

The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

Volume LX

APRIL 2025

Number 4

76th Annual Baptist Missionary Association of America National Meeting April 22-24, 2025, Waxahachie, TX

Tuesday Evening, April 22

6:00pm	Send Me-A Celebration of 75 Years of Global Missions	Pathway Worship Center
7:00pm	Break	
7:15pm	Worship Pathway Worship Team President's Message-Bro. Charles Johnson	Pathway Worship Center
8:15pm	First Business Session	Pathway Worship Center

Wednesday Morning, April 23

7:15am	New BMA Pastors Orientation	
8:00am	Brotherhood Meeting Committee Meetings WMA Meeting Registration	Pathway Baptist Church Pathway Baptist Church Heritage Baptist Church
8:30am	WMA Women's Conference	Heritage Baptist Church
9:00am	Pastor's Conference	Pathway Baptist Church
11:30am	Lunch Break	
12:00pm	Women's Luncheon	

Wednesday Afternoon, April 23

1:00pm	Second Business Session WMA Business Meeting	Pathway Worship Center Heritage Baptist Church
3:15pm	Break	
3:30pm	Legacy Missionary Celebration & Commissioning	Pathway Worship Center
4:45pm	Break for dinner	

Wednesday Evening, April 23

6:30pm	Worship Oak Park Baptist Worship Team Annual Message-Bro. Gary O'Neal	Pathway Worship Center
7:30pm	Break	
7:45pm	Third Business Session	Pathway Worship Center
9:00pm	Late Night Preaching Lab, Dr. Cliff Johnson	

Thursday Morning, April 24

Fourth Business Session (If Needed)

We Serve a Risen Savior

The Legal Alert, Used by Permission
Submitted by David Langley

This Easter season, let us remember that true, lasting joy is not based on circumstances but is deeply rooted in a personal relationship with Christ and the assurance of His sovereignty.

Joy Comes from Christ, Not Circumstances

Joy is not a fleeting emotion tied to our earthly circumstances. Rather it is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and come from a deep relationship with Jesus Christ. No matter what challenges or hardships Christians face, true joy can still be experienced because it is grounded in the unchanging nature of God.

Joy in Trials

Joy doesn't disappear in the midst of trials or suffering. In James 1:2-4, believers are encouraged to "count it all joy" when they face various trials. God uses these trials to refine our faith and deepen our reliance on Him, and through them, Christians can experience joy that surpasses understanding.

Joy Is a Choice

Joy is ultimately a choice that believers can make. Even when life is difficult, Christians can choose to rejoice in the Lord, trusting in His plan for their lives. This choice to embrace joy is an act of faith and obedience to God, who commands His followers to rejoice in Him regardless of their circumstances (Philippians 4:4).

Joy Comes from Obedience to God

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and [that] your joy might be full.

John 15:10-11

Following God's Word and living in alignment with His will brings joy that is not fleeting or circumstantial.

Joy Is Rooted in the Hope of Salvation

Remember the joy Christians have because of the eternal hope they possess

(We Serve a Risen Savior, cont on pg 7)

"From the Pastor's Pen"

By Wearthly Shank

"Stand Up For Jesus"



stand in defense of our faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Everywhere Paul went, he was given opportunity to speak of his Savior, Jesus Christ.

And he took advantage of every opportunity to stand up and declare his faith.

Acts 26:12-13, & 19

Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. ...

Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision.

As I scanned through the pages in the Book of Acts, I noticed the several times that Paul spoke of his conversion.

In chapter 22, he is speaking to the people in Jerusalem. He calls them "brethren and fathers", so he's speaking to believers.

In verses 6-12, he gives his testimony of salvation.

In Acts 24, he is brought before Felix.

In chapter 25, he's brought before Festus where he appeals to Caesar. And he is brought back before Agrippa and Festus. In each of these cases, Paul gives testimony of his faith and his missionary labors.

Then in chapter 26, before king Agrippa, he once again gives testimony of his experience with Jesus on the Road to Damascus.

Paul got well acquainted with influential citizens of communities wherever he was given opportunity to preach.

