

## ABA Meeting Daily Wrap-Ups

Sunday – June 16, 2024

Worship led by Calvary Baptist Church, Magnolia, AR was held in the Wyndham Ambassador Ballroom. The service was well attended with approximately 100 present. Bro. Micah Carter, pastor of Calvary, welcomed everyone to the service. Brethren Jackson Heflin (Calvary) and Andrew Murphy (Northern Hills Texarkana) led the congregation in 3 hymns of praise. Sister Kinley Coburn (Austin Chapel Dekalb, TX) brought a special in song entitled “It Matters to The Master.” Bro. Justin Coburn (Austin Chapel) accompanied her on the piano. Bro. Micah Carter brought the morning message entitled, “When Jesus Came By” from Luke 7:7-11. An invitational hymn followed the message and Bro. Mike Maxwell (Hillcrest, Acworth, GA) closed in prayer.

Monday – June 17, 2024. At 6:30 pm a welcome reception hosted by the Missionary Baptist Seminary in Little Rock, AR. Approximately 600 messengers and guests were welcomed to the Wyndham Grand Ballroom and enjoyed a time of fellowship as well as some light refreshment.

Monday – June 17, 2024. At 7:00 pm the Missionary Share Time was held in the President Abraham Lincoln Ballroom. There were approximately 600 present as missionaries from 17 countries and 31 states shared their field of labor and ministry. 80 missionaries/ministries shared what God is doing in their field of labor and their greatest needs. Everyone who was in attendance was blessed beyond words.

Monday – June 17, 2024. The ABA Schools Meeting was held in the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel Freeport Room. Representatives from Missionary Baptist Schools and Institutes shared their ministry needs and blessings.

Tuesday – June 18, 2024 – 8:30 am. The Baptist Sunday School Committee met in the Rendezvous Room of the Wyndham Hotel. The committee welcomed many guests and invited them to sit in counsel. Following a devotion given by Bro. John Tartar, MS, the committee heard from the Chief Executive Officer, Bro. James Crain and the Editor in Chief, Bro. Mark Clements. Bro. Crain reported on the health of the business which included steadily increasing sales numbers and the reduction of expenses. Several projects are to be considered around the building in Texarkana including the purchase of a new air conditioning unit in the warehouse, a new 45” paper cutter, and the renewal of bathrooms and Store Front. The committee recommends a 3% raise in literature prices to offset rising costs of materials, insurance and other expenses. There is also a recommendation for the reallocation of designated funds to more accurately meet upcoming projects and needs.

Other meetings on Tuesday morning were the Past Presidents Breakfast, Interstate Mission Development Breakfast, Choral music workshop, National History and Archives Committee, MBSF Council Workshop, ABA Camp Workshop, National Women’s

Conference, National Youth Meeting, ABA Officer's Luncheon, and The Good Fight Ministers' Wives Conference.

Also meeting on Tuesday at 10 am was the Missionary Committee in the Bank of Springfield City Center. The Standing Committee along with one messenger from each church represented met to consider the report of the Secretary – Treasurer of Missions, Bro. Justin Coburn and the recommendations of the Standing Missionary Committee. Bro. Coburn shared his heart about the work of the missionaries around the world to reap the harvest that is ready for the Lord. In the past year, ABA recommended missionaries reported 4,895 professions of faith and 579 baptisms along with two churches organizing. There are 15 newly recommended missionaries and 138 re-recommended missionaries for a total of 153. Bro. Coburn reported that the 2023 Thanksgiving offering totaled over \$346,000. Annual receipts were down about \$100,000 from last year but due to a couple of large offerings from the sale of church properties designated to the Missions Fund there was a surplus of over \$47,000.

