

Baptist World Alliance World Congress Report

Pastor for Missions - Jesse McCain

On July 4 a team of 5 from our church set out towards Brisbane, Australia to join over 3,000 Baptist from over 130 countries for the Baptist World Alliance 23rd World Congress. Brisbane is a beautiful city and Queensland Baptist generously helped host the World Congress. Our team filled up free time quickly, taking in the beauty of Brisbane and trying to see all of Australia that we could see. Koalas and Kangaroos were gently touched. Rainforests were experienced, and Humpback Whales were witnessed in migration. However, the true value of this trip lies with our time among global Baptists. Baptist World Alliance (BWA) was established in 1905 and continues to gather Baptist across the globe for common work in the gospel. Every 5 years they gather global Baptist together for worship, discipleship, and continued collaboration around the work God is doing among Baptist Churches. FBCA's team gathered with global Baptists and presented for other Baptists that they might consider God's work here at FBCA. Below I'll touch base on the Summits and the World Congress.

Next Gen Summit and Women's Summit

All Members of the team were able to attend small gatherings in preparation for the World Congress. Reed and I attended the Next Gen Summit focused on engaging young Baptists in their contribution and calling within Baptist Churches and the Baptist World Alliance. Those attending were able to connect with other global Baptists, hear from Baptist leaders including Kay Warren and Charlie Dates, and reflect on what God is currently doing in their lives together at tables. FBCA was represented among the presenters as Next Gen Staff asked me to present on calling and spiritual formation. I was grateful to share my story and how the local church (FBCA) has walked with me through both spiritual formation and calling!

Jean Clark, Gladis Tavares, and Curice Paulus attended the Women's Summit as they prepared for the World Congress. Their time was similarly structured as they joined global Baptist women in worship, teaching, and opportunities to connect/hear about God's work elsewhere. One team member commented that their favorite part of the entire trip was "Meeting Global Baptist. Everybody has the same need for Jesus. We are one of many. We're not better but different." How beautiful to see the different cultures and backgrounds of global Baptists coming together around the good news of Jesus as many parts of one body. We are one of many, indeed!

World Congress

After a day to break and enjoy beautiful weather in the Maiala National Park including multiple sightings of Red Pademelons which are miniature Rainforest Kangaroos. The Congress began the evening of July 9. Dr. Elijah Brown (BWA Executive Director) followed an opening ceremony with processional banners representing countries present by casting vision for the BWA as it looks towards 2033. 2033 represents much for believers as we consider the 2,000 year anniversary of Christ's defeat of sin and death, providing a way for new life in him. Our own church has looked to this year as Pastor Robert has cast vision for our church with 2033 in mind back in 2023. We're in good company as we look to God's work within his church in the next 5 years. Dr. Brown called for Baptists to come together and maximize our impact together through 5 examples found within the early church in Acts 2. You can find them listed here.

- **The Witness Path: BWA's goal for 450 Million shared testimonies.**
- **The Bible Path: BWA's goal for 1,159 languages engaged through prayer and Bible Translation.**
- **Care Path: BWA's goal for 1 Billion Intentional Acts of Service.**
- **Freedom and Justice Path: BWA's goal 1 Million signatures on the Covenant of Religious Freedom**
- **Neighbor Path: BWA's goal of 500,000 Neighborhood lay chaplains**

All of these are possible of accomplishing together if we do our part over the next 5 years. Dr. Brown was quick to point to our example here at FBCA as he lifted up Pray and Go as an example of Baptists already living out the good news of the gospel. Some of their prompts included: learn your neighbors names, pray for them by name, and follow the spirit as opportunities present themselves. BWA and FBCA are already joining each other in meaningful work through Pray and Go/the Neighbor Path and our work with Wycliffe Bible Translators/the Bible Path. How can you contribute to some of God's work among Baptist over the next 5 years?

The Congress presented opportunities for worship, teaching, Bible studies, topic breakouts, and other program elements. All of these became beautiful opportunities to be with the global Baptist family as we learned from each other and shared with each other. BWA also asked me to share about the work our church has done with Pray and Go in a Prayer Walking Breakout. Here again, FBCA has been asked to contribute on the World Congress that other Baptists might consider what God is doing among us here at FBCA.

BWA is one of FBCA's denominational partners. Not only are we financially supporting evangelism and discipleship work around the world, we are coming together with other Baptists to equip believers for their contribution and work in his kingdom. BWA is helping equip our people for what God is doing here in Alexandria. Additionally, FBCA is equipping other Baptists with BWA for the work God is doing around the world. The time for us to support each other in the work of Jesus through his church is now. Consider with me how you might join BWA and our church in making great the name of Jesus and his work through his church.

I'm here and available if you want to talk more. Steady on.

With Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jesse

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