The point of this short discussion is that we ought to be ready always to

When was the last time you testified Jesus to a group? Or to a single person, one on one?

God opens many doors for us in our daily walk. Doors of opportunity to speak of our faith and trust in Jesus for salvation. I don't know about you, but I miss a lot of "opened doors."

My heart's desire and prayer are that "I" will take advantage of every opportunity that God gives me to witness the saving grace of Jesus to a lost soul.

And I also pray that every Christian reader of this short note does the same. "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

Think about it!



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Fonda Norris, EIM Shepherd's Bag Coordinator at:

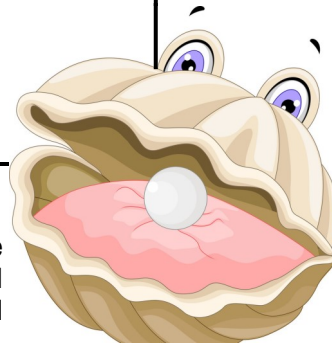
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"I Was Just Thinkin' "

By Narita Roady

"Consider the Oyster"



While dining in a local restaurant a diner noticed another patron look around in a very agitated way. Finally he saw the waiter and called him over. Listening closely the first patron heard him say, "It is stifling in here, would you please turn the air conditioner on?"

Smiling and nodding his head the waiter left and in a short time was back tending to other customers.

Very few minutes passed and the same customer was motioning for the waiter. This time he was overheard to say, "I am so cold, don't you care about the comfort of the diners? Would you please turn the air conditioner down?"

Once again the waiter smiled and very pleasantly said he would take care of it.

This continued every five minutes for about a half an hour. Each time the waiter patiently and agreeably complied. Not once did he show any signs of anger or irritation.

Not being able to stand it any more, the first customer summoned the kindly waiter. "I don't see how you've put up with it! Why don't you just ignore that complaining man or tell him off?"

A big grin broke out across the waiter's face and he chuckled, "Oh it's okay, I don't mind. You see we don't even have an air conditioner!"

I really admire that waiter! Most people would have already blown up at the man! We all know people just like this customer. We may work with them, go to church with them; we may even live with them – PEOPLE THAT DO THINGS TO IRRITATE US!

I do not believe there is one person who can say at one time or another, they have not had someone they know or a stranger that really got on their nerves. So much so, you would like to smack 'em one just to make them shut up. Not very Christ-like is

it?

While we may not have followed these impulses (I hope not!); we still felt and thought them.

How do you think God wants us to respond to those who ruffle our feathers? I have no doubt He wants us to handle them in a godly way. If we do not, our reactions can damage our spirits with anger, resentment and bitterness, not to mention the spiritual harm we can inflict on the one receiving our pent-up frustration.

We are mature adults and know that seeking an irritation-free life is not realistic. God allows them in our lives for a purpose and He wants us to learn to manage these situations appropriately.

We want to change the other person, PRONTO! But in His wisdom God has other plans, He wants to change US!

So how can we handle those people that grate and gnaw on our every nerve? I believe God has shown us the answer once again through nature: The oyster.

When a foreign object slips into the oyster and beings irritate it, it wants to protect itself from further harm or discomfort. The oyster's beings to cover the intruder with layers of a hard substance called mother-of-pearl.

Eventually this creates a pearl, something of great beauty and value. God has also equipped us with our very own "mother-of-pearl" to cover the aggravations of others.

The first layer is HUMILITY. When we become incensed by the conduct of others we are letting pride take the upper hand. Let's be real, just who are we to think that others should adapt to meet our expectations and standards?

What we need is a big dose of His grace.

Having been lavished with His unmerited love, favor and forgiveness how can we do anything less to one who offends us. If we are prideful, God cannot help us.

"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4:6

When pride fills our hearts, we refuse to accept God's truths and commands. There's no way God can help us deal with frustrating

If we were honest with ourselves it is pride that is the root problem of our intolerance of people. God even says He wants us to put a layer of "humility" around us, because in 1 Peter 5:5, He says to be "clothed with humility".

This is probably the hardest layer to put on, but it must be the very first.

