

# **Editorial: Don't rush past yesterday**

December 3, 2025

Yesterday may be gone, but its importance is still alive and well, informing our today and tomorrow. We must reflect on it with a purpose.

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## **Commentary: Religious liberty: Tensions in Baptist identity, Part 6**

December 3, 2025

Wade Berry examines the interrelationship of two sometimes-controversial Baptist principles—soul competency and religious freedom.

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## **Voices: Forgiveness: 70 times seven**

December 3, 2025

Johnny Teague shares a story from his church about forgiveness and

discipleship.

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# Editorial: Being thankful it isn't 'otherwise'

December 3, 2025

Jane Kenyon was a poet and translator. She died young. Already, I am three years older than she was when leukemia took her. How many times in my life I also could have died young.

Her poem "Otherwise" is short. It is a powerful poem, because in simple, spare prose, it makes much of the overlooked and mundane. Through it, Kenyon expresses gratitude for everyday things many of us long since have taken for granted.

Things like getting out of bed in the morning, eating a bowl of cereal, seeing art on the walls of our home. Having a home.

You can [listen to "Otherwise" here](#).

Kenyon knew it could be otherwise, all of it. She knew someday it would be. She wasn't well.

I'm old enough now, I've experienced enough life, I've seen enough things go well enough to know and appreciate, to be thankful it wasn't, it isn't otherwise.

And I'm learning to be thankful still.

# Thankful in all circumstances

One of our brothers returned to his home after the Baptist General Convention of Texas annual meeting in Abilene last week. His home is at war. It is otherwise for him. Yet, even in the midst of war, he and his fellow Ukrainians know it could be worse.

In so knowing, they teach us to be thankful in all circumstances.

Another of our brothers posted a video to Facebook last Thursday from an emergency room. On Tuesday, his wife had emergency gall bladder removal. On Thursday, he was back in the emergency room with his daughter after she was in a car accident. He was thankful for a seat belt.

“Yes ... in spite [of] anything, we will be thankful. We need to be thankful. There is so much to be thankful for,” he said.

“Even if it’s hard, even if it’s unsettling, if life throws things at you, we come before the Lord, we pray together, we ask for help, and we thank [him] for things we already have,” he concluded, encouraging those watching to come celebrate with his church.

Our brother teaches me to be thankful amid all circumstances.

## Are we thankful?

What about us? What do we take for granted? What, who have we grown so accustomed to in our lives that we have forgotten to be grateful for them, that we fail to imagine it could be otherwise?

We simply don’t see so much of what we ought to be, can be thankful for. Many times because we don’t look through the irritations, the inconveniences, the frustrations common to all of us. More than anything,

that's my problem when it comes to thankfulness.

Lord, thank you that the bad isn't as bad as it could be, and thank you for the good that doesn't have to be at all.

## **Some of what I'm thankful for**

I am thankful for the Baptist Standard staff. Each person loves the Lord and cares deeply for people.

I am thankful for the Baptist Standard board. They are great encouragers, on top of being great leaders in their respective places of service.

I am thankful for our donors, who do far more than help pay our bills. They fuel us to pursue our mission.

I take none of them for granted.

Because I know it could be otherwise.

*Eric Black is the executive director, publisher and editor of the Baptist Standard. He can be reached at [eric.black@baptiststandard.com](mailto:eric.black@baptiststandard.com). The views expressed in this opinion article are those of the author.*

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## **Voices: Holy ground: Home alone for the holidays**

December 3, 2025

Ruth Cook reflects on the deep grief of losing loved ones and the challenge

that grief presents during the holidays.

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## **Editorial: Church, sometimes we're the problem**

December 3, 2025

Editor Eric Black holds a mirror up to the church for self-examination and points to the cure for the church's ailment.

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## **Voices: The power of a daily family devotional**

December 3, 2025

Gay N. Lewis shares how a daily family devotional impacted her family and suggestions on how others can implement the practice in their homes.

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# **Letter: Editorial: What is the BGCT? Show up to shape it**

December 3, 2025

Kevin Burrow responds to Editor Eric Black's editorial to point out a needed clarification, and Black responds.

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# **Editorial: What's the BGCT? Show up to shape it**

December 3, 2025

Being a Texas Baptist means showing up to vote, Editor Eric Black contends, encouraging Texas Baptists to participate in the BGCT annual meeting.

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# **Commentary: Priesthood: Tensions in Baptist identity,**

# Part 5

December 3, 2025

Wade Berry delves into the significance and place of the priesthood of the believer, a biblically based and historic Baptist doctrine.

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## Letter: Mistake to lionize Charlie Kirk

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It will be a huge mistake if Florida state lawmakers pass a bill requiring all of Florida's public state universities and colleges to rename one roadway on their campuses after the assassinated conservative activist Charlie Kirk.

The party of Trump and Turning Point USA are portraying Kirk as a righteous martyr. From 2015 to 2024, Kirk used God (Jesus) and Holy Scripture to win votes for an immoral, greedy, autocratic politician, Donald Trump.

God is not fooled when we use God (Jesus) to promote our selfish pursuits of taking our country down the wide road of white Christian nationalism. God doesn't choose our political leaders. In a democracy, we the people elect them.

It is wrong to lionize Charlie Kirk. Kirk should not have been assassinated. It was an evil act that took his life. No one should celebrate his death. Everyone can pray for and empathize with Kirk's wife and two young

children. May we do so.

*Paul Whiteley Sr.*

*Louisville, Ky.*

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# **Voices: ‘What makes for a good D.O.M.?’**

December 3, 2025

Stacy Conner celebrates the ministry of directors of missions in rural Texas, where churches are smaller and miles are greater.