



THE BAPTIST MESSENGER



 **Camp
Perfect Wings**
**A FAMILY
REUNION**

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2024 SBC Annual Meeting Update

Having taken part in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting for many years, I always walk away energized about our shared mission to advance the Gospel around the world.

At the 2024 SBC Meeting in Indianapolis, there were some wonderful things that occurred at the annual meeting: the sending of 83 missionaries by the International Mission Board (four of whom are from Oklahoma), reports that show a significant increase in baptisms and attendance among churches in most of our state conventions, reported growth in our seminaries, and countless testimonies of the advancement of the Gospel and goodness of God in the lives of people and families.

I remain encouraged that Southern Baptists, even with our flaws and disagreements, will strongly continue on our long-held path of biblical faithfulness and missional focus.

At the same time, there has been quite a bit of confusion generated from media reports regarding the vote on the Law Amendment at the SBC Annual Meeting in Indianapolis. This article I have written that will hopefully bring clarity to what has actually happened.

Many are aware that messengers did not approve by two-thirds majority an amendment to the SBC constitution (known as the Law Amendment, named for its author Mike Law) that states a church will be in friendly cooperation that “affirms, appoints, or employs only men as any kind of pastor or elder as qualified by Scripture.”

With the amendment falling short of a two-thirds majority, there has been some confusion that with this vote the SBC has approved women to serve in the office of elder/pastor. However, this is not true.

Many that voted against the amendment did so, not because they believe women should serve in the office of elder/pastor, but rather thought the amendment to

be unnecessary or that it could potentially create problematic issues regarding Baptist polity. It is important to note that the most recent version of the Baptist Faith and Message states, “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.”

In addition, messengers in the Annual Meeting both last year and this year overwhelmingly voted to declare three churches who have women serving in the office of elder/pastor as being not in friendly cooperation with the convention.

Thus, messengers did not vote to approve women serving in the office of elder/pastor, but rather were working to find consensus and clarity on issues related to the office, title, and function of elder/pastor. There was no sentiment among messengers that women should not serve on church staff or have roles of ministry in the church. Rather, messengers were working on the best way to uphold what our confession states—that only men as qualified by Scripture can serve in the office of elder/pastor and at the same time firmly believe that women are called and gifted by God to serve in other roles of ministry in the church.

Southern Baptists are committed to biblical/doctrinal fidelity, the Convention’s confession of faith, and the importance of both men and women exercising their gifts in ministry within the guidelines provided by Scripture.

In the end, Southern Baptists are a Gospel people. How grateful I am that God has blessed Oklahoma Baptists with great unity and Gospel focus. Let’s keep working together to advance his kingdom!



Todd Fisher

Oklahoma Baptists
Executive Director- Treasurer

CHRISTIANS IN A BRAVE NEW WORLD

Nearly 100 years ago, the British writer Aldous Huxley composed his classic dystopian novel, “Brave New World.” Huxley depicted a world in which all people were on drugs/medication, babies were created in science labs, young people were indoctrinated, the sexual act was treated casually and life had no sacred quality whatsoever.

In many ways, his nightmare vision is unfolding before our eyes today. Just the other week, the U.S. Supreme Court “ruled unanimously to retain the existing lack of safety standards for the abortion pill,” making chemical abortion widely available.

Our culture is indoctrinating children away from biblical sexuality and toward perverse ideas on gender. In 2007, there was only one gender clinic in America. Today, there are hundreds amid the gender chaos. Meanwhile, practices called “reproductive technologies” are often used and without a regard for the value of life.

Abortion, euthanasia, gender confusion, drug addiction, reckless practices surrounding in vitro fertilization (IVF)—all of these seem to be thriving while the Christian ethical viewpoint about life fades.

Christians seem to be living in our own Brave New World, as author Joni Eareckson Tada once observed. So, what are Christians to do?

Above all, we must stay grounded in God’s Holy Word, the Bible. We know from God’s Word that life is precious, and people are made in God’s image (Gen. 1:27), from the first moments of conception/fertilization to the natural end of life. The biblical view is that all human life is sacred, that we believe in a “seamless thread of life” from womb to tomb. The biblical view is that God made us male and female—and the marital act, exclusive for marriage, is what leads to children. As Christians, we believe in procreation, not mere “reproduction.”

Southern Baptists, informed by Scripture, have often weighed into these issues, such as abortion. Recently, though, Southern Baptists are by necessity having to weigh in on the ever-increasing bioethical issues.

At the recent Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, messengers approved a resolution that talked about “reproductive technologies,” including IVF. The resolution highlighted “the ethical realities of reproductive technologies and the dignity of the human embryo,” calling on Southern Baptists “to reaffirm the unconditional value and right to life of every human being, including those in an embryonic stage, and to only utilize reproductive technologies consistent with that affirmation especially in the number of embryos generated in the IVF process.”

Christian author and ethicist Gilbert Meilaender, in his important book “Bioethics: A primer for Christians,” spoke to these issues in helpful ways. He calls us to draw a clear distinction in worldviews and calls for Christians to resist the idea that there is a “neutral ground” in bioethics.

Bioethical issues are not abstract. They have profound moral implications. They also show up in nearly every family and community in America. Fortunately, there are resources for Christians that can help guide us, including Albert Mohler’s popular podcast, “The Briefing,” good books and more. But ultimately, we need to get back to the Bible.

