



February 15, 2006

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

A Newsletter of the American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountain Region



“Got Water?”

Gathering Planning Committee Announces Theme for 2006 Event

As the Gathering Planning Committee met at the Region office on Tuesday, February 7, they brought with them mental images and catchy phrases to put into the pool of ideas that would eventually birth the theme for the 2006 event. The conference room was vibrant with energy emitted by committee members, and after two hours of energizing exchanges, they came to consensus. It is the committee’s intent to plan a Gathering focused on worship, celebration, and growth. “Got Water?” says it. The theme is based on John 4:13-14.

The dates for the 2006 Gathering are October 20-21. New Hope Baptist Church in Denver, CO, pastored by Jim Peters, will be the host church. Many more details will be forthcoming, but save the dates and plan to attend this year’s Region family event. You will be refreshed!

Gathering Planning Committee members are pictured above. *Standing (l to r):* Rob Clausen, Marie Heaton, Cheryl Messenger, Kathy Bird DeYoung, Mike Williams, Mike Oldham, Kay Farley, Richard Salcedo, Alvin Wilkerson, Beverley Hoffmeister, and Wayne Dvirnak. *Seated (l to r):* Desmond Hoffmeister, Larry Van Spriel.

American Baptists Mourn the Death of Coretta Scott King



American Baptists mourn the death of Coretta Scott King, a leading voice for human rights, and widow of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Following her husband's assassination in 1968, Mrs. King continued their commitment to biblical principles of justice and equality, serving as a spokesperson for civil rights and ministries of reconciliation. She was familiar to many American Baptists through participation in various denominational and ecumenical events.

James D. Peters, Jr., pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Denver, CO, writes, "The loss of Coretta Scott King is a major loss to the causes of freedom, justice, and equality for all Americans. However, her priceless legacy will live in the hearts and minds of those who knew her.

"It was my pleasure to know her personally, since I worked with her husband, Martin Luther King, and participated in marches with him many times. While I met Dr. King in 1958, my first up-close meeting with Mrs. King was in August of 1962 when I journeyed to Albany, GA where the 'Albany Movement' was taking place, and Dr. King and others were in jail. The headline in the *Albany Journal* read, 'Mrs. King coming to Albany to Lead Demonstration.' She would have, but Dr. King was released that day after two weeks in jail. I had the privilege of joining her and Martin in the home of Dr. Anderson, the leader of the Albany Movement, and sharing their first meal and time together after his time in jail.

"New Hope Baptist Church in Denver was the location in 1958 for Mrs. King's first public speech. Anna Lee Williams, wife of M. C. Williams, then the pastor, asked Mrs. King to speak for the annual Women's Day and she accepted. She was a noted singer, but inspired the crowds with her words about her role in the Civil Rights Movement and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The people at New Hope, and the many Denver residents who attended, were blessed by her testimony and her faith in God. When she returned to Denver, she always mentioned that her first public speech was at New Hope Baptist Church.

"I visited her in her home when I lived in Atlanta and participated with her and others in the Martin Luther King Birthday celebrations there in 1977. I met with her, on behalf of the American Baptist Black Caucus, in New York at the United Nations where she held a post appointed by then President Carter.

"She was a grand lady. Her dedication to Martin's dream led her to form the Martin Luther King Center for Social Change in Atlanta and to be its principal speaker and fund raiser.

"She was a dedicated Christian and a long time member of Ebenezer Baptist Church, which is affiliated with ABC/USA. America had lost a leader and I have lost a friend."

Other Denominational Leaders Reflect. . .

American Baptist Churches USA General Secretary, A. Roy Medley, hailed Mrs. King's "eloquent and profound expression of God's love within society in lifting up the precious gift of human equality." Medley added, "Over the decades, American Baptists have been especially moved by Mrs. King and her husband through their participation in ministries endorsed by this denomination. She was a compassionate voice for the voiceless, who responded powerfully to Jesus' call to peacemaking."

Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, executive director of National Ministries, commented, "Mrs. King, and indeed the entire King family, sacrificed personal self interest and professional advancement for the larger social good. When I reflect upon her life and service to her family, to America, and to the larger world community, I am convinced that the 20th and 21st centuries were blessed by one of our faith's greatest saints."

Compiled from AB News Service article and ABCRM sources.

Greetings from the Myers family. . .



It's hard to believe that our year back in the States is already half over. Time certainly flies when one is speaking in a different church every week!

Furlough is always a mixed blessing for missionaries, as we have discovered these last six months. We so enjoy being able to be with family and friends in the States, and we are blessed each time we share in the churches, but at the same time miss our friends and ministry in Bulgaria. We plan to return "home" to Bulgaria in July, 2006.

*Tom and Terry Myers, AB Missionaries to Bulgaria, on home assignment until 07/06
Contact the Myers family: myersbulgaria@msn.com*

We like being MKs!



Being an MK (missionary kid) is a very good experience because you get to go to other countries and learn about their cultures. You also get to meet kids from that country. You get to learn things that most children in the U.S. don't get to learn about, like the country's history. We think that being a missionary family as made us a lot closer, because when you are new to a place, you rely on your family.



But being an MK has drawbacks as well. When you leave on furlough, you have to leave your friends in the country where your parents work, and when you go back there, you have to leave your new friends in America. So the life of an MK is full of ups and downs.



Some of the things you get to do are go to churches and see the work your parents are doing. You get to see the way people live in your country. You sometimes have a meal with Christians in the area you are visiting. You get to taste what they eat. It is cool to try new foods. The people always give us the best they have. They are very generous even though they do not have a lot of money. You also have to learn a new language which can be difficult, but it is nice when you can talk to people in their native language. We have to speak in Bulgarian at church. It is hard to understand what all the teachers say in Sunday School when they speak Bulgarian, so it is nice to be in America where our Sunday School is in English.



When we were with some other MKs in Colorado Springs last summer, our teacher gave us two balls of clay. One was blue, and the other was yellow. She told us to mix them together, and as you might guess, the clay turned green. The yellow clay symbolizes our life in America. The blue ball is our life overseas. So when we mix those two lives we get a life which is neither totally yellow or totally blue, but one that is a mixture of the two. We are not American or Bulgarian but from a whole other culture entirely. We sometimes wonder if there is a place where we can be comfortable being green, where we can truly be ourselves.

We like being MKs! It is a good experience. It can sometimes be hard, but mostly it's a fun life. God has blessed us by sending our family to Bulgaria!

*A.J. (6th grade) and Nathan (4th grade) Myers, Mks-in-Residence
living with their parents, Tom and Terry Myers,
and their grandparents, Bill and Betty Moseley in Ft. Collins, CO*

The Story Behind the African American National Anthem

The hymn, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" is known as the national anthem for African Americans. It places emphasis on the history of people of color which includes many triumphs and struggles. This great song is known across the world, but the history behind the song's creation and first performance is often unknown.

James Weldon Johnson was born in 1871 in Jacksonville, FL. He was a poet, lyricist, lawyer, government official, and a lover of the spirituals. He was the first African American to be admitted to the Florida bar in 1897. He and his younger brother, John Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954), a musician, wrote musical comedies and operas. But their best known composition is "Lift Every Voice and Sing." This song was written as a special tribute to honor almost 40 years of freedom for people of color in America. It was first performed by a children's choir as a church program on February 12, 1900. James Weldon Johnson went on to become United States Consul to Venezuela in 1906 and to Nicaragua in 1909. In 1913, he became the editor of the *New York Age*. He was also very active in the NAACP.

Other writings of Johnson include *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse* in 1927. *Black Manhattan* in 1930, and *Negro Spirituals* in 1925. Johnson died in 1938. The United States Postal Service issued a 22 cents commemorative stamp (the eleventh in the Black Heritage Series) in his honor in 1988.