Another one is SELF-CONTROL I have to say up front that NO ONE can upset you unless you ALLOW them. If someone gets to us it is our own fault.

I am sure it is no news to you that self-control begins in the mind. It's our thoughts that fire up the furnace of our emotions that in turn ignite our blistering tongue. Great strength is needed to accomplish this.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Proverbs 16:32

Capture those angry thoughts and you'll be in command of your attitude, actions and mouth. It's as easy as checking those thoughts with the Lord at the door of your mind. If they don't follow His guidelines don't let them in!

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" 2 Corinthians 10:5

Next add WISDOM. Godly wisdom is similar to a train with several cars attached. Wisdom is knowledge of Gods Word followed by an understanding of His will.

("Consider the Oyster," cont on pg 7)

Opportunities at BMAA National Meeting

Healthy Church Solutions, your BMA Global church and leader health ministry, is pleased to bring you the Pastors



Conference again this year at the National Meeting, April 22-24 at Pathway Baptist Church in Waxahachie, TX.

This ministry is also facilitating a variety of breakouts for you to choose from that we hope will be a blessing to pastors and church leaders.

Bro Wayne Whiteside will speak at the Pastors Conference about "Living Sent, Even to Death Row." Wayne was licensed to Gospel ministry by Rosewood Baptist Church in 1981.

He is currently the pastor of Crestview Baptist Church in Farmerville, Louisiana, where he has served for 27 years.

For the past twenty-six years, he has lived sent and on mission as a volunteer prison chaplain in prisons in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

Wayne is a graduate of Harmony High School, and has a bachelor's degree from East Texas Baptist University. He earned a master's degree from New Orleans Baptist Seminary and a doctorate from Andersonville Theological Seminary.

Twelve different breakouts will be available Wednesday morning, April 23, directly following the Pastors Conference.

Various departments and ministries will present topics relevant to our churches, pastors, and leaders.

The breakouts available are:

Social Media and the Church

Jon Dodson
Lifeword

Trauma and Brokenness in Families Within the Church

Angelyn McMurray
We are Free

Building Policies & Risk Management

Travis Weaver and Kurt Hetherington
James Green and Associates and BMA Financial

Dangerous Study Habits

Clif Johnson
Baptist Publishing House

Discussion over Article VII of the BMA Doctrinal Statement

Dr Philip Attebery
BMA Seminary

Missionary Care

How We Can All Get Involved

Jonathan Montgomery
BMA Global

Hispanic Church Planting

Elvis Garcia
BMA Global

New Testament Expressions of the Church

Drew Cline
Healthy Church Solutions

How to Prepare and Host an Event

Jason Prewitt
Daniel Springs Camp

Handling Church Conflict

Larry Barker
Healthy Church Solutions

Understanding Islam

Ashraf Sara
BMA Global

Bi-vocational Pastoring

Robert Forrest
Healthy Church Solutions

Save the Date

ReCharge '25

September 29-October 1

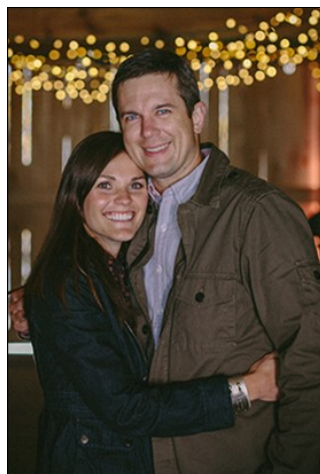
Join Healthy Church Solutions and BMA Global for spiritual refueling, encouragement, and fellowship in the Memphis/South Haven, MS area.

Guest speaker Sam Rainer

Lead pastor of West Bradenton Baptist Church, Florida

President of Church Answers

Co-founder and co-owner of Rainer Publishing



Other details
announced soon!

Let us recognize
your ministry efforts,
pour into you,
and serve you this
fall!



“Should We Still Pray For Our Political Leaders?”

Dr. John M. Adams

Moral Action – Executive Director

Our Heavenly Father hasn't promised that every political leader will become pure and righteous if we pray, but He still commands us to pray for our leaders and those of other nations as well.

