

The Missouri Missionary Baptist

“Holding Forth the Word of Life” – *Philippians 2:16*

Volume LXXXVII

St. Louis, MO • October 14, 2025

Issue No. 10

2026 EIM Overseas Missions Opportunities

Mike Goodwin, President

Evangelistic International Ministries (EIM) has completed its 2025 team schedule. What a great year this has been to be involved in the Great Commission. We were able to share the gospel with well over 5,000 people this year and have seen many called by Christ and given new life.

We are already looking forward to our 2026 missions schedule. The trips on our missions calendar are: four Shepherd's Bags, two Overseas Bible Schools, three Barnabas Touch/Evangelism and a BMMI/EIM dental team are scheduled. We would love nothing more than for you to consider traveling with EIM in 2026. The following is a brief overview of each trip:

Our Shepherd's Bags trips are five days

long, Monday through Friday. Each trip includes two travel days and then we will spend three consecutive days distributing Shepherd's Bags in schools and presenting the gospel in each place.

Our Overseas Bible Schools trips are usually 6-7 days or 8-10 days based on the country we are going to. We depart on Wednesday and arrive at our final destination on Friday. Bible School starts on Sunday afternoon and runs through Wednesday afternoon.

All Barnabas Touch/Evangelism trips are 10-day trips with six days of extensive teaching. Each day of teaching will be 8-10 hours.

Our Medical Mission trips are in partnership

• See EIM page 8 •



Celebration 2025: Time of Worship and Fellowship

This November, the BMA of America invites you to join believers from across our association for Celebration 2025, a three-day gathering filled with worship, encouragement, and fellowship. The conference will be held November 18–20,

2025, at the breathtaking Chateau on the Lake in Branson, Missouri. Together, we will lift our voices in praise and give thanks for all that God has done!

We are honored to welcome Bro. David Dickson as this year's conference pastor. A faithful servant and longtime leader in the BMA, Bro. David will guide us through God's Word with wisdom and passion. Leading us

in worship will be Bro. Neil Dumas and Bro. David Atteberry, along with special guests including Christian music artist Michael Booth, the Central Baptist College Choir, and beloved Christian comedian and entertainer Dennis Swanberg.

In addition to powerful sessions and uplifting worship, every registered guest will receive a complimentary ticket to enjoy *The Presleys' Country Jubilee*, a Branson tradition that blends music, laughter, and faith-filled family entertainment.

More than just a conference, Celebration is a time to be renewed in Christ, encouraged by His people, and inspired to carry His mission forward. Registration is just \$175 per person, and spots are filling quickly.

For details and to register, visit bmaamerica.org/celebration. Make plans to join us this November as we celebrate God's goodness together!

Highlights from WMA Sponsored Retreat

Pam Burke

On September 5 and 6, 103 women from eight states gathered at the Drury Plaza Hotel Cape Girardeau Conference Center for the annual Missouri WMA Sponsored Ladies



Retreat. Over a period of 24 hours or so, we enjoyed a great time of fellowship, worship, testimonies, and encouragement.

Janet Widger, speaking for the retreat committee, welcomed everyone and got the

meeting off to a good start. She introduced the other committee members – Sara Buckley, Lisa Freeman, and Amy Asher. We

also heard from Tracy Goede, Missouri WMA President, and Cindy Allen, National WMA President, who was visiting from Jacksonville, Texas. Molly Kingston, Mandi Miller, and Melody Miller beautifully led us in worship through music during the event, using selections from the “old classic” hymns



as well as current praise and worship songs.

• See RETREAT page 3 •

News Release from BMAA President

Charles Johnson

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In recent years, the BMA of America has found it necessary to change our process of accepting new churches into our associational fellowship. While we want to include all local assemblies of like faith and order who desire membership, we also want to ensure that new prospects fully agree with us both doctrinally and in principles of operation.

Churches who are interested in BMA of America membership are required to fill out a petitionary form which may be found at bmaamerica.org/partner-with-us/. Submission of this form will go to Bro. Randy Shepherd, Recording Secretary for the BMA of America, who may be contacted at sslbc@aol.com. Deadline for submission is January 31 preceding the national meeting held in April.

After the form is submitted, the prospective church will be contacted by a national officer (either the president and/or the vice-president) for vetting purposes and explanation of the required steps for joining the Association. These steps include the church's formal adoption of agreement with the BMA Doctrinal Statement and Principles of Cooperation which may be found on the BMA of America website.

If any potential church has other questions, you may contact me at (903) 790-1691 or at cj1972@etex.net.

State Missions

Dear BMAMO Churches,

This will also serve as my report for the annual state meeting of the Missionary Baptist Churches of Missouri.

I hope and pray that this report and article find you doing well in the Lord.

The Lord is truly blessing Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, and in my humble opinion, our association as a whole. It has been a fruitful year with Bro. Juan Fernandez serving as our national missionary to the greater St. Louis area. You'll be hearing more about what God is doing there in his report, but suffice it to say here that God is richly blessing. Juan, his wife and family are faithfully serving the Lord in this effort.

Bro. Chuck Tedrow is doing an excellent job in replanting the church in Union, Missouri, now known as Hillside Missionary Baptist Church. They will be having a soft launch on November 2. Please be praying for Chuck's health and for the continuing discipleship to Hillside.

I was able to go to the Church Multiplication Training in Texas at the end of August. Bro. Chris, Todd West, and Heath Mitchell led that particular training. I will be trying to implement many of the things that I was exposed to there to help the health of our churches here in Missouri. Bro. Larry Barker has been a tremendous support and help in these efforts as our North American Director of Operations.

