

PROCEEDINGS OF THE EASTERN DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

Thursday Morning, October 3, 2002

The Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists convened in its 150th annual session with Blackwater Lick Church, Blackwater, Virginia.

Blackwater Lick Primitive Baptist Church (Big Door) is the oldest church in Blackwater. It was organized on Saturday, September 27, 1847 as an arm of Blackwater, Tennessee Primitive Baptist Church. The old salt works located nearby gave it the name Lick. According to the writings of the late Elder Hampton Osborne, a local historian, There was a large distillery where whiskey and brandy were manufactured and sold. It was told that the good people of the area made it so hot for the distiller that he pulled out for more peaceful precincts. The old still house was then used as the first church. The following year, 1848, the Eastern District Association of Primitive Baptists met with Blackwater Lick. Six churches were represented. They were: Blackwater, TN now Willis Chapel, Blackwater Lick, Sulphur Springs, Zion, Hickory Flat, and Cedar Fork. The first three churches are still active members of the Association.

According to Elder Osborne, Several years before the Civil War, the members built a large log church house over in the field, which later became the C. J. Robinette farm, near the Austin Bledsoe Graveyard southwest of the present site.

Few services were held during the Civil War period. During this period, Yankee soldiers or some said Bushwhackers camped in the old church one night and built a large fire in the fireplace. The next morning, there was a batch of ashes where the old church had stood.

Soon after the war ended, another large log building was built on the present site. The building had a large double door, thus the name Big Door came to be applied to the church. For many years this building served as schoolhouse and church. Isaac Robinette, who served as the first pastor, deeded the land to the Primitive Baptists.

The old log building was torn down in 1906 and replaced with a two-story frame building on the same site. In 1960, a smaller, more modern building was built, and in 1971 the fellowship hall was added. In 2001 the church acquired the schoolhouse property.

Early leaders of the church included: Elder E. S. McPherson, who served the church faithfully as moderator for 32 years, Elders G. B. Wallen, Isaac Chrisman, Isaac Robinette, Alfred Wallen, Joe Wallen, Emory Robinette, J. P. Peters, Dan Bower, George Edens, and others.

Later pastors include: Elders W. H. Burke, Pleas Jenkins, Amos Joyner, Hobert Hall, J. H. Sybert, Alex Willis, Coy Lawson, Garland Litton, Bryan Moore, B. A. Johnson, and Bob Brown. Elder Carl Lawson served faithfully as pastor from 1968 until 2000. Elder Amos Osborne served the church as clerk for 59 years. Sister Sarah Parsons held that position for 19 years. Elder David Smith is the current pastor.

As stated in the church's one hundredth anniversary program:

For the past 100 (now 155) years, this church has been a comfort to the distressed, a home to the saved, a light to the lost. Like a powerful lighthouse on the rugged shores of the ocean, its light has penetrated the darkness of perilous times and gave hope to hundreds of troubled souls. It would be impossible to estimate the power and scope of influence this church has had upon the passing generations. The gospel preached within its walls which at the time may have seemed fruitless, in later years, probably on some foreign shore, was gathered up like bread cast upon the waters to be gathered up days hence. May she prosper and grow through the coming years as she has in the past and continue to be a bright shining light to lost souls and a comfort and inspiration to the children of God.

Unfortunately, many faithful members have died and others have moved away, leaving a small but active congregation to continue the holy mission set forth in 1847.

Joyous smiles and thankful hearts were abundant when God's children gathered for the first day of the 150th association. The morning fog gave way to bright sunshine and unusually high temperatures. God so richly blesses His children to meet together in heavenly places while here on this earth, which is just a foretaste of things to come when we shall meet Him in our new home He has prepared for us. Sister Zula McCullough led the congregation in singing several old songs of praise to our Blessed Redeemer. We must get ready for that day when we will meet just inside the eastern gate. He whispers sweet peace to us as His unseen hand guides us through this weary land. It won't be very long till Jesus shall appear on that cloudless day when we shall meet Him in the air.

