

Letter: Baylor Rejection of LGBTQ+ Grant

July 14, 2025

Two readers respond to Baylor's rejection of a grant to the Diana Garland School of Social Work from the John and Eula Mae Baugh Foundation.

Letter: Letters: Editorial on SBC attendance

July 14, 2025

RE: Letters: Editorial on SBC attendance

I just read the letter to the editor responding to [Editorial: Tiny fraction of Baptists deciding for the whole](#).

Just to add to the numbers, I would note the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting held in Dallas, Texas, June 11-13, 1985, had more than 45,000 messengers gathered, and I was there. Probably the highest percentage representation, as well, but too many people and therefore too unwieldy a meeting.

David Appleby

Port Neches, Texas

For many years, those in church leadership have discussed—bemoaned—the number of people who participate in local church, associational and convention decision-making. Not many people do, and it's been that way just about everywhere for a long time.

As I've interacted with people in person, by email and via social media since publishing [my editorial response](#) to the 2025 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Dallas, some of us have discussed reasons for the low involvement.

In one Facebook comment thread, I asked “why don’t more of those [Southern Baptists] who disagree [with positions being pushed during SBC annual meetings] come to the conventions as messengers and make their position known as clearly as those [with whom they disagree].”

The commenter responded, “Because most people work ...” I heard this as a former pastor used to people thinking pastors only work on Sundays, and only about 30 minutes at that.

But the commenter continued: “Because most people work, have other things to do, or just go on about their life, don’t feel that the convention affects their church directly, ... because a lot of people feel it’s not that big of a deal or don’t realize the long-term impact.”

To David Appleby’s and Dustin Slaton’s point, if all possible messengers showed up at an SBC annual meeting *and voted*, the SBC would need a different way of counting votes other than a visual “Yeah, that looks like a majority to me” count of raised

ballots.

And to what I take to be the Facebook commenter's point—and one of the points I've made many times over many years, what reason do more potential messengers have to make the sacrifice or investment to attend meetings and to vote? The majority are telling us by their absence they don't have a good enough reason to go to the meetings.

Letters: Editorial on SBC attendance; Filthy language

July 14, 2025

One Baptist Standard reader responds to an editorial by Editor Eric Black. Another expresses his opinion about coarse and vulgar language.

Letter: Editorial: Why did the Baptist Standard publish that?

July 14, 2025

A Baptist Standard reader responds to Editor Eric Black's May 22 editorial responding to another reader asking about a publishing decision.

Letters: Editorial: Ten Commandments bills' unintended consequences

July 14, 2025

Baptist Standard readers respond to Editor Eric Black's editorial on bills being considered by the Texas Legislature.

Letter: Editorial: Church in 21st century looking more like 19th

July 14, 2025

A Baptist Standard reader responds to Editor Eric Black's take on the state of mission funding and the pastorate.

Letter: Condemning transgender affirmation

July 14, 2025

A Baptist Standard reader expresses his condemnation of transgender affirmation by various parts of American society.

Letters: Working together, evangelism, Zelensky

July 14, 2025

Working together for a better world

The United States was the only country to [vote](#) March 4 against a United Nations resolution declaring an International Day of Hope. The resolution was approved 161 to 1.

The U.S. delegate said the text “contains references to diversity, equity and inclusion that conflict with U.S. policies that seek to eliminate all forms of discrimination and create equal opportunities for all.”

Moreover, the United States was one of just three nations, along with Israel and Argentina, to vote against a resolution calling for an International Day of Peaceful Coexistence.

The U.S. representative expressed concern the resolution “advances a program of soft global governance that is inconsistent with U.S. sovereignty.”

If our worst fears regarding war do come to pass, our epitaph will read, “[Ideology](#) destroys Earth.”

[John Paul Lederach](#), professor of international peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame, [wrote](#) an essay in 2002 titled, “Breaking the cycle of violence.”

In the article, Lederach contends the most important question the United States and the West can ask other nations is, “How can we help you meet the fundamental needs of your people?”

It is a foundational principle in many religions that we are created in God’s image, and that every human life has intrinsic value and is worthy of respect.

Can we not just work together as human beings to build a better world?

*Terry Hansen
Milwaukee, Wisc.*

RE: [Voices: The slow, tragic demise of evangelism](#)

Your two-part series on the demise of evangelism in our time struck a nerve with me.