As you know, three ladies in our associational churches were able to go on mission trips this summer, and we praise God for that. Still to this day, the greatest emphasis of this Missions Director and the Missions Department in Missouri is the health of our churches, specifically, focusing on discipleship. I stand ready to help any church that is willing to be assessed and help them to determine and figure out how to better carry out the Great Commission and ultimately be disciples that disciple disciples, that disciple disciples, that will result in a healthy church that plants other healthy churches.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve. May the Lord richly bless the churches in Missouri as we strive to carry out the Great Commission.

Bro. Ben



MISIÓN BAUTISTA BELÉN
(Bethlehem Mission)
Serving Hispanic Families • St. Louis Metro East
Juan Fernandez
pastorjuanfernandez@gmail.com • (618) 581-8056

And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord God, you know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord. (Ezekiel 37:3-6)

Praises

- For daily prayer walk in our neighborhoods.
- For opportunities to visit BMA churches to promote prayer for the spiritual harvest among our Hispanic families.
- For spiritual conversations during our door-to-door canvassing.
- For outreach in Granite City (Saturday), Lindsay Lane (Wednesday, Sunday) and Chesterfield (Sunday evening).
- For new opportunities to serve our community with ESL class beyond our current ministries at Lindsay Lane (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) and in Chesterfield (Saturday morning).

We currently have discipleship groups serving three families in Chesterfield, Florissant and Granite City. The challenge is to get them together to celebrate biblical fellowship. So, we have planned to get



together the second Sunday of the month for this purpose. There is also a family in O'Fallon who has expressed a desire to join our discipleship process. The young man has completed six out of ten of the Discovery Bible Studies. Praise the Lord!

For you and your family that pray for our wisdom, guidance and grace. We are reaching out to non-believers. These four years we have focused on evangelism, but there have been very few contacts who have completed our discipleship process. We are praying for three families who are settled in these areas to establish a core team with our ministry. Many of our potential contacts are still in the process of receiving and believing the gospel of Jesus. It has been difficult to connect with committed individuals who are ready to commit to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ among our Spanish-speaking families. There are many opportunities

Financial Report BMA Of Missouri Missions September 2025

<u>Checking Account:</u>	
Balance Aug. 31	\$ 44,215.98
<u>Income:</u>	
Missions	\$ <u>3,831.55</u>
Total Income	\$ <u>3,831.55</u>
Total Available	\$ 48,047.53
<u>Expenses:</u>	
Director, salary/bonus	\$ 450.00
Director, TX training	123.62
Secretary, salary/bonus	200.00
Juan Fernandez, support	<u>2,333.33</u>
Total Expenses	\$ <u>(3,106.95)</u>
Balance Sept. 30	\$ 44,940.58
<u>BMAMS Revolving Loan Investment:</u>	
Balance Aug. 31	\$ 123,073.10
Interest	<u>0.00</u>
Balance Sept. 30	\$ <u>123,073.10</u>
Total in All Accounts Sept. 30	\$ 168,013.68

to serve our families. We pray that our efforts are focused on keeping the main thing the main thing.

We continue to plan our day for launching public services officially by the month of December, 2025. In faith, Hebrews 11:1 leads us to continue praying, planting and watering the seed of the gospel among our families.

Prayers are appreciated that we may be found faithful and fruitful to the Lord. We are called to serve Him and continue partnering with you, the dear BMA churches in the state of Missouri. Jesus is coming soon, so let us be ready and fruitful with a harvest of first and second generation Hispanic families in the Midwest.

In His service,
Juan Fernandez



El gozo del Señor
(The joy of the Lord)



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Quarterly Financial Reports

Missouri Missionary Baptist Paper 3rd Quarter 2025

Beginning Balance July 1	\$ 20,617.50
Offerings	<u>3,423.11</u>
Funds Available	\$ 24,040.61
Salaries	(2,400.00)
Printing & Mailing	(2,713.45)
Other Expenses	<u>(384.98)</u>
Ending Balance Sept 30	\$ 18,542.18

Kenneth E. Gibson Grant Fund 3rd Quarter 2025

The Grant Fund balance remains unchanged at \$31,643.07.

BMA Of Missouri Minute Fund 3rd Quarter 2025

Beginning Balance June 1	\$ 2,002.50
Offerings	<u>0.00</u>
Funds Available	\$ 2,002.50
Office Supplies	<u>(15.61)</u>
Ending Balance Aug 31	\$ 1,986.89

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Stop and Smell the Coffee Brewing – Part 1

Editorial – Don Burke

Efficiency: Learning to do a task as smoothly and with as little time, effort and money as circumstances allow. Every item on my to-do list – from yard mowing to paying bills to even at times Sunday sermon preparation – is intentionally or unintentionally measured against this standard of efficiency.

But while efficiency often allows us to check off the most items on our to-do list, when followed too slavishly we can find that the quantity of checked items is achieved at the sacrifice of quality of living. A sermon passage too hastily outlined for Sunday

presentation might well miss a rich well of truths which is only discovered by a slower pondering of the passage. Sometimes we just need to slow down and take in the smell of the coffee as it's brewing.

I've noticed the scripture of God's response to Solomon (2 Chronicles 7:12ff) pop up a number of times recently, including at least a time or two here in the *Missouri Missionary Baptist*. And there is nothing wrong with a quick (efficient) reminder of the great passage. But like a juicy • See STOP page 5 •



• From RETREAT page 1 •

Yalanda Merrell was the speaker for the retreat. Through lessons from God's Word and stories from her own life and those of others, she presented in each session from the theme "JOY – Just Our Yes." She encouraged and challenged each of us to find true joy in life by saying "yes" to God's callings, no matter how easy or how difficult those "yes" opportunities might be. Yalanda also shared some of the exciting things that are happening around the world through the work of Lifeword ministries.

