

The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

Serving Churches of the Baptist Missionary Association of Oklahoma

Volume LIX

DECEMBER 2024

Number 12

“From Thanksgiving to Transgression”

By Bro. Chris Gonthier
BMAO Moral Action

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.”

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And what soever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

Colossians 3:15-17

There are many passages in the Bible that refer to us being thankful. All Christians, those who are born again, have sufficient cause in which to be thankful. This is especially true for the majority of Christians who live in the United States.

So important is the concept of thanksgiving the United States has declared a national day of Thanksgiving.

I resist the urge to call it Turkey Day, because the emphasis should most



assuredly be on being thankful.

We share a traditional feast with friends and or family. Truthfully though, we have a tendency to overeat a tad, and sometimes forget about the less fortunate.

Here I am not just

talking about the homeless, but some people have to work. Firefighters, hospital workers, police and others have to spend the day away from family for us to maintain the lives we have grown accustomed to.

Though this suggestion is late for this year, it can still be done for other holidays. When we cook for our family, get into the habit of cooking for someone else, those who cannot enjoy the day as you do. I promise people will appreciate the thoughtful gesture and their day will be brighter.

1 Thessalonians 5:18, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

As people search for the will of God in

their lives, sometimes God will not give us specific directions because we have not followed general instructions. We have specific commands as to whom we should be thankful towards.

Psalms 107:1, “O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.”

Our thanks should most definitely be directed towards God. We should not be limited in the things that we are thankful for.

Ephesians 5:20, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It is definitely not improper to thank someone who showed us kindness, but we must always remember that all good things originate with God.

James 1:17, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

I am thankful for my job and the stability it provides, but God is the one responsible for my ability to work as well as the opportunity to work. Without my relatively good health I would be unable to work. The place I sleep, the food I eat, the clothes I wear...all directly, and/or indirectly, come from God.

Although my family is not perfect, in part because I am part of it, I am truly blessed. I have never really been truly hungry, though I may have said I don't have anything to eat.

Upon searching the pantry and the cupboard, I would have discovered enough food to make an entire third world village happy. How blessed we truly are.

In the United states, at least for now, we have the freedom to worship God as we choose. In some other parts of the world, you cannot choose to worship or whom to worship. There is no freedom of conscience or choice. You may be killed for not doing as you are told.

I am thankful, in particular, for my

(“Thanksgiving to Transgression,” cont on pg 8)

**“The spirit of being thankful and giving
is often quickly replaced with the spirit of greed.
Rudeness replaces righteousness and lust replaces love.
What is the most troubling of all
is the commercialization of the Christmas season.”**

"From the Pastor's Pen"

By Wearthly Shank

"Listen!!!"

We listen at 125-150 words per minute but we think at about 1000-3000 words per minute.

We are distracted, preoccupied or forgetful about 75 percent of the time.

Immediately after listening to someone talk, we usually recall only about one half of what we heard.

Beyond that, we remember about 20 percent of what we hear.

We spend about 45 percent of the time listening

About 85 percent of what we know, we have learned by listening.

The Bible is clear on the importance of listening: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." James 1:19.

Also, the phrase "hear the word" is found in the Bible 35 times.

It is quite evident that the command to spend time in the Word of God daily [see Psalm 1] is because we tend to forget what we hear. Therefore, brethren, listen up! [copied, unknown source]

To this, I would add a thought which came to my mind. James said, "Be slow to speak". Ever wonder why?

It has been said that God gave us two ears, two eyes, and only one mouth. That is because we should listen and watch twice as much as we speak.



To be slow to speak should tell us to "think before we speak". Too often, when we are in a discussion with friends, we tend to get caught up in the conversation and begin to speak in a negative way.

It seems like one negative comment will breed a negative response and then the conversation sprouts more negativism.

Next time you're in a discussion, listen for negativism and try to bring the conversation back to emphasize a positive dialogue.