(See lyrics, printed on page 5.)

Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations

April 28-29, 2006

Christ Church United Methodist in Denver

Sponsor: Lombard Mennonite Peace Center

Currently the church is experiencing something of a crisis in the pastorate system. Clergy morale is at an all-time low, with pastors under attack like never before. The net result is an increasing incidence of involuntary pastoral terminations, which leave a lasting legacy of pain in congregations. Such a trend can only be reversed if the church is willing to reexamine some of the ways that the pastorate system has functioned in recent years.

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center provides unique programs to churches concerned about the future health of congregations. The *Facilitating Healthy Pastor-Congregation Relations* workshop is based on LMPC's experience over a number of years in serving as a mediator and consultant to severely conflicted churches from a broad range of denominations. LMPC seeks to help them establish more healthy conflict norms.

The workshop suggests some of the structural changes that can help a church function in more healthy ways. However, structural changes are not enough; attention must also be given to emotional processes and the ways that leaders function. Thus, the workshop also reflects LMPC's training in family systems theory and how it relates to church conflict. Family systems theory provides important insights into how leaders can function in well-differentiated ways so that the potential destructiveness of conflict can be



minimized. This workshop is appropriate for pastors, lay leaders and other church members, as well as Region staff.

Robert Williamson, LMPC Associate Director will be the workshop leader. Bob has experience as a parish pastor, a trainer in conflict transformation, and a consultant to conflicted churches. He has studied with Edwin Friedman and Peter Steinke.

The early registration fee is \$89.00. If received after April 14, or for those who register at the door, the fee is \$109.00. The fee includes training manual, lunch, and refreshment breaks. Cancellations are subject to a non-refundable administration fee of \$25, if LMPC receives at least five days advance notice of cancellation, otherwise no refund will be issued. If four to six persons register together from the same congregation, a discount of \$10 off the normal rate per person is applied for all members of the group. For groups of seven or more, the discount is \$20 per person. Group payments must be made with one check.

For more information, call LMPC at (630) 627-0507 or visit the website: www.LMPeaceCenter.org



Buddy Basketball Provides Entry Point to Church Life—and it's fun!

Highland Park Baptist Church in Colorado Springs, CO, is into its second year of an outreach ministry called Buddy Basketball. Bill Wolfe, pastor of the church, began Buddy Ball at his last church in Mason, MI, in 1994. In five years it grew to over 400 children and youth being involved, and is still running at that level in Mason. In its first year at Highland Park there were 35 participants. That number has almost doubled for the second season.

Buddy Basketball has always been committed to five principles:

1. Provide young people with a fun recreational activity;
2. Teach the basic fundamentals of basketball;
3. Equal playing time;
4. Regardless of a participant's skill level, have him/her improve; and
5. Positive adult interaction and feedback.

Every participant receives a t-shirt and an end-of-the-season medal. The participants are in grades 1-8, and are broken down into different age groups. This year the principal of the grade school a few blocks from the church asked for a registration brochure for every one of her students.

The ministry is made possible through the dozen volunteers who coach and encourage the kids. Highland Park also recognizes that Buddy ball is an entry point into the church for unchurched people who are a little uncomfortable about even coming inside. When they see their sons and daughters having a great time while learning the game of basketball, and when they see that there's an airport of Starbucks coffee waiting for them when they arrive, it begins to break down barriers.

Games and skill sessions are held on Saturday mornings and early afternoon.

Good Things to Know about the ABCRM website. . .

- *It's good to know* the address: www.abcrm.org.
- *It's good to know* that you can find pastors' names and church addresses. Go to the "Pastors" page and click on "Senior Pastors."
- *It's good to know* that you can read previous issues of this newsletter. Go to the "Communication" page and click on archived issues.
- *It's good to know* that you can download applications for the Youth Mission Trip to Gulfport, MS from the home page, under "News and Events."
- *It's good to know* that you can find names of people willing to preach in the absence of your pastor. Go to "Pastors" page and click on "Pulpit Supply."