At various times throughout the sessions, several women shared their "JOY" testimonies of times they had said "yes" to God and the blessings that came through those decisions.

We saw pictures from Camp Garwood of the new building, where funds from the retreat's silent auction the previous two years had gone. Tracy Goede, Connie Reifsteck and Marybeth Widger (along with other helpers) did a great job organizing and running this year's silent auction. The ladies enjoyed bidding on the over 550 items available, raising \$2,155 to go toward the purchase of drink dispensers for use in Camp Garwood's dining hall.

We heard first-hand reports from Janet Widger, Juanita May and Janis Eaton – ladies who have put feet on the ground and helped serve with Just the Crumbs at various locations during the past year. Just the Crumbs is the National WMA project for the current year. An offering was taken and brought in \$1,300 to send to that project.

The retreat wrapped up with drawings for door prizes. Eighteen ladies went home with the table centerpieces which we had enjoyed throughout the event, and Keeley Bolen won the grand prize – free registration for the 2026 retreat!

Many left on Saturday afternoon already excited about next year's retreat, which is scheduled for September 11-12, 2026, at the same location. Ladies, mark your calendars and look for more information to come in the months ahead.



▪ Updates from Our Churches ▪

Kewanee, New Madrid

Hello from Kewanee Missionary Baptist Church. "I think I like fall most of all!" We had a full month in September.

Several of our ladies attended the Missouri WMA Retreat in Cape Girardeau on Sept. 5-6. It was a blessing to hear Yalanda Merrill speak again this year. A big thanks to all who put this together.

We celebrated Grandparents Day on Sept. 7 before worship services. The kids were brought up front and asked questions about their grandparents. A lot of great answers!! At the end of the services that morning, each grandparent went home with a "cake pop"!

We also celebrated KMBC's 90th Homecoming Anniversary. Bro. Dan brought a great message. Gloria Houston, our new church historian this year, did a great job putting together information on the history of the church along with a video put to music of church members through the years. A lot of time and effort was put into this, and we thank her so much for using her talents and her faithfulness to the Lord. The ladies cooked a wonderful lunch, and in the afternoon our worship music was brought by "More Than Conquerors." You could feel the Holy Spirit fill the room as they sang. God uses them in a powerful way!

Sis. Pam Wisely has started an eight-week women's Bible study in 2 Corinthians titled "More Than Enough," meaning God's strength is sufficient in all our circumstances. They are studying one of the most personal letters that Paul wrote to discover how God is the ultimate

source of the strength and sufficiency that we need. God gives us the strength to go on through troubles, disappointments and temptations, and strengthens us to go forward, equipping us to serve Him and compelling us to share the gospel. Our weakness doesn't disqualify us, and it is not a flaw in our design. In fact, God shows Himself most powerful in and through our vulnerabilities. We are called then not to work harder to hide our weaknesses, but to call upon God's infinite resources and rely on Him. Through our experiences and God's strength, we are able to help others going through similar things. Sis. Pam is a wonderful teacher, and we thank her so much for leading this Bible study.

Until next month, God bless!

*Dan Wisely, Pastor
Debbie Nowell, Reporter*

Ozark Heights, Potosi

Greetings to all our sister churches from Ozark Heights. We pray all is well with you.

I apologize for my failing to get the reports out to you. I have started the reports on a couple occasions, thinking I will get back and finish them before the deadline, only to remember to send them after the deadline.

Our youth group did a float trip on August 14th and totally enjoyed the time together and fun paddling the Courtois River. But according to the youth directors, they preferred to watch the youth do the paddling. Plenty of water to cool off in and plenty of sun make for a wonderful time together.

Our pastor(s) continues to preach strong, meaningful

messages on Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. and studies on the church doctrine of a Missionary Baptist Church Sunday evenings at 6 p.m. Know what we believe, why we believe, and its impact upon us and the lost. We are excited to tell you Sis. Cheri McCoy joined our church by statement in September.

Talent nights are every 4th Sunday evening at 6 p.m. We invite you to join us with your talent. Our talent nights have been truly amazing over the last several months as they grow with others coming prepared to sing and joining in to make it a journey together in praise!

Our youth group held a bake sale on Saturday, September 6th, and God bless their effort raising almost \$1,000 for Youth Alive. We have youth ministries for all ages on Sunday morning at 11 a.m., 6 p.m. Sunday evening and 6 p.m. Wednesday evening.

We had our missionary Bro. Mike Strong come and speak to us about his ministry in Minneapolis, and his message and zeal were truly inspiring. Following his message the WMA voted to support his mission monthly, and in our business meeting there was overwhelming support to increase our monthly giving to Bro. Mike's work in Minneapolis. If you have not had the opportunity to hear Bro. Mike, you should contact and schedule him on his next mission visit.

Our ladies in WMA are encouraged to be more active. WMA meets every 3rd Wednesday at 6 p.m. Please come and join us to help make a difference in our community and the world for our Lord and Savior.

Brotherhood meets every 3rd Wednesday at 6 p.m. Bro. Jim Shy has been doing an excellent study on the characters found in God's Word and the impact they had on their nation.

Recently we have seen the impact one man can make on a nation. D.L. Moody was inspired by the words of Henry Varley who said, "The world has yet to see what God can do through a man who is totally yielded to Him." Moody said, "Let me be that man."

