

Daily Meeting Summary

Sunday, June 19, 2022

The Sunday worship service was held in Seminole Ballroom C and hosted by Calvary Baptist Church - Orlando. Bro. Steve Rutherford, Pastor and Bro. Brandon Rutherford, Worship Leader led the service. The sermon was presented by Bro. Darvie Fenison - *Something Happened* - Isaiah 6:1-8. The attendance was approximately 124.

Monday, June 20, 2022

Messengers arrived on Monday, June 20, 2022 at the Hilton Doubletree In Orlando, Florida in preparation to attend the 96th Annual Messenger Meeting of the American Baptist Association. The evening began at 6:30 pm with a Welcome Reception sponsored by the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock, AR. The reception began with a welcome given by Bro. Edgar Sutton and Bro. Roger Copeland. Attendees fared sumptuously on Pork and Chicken sliders, Lemonade, Coffee, and Water in the Sunshine Café. There were approximately 250 in attendance.

The Missionary Share time was held in the Universal Center A-C-D and began at 7:00 pm with over 500 in attendance, 88 missionaries and ministry leaders shared their area of service. Each missionary was given 3 minutes each and was able to share highlights of their field of labor along with any needs.

At 7:30 pm, the American Baptist Association of Theological Schools was convened in the Sun & Turf 1 & 2 room. With 17 schools in ABATS, those schools represented at the meeting shared their work and hope for the future.

Throughout Monday, messengers and guests enjoyed the attractions of downtown Orlando including the nearby Disney Resorts. Truly a wonderful time of reunion and renewed fellowship was enjoyed by all those present.

Tuesday

On Tuesday morning various ministry and committee meetings were held including the National Women's Conference, The Missionary Committee and the Baptist Sunday School Committee. All meetings were held within the confines of the Hilton Double Tree.

At 3 pm on Tuesday afternoon, the first session of the 96th Annual meeting of the American Baptist Association began as President Eric Sutton asked messengers and guests to stand. Bro. Charlie Thornton, FL, read from Psalm 133 and opened the meeting in prayer.

Pastor Steve Rutherford, FL, extended a welcome to the messengers and guests to the meeting. Brother Bob Pogue, AZ, responded to the welcome on behalf of all assembled.

Bro. Edgar Sutton, Director of Meeting Arrangements Emeritus (DMAE) presented the proposed agenda which was adopted.

Chaplain Wayne Hunter, FL, posted the colors of the American Flag and Bro. Terry Romine, AR, led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Following the pledge, Sister Caroline Simmons-Vernon (widow of Bro. Mark Simmons who died tragically last year) sang the National Anthem.

Brother Terry Romine, AR, led in prayer.

The congregational song “In My Heart there Rings a Melody” led by Bro. Dustin Wright, TX.

Bro. Jim Harris, FL, introduced President Sutton for the Annual President’s Address. Following a special of “Jesus Saves” from the Wiersma Family, President Sutton spoke. His message and the theme of the meeting was “All the world....every Creature” from Mark 16:15.

President Sutton called for any necessary business. There were two items brought that were laid on the table until a subsequent session.

1. Changes from the revision committee for the Articles of agreement and the Mission policy.
2. A resolution for the abolition of abortion brought by Calvary Missionary Baptist Church of Muldrow, OK.

Bro. Edgar Sutton presented invitations from locations for the meeting in 2025. They were:

1. Jacksonville, FL
2. Orlando, FL
3. Springfield, MO

President Sutton announced the members of the Enrollment and Finance Committee, The Tellers, Resolutions Committee, Memorial Committee.

Bro. Neal Clark, AR, made a motion that Bro. Edgar Sutton receive \$1,000 for every year of service rendered to the American Baptist Association as the Director of Meeting Arrangements. Bro. Sutton has served in this capacity for 35 years. Bro. Roger Copeland, AR, seconded the motion and it was carried by a standing vote with applause. Bro. Sutton expressed his heartfelt thanks to all.

Following announcements, Brother Brent Lane, Mission Builder (FI) read Luke 24:46-48 and closed the session in prayer.

Tuesday Evening

Bro. Shin Kamoda, Japan, opened the evening session by reading Matthew 9:35-38 and led in prayer.

President Sutton welcomed messengers and guests to the services and recognized Bro. Dustin Wright and the ABA Choir to lead in a time of worship. The songs presented included "Redeemed, Higher Ground, In Christ Alone, Higher Ground".

Dustin Wright, TX, led the congregation in prayer.

Bro. Scott Bourland, IN, came to introduce the speaker for the Annual Sermon, Bro. Micah Carter, AR.

There was a special in song by Jackson and Leah Hefflin entitled "Goodness of God".

Bro. Micah Carter, AR, brought a powerful message "Be Patient Unto the Coming of the Lord" from James 5:7-11.

President Sutton led in a time of response and invitation with the congregation standing. Several counselors came to the front of the room to welcome those who would come for prayer and encouragement.

Dustin Wright, TX led the congregation in singing, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus".

