachers of the gospel.

We would love for you all to attend if you can. Those of you who are ordained please feel free to join us in the presbytery. Here are the specifics:

I have included below a report from Bother Chris. He has much more detail on what we have been doing:

Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:20)

Apparently Jesus is a "door knocker", knocking on the door of our hearts to invite us into fellowship with Himself! He also promised us that if WE will "knock...it shall be opened unto you." (Matthew 7:7)

Recently we have been taking teams out into the neighborhoods of Norman to "knock doors", and we have been seeing this promise fulfilled -open doors! As we have been going out, we have had opportunities to pray, encourage, and share the gospel with several people.

Steve and Luis have been doing some outreach, as well as Sue, Natalie, Evelyn, and Rebecca. Not only folks from our church, but Chris, a meteorologist from the National Weather Center and his friend Larry have been joining us to learn how to do evangelism. That makes three and possibly four evangelism teams that we are sending

out from our little church, which all started with Steve who began doing evangelism and then inviting me along with him to work together seven years ago!

We have had some divine appointments in these recent efforts! One was an 84 year old man named John who had been a widower for 22 years. As you can understand, he was probably experiencing some loneliness, so he invited us in for an extended conversation about the gospel and prayer!

He was a man that was struggling with faith and had been for many years. He said "I have been praying to God for 40 years that I would believe." So, I said, "well, here we are, the answer to your prayer!"

He did not receive Christ that day, but he is open to us following up with him again.

After meeting John, I was struck by the idea that there are probably millions of others like him who are struggling with having faith in God and withering away in their homes. They are not only open but eager, even desperate, to have a spiritual conversation if we would simply go out into the community and "knock".

God does not desire that any should perish, but do we!? It will require millions of workers to be sent into the harvest if we will fulfill the heart of God to minister to all of these lost and lonely people!

There was also another John that we met through neighborhood outreach just this past Wednesday. We had been knocking several doors without a good conversation, but then Larry said, "Let's do one more house."

It's a good thing he did, because the LORD definitely provided a divine appointment!

We met John and his wife Liz who have two kids and attend

Antioch church. What really caught my attention was how familiar John looked to me, so I asked him, "Did you live in Oklahoma City and go to P.C. North high school? He said no, but his wife did! She graduated two years before me!

I found out John, on the other hand, grew up and went to school in Edmond, but he attended OU and did a lot of evangelism in the OU dorms.

I then remembered that it was my freshman year at the Adams dormitory at OU that a couple of older college guys knocked on our door which we opened and allowed them to come in. I was not yet a Christian at the time so it was very urgently needed that someone was willing to knock on the door to share Jesus with me!

I told John that night, you remind me of the guy that was trying to reach me through personal evangelism! He couldn't remember, it was 19 years ago...but was John the one that came to my dorm room that day to share the gospel or someone that looked just like him?

Well, it certainly gave me chills and goosebumps thinking that it might be a possibility that I was now standing at and knocking on HIS door!

Whether it was John, or someone else, or an angel from heaven that visited me that day, that was the first time that I can remember that someone had compassion to share the word of God with me, a complete stranger!

There were others who planted and watered and reaped, but it was God who gave all the growth!

What a reminder that day was to me, that if we will be faithful to sow the seeds of the gospel with the lost who desperately need it, we might discover that one day they have become evangelists that are sowing seeds themselves, making disciples, and continuing to multiply the fruit of our labor for the glory of God!

Thank you all again for the spiritual and monetary support. You are making a difference through your ministry at New Generation Baptist Church.

# "I Was Just Thinkin'"

By Narita Roady

## "Sleep Sound While the Storms Rage"

Along the Atlantic seacoast there was a farm. The farmer was continually looking for hired hands. Few people wanted to work on farms in this area because they feared the violent storms that often raged across the ocean. These tempests left a path of chaos and damage, destroying crops, barns, and homes.

The farmer didn't lack for interviews, but when his location was revealed they always turned down the job.

One day, an undersized, scrawny, old man, came to apply. The farmer was a bit skeptical, but he asked him, "Are you a good farm hand?" "Well", drawled the man, "I can sleep sound while the storms rage."