My prayer is, "God, please help me to be an example of a true child of God upon the lost in this world."

Please pray for us as we continue to serve our Lord at Ozark Heights.

*Dwight Petete, Pastor
Gary Gilliam, Reporter*

Lindsay Lane, Florissant

Greetings once again from Lindsay Lane. We pray God's blessings on you!

Pastor Brian is taking a much-needed vacation. Bro. David Wright filled in for him on the 28th. Bro. Jeff Moorman has filled in for him, as well as Bro. Juan. We thank God for these men of God who are willing to step in when needed.

Several of our men had a work day recently and were able to get some much needed repairs done to the building. Our senior lunch will be the 7th. It will be very interesting to see what folks will share as we are bringing dishes that start with letters of the alphabet! We always have tons of fun and fellowship!

The 19th will be our annual washer tournament. The 2nd of November will be our annual chili cook-off. The 10th will be a night out with the homeless as we minister to those less fortunate. The 18th will be our ladies journey to Kimmswick for fun and fellowship.

We have many folks needing healing. Sis. Thelma Cornett and Bro. Truman and wife Sheila Parrish are homebound at the present

time. Bro. Albert Meade, pastor's father, will be getting a pacemaker in the coming days. We thank you for your prayers on our behalf!

May God bless till we meet again.

*Brian Meade, Pastor
Kathy Chapman, Reporter*

Oak Hill, Alton

Hello to all from Oak Hill! September was a great month at Oak Hill.

We gained a sister in Christ – Abby Casey was saved on September 7th. September 21st, we added five members to our church – Jordan, Desirae, and Makenzie Pankey and Chistopher and Christina Smith.

October 4th Isaac Roberts and Haley Kernodle had a beautiful ceremony at their wedding.

Saturday, October 18th, we will be having our Walk-of-Faith fish fry at 5:00 p.m. For the people who do not like fish or are allergic to it, we also have chicken strips, french fries, hush puppies, and a lot of different desserts. If you will be in our area, come by and eat with us. I'm sure we will have something you will like to eat.

Until next month I hope I will have some more good news to tell you. Until then we will be praising and honoring our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

God Bless!!
*Edward Casey, Pastor
Jennifer Williams, Reporter*

Landmark, DeSoto

Greetings to all from Landmark, DeSoto!

WOOHOO AND HALLELUJAH! We had a GREAT Homecoming Day (93 years!) this past Sunday! Unofficial attendance count was 48 (wish we could have that many every Sunday). Bro. Tom Foster was our guest preacher, and we were all blessed by the message God gave him, reinforcing that when you have accepted Christ as your Savior, He is with you always. He is GOD

~ Upcoming Events ~

Revival – Nov. 10-14; Ohlman, Bunker; Scotty Rayburn, evangelist

Celebration 2025 (worship celebration for adults) – Nov. 18-20; Chateau on the Lake, Branson

Send event info to mmbpaper@gmail.com.

and is stronger than any of us. Sis. Foster sang a special for us before the sermon, which was also a wonderful blessing. God has gifted her with a beautiful voice that she uses to uplift and praise Him.

Of course, we had a scrumptious meal after the morning service. Many thanks to Sis. Terry and Bro. Bill Smith and all the people who helped put it together. At 2 p.m., the Southern Gospel group, "The Wanda Mountain Boys," performed for the Lord and for us. We had a foot-stomping, amen-ing good time! I think everyone present felt filled up with the Holy Spirit by the end of the day.

In related news, some of those in attendance were repeat visitors. We hope they all felt welcome and "at home." Most of the credit goes to Bro. Len and Sis. Rebecca Young and their diligent efforts to invite people to church. Next time you see them, ask them about their Dairy Queen ministry!

We do still have many prayer requests for our members and their families – illness, death of loved ones, many other hardships. I'm

so glad God lets us lay these burdens at His feet (although I'm bad about laying them down and then trying to pick them back up...). We will continue to lift all of you up in prayer also.

May God continue to bless all of us as we watch for His return.

*Len Young, Pastor
Barbara Williams, Reporter*

New Testament, Sullivan

Greetings from New Testament Baptist Church.

Fall has found us very busy at NTBC! We began September with our Seedline Scripture project with Bro. Tyler Bridges. What a blessing to have many of our sister churches join us in this project as we assembled 30,000 Spanish *John and Romans* to be distributed with the Everlasting Christmas Shoeboxes. We also assembled 10,000 French *John and Romans* to be sent to Bro. Michel and Sis. Ruth Poirier, missionaries to Canada, and 10,000 English *John and Romans* to be used in the United States.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the Meramec Landmark Baptist Association

for their generous offering to support this project. We also appreciate Bro. Richard Flowers, Bro. Greg Pinnell and Bro. Josiah Rector for delivering the scriptures, our Christmas shoeboxes, and our fellow churches' Christmas shoeboxes to Conway, Arkansas, following the scripture project.

Our men, teens and boys had their first Bible study based on the movie *The Forge*, with 41 in attendance. The ladies, teens and girls also had a great turnout for their first Bible study centered on love stories of the Bible. The children and youth rounded out the month with a game and pizza night.

Our Life Issues program, an addiction recovery program, meets every Thursday night and continues to provide Biblical strategies and resources to assist those who struggle with addictions, difficult emotions, relational struggles and issues with life.

Master Clubs, a discipleship program for 3 years to 6th grade, had its kick-off in September. It meets every Wednesday evening along with Summit, our youth pro-

gram for 7th-12th grades, while our adult Bible study, led by Pastor Josh Wright, is held.