With God’s help, we can better navigate the dark waters of this Brave New World, knowing that in the end, Jesus will turn all darkness and death back to light and life.

“For the darkness is passing away, and the real light is already shining.” 1 John 2:8



Brian Hobbs
Oklahoma Baptists
Editor

UPCOMING events

See what events are happening around the state!



**INDIAN
FALLS CREEK**

July 28-August 1

Indian Falls Creek
Falls Creek Conference
Centers

indianfallscreek.org



August 4-8

Collegiate Week
Falls Creek Conference
Centers

[collegeministry.com/
collegiateweek](http://collegeministry.com/collegiateweek)

Worship Summit

January 22 Elk City, First Baptist Church - Aaron Robertson
February 12 Tulsa, Southern Hills - Jesse Graver
April 18 Bartlesville, Highland Park - Tyler Neighbors
June 20th Ada, First Baptist Church - Danny Lacey
August 8th OKC, Village Baptist Church - Allen Kimberlin

August 8

Worship Summit
Oklahoma City, Village- Allen
Kimberlin

[oklahomabaptists.org/
worship-summit/](http://oklahomabaptists.org/worship-summit/)



August 24

The Call Conference
Oklahoma Baptist University
[oklahomabaptists.org/
youth/evangelism/the-call-
conference/](http://oklahomabaptists.org/youth/evangelism/the-call-conference/)

FEEDING & LEADING

A PODCAST FEATURING TODD FISHER & ANDY TAYLOR

Historical-Cultural Background Study for Sermon Preparation

EPISODE 48

Understanding the historical context of a sermon text not only provides great insight into its meaning – and might keep you out of misinterpretation – but often provides outstanding illustrative material. Todd and Andy discuss the value of spending time understanding the historical and cultural context of a passage.

LISTEN AT
oklahomabaptists.org/podcast
or on...



MESSENGER INSIGHT

Hear Brian Hobbs and Ryan Smith interview Laura and Zoe, each of whom have a testimony of how the Lord brought them out of a transgender lifestyle into a fulfilling life in Christ today at baptistmessenger.com/podcast or find the Baptist Messenger Insight Podcast program on your preferred podcast platform.



Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children

Helping children. Providing homes.
Supporting families. **Bringing Hope.**



OUR MINISTRIES

These campuses offer child-focused care, where up to eight children are placed in a cottage-style home under the supervision of a houseparent couple. From meals and bible studies to campus programs and education, staff members strive to help shape children into caring, capable adults. Transitional Living programs are available to them after high school graduation, as they continue their education.

BRT Boys Ranch Town

 Baptist Home for Girls

 Baptist Children's Home

Hope offers free, confidential, medical grade pregnancy testing and education on all pregnancy options. Ultrasounds are used to determine pregnancy and gestational age. Empowered Parenting classes on pregnancy and baby care are offered for expectant moms and dads. Adoption education and referrals are available and abortion recovery classes for those hurting from abortion. ThinkImPregnant.org

 Hope Pregnancy Center

Each of these campuses have a ministry developed to help single mothers and their children, who may have limited or no support. The goal is to help these families become productive and more self-sufficient by providing a stable and nurturing place to live while equipping, assisting and teaching important skills. Areas include parenting skills, career development, spiritual development, church involvement, relational needs, money management and education.

 The Vine

 Baptist Children's Home

Through church partnerships, Foster Care Ministries provides training opportunities and other events that equip and encourage foster and adoptive parents. Training opportunities help these families meet annual in-service requirements. Training is provided through in-person events and our online platform.

 Foster Care Ministries

OBHC does not charge for its services or accept government funds. OBHC is dependent on the generosity of caring people and churches.





Important Questions

A few years ago I had the privilege of serving as a longer term interim for one of our Oklahoma Baptist churches. I had been there long enough that a lot of people knew who I was and I knew who a bunch of them were. I had also been there long enough that a lot of people were increasingly excited about getting a real preacher to replace me.

I had been there long enough that I had become acquainted with a young boy of about 8-9 years old. He had distinctly red hair and more than a few freckles. I am sure that he didn't invent mischief. But he certainly wasn't opposed to it. He was simply a good natured, mischievous young boy – just like all young boys should be. For those of you who are Andy Griffith fans, this young one would have made a great Opie.

It happened on Sunday morning. It was back during Covid. You remember those days.

I was standing in the foyer greeting people as they entered the worship center. I was shaking hands with those who were not afraid of Covid. I was giving knuckles to those who had a healthy concern about Covid. And I was bumping elbows with those who were more than a bit terrified of it. I am sure glad those days are behind us.

But on this particular day, my little red haired, freckled faced buddy walked up and stood by me. He didn't say anything to me or anyone else for that matter. He just stood there offering an occasional handshake, knuckles, and elbow touch. For a few moments, I thought maybe the Lord was calling him to be a senior pastor.

But then we had a little bit of a lull in the folks who were coming in. He looked up at me and asked, "Can I ask you a question?" I thought the young man might have a Bible question he had been wrestling with or maybe a

question about the organization of the New Testament Church. So, I said, "Of course you can ask me a question. What's on your mind?" He quickly replied, "I was wondering if you could shorten up the service today. I would like to get home a little earlier than we have been."