Somewhat confused by his answer, and harboring serious doubts about his abilities, the farmer hired him. He decided that beggars couldn't be choosers, and no one else wanted the job.

The little old man turned out to be a fantastic worker. He was busy from the time to sun rose until night fell. The farmer was very pleased with his work, until one night.

Awakened from his sleep, by the familiar sounds of crashing waves and howling wind, the farmer knew a storm was very near. He leapt from bed and ran next door to the hired hand's house, where he found the old man sound asleep.

Shaking him, the farmer screamed, "Wake up! A big storm is on the way! We need to get everything tied down before it's blown away!"

Barely opening his eyes, the little man, replied, "Nope, I told you when you hired me, I can sleep while the storms rage." With that he rolled over and went back to sleep.

The farmer was furious! He was ready to give him a tongue-lashing and fire him that minute, but there was no time. He pushed open the door and rushed out into the high winds to get ready for the storm.

As he walked around his land, he was

speechless. All the animals were safe in the barn, chickens secured in their coop, haystacks covered tightly with tarps, doors solidly fastened and shutters firmly secured. Everything that could possibly blow away was tied down!

Finally the farmer understood the strange statement his hired hand had said. With that, he turned, went back into his house, pulled the covers over his head, and slept soundly while the storm raged outside.

Can you rest peacefully when the storms of adversity blow into your life? Unfortunately there is no channel we can tune into that will give us detailed information concerning approaching problems in our lives, but God does give us fair warning in John 16:33.

*These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*

While all of us will experience hard times, there are ways we can prepare ourselves before they hit.

Far too many Christians are sitting ducks for Satan's attacks, always caught completely off guard. They attempt to find security and strength AFTER the winds of tribulation have struck. By then it's too late to secure panicky emotions and fearful thoughts against the pounding circumstances.

In reality we should daily prepare our hearts and minds, making them ready for the Enemy's attacks.

**First** we need to anchor ourselves soundly in the Word of God. This consists of more than just aimlessly reading our Bible so we can check it off our "spiritual to do list" for the day.

I am talking about quality time, seriously



seeking Him and what He wants to reveal or teach us that day. Keeping a notebook and writing down scriptures or thoughts that come to mind is a wonderful tool.

It is through God's Word that we find comfort and hope. For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our

learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Romans 15:4

Now how on earth can you find comfort in His Word if you don't have a clue what He is saying?

While listening to preachers and teachers is needed and good, you cannot develop a relationship with the Lord through another person. It has to be one on one time together.

You will be amazed how the appropriate scripture will pop into your head when you need it most.

**Second**, we should prepare for the onslaughts of life by having a consistent prayer time. Prayer is like spiritual insurance. Not that nothing bad will befall you, but you will have the peace and assurance that the Lord will care for you. It draws you close to the heart of God and places near His throne.

If you have turned everything involving your present and future over to God, then you have nothing to be concerned about!

Furthermore, NOTHING catches God by surprise. How wonderful to have the One in control that knows EVERYTHING that will come into your life!!! The best way to prepare is "pre-prayer"!

**Third**, be faithful to church services. Too many people know the church needs them, but fail to see how much they need the church!

A shameful number of Christians view worship services as an optional social event to be added or deleted based on their feelings or weekly schedule.

At church you leave the worldly

("Sleep Sound," cont on pg 7)

# “Leading With Encouragement”

By Bro. Larry Barker

First Thessalonians 5:11 says, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.”

The times we are living in right now are difficult. The last two to three years have been one of the most difficult seasons I can remember. So many are struggling, and depression is becoming more and more of a challenge. Antidepressants are now the most widely prescribed drug in the U.S. according to *Therapy Culture*.

Pastors and leaders are not immune to the clutches of disappointment, discouragement, and depression. Yet Paul, in light of the Day of the Lord coming, says “Encourage and build each other up.”

Our world has produced a complete lack of trust, conspiracies galore, and polarizing viewpoints. Every word spoken is scrutinized, every decision is challenged, and even our motives are questioned if you dare to disagree.

Remember that the real enemy is Satan and we are called to be different by encouraging one another and seeking to build up one another. Let’s challenge ourselves to not allow the gripe-y, negative, ever-complaining culture around us to infiltrate our church families.

Hebrews 10:24 says, “And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works.”

