

Behold Your God!

By Gary O'Neal, President, Baptist Missionary Association of America

Being chosen to serve as your president is both humbling and inspiring. I grew up in a BMA church, and for nearly three decades I've had the privilege of serving BMA churches as a pastor. I don't take lightly the trust you've placed in me, and along with First Vice-President Dustin Wisely and Second Vice-President Tony Crocker, I covet your prayers as we move forward together.

As I begin this year of service, I've been asking myself a simple question: *What does the BMA need most right now?*

We live in a moment of relentless noise. Every week seems to bring a new crisis demanding our attention or a new strategy guaranteed to reverse our trends. We can find ourselves chasing all of it — measuring our churches against metrics, tracking cultural shifts, attending the right conferences — and slowly without realizing it, we can lose sight of the One for Whom we're doing all of this.

I'm not suggesting we ignore the world around us. But I am convinced that what our association needs more than a new strategy is a fresh vision of an old truth: *our God is great, and greatly to be praised.*

Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, the prophet Isaiah looked ahead to a moment when God's people would be overwhelmed. In Babylonian captivity, they were discouraged and tempted to wonder whether God had forgotten them. And into that moment, God gave His people not a new program but a vision. Listen to how Isaiah opens his magnificent fortieth chapter:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God."

What follows is one of the most breathtaking portraits of the greatness of God found anywhere in Scripture. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand? Who has weighed the mountains? Who has counseled Him? All the nations taken together are a drop in a bucket. And yet this same God tends His flock like a shepherd, carries the lambs in His arms, and renews the strength of those who wait on Him.

That's our theme for the 2027 annual meeting— *Behold Your God.*

I want to invite you and every pastor, church leader, and messenger in our association to join us April 20-22, 2027, at the Chateau on the Lake Resort in Branson, Missouri. Come ready to lift your eyes. Come ready to be reminded that the God we serve has not changed and He has not grown weary.

The latest crisis will pass. The newest technology will be replaced. But the God Who sits enthroned above the circle of the earth remains. Knowing Him isn't one item on our ministry agenda. Knowing Him *is* the agenda.

We'll see you in Branson.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Gary O'Neal

President, Baptist Missionary Association of America