NTBC is looking forward to November 2 when the Union Church Plant will hold their soft launch and dedication at 3:00 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to come and support this ministry.

Please join us in prayer for Bro. Charles and Sis. Marsha Idleman and family in the sudden loss of their daughter, Shannah. We are so thankful for Shannah's testimony of salvation and assurance we will see her again. Bro. Charlie was pastor at NTBC for 17 years.

We are thankful to see visitors during our services and continue to look for unique and encouraging ways to reach out into our community with the gospel.

Striving together,

*Josh Wright, Pastor
Kay Bylo, Reporter*

Ohlman, Bunker

Summer flew by! We started our Wednesday night youth ministry back up on September 3rd. This year we split up some of the age

groups, which meant we needed more teachers and an additional classroom. Each week, depending on the need, the adults are subject to changing class location. That is a good problem.

Depending on school athletics, we have had as high as 60 youth in attendance and as low as 30 youth. This makes it really interesting for the teachers to be prepared as well as the cooks and kitchen volunteers. We are thankful that our "new to us" bigger bus is finally back in service. Hopefully all of the mechanical issues have been worked out. This bus being out of service last year affected our attendance. Pray for this ministry, the bus drivers, the teachers, the kitchen workers and most of all the youth that attend.

On September 14th, Natalie Steelman came forward and presented herself as a candidate for baptism. She was saved at church camp.

We will be in revival services November 10th through the 14th with Bro. Scotty Rayburn as the evangelist.

*Terry Sharpe, Pastor
Janet Widger, Reporter*

• From STOP page 3 •

brisket slow cooked in an outdoor smoker, for this moment I want to take a slower, pondering look at this passage – to slow down and smell God's coffee brewing.

"If." After setting the hypothetical stage of His people finding themselves under His chastisement (v13), God begins the prescription for correcting it with the word "if" (v14). I don't mean to pick a fight with any among my reformed-leaning brethren, but the biblical reality is that not all things rest solely upon the will of God. Or better stated, sometimes in God's unquestionable sovereignty He sovereignly determines to allow a given outcome to rest upon the decision of man. Consider, for example, as Jesus wept over Jerusalem He stated that it was *His will* for them to come to Him (salvation), but *they willed* to not do so – and in His eternal sovereignty He allowed that outcome to be determined by their will even though it conflicted with His own.

Returning to 2 Chronicles, God shows the same thing here, where the outcome rests upon "if" – an "if" that leaves the ball in our court. While there are certainly elements such as God's timing and factors like periods of consequences of our wrong that come into play, ultimately the go/no-go decision to get out of the situation hinges on the "if" of man's choice.

Do you sense that we – as individuals, as local congregations or even as an association – are experiencing a leanness of God's presence and blessings? If so, could it be this "if" is for us, too?

Now consider the second element in this passage to ponder on – "humble themselves." The opposite of being humble is being self-assured (AKA, arrogant). When I say self-assured, that is not the same as someone having Bible-based convictions or even at times fact-based confidence. Rather, it is someone whose underlying reasoning amounts to, "I know because I know." Even with all the confidence in the world, such steadfastness is built on nothing more than one's own thinking or feelings. The problem is, while the humble

rarely see themselves as humble, it's even more so that the self-assured almost never see their own arrogance.

Some years back I was in a casual conversation with a fellow pastor, and in the course of our discussion he asked my thoughts about an idea related to his upcoming Sunday sermon. He shared the passage he had in mind, then shared the thoughts he intended to preach from it. Since he asked, I explained that I didn't see the passage making the points he was making, and explained from the passage just why. His response was something like, "I genuinely appreciate your feedback and I agree with your insights... but I think I'm going to preach it anyway." Now I'll be the first to say that I am far from the final word in interpreting scripture. And second, I fully recognize that my fellow preachers answer to God and not to me – and I wouldn't have it any other way. But I share this story to simply show that it is so very easy for us to proceed through life, and even ministry, operating out of our own thoughts rather than giving due time and consideration to being sure they conform to God's. And when we do that, are we not being *self-assured*, and thus distancing ourselves from the humility God calls us to?

As I said, it's difficult for the self-assured to see their own arrogance. And yet that is exactly what we – *all* of us – have to do. We must be perfectly honest as we examine whether our ways are motivated by our own thinking and our own schemes, or if they are prompted by the Lord's guidance. Do our actions and thoughts reflect what the Bible says, or are they governed more by our own perspective or feelings?

We stray into sin – and thus, encounter its punishment – because of putting more value upon our own perspective than upon God's. It only makes sense, then, that the first move in getting back right with Him comes from turning off that very faucet of arrogance that has flooded our life with the problems it brought.

To be continued....

Use of AI in Sermon Preparation

Dr. Philip Attebery, BMA Seminary President

Someone recently asked, “Can the BMA Seminary provide pastors with guidance on the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially for sermon preparation?”

BMA Seminary faculty recently identified two basic types of AI. First is “Assistive AI” that seems to be acceptable for use in sermon preparation. Such AI can assist a pastor in finding related Bible passages, researching the background of a biblical text, discovering the meaning of biblical terms, and finally checking the grammar of his sermon.

Second is “Generative AI” that creates a sermon for the pastor. This seems to be unacceptable. Generative AI does more than assist the pastor, it does all the work for him. Why is this unacceptable? There are ethical, cognitive, and biblical reasons to consider.