Tuesday Afternoon – June 18, 2024. At 3 pm, President Sellers called the 98<sup>th</sup> Annual Messenger Assembly of the American Baptist Association to order following the singing of “Blessed Be The Name” led by Bro. Brad Rountree and the ABA Worship Team. Bro. Ronald Howell, IL, opened the meeting with reading of Scripture and prayer. The messengers were welcomed to Springfield by a member of the Visitors Bureau and Bro. Terry Parrish, AR, expressed the thanks of the messengers for the warm welcome. Chaplain Wayne Hunter, FL, posted the American Flag, and Chaplain Terry Romine, TN, led in the Pledge of Allegiance and followed by the singing of the national anthem. There were several beautiful hymns of worship followed by special music by Bro. Dawson Sellers, AR, who sang “Give Me Jesus” just before President Sellers presented the Keynote Address entitled “It’s All About Jesus”. Director of Meeting Arrangements, Bro. Neal Sutton presented the invitations for the 2027 meeting which included Erie, PA, Grand Rapids, MI, and Lexington, KY. President Sellers presented Bro. Neal Sutton a plaque in honor/memory of Bro. Edgar Sutton for his many years of faithful labor as our Director Of Meeting Arrangements. The presentation was greeted with a rising gesture of appreciation of the messengers. The afternoon session was closed with Scripture reading and prayer offered by Bro. Jason Rumph, IN.

Tuesday Evening – 7:00 pm. The session was opened by Scripture reading and prayer offered by Bro. Chuck Kennedy, IN, followed by the singing of “Forever Jesus” led by Bro. Brad Rountree, the ABA Worship Team, and the ABA Choir. A time of worship was enjoyed in the singing of “Living Hope” and “I Speak Jesus” which featured Bro. Doug Curtis, AR, and Bro. Brad Rountree, TX. Bro. Josh Luellen introduced the speaker for the Annual Sermon, Bro. Nathan Luellen. Sister Krystal Luellen shared the song “How Beautiful”. Bro. Nathan Luellen shared a powerful message “The Statement of a Servant” based on Exodus 21:1-6. Following the message a time of extended invitation was offered with the Vice Presidents and their wives standing in front to receive those who would come forward for prayer and encouragement. There were many who prayed at the altar during the time of invitation.

Following the invitation, Bro. James Crain, AR, shared the thanks of the congregation for the message. Bro. Mark Clements, Editor in Chief shared a video that introduced the VBS 2025. The evening was closed by Scripture Reading and Prayer offered by Bro. Kenny Roberson, IN and a song of celebration “Forever Jesus (chorus)” led by Bro. Rountree, the ABA Worship Team and the ABA Choir. It was estimated that there were 1,000 in attendance for this session. The messengers were dismissed to fellowship and enjoy the exhibits.

Wednesday – June 19, 2024 – Morning Session – The morning session opened with reading of Scripture (Revelation 19:11-16) and prayer offered by Bro. Brian Crocker, IN. The ABA Worship team led the congregation in singing a collection of hymns called “Smoky Mountain Gospel Medley” and then special music was presented “Thank you Jesus for the Blood” featuring Sister Jenny Clements. The Missionary portion of the business was considered including the report of the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions, Bro. Justin Coburn and the report of the Missionary Committee. Two line items were considered from the report: a raise of 3.06% for the full salaried Interstate and Foreign Missionaries, and a raise of 3.06 % for the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions. Both items were approved. Bro. Jim Nixon, TX, nominated Bro. Russell Bailey, CA to take his place on the committee and Bro. Bailey was nominated and elected. There were no other changes in the membership of the Standing Missionary Committee. Bro. Coburn was reelected to the position of Secretary-Treasurer of Missions. Bro. Scott Bourland, IN, led in a time of prayer for the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions, the Missionaries, and for the work of Missions. Nominations were received for the Annual Sermon and for the Missionary Sermon, the vote will be taken on Thursday morning. Vice President Dornan presided over the report of the Campground Trustees. Following the report and discussion, the Campground Trustees were all reelected to serve another year. The Chaplaincy Commission report was presented by Bro. Terry Romine. Bro. Herbert Kitchens asked to be replaced on the Commission and Bro. Wayne Hunter was elected to take his place. During the report, a special in song was offered by the ABA Worship Team “The Dream Goes On/America the Beautiful” featuring Bro. David Wiersema, AL. Following this report, the report of the National Youth Fellowship was received and approved. The morning session concluded with Scripture reading (Philippians 2:5-11) and prayer led by Bro. Jason Hebert, LA.

