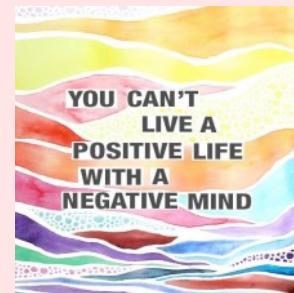
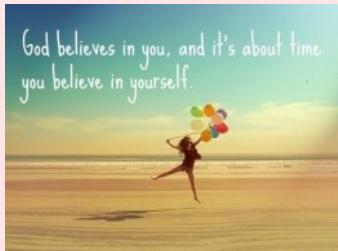


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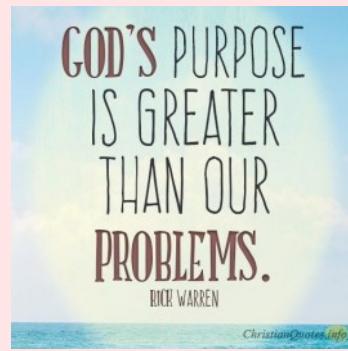
Newsletter

Happy Summer



PEACE IS NOT
THE ABSENCE
OF TROUBLE
BUT THE
PRESENCE OF
CHRIST.

-SHEILA WALSH



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**LETTER TO ATTORNEY GENERAL JEFF SESESSIONS**

June 15, 2018

Mr. Jeff Sessions, Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the 5,000 congregations and 1.3 million members of the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA). As General Secretary, I serve as the national pastor of the denomination. ABCUSA has a long and distinguished record of service in welcoming immigrants and refugees to communities throughout the United States.

The American Baptist family would like to communicate our deep concern over the unjust immigration policies of the United States government, and in particular, the unconscionable separation of children from their parents on our southern border. As a fellowship of Christ-followers who recall the trials of the child Jesus and his parents, who fled from persecution in their homeland to another country (Matthew 2:13-18), we adamantly oppose separating children from their relatives. A just society can fulfill its fidelity to its own laws and border security without resorting to such unwise and harmful practices; instead, we urge that compassion, fairness and family-affirming policies characterize our response to the plight of families on our borders. We note that destructive practices such as the separation of children from parents place a serious burden on our law enforcement agents and officials, who in carrying out such policies find their own consciences ethically compromised and troubled.

Furthermore, we strongly disagree with your erroneous appropriation of the New Testament (in particular, Romans 13) to justify inhumane and unjust governmental actions. No responsible Christian theologian would assert that Romans 13, or any other passage in the Bible, supports the horrific separation of children from parents that we are witnessing at the present time. In fact, both the Old and New Testaments call those who believe in God to welcome refugees and immigrants with open arms and friendship, with loving care and concern, and with the willingness to assist others in enjoying the prospects of a future based on hope and opportunity.

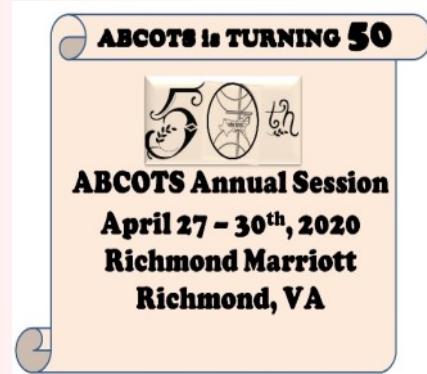
Accordingly, American Baptists wish to express our sincere hope that the separation of children and parents will immediately cease. We urge Congress and the President to approve and implement without delay more compassionate and just immigration policies and procedures. As the leading law enforcement official of our government, it is your privilege and responsibility to lead such an effort. Thank you for considering our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lee B. Spitzer".

Rev. Dr. Lee B. Spitzer, General Secretary
American Baptist Churches USA

ABCOTS 49th Annual Session
April 29 - May 2, 2019
Radisson Baltimore Inner Harbor
Baltimore, MD



Highlights from ABCOTS 48th Annual Session, Atlanta, GA

Thank you Atlanta. We are grateful to our hosts in the city of Atlanta and Area Three. Thank you and congratulations to our President, Dr. Douglas Summers, the Board of Directors, staff, and the countless other volunteers who so diligently support the ministry and missions' work of ABCOTS in our seven (7) local Areas throughout the Region. Please go forth visiting, sharing, learning, and renewing our commitment to the mission and ministry of ABCOTS. Your presence and support is valued and especially appreciated, we look forward to seeing you in Baltimore, MD 2019 as we celebrate our 49th Annual Session.