Encourage someone! God placed us in a church family not to tear one another down but rather to build one another up.

Who do you need to encourage today? To whom do you need to say thank you? Who comes to mind that you need to call or text and express your appreciation for what they mean to you?

Everyone needs encouragement now and then, and our church families should be the best examples of godly encouragement.

Hebrews 10:25 says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”

Jesus was continually encouraging and challenging His disciples in their faith journey. He spoke the truth and did not back off the reality of the situation but encouraged them.

He did not tell them that everything was going to work out how they wanted or that there would never be difficulty and tribulation. There was no promise that it would always be smooth sailing, but He did say in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

Even in the midst of tribulation God’s peace is available.

*Encourage* means to pour courage into, so who needs to be encouraged today? Who is struggling right now?

All of us could use some building up and to be reminded that we are not alone and God is still in control. This is the importance of community and being connected to a church family spiritually, relationally, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.

We need to see one another, spend time with one another, encourage one another, and build up one another. Fight the temptation to focus on yourself and begin by focusing on others who need encouragement.

During challenging seasons, the goal is not keeping up with the times but rather keeping up with Jesus. How do we do that?

According to First Thessalonians 5:8 we put on the armor of faith first. We approach these uncertain times and the future with a faith-based rather than fear-based attitude.

Find encouragement in God’s Word where over and over when His people faced insurmountable odds they were told, “Do not be discouraged! Do not be

afraid!” What was happening?

Courage was being poured into them by trusting in the Lord instead of how things appeared to be. Fear is real, but never forget that God is able.



First Thessalonians 5:8 also says to put love on our chests. Outrage is not a strategy, and while what you are standing for is right you may not be standing for it in the right way. These are some of the most difficult times culturally to navigate.

The real challenge forging ahead will be navigating these difficult times by showing compassion without compromising convictions and standing for biblical convictions without compromising compassion. Encourage one another by showing the same grace you desire when you are the one who has sinned. We all need grace and let’s encourage one another with that truth.

Then Paul tells the church in Thessalonica to put on a helmet of the hope of salvation. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and that means we must distinguish between our present state and our future fate.

Our future fate is not determined by the times we live in, the culture we are enduring, or the difficulties of our situation.

Do not forget that God enjoys working through the critical mass of two or three. He does some of His best work in the worst places and during the most difficult times.

Be encouraged by Romans 5:8 that says, “But God proved His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

The challenge is for us to encourage one another and build one another up. I don’t know about you, but I could use a little building up right now. You do not go through the battles unscathed. They weigh on you, pull you down, and impact you spiritually, emotionally, and even physically.

Maybe we need to begin by repenting of our bad attitudes and seek the mind of Christ.

(“Encouragement,” cont on pg 5)

## “Leading With Encouragement” continued

The first work of grace is the first word of grace: Repent.

It begins with a change of heart that leads to a change of behavior. To repent means that you adopt God’s viewpoint over your own. Even your attitude. Encourage someone today with these words!

Nostalgia can be a lot of fun, but it can also be paralyzing. When we worship the past and how things used to be, we miss out on the opportunities before us right now.

The future is always moving toward us, and while it is quite uncertain, we must prepare for and plan how to connect with it.

How will we engage our culture in the future with Christianity no longer the default identity? Maybe we are a bit spoiled by having home field advantage for so long?

It will be more costly to be a Christian and stand for Christian values in the future. But God’s churches will always have a future when they look to Him, trust Him, obey Him, and follow Him. In *Rings of Fire* Leonard Sweet states, “The divine seems to enjoy working through a faithful remnant, the critical mass of two or three . . .”

No matter how bad culture gets, will He find us faithful when He returns? We should not be shocked knowing the depravity of man. None us imagined our society would be where it is today, but we are here “for such a time as this.” God placed us right here, right now, so let’s not miss this opportunity.

Following Jesus requires studying the future. The apostle Paul spoke of pressing towards the mark of the prize of the high calling. The writer of Hebrews said he was looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

You are called to finish well no matter the circumstances, the environment, or the level of persecution that may occur. The challenge of the future will be showing compassion without compromising convictions and standing for our convictions without compromising compassion. It is not easy, but we are called to love our enemies

and to pray for those who persecute us.