While a ministerial student at Wayland Baptist College during the summer of 1959, I hitch-hiked from New York City to Plainview, Texas, and then

from Texas to North Bend, Ore. On both ends of that journey, I rode with Wayland student friends. I shared the good news of Jesus inside the vehicles of others over countless miles.

For a period of time, I pastored small churches in Texas, New Mexico and California while teaching full time in the field of education. For many years, members of my family engaged in Christian drama.

My wife Shannah and I have been involved in jail ministry in a variety of ways. Today, we still share the good news, but we and our Christlike relatives and friends, who are better examples than us, find it hard to witness in the age of Christian nationalism.

Many people now view evangelicals as hypocrites due to the mean-spirited actions of today's religious zealots who are hungry for political power. Evangelicals now are viewed as members of a political bloc, instead of "the bearers of good news about Jesus Christ." My wife and I no longer call ourselves "evangelicals." We simply identify as "Christian."

Satan is surely rejoicing about the bad news of Christian nationalism. Many of our friends and relatives support the movement because of their views about abortion and homosexuality.

*Leon Blevins
Flower Mound, Texas*

RE: Voices: What would you do if you were Esther?

I think this article you chose to publish might have been more than I can handle.

I think we need to be careful when trying to make comparisons of current politicians and events against those portrayed in the inspired word, especially when there is a political tint to the observations.

I sort of find the parallels drawn ludicrous and easily could make arguments that the author had it backwards. The author indicated we should find our own credible Ukrainian sources, rather than supply us with certifiable evidence.

This article never should have been published, in my opinion.

I've been a fan of the *Baptist Standard* since it was a small, paper magazine we picked up at church. This might well be the end of my interest in your publication. My intention is to unsubscribe. We'll see.

*Andy Pardue
Mesquite, Texas*

Letters: Explainer, BGCT & NAMB, Esther & Ukraine

July 14, 2025

Explainer

Some readers have noticed how few letters to the editor we publish. There was a time when each issue of the *Baptist Standard* contained a full section of letters. Now, we can go months without a single letter.

Throughout my tenure, I have been asked if I publish every letter to the editor I receive. I publish letters to the editor for which the writer provides his or her name and location—including those letters that criticize me and the *Baptist Standard*.

The simple fact is, social media and the desire for anonymity have resulted in the very low number of letters to the editor we publish. Social media allows anyone to say whatever they want to say, and immediately and sometimes anonymously. Many times, those who send me emails that read like letters to the editor do not want them published or do not want to be identified, which precludes their publication.

And then, there are topics like the relationship between the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the relationship between Ukraine, Russia and the United States that generate a lot of conversation and, by extension, more letters to the editor.

So, for the first time in a long time, I present you, the reader, with a full Letters to the Editor.

*Eric Black, executive director/publisher/editor
Baptist Standard*

**RE: Voices: Correcting
misunderstanding about BGCT/NAMB
agreement**

I appreciate Dustin Slaton's answer March 5 to [my earlier opinion piece](#) in the *Baptist Standard*. My only response is:

The Baptist General Convention of Texas in November 2024 voted convincingly not to affirm the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message.

The Texas Baptist Executive Board in February 2025 approved a plan to accept \$300,000 annually from the North American Mission Board to help finance new churches that will approve the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message.

Anyone else see any inconsistency in those actions?

*Toby Druin
Waxahachie, Texas*

Love of money evil's root cause

Elon Musk and Donald Trump are two of the greediest persons on earth. Their love of money is the root cause of the evil they are inflicting on our nation's people and the rest of the world. Both are using their powerful positions in government to enhance their own personal wealth. Doing so is wrong and totally unacceptable.

Spineless U.S. House and Senate Republicans, along with a dominant conservative U.S. Supreme Court enable Musk and Trump to do their thing by failing to hold them accountable.

Mid-term elections in 2026 cannot come soon enough.

*Paul L. Whiteley Sr.
Louisville, Ky.*

RE: Voices: What would you do if you were Esther?

Thank you for publishing Dr. Semikov's article. I've served for 28 years as a U.S.-based missionary, having made 60 visits to Ukraine—four since Feb. 24, 2022.

The parallels between the account of Esther and her advocacy for the Jewish people and President Zelensky's advocacy on behalf of the Ukrainian nation are numerous. Dr. Semikov's analysis is compelling.