The Bible says, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

I Timothy 2:1-2

You might say the world is still rocked by conflicts and corruption and lawlessness but let me ask you a question.

How much worse would the world be if God's people didn't pray? What if we simply gave up and allowed the devil to carry on his schemes without interference?

We may never know what impact our prayers are having – but God is still at work in response to the prayers of Christians.

“I've never witnessed such intense hatred and vitriol in Washington D.C. The disdain between the Democratic and Republican parties has plunged to new depths. The drive to rule is tearing our country apart.” Lloyd Ogilvie

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Ephesians 6:18

Pray for our leaders, for wisdom and guidance in the days to come.

Pray for both parties, that they will put aside their animosity and partisan politics

for the sake of the unity of our great nation.

Pray that the hostility will cease, and that peacemakers from both sides of the aisle will provide the courageous leadership so desperately needed.

When Benjamin Franklin emerged from the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia after helping forge the U.S. Constitution, he was asked what sort of government the delegates had created.

His reply was, “A republic, if you can keep it.” Billy Graham

Our nation was born in a quest for religious liberty and founded on Christian moral and spiritual principles.

John Adams, an original signer of the Declaration of Independence and our second president, wrote a profound letter to the Massachusetts Militia in the fall of 1798, saying:

“Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

James 5:16

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

I Timothy 2:1-2



What a difficult and different approach to governmental authority. Even if we disagree, we are to pray for those who rule the daily affairs of our lives.

The early church had been accused of action against the decrees of Caesar and having another king, Jesus Himself (Acts 17:7).

Their enemies effectively accused them of dissatisfaction with the ruling parties. Paul encouraged these early believers to look to God as the One who had placed these men in authority.

Pray that they would have wisdom. This was Solomon's prayer as he ruled the nation of Israel - that he would have “an understanding mind to govern the people” (1 Kings 3:9).

Pray that our leaders would have wisdom to know right and the strength to do it.

Pray that they would have discernment. This is the ability to know right from wrong; to know God's leading as opposed to the leading of the enemy (I Kings 3:9).

Pray that God would protect them from lies and deception.

Pray that they would be instruments of God. This was Paul's instruction in Romans 13:4; that rulers, authorities, and governing bodies were actually “servants of God”.

Pray that our leaders would lead a society marked by tranquility, godliness, and dignity

Oh, how we need all of Christian folk to rise up in prayer. God can and will hear us as we pray!

"That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

"Dad's Integrity"



My dad was a unique individual. He passed on in 1990 at the age of 81. When he reached 80 he declared, "I'm 80 years old and I'm going to do what I want to do the rest of my life."

My mother put it accurately when she responded, "John, you've been doing what you wanted to do all your life."

I have a lot of fond memories of Dad, but he also had some frustrating characteristics. He loved to argue and I did not. We he was in the mood to argue, it didn't matter what I said, he would take the opposite position.

One day he said the sky was blue. I agreed. He said, "Well, it's not really blue, it's more of an aqua." I agreed. He said, "No, it's more of a turquoise." I shook my head, got up, and left the room.

My older brother, however, liked to argue. So when I arrived, many times they would be in a very lively discussion. They would try to drag me into it, but I would usually leave the room and go help my mother with the dishes or some other "manly" chore. Anything was better than to be in the middle of an argument about the price of cows in India, or some such.

My dad had a very strong sense of integrity, which was probably where my brothers and I got ours. When Dad made a commitment he always carried it out, regardless of whether it was beneficial to him or not.

If he borrowed something and promised to return it the next day, if necessary, he would track the person down to return it come sleet, snow or high water.

However, the drawback to that was he also expected others to exercise integrity in the dealings also. Often that's not the case.

Recently, as I bought gas at Sam's, I had to wait to get the pump. There gas was \$2.00.9 a gallon. Gas everywhere else was \$2.06.9 and above.

I thought about how times had changed. I remembered Dad bought gas in Stratford and paid 19.9 cents a gallon for it. Truly, things had changed, but almost immediately I remembered how my dad reacted to that 19.9 cents a gallon. He was far from happy about it.