Elder Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone to today's services and asked them to obey the Holy Spirit. He led the congregation in singing an old hymn. He then brought to our attention the passing of Elder Kenneth Mitchell since we last met.

The moderator appointed the Committee on Religious Exercises which includes: Delmer Wallen, Sr. (chairman), Jess Akens and Ralph Baker.

Elder John Henry Sybert thanked God for the privilege of having attended every association since 1934, just before leading the congregation in singing the old song of praise, Brethren, We Have Met Again.

Elder David Smith, pastor of the host church and Elder Carl Lawson, former pastor of the host church welcomed everyone and asked them to do what the Lord bids them to. It is truly an honor to host this grand body of God's children.

Prayer requests were made for: Elder Gale and Enlo Derrick, Ruth Winegar, Faye Howington, Elders Hasco Jenkins, John Bowlin and David Jerrell, Ruth Hurd, Crystal Nichols, Cora L. Neeley, Fred Sizemore, Doris Burke's mother and sister, Jim Burke, Delmer Wallen, Jr., all our service men and women everywhere, several others that the clerk could not hear and a host of unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Elder John Turner led us to the throne of grace in a wonderful prayer.

Having been chosen to preach the introductory sermon, Elder David Smith came forward, reading from the book of Joel, 3:14-21 using as a text the 14th verse, Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. Jesus is able to lift us up from all our iniquities. Let us go out into the highways and byways and compel the lost to come in. Our hope is in Jesus who has blessed us so wonderfully. We must be fully persuaded that He can save the lost before we can convince them that He is able. Let us convince them that our God is alive and alive forevermore. We must look to Jesus to show us the right way to go. Elder Bob Brown followed with another message from on high. The end of ungodliness is destruction. God will deliver us from all things if we will trust Him. Just as there were multitudes in need then, there are multitudes in need of the Lord today. If we will not just give God some sort of lip service, but come together in one mind and one accord, truly seeking an outpouring of His Holy Spirit, the multitudes will see Him in our lives. Though the outward man perish, the inner man is renewed. The assurance of heaven is the most precious thing we have. Years are swiftly passing and soon we'll be at home with Jesus.

Dismissed for lunch with a song of praise to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Thursday Afternoon, October 3, 2002

The congregation came together with songs of praise after a wonderful lunch served by the host church. On Christ the solid rock we stand to hold to God's unchanging hand that we may build our hopes on things eternal. Oh what a Savior we serve that we can stand with utmost confidence and shout from the highest mountain, My God, how great thou art! Bless the Lord, bless His holy name. We were further blessed with songs of praise from the West View singers.

Elder Terry Sizemore welcomed everyone back and thanked the host church for the wonderful lunch. He asked that we remember the prayer requests made in this

morning's service, the lost, Silas Shelbrume, Walter and Anna Self, Elders Lowell Johnson and Ronnie Smith and many unspoken requests signified with uplifted hands. Elder Fred Gilreath took our petitions to the Lord.

The moderator read the report from the Committee on Religious Exercises.

Thursday night, Sneedville: Jason Robinette, Charley Johnson and Jim Emery.

Stand, Friday morning, October 4, 2002: John Arnott and Lewis Baker.

Brother Bradley Bowen, chairman of the Committee on Church Letters, read the committee's report. The committee now reports 64 churches which they recommend accepting and noted that the letters from Caney Creek, Garden of Hope and Little Dove have not been received, but the letters would be reviewed as soon as they were available. It was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendations of the committee and seat those delegates duly elected or appointed by their respective churches as the voting body of the association.

The delegation was seated in order to transact the business.

The moderator asked for nominations to serve as moderator pro-tem during the election of the association officials. Elder John Arnott was nominated. It was motioned, seconded and voted for him to serve during the election. Elder Arnott thanked the delegation for their confidence in him.

