

The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

Volume LXI

AUGUST 2026

Number 8

“Behold Your God!”

**By Gary O'Neal, President
Baptist Missionary Association
of America**

Being chosen to serve as your president is both humbling and inspiring. I grew up in a BMA church, and for nearly three decades I've had the privilege of serving BMA churches as a pastor.

I don't take lightly the trust you've placed in me, and along with First Vice-President Dustin Wisely and Second Vice-President Tony Crocker, I covet your prayers as we move forward together.

As I begin this year of service, I've been asking myself a simple question: What does the BMA need most right now?

We live in a moment of relentless noise. Every week seems to bring a

new crisis demanding our attention or a new strategy guaranteed to reverse our trends.

We can find ourselves chasing all of it — measuring our churches



against metrics, tracking cultural shifts, attending the right conferences — and slowly without realizing it, we can lose sight of the One for Whom we're doing all of this.

I'm not suggesting we ignore the

world around us. But I am convinced that what our association needs more than a new strategy is a fresh vision of an old truth: our God is great, and greatly to be praised.

Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah looked ahead to a moment when

God's people would be overwhelmed. In Babylonian captivity, they were discouraged and tempted to wonder whether God had forgotten them.

And into that moment, God gave His people not a new program but a vision. Listen to how Isaiah opens his magnificent fortieth chapter:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God."

What follows is one of the most breathtaking portraits of the greatness of God found anywhere in Scripture.

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand? Who has weighed the mountains? Who has counseled Him?

All the nations taken together are a drop in a bucket. And yet this same God tends His flock like a shepherd, carries the lambs in His arms, and renews the strength of those who wait on Him.

That's our theme for the 2027 annual meeting— Behold Your God.

I want to invite you and every pastor, church leader, and messenger in our association to join us April 20-22, 2027, at the Chateau on the Lake Resort in Branson, MOi.

Come ready to lift your eyes. Come ready to be reminded that the God we serve has not changed and He has not grown weary.

The latest crisis will pass. The newest technology will be replaced. But the God Who sits enthroned above the circle of the earth remains.

Knowing Him isn't one item on our ministry agenda. Knowing Him is the agenda.

**We'll see you in Branson.
Soli Deo Gloria**



Staying Connected to the CBC Family

Serving as president of Central Baptist College has given me the privilege of seeing how a CBC education continues to shape the lives of our alumni long after they leave campus.

Although graduation marks the completion of your student journey, it is also the beginning of a lifelong connection to the CBC family.

One of the best ways to stay engaged is by becoming a member of the CBC Alumni Association. Your membership helps strengthen the connection between alumni and the college while supporting programs and opportunities that enrich the CBC experience for current and future Mustangs.

Whether you recently graduated or have been part of the CBC family for decades, I encourage you to become an active member of the Alumni Association and stay connected with your alma mater.

To learn more or become a member of the CBC Alumni Association, visit cbc.edu/alumniassociation.

We also invite alumni to introduce the next generation to Central Baptist College through our Mustangs in the Making program.

This free program is open to children and grandchildren from birth through their senior year of high school and is designed to help families build an early connection with CBC.

Throughout the years, participants receive birthday cards and special milestone gifts as we celebrate each stage of their journey. It is a wonderful way to begin building excitement for what could one day become their own

CBC experience.

To enroll a child or grandchild in Mustangs in the Making, visit cbc.edu/makingmustangs.

Another meaningful opportunity to invest in the future of Central Baptist College is through Legacy Leaders.

This monthly giving program allows alumni and friends to make a lasting impact by supporting scholarships, academic programs, and student opportunities.

Every gift, regardless of size, helps prepare future generations of Christian leaders and ensures that CBC continues to fulfill its mission for years to come. To become a Legacy Leader, visit

cbc.edu/legacyleaders.

Thank you for your continued support, encouragement, and prayers for Central Baptist College.

Together, we are investing in students, strengthening our mission, and building a legacy that will impact lives for generations.

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Published by the
Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

Direct all correspondence, publication material
and news items to the office of the editor

Direct all subscription payments to:
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P.O. Box 5171
Ardmore, OK 73403

E-mail: Michael.mobly@yahoo.com

Subscription rates are, any church may pay
ten dollars a month, or one hundred twenty
dollars a year, to receive a digital copy of the
paper emailed to one email address
in your church.



"I Was Just Thinkin' "

By Narita Roady

"The Long Walk"

A missionary had labored long and hard in an African village. As the adults and children sat round her one day, she tried to find a way to illustrate the Christmas custom of giving gifts to celebrate the birth of Christ.