This is Leonard Sweet’s challenge: “The church spends more time slandering its moment than in savoring and saving its moment. If we loved the world as God so loved the world, we would love it well and love it to life.”

This is not a call to water down the Word or cower from the truth. Rather, Sweet exhorts us to “not be afraid of anti-fragile preaching.”

Preaching repentance calls for a change of heart, behavior, and being, but if that does not occur we are called to continue. Ezekiel was told by the Lord that people would not listen to him anymore than they listened to God.

**“Remember that the real enemy is Satan and we are called to be different by encouraging one another and seeking to build up one another.”**

Jesus commanded us to occupy until He comes. He did not call us to a life of isolation or compromise, but to live in the world and not be of the world. It is not easy, but once again Sweet sheds some light on what that might look like: “Whoever your author is will be your authority.”

We must allow God to author our story and let the Holy Spirit to be our editor. He continues, “We have no interest in keeping up with the times but rather keeping up with Jesus and opening up to God’s presence in the times we’re in.” Are we in step with living out God’s mission? How do we lead into the future?

First, we **stay in step with Christ allowing Him to direct our paths.** We make sure every initiative we pursue is God-initiated. We listen to the Holy Spirit and obey his direction.

Are you quenching the Holy Spirit’s power in your life and in your church by focusing on what you want and desire more than His command to make disciples?

Have you so focused on the sins of commission that the sins of omission go

unnoticed?

Are you willing to go through the doors He opens?

Are you looking to escape, or are you actively engaging the lost?

We lead into the future by **showing love and compassion.** You cannot escape the culture God has placed you in, nor should you. Seek and search for ways to demonstrate the love of God in practical ways.

Leonard Sweet says, “Having culture as a bosom buddy can lead to collusion (or syncretism). Having culture as an enemy can lead to condemnation. Having culture as a companion on your journey can lead to its own problems.”

Loving the people in your culture means you declare the unknown God as Paul did in Athens in Acts 17. Figure out more ways to build relationships in order to have gospel conversations.

Leading into the future will require **figuring out how to once again reproduce and multiply.** With most churches struggling, not growing, and not multiplying, what will we do about this reproductive crisis?

When a species cannot reproduce itself, we classify it as endangered. Are you making disciples, reproducing leaders, and multiplying small groups and/or churches?

The two greatest dangers in any church are an unwillingness to evaluate and to do anything about that evaluation. The only thing worse than having a problem is the failure to be aware of the problem you have.

Churches are entering some of the most culturally difficult times to navigate. Western culture is focused on self-determination and individual personal freedom.

The secular world says only you can determine who you are, what you do, and how you live. These ideas are celebrated but ignore the truth of God’s authority over us.

Evaluate your church’s present state then compare it to its potential fate. Without Him you do not stand a chance, but He does some of His best work in some of the hardest places and times.

# "That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

## "Knowledge"

A very wise person once said even the most intelligent of us is unintelligent in some areas of life. I've found that to be truth.

However, those who don't recognize this truth often look down on others who are less gifted than they in certain areas.

That reminds me of the story about Christopher Columbus and one of his critics. Columbus was being honored for his discovery of America.

One of his critics said he didn't understand why everyone thought Columbus' journey was so remarkable. After all, many others were routinely making that journey at the time.

In response Columbus asked him if he could make a boiled egg stand on end.

"No one can do that!" declared the critic.

Columbus took a boiled egg and struck the end against the table, flattening the end. He then declared, "Anyone can do something, once they've been shown HOW."

One time our church was building an addition onto our facilities. I was working beside a professional carpenter. I was amazed at his skill and knowledge. I was impressed that, although he measured each piece before cutting it, he already knew the proper place to cut without measuring.

I told him, "Brother, I wish I knew as much about carpentry as you do." He stopped dead in his tracks, gave me a long look, and with tears in his eyes humbled me with this statement.

"Brother, I would give all my knowledge of carpentry to know as much about the Bible as you do."

While such a statement appealed to my pride and ego, I knew there was still a lot I didn't know about the Bible. But I've never forgotten the overwhelming

awareness of responsibility that swept over me when he said that.