My first thought was that somebody had put him up to that. I quickly scanned the foyer area looking for an adult, probably a deacon, who would have been bent over laughing at that one. But nope. Not a soul was paying attention to my situation. It was just me and this red haired, freckled face boy locked in a battle of wits over how long the worship service should last.

So, I said what any self-respecting preacher would say. I said, "How about you go find the music guy and ask him. He's the one taking up all of our time with all those songs he's singing" (I was basically teasing but I needed to get out of this one, one way or another).

To my surprise, my young friend, turned and walked away. To this day I have no idea if he went to find the music guy and ask him to cut out a song or two or three. The music guy never said anything to me about it. I didn't have the heart (OK, courage) to ask. But our services stayed about the same length after that. And my red haired, freckled face young friend never bothered asking me again. Maybe he thought I was a lost cause.

We all need people in our lives who are courageous enough and care enough to ask important questions – even those questions that might catch us a bit off guard. So, don't avoid those folks. Instead welcome them in and let them ask away. Who knows what you might learn.



Joe Ligon
Oklahoma Baptists
Sr. Associate Executive Director



Brad Johnson with his son, Caleb

2024 Family Reunion

Summer camps are a great way for kids to get out of the house for a week or so. However, some first-time camp goers or even returning campers may experience a bit of homesickness. This sense of stress or anxiety happens when separated from familiar environments for extended periods of time and, sometimes, this feeling can be overwhelming.

This was the case for Ethan, a first-time camper at Camp Perfect Wings held at CrossTimbers Children's Mission Adventure Camp near Davis, May 23-25. Ethan became quiet and distant because he was homesick, that was until he met Jeremiah, another first-time camper. Jeremiah helped Ethan feel welcomed and at ease in an unfamiliar place. By the end of the first day, they acted as if they had always been friends, brothers even, bringing out Ethan's energetic and sociable side. This sense of comfort and family is what Camp Perfect Wings is

about, creating a welcoming environment for children and adults with special needs.

Acting as the primary tool to reach those with special needs, Camp Perfect Wings is an amazing camp held once a year in the early summer. It includes morning and evening worship, guided activities like music, crafts, games, target sports, motorcycle rides, carriage rides, a cookout and more.

"The highlight for many campers would be the motorcycle rally with the F.A.I.T.H. riders," said Becka Johnson, Camp Perfect Wings director. "They truly look forward to this; they start asking about it the moment they walk in."

At the camp, there are two types of attendees designated as Campers and Buddies. Campers, like Ethan





and Jeremiah, are children and adults ages 8 years and older who have intellectual or developmental disabilities. The campers enjoy games, activities and Bible time designed with their special needs in mind.

Buddies are responsible teens or adults ages 16 years and older who have a desire to serve those with special needs. A Buddy can be anyone who has worked or currently works with special needs individuals, are family members of special needs individuals or anyone else who wants to serve those with special needs.

Ethan's buddy was Luke Snoddy, a recent Oklahoma Baptist University graduate. Having earned a bachelor's degree in children and family ministry, helping at Camp Perfect Wings and CrossTimbers is right up his alley.

"What I love is seeing the love of God reaching across all boundaries," Snoddy said. "It's like a whole family when you see them all. It's a calm environment where their needs are honored."

"What I love is seeing the love of God reaching across all boundaries."

This was Snoddy's first year helping at Camp Perfect Wings. Still, he realized Ethan's homesickness, and was relieved to see him make a new friend in Jeremiah.

"Ethan was a little homesick at first," Snoddy said. "That was until he met a new friend, Jeremiah. Ethan is very energetic and sociable, and Jeremiah just brought that out in him."





This year's theme for the camp was "Made New," based on 2 Cor. 5:17, *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."* The speaker for this year's camp was Louisiana Baptists Children's Ministry Strategist Pastor David Anderson, who has been assisting at Camp Perfect Wings for 16 years.

"It's like a family reunion," said Anderson. "Many of the Campers and Buddies are returners. Then you also make new friends every year."

Since Anderson has spoken at the camp so many times, many returning campers know him and are excited to hear his sermons. He can communicate and connect with them on a deeper level.

"Pastor Anderson is great," said Sarah Hagar, CrossTimbers Program Director and Oklahoma Baptists' Childhood Ministry Partner. "He has a way of connecting with the campers that meets them where they are. He does not talk down to them at all."

God's hand was evident in bringing Jeremiah and Ethan together. Megan Cline, Jeremiah's mother, had not heard of Camp Perfect Wings until she saw an advertisement for it in a hospital pamphlet.

Unfortunately, she saw it a day after registration closed. Determined, she called the hospital and requested if there was anyway Jeremiah could attend the camp. They agreed to register Jeremiah for the camp under the condition that she'd be Jeremiah's buddy, which she happily agreed to. Little did she know that one call would give Jeremiah, and herself, an unforgettable experience.

"I was in tears because we have never been anywhere where Jeremiah's friends care about him," Megan said.



"But after he met Ethan, Ethan would come running to Jeremiah and give him a big hug. Jeremiah had a friend who wanted to be with him."

