

# The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

Volume LIX

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Number 6

## **“Pastor or Hireling”** By Chris Gonthier, BMAO Moral Action

John 10:12-14, “But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.”

When a church looks for a new pastor, everyone has their idea on what to look for. Bible college or seminary are often listed as a requirement before a man is even considered.

Everyone wants a young man with lots of experience as a pastor. Now we do not want a novice to pastor a church, but a man needs to get experience somewhere.

What does the Bible actually say regarding the qualifications of the pastor. Let us look at 1 Timothy 3:1-7

1 “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to much wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

First and foremost, you MUST be a man. I know this may upset some, but God makes the rules, and we are to follow. Too many women, and some may be good intentioned, do not understand this.

Let me be very clear on this, God does not call those he says is not qualified. God is not the author of confusion. He calls men to be pastors.

The next point of verse 1 is you must desire the office. If you do not want to be there, your heart will not be in it. If God has not placed a burden or desire on your heart, then maybe you should reconsider.

There is also this blameless thing; you need a good reputation. Morally chaste and having only a single wife is a good way to help maintain such a reputation.

Some men who have a problem with faithfulness want to be a pastor. It definitely has the potential to cause grief and heartache.

Vigilant...you need to pay attention and to do so you must be sober. Good behavior means different things to different people, but there is a standard we should not fall below.

Most would agree that teaching is a good gift for pastors to have, but sometimes we let the hospitality thing slide. Pastors are servants and should like people and definitely love them. If you don't, you should not be in the ministry.

Verse 6 explains the dangers of being a novice and how much it can harm the

pastor as well as the church. The verse that tells us about pride going before a fall comes to mind.

“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”

Proverb 16:18.

We do not need pastors and churches falling like dominos because we did not follow the scriptures. There are other key points in this section of scripture that is important, but I will not cover them here. Please do read the remainder of these requirements; but we also need to consider the proper application of scripture.

How do we determine who we want to be our pastor. Well, there are some definite “no’s” and “yes’s” we need to follow. There are other things we should also prayerfully consider.

In recent years there has been a trend toward asking pastors for resumes. In years gone by, from what I remember, word of mouth was the most common way to make connections.

In the secular world, resumes are very common, as there is competition for jobs. In the world of ministry there is NO competition. Either God wants a man somewhere or he doesn't. It is not and should never be a popularity contest.

It also should not be who has the best resume. I do not know if the average lay person understands the difficulties surrounding a resume.

Now what I am going to say is a personal conviction of mine so I am not saying you must agree, but please consider. In order for me to have a “competitive” resume I must brag on myself.

The Bible lists the criteria, or standards that a pastor must have, anything else is what we think should be required. Pride kicks in and I feel that I am bragging on myself. I am not saying to not do homework or ask questions.

I have 2-year and 4-year Bible college degrees, but that is not what makes me qualified. One of the best pastors I knew had very little formal education, but was

**(“Pastor or Hireling,” cont on pg 7)**

# "From the Pastor's Pen"

By Wearthly Shank

"...Press Toward the Mark"



Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. **Hebrews 12:1**

As we focus our thoughts on contending to the faith and pressing "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God" [Phil 3:14], let us seek God's guidance as we notice the writings of Hebrew 12:1-2.

The author of Hebrews is unknown but this language noted here sounds very much like Paul's usage.

Anyway, the illustration in this passage has some very good spiritual advice for serving the Lord with our labors. As we "press toward the Mark" of outreach for the Lord and our church, let's notice a few things about running the race.

First, the runner was properly attired for

racing. He said, "lay aside every weight ...that so easily besets us." Sometimes, we need to lighten our load. We've got too many distractions dragging us down.

He also mentions "the sin that so easily besets us." The sin that besets me is not necessarily the same sin that besets you.

Next, we see that this runner was expertly disciplined for the race. He said, "let us run with patience".

Our service for the Lord is not a short spurt, but a continual determination to reach our goal. The runner that jumps

out in a dead run is not going to make it to the finish of a marathon run.

And a marathon is not a race against other runners, it's a race of personal endurance to finish the run. That's why we need patience; to be strong enough to reach our goal.

Too often, we get discouraged and drop out. Hang Tough!

Hebrews 12:2 says, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

The racer was spiritually motivated for the race. As we "press toward the mark" in our efforts for the Lord, we need to keep our eyes on the goal.

That being doing whatever God has for us to do for His honor and glory, looking unto Jesus for direction.

Think about it!!