News and Updates from ABC USA www.abc-usa.org

American Baptist Home Mission Societies Lifts Up Ways to Help Immigrant Families

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 7/16/18)—Continuing to denounce the separation of migrant children from their families, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) announces a new way for American Baptists to financially support legal aid for family reunification and suggests helpful resources for those who wish to advocate in their communities. On behalf of American Baptist Churches USA, ABHMS is coordinating a One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) collection specifically to help separated immigrant families. To give a gift that will provide for such a family's legal aid, send a check to the attention of Kim Wilkins at American Baptist Home Mission Societies, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851. Make the check payable to "One Great Hour of Sharing" and write "OGHS-Immigrant Children" in the memo line. Or, give online by visiting www.abc-usa.org, clicking "Give Online," and including "OGHS-Immigrant Children" in the comments section when making your gift....(www.abc-usa.org/2018/07/16/american-baptist-home-mission-societies-lifts-up-ways-to-help-immigrant-families).

Prescription: Add Salt – A Reflection on the 2018 World Mission Conference

Rev. Dr. Kevin A. Walden, associate general secretary for Congregational & Pastoral Effectiveness w/ the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary.

"Salt is good; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; they throw it away. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" (Luke 14:34–35 NRSV)

Like many adults these days, we are often encouraged to avoid salt. At the World Mission Conference held at Green Lake Conference Center this July, the focus was on adding salt. In fact, Rev. Sharon Koh, International Ministries Executive director and CEO told participants that the testimonies of God's work in our lives should be such that we actually add to the saltiness of each other. Dr. Pat Hernandez, Associate General Secretary for Women in Ministry reflected saying, "One grain of salt does not a seasoning make, but many grains season much. Coming together for the World Mission Conference, we season and strengthen each other and make a difference in the world."Each testimony built up the body of Christ gathered as we could see the Lord moving powerfully all over the world. Truly, each testimony added salt to our own saltiness. (www.abc-usa.org/2018/07/16/prescription-add-salt-a-reflection-on-the-2018-world-mission-conference)

UPDATES FROM HEADQUARTERS

Please send us your church's email address to be kept updated on the happenings in the region.

A Note from the Accountant's Corner



Greetings from the Accountant's Corner. I trust you are having an enjoyable summer thus far. As you continue to enjoy some well-deserved sunshine, rest, and/or time away, please bare in mind that Fall will arrive before we know it. Here are some tax deadlines to take into consideration:

September 15 — S Corporations & Partnerships File your 2017 calendar year income tax return (Form 1120S or 1065). This due date applies only if you timely requested an automatic 6-month extension.

September 15 — Estimated Tax Payments Your third quarter estimated tax payment for 2018 is due. If you haven't made any previous installments-to-date, you may want to speak with your tax advisor regarding "catch-up" payments.

October 15 — Individuals If you have an automatic 6-month extension to file your individual income tax return for 2017, now is the time to file your Form 1040, 1040A, or 1040EZ and pay any outstanding tax, interest, and penalties.

Corporations File your 2017 calendar year corporate income tax return (Form 1120) and pay any tax, interest, and penalties due. This due date applies only if you timely requested an automatic 6-month extension.

Finally, below are some summertime tax tips that the IRS has published:

Worker classification matters. As with other workers, business owners must correctly determine whether summer workers are employees or independent contractors. Independent contractors are not subject to withholding, making them responsible for paying their own income taxes plus Social Security and Medicare taxes. Workers can avoid higher tax bills and lost benefits if they know their proper status.

Summer workers may be exempt from tax withholding. Workers may not earn enough from summer jobs to owe income tax, but employers usually must withhold Social Security and Medicare taxes from pay. This is particular of interest for students and seasonal employees.

Check withholding. For those who work a seasonal or part-year job, checking withholding now can help make sure employers withhold the right amount of tax. Taxpayers who work part of the year should check early in the employment period to determine an accurate amount for their withholding.

Getting married? First, report any name change to the Social Security Administration before filing next year's tax return. Then, report any address change to the United States Postal Service, any employers and the IRS to ensure receipt of tax-related items. Finally, use the Withholding Calculator at IRS.gov to make sure withholding is correct now that there are two people to consider.

Clean out, donate, deduct. If they are in good condition, those long-unused items found during spring or summer cleaning and donated to a qualified charity may qualify for a tax deduction. Taxpayers must itemize deductions to deduct charitable contributions, and be sure to have proof of all donations.

Help with service project, deduct mileage. Driving a personal vehicle while donating services on a trip sponsored by a qualified charity could qualify for a tax break. Itemizers can deduct 14 cents per mile for charitable mileage driven in 2018. Keep good records of mileage.

Get tax credit for summer day camp expenses. A popular solution — with favorable tax consequences — is a day camp program. Unlike overnight camps, the cost of day camp may count as an expense towards the Child and Dependent Care Credit.



ABCOTS is a Maryland non-profit corporation associated as a covenanting Regional organization with the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. (ABC-USA), and with other covenanting American Baptist Regions and the covenanting ABC-USA National Bodies

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