

TGC North Mississippi Chapter

Committee:

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What: A regional chapter of The Gospel Coalition in North Mississippi, hosting regular gatherings for local pastors and occasional events to equip and encourage local Christians.

Who: The primary target audience is pastors, college ministers, and those training for ministry.

Why: Our goal in hosting a regional chapter is twofold. First, we hope to increase the collaboration of ministry among the churches in North Mississippi. Second, we hope to increase the connectivity of those in ministry in North Mississippi for the purpose of equipping, exhorting, and encouraging one another in the ministry God has given us. North Mississippi does not have a currently existing structure connecting churches across denominations. Though we are more similar than different, our rural context means churches and towns often operate in isolation from one another. Further, theological and pastoral resources are more limited in our region. Our hope in hosting regular meetings would be to address these challenges.

Still, there remains immense opportunity for ministry here. The region includes the state's two largest institutions of higher learning: the University of Mississippi and Mississippi State University. With a growing interest in SEC schools, these universities and towns continue to draw thousands of out of state students, thousands of international students, and numerous professors every year. Church planting efforts are growing throughout the region, as the population and industry continue to grow. Therefore, we want to think strategically about these opportunities together.

The TGC regional chapter model allows us to pursue these goals with clarity of doctrine and mission. Those who would gather share the same conviction as TGC and as one another—the centrality of the gospel to all of life. We share the same calling as pastors and shepherds of God's people. We share the same geographic location and the accompanying challenges, opportunities, and cultural uniqueness. Lastly, we share the same goal: we want to see the people, churches, and pastors of North Mississippi trusting in our Lord Jesus Christ, worshipping him in the gathering of God's people, sharing his good news with those around us, and glorifying his name.

How: Our programming will offer two components. The first will be quarterly meetings. These meetings will be larger, longer, and more robust in their offering. We plan to bring in an outside speaker for these meetings. The core components will be fellowship, prayer, two presentation blocks for the speaker (with a break in-between each one), and lunch. Topics will vary depending on the availability of potential speakers, but we hope they will center on a practical aspect of ministry that invites discussion, innovation, and collaboration between our churches.

The second component will be more regular prayer gatherings. For the last year, Grace Bible Church has hosted the North Mississippi Pastor's Fellowship. This has been a gathering of local pastors who meet monthly to talk ministry and develop friendships with one another over lunch. We plan to maintain these more frequent gatherings, knowing it will mostly be pastors closer to Oxford. Other trainings and mini-conferences will be planned, and those opportunities will be offered by the TGC North Mississippi Chapter to area churches.

To fund the lunches and speaker fees, Grace Bible Church has set aside a portion of their budget. We will also ask other churches to consider allocating portions of their budgets to support the chapter's ministry.

When: Our first meeting will take place in September of 2025. We will meet from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Subsequent meetings will take place in December, February, and May.

Where: The most frequent host for our meetings will be either Grace Bible Church or Christ Presbyterian Church in Oxford. We will also seek to host at least one of our quarterly meetings in Starkville. Oxford is in the heart of North Mississippi with easy access (less than a two-hour drive) from all the region's towns. If churches in Jackson desire to participate, we will seek to accommodate them as well by offering a meeting in Jackson, which could one day lead to the formation of a South Mississippi Chapter.