Brother Danny Lawson was nominated to serve as clerk and treasurer. No other nominations were made and it was motioned, seconded and voted for him to serve as clerk and treasurer for the ensuing year.

Elder Terry Sizemore was nominated to serve as the moderator of the association. It was motioned, seconded and voted for Elder Sizemore to serve as moderator of the association for the ensuing year.

Elder Sizemore, speaking for himself and the clerk, thanked God for the privilege of serving His people and the delegation for their confidence and trust they have put in us. He asked everyone to continue praying for us that we might do all things according to His will.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the moderator to appoint any and all committees. The moderator then appointed the following committees:
Committee on Newly Constituted Churches: Ministers John Arnott (chairman), A. D. Howington and James Jarnigan; Deacons Don Gordon and Edgar Neeley; Laymen Bobby Caudill and Jack Osborne.

Committee on Finance: Greg Hill (chairman), Virgil Lipe and Fred Gilreath.

Committee on Obituaries: Bill VanHoose (chairman), Donny Clifford and Eckel Head.

Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries: Oscar Irvin (chairman), Carson Johnson, Roger Trent, Larry Miller, Neal Drinnon, Roger VanHoose and Richard Seiber.

The clerk reported to the delegation that an insurance policy to cover the association had been written by Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company, a company specializing in insuring churches and related ministries. While this policy provides significantly more coverage than our previous policy, the yearly premium was substantially higher than before. Therefore the policy was not acquired, even though the association had granted the clerk and moderator permission to acquire such a policy when and if one was found. The estimated cost for the policy was \$1,877.00 per year. It was motioned, seconded and voted to acquire the new policy for the association.

The clerk brought it to the attention of the delegation that the kitchen would be in need of some repairs in the next few years and asked them to be thinking about this. It was also noted that one of the older coolers in the kitchen had stopped running after several attempts to repair it had been made. The clerk asked the delegation to consider purchasing a new cooler. No discussion was forthcoming, so the issue was dropped. It was later brought to the attention of the clerk and moderator that the delegation could not understand the clerk due to some trouble we were experiencing with microphones. This may need to be addressed again during a later business meeting.

The clerk brought a request to the delegation from the Hawkins County Genealogical Society asking if they could microfilm the past minutes of the association to preserve them for future use. The minutes will be delivered to the state representative who will personally take them to Nashville for the microfilming process. Once the process is complete, they will be available on the world wide web for everyone to access. While there is always some risk involved, it is felt the risk was minimal. It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow them to microfilm the minutes to preserve them for generations to come.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to have all things which are standard printed in the minutes.

The moderator appointed the Committee on Electrical and PA Systems which includes: Delmer McPherson (chairman), Elders Carl Lawson, Howard Sybert and David Jerrell, Scott Mellons, Bobby Caudill, Danny Lawson and Elder Roger Smith (alternate).

The business being concluded, the delegation was dismissed until Friday morning, October 4, 2002.

Friday Morning, October 4, 2002

The Lord blessed us with another beautiful day for the second meeting of the 150th annual session. It was a joy and a privilege to see His children gather to worship Him in truth and spirit. Sister Zula McCullough led the congregation in singing several songs of praise as everyone made their way into the auditorium. It doesn't matter where we may be, because any place is home sweet home if Christ our Lord is there. Let come and go what may, He keeps us all the way. His amazing grace rains down on us just like holy manna from above. Oh what matchless love He showed for us when He suffered all alone for the race just to show His matchless grace! The anguish that He bore because He loved us so much will allow us to fly away one day to that home prepared for the redeemed. Shouts of praise and tears of joy were all over the auditorium as God so wonderfully blessed His children. Oh what a Savior we serve! A love that knows no bounds, He is always there to take care of His children. After praising God throughout all the ages, we'll have no less time, for we've just begun to live.

Elder Terry Sizemore, moderator of the association, greeted us with wonderful words of welcome, thanking God for salvation, all His blessings and for His Holy Spirit that meets with us.