## The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

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2024 BMAO

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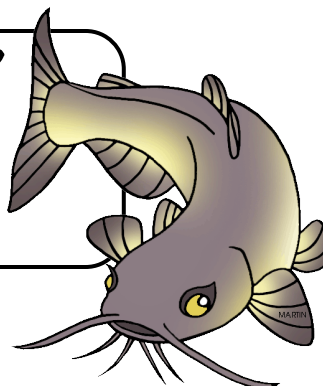


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# *"I Was Just Thinkin' "*

By Narita Roady

## *"Do You Need a Catfish in Your Tank?"*



TAKE CARE OF THIS NOW! YOU HAVE TO GET THIS DONE NOW!"

Cod fishing is an enormous industry in the Northeastern part of the United States. The fish industry there had a goal of selling their codfish across America, but they had a problem. When they shipped their fish to other parts of the country it just wasn't working. Codfish that were shipped frozen arrived tasteless because of the long distance it traveled.

Next the sellers attempted to transport them in big tanks. This didn't work either as the fish were lethargic and reach their destination spongy, soggy and tasting awful.

They didn't know what they were going to do until a local fisherman had an idea. He suggested they add some catfish into each tank of codfish. Off they went traveling to buyers all across the United States.

Did it work? Yes! Even to locations thousands of miles away they arrived as healthy and delicious as if they had just been caught!

You see, catfish are the natural enemy of the codfish, so they had spent their time active and alert to avoid being eaten by the catfish!

God knows it is our nature to become complacent and satisfied when life is going our way. With no challenges or pressures, we quickly fall into a spiritual stupor and drift along.

Our prayer life and Bible study becomes flabby and our relationship with

Him loses its flavor.

So what does the Lord do? He has some catfish He ALLOWS in our tanks. They even have names and I believe their purpose is found in Romans 5:3-4, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope."

These "catfish" are familiar to all of us. They are Stress, Persecution, and Tribulation.

Now I am not referring to the type of problems we bring upon ourselves by unrealistic expectations or plans we make without God. My reference is to the pressures we face just as a part of daily living.

Like it or not they keep us moving forward. We have to do something with the moment we are facing. Doing nothing is a luxury we simply don't have! Alertness is required for us to make the needed changes and reach the goals we want to achieve. So what is God trying to accomplish?

Our first answer can be found in Romans 5:3b, ". . . knowing that tribulation worketh patience;"

Because stress is so demanding, it creates an urgency in us to take care of it. Our ears are bombarded with it shouting, "DO SOMETHING NOW!"

As we deal with these irritating intruders, life continues on around us, inevitably creating roadblocks and hindrances along the

way. With each interference we face, our flesh responds the best way it knows how, with impatience!

Following quickly on its heels are annoyance, anger, irritability and snappiness. Our blood pressure rises, chest tightens, jaw clenches and stomach hurts.

You know what I am talking about don't you? Have you ever thought, "God what are you trying to do to me? Bring me home to you sooner?"

Aahhh, but this isn't God's doing, but our response to the difficulty. We are actually doing this to ourselves! Yes, He allowed the situation but you are in control of the response, and the response He wants you to learn from these experiences is PATIENCE!

Patience requires us to trust in God for what we need, be it strength, wisdom, or specific needs. We are drawn to focus on Him instead of the thistles and thorns of life around us.

Patience has its bonuses too. We will reap the benefits of peace, contentment, joy and even better health. "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." James 1:3-4

Romans 5 continues with God's second purpose for allowing catfish in our tank; ". . . And patience, experience. . ."

Through patience we gain knowledge in how to conquer our trials. Step by step as we overcome our mountains of difficulties we gain experience in how to handle the next adversity. Confidence

("Catfish," cont on pg 7)

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***"There is no fear of remaining in our sorrows  
because our hearts are secure  
in the blessings to come.  
In other words God's promises are real  
to us although we cannot see them right now."***

# “BMAA Moral Action Call to Action”

Dr. John Adams, Director

## What is America's hope?

We must claim God's promise of healing. II Chronicles 7:14. God says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

We must meet several conditions before healing can come:

First, God's people must humble themselves before a holy and righteous God. We must become broken in our souls and spirits in order for our Father to renew us.

Second, we must pray. We must renew our daily fellowship with the Father. Our Father desires to spend time with us, but do we desire to be in His presence? Prayer is essential.

Third, we must turn from our sin. How can we do this? Dr. Adrian Rogers said that we must "name it, nail it and forsake it."