This story is only one of many other similar ones found at Camp Perfect Wings. It is a place where everyone is welcomed with open arms and where they can be inspired through the Word of God to keep their focus on Christ.

"My dream for Camp Perfect Wings is that it would continue to grow and reach more families with special needs," said Hagar. "The state's mission offering helps us keep Camp Perfect Wings affordable for families."

"My dream for Camp Perfect Wings is that it would continue to grow and reach more families with special needs."

Camp Perfect Wings is supported through the Cooperative Program to accompany camp registration fees and will be a featured ministry in the Edna McMillan Oklahoma State Mission Offering emphasis. For more information, visit oklahombaptists.org/childhood/camp-perfect-wings.



Jacob King
Oklahoma Baptists
Staff Writer
Photo Credit: Keaton Nye

2024 SBC ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)—Nearly 11,000 Southern Baptist messengers gathered June 11-12 in Indianapolis for the 2024 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual Meeting. There were a total of 10,946 messengers—including more than 400 from Oklahoma. Messengers hailed from all 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico, representing 3,988 churches.

83 MISSIONARIES COMMISSIONED IN IMB SENDING CELEBRATION

The messengers were moved to joy and tears as 83 new missionaries—including four Oklahoma Baptists—were commissioned on June 11 by the International Mission Board (IMB). IMB President Paul Chitwood told the missionaries, “Beside you and behind you are row upon row, thousands of Southern Baptists, here to celebrate with you as you prepare to go to the nations.” “As you go out to literally every corner of the Earth in pursuit of the lost, may the Lord remind you that always—always—there are Southern Baptists praying fervently for you, and for the Gospel to advance.”

OFFICERS ELECTED, INCLUDING OKLAHOMA PASTOR BRAD GRAVES AS 1ST VP

A crowded field of candidates for SBC president led to numerous runoff elections in 2024. After two runoffs, North Carolina pastor Clint Pressley was named president. Pressley is senior pastor of Charlotte, Hickory

Grove, Oklahoma pastor Mike Keabone of Lawton, First was among the other candidates to run for SBC president.

Brad Graves, senior pastor of Ada, First, was elected first vice president. Eddie Lopez, senior pastor of Forney, Texas, FBC en Español won the race for second vice president. Don Currence was named registration secretary, and Nathan Finn, was named recording secretary.

KEY BUSINESS & OTHER SBC MATTERS

Southern Baptist messengers did not approve what became known as the Law amendment. The amendment did receive the requisite two-thirds approval last year in New Orleans. The amendment would have defined a cooperating church as one that “affirms, appoints, or employs only men as any kind of pastor or elder as qualified by Scripture.”

Oklahoma Baptists’ Todd Fisher said, “Many who voted against the amendment did so, not because they believe women should serve in the office of elder/pastor, but rather thought the amendment to be unnecessary or that it could potentially create problematic issues regarding Baptist polity. It is important to note that the most recent version of the Baptist Faith and Message states, ‘While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor/elder/overseer is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.’”

Messengers overwhelmingly approved two recommendations brought forward by the SBC Abuse Reform and Implementation Task Force (ARITF). The recommendations hand the priorities identified by ARITF over to the SBC Executive Committee to further implement.

Messengers also approved various other motions, eight resolutions and heard various ministry reports. The 2025 SBC Annual Meeting is set to take place June 10-11 in Dallas, Tex.

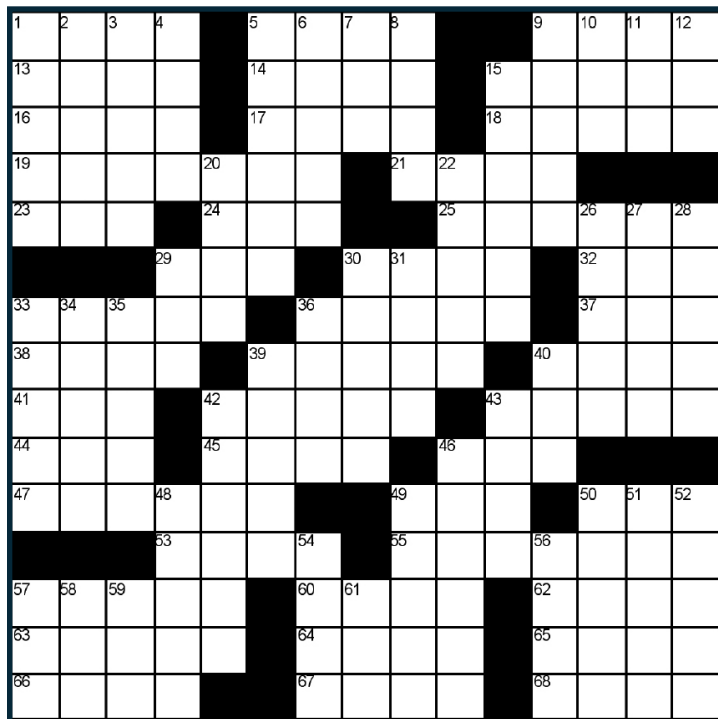
Prior to the SBC Annual Meeting, many other SBC auxiliary events took place from June 9-12 in Indianapolis. The annual Pastors’ Conference took place June 9-10 and was attended by thousands of pastors and others. The 2024 conference was led by president Stephen Rummage, pastor of Oklahoma City, Quail Springs.