The delegation was called to order to transact the business.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to adopt the business proceedings of yesterday as read.

The Committee on Church Letters gave its final report, having received the letter from Caney Creek. After reviewing the letter, the committee recommended accepting it. It was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendation of the committee and seat those delegates appointed by the church as part of the voting body. This brings the total number of churches lettering into the association to 65. It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the clerk and/or moderator to review the letters from Little Dove and Garden of Hope and add them to the minutes when they were received. This being their final report, the committee was dismissed.

The moderator appointed the Committee on Church Letters for the year 2003, which includes Paul Johnson (chairman), David Horton, Marvin Ketron and Joe Pitzer (alternate).

We were further blessed with singing by Sister Doris Burke. We are homesick for a country which we've never seen before, but if we'll take off the old earthly coat and put on the new heavenly coat we can enter into sweet Beulah land.

Prayer requests were made for the lost, all those made in yesterday's services, Launa Wheeler, Grace Cornett, Maggie Lawson, Cassell and Beulah Caudill and many others signified with uplifted hands. Elder Lucian Lane, the association's oldest minister, blessed us with his wonderful testimony just before Elder Bill LaFollette led us to the throne of grace in a most humble prayer.

Having been chosen by the committee on Religious Exercises, Elder John Arnott came forward to take the first part of the service, thanking God for all the blessings of life and praising His name for all He has done. He read from St. Matthew 16:13-18, using a portion of the 13th verse as a text, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? The God we serve is the only living God and He is the same yesterday, today and forevermore. He willingly gave His life that we would have the privilege of gathering here today. If you ask the world who Jesus is, you will get many different answers, but those that are saved know their heavenly Father and He knows them. He brought salvation, and for this cause He came into this life that He might willingly give it for those that would believe in Him. Elder Lewis Baker followed with another message from on high. God commanded the light to shine out of darkness and into our life that we might have eternal life. May we never compromise the things of God for anything this world has to offer. He came unto His own and His own received Him not, but to all those that did receive Him, He gave them everlasting life. As the grains of sand on the seashore, so are the blessings of God. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord.

Adjourned for lunch.

Friday Afternoon, October 4, 2002

The congregation gathered in the auditorium for the afternoon business session. Songs of praise were sung as everyone was still rejoicing from all the blessings the Lord bestowed on His children. Till Jesus came and made us whole, we would not be denied. The half has never yet been told of such joy unspeakable and full of glory. Won't it be wonderful there, when we get to that city He has prepared for us? When we are happy in Him, all that is within us can rejoice. One day soon we'll see His smiling

face as He welcomes us home. We were further blessed with testimonies and songs from Sisters June Kail and Rene Hurley. No matter what we choose to call it, heaven will be home. Some day soon we'll lay down all our troubles and move to our new home on high where we'll be free from all care.

Elder Sizemore thanked the host church for the bountiful lunch they served and God for the wonderful service this morning. We can't thank Him enough for all He does for us. Bless his holy name!

The delegation was seated in order to transact the business.

The moderator read the report from the Committee on Religious Exercises:

Friday night:

- Willis Chapel: Oscar Irvin and Greg Hill.
- Beech Grove: Harold Shaw and Eckel Head.
- Sneedville: Roger VanHoose, Bill VanHoose, John Turner and James Lykins.
- Union Hill: Jerry Johnson and Jim Emery.
- Stand, Saturday morning:, October 5, 2002: John Henry Sybert and Terry Sizemore.
- Sunday morning, Cadet: A. D. Howington
- Sunday night, Cadet: Harold Shaw

Prayer requests were made for the lost, all those made in previous services, Elder John Bowlin, Marie Thomas, all of our churches, especially those without a pastor and many unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Brother Gleason Storie led us to the throne of grace.

The Committee on Finance reported \$5,310.00 in receipts for the year.