We must identify and confess our faults to the Father. John said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". (I John 1:9).

Fourth, we must not carry our guilt around. Every believer must "nail" his sins to Christ's cross. They have been paid for by Christ's blood, and they will not be held against us.

Paul declared, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14).

The songwriter wrote,  
*My sin, oh the bliss of this glorious thought,  
My sin not in part, but the whole;  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul.*

Fifth, we must "forsake" wickedness. When we forsake a wicked life, we literally run from it.

Paul told Timothy, "Flee also youthful lusts..." (II Timothy 2:22). Are we willing to forsake the worldly lifestyle and embrace righteousness?

Will we let Jesus lead us?

When these conditions are met, our Father will forgive us. He will wipe the slate clean, and give us a fresh start. He will fellowship with us and bless His children again.

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

Glory! Our American and Christian hope is Jesus, God's only Son.

## Abusing a Child

Matthew 19:13-15

"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray and the disciples rebuked them.

But Jesus said, suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence."

## Why Are Children Abused?

It is all because of sin, whatever the excuse. "Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked" (I Samuel 24:13). If sin is not condemned, repented of, and forgiven, it gets worse.

A sinner who hardens his heart against God does not know the extent to which he will go in sin. A nation which turns her back on God will be abandoned to her own ways as Israel was.

A society which does not recognize sin for what it is will become more depraved and perverted (Romans 1:21-32).

Child abuse is caused by selfishness. Some who bring children into the world do not want to be bothered with them. Children require time which parents could spend in the pursuit of pleasure, money which they could spend on themselves, and work which some want to avoid at all costs.

Those who abuse children could not be thinking about the welfare of others (unless they are thinking about the welfare check which the children make available). They seem to think of nothing except gratifying their own lusts.

Child abuse is caused by sadism. One who can get pleasure of any kind from hurting others is sadistic. Grown men take advantage of helpless children. Wicked people take pictures of all sorts of child abuse.

Those who make those pictures and those who take any pleasure in seeing them are about as low as one can get.

Mothers beat their children, not to make them better, but to satisfy their rage.

Child abuse is caused by sickness. That may be nothing but sin-sickness which can be cured by conversion to Christ.

But surely some of the child abuse must be the result of mental illness, maybe even demon possession. One who is guilty of abusing little children is not controlled by sound reasoning.

## By Whom Are Children Abused?

The Bible gives some examples of child abuse. Tyre and Zidon (cities on the Mediterranean coast) were condemned because they sold the children of Judah and Jerusalem unto the Grecians (Joel 3:4-6).

Perhaps it is not uncommon in many parts of the world today for captives of war to be sent into slavery.

Some countries still have concentration camps which no doubt make use of slave labor, and children may be involved.

King Manasseh "made his son pass

("BMAA Moral Action," cont on pg 5)

# ***BMA of Oklahoma and Just the Crumbs***

Just the Crumbs is a nonprofit organization that began in December of 2014 in order to provide help to those in need.

Its founder, Lavon Haden, a BMA Minister, began the ministry by simply handing out hotdogs to the hungry in his town of Columbia, MS.

His goal was not to ask for money, but rather ask for anything people had in excess that he could sell, hence the name "Just the Crumbs." This vision has resulted in the establishment of four thrift stores, the profits of which go to disaster relief projects.

This past month tornados struck here at home in Oklahoma. Not being new to tornados, but new to a disaster relief outreach we now support through the BMA of America, we were a beneficiary of this ministry.

With their semi-truck, 53-foot mobile kitchen, and multiple trailers to help with disaster relief they provided much needed help in Marietta and Sulphur, OK.

As you may know we have a church close by pastored by Bro. Wayne Edgar in Roff. His dear wife, Susie lost her sister-in-law. Please be in prayer for them and others in our state.

At this writing two other cities in Oklahoma were hit as well. There were BMAO people on the ground alongside JTC serving meals. Thanks to each volunteer and those that sent financial support, from Arkansas, and Oklahoma. I don't know much about multi-media I just tried to reach out the best I could.

It was devastating to see the damages to these communities. My wife and I both traveled to Sulphur, OK to serve alongside JTC, and what a blessing these folks were.

Those from BMAO, again thank you all for serving in this area of ministry in time of such great need.

Food and lodging will be provided for volunteers at the disaster site. Bro. Brandy asks us to pray that we would reach the lost. That's the whole concept of what we do - to create opportunities to witness. There's no better time to do that, than when people are in need."