He was correct that knowledge of God's Word is like the Pearl of Great Price of Mathew 13:45-56 which Jesus said the man sold all he had in order to buy.

However, knowledge of the Word of God is not to be the final result. Seemingly the greatest goal we could have in life would be to know all we could about the Word of God, but along with the gaining of knowledge is the great responsibility to share it with others.

Along with the responsibility to share though comes the responsibility to share it responsibly.

James declared, "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall

receive the greater condemnation."

Literally, James has declared we teachers will be judged by a higher standard and with greater severity than other people, so we assume the greater accountability and the more condemnation.

The Apostle Paul declared in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

If the word of truth can be rightly divided, it can also be wrongly divided. There is much religious confusion in the world today.

Most of it comes from the religious leaders of our day who have, and are still, wrongly dividing the word of truth. Many do it intentionally in order to teach their errors and misconceptions about what the Word of God actually declares.

Like the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day, the mislead their followers, making them "two-foal more a child of hell than they themselves." Mathew 23:15



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## Lifeword Sunday Packets Are On Their Way!

Churches, be on the lookout for your Lifeword Sunday packets! These will include important information for the October 23<sup>rd</sup> event and how you can best support Lifeword's media ministry. Visit [www.lifeword.org/lifewordsunday](http://www.lifeword.org/lifewordsunday) to register your church, download the Lifeword Sunday video, and order your T-shirts.



*Lifeword Sunday - October 23, 2022*

Lifeword is reaching millions of people around the world every day. The gospel is currently being shared in 140 languages, with a goal of expanding to 200 languages by year 2025. Our mission is to share the love of Jesus to every tribe, every tongue, and every nation. God's Kingdom has no borders; therefore the ministry of Lifeword has no borders!

We can't wait to see how God is going to use you to grow the reach of Lifeword around the world!

## **“Shadows of Darkness,” continued**

who is paying for these advertisements if we are going to be able to place them in their proper context. Also, we need to know who is involved so we can prosecute those who are unethical and slanderous.

Corporations are not guaranteed the rights that individuals have protected by the Constitution. We want fair and safe elections, but we will never have elections that are fair or safe when the playing field is not level. We would be justifiably upset if widespread voter fraud was committed.

Why do we not get upset when election results are changed because information is withheld and false information is spread? Accusations of domestic abuse and other allegations of wrongdoing on the eve of the election insured at least one candidate lost in the primary.

Another was accused of speaking against law enforcement even though he received awards from law enforcement agencies.

The list of lies is too numerous to cover here.

Most would agree that this is just wrong, but some establishment politicians

are involved in these shenanigans. Even within party meetings there have been unethical situations that would make you wonder.

We need to be good stewards of that which we have received. We need to leave for our children a heritage.

Sadly, we are leaving our children a corrupt system because we have become apathetic. We have become complicit either through direct involvement or because of malfeasance of our civic duties.

We often will not even vote, and if we do, we do not actively research the available candidate pool. We receive the mailers and hear the lies often enough that we accept them as true.

Repetition, or to be more specific the brainwashing, has led to the demise of our state and local governments.

This evil is not just perpetrated directly on people, but often other ballot measures are completely

misrepresented. We have mainstream media sources that are not presenting the people with truth.

There are lies of commission and lies of omission, partial truths, and orchestrated deception.

We, as citizens, need to stand up and put a stop to this nonsense. Do not give your power to unethical people. Research, vote, and become involved with groups or people who love this state and our country.

Knowledge is power, and the lack of knowledge makes one weak.

Unethical behavior and outright fraud is destroying the fabric of our society.

Currently we have the freedom to go to church, freedom of speech, and amendments to the Constitution protect our God given rights. The dark money, money not tracked or traced, is being used destructively by attacking people who would greatly benefit our state, nation, and local governments.

Is our way of life worth our involvement? Or do we even care anymore?

## **“Sleep Sound While Storms Rage,” continued**

distractions behind to focus on God. I wish I had a dime for every time someone has said, “When I attend church, my week goes so much better.” No joke!