The Committee on Obituaries reported that 69 had been received at this time. Elder Sizemore reminded everyone to get obituaries to the clerk as early as possible to help him get them ready to be printed in the minutes.

Elder Sizemore thanked the committees for their work and discharged them after their reports were given.

It was motioned, seconded and voted that the host church will be responsible for the maintenance of the kitchen, with any needed repairs to be paid for by the clerk of the association.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the clerk \$850.00 in appreciation for his services.

The Committee on Newly Constituted Churches reported that one had been received at this time. The committee did not have all the information they needed to make a decision on receiving the new church into the association. The committee recommended that the letter be tabled until additional information could be acquired by a separate committee during the course of the year. After some discussion, it was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendation of the committee. A separate committee will be appointed by the moderator before the association closes.

The Committee on Arrangements and/or Queries reported that one had been received. The committee felt that the query, concerning the formation of a youth group, had been answered earlier and did not need any additional action at this time. They also noted that each church could promote a youth group which can meet at any time, any place and with other church youth groups as they so desire. After much discussion it was motioned, seconded and voted to accept the recommendations of the committee.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to allow the clerk to replenish the necessary forms to properly perform his duties.

Elders Shane Russell and David Smith came forward to read the circular letter. Its message told us about love and how we must show our love to all those around us before its worth can be realized. May we always show our love for each other like the love our heavenly Father shows to us each and every day. It was motioned, seconded and voted to print it in the minutes as read.

Elder Sizemore appointed 3 deacons to prepare the circular letter for 2003. They are: Burnice Sybert, Billy Jack Johnson and Darrell Sizemore.

During a portion of Thursday's business session, the delegation could not understand the clerk when he informed them about problems with one of the association's coolers. The delegation was informed that one of the coolers in the kitchen had stopped working and it was felt due to its age that it was not worth the cost of additional repairs. It was motioned, seconded and voted for the clerk to purchase a new 78 cubic foot cooler at an estimated cost of \$2,300.00. To help defray this expense, a special offering was taken up while the congregation sang a song. A collection of \$1,808.77 was received.

There were 7 churches that asked for the association to meet with them in 2003. These include Blackwater Lick, Burke's Union, House Chapel, Oak Grove, Richardson's Chapel, Riverside and Slate Hill. During the plea process, 2 churches withdrew and when the plea process was completed, all the churches withdrew in favor

of House Chapel, where the Lord willing we will convene on Thursday morning (October 2, 2003) before the first Saturday in October, 2003. Introductory - Elder Neal Drinnon; Alternate - Elder Henry Wheeler.

Adjourned until Saturday morning, October 5, 2002.

Saturday Morning, October 5, 2002

The Lord blessed us with some good rain on Friday evening, and on Saturday morning everyone was all smiles as we gathered for our memorial service. Still rejoicing from the earlier services, the Blackwater Lick Church singers sang songs of that beautiful home where we'll never grow old. We'll give happy praise to our King for our troubles and trials will be over. If it is well with our soul, then we are blessed beyond measure. May we always journey through this land singing as we go, pointing souls to Calvary in hopes that they may come to know this wonderful Savior we serve. Oh, I want to see Him, look upon His face and thank Him for salvation and His amazing grace. We will meet Him in the morning and exchange the old cross for a crown. Sister Kathy Robinson also blessed us with her song. I know a man who can do all things, this man I call Jesus.

Elder Terry Sizemore, moderator of the association, thanked God for His divine guidance and leadership, not just throughout this association, but at all times. He will always show us the way no matter what may come before us. He welcomed everyone to today's memorial service. God has so richly blessed us to be a part of this grand old body that has been around for over 155 years. Just imagine if you can what tremendous blessings have been bestowed upon the body during all those years. The congregation wished Elder John Henry Sybert a happy 83rd birthday as they sang to him. What a blessing this man has been in the lives of so many people.

A special Thank You was given to Elder Woodrow and Barbara Fields for their donation of a new freezer to the association. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts for all their dedicated work for the association over the years.

