



**North American Baptist Fellowship
General Secretary's Report
Oct 31, 2023**

Jeremy Bell, General Secretary

When we met last in Falls Church, VA in 2022, we approved some significant transitions in our leadership. Please follow this link to view the list of current leadership within the NABF:

<https://nabfellowship.org/leadership/>.

This year we have been grateful to have the Rev. Dr. Samuel Tolbert continue as a member of the NABF Executive as Past President. Rev. Emmett Dunn, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of Lott Carey has become NABF President. Our well-beloved and sometimes-long-suffering Treasurer of many years Robert Cochran has retained his commitment to grant-writing on the Executive, but has yielded the Treasurer position to Rev. Dr. TaNikka Sheppard. Rev. Dr. Sheppard has also joined us in the new role of Assistant General Secretary. Two new roles of Vice Presidents were also elected. We are grateful to both Dr. Craig Christina of the Texas Baptists and Dr. Trisha Miller Manarin of DCBC to hold these roles. We are thankful for the new direction and leadership that this season affords.

As part of our growth and transition of roles within the NABF Executive, we are matching portfolios to each of our Executive Officers. This is a work in progress, with news to come in the months ahead.

Introduction of New Denominational Leadership

NABF is a family of 22 denominations and groups that serve their communities through 55,000 churches and 19.5 million congregants throughout the United States and Canada. In the last year or so, several of our member denominations have been in transition into new seasons of leadership.

In 2022, Raphaël Anzenberger joined as General Secretary of the French Baptist Union ([Union D'Églises Baptistes Francophones Du Canada](#)), moving to Canada from France for the role. Dr. Anzenberger's strongest passion is evangelism. He sees his role to lead the Union to living out a missional ecclesiology in the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick where the Union is situated. We are thrilled to have him join us in person at these meetings.

[Rev. Dr. Wayne Faison](#) is the new Executive Director of the [Baptist General Association of Virginia](#). Rev. Dr. Faison has served in several leadership positions on BGAV's staff and has 13 years of pastoral experience, including his current role as Senior Pastor of East End Baptist Church in Suffolk, VA. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree in Black Church Leadership from the School of Theology, a Master of Divinity degree in Missions, Evangelism, and Church Growth from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. We were grateful to have interviewed Dr. Faison at our BWA Regional Meeting in Norway this past July.

In the [Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec](#), [Rev. Leanne Friesen](#) has joined as the new Executive Minister. Rev. Friesen is a lead pastor of 18+ years and a well respected preacher, writer and speaker in a broad variety of contexts, having engaged groups at events across the country. Rev. Friesen brings "a deep and vibrant love for Christ, visionary leadership, innovation, a strong theological foundation, and commitment to [] Baptist identity." She received her MDiv from McMaster Divinity College.

Elsewhere in Canada, the [Canadian Baptists of Atlantic Canada](#) have appointed Rev. [Renée MacVicar](#) as their next Executive Minister. Rev. MacVicar has served for decades in local churches as well as in leadership roles within the CBAC and [Canadian Baptist Ministries](#). She is described as “visionary; wise; relational; an effective communicator; someone who can inspire confidence; a person who is always learning; someone who genuinely desires to ‘act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with God’.” She earned her MDiv at Acadia Divinity College as well as a Master of Arts in Theology degree.

[Rev. Dr. Julio Guarneri](#) was elected to serve as the next executive director of the [Baptist General Convention of Texas](#) (BGCT) this past September. As he spoke in appreciation of the nomination, Rev. Guarneri encouraged Texas Baptists to continue being mission-driven, not issue-driven, and expressed the great need for the Convention to continue working hard to reach the growing population. Guarneri has a long history of service within BGCT leadership, and has served as a faithful Baptist pastor for over 27 years. He has a Master of Arts in Religious Education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in leadership studies from Dallas Baptist University. We note with gratitude the service of Craig Christina as BGCT’s interim executive director until Dr. Guarneri takes office in December.

For just over one year, the [Rev. John K. Jenkins](#) has held the position of President of [Converge](#), the first African American to lead the 170-year-old organization. Pastor Jenkins has traveled the world preaching and teaching about the love of Jesus Christ. Pastoring First Baptist since 1989, he remains steadfast in his quest to “develop dynamic disciples.” Pastor Jenkins has a Master of Arts Degree in Ministry Leadership from Wheaton College and two honorary Doctorates of Divinity, from Denver Seminary and from the Southern California School of Ministry.

The Norway Regional Meetings (July 5)

The BWA afforded each of the regions a time to meet this past July 5th at the BWA gathering in Norway. It was an encouraging time, with a great number of NABF leaders and congregants present. Many were encouraged by Emmett Dunn’s interview of Wayne Faison, and gleaned much wisdom from TaNikka Sheppard’s interview with Samuel Tolbert, Jennifer Lau and Paul Baxley on the topic of leadership.

NABF Annual Meeting: October 30-31st

We are excited to be together for this year’s NABF Annual Meeting in the Washington DC area. We thank God for how the Rev. Katie Choy-Wong shared and led us on the topic of Building Bridges, touching on the challenging environment which we are presently in.

Financial Contributions

Apart from a \$10k anchor donation from the Texas Baptists and denominations who give throughout the year, the NABF is experiencing a significant lag in personal and organizational contributions. We are at a crucial crossroads of effective sustainability. We will continue to address this reality.

We are grateful to be with so many of you in person and online.

Warmly,
In Christ,



Rev. Jeremy Bell
General Secretary
On behalf of the NABF Administrative Executive

North American Baptist Fellowship General Secretary’s Office