Ethical Reasons

Ethically, think about the “byline.” Church bulletins often indicate that the sermon will be delivered “by” the pastor. Congregants rightly assume that the pastor named has researched and prepared the sermon presented “by” that pastor. If I present a sermon generated by AI, or copied from another preacher, I cannot ethically declare that I delivered a sermon prepared “by Philip Attebery.”

Biblical Reasons

Biblically, the apostle Paul directed Timothy, “*study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth* (2 Timothy 2:15). This passage applies to any preacher or presenter of God’s Word.

Paul wrote the word “study” as a command. The word means to be diligent, eager, and to exert oneself. This alone renders the use of Generative AI unacceptable in sermon preparation. A preacher who uses AI to generate his sermons cannot honestly say he has been biblically diligent to exert himself in sermon preparation.

Two results should come from diligent study. First, a preacher, should “shew” or present “thyself approved unto God.” A congregation of listeners may accept AI-generated sermons, but God is the ultimate determiner of acceptability. Second Timothy 2:15 makes it clear that God desires to accept the man who has diligently exerted himself. A preacher cannot honestly say that he has shown himself to be a diligent student, of whom God approves, by using AI-generated sermons.

The second result of diligent study is to be an unashamed worker who rightly divides the Word of Truth. The word “workman” indicates labor and

work! The word “unashamed” implies that there is no need to be ashamed. The phrase “rightly dividing” means to handle something correctly and to cut straight. A preacher cannot honestly say that he has worked hard, correctly handled God’s Word, and has no reason to be ashamed when using AI to generate sermons.

Cognitive Reasons

Cognitively, the use of AI may cause significant and long-term decrease in a person’s brain function. According to the abstract of the June 2025 report entitled, *Your Brain on ChatGPT: Accumulation of Cognitive Debt when Using an AI Assistant for Essay Writing Task*, conducted by researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the results of their study on participants’ AI use “demonstrate . . . a likely decrease in learning skills” and that AI users “performed worse than their counterparts” who did not use AI.

According to the MIT report, users of AI are 60% more productive overall; however, their “cognitive load” needed for real learning is reduced by 32%. Pastors are expected to learn biblical truths and content as they prepare sermons. AI hinders such learning.

Although Assistive AI is acceptable for finding Bible passages, the MIT report warns that “as users increasingly depend on search engines for fact-checking and accessing information, their ability to remember specific content may decline . . .” This can potentially be a problem. For example, hiding God’s Word in your heart helps you avoid sin, not simply having quick access to His Word.

Conclusion

Those currently using AI to generate sermons should consider the findings and questions asked above. It is incredibly difficult to see how a preacher can obey the command and attain the status required of 2 Timothy 2:15 if using AI to generate sermons. Having served as a bi-vocational pastor at times during my ministry, I can understand the temptation to use helps in generating sermons. In the past, some pastors have simply plagiarized “their” sermons by using messages discovered on the Internet, in a book, or other formats. Today, using generative AI may appear to remove a bit of stigma because it does not directly copy another preacher’s message. However, it clearly violates the ethical and biblical guidance presented in this article. For more on this, visit the BMA Seminary’s blog on AI and Sermon Preparation at <https://bmats.edu/2025/09/03/ai-and-sermon-preparation/>.

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Share Your Hope

Cindy Allen

My dad was diagnosed with leukemia in 1994. He was only 47 years old. I was 24 and pregnant with our first son. It came out of nowhere and rocked our world. God blessed us with seven more years of ups and downs. It was not an easy road to walk, especially for my parents, BUT GOD.

The last 17 days of my dad's life he spent in a hospital. Again, God blessed. My dad was able to make decisions about the end of this life, making this path easier for my mom. The weekend before he died, he felt really good. Friends and family were able to visit and say their goodbyes. I always said, "If anyone was able to plan out their final days, my dad seemed to be in control of his." And if you had known my dad you would not have been surprised that he was in charge! Another blessing that God allowed.

I have a very vivid memory of laying on a cot in his room, facing the wall, and singing over and over, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but only trust in Jesus' name. On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking ground."

We all picked a song to be sung at Daddy's funeral, and that was the song I chose. My brother-in-law did the music and he had never sung that particular one at a funeral, but I wanted people to know God was THE hope. He was getting my family through this horrible time, just like He had been there for the last seven years, and He was available for them.

In 1983 Anne Murray made a country song popular entitled, "Little Good News Today." The gist of it is nothing good is on the news but she sure wished there would be. If that was true in 1983, it is for sure true in 2025.

I am not going to list all the sadness happening in East Texas, I am sure you have that same sadness in your neck of the woods. Suffice it to say, our world needs Jesus. Just like Jesus was my solid rock in my daddy's hospital room, he can be the solid rock for everyone in the world, everyone in your church, everyone in your neighborhood, everyone in your family. EVERYONE!

The crazy part, he WANTS to be that for EVERYONE. But as believers we have to embrace our part of the plan. God isn't going to skywrite about his love or buy commercial time during the Super Bowl. He chose people as the vessel to share His love, to share His hope. God has commissioned each believer to love others and share His love with others. I looked up "commission as used in the Bible" and this is what I found: "A sacred, authoritative mandate given by God or Jesus Christ to an individual or group to fulfill a specific task or mission, often to make His will known to others." Hello ladies, that is what Jesus did at the end of the gospels. He commissioned us to go into all the world AND proclaim the gospel.

We all have a story of hope (maybe lots of stories). Our world needs to hear that. You don't have to know lots of scriptures and references; you don't need a Bible degree. You just need your version of a story where you laid in a hospital room and sang a song over and over that reminded you Jesus is your rock. THAT is what our world needs to hear.