To donate to BMA partnering with Just the Crumbs, or to volunteer, contact Angela Rice at :

**angela@bmamissions.org**

**or call the**

**BMA Missions Office**

**501-455-4977.**

For more information about BMA Disaster Relief and Just the Crumbs, or to sign up to be first responder, visit [www.bmamissions.org/disasterrelief](http://www.bmamissions.org/disasterrelief).

If you would like to volunteer, contact:

**Bro. Mike Angus**

**228-669-1108**

**or Beth**

**662-582-6667.**

You can also give a tax-deductible donation by clicking the "Just the Crumbs" button on the BMA National Web Site or by mail to Just the Crumbs, 10 Wagon Trail, Sumrall, MS 39482.

**David Langley**

**President, BMA of Oklahoma**



## ***"BMAA Moral Action," cont from pg 4***

through the fire" as a religious ritual (II Kings 21:6), and Judah did the same. As wicked as that was, it is not uncommon to hear of some child's murder and mutilation in connection with suspected devil worship today.

Pharaoh ordered the death of newborn Jewish boys. Herod caused the death of the children around Bethlehem in an effort to kill Jesus. Hitler also had political reasons for trying to wipe out God's chosen people, the Jews. Thousands of children were sent to death.

Joseph was seventeen when his brothers sold him into slavery. Most child abuse is still perpetrated by relatives. Children are beaten, battered, starved, neglected, sexually assaulted, burned, cursed, and exposed to all kinds of ungodliness – and much of it by those who claim to love them.

God remembers those who abuse children. Pharaoh lost his firstborn. Manasseh's and Herod's names have gone down in infamy. Joseph's brothers had to face him and "fess up." Judah went into captivity. Hitler died in the ruins of his country.

Jesus said, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matthew 18:6).



# "That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

## "Broken Shoelaces and Other Emergencies"



I was running late when I put my left shoe on and pulled on the lace to tie my shoe. Suddenly, one side popped and came off in my hand. I thought, "In all my life, I've never had a shoelace break at a good time.

As I sat meditating on that, I realized that was a pretty dumb thought because there probably isn't ever a good time for a shoelace to break.

Some other statements that are in the same category have to do with, "I don't have time...".

I recall a long ago TV commercial for a headache tablet. In it a man said, "I don't have time for the pain." At that I wondered if he meant at some point in his life he would make arrangements to have time for the pain.

As for the broken shoelace, I tied a knot in it and finished tying my shoes. I fully intended to put a new set of laces in my shoes the next day.

However, about six months later I still had the same lace with the temporary knot in it. I guess I figured I would get around to replacing it the next "not a good time" it would break. That is, unless I could get enough slack in it to make another temporary knot, and then wait awhile longer.

I haven't kept up with terms, but we used to refer to marriage as "tying the knot." I never did understand exactly where that term came from to associate it to marriage, but I'm sure there's some logical reason for it.

Marriage being considerably more complex than a shoelace, I doubt the two have much in common. However, my Grandpa Abney was a Missionary Baptist preacher. He often referred to the weddings he performed as "tying the knot."

He used to say when he tied the knot, it stayed tied, which meant they didn't end in divorce. I don't know how he managed that, because I've tied a bunch of knots in my life.

I must not have tied them as tightly as Grandpa because I didn't do too many of them before some started coming untied.

When my shoelace in this article broke I was getting ready to go to church. I didn't "have time" to mess with a shoelace, but that didn't matter. When it broke everything else went on hold until I fixed the problem.

Much in life is the same way. Some people are so busy taking care of important things they don't have time to take care of their own family problems. They don't have time to "mess with" their family problems right now.

Suddenly something in their family breaks the way my shoelace did...with a loud pop. They're suddenly looking at a broken piece in their hand.

Some become agitated at the involved family member as I was with my broken shoelace. They make a temporary knot and go on.

I've known some of God's people who apparently think the only way to serve God is "full speed ahead," "take no prisoners," and take no time out for anything, not even their family.

While zeal and dedication in God's service is admirable it is good to remember what Jesus told His disciples in Mark 6:31.

"And he said unto them, come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."

The way one preacher put it, Jesus said for them to "come apart before you come apart." Let us not wait for God to break our shoelace before we follow that admonition.

# SOAR'24

ALL IN

July 3-5, 2024

Live! by Loews in Arlington, TX

# “Catfish,” cont from pg 3

But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”  
Romans 8:24-25 24

and security are results. Confidence not only in knowing what to do, but also strengthening our faith and trust in God.