Visit baptistpress.com or baptist-messenger.com for articles about the 2024 SBC Annual Meeting.

by Baptist Press & Messenger Staff



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Church bell sound
5 "___ of every unclean...bird" (Rev. 18:2)
9 Location of seven churches
13 Pathway
14 Worthy is the ___
15 Connect, in a way
16 "Partridge sitteth on ___" (Jer. 17:11)
17 "Fire was cast ___ the sea" (Rev. 8:8)
18 Navy's place (2 words)
19 "___ is he that readeth" (Rev. 1:3)
21 Nothing
- 23 Conger
24 Ephesus to Troas (dir.)
25 "Phantom of the Opera" author
29 Laodiceans weren't this
30 "Jesus ___" (John 11:35)
32 SSW opposite
33 Tool shop element
36 Not lows
37 "___, thou knowest" (Rev. 7:14)
38 "Even to ___ hairs will I carry you" (Isa. 46:4)
39 Italian city
40 Jesus' disciple, familiarly
41 Tidal movement
42 National symbols

WORDSEARCH

A A T Z D U L L Z Q C A M P E R S V U S R C G R U
C E L B I B O S H C M D B P W M P N D N G L T E M
V Y L I M A F H C H I L D R E N A B C X R C K E M
R Q B S I T P K J N Y H G K A H T R B S Z N A E T
R G A T S Y S O Z D A Z K L T M O K W I I A U E G
F T D O T X N T T I O D B E U S B C U O A Q M X D
I R U N F V L C M W D U J K S Q C N S M R O A V X
U M L T O A O E W W D S E T X P D D O J C S L W F
R L T N I W R F H D Y L I X M P N H C L I G H B V
Y K S C W E Z R I K C M A A Q E A H E P O B D I X
H F E L J R Q E B Y B Q C V I L L W D M O Y D S P
I P W F B D S P C E U E S R K K L O V E H S B M N
S T C B J F K R R E Q E F O N K C W P U R W X S E
S H B B H K O S B K F T B W I N G S V I Z O W Y W
U B S T T T G D I S A B I L I T I E S B H R N X M
Q X H P O E V M I N I S T R Y I I D A A T T P O A
G O R M R E M M U S R S I V A D X E V R E S W O H

Note: The word clues are chosen by Messenger staff, while the puzzles and letters surrounding the clues are computer-generated at random.

- 43 34 Down tokens, perhaps
44 Time period
45 40 Across's work need
46 Point
47 Where John received his vision
49 "I make all things ___" (Rev. 21:5)
50 Horse food
53 "I ___ overcame" (Rev. 3:21)
55 In abundance

DOWN

- 1 Trainee
2 One of the beasts was like this
3 Messenger to John
4 "Who am ___ than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8)
5 Patron
6 Root beer brand (3 wds.)
7 U.K. time zone
8 Black
9 John saw a gold one
10 Mary to Martha, for short
11 Sorbet
12 Wanted poster letters (Abbr.)
15 Police academy enrollee
20 Jesus' head compared to this
22 "I am ___ and Omega" (Rev. 1:8)
26 Beginning
27 "___ my heart to fear thy name" (Ps. 86:11)
28 Former name of Jerez
29 "A golden cup in ___ hand full of abominations" (Rev. 17:4)
30 Angels' features
31 Many celebrities have big ones
33 God's flock
34 Indian snake
35 Moroccan capital
36 If you have ears, do this
39 "Sea of ___ like unto crystal" (Rev. 4:6)
- 57 Censer's emission
60 What gold bricks in heaven do
62 Over
63 Bound
64 First garden
65 Pitch
66 Four beasts were full of them
67 See 29 Across
68 Rushed
- 40 Revelation's bottomless ___
42 Scammed
43 Plague dispenser in Revelation
46 Require
48 Orders
49 Innies or outie locale
50 "Jacob took the stone...and poured oil ___ of it" (Gen. 28:18 niv) (2 words)
51 Compensate for, as sins
52 Used a keyboard
54 Oil cartel (Abbr.)
56 Jesus does this with sinners
57 Teresa, Clare, or Anne (Abbr.)
58 Mother's Day month
59 Unlocked (poet.)
61 Hoopla



LAST MONTH ANSWERS

WORDS

- ADULTS
CROSSTIMBERS
HONORED
OKLAHOMA
WINGS
BIBLE
DAVIS
JEREMIAH
PERFECT
WORSHIP
BUDDIES
DISABILITIES
LOVE
- SERVE
CAMP
ETHAN
MINISTRY
SPECIAL
CAMPERS
FAMILY
MOTORCYCLE
SUMMER
CHILDREN
FRIENDS
NEW
WELCOME



“THE SAVIOR” MOVIE REACHES AUDIENCE OF 500

A Red Carpet premiere event recently celebrated a historic occasion at the College of Muscogee Nation. For the first time in history, a movie dubbed and spoken entirely in the Mvskoke language made its debut on June 15. In four showings, the film *HESAYECV* (The Savior) reached an audience of about 500 people, paving the way for more screenings around the state. These events were attended by notable educators, language preservationists, influencers, tribal leaders, and dignitaries, in addition to Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole citizens. The idea for a gospel-centered film dubbed and spoken in the Mvskoke language came from the late Bill Barnett. A full blood Mvskoke citizen, Barnett was a well-known Baptist pastor who envisioned seeing a movie about Jesus Christ in the language of his tribe. Barnett passed away in 2021, and his vision came to fruition three years later. Barnett’s daughter, Jennifer Barnett (Mvskoke/Cherokee) produced the movie.