The delegation was called to order to transact the business.

It was motioned, seconded and voted to adopt the business proceedings of yesterday as read.

The moderator brought it to the attention of the delegation that the letter from the new church wishing to join the association had been withdrawn, therefore no

committee would be appointed to gather the additional information as described in yesterday's minutes.

Elder David Smith and Brother Danny Lawson came forward to thank all those that have helped make this association possible. Many folks have helped in so many ways that we could not have made it without their help. The association has united the church and helped us join together for the cause of seeing many souls saved. Most of all we thank God for meeting here with us, for without Him our labors would be in vain.

Elder John Arnott thanked the host church for all their efforts and their offer of the facilities to any church that might want to host the association here. The Lord has truly blessed us and we thank Him from the depths of our heart for all he has done.

Elder Sizemore thanked all those that served on the committees, cooked and cleaned, parked the cars, took out the trash and all the other jobs that sometimes go unnoticed. He also made mention of the fact that Sister Eileen Brown sends out a newsletter and would be glad to announce revivals and special services for any church if they let her know about it. Please try to give her the notice a month in advance or as early as possible.

Elder Sizemore read the report from the Committee on Religious Exercises and released the committee, since it was their final report.

Saturday night:

- Poplar Grove: Bill VanHoose and Roger VanHoose.
- Roller's Chapel: Terry Sizemore and Rod Raleigh.
- Sneedville: Derrick Cantwell, Donny Clifford and Eckel Head.
- Wallen's Creek: A. D. Howington and Delmas Harris.

The clerk read the resolution of thanks he had prepared. It was motioned, seconded and voted to print it in the minutes as read.

Prayer requests were made for the unsaved, all the requests made in prior services, Ralph Lawson, Leroy Lawson, Mary Johnson and a host of unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Elder Mike Fullington led us to the throne of grace.

The moderator read the names of those saints gone home to be with the Lord. While we miss them, they are at peace with the Lord and much better off than we are. Thank God for each one of them and the lives they lived, for what they taught us and showed us and for giving them to us for as long as He did.

Elder Bob and Eileen Brown blessed us with some wonderful songs of praise. When the hand of Jesus touched us, oh the joy that filled our soul because He made us whole. What a day, glorious day that will be when our Jesus we shall see.

Elder Terry Sizemore blessed us with his song that reminded us that Jesus didn't come here to stay, only to show us the way, then He got on a cloud and went home. Some day soon we will do the same to be with our Savior forever.

Elder John Henry Sybert came forward to take the first part of the service. He blessed us with many precious memories of the church and school. The memory of those departed saints that have outstripped us and gone on to their reward will live on. Elder Sybert read several verses of scripture beginning with St. John 5:24-29 then I Corinthians 15:39-58 using as a text St. John 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. We shall not all sleep, but we all will be changed in a moment and a twinkling of an eye. While these have fallen asleep in Jesus, there will be a few that will not, but will be changed. One eternal day we'll be with the Lord. Oh death where is your sting, oh grave where is your victory? If this old earthly house is dissolved, we have a new body not made with hands; for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. Elder Terry Sizemore followed with another inspiring message from the Lord. To be God's disciples, we have to deny the things of this world. Thanks be to God who gave us the victory. We must be more zealous in our lives to let others know that through Christ Jesus the Lord we have the victory. We can't bring these dear departed saints back to us, but we can go to where they are and live forever and ever with our blessed Redeemer. While each of us is called to do good works, our works cannot take us to heaven, only the blood of Jesus Christ applied to our hearts can do this. These men preached so wonderfully to us, the Lord surely used them in a mighty way. Thank God for all our preaching brethren that will stand and preach the truth.

The congregation was not dismissed, but was told they could leave as they desired. Brother Harmon Willis praised the Lord as he rejoiced and preached about our blessed Savior. Oh what a Savior we serve! He is so good to us, may we never forget to give Him all the glory and honor for everything.