Bro. Mike Wilkes, LA, came to express the thanks of the congregation to Bro. Carter for his powerful message.

President Sutton called for Bro. Edgar Sutton to come to the front of the room to make announcements and for a special presentation. Past Presidents in attendance at the meeting also joined at the front: David Butimore, Terry Parrish, Joe Morrell, Randy Cloud, Roger Copeland, Neal Clark.

President Sutton presented Bro. Edgar Sutton a Waterford Chrystal Bowl inscribed with his name and dates of his service as DMA.

President Sutton recognized Bro. Roger Stewart to make a presentation to Bro. Sutton with a check representing the vote of the messengers for appreciation for his 35 years of service to the churches and messengers of the American Baptist Association.

President Sutton called on Bro. Tony Hansen, Ukraine, to read Scripture and lead the closing prayer. Mark 5:18-20. The congregation was standing.

Following the prayer Bro. Dustin Wright led the congregation in singing, "He Keeps Me Singing".

Wednesday Morning

The Wednesday morning session of the 2022 ABA messenger meeting began with President Eric Sutton welcoming messengers and guests and inviting them to stand for Scripture reading and prayer. Bro. Aldofo Gonzalez, Mexico read Luke 5:4-5 and led in a time of prayer.

Following the prayer, Bro. Dustin Wright led the congregation in singing, "Because He Lives". Bro. Dawson Sellers sang a beautiful special entitled "I Can't Even Walk".

The next order of business was the consideration of the Missionary Committee business. Vice President Sellers called upon Bro. Edwin Button, Chairman of the Standing Missionary Committee for the report of the Mission work.

Bro. H.H. Strickland, Assistant Clerk, presented the minutes in lieu of Bro. Jim Nixon, Clerk who was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. The committee recommended 4 new interstate missionaries on salary, 3 new foreign missionaries on designated funds, 4 new national missionaries on salary, 1 new national missionary on designation, and 1 new mission ministry. One returning foreign missionary on designated funds, David Manary, was removed from the list by a separate vote.

The following missionaries passed away during the last associational year: Abel Dimatulac, Philippines, Tim Simmons, Louisiana. Also former Standing Committee member, Bro. Victor Guzman who served from 1999-2021 was called home to be with the Lord. Our prayers are with all of these families.

In total, 154 missionaries are to be supported through the Missions Office in Texarkana in the coming year.

The following action items presented by the Missionary Committee were passed by the messengers:

1. A 3% increase in salary for all missionaries on full salary.
2. A 3% increase in salary for the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions

The standing Missionary Committee retained all members with the exception of the addition of Bro. Steve Merritt, AL who was elected in the place of Bro. Ron Ballard, AL who offered his resignation.

The following nominations were received for Annual Sermon 2023:

Justin Coburn, TX
Caleb Wood, WA
Mark Tannius, MD

The following nominations were received for Missionary Sermon 2023:

Alan Schoeff, VA
Joel Dilahaunty
Mike Jones, NC

Election of the speakers will take place on Thursday.

Chairman Button made the following presentations:

A plaque to was presented to the family of Bro. Victor Guzman.

Sister Luellen, widow of Bro. Jeff Luellen was recognized.

A plaque for Bro. Les Miller, Standing Mission Committee member who served 2011-2021.

A plaque for Bro. Larry Albritton, Standing Mission Committee member who served 2009-2021.

The following special reports were received:

Report of the Campground Trustees. Bro. Doug Curtis, Bogg Springs announced that next year would be his final year as superintendent.

Chaplaincy Commission Report. The commission has a new treasurer: Sister Julie Campbell, 32 Mason Lane, Carlisle, AR. 72024. The congregation sang, "God Bless America."

National Youth Fellowship Report.

Bro. Matthew Thompson came to read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 and closed the morning session in prayer.

Wednesday Afternoon

The Wednesday afternoon was concerned with the report of the revision committee for the Articles of Agreement and the Mission policy.

The articles of agreement changes were accepted by the messengers unanimously. The articles will be presented to the churches fellowshipping with the ABA and must receive a 2/3 majority of the number of churches which is an average of the last three associational years. The articles of agreement changes were approved by a vote of 237-0.

The Mission Policy also was passed with minor changes made by the messengers. Only a majority of the votes were required to pass these changes. The vote to approve the Mission Policy was approved by a vote of 199-0.

President Sutton closed this part of the and introduced the World Mission Focus

Bro. Brandon Rutherford led the congregation in singing, "It is Well" and accompanied on guitar

The World Mission Focus was a powerful presentation by Bro. Chase Reynolds. The title of the program was Him of Whom They Have Not Heard.

Speakers of the session were:

Rusty Teer, Thailand

Eddie Williams, Africa

Doug Wiersma, Westwood Missionary Baptist Church

Following the presentation there was a time of prayer of response and invitation.

Wednesday Evening

Bro. Terry Parrish spoke concerning Bro. Marque Black and his battle with COVID over the past year. God has blessed and brought Bro. Black through a very difficult time. Bro. Black sang and encouraged the congregation to join him in singing, "Through it All".