OBU PRESENTS HOBBS AWARD TO RUMMAGE AT SBC ANNUAL MEETING

Oklahoma Baptist University (OBU) President, Heath A. Thomas presented the Herschel H. Hobbs Award for Distinguished Denominational Service to Stephen Rummage on June 11 during the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Indianapolis. Rummage serves as senior pastor of Oklahoma City, Quail Springs. “I am so pleased that the committee unanimously selected Rummage for this prestigious award,” Thomas said. “In the tradition of Herschel Hobbs, Rummage is a pastor, churchman, scholar, and denominational leader. We are grateful to have him serving faithfully in Oklahoma and leading graciously in the national convention.” Rummage also has pastored churches in Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, and Louisiana. He has taught at Southeastern, New Orleans and Midwestern seminaries. Rummage is also an author and the founder of Moving Forward, a nationally broadcast radio teaching ministry. He served as president of the 2024 SBC Pastors’ Conference and has previously held positions, including chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and president of the Florida Baptist Convention.

TRIBUTE

Rufus “Wagooli” King, died June 19. Rufus was a retired Oklahoma pastor. He served at Lost City, Keener; Jay, Pine Ridge and Eucha, Round Springs.



Martha Carter, died June 23. She was the mother of Tim Carter, bi-vocational pastor at Wapanucka, and mother-in-law/mother of Greg and Shawn Idell, pastor of Madill, Oakview.

Ruth Cotten, died June 21. She was wife of former Enon Association Director of Missions Tom Cotton.



PASTOR



CECIL MACKEY

Senior Pastor of Little City Baptist Church

Madill, Oklahoma



Can you briefly share about your family, about where you serve in ministry and how the Lord called you to serve?

I serve at Little City Baptist Church in Madill. I have pastored this church for eight years. It is also my first pastorate. I have been married to my high school sweetheart, Tammy, for 28 years. We have two grown children. Our daughter Leslie is married and has a 10-month-old daughter "Sugar Bear" and she and "Pappy" are tight. My son, Jeff works for the Choctaw Nation. My whole family attends Little City Baptist Church.

When the Lord called me into ministry, we attended Atoka, Southside, where I served as a deacon. I had filled in for our pastor a time or two by doing "devotions" and had led out in our men's ministry. I knew the Lord was calling me to more, but I fought it for about five years. One night in a revival service there I couldn't resist anymore, so I surrendered. But I thought OK, God, I will be a supply preacher. And for the next year I preached every Sunday somewhere except for two or three Sundays. I came to Little City just to supply because they were between preachers. I preached a couple times for them, and they asked if I was interested and I said "No, I'm just a supply guy."

After about three weeks of fighting with God, I said "OK God." I told my wife, and she said, "I knew it. I've been waiting on you to figure it out. So, I called one of the deacons and told him. He said they were already talking to someone, but he wanted to have lunch. When we met for lunch, he said the guy they had been taking to just called him and backed out. So, we interviewed. I went in view of a call on Easter Sunday 2016, and here we are.

What impact are you seeing the Lord make in your church and community?

We have seen many come to faith in those eight years. Right now, I see God growing a large group of young families and maturing them as they begin to serve Him and grow in knowledge and maturity. We have a small food pantry that has really become a great ministry of late. We are always looking for opportunities to serve people in our community and be there in times of need. We are strategizing now how to be more evangelistic to people who come to the lake in the summer since we are right on Lake Texoma.



You have served as a firefighter and first responder. What similarities do you see between those roles and pastoral ministry, in terms of helping people?

In my 25 years as a volunteer firefighter/first responder, I have seen firsthand the devastation that enters people's lives, but goes unnoticed by the majority of those around them. I believe it has prepared me to be perceptive to opportunities to meet needs and minister to people in times of brokenness. It also has helped me in leadership because I was fire chief for several years before serving as rural fire coordinator for the Department of forestry for five years when I was their liaison to 120 fire departments in south central Oklahoma. That prepared me for how to help people resolve conflicts and come together for a common good greater than themselves. And as believers we sometimes have to lay aside personal preference for the God we have in common and the good of the ministry He has given us that is greater than ourselves.

Why is it important for your church to support the Cooperative Program?

We give through the Cooperative Program because though there may be things that don't go exactly the way I would do it, I understand that together we can do abundantly more for God's Kingdom than we ever could on our own. My goal in life is to contribute all I can, wherever I can, however I can, for God's Kingdom work.



HOW YOU CAN PRAY FOR OKLAHOMA PASTORS

1. Pray for his family.

Ask God to help him love and lead his family well, making the most of his time in the home. Ask the Lord to give him the courage to put off the trivial matters of ministry, so he's fully engaged as the husband and father God calls him to be.

Ephesians 5:25 and Psalm 127:3-5

2. Pray for his walk with God.

Pray that he will devote himself to prayer and Bible reading first and foremost before he begins his day of ministry and family time.