Up to that time gas was sold by full pennies per gallon. There was no such thing as .9 on any gas price. Gas prices had just been raised in Stratford to 20 cents per gallon at the two or three stations in town.

The station where Dad had done

business for years had the gas priced for what Dad took to be 19 cents per gallon. However, Dad didn't see the small raised 9 to the right of the 19.

Dad had the owner put in ten gallons. When the owner said, "That'll be \$1.99," smiling, my dad immediately corrected him. "No, I said ten gallons. Ten times 19 is a \$1.90."

The smile faded as the owner said, "No, the gas is 19 and nine tenths a gallon." He pointed to the sign which read "19.9".

Silently Dad paid the money, looked directly into the owner's eyes and in a voice as cold as ice told him, "That's just plain dishonest!"

For nine tenths of a cent the owner lost more than just Dad's business, he lost Dad's respect.

Although it wasn't long until every station in town was doing the same as the first station and adding the nine tenths to the price of a gallon, Dad never again bought anything from that station, not even a coke.

BMAA Directors Reports/Recommendations Online

The Directors of the BMA National Departments and Agencies have prepared 2024 ministry reports online for all BMA church members to peruse. These reports are presented by video and are much more in-depth than the reports that will be given at the National Meeting in April.

Messengers attending the National Meeting are encouraged to view these reports and call the respective directors with any questions.

Also included online is the schedule for the National Meeting, the Report and Recommendations Booklet, an opportunity to register for the meeting, and hotel information. There will be a limited number of Report and Recommendation Booklets printed for the meeting, but messengers are encouraged to download this information on their phones or tablets to help save print dollars.

Visit bmaamerica.org/nationalmeeting to find all this information. If you need help with anything pertaining to the meeting, contact Conference Director Donny Parrish at:

donny@lifeword.org
or call
972-571-0357

“Consider the Oyster,” cont from pg 3

Trailing directly behind is the obedience to apply what He has shown us which in turn gives us discernment in how to respond.

“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.”
Proverbs 22:3

There is no gray area here, the Bible is clear that if we are not wise we are fools. If we are quick to fly off the handle when someone punches one of our “aggravation buttons” there is not time to a use good judgment. Not only are we a fool, we usually make a fool of ourselves!

“Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? there is more hope of a fool than of him.” Proverbs 29:20

Do you truly have God’s wisdom?
Read James 3:17.

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

How did you measure up?

Continue to coat that irritation with PATIENCE. Anything that tries our patience is a test and training lesson from

the Lord.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;”
Romans 5:3

Can you imagine how our pride, disobedience, and stubbornness must annoy God? Consider how patient He is with us. He puts up with our countless offenses against Him and continually forgives us, fully expecting us to do the same toward others.

What if God were as hot-headed most Christians? We’d be in BIG trouble, wouldn’t we?!

He tells us in 1 Thessalonians 5:14c to “. . . be patient toward all men.” There are no exceptions in that verse is there?!

Lastly, cover it all with lots of LOVE. Hebrews 10:24 instructs, “And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.”

The problem is we just want to provoke those that bother us, but unfortunately not unto love! When the love of God lives in us, we will choose not to see or hear those things that incite us. Such love will let many things pass by simply because they are not of any significance to us. It will keep a firm hand on our feelings, not allowing them to get out of control.

Love is so full of compassion and kindness that it does not tolerate any actions or attitudes that might hurt another.

Love looks for the good and overlooks the bad. Most of all love shows the world Who we belong to. “

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”
John 13:35

You might be interested to know that the largest pearl ever found weighed 14 pounds and was valued at 40 million dollars! Imagine how big that giant clam’s irritation was!

I would venture to say if we would coat our annoyances with God’s mother-of-pearl we would probably have some whoppers of our own!

Oh, and one more lesson from the lowly oyster. Not only does he use what God has given him to turn his irritations into something beautiful, he also KEEPS HIS MOUTH SHUT!