There were so many challenges in communicating God's truths with the natives, she could only hope and pray they understood.

When Christmas arrived, one of the young boys brought her a gift wrapped in a crumpled piece of paper. He beamed with pride as he presented it. Knowing the extreme poverty of the people, she couldn't imagine what it might be.

Upon unwrapping it, she gasped as she held in her hand an exquisitely beautiful shell. When she could finally speak she asked the boy where he found the stunning shell.

As he described the one place where such shells were found and named the location, she was even more shocked. She knew the place and that it was a number of miles away, over very ragged and treacherous terrain.

Her heart was touched and she thanked him profusely. Then she exclaimed, "This is the most beautiful shell I have ever seen, but you had to travel so far to bring it to me!"

With a big smile the precious child replied, "Teacher, long walk part of gift!"

This reminded me of another long walk in the Bible. Not a physical journey, but

an emotional, and mental one. Not a sacrifice of energy and time, but a very personal sacrifice.

I am speaking of the sacrifices we make to truly love others as written in 1 Corinthians 13. How much easier it is to perform a physical task and be done with it, rather than dig deep and give from within ourselves.

The true gift of love is very often a "long walk". Fewer and fewer people actually understand what real love is today.

Due to a bombardment of media, movies, T.V. shows, and worldly music our youth think love is sexual. They confuse love with lust, infatuation, and physical attraction.

What happens when the physical attraction is gone? That's no "long walk", just a "short stroll".

To them, love is a feeling. Feelings are fickle and can change in a moment's notice. Love is an action not an impulse.

Genuine love does produce wonderful feelings, but they are a product of loving, not the driving force.

Others have the distorted idea that love is a strong attachment or liking someone. Phrases are thrown around

such as, "I just love her; she is so sweet." Or, "I love being with him; he's so much fun!"

What happens when she isn't sweet anymore, or he is no longer fun? You guessed it, another "short walk".

Another greatly distorted view of love is, "If

you love me you will give me my way and treat me how I think I should be treated."

Love is about giving not taking. This one doesn't even qualify as a "short walk" or even a few small baby steps!

Does the love you profess to have for your family, church family, friends and neighbors take the "long walk"? A look at 1 Corinthians 13:4, will give you the answers.

Charity suffereth long

I believe this verse manifests the gift of a "long walk". If our love for others is pleasing to God there will be suffering involved. Face it authentic love is not all roses and boxes of candy.

Notice the scripture does not just say such love will suffer but it will do so for long time.

Your marriage, your relationship with your children and family, serving with brothers and sisters in Christ in a church home, and reaching others for Lord is a long term commitment.

Everyone who has ever been married has experienced hurt, disappointment, rejection, and unfulfilled needs.

Sometimes a spouse will think, "I don't think I can take this much more." To stay and keep the marriage vows becomes a "long walk", with much suffering, doesn't it? This is true in any earthly relationship.

("Long Walk," cont on pg 7)

"Kindness can take the form of showing maturity by choosing self-control in our responses during emotionally charged times or checking our motives with the Holy Spirit concerning what we are about to speak."

“Why CBC Day Matters”

Since its founding in 1952, Central Baptist College has existed to serve as the educational arm of the Baptist Missionary Association of Arkansas.

According to the College's official history book, written by Dr. Dusty Bender, the founders of the BMA believed that education was “a means of perpetuating the faith.” We still believe that today.

Students are being saved at CBC. Since January 2026, we have witnessed 15 students place their faith in Jesus Christ. I wish we had a tally of all the students who have been saved on this campus since 1952.

Some see CBC as “just a college,” but this small campus is an international mission field.

We are only able to do this Christ-centered work because of the churches who make it possible. It has been truly incredible to witness the way the churches of the BMA have rallied behind us over the last year.

During the most recent fiscal year, which ended June 30, we experienced a 13.27% increase in support from our churches. Some increased their monthly support, some sent generous special offerings, and others who had not given to CBC in more than two decades renewed their support.

We are grateful for the trust our churches place in us to carry about this great work.

That is why CBC Day is so meaningful. On September 27, we invite BMA churches across Arkansas and beyond to join us in celebrating Central Baptist College and the ministry we share together.

CBC Day is more than a day to recognize our college. It is an opportunity for churches to unite in support of preparing the next generation of Christian leaders who will serve in churches, schools, businesses, ministries, and communities around the world.