Sunday Morning, October 6, 2002

The cool morning air faded away to bright sunshine as everyone gathered in the auditorium for the last day of this 150th annual gathering. On the streets of glory we will lift our voice for all our cares and troubles will be over, but let us do the same here so that others might see the Lord in our lives. Time will be no more and we shall rejoice

with our Blessed Redeemer throughout eternity if it is well with our soul. Our time with Him will be everlasting, for there we will sing forever of His saving grace. Praise God for the Rock of Ages for we can hide in Him.

Elder David Smith, pastor of the host church, welcomed everyone by thanking God for His presence and the many, many blessings He has bestowed upon His children. The Lord hath need for each of us, let us never fail to labor in His vineyard. God has a need for each of us or He would have called us on home.

Prayer requests were made for the unsaved, those made in earlier services, Carrie Willis, Elders Lucian Lane and David Jerrell, Maggie Lawson, Gladys Huff, Sarah Parsons, Beulah Huff, Elder Donald and Lola Mae Sybert, the lost in Pleas Lawson's family, Doris Burke, Mona Lawson, Jim Burke and several others the clerk could not get and many unspoken requests signified by uplifted hands. Many wonderful testimonies were given, thanking God for all He had done in their lives. Elder Richard Seiber led us to the throne of grace in a most humble prayer.

We were blessed with special singing from Doris Burke, Alicia Smith and Deborah Smith and the West View singers. There is coming a day where there will be no more heartaches, sorrows or pain and no more tears to dim the eyes, where we will cross the river into that land of endless day. Oh, what a Savior we serve! His love strengthens us and His grace is sufficient for all things for we are truly blessed. Just remember when that sound came from heaven like a mighty rushing wind and filled our heart with cheer. There is a fountain that frees the soul from sin, and if we will drink this water we will never thirst again. Troubles and trials often beset us, but the Good Shepherd is leading the way. Even the Lord will be in that number when we reach that heavenly shore.

Elder John Henry Sybert thanked God for the many blessings throughout the association and at all times. He told us of the great number of souls that were saved during a revival here at the church in 1938. He read from Philippians 1:18-27 and spoke to us for a few minutes. Comfort one another with these words. Thank God there is comfort in His Word while we wait for Him to take us home. Elder Neal Drinnon followed with a wonderful message from our Father. It doesn't matter what shape we may be in, God has need for us. He will never leave us nor forsake us. It does not matter what we can do, but what God can do through us. No matter what you might think about Jesus, He's still King of kings, the great I Am. May God take the pride from us that we may become humble where He can use us to His glory. His Word tells us to ask and we shall receive, seek and we shall find, knock and it will be opened unto us. What more could we ask of such a wonderful Savior? He has truly blessed us throughout this association.

The congregation rejoiced and thanked God as they fellowshiped one with another. We were blessed with songs from Ralph Lawson and Dustin Lawson as the crowd slowly made their way out of the auditorium. Oh how we love Jesus, for He first loved us and we can draw nearer the cross and shout with acclamation, My God, how great thou art!

I would like to first thank God for meeting here with us and for the outpouring of His spirit and the many blessings He has so wondrously bestowed upon His children while gathered here at Blackwater. I thank each of you who came to be with us. It is truly a blessing to help host such a great body of God's children. I pray your time here was most enjoyable. I especially thank each of you that helped us. I know the Lord has truly blessed you for your unselfishness and your willingness to see His work go forth. This group is such a blessing to me, I cannot find the words to truly express what you mean to me. To merely say that I love you all is not sufficient, but I know the Lord will bless you and keep you until we meet again. I wish the time had been available to speak with you more, but it is a pretty busy time for me. I thank each and every one of you from the bottom of my heart and I pray the Lord will bless you to the utmost in the days to come. May we all humble ourselves where Jesus can use us for His honor and glory. Bless the Lord, bless His holy name!