Bro. Earnie Hopper read Scripture (Psalm 103:1-14) and led in opening prayer.

Bro. Roger Steward, Secretary Treasurer of Missions introduced the program for the evening. Over the past year ABA missionaries reported 5,256 professions of faith, 635 baptisms, and 12 churches organized (Glory to God!).

The Mission Committee presented a powerful Mission Program that included special music, video, and a special offering. Missionaries present were invited to come to the front along with the Standing Missionary Committee for prayer.

A special offering was received for the ABA missions program.

Bro. Wally Mann, TN, introduced the speaker for the Missionary Sermon: Bro. Danny Jones, FL.

The Jones Family brought a special in song, "Should We Neglect the Cause?".

Bro. Danny Jones, FL brought the Mission Sermon, "To All the Earth" based on 1 Chronicles 16:23-36.

Following the message there was a time of response and invitation and several came forward for prayer.

Bro. Bobby Sparks, TX, expressed the gratitude of the congregation for the powerful message.

The Memorial Committee report was given to honor those pastors who have entered into their heavenly rest.

Bro. Juan Gonzalez closed the Wednesday evening service with Scripture reading and prayer.

The service concluded with congregational song of praise "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be", "When We All Get to Heaven".

Thursday Morning

The Thursday morning session was opened by Scripture reading and prayer by Bro. Brett Bell who used John 13:34-35.

Following the singing of "How Great Thou Art" led by Bro. Brandon Rutherford President Sutton led the messengers in the selection of the meeting place for 2025.

The vote of the messengers was to go to Orlando, FL in 2025. During the vote, Bro. Sutton made announcements concerning meeting arrangements here and in the coming years.

Chairman Butimore of the Baptist Sunday School Committee was called upon to present their report. Dennis Richey shared the minutes and mentioned four action items:

1. A 5% increase in salary for Bro. Dean Grigsby (he had not received an increase in over two years) and a \$7,500 performance bonus.
2. A 3% increase in salary for Bro. Mark Clements (EIC).
3. A 3% raise in salary for the writers of the literature.
4. A standing vote of appreciation for the employees of BSSC for hard work during COVID.

All action items were approved.

The reports of the Business Manager and Editor in Chief were approved. Brother Dean Grigsby and Bro. Mark Clements were reelected to their positions as Business Manager and Editor in Chief. Bro. Larry Clements came to offer special prayer for these two men and their respective offices.

The Baptist Sunday School Committee was elected. The following men were newly elected to the Baptist Sunday School Committee: Micah Carter in the place of Everett Ledbetter, Terry Parrish in the place of Jim Philamlee, Eric Sutton in the place of Jeff Krisell.

The History and Archives Committee presented their report. Bro. Paul Clark was presented with "The Historic Merit Award". The following men were newly elected to the History and Archives Committee: Russell Bailey in the place of Robert W. Cullifer.

The Enrollment and Finance Committee presented their report. Included in their report was the number of messengers registered: 467 with the total present at the meeting approximately 1,000.

The Resolutions Committee presented a Resolution of Thanks expressing gratitude for all who labored tirelessly to make this meeting possible. The resolution was approved by the messengers.

Bro. Wayne Hunter presented the report of the Law Enforcement Chaplains. Following this report Bro. Hunter, FL, made a motion to have the moderator appoint a 5-member committee who will devise a security plan for future meetings of the American Baptist Association. The motion carried and the following men were appointed: Wayne Hunter, Terry Simmons, Scott Pevehouse, Hoyt Chastain, Darrell Sheely.

The Resolution on the Abolition of Abortion was removed from the table and considered by the messengers. The Resolution was approved.

Donovan Jarvis, AR, presented the MBSF report.

Damien Austin, Ukraine, read Psalm 67 and closed the morning session in prayer.

Thursday Afternoon

The meeting reconvened with the singing of “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms” and Scripture reading (Revelation 22:13) and prayer by Kevin Hutchenson, Romania.

The following reports were received and approved:

National Women’s Conference

Good Fight Ladies Conference

Choral Music Workshop

Speakers were elected for the 2023 Session

Annual Sermon

Caleb Wood

Justin Coburn, Alternate

Missionary Sermon

Mike Jones

Alan Schoef, Alternate

The following officers were elected:

President – Eric Sutton

Vice Presidents: Todd Dornan, Micah Carter, Bryan Sellers

Clerks: Mike Yoho, Nathan Luellen

Director of Meeting Arrangements: Neal Sutton

Parliamentarian: David Butimore

Assistant Parliamentarian: Terry Parrish

Music Directors: Brad Roundtree, David Weiserma, Steven Ridings

A motion carried to give all paid officers a 3% raise.

The Newly Elected Standing Mission Committee report was given by Bro. H.H. Strickland, FL.

The newly elected officers each gave words of thanks to the messengers for the opportunity to serve.

Closing Scripture (John 14:1-6) and prayer was given by Bro. Walt Emry, Vanuatu.

The hymn “Send the Light” closed the 96th annual session of the American Baptist Association.