Philippians 4:6 and Psalm 119:9

3. Pray for his schedule.

Pastors prepare engaging sermons, have people to visit in hospitals, worry home-bound members will fall through the cracks, and are attempting to follow up with visitors. Pray that God will help him manage his schedule well to spend time with his family and lead his church family.

Ephesians 5:15-17 and Psalm 90:12

4. Pray for his sermon preparation & delivery

Pray that God gives him focus and perseverance in sermon prep, as well as clarity and wisdom as he aims to rightly handle the Word of God. Pray God will fill him with passion and conviction as he declares the Good News to encourage the saints and lead the lost to love and follow Jesus.

2 Timothy 2:15, Psalm 119:18, Hebrews 4:12, & Mark 16:15

[Research.lifeway.com/2022/01/04/5-ways-to-pray-for-your-pastor-to-start-the-new-year/](https://research.lifeway.com/2022/01/04/5-ways-to-pray-for-your-pastor-to-start-the-new-year/)

FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

The future of the evangelical church depends in great part on bivocational ministry. This isn't a light statement. The work of God's Kingdom on earth necessitates the efforts of pastors, church planters, and other ministry leaders serving in a bivocational context.

Globally, most Christian evangelical work is carried out by men serving as both tent makers and ministers. Recent trends show many churches experiencing declines in attendance and financial contributions, leading to struggles in providing full-time salaries with adequate benefits for pastors.

While this may be seen as a negative reality, it can potentially turn out to be advantageous for many medium to small-sized churches. Here are four reasons why bivocational ministry should be viewed positively:

1. Pastors can utilize more of their skills by serving both in the church and the marketplace. While fully funded pastors are essential in certain settings, most churches with around 200 members or less can be effectively managed by a team of bivocational leaders.
2. Churches can allocate more resources for outreach and missions when not burdened with full-time salaries.
3. More church members can participate in ministry when they understand that the pastor, due to other responsibilities, cannot attend every event or visit. This can motivate members to take on tasks that might otherwise fall to the pastor.
4. Pastors can focus more on equipping the saints for ministry, as taught in Ephesians 4:11-16. By concentrating on their primary responsibilities, they can train, empower, and oversee the saints in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Bivocational ministry isn't a consolation prize for those serving less resourced churches, nor is it a second-rate calling. It's a biblical model that can lead to the planting of more churches and help stagnant churches to move from surviving to thriving.

Oklahoma Baptists celebrate bivocational churches and their leaders, and care about their wellbeing and effectiveness. Bivocational pastors can obtain resources and training through the Oklahoma Baptists MVP Ministry and the Haskins School of Christian Ministry.

The Haskins School exists to help train lay, ethnic and bivocational ministry leaders with the expectation that more churches will have effective ministers who know how to lead well, regardless of church size or geographical location.

If you are a bivocational minister or a member of a bivocational church, remember you are not alone.

If you are a bivocational minister or a member of a bivocational church, remember you are not alone. You are part of a massive fellowship of believers called to pray, trust, and serve, allowing the Spirit of God to work through the body of Christ to glorify the Father as the church moves to fulfill the Great Commission.



Ever Borunda
Oklahoma Baptists
Hispanic Ministry Partner

MISSIONARY

Prayer Guide

Join us throughout the year in praying for our missionaries, serving locally and around the world!

Who & Where

Why

How to Pray



Cris Lowery

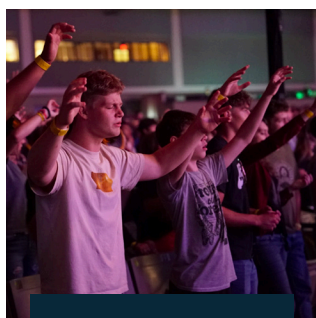
OKLAHOMA

Pray for Cris Lowery who serves Oklahoma Baptists as the Collegiate Ministries Director. Oklahoma has ministries on 39 campuses across the state. Cris's goal is to help church-based and campus-based leaders be successful. He does this by providing the training, encouragement, support and resources they need to connect with and impact the students and young adults in their ministries. Cris and his wife, Danisa, have three married kids and four grandkids.

Pray the church-based and campus-based leaders in our state will continue to successfully impact lives for the kingdom.

Pray students and young adults will be receptive to the truth and hope of the Gospel.

Pray God will continue to provide the needed resources to accomplish the task.



Falls Creek

OKLAHOMA

Pray for Oklahoma youth as they experience community-building opportunities and unique camp experiences at Falls Creek in Davis. Individual campers participate in fun, team-building activities and personal spiritual disciplines, such as small-group Bible studies, in-cabin Bible studies, breakouts, and community building within their group. These bonding interactions carry over as groups return home and can literally impact the church for months and years ahead.

Please pray youth will gain a new understanding of Jesus this summer.

Pray their relationship with Him will be strengthened.

Please pray for unity, purpose and action in the church through Falls Creek youth camp.



Jim & Charlotte Whitley

BRAZIL

Jim and Charlotte Whitley serve with the International Mission Board in Brazil. They are church planters working among the Romany-Calón people group. Patience, perseverance, and personal relationships are important to gain acceptance and respect. The Whitley's greatest joy comes when they see God's transforming power change the life of a Calón who finally understands and chooses to follow Christ as his or her only Lord and Savior.