Worship strengthens and prepares us spiritually and emotionally for whatever lies ahead. Spending time with our brothers and sisters in Christ not only gives us support but also provides encouragement to face our difficulties. We do not feel alone and isolated, and the Truth of God’s Word we hear and learn increases our faith. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Romans 10:17

If you are weak in your church attendance when all is well, then the devil won’t have a hard time convincing you when problems come that you need to stay and home and “get things worked out”. When we’re prepared spiritually we have nothing to dread or fear.

The storms of life can either tear us apart and destroy our lives, or strengthen our faith, hearts and minds because we have placed ourselves firmly in the hand of God. Are you prepared for what tomorrow might bring? Don’t let the next storm ravage your life, begin securing it with the Lord today. Sweet dreams.

### **The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST**

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## **New Generation Baptist Church Ministerial Ordination**

**September 25th, 2:00pm**  
**724 Fairway Drive, Norman, OK 73069**

**Candidates:**  
**Bro. Chris Lorenz & Bro. Luis Santos**

# Everlasting Smiles: Target Ukraine

The devastation and destruction experienced in the lives of Ukrainians this past year has changed their lives forever.

Our prayer is that through Everlasting Smiles, not only will the shoeboxes bring a smile to a child's face, but also bring hope to a parent's heart. Seeing their children happy brings a smile to faces and hearts that need it.

Through giving out Christmas boxes to Ukrainians this year, we have a great opportunity to share the gospel with families that are in desperate need of the hope that is offered through Jesus that helps us build relationships and connect people to our churches.

**Larry and Tammy Wood,  
BMA Missionaries  
to Ukraine and Czech Republic.**

This year, more than ever, we are excited to send our Christmas shoeboxes. We just finalized with Bro. Larry and Tammy Wood that shoeboxes will go to Ukraine and surrounding countries housing Ukrainian Refugees.

Can you imagine children receiving boxes full of gifts after what they have had to face?

Can you imagine how much it will mean to parents who have been through so much sadness to see the excitement in their child's eyes?

In each shoebox, there are many fun things children will enjoy. They are also packed with LOTS of love, and many prayers are prayed over them. But the most important thing we can give any child is the opportunity to know Jesus.

Our prayer is that through the ministry of Everlasting Smiles, we will open doors for our missionaries to tell families about Jesus and that the Bible inside each box will bring them closer to Him.

For more information including packing instructions, visit [bmamissions.org/christmas-shoeboxes](http://bmamissions.org/christmas-shoeboxes).

## Donations

Want to make a donation for us to pack boxes for you? We can do that!

The cost of each box is \$25. This includes the box, wrapping, gifts, Bible, and shipping costs.

Send your donation to:

**Everlasting Smiles  
PO Box 878 Conway, AR 72033**

## Drop-off information

We are thankful that we now have four regional drop-off stations for your boxes. Local drop-off stations at churches listed on our website ([bmamissions.org/christmas-shoebox](http://bmamissions.org/christmas-shoebox)) are still accepting boxes, but we have added additional ones.

These stations will serve the same purpose as our Conway location: to pack your shoeboxes and get them ready for shipping.

Regional stations will deliver your boxes to the Conway office ready for shipping. What a blessing!

Here is a list of regional and local drop-off stations:

### Arkansas

BMA America Office  
611 Locust Street, Conway, AR 72034  
Contact: Angela Rice, 214-498-3041

Prospect Baptist Church  
1603 Hwy 349, Jonesboro, AR 72401.  
Contact: Theresa Book, 870-598-4908  
or Mike Book 870-598-7232

### Mississippi

Southeastern Baptist College  
4229 Hwy 15 N. Laurel, MS 39440.  
Contact: Anderle Foster,  
601-344-8656



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Central District Meeting

September 13  
Grace Harbor

### New Generations Ordination Service

See pg 7

### Re:Charge Leader's Conference

September 27-29  
Hot Springs, AR

### BMA of OK Annual Meeting

October 7-8  
Unity, Wayne

### Texas

Fellowship Baptist Church  
992 FM 1520, Pittsburg, TX 75686  
Contact David Kizer  
903-767-1151

Please contact your drop-off station and set a drop-off time. This speeds up the drop-off process. We appreciate you so much for your involvement in this ministry.

If you have questions, please reach out to:

**Angela Rice**  
[angela@bmamissions.com](mailto:angela@bmamissions.com)  
or 214-498-3041.