Lift Every Voice and Sing

(African American National Anthem)

Words by

James Weldon Johnson

*Lift every voice and sing,
till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies
of liberty;*

*Let our rejoicing rise,
high as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud
as the rolling sea.*

*Sing a song full of the faith
that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope
that the present has brought us;*

*Facing the rising sun
of our new day begun,
Let us march on
till victory is won.*

*Stony the road we trod,
bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days
when hope unborn had died;*

*Yet with a steady beat,
have not our weary feet,
Come to the place for which
our fathers sighed?*

*We have come over a way
that with tears
has been watered.*

*We have come,
treading our path
thro' the blood
of the slaughtered,
Out from a gloomy past,
till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam
of our bright star is cast.*

Some Musings on Tribal Theology in Northeast India (Part 3)

The Context for This Theological Conversation

(This article is the third in a series written by Ahao Vashum, our global mission partnership specialist.)

Tribals of Northeast India are at a cross roads where the political, religious, theological, and cultural elements which constitute their identity have been influenced profoundly by the years of British colonization and the Indian occupation of the region since 1947 on the one hand, and the overpowering and the presence of the Western Christian image on the other. Other factors that are compounding the situation include the forces of modernization and the more recent globalization processes—economic, technological, and cultural.

To this very day, tribal Christians continue to follow the kind of theology that was brought to their soil by the Christian missionaries over 130 years ago. Indeed, the message preached by those first missionaries emphasized individual sin and the primacy of salvation of the individual soul. This message continues to have strong sway on the Naga people's theological outlook today.

To this day, most tribal Christians think that to be an authentic Christian means they must shun anything that is of the past and embrace whatever comes from the Christian West. This way of thinking is so deeply embedded in the tribal Christians' beliefs that they consider their most important obligation as Christians to be their strict adherence to the tenets of Christianity that were introduced to them by the missionaries.

Such understanding has led them to undermine and /or reject a great deal of their cultural values and traditions. This is reflected clearly by the prevailing worship pattern and styles, including the hymns and songs they sing and the accepted style and form of preaching. Except for the language, everything is meant to be a near exact imitation of Western Christian style and tradition. This intent to imitate the West is even plainly evident in the church buildings which are built to replicate the gothic architectural style of the West rather than tribal or indigenous styles.

Ultimately, however, the most problematic result of Western influence has been the negation of a tribal worldview and the acceptance of a "Western Christian worldview." Tribal worldview is characterized by undifferentiated unity between the sacred and the secular, the worldly and the heavenly, the physical and the spiritual. The traditional worldview gave way to the view of humanity which values the individual and the individual's salvation.

This compartmentalization has produced a disconnect in tribal Christian life today between the orthodoxy of the Church's doctrines and teachings and the way tasks and responsibilities of daily life are carried out. Traditionally, tribals view religion as the entirety of a way of life rather than a propositional statement of faith; in other words, each action and every activity were considered religious. They believed that the total sphere of life was permeated by the

presence of God and so they lived in the constant consciousness of divine Presence. In summary, the strong emphasis on the primacy of individualism has contributed a great deal to the gradual erosion of communitarian spirit and value which are hallmarks of tribal community life.

(To be continued in future issues.)

History of Christianity in Northeast India

Christianity came to Northeast India in the middle to later part of the 19th century. The first Christian missionaries were affiliated with American Baptist and Welsh Presbyterian Missions. Baptist missionaries worked among the Nagas, Kukis, Assamese and Garos. The Presbyterian mission was concentrated among the Mizos of Mizoram and the Khasis of Meghalaya. Today, with the exception of the Assamese and Meiteis of Manipur, almost all the hills tribal communities have embraced Christianity. While Baptists and Presbyterians represent the majority, other churches such as the Roman Catholic and Seventh Day Adventists are also present. In recent years Pentecostal groups have begun to establish a presence in the region as well. The Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI) is the highest Baptist Council in the region. The Council is made up of 84 Associations and comprising 5446 local churches. Christians in the Northeast make up the second largest Christian population in India. The largest body of Christians is in South India.