Without the “catfish” keeping us vigilant we would not have the opportunity to develop a stronger faith. We know assuredly He will care for us no matter how present conditions appear.

In Hebrews 13:5b, He promises us, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

That brings us to our final purpose God has for allowing a “catfish” in our tank. “and experience, hope:”  
Romans 5:4b.

Hope is faith in action. Faith knows with certainty there is far more to our future than the present problems we face.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

## “Pastor or Hireling” cont from pg 1

abundantly qualified. He was trained by pastors in real life situations. So my urging is to make sure a pastor meets the meets the biblical requirements, and then prayerfully consider God’s will.

No matter how qualified a man is, if he is not anointed for that ministry there will be problems. As a side note church members should be careful before assuming too much responsibility or taking on positions only a pastor should have. I am mostly speaking towards the times a church is without a pastor.

Sometimes a new pastor comes in and there is a struggle for leadership. The Bible is clear on the roles of pastors and the roles of church members. For the church to function properly we must be where God wants us and be able to use the gifts given to us.

Remember, God knows best. We can only demand a man meet the biblical qualifications. Anything else is just our preference

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear”. Hebrews 11:1,3

By Hope our eyes are focused on the Lord and His promises. When we are weary in battle it keeps our feet moving forward.

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”  
Isaiah 40: 31

There is no fear of remaining in our sorrows because our hearts are secure in the blessings to come. In other words God’s promises are real to us although we cannot see them right now.

“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”

As this cycle is repeated through the days and months ahead, we will find ourselves being able to carry heavier burdens with less effort. Yes we are stronger but more so we allow God to carry our load for us.

Along the way we will meet others struggling. With sincere empathy we will be able to comfort them and share our hard earned lessons, by showing them how out to out run the “catfish” in their tank.

What is your “catfish”?

Is it a demanding boss, an insensitive spouse, a rebellious child, or judgmental church member?

Perhaps it is a small thing like the slow line at the grocery checkout, a traffic jam, or a flat tire.

Whatever yours may be, if its brought you to your knees, kept you in the Word and caused you to cling close to Jesus then it’s done its job! Now you can truly praise Him and glory in tribulations!

### Sunray Baptist Church

2223 North 9th in Purcell,

will be hosting its annual

**SummerSing** gospel singing service  
on Saturday, June 29, beginning at 6pm.

Singers will be

*Sound Street* from Waynesboro, MS,  
and *Lauren Talley*, from Calhoun, GA.

A love offering will be taken to help with expenses.

Sis. Lauren will be staying over  
and will sing at our Sunday morning worship service  
on Sunday, June 30.

Please join us for this time of worship, praise, and song!

# Central Baptist Day Slated for September 8

From your genuine faithfulness to Christ and to His church, it is edifying experiencing your consistent trust in Central Baptist College that is evident from your prayers, encouragement, and generosity throughout these many years.

Through your obedience in supporting your college, you have helped strengthen students, faculty, staff, administration, and alumni enabling genuine zeal to proclaim the Gospel of Christ throughout a world that is in dire need for eternal truth. Thank you for partnering with CBC. Your support helps us to stay true to our mission of transforming this generation through higher education that "integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment."

CBC Day for 2024 has been set for Sunday, September 8. We are encouraging churches to set aside this Sunday, or another day on your church calendar, to pray for the college and to promote the BMA Promise Scholarship.

Please allow us an opportunity to personally share with your congregation, ministry group, leadership, and/or small group for a CBC Day.

To better fit your schedule, we are available to share on a Sunday night or during a mid-week service. We would also be honored to share at any BMA of Arkansas events such as WMA and Brotherhood meetings.

If you would like to sign up or if you have any questions, contact Duffy Guyton, Director of Church Relations, via email at [dguyton@cbc.edu](mailto:dguyton@cbc.edu) or on his mobile phone at (501) 269-6784.

We are grateful that you are partnering with us as we Biblically equip this generation to be used by Christ for His glory.

The Lord entrusts us to carry out His Word by empowering us, and this is exemplified in the Apostle Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth in 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."

God desires to display His great power of His Gospel through this younger generation as His messengers at CBC.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**SOAR**  
**BMAA National Youth**  
**July 3-5, 2024**  
**Live! by Loews**  
**Arlington, TX**

**Kids Camp**  
**July 15-19**  
**Camp Cedar Hills**  
**Binger, OK**

# CBC DAY

*September 8, 2024*



**CENTRAL**  
BAPTIST COLLEGE