Remember another famous quote; "be sure brain is in gear before putting mouth in motion."

Preaching in a Hostile Age The Preaching Lab 2025 Conference

Don't be fooled by election results. Hostility against biblical and bold preaching is still in the air. But Paul encourages Timothy, and us, to share in the suffering, to be strengthened in Christ, to cut the word straight, flee youthful passions, and to preach the word, no matter what is going on outside the church doors.

In order to help us endure in this call, the Preaching Lab is asking three of the BMA's most long-tenured pastors to minister to us. Doug Brewer, Gary O'neal, and David McMurray will be working their way through Timothy over the two day conference, along with sharing some insights concerning burnout among pastors.

Start your year off strong by gathering with other preachers, whether you are a pastor, youth pastor, evangelist, missionary or church planter. You will be challenged, equipped, and encouraged.

You will forge brotherhood-type relationships that you can lean on in the hard days of ministry. The conference will be held January 10-11 in Little Rock at Oak Park Baptist Church.

You can register at tiny.cc/preachinglab2025.

College students can register for \$25.



The OKLAHOMA BAPTIST

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:
Carl Barnes
P.O. Box 5174
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

"Give the Turkey to the Church"



With Christmas near and the number of turkey chefs on the rise, the Butterball Turkey company sets up a special hotline to answer any questions people might have about cooking their holiday bird.

They received one such call from a woman who was wondering if it was safe to cook a turkey she had stored in her freezer for 23 years! (One would have to think, "What's the question!?")

The helpline operator told her it may very well be safe, but only if the temperature of the freezer had been maintained at below 0 degrees for the entire 23 years.

She added that even if it WERE safe the flavor had probably deteriorated and she could not recommend cooking and serving it.

The caller glibly replied, "Yea, that's exactly what we thought. In that case we'll just give it to the church!"

What audacity! What nerve! How could they! Yet how often are we guilty of the same offense? We want to be at the top of God's priorities and be first on His list, but expect Him to be okay with being at the bottom of ours?

Have you ever given the "turkey to the church?" Of course I don't mean an actual Butterball. There are several ways we do this and may not realize it.

What about your time?

Each week families hustle and bustle

about from dawn to dusk. Prime time is allotted to work, children's school activities and sports, internet, television and a multitude of other time "gobblers".

Christians are willing to volunteer and help with all their children's school, sports teams, extracurricular activities, community groups, and more.

These same "servants" raise a mighty ruckus of murmuring and complaining when asked to keep the church nursery, help clean the church, teach a class, or anything for the church in general.

What does God get?

Usually very little. Maybe a rushed devotional in the morning if any at all. Possibly a few flare prayers throughout the day when there is a NEED.

Church members will drag themselves to service, MAYBE three times a week with a "put out" attitude, all the while thinking, "I am soooo tired.

How much longer before the preacher shuts up? I have so much to do; I really need to get home."

What about some time for the Lord, visitation, witnessing, helping and encouraging others, inviting people to church? Nope they've saved the BEST for themselves and given "the turkey" to the Lord.

Out of those 525,949 minutes He gives us each year, don't you agree He deserves the lion's share? When we face eternity, is the world that we so feverishly spend our precious time on now, going to be able help us?

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Romans 13:11-12a

With Christ coming so near our very next step could be into eternity, then why do we continue to give God the crumbs of HIS gift of time?

***Just a tiny little minute,
only sixty seconds in it,
forced upon me, can't refuse it,
didn't seek it, didn't choose it,
but it's up to me to use it,
give account if I abuse it.
Just a tiny little minute,
but eternity is in it.
Author Unknown***

Consider your life. What are you investing in? Somehow, people have drawn a big black line between GOD and LIFE, separating the two in their minds and daily life. We have many pressing matters and life today is complicated in countless ways.