Prayer: Dear Lord, Give me the courage to share you with

Lettre Mission Les Poirier's

Michel Poirier

Quebec

During this month we had the opportunity to lead a woman to the Lord. She was raised in a Christian home but her parents were only professing Christian and went to church only on special occasions, like Christmas or some kind of church activity. When I asked her where she would spend eternity, she said in hell. She knew the wages of sin and knew she needed repentance. Praise the Lord, she trusted Christ. So many are like that woman, they lived in a home that professed Christianity but no proof of real fruit of salvation. We have people who come and are exposed every week to the fact of sin and the consequences of sin in their life, but don't do anything about it because they are comfortable in their sin. They like to play in the mud, they like to play with sin, and they don't want to get out of it because they like it. It breaks my heart when I see people come to church week after week and go home without a change in their life. I was in the mud when Christ saved me and pulled me out of the mud and set my heart in tune with God. Ruth and I are doing good, seeking the lost every week. Sometimes we are able to share Christ, and at other times it's not as good. But the Word of God will not return void. We pray for our LEVIS Quebec.

Haiti

It looks like people are getting used to the gangs going from house to house to get what they want. There is not a lot of activity going in the street. What used to be a busy street is now a ghost street. Some try to sell food and vegetables but not many succeed. The farmers and women that come down from the mountain with their goods to sell have to pay fees to pass on the street. For our churches in



the area of Bon Repos, they keep preaching the Word and are able to feed a group of kids every week. On Sunday everybody gets a meal – sometimes it's little but they all will get something even if there is only bread and coffee. One of our ladies went to see her mom in Ti gouave, Haiti. She was afraid all the time she was there. Her mom was sick unto death and she was able to say her goodbyes to her.

those around me. Help me to care enough to look into people's lives and see their need for you, your love, your hope, your salvation. Thank you, Father, for being my hope and help me to testify of your greatness. In Jesus' name, amen.

Scripture Reading: Romans 10; Romans 15:8-13; Psalm 107.

Response: Go and Tell.

Pray for the situation in Haiti. Some of you are very generous with your giving to this cause, and the church people are very thankful.

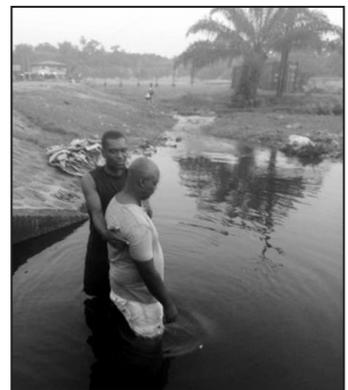
Africa

Ivory Coast. Like any country, death doesn't wait for anybody. In Ivory Coast the church family were grieving the loss of some members who were pillars in the church. It always hurts to lose a servant of the Lord.



Cameroon. The church was happy to baptize two young men in the river after confessing C h r i s t publicly.

B e n i n . The preacher teaching the Word to a congregation of men and



women who are eager to learn and study the Word. After a hard week of sowing the seeds of the gospel with some help from brothers in the Lord, they were rejoicing for the good group of people who came to hear the preaching. Praise the Lord for his Word.

Dominican Republic

Our Haitians are still gathering every week in secret to listen to the Word of God through the WhatsApp message that I send to them every week. A couple of years ago the president of Republic Dominican announced that all Haitians not citizens of the Republic are to be arrested and put in jail, then sent back to Haiti. Most of the ones we know have been established in Dominican Republic for over 15 to 20 years. Their children are in school and the parents have a regular job. Things are hard for them, and to be sent home to Haiti with no home, no job, no money and no hope except the Lord. Our little group is 15, including the children. Pray for their protection.

We thank you for your prayers and sacrifice you do for our ministry, trying to reach the French-speaking people for the Lord. May the Lord bless you as you work with us reaching these people.

Michel & Ruth Poirier

pasteur.poirier56@gmail.com

Why the Bible Department Matters at CBC

The Chronicle of Higher Education recently ran an article with a sobering title: "Why Religious Studies Is in Trouble." It told the story of many colleges around the country that are cutting back on their Bible and religion courses. Fewer students are required to take them, budgets are shrinking, and some schools are even questioning if these departments are still "relevant."

At Central Baptist College, we couldn't disagree more. In fact, I would argue that our Bible Department is one of the most important parts of who we are.

Here's why. Every single CBC student, no matter their major, takes nine hours of Bible courses before they graduate. That means every student is given the opportunity to learn how to read and understand Scripture, how to think through matters of faith, and how to apply God's Word in their daily lives. Those

classes touch more students than any other department on our campus.

Think about that. A young man studying business is also being grounded in God's Word. A young woman preparing to teach in a classroom is also learning how to share her faith. A future physician is learning both how to care for patients and how to see them as people made in the image of God. That's the CBC difference, and the Bible Department makes it possible.

The CBC Bible Department also holds a rich history of training generations of BMA pastors, missionaries, and evangelists. Throughout our history, the men who have taught in this department (and those who teach for us today) have poured their lives into their students. Our churches have reaped the benefit.

The Chronicle may be right that some colleges are letting go of their commitment to Bible and religion, but at

CBC we are doubling down. The Bible is not an elective. It's the foundation for everything else. Our mission has always been to integrate faith and learning, preparing students not only for a career but for a calling.

Churches like yours make that possible. When you pray for us, when you send students our way, and when you support the ministry of CBC, you are investing in more than just a college education. You are helping us teach the next generation to know Christ, to love His Word, and to live out their faith in every walk of life.

