

## 2021 ABA MESSENGER MEETING SUMMARY

### MONDAY, JUNE 21, 2021

Messengers arrived on Monday, June 21, 2021, at the Marriott and Holiday Inn Hotels in preparations to attend the 95<sup>th</sup> Annual Messenger Meeting of the American Baptist Association. The evening began with a Welcome Reception at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center in the Elk River Atrium sponsored by Missionary Baptist Seminary of Little Rock, Arkansas. Approximately 400 were served the evening hors d'oeuvres along with beverages.

The Missionary Share Time started in the theatre of the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center at 7:00 p.m. with over 550 in attendance, 75 missionaries and ministry leaders shared their burdens. Given two minutes each, every person was able to share the highlights of their field of labor along with their needs.

At 7:30 p.m., the ABA Schools meeting convened. With an attendance of twenty-six several seminaries sponsored by churches fellowshipping the American Baptist Association were represented. Each school was offered an opportunity to report on their work. Also, Bro. John Mix introduced a new seminary in Kingstowne, Virginia which will be known as Kingstowne Baptist Bible Institute with enrollment starting in the fall of 2021.

Throughout Monday, messengers enjoyed the downtown atmosphere and nearby restaurants. A popular attraction for food and shopping was the Charleston Town Center Mall. Renewed fellowship was enjoyed by all the attendees.

### TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2021

The 95<sup>th</sup> Annual Messenger Meeting of the churches of the American Baptist Association convened Tuesday afternoon, June 22, 2021, in the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center in Charleston, West Virginia. Following an instrumental prelude offered by Sis. Tara Johnson of Arkansas, Bro. Daniel Clark of Arkansas offered a special titled, "We Shall See Jesus." President Terry Parrish called Bro. Davis Harris of Arkansas to the podium for Scripture reading and prayer. Following the prayer, the messengers and guests were seated, and the meeting was called to order.

Bro. Zack Stringer, pastor of First Baptist Church of Inwood, West Virginia offered a warm welcome with Bro. Mark Clements of Texas giving the response on behalf of the messenger body. The messengers adopted the proposed agenda, which then called for the posting of the colors from the Chaplaincy Commission. Once the American flag was posted, Chaplain Herbert Kitchens led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Bro. Dustin Wright led the congregation in singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" and Bro. Kitchens led in prayer.

Bro. Dustin Wright led the congregation in singing the hymn, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." Vice President Eric Sutton called Bro. Dennis Richey of South Carolina to introduce Bro. Terry Parrish for the President's Address. Bro. Marque Black shared a song titled, "Find Us Faithful." Bro. Parrish delivered his President's Address on how "Our Mission Is Soul Fishin'."

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Bro. Parrish recognized Bro. Edgar Sutton, Director of Meeting Arrangements, for the presentation of the invitation for 2024. Bro. Sutton presented Springfield, Missouri as the sole invitation to be considered by the messenger body.

Bro. Parrish appointed the following committees: Enrollment and Finance, Resolution, Memorials, and Tellers. After closing announcements, Bro. Dennis Ingle of Arkansas led the congregation in Scripture reading and prayer and the afternoon session was dismissed.

At 7:00 p.m., the messengers gathered once again for the evening session. Bro. Tyler Freeman of Arkansas opened the assembly with Scripture and prayer followed by special music by the Mattingly Family. Bro. Marque Black led the congregation in singing and President Parrish introduced the speaker for the annual message. After special music, Bro. Terry Romine of Tennessee delivered a message titled, "Called Until..." from Isaiah 6:1-12. Bro. Parrish opened an invitation for a response to the message from the audience.

Bro. Parrish then opened the floor for nominations for Editor-in-Chief with Bro. Mark Clements of Texas being nominated. Bro. Muncy Harris of Arkansas closed the session with Scripture reading and prayer.

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021

The messengers of the churches of the American Baptist Association gathered on Wednesday morning, June 23, 2021, at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center to consider the recommendations of missionaries and mission helpers and ministers for the next associational year. Bro. Bob Pogue of Arizona opened the assembly with Scripture reading and prayer. Bro. Dustin Wright of Texas led the congregation in singing "Nothing But the Blood" followed by a special music from Brittany Wright of Texas.

Vice-Moderator Bro. Lynn Raburn from Arkansas recognized Missionary Committee Chairman Bro. Ed Button of Florida to begin the business of the mission committee. Bro. Roger Stewart brought an annual report as the Secretary-Treasurer of Missions. Bro. Stewart reported 3,484 professions of faith from the missionaries and greater than \$3.1 million being given through the office for the past year. Following the Missionary Committee report read by Bro. Jim Nixon of Texas, 160 missionaries and mission helpers and ministers were approved by the messengers for the upcoming year.