God does not want us to neglect our responsibilities to our family or employer, but He does not want to be left out of them. He wants to go with us on our daily rounds and be a part of all we do. Instead we rush out the door and leave

("The Turkey," cont on pg 7)

***"While tithing has become
a rare habit among Christians,
giving an offering is almost unheard of!
God allows us to use His money
not only to take care of our needs
but to care for the needs of His ministry too."***

Here's What's Happening at Central Baptist College

Dr. Claire Tucker named Vice President for Academic Affairs

Central Baptist College has announced the appointment of Dr. Claire Tucker to serve as the institution's Vice President for Academic Affairs effective January 1, 2025.

A resident of Little Rock, Tucker joins CBC after 10 years at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. She has been Academic Affairs Coordinator for the College of Health Professions since 2023 and the Chair and Program Director for the Department of Dental Hygiene since 2018.

Her decade of experience in the classroom, extensive research, and service on various university committees has earned her tenure and the rank of associate professor.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Claire Tucker to Central Baptist College," said Executive Vice President Jeremy Langley.

"Her professional experience and testimony of faith in Jesus Christ make her a great fit for our campus community."

Tucker's hire follows a national search for the College's new VPAA which drew interest from candidates locally and around the globe.

"Dr. Tucker checked every box in what our committee was seeking for our next Vice President for Academic Affairs," Langley said.

"Her academic and leadership credentials are strong, and her work ethic appears to be second to none. I am confident she will be able to build on CBC's seven decades of academic excellence while leading her division to new and exciting heights."

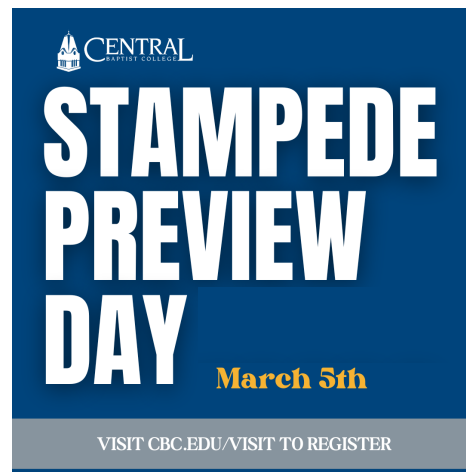
As Vice President for Academic Affairs, Tucker will serve as a member of the President's Executive Leadership Team.

She will also oversee all aspects of CBC's academic programs, provide supervision for all academic personnel, serve as the College's accreditation liaison, and lead the development of new and innovative degree programs, among other duties.

"I am honored to join Central Baptist College as the Vice President for Academic Affairs," Tucker said.

"Building on my experiences as Academic Affairs Coordinator in the College of Health Professions and Chair of the Department of Dental Hygiene, I am eager to work alongside the faculty at CBC. I am strongly committed to fostering a culture of grace and excellence, and I look forward to supporting CBC's mission of preparing students for lives of service and leadership."

Tucker and her family attend Christ Community Church in Little Rock. She is active in the congregation's children's ministries and community outreach



The banner features the Central Baptist College logo at the top left. The main text reads "STAMPEDE PREVIEW DAY" in large, bold, white letters on a dark blue background. Below this, "March 5th" is written in a smaller, orange font. At the bottom, a grey bar contains the text "VISIT CBC.EDU/VISIT TO REGISTER" in white.

efforts. She also participates in foreign mission opportunities as time allows.

About Central Baptist College

CBC, a four-year, private, liberal arts college owned and operated by the Baptist Missionary Association of Arkansas, is dedicated to transforming lives through education that integrates Christian faith and academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment.

Offering approximately 40 baccalaureate degree programs, CBC also boasts 16 athletic teams competing in the AMC conference of the NAIA and supports six fine arts performance groups.

For more information about CBC, visit cbc.edu.

Spring Semester Registration

Central Baptist College is now registering for spring 2025 classes. Now is the time for new and current students to decide what degree to pursue or courses to take. Here are the deadlines and some financial tips to help students and/or parents navigate the process.