So while others may say that "religious studies is in trouble," I want you to know that here at Central Baptist College, the study of God's Word is alive and well. It is growing, it is shaping lives, and it is at the very heart of what we do.

And as long as the Lord gives us strength, it always will be.

• From EIM page 1 •

with BMMI. EIM takes a dental team to compliment the medical team. This trip is a 10-12-day trip to Tanzania.

The cost covers airfare, transportation, lodging, food and travel insurance while in country.

Below are testimonies from those who have traveled with us this year.

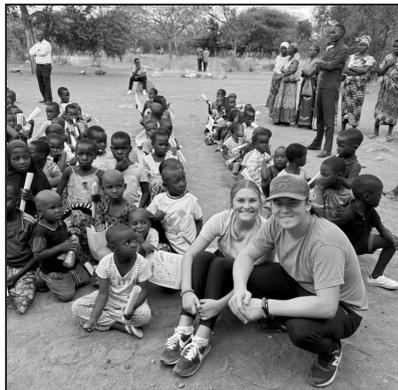
The thing that meant the most to me was watching how happy the kids were to learn about Jesus. Every time we spoke the gospel their smiles grew, and they all paid so much attention to us, and they took in what we were saying really well. – Brixey, Lonoke Baptist Church, Morrilton, AR

The mission trip with EIM this year for me meant getting to see a whole different world, while connecting with some of the sweetest people sharing Gods precious word!! – Allee Grace Duvall, Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Plumerville, AR

In Tanzania we were involved with pure personal evangelism. Even when we did our OBS the greatest moments were making connections with people who were hungry to hear or share the gospel. – Thaddeus Stout, 12th Street Baptist Church, Kalamazoo, MI

If you would like more information, please contact Mike Goodwin at (870) 904-2091 or mgoodwin@eimworldwide.org or

Fonda Norris at (870) 226-3626 or fnorris@eimworldwide.org and visit our website at www.eimworldwide.org and click the link "Take a Trip."



2026 Schedule

Shepherd's Bag Distribution

Trips may be added to facilitate additional groups. Contact us for available openings.

- Honduras – March 23-27 – Cost: \$1,800
- Honduras – June 8-12 (TEAM CLOSED – RESERVED)
- Honduras – June 22-26 – Cost: \$1,800
- Honduras – August 3-7 – Cost: \$1,800
- Honduras – October 5-9 – Cost: \$1,800

Barnabas Touch

- Liberia – January 13-20

Overseas Bible School

- Tanzania – June 10-19 – Cost: \$3,200
- Mexico – July 25-31 – Cost: \$2,300

Medical Missions

- Tanzania, East Africa – TBA – Cost: \$3,200

Newsletter from Union Church Plant

Chuck Tedrow

Dear BMA Supporting Churches,

God is doing an awesome work in Union, MO!

It has been a wonderful August and beginning of September at the Union Church Plant as we continue to average 14. We will begin knocking on doors on the first of October and currently have at least two churches coming to help with canvassing the area! Also, we will be looking for a family to come and serve in the nursery and children's church for either one month or one Sunday a month. If you would like to help, please give me a call or email. For anyone new to the church plant, we have started one-on-one discipleship lessons.



The remodeling of the building is coming along tremendously. The carpet has been laid, and we have finished the base trim. Facebook will be operational in a couple of weeks, and the website is ready to launch. The next phase includes improvements to the parking lot, front door, and sign. We are working with a lawyer now to get everything in order for the new church – Hillside Baptist Church.

I will begin teaching a nine-week course on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit in September at New Testament Baptist Church in Sullivan, MO. Some of the people from the church plant will attend this also.

On a personal note, my health has not been the greatest over the last couple of weeks. MS is not easy to deal with, but I have to stay faithful and finish my race. I've been having a lot of fogginess, fatigue, and weakness. Your prayers would be greatly appreciated.

The soft launch of Hillside Baptist Church will be November 2. BMA Global Church Planting Director, Bro. Larry Barker, will be speaking in the 10:30 a.m. service. We will be holding a building dedication and prayer for the ministry of the new church plant, and we will also be having an open house at 3:00 p.m. Pastor Josh Wright of New Testament Baptist Church (our sending church) and Missouri State and Local Missions Director, Bro. Ben Kingston (Bethel Baptist Church, Lonedell), will speak in the afternoon along with Bro. Barker. We will have a dessert fellowship to show our appreciation and thanks to everyone for their work and support.

Our worship service will probably be different than most of you are used to. We will be small-group style discipleship with u-shaped tables set up, and an atmosphere that is relaxed. Attendees will be encouraged to dress casually and enjoy home-brewed coffee or tea. A PowerPoint presentation will be utilized, and participants will be encouraged to ask and respond to questions.

We were blessed this month to have Missionary Michael Strong speak one Sunday about his ministry in Minneapolis. We were also blessed to be part of the effort to assemble copies of *John and Romans* at New Testament Baptist, Sullivan. These scriptures will be sent out with the Everlasting Smiles Christmas Shoeboxes and to various missionaries to aid in their ministries.

The Union Church Plant has been tremendously blessed through the support of BMA Global, the BMA State Association, and the Meramec Landmark Baptist Association. In addition, we have had many anonymous love offerings to assist in the ministry. If any church would like me to come speak about the Union Church Plant, I am available this fall on Wednesday nights. I would love to share our vision with your people.

Striving together, Bro. Chuck Tedrow, Church Planter
(636) 358-3732 • chuck.tedrow79@gmail.com