For many decades, CBC has remained committed to providing a Christ-centered education that develops students academically, spiritually, and personally.

While our campus has grown and academic programs have expanded, our purpose has remained the same: equipping men and women to discover God's calling and faithfully live it out.

That mission has always been strengthened by the faithful support of our churches.

Many of our students arrive at CBC because a pastor, youth pastor, Sunday school teacher, or church member encouraged them to consider a Christian college.

Others are able to attend because churches invest through scholarships, special offerings, and generous financial support. Just as importantly, our churches faithfully pray for our students, faculty, and staff throughout the year.

CBC Day provides an opportunity for

churches to come together in a united expression of support for Christian higher education.

Whether your congregation chooses to receive a special offering, spend time praying for CBC, invite a college representative to share during a service, or simply highlight the ministry of the college, every church can play a meaningful role in strengthening our mission.

If your church would like to participate in CBC Day, I encourage you to contact Duffy Guyton, Vice President for Advancement, at 501.269.6784, or sign up by visiting www.cbc.edu/cbcday.

We would be honored to provide promotional materials, resources, and information to help your congregation participate.

As September 27 approaches, I hope your church will join us in celebrating God's faithfulness to Central Baptist College and in investing in the future of Christian higher education.

Together, we can continue preparing students who are rooted in faith, equipped for service, and ready to answer God's call wherever He leads.



ReCharge '26 Focus on Healthy Families

Summer always seems to pass more quickly than we expect. It doesn't take long for fall calendars to begin to fill, for ministry activities to ramp back up, and for the holiday season to arrive.

Before that busy pace takes over, what would it look like to intentionally create space to slow down, catch your breath, and allow God to refresh your heart?

We'd like to offer a suggestion. Join pastors, spouses, church staff, and ministry team leaders from across the country for the ReCharge Leadership Retreat '26, happening September 28–30 at Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine, TX.

ReCharge is small on purpose and gives you a place to step away, make deeper connections, engage in real talk with others who understand ministry, and freely worship the Lord through praise, prayer, and biblical teaching.

In fact, several churches are making ReCharge their annual staff retreat by bringing their entire ministry team to be refreshed and encouraged together.

This year's theme is Healthy Families and is designed to encourage you as you lead your own family while also shepherding the families God has entrusted to you in your church.

Here's what you can look forward to:

Monday Evening | September 28

We'll begin at 6:00 p.m. with a catered dinner, meaningful worship, and an evening of entertainment that sets the tone for several refreshing days together.

Tuesday | September 29

After enjoying a buffet breakfast, we'll gather for men's and women's breakout sessions on Family of Origin, with Larry Barker leading the men and Angelyn McMurray leading the ladies.

In Session One, our speaker, Dr. Steve Crawley, will equip us with practical, biblical insights about what it looks like to

be active and passionate about "Family Discipleship".

Tuesday afternoon is intentionally left open for you to rest, enjoy Great Wolf Lodge, or explore the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Tuesday night's session will be especially meaningful as Larry and Shelby Barker share from their own family's journey in a message titled "Ministering to Prodigals: The Ministry We Wish We Never Had."

Their honest and transparent story offers hope and encouragement for families walking through similar seasons.

Wednesday Morning | September 30

We'll enjoy one final breakfast together before concluding with Pastor Charles Johnson, who will challenge us with the message "Keeping Your Family Ministry First," a reminder of the priorities that sustain healthy relationships and ministry life for the long haul.

You'll be done before lunch and can plan to travel home or sightsee some

more.

One of the unique blessings of ReCharge is the opportunity to spend time with many of our North American church planter families, who attend each year for much-needed encouragement and respite.

We encourage you to join them and get to know them better. We have some great folks in our tribe!

If you're a church member or church leader who isn't planning to attend yourself, consider blessing your pastor and spouse by sending them to ReCharge as a Pastor Appreciation gift.

And pastors, why not invite your staff and key ministry leaders to experience it with you? Investing in your leadership team today can strengthen your church for years to come.

Our special conference hotel rate of just \$109 per night at Great Wolf Lodge is only available through August 28, so be sure to reserve your room and complete your registration before the deadline.

Visit bmaamerica.org/recharge today, and join us September 28–30 as we worship, rest, reconnect, and return home refreshed for the season ahead.

RE:CHARGE LEADERSHIP RETREAT

September 28-30

REGISTER NOW - \$150

Includes: a catered dinner, two breakfasts, concert, and all sessions!

Great Wolf Lodge

100 Great Wolf Dr, Grapevine, TX 76051

\$109 per night

Book by 8/28 for this special rate!