Traditional Student Information: Current students can now register for spring and winter intersession classes through December 6.

Spring registration for new students will take place on January 8-10 with the first day of classes being held on January 9.



CENTRAL
BAPTIST COLLEGE

“CBC,” cont from pg 4

Transfer Student Information

The spring semester is a great time for traditional transfer students. If you've started your degree but need to finish, apply today. We are taking applications and making scholarship awards now. The deadline to apply will be January 6.

PACE Program Information

Working adults looking for a convenient and flexible college option will be able to register soon for the first 5-week course of the spring semester.

Classes are offered in-class, online or in a hybrid option. The deadline for new student applications for this enrollment period is Monday, January 7.

Financial Aid Information

If you have not completed or renewed

your FAFSA, now is the time. Whether you are working on spring or fall 2025 enrollment, schools need this for you to be considered for federal or state scholarship aid.

We are currently accepting applications and awarding scholarship packages for high school and transfer students. The fall 2025 priority deadline for CBC scholarships is December 15.

Visit cbc.edu/cost for help with this process.

To apply or start the conversation with a personal admissions counselor, visit cbc.edu/apply or contact us at either admissions@cbc.edu or (501) 329-6873.

CBC Participate in “GivingTuesday”

On Tuesday, December 3, Central Baptist College will join non-profit organizations all over the world to participate in GivingTuesday.

GivingTuesday is a global day of giving held every year following Thanksgiving. It takes place after Black Friday and Cyber Monday and begins the charitable giving season.

Days like this are very important for CBC and other non-profit organizations as they allow for public awareness of CBC and for individuals to offer their support in a virtual setting.

Mark your calendar! This year, we are asking you to consider giving to one of the nine funds which make up the Gifts that Transform annual giving program for CBC.

To give, visit cbc.edu/transform. From this page, you will have the option to give to the Alumni Fund, Athletic Fund, CBC Fund, Church Fund, Fine Arts Fund, Friends of the Library Fund, PACE Fund, Scholarship Fund, or Student Life Fund.

You will also find more information about each of these funds on this page.

We hope you will prayerfully consider giving to CBC. We strive to follow our mission statement by providing high quality education in a Christ-centered environment to all our students, and your gifts help make what we do here possible. T

That is why we call these gifts transformational. Our goal is to transform lives for God's glory, and your gifts support us as we strive towards this goal following Him every step of the way.

For more information on this or any of our other giving programs, visit cbc.edu/give.

If you have any questions about giving, please contact Public Relations Director Jessica Faulkner at jfaulkner@cbc.edu.

Thank you for your support! Please continue to pray for CBC as we work to finish this semester strong!



"That Reminds Me"

By Jesse Spurlock

"Christmas Memories"

Today is Christmas, the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is also the time the world seems to go crazy in our effort to spend all our money and go in debt for six months into the future. I thought about the Christmases we celebrated when I was a boy on the farm. We didn't get very expensive presents because there was barely enough money to buy groceries and other necessities. But there were a lot of memories connected to them.

That made me start trying to remember which Christmas was my very best one. Several came to mind. Due to my age, that's a lot and makes for a real challenge. Why not try it for yourself.

One Christmas that is clearest in my mind was the one where my brothers and I had each received a truck. One was a fire truck, one was an ambulance, and the other was a brown Army truck. I loved my Army truck, but my two brothers both wanted the fire truck. Their discussion of the matter made less than the best Christmas.

It is interesting to note though that Jim left his fire truck in the cow lot where a horse stepped on it. Louis left his ambulance in the road and someone ran over it. I figured that was what they got for arguing over their Christmas presents.

I recall a good Christmas when the good folks of Stratford decided to give the "poor Spurlock kids" a Christmas.

They brought a box of toys and comic books. I was impressed they had done that, but I also wondered by Dad didn't seem to appreciate it.

Although he graciously let us keep them, he was offended because he didn't consider us poor. He had already bought presents for us, and he didn't want to accept charity.