“We Serve a Risen Savior,” cont from pg 1

through Jesus Christ. He encourages believers to focus on the eternal promises of God rather than the temporary struggles of life. The joy that comes from knowing Christ is secure and eternal, grounded in the salvation that cannot be taken away (1 Peter 1:3-9).

Joy in Serving Others

Another aspect of joy is that it is found in serving others. Christians find true joy not by focusing on their own needs or desires, but by fulfilling God’s call to love and serve others selflessly (Acts 20:35).

Joy in the Present and Future

Christians are to experience joy not just by looking ahead to Heaven, but also by recognizing the present blessings God has given them. Joy is not only about looking forward to the future but also about living in the fullness of God’s blessings in the here and now.

Joy Is Linked to Gratitude

Joy is tied to a heart of gratitude. A thankful heart is essential for cultivating joy. When believers take time to reflect on God’s goodness, mercy, and blessings, they are naturally filled with joy. Gratitude for salvation, for provision, and for God’s continual care fuels a deep and abiding joy.

Joy in God’s Sovereignty

Joy is the importance of recognizing God’s sovereignty. Understanding that God is in control of all things—whether good or bad—brings a sense of peace and joy, knowing that He works all things together for the good of those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

Joy Is Not a Temporary Emotion

Joy is not happiness, which is temporary and based on circumstances. True joy is deeper and rooted in God’s love and promises. While happiness can come and go, joy remains steadfast because it is anchored in our relationship with Christ.

In Conclusion

Joy is not something dependent upon external circumstances, but a supernatural gift from God that comes through trusting in Christ, obeying His Word, serving others, and keeping an eternal perspective. No matter the struggles or challenges, Christians are called to rejoice in the Lord, knowing that their joy is found in Him alone.

BMA SEMINARY

BMA Seminary is excited to announce that it has been awarded a Pathways 2025 Assessment and Planning Grant. The award comes from a philanthropic foundation and is intended "to support exploration and opportunities that strengthen and sustain . . . the school's capacity to prepare and support pastoral leaders for Christian churches."

Through the years, BMA Seminary administrators have informally gathered information from BMA pastors and congregational leaders regarding specific needs and emerging challenges for their congregations as they pertain to pastoral leadership.

After all, the seminary exists to equip individuals for leadership roles within BMA churches.

So, how will the Assessment and Planning Grant work?

First, it allows BMA Seminary to use grant funds rather than the institution's general fund that comes from donations and tuition income.

Second, it allows BMA Seminary to host a series of events where fun, fellowship, and fact-finding can occur.

Third, designated congregational leaders will be asked to help the Seminary by sharing their thoughts about pastoral leadership needs and challenges and BMA Seminary.

Fourth, seminary personnel can hopefully respond to attendees' feedback by developing accurate and targeted strategies for addressing the stated needs and challenges for BMA congregations and their pastoral leaders.

The main event is scheduled for April 21, 2025, at Topgolf Dallas <https://topgolf.com/us/dallas/>, a day before the

annual association meeting of the Baptist Missionary Association of America in Waxahachie, TX (April 22-23 at Pathway Baptist Church).

Grant funds will pay for those attending to eat and play golf. In other words, this is an opportunity to play Topgolf for free, including those with physical disabilities.

Designated congregational leaders will also be asked to help the Seminary by sharing their thoughts about pastoral leadership needs and challenges.

The designated congregational leaders will also receive a stipend of \$250 to help offset an extra night's hotel expense. The event is scheduled from 1:00-4:00 PM.

It is important to sign up for the event by emailing the seminary president's office at president@bmats.edu.

If you are unable to join us in Dallas, mark your calendar for May 20-21, 2025, and plan to join us at DeGray Lake Resort State Park!

More details will follow about this opportunity which will include options for golf and fishing!

Please take advantage of this unique opportunity to have some fun and help BMA Seminary!



TOPGOLF

UPCOMING EVENTS

BMAO Midyear Meeting
April 5
Shady Grove, McAlester

BMAA
National Meeting
April 22-24
Pathway,
Waxahachie, TX

ReCharge '25
September 29-October 1
See pg 4

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