After the morning session, the Preachers, Deacons and wives over 55 luncheon was held in the Abraham Lincoln Hotel with good attendance, delicious food, and a great time of fellowship. It was noted that this event was a favorite of Bro. Edgar Sutton and he was remembered by a sharing of personal stories from some of the attendees. We look forward to more times of fellowship for this group in the years to come.

Wednesday – June 19, 2024 – Afternoon Session – The afternoon session featured the World Mission Focus presentation followed by the Bogard Press Bible Challenge and VBS 2025 introduction. Bro. Chase Reynolds, AR, introduced The World Mission Focus program that featured Bro. Joe Morell, AR, speaking about the need for more fields for the work of missions followed by Bro. Scott Bourland, IN, speaking about the need for more laborers to go to the fields. At the end of the messages, Bro. Reynolds called for a time of prayer for missions and missionaries. Many of those assembled came to the front of the auditorium to participate in this special prayer for the fields that are white unto harvest. The second half of the Wednesday afternoon session was presented by Bogard Press. Editor in Chief, Bro. Mark Clements spoke about Bible Challenge and introduced three young people who have participated in Bible Challenge during the past year and have won various competitions that brought them to the final national event. The 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> grade group featured only one student, Sophia Tabler, Winter Haven, FL. Sophia demonstrated her

Bible Challenge skills by an exhibition event. The 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade group featured two competitors: Tiffany Jones, Winter Haven, FL and Mallory Hayes, Corinth, MS. These two students impressed all onlookers with their Bible Challenge skills and engaged in a very close competition. It was a very informative demonstration on the Bible Challenge Program and each participant equally impressive. Following Bible Challenge, Bro. Mark Clements presented an introduction to the 2025 VBS curriculum entitled, “Timeless” including new music written by Bro. Willie Davenport, FL. Following this presentation, Bro. Roger Copeland, AR, closed the afternoon session in prayer.

Wednesday – June 19, 2024 – Evening Session. The Wednesday Evening Session is devoted to Missions and Missionaries. The session began with Bro. Brad Rountree and the ABA Worship Team and the ABA Choir leading the congregation in singing “Wondrous Cross Medley” followed by Bro. Wayne Stringer, Philippine Mission Development, reading Scripture (Lamentations 3:22-24) and voicing a prayer. Bro. David Wiersema, AL, directed the singing of special music “Jesus Saves – Jesus”. The Mission Committee presented their program which featured a video that included the names of Missionaries present, their field of labor, and sending church. The missionaries crossed the front of the auditorium behind the flag of the country of their field of labor. Bro. Button, Chairman, invited the messengers to come to the front to pray over the assembled missionaries and their families. Following the program a special missions offering was received (\$9,640) which will be shared among all the ABA supported missionaries. Following the offering, Bro. Paul Armstrong, AL, introduced the speaker for the Mission Sermon, Bro. Brent Lane, KY. Following his introduction special music was offered by Sister Aubree Lane, KY, entitled “Abandoned”. Bro. Lane brought a powerful message “Coach Me Up”. His text was Hebrews 12:1-2. At the end of the message President Sellers led in a time of invitation and response as the ABA Worship Team and the ABA Choir led the congregation in singing “Hymn of Heaven”. Bro. Mike Maxwell, GA, expressed the appreciation of the congregation to Bro. Lane for his timely message. Bro. Jay Gibson, TX, Chairman, presented the Memorial Committee report which included a video of the men who have passed to their heavenly home during the past year. Following the video, Bro. Russel Bailey, CA, led in a time of prayer. The motion to adopt the report of the Memorial Committee carried with a voice vote of heartfelt approval. The end of the evening service featured Scripture reading (Matthew 3:16) and prayer offered by Bro. Bruce Betts, MS, followed by a song of celebration “Forever Jesus (chorus)”. Attendance for the evening service was estimated to be 1,000.