However, he was also familiar with the

Bible injunction, "It is more blessed to give than receive." So he permitted the folks from Stratford to be blessed in their giving. That was a good Christmas.

I remember all four of the Christmases I spent in the Marines. The first was in boot camp—not good!

One other was spent in the States, but a long way from home.

The other two were spent overseas. I was too homesick on those to enjoy them.

I specifically recall one of those Christmases was the year they came out with the song, "There's No Place Like Home for the Holidays." What a terrible song to have sung repeatedly to a homesick farm kid about 8000 miles from home.

Lelia and I married and moved to California. Our first Christmas was memorable.

We couldn't afford a Christmas tree but had some friends over. They decided we needed a tree, so we went to the tree lot and paid 50 cents for a shabby bush that was passed off as a Christmas tree.

We all decorated that tree. It was pretty pathetic, but that made for a great Christmas.

As I continued to consider the best Christmas I've had I recalled Psalm 118:24. "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

THIS is the day! Not one of the past. I realized Christmas memories are just that...memories. This is the day to make memories also.

Remember, regardless of the memory, the day, or the Christmas under consideration, Jesus is the reason for the season. Therefore, let us make a great Christmas memory by worshipping Him.



*We hope you enjoy
celebrating the birth of our
Savior with family and*



*friends
this
glorious
Christmas
season*

“The Turkey,” cont from pg 3

“Somehow, people have drawn a big black line between GOD and LIFE, separating the two in their minds and daily life. We have many pressing matters and life today is complicated in countless ways.”

God at home, with our Bible on the bedside table.

Moreover, He doesn't want us to take HIS time to do other things either. Even though we may feel we have the weight of the world bearing down on us, God expects us to give Him HIS time when it is due.

Like our tithe, it is such a small portion compared to all the time He gives us for our plans and work.

“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.” Romans 14:8

Seminary Names Dr. Attebery as New President

The Board of Trustees has named Dr. Philip Attebery as the next president of the BMA Seminary. On Thursday, September 26, 2024, during their regular semi-annual meeting, the board unanimously voted to name Dr. Philip Attebery, current Vice-President and Interim President, the next president of the BMA Theological Seminary, effective immediately.

The presidential search committee, requested applications from April 18 until the beginning of August.

On September 16, the search committee met with Dr. Attebery for an interview for the position. BMA Seminary has a long history of strong presidential leadership, the most recent being Dr. Charley Holmes who resigned this past spring.

The interview consisted of conversations that explored Dr. Attebery's personal life and devotion to the faith, theological stances,

Think about your abilities.

Each of us was blessed with special talents and skills that God wants us to use to bless others and glorify Him. Because Christ lives in us we also have a well spring of strength to show forth His love and mercy.

But where do most Christians let this flow of loving kindness “gush”? More often than not they go out of their way to show love, kindness, patience and to help those outside of the church.

Ever careful in word and attitude not to offend and ever thoughtful of their feelings and needs, their “halo” shines brightly.

administrative priorities, financial strategies, and seminary goals.

After two hours, the presidential search committee unanimously and eagerly voted to recommend Dr. Attebery to the full board for consideration of the presidency.

The full board met over a span of two days handling regular seminary business, including the vote to set Dr. Attebery as the new president of the seminary.

Dr. Philip Attebery has served the seminary as her Vice-President/Dean since 2000, along with being a professor of Church Ministries and Christian Education since 1995.

He holds a Ph.D in Leadership Studies from Dallas Baptist University, D.Min in Pastoral Ministry/ Theology from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, and M.Div from BMA Theological Seminary

Don't get me wrong this is the way we should conduct ourselves in the world, but when that same “shining” saint hits the church doors, they “give the turkey” to their church family.

They vent their pent up frustration and exasperations on brothers and sisters in Christ, never thinking how their words might cause offense or wound another's spirit. Within their church family are many needs they are totally blinded to.