Use code 2609RECH

"That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

"Cutting to Fit"

I'm not a professional carpenter, but have helped construct a lot of buildings in my time. I've paid attention to methods used by the professionals I've worked alongside and used them.

One time, our landlord hired a young high school student to help me construct a carport in the back of the house. He was more of a "gofer" than a real helper. I had never built a carport before, but I was better off than my helper.

When he came he told me the landlord had sent him over to help build something called a "car porch" onto the side of the house. Realizing he was talking about a carport I asked him if he'd ever helped build one. He said he knew what a carport was, but he'd never even seen a car porch, much less built one, but he was willing to learn.

I had never heard of a car porch either, so we just built a carport. We had several interesting adventures in that.

One mistake we made was a good illustration of how sin works. We were to make a ten foot wide storage room at the back of the carport. I intended the outside two by four to be nailed to the ends of the floor joists of the room. I had my helper start.

I didn't realize until later he nailed the outside two by four to the inside of the outer floor joist and nailed it to the end of the inner floor joist. That caused the outside two by four to angle away from the side of the house.

The error was only the width of the two by four, and not too noticeable at first. In the beginning, it was only a matter of inches, however, by the time it got to the entry of the carport, ten feet later, it was several feet out of line.

That's the way sin operates. It isn't far off when it first starts, but it also isn't long until it leads far, far off track.

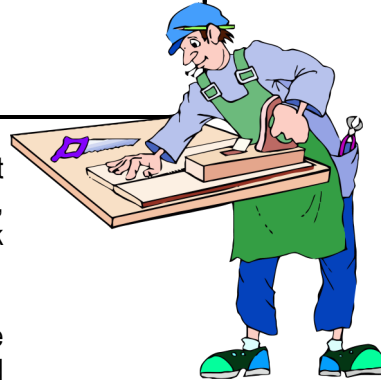
The further we get from the original sin, the further off track we find ourselves.

I climbed up on the ladder and measured for the board that would seal off the open spaces between the rafters and the wall. There were several boards in the way, so that the sealing board had to be cut to fit around them.

I wrote all the measurements on a paper while on the ladder. I came down and measured, marked and cut the board according to the measurements.

I suddenly became aware that my helper had stopped his work and was watching me. I thought he was just taking a break.

I climbed back up on the ladder and slipped the board into its spot. It fit perfectly, so I nailed it in place.



As I was coming back down the young man asked, "How did you do that?"

"Do what?"

"Cut the board on the ground and know it would fit when you got it in place up there?"

I asked him, "Why would it not fit?"

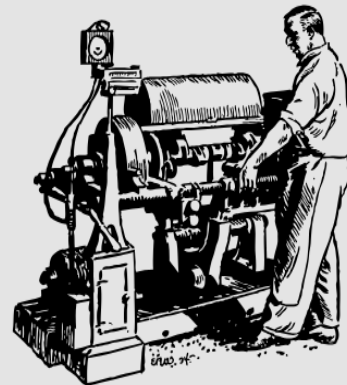
He said, "Oh, I didn't see you measuring. I thought you just 'eyeballed' it from the ground and cut the board without measuring."

I had to laugh at the ramifications of that.

Thinking about measuring and cutting in one place, to be placed elsewhere, I'm reminded that's what God is doing with us. He is measuring and molding on earth to make us fit in a special place He has prepared for us in Heaven.

I've made some mistakes in that method of my life, but God never does. When He finishes with us we will always fit perfectly.

Day of Sharing



Sunday, August 16th

PLEASE PLAN TO RECEIVE A LOVE OFFERING
AND PRAY FOR BAPTIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

“A Long Walk,” continued from pg 3

Love is kind

God doesn't stop there He adds even more. Not only is authentic love to “suffer long”, but it “is kind”, in the process. That certainly ups the cost of the gift!

How many of us are naturally kind when we are suffering at the hand of another. The answer is ZERO. Such a response must be a supernatural working of God in our lives, and can only be accomplished by us submitting our will to Him.

Kindness can take the form of showing maturity by choosing self-control in our responses during emotionally charged times or checking our motives with the Holy Spirit concerning what we are about to speak.

Love is patient

A cup of kindness also holds a

generous portion of patience. Patience gives us perseverance on the “long walk”. It oils our grinding gears of endurance so we don't throw in the towel with that whiney toddler or rebellious teenager.

It can make the difference in us staying in the church God has called us to serve to face misunderstandings and difficulties that happen, or leaving our church home for “greener pastures” with another congregation.