I know many Christians voted for President Trump, but the betrayal of Ukraine by the current administration cannot be defended on biblical, moral or democratic principles.

It is imperative Christians across the United States stand up for what is right and rise up on behalf of a nation fighting for the same values Christians in the United States hold dear: faith, family, freedom to worship, the right for self-determination, and an emphasis on value and dignity of each human life.

Ukraine has one of the largest evangelical populations in all of Europe. They have been a bastion of evangelical Christianity since their independence from the Soviet Union in 1992, with more than 2,200 Baptist congregations—though hundreds of church buildings have been destroyed by Russia. In the middle of the war, these churches have opened their doors to their communities, providing sanctuary, humanitarian and medical aid, in addition to meeting spiritual needs.

Missionaries from Baptist churches in Ukraine currently serve in more than 22 countries around the world in places as far away as Africa, Australia and South America.

Abandoning Ukraine now in favor of Russia isn't only a shift from religious freedom to support of a dictator, it is an abandonment by the American church of our brothers and sisters in Ukraine.

I urge American Christians to [contact their senators and representatives](#) and speak up in support of Ukraine. Our voices matter.

Stephen Benham

Lawrence, Penn.

Thank you for publishing Dr. Semikov's article, "[What would you do if you were Esther?](#)" I found the parallels between the biblical story and current international events thought-provoking.

As an early scholar of the Bible, I appreciated learning more about Esther's story—an example of a leader facing a difficult choice between personal risk and standing firm for her people. History repeats itself, and today, we see leaders navigating similar dilemmas, including Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The recent confrontation between our national leaders has sparked intense emotions and debate. Some find it troubling to compare Ukraine's fight for survival with biblical struggles, as morality, political views and understanding of the war shape perspectives. Yet, for those who grasp the history of this conflict, the right side to support is clear. It is unsettling when prominent leaders hesitate to stand against evident evil.

The question of compromise is complex: Do you surrender and risk annihilation or keep fighting despite great costs? Is true courage about defying enemies, or does it also mean challenging allies? While national interests matter, moral responsibility cannot be ignored.

Dr. Semikov's article raises important questions about leadership, morality and international responsibility. Thank you for publishing this thought-provoking piece. I look forward to future discussions on this topic.

Sergiy Nesterenko, M.D.

Lubbock, Texas

Letters: SBC abuse database and gambling in Texas

July 14, 2025

Baptist Standard readers respond to news about the SBC sexual abuse database and an editorial opposing expansion of gambling in Texas.

Letter: Voices: Silent on Sunday, manager on Monday

July 14, 2025

RE: Voices: Silent on Sunday, manager

on Monday

The main thrust I gleaned from Ms. Lukefahr's opinion piece is it seems unfair women can run a boardroom but not a church, because the Southern Baptist Convention has made clear they cannot be pastors.

Lukefahr notes: "Secular employers increasingly embrace diversity and champion gender equality for all positions of authority. Apple, for example, commits to 'inclusion that reflects the world around us' and publicly posts statistics for accountability."

The lament, it seems, is that SBC churches fail to focus on equality of opportunities like Apple does. Yet, the church does not exist to commit itself to the changing cultural landscape. I am unsure if Ms. Lukefahr has recently looked at "the world around us," but it seems abysmally outside the confines of God's desires.

To argue Apple—or any of the corporations that slap a rainbow veneer over their corporate logo in June—are the stalwarts of moral and social progress concerns me greatly, coming from another Christian voice.

Discussions of church polity and who is or is not qualified should rest on the weight of Scripture. Yet, what was presented was an argument from the surrounding culture. That is no argument at all.

Our surrounding culture overwhelmingly affirms abortion as a right, marriage as anything that goes, and gender as a construct rather than something designed by God, binary in its nature and determined based on the organs one is born with. The culture cannot even manage itself, let alone the complexities of God's expression of himself and his kingdom today.

The slope is steep and slippery if your theology relies first on your

sociology. We can debate Paul's writings from within, but never whether the culture can speak into Christ's church from without.

*Nathan Feinberg, pastor
Adamsville Baptist Church
Lampasas, Texas*

Letters: Voting, Baptist identity and responding to letters

July 14, 2025

Baptist Standard readers express their views on voting, an editorial by Editor Eric Black, and other letters to the editor.