The messengers reelected Bro. Roger Stewart as Secretary-Treasurer of Missions. Bro. Raburn called for Bro. Stewart to come forward and prayer was offered by Bro. Ed Button for Bro. Stewart the missionaries sent by the churches of the American Baptist Association, the newly elected Standing Missionary Committee, Sisters Gena Stewart, and Karen Murphy. After adopting the report of the Mission Committee, the Standing Missionary Committee was elected by the messengers.

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President Parrish opened the floor for nominations for the speakers for the annual sermon and missionary sermon for 2022. These nominations will be considered for a vote Thursday morning.

Vice President Eric Sutton called for the reports of the Camp Trustees, the Chaplaincy Committee, and the National Youth Fellowship. President Parrish called for miscellaneous business. Following announcements, Bro. Jerry Baker of New Mexico closed with Scripture reading and prayer.

The messengers reconvened following lunch with a congregational hymn led by Bro. Marque Black. The messengers and guests enjoyed the afternoon session of special seminars. Bro. Craig Duncan and Bro. Jonathan Johnson, both of Arkansas, spoke concerning Reaching Multiple Generations. Following a break, the afternoon session reconvened with World Mission Focus led by Chase Reynolds. An invitation was offered at the close of the session.

Following a break for supper, the messengers gathered for the Wednesday evening service focusing on Missions. Opening with special music and congregational hymns, President Terry Parrish introduced Bro. Roger Stewart for the Mission Program. Bro. Stewart presented missionaries representing regions from all over the world. Once they entered, the messengers circled the missionaries and their families and prayed for them. A mission offering was collected totaling \$8,142.83.

Bro. Dan Mendoza of Texas introduced Bro. John Strader of Texas prior to preaching the mission message. Bro. Strader preached on Jesus' Method of Church Planting from Matthew 4:12-25. An invitation hymn of "I Surrender All" was sung as the audience responded to the sermon. Bro. Randy Cloud of Arkansas extended the right hand of appreciation on behalf of the messengers.

### **THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021**

The messengers of the churches of the American Baptist Association returned to the Charleston Coliseum and Civic Center on Thursday, June 25, 2021, to begin deliberations at 9:15 a.m. President Terry Parrish invited Bro. Caleb Wood of Washington to open the assembly with Scripture reading and prayer. A congregational hymn of "Victory in Jesus" was led by Bro. Marque Black

President Parrish called for a vote to select the meeting place for 2024 and Springfield, Missouri was unanimously selected.

Vice President Mark Clements moderated the Baptist Sunday School Committee portion of the morning's business. Reports were given by Business Manager Dean Grigsby and outgoing Editor-in-Chief Kyle Elkins. A rising vote of appreciation with applause was given to Bro. Elkins for his many years of service to the BSSC. Bro. Grigsby was reelected to serve as Business Manager and Bro. Mark Clements of Texas was elected to serve as the new Editor-in-Chief. One

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new committee member was elected along with quarterly writers. A special recognition was given to the family of the late BSSC member Bro. David Keeling.

The motion previously laid on the table concerning an additional doctrinal statement was removed for consideration. Following an amendment and discussion, the new doctrinal statement was added. “23.) We believe God designates each individual their gender. God ordained two genders, male and female. Mankind does not possess the authority to identify themselves differently than their biological sex assigned by God, and any attempt to alter one’s gender is sin. (Genesis 1:27; 5:2; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6; Job 40:8; Jeremiah 13:23)”

A motion was made to set aside the adopted agenda to vote on speakers for 2022. Bro. Micah Carter of Arkansas was elected to deliver the annual sermon with Bro. John Mix of Virginia as the alternate. Bro. Danny Jones of Florida was elected to deliver the mission message with Bro. Rusty Teer of Thailand serving as the alternate.

After a break for lunch, the messengers resumed business with Bro. Mike Yoho of Maryland reading Scripture and opening in prayer. The new officers elected for the upcoming associational year are as follows: PRESIDENT: Eric Sutton; VICE PRESIDENTS: Bryan Sellers, Lynn Raburn, and Todd Dornan; RECORDING SECRETARIES: Mike Yoho and Nathan Luellen; PARLIAMENTARIAN: David Butimore; ASSISTANT PARLIAMENTARIAN: Terry Parrish; MUSIC DIRECTORS: Mark Simmons, Brandon Rutherford, and Dustin Wright; DIRECTOR OF MEETING ARRANGEMENTS: Bro. Neal Sutton. A motion and second was made to elect Bro. Edgar Sutton as Director of Meeting Arrangements Emeritus.

President Parrish called newly elected President Eric Sutton to the podium for the passing of the gavel. All new and reelected officers expressed their appreciation for the privilege to serve the churches of the American Baptist Association. President Sutton called for Bro. Nathan Luellen of Louisiana to close the assembly with Scripture reading and prayer. The meeting ended with a congregational hymn of “Amazing Grace.”