It can help you spend a holiday with your dysfunctional family without being a part of the yearly “drama” that may arise, and maybe even being a blessing!

I will be perfectly honest. Most of the time I can say my love is authentic. At other times I am ashamed to admit that I start out on the long walk, but grumble and complain all the way. Making sure

***“Genuine love
does produce wonderful
feelings, but they are a
product of loving,
not the driving force.”***

everyone knows my discomfort and weariness.

When that's the case I may be walking, but I just making everyone else suffer long! This is an area in my spiritual life I continually work on and will have to the rest of my life.

What about you? When you examine your love for the people in your life, is it really love? When the journey grows longer than you anticipated and you are exhausted, do you continue with tolerance and compassion? Have you been willing to make the “long walk” part of the gift?

As the old Chinese proverb says, “A journey of a 1000 miles begins with a single step.”

Are you willing to take that first step now?

Celebrating 75 Years

BMAO (Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma)

- ✓ Remembering Matthew 28:19-20.
- ✓ Remembering BMAO partnership.
- ✓ Remembering our Mission.

Join the celebration!

Help make the 75th years a day of celebration in Oklahoma.

Upload pictures here, just select your church.

<https://bmao.org/celebrate75contribute>

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UPCOMING EVENTS

**Baptist
Publishing House
Day of Sharing**
Special offering
August 16

**Re:Charge
Leadership Retreat**
See pg 5

**75th Annual
State Meeting of the BMA
of Oklahoma**
October 2-3, 2026

“Rooted and Established”

In Colossians 2:6-7, Paul exhorts his readers, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.”

Those words will guide our chapel services at Central Baptist College during the Fall 2026 semester following the theme “Rooted and Established.” Throughout the semester, we will challenge our students to know what they believe, understand why they believe it and build their lives firmly upon the truth of God’s Word.

We are approaching that challenge in a very intentional way. Week by week, our chapel services will walk through the BMA doctrinal statement, point by point, with the hope that our students will become more rooted and established in the faith.

Why doctrine? Because what we believe matters.

Our beliefs shape how we understand God, how we understand ourselves and how we live in the world He created.

In a culture where truth is increasingly treated as personal, flexible and subject to change, Christian young adults need more than a passing familiarity with the faith. They need deep roots.

As Paul wrote to the Colossians, he described believers as “rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith.” That is our prayer for every student at CBC.

We are grateful for the outstanding group of pastors, professors and ministry leaders who will help lead this journey through Scripture:

August 26: Theme introduction,
Dr. Jeremy Langley, president of Central Baptist College

September 2: “God,”
Dr. Tim Brewer, professor of Bible at CBC and CBC alumnus

September 9: “Scriptures,”
Justin Harrell, men’s discipleship pastor at Collective Church in Bryant and CBC alumnus

September 16: “Creation,”
Dr. John David Smith, president of BMA Global

September 23: “Satan,”
Gary Copeland, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Sheridan

September 30: “Depravity,”
Landon Riddle, associate pastor of Southgate Baptist Church in Moore, Oklahoma, and CBC alumnus

October 7: “Salvation,”
Dr. Martin Jameson, professor of Bible at CBC and CBC alumnus

October 14: “Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom,”
Dr. Jeremy Langley

October 21: “Sanctification,”
Dr. Tim Brewer

October 28: “Security,”
Bro. Don Chandler, senior pastor of Central Baptist Church in Conway and CBC alumnus

November 4: “Church,”
Dustin Wisely, lead pastor of First Baptist Church in Magnolia and

CBC alumnus

November 11: “Civil Authority,”
Dr. Russell Threet, pastor of West Park Baptist Church in Ozark

November 18: “Last Things,”
Dr. Virgil Porter, professor of Bible at CBC and CBC alumnus

December 2: Fine Arts Christmas Chapel

Chapel services are held each Wednesday at 1:00pm in Burgess Auditorium.

Please commit to praying for our weekly chapel services, for our students, and for those who will deliver God’s Word. Please pray that hearts would be changed and that students would be drawn closer to Him.

CBC belongs to the churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Arkansas, and we take seriously the sacred responsibility those churches have entrusted to us.

We are committed not only to preparing students for successful careers, but also to equipping them to stand firm in their faith for a lifetime of service to Christ.

My prayer is that God will use every message to deepen our students’ love for His Word and establish them firmly in the faith so they will be, as Paul wrote, “rooted and built up in Him.”