The need might be a material one, a word of encouragement, a hug, or just a caring and listening ear.

Galatians 6:10 tell us, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

Those that love us as, labor beside us, and are there for us in times of trouble deserve our best, don't you think?

What about your money?

How many times does a believer put a five or ten in the offering plate and feel they have done God a great service with HIS money? Finances are just one of the major areas that God gets “the turkey”, or maybe I should say the “bones”.

If what most people give to the church was honestly 10% of what they earn each month, they must be living in cardboard boxes and wearing rags!

Wow, if all of us would add up those cokes, rented movies, eating out, satellite or cable television, internet, or any expenditure other than food, and shelter, in other words necessities, how much would be left?

While tithing has become a rare habit among Christians, giving an offering is almost unheard of! God allows us to use His money not only to take care of our needs but to care for the needs of His ministry too.

No wonder churches and ministries struggle so in these last days; the money God intended for them is being used to make credit card payments or sitting in someone's garage in the form a gadget they couldn't live without.

...To be continued next month.

“Thanksgiving to Transgression,” cont from pg 1

“As people search for the will of God in their lives, sometimes God will not give us specific directions because we have not followed general instructions. We have specific commands as to whom we should be thankful towards.”

Baptist doctrine. Knowing I have access to the truth and can follow the scriptures is truly a blessing!

I grew up in a religion that did not follow scriptures, and I am thankful to God that someone came my way to expose me to the truth.

We can express our thankfulness by allowing ourselves to be tools used by God.

One thing we often have to remind ourselves of is that thanksgiving isn't just a day, but a lifestyle.

Immediately after Thanksgiving comes the long awaited and anticipated Christmas season. Thoughts of making everything merry and bright become the predominant theme. Long awaited reruns of love movies as well as new movies, the same theme with new characters, are at the forefront of our minds.

I admit Christmas is special to me in part because my late wife loved the holidays. This is a tremendous opportunity to carry over from thanksgiving and make the Christmas season joyous.

However, the day after Thanksgiving is known as Black Friday. It can be black indeed. People patiently stand in line before 5:00am to get into their favorite store to save money, but cannot make it to church at 10:00am to see a soul saved.

People run each other over with carts and fight for the limited items offered at discounted rates; and the last of the most popular items can bring out the nasty in many people. It quickly becomes a free-for-all instead of the freely giving of thanks.

While the premise is we are trying to get loved ones nice Christmas gifts, some spend money they do not have and put themselves in bondage. Others use this opportunity to buy things they want, but do not need nor can afford.

The spirit of being thankful and giving is often quickly replaced with the spirit of greed. Rudeness replaces righteousness and lust replaces love. What is the most troubling of all is the commercialization of the Christmas season.

The jolly old elf has replaced the Christ as the most prominent figure of the holiday.

Children know all the reindeer by name but are unaware of the Christmas story.

What is under the tree overshadows what is in the manger. Jesus and the church are forgotten, but the Claus is discussed freely. Doing righteousness for Christ's sake is replaced with an elf on the shelf. Schools won't acknowledge Christ but will put up trees and Santas everywhere.

It is no wonder why Christianity has been on the slide of late, as we no longer consider it important. Happiness has replaced joy and folly the truth.

As we live in fables and discard the truth it should not be surprising that our children are unable to recognize the truth. It is a matter of priorities.

Does Christ matter to you, or are you more concerned with the world?

“And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” 2 timothy 4:4

UPCOMING EVENTS

“Preaching in a Hostile Age”

Preaching Lab

January 10-11

Oak Park Baptist Church

Little Rock, AR

See pg 2

Scholarship Gala

Central Baptist College

February 28, 2025

See pg 5

CBC Stampede

Preview Days

March 5

BMAO

Midyear Meeting

April 5

Shady Grove,

McAlester

BMAA

National Meeting

April 22-24

Pathway,

Waxahachie, TX