Pray God will call Calón men and women to respond to the gospel message, to be disciplined, and to desire to lead others.

Pray Brazilian Baptists will heed the call to reach the approximately one million unreached Calón people.

Pray for discernment in God's leading as the Whitleys continue to develop Bible studies for the illiterate Calón.



Danny Toombs

OKLAHOMA

Danny Toombs serves as the director of the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at Cameron University in Lawton. Danny feels that working with college students is a great privilege and joy, though there are challenges. God has given Danny a heart to help students know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior and to grow in that relationship. He loves to help students connect God and His Word to their personal lives and situations.

Please pray God will pour out His Spirit on students to empower them to share the hope we have in Christ.

Pray Danny would have the wisdom to lead students in a way that honors Christ.

Pray Danny and his staff would be sensitive and obedient to God's direction for their lives and ministry.

RECOMMENDATIONS SOUGHT FOR *Boards and Committees*

The Nominating Committee of the convention of Oklahoma Baptists invites Oklahoma Baptists from across the state to recommend persons to serve on the various boards and committees. The committee's nominations will be presented to messengers at the Annual Meeting of Oklahoma Baptists to be held November 11-12.



[oklahomabaptists.org/
recommendations](https://oklahomabaptists.org/recommendations)

2024 Annual Meeting Resolutions

All resolutions for consideration during the 2024 Oklahoma Baptists' Annual Meeting must be received by the Oklahoma Baptists Board of Directors no later than **August 26, 2024**

How to submit your resolutions:

Mail

Oklahoma Baptists' Board of Directors
3800 North May Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

Email

lwarren@oklahomabaptists.org
Must indicate "Resolution" in subject line

Online

oklahomabaptists.org/business/#resolutions



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SPECIAL GUEST:
STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN



3 Questions for Church Bus Buyers:

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3. Which Bus Company has the largest in-stock, ready-to-deliver inventory of buses and vans?

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3 SIMPLE TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR PASTORS

"How are you doing, Pastor?"

A common response I hear from pastors is: "Busy." Most of the time the tone is innocuous, so I chalk it up to small talk. As the conversation unfolds, it usually becomes clear their answer was either an appeal for admiration, sympathy or help.

Lifeway's Greatest Needs of Pastors study found half of pastors say time management is an aspect of their personal life that needs attention today. Time management is time stewardship. Regardless of our respective responsibilities, we all have the same, limited amount of time to spend. Here are three time management tips for pastors and ministry leaders:

BUDGET YOUR MINISTRY TIME

Many believe pastors should be available for their members 24/7. This approach to ministry is not only unbiblical (i.e. the fourth commandment) but also disrespectful to your other church members or staff. John the Baptist told people repeatedly, "I am not the Christ." Turn to a mirror right now and say the same thing out loud before you read on.

With many pastors serving at normative-sized churches with fewer than 100 in attendance, pastors often play multiple roles within the church. There are a few steps you can take to budget your ministry time well while spinning multiple plates.

1. Stack meetings on Wednesdays and Sundays. As the primary leader in your church, it's okay to ask for necessary meetings to work with your schedule.

2. Push sermon prep to the front of the day and week. Don't take calls or texts when you're studying. "Devote [yourself] to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4, CSB).
3. Clarify to yourself, staff, and church what a real emergency is. If everything is an emergency, then nothing is. If you're returning texts in traffic or in the middle of a face-to-face conversation, you have a problem.

BUDGET YOUR FAMILY TIME

We recharge with our families only when we create boundaries that protect our time with them. Some of you may be waiting for a more convenient time to connect with your family and disconnect from your ministry. Waiting for perfect conditions will only lead to imperfect excuses.

It's our choice whether we steward our time or allow it to be stolen. No pastor sets out to be a superhero, but if the cape fits, take it off and go be a hero at home.

Unless you're a student minister, summer is a great opportunity to take a vacation with your family because the church and school calendars are less crowded. If possible, string two Sundays in a row together or at least two weeks away.

BUDGET YOUR PERSONAL TIME

Jesus and His dozen apostles were exhausted from a ministry sprint that included a resurrection (Jarius' daughter) followed immediately by the execution of John the Baptist. One thing ministry peaks and valleys

have in common is that they both leave us exhausted and in need of a recharge.

I have experienced the burn of burnout only to look at my calendar and see how long it had been since I'd taken a real break from my ministry routine. If you've gone more than three months without taking a break from preaching or teaching, you'll experience this burn.

Who speaks into your schedule consistently? Allow a handful of people from your family, ministry and friendship circles to call a timeout for you when you become blind to your own limitations. I realize this is much easier to write about than to do.

Intentional timeouts are usually a result of some advanced planning. Finding a remote cabin or retreat center that's accessible and affordable is something you probably don't have spare time to look into. Why not ask for help? If you belong to an association of churches or a denominational organization, ask them to help you find a remote place.

Jesus called for a ministry timeout for one simple reason: His disciples were tired. Self-care is strategic, not selfish (1 Timothy 4:16). Apply these time management tips for the purpose of reconnecting with your family and recharging your soul.

By Mark Dance of Guidestone Financial Resources



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