Thursday – June 20, 2024 – Wrap up

The Thursday morning session began with the Mattingly Family sharing a beautiful special in song followed by Bro. Kevin Hutcheson, LA, reading Scripture (Revelation 22:21-22) and leading in prayer. The ABA Worship Team directed by Bro. Steven Ridings led the congregation in singing “What a Savior, What a Friend”. President Sellers led the vote for the meeting place in 2027 and the messengers selected Erie, PA. Bro. Caleb Wood came to moderate the session and presided over the Baptist Sunday School Committee business which included the report of the CEO, Bro. James Crain and the Editor in Chief, Bro. Mark Clements. Two line items were included in the CEO report: a 3 % raise in literature prices to cover rising expenses and a reallocation of Designated Funds Allocation in order to better meet expected future needs. The Editor In Chief’s report included VBS plans in future years, a new digital platform for downloading literature quarterlies (KOBO) and the pending research on combining Bible Basics and Splat into a new children’s curriculum. This will be a long term project with no projected time line as yet. Work on a new Teen Bible Study Guide is underway which will utilize the Through-the-Bible format to sync with the Adult literature. Dr. Robbie Horn, writer of the Young Adult Quarterly, was honored as he is retiring from writing this curriculum after 28 years. The family of Dr. Larry Clements was also present and was presented a plaque that honored Bro. Clements for his many years of service to the churches of the American Baptist Association as a writer, Clerk, Editor in Chief and friend to many. His presence and service is very much missed as the Lord called him home to glory last year. Memorial pages were requested by the Messengers for Bro. Clements and Bro. Edgar Sutton to be printed in the 2024 Yearbook. Bro. James Crain and Bro. Mark Clements were both reelected to their respective positions. Special prayer was offered for the CEO and the EIC by Bro. Dennis Richey, SC. The Baptist Sunday School Committee was elected with one change in membership as Bro. David Butimore announced he was stepping down and nominated in his place Bro. Tim Chambers, CA. Following the BSSC business the History and Archives Committee gave their report. Chairman Michael Thompson spoke specifically about the plans for the 100<sup>th</sup> Session of the American Baptist Association in 2026 in Hot Springs, AR. All members of the History and Archives Committee were reelected for the next associational year. The following reports were also given: Enrollment and Finance, Resolutions Committee, Law Enforcement Chaplains, Security Committee, MBSF, National Women’s Conference, Good Fight Ladies’ Conference, Choral Music Workshop. A motion was made to suspend the agenda in order to continue with the business and complete the meeting in a more timely fashion. The motion required a 2/3 majority but passed with no opposition. The messengers then elected the speakers for the 2025 session of the American Baptist Association which will be held in Springfield, MO. Bro. Andrew McClung, CA was elected to bring the Annual Sermon and Bro. Bobby Sparks will be the alternate. Bro. Justin Coburn was elected to bring the Mission Sermon with Bro. Gediminas Kapustavicius, Lithuania being the alternate. The following men were elected to serve as officers of the ABA in the coming year:

President – Bryan Sellers

Vice Presidents – Micah Carter, Todd Dornan, Caleb Wood

Recording Secretaries – Nathan Luellen, Mike Yoho

Parliamentarian – David Butimore  
Assistant Parliamentarian – Terry Parrish  
Music Directors – Brad Rountree, David Wiersema, Jackson Hefin  
Director of Meeting Arrangements – Neal Sutton

The Recording Secretaries and the Director of Meeting Arrangements received a 3.5% raise by the vote of the messengers. The newly elected Baptist Sunday School Committee and the Newly Elected Standing Mission Committee gave their reports followed by a time for the newly elected officers to express their thanks to the messengers for the privilege of serving. Brother John David Watson, AR, read Scripture (Romans 16:25-27) and led the closing prayer for the 2024 meeting. A closing song was led by the ABA Worship Team “For All That You Have Done for Us”. The 2024 Meeting of the American Baptist Association was concluded. A post ABA meeting dinner was held at 6 pm in the Wyndham Hotel. Approximately 30 guests enjoyed a wonderful meal, great fellowship with love and laughter. It was noted that this gathering was so enjoyed by Bro. Edgar Sutton and those gathered shared personal remembrances of Bro. Eddie from his years of service to the churches of the American Baptist Association. It is hoped that this tradition will continue