One Day Workshop Training: PREPARE/ENRICH

On March 11, Jan McCormack will be leading a one-day Prepare/Enrich Workshop. It will take place in Room 119 of the Chapel Building at Denver Seminary, located at 6399 S. Santa Fe Drive, Littleton, CO 80120.

The PREPARE/ENRICH Workshop is designed to help facilitators learn how to use the PREPARE/ENRICH Program with premarital and married couples.

Topics for couples covered in the PREPARE/ENRICH Program include **communication, conflict resolution, family-of-origin, finances, sexuality, spiritual beliefs, and many more.** Six feedback exercises have been created to help you work with all your couples on improving their relationship.

Materials you will receive at the workshop include:

- **Comprehensive Counselor Manual**—step by step instructions for administration and feedback of the Program.
- **5 Inventories**—for premarital and married couples at all stages of life.
- **Building a Strong Marriage Workbook**—exercises for couples to complete.
- **Complimentary Scoring on our new Online System**—use it for yourself or a couple you are working with, \$29.95 value.

Comments from recent workshop participants...

"Great and efficient resource; thought it was worth every penny; want to use it for my own marriage."

"Exceptional program, the best thing in pre-marital counseling that I've come across."

"As a pastor, I wish I had been using this for the last twenty years. As a seminary faculty member, I will encourage my students to get the training and use PREPARE/ENRICH."

"This is an excellent resource for having a structured way to provide feedback to couples on the inventory, and a useful tool for counseling in general."

The cost. . .

The cost of the workshop is \$150.00 for those who are not students or associated with Denver Seminary.

To register. . .

To register, e-mail stephanie.thompson@denverseminary.edu or call Stephanie at (303) 762-6954, ext. 1309. You will be asked to go to the campus office to fill out a registration form and leave a check for the amount.

If you cannot go to the seminary campus to register, Stephanie will send or fax you a registration form to be mailed back with a check.

Leadership Changes

(since January 1, 2006)

Anne Dondapati, interim pastor at Aurora Community Church/Aurora.

Bruce Greer, resigned as interim at Aurora Community Church/Aurora to become Transition Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church/Denver.

Ron Horne, resigned, FBC/Cortez.
Mary Beth Mankin, pastor at FBC/Laramie.

Claud Pettit resigned as interim pastor at Berkeley Baptist, Denver.

Chuck Shipman, interim pastor at FBC/Pueblo

New Hope Baptist Church of Denver Produces Praise CD

After much prayer and spiritual preparation, the Majestic Praise Choir of New Hope Baptist Church has produced a two CD set, entitled *Hallelujah Anyhow!* Under the direction of music minister, Daryl J. Walker, the choir has recorded a total of songs of praise. Some of the titles include "Praise of New Hope," "I Can See," "Wade in the Water," "God is Good," "Think About the Good Things," "I Will Heal Your Land," and "Thank You, Jesus."

Choir member, Minister Nathala Young, says, "This is much more than a CD; it's a blessing! This music edifies the soul."



The two CD set is available for \$15.00. Contact New Hope Baptist Church at (303) 322-5200 to purchase your copy.

Northern Front Range Cluster

A Reminder!

On Sunday afternoon, February 26, at 3:30 p.m. the American Baptist Church of Ft. Collins will host the first Northern Front Range Cluster Gathering.

The worship celebration will include three local church ministry vignettes, lots of good music, and inspiration. Each attendee is asked to bring some form of "finger food" to be shared during the time of fellowship at the close of the Gathering. Come and be a part of another first!

International Ministries Begins New Era of Missionary Appointments

Charles Jones, acting executive director of International Ministries, announced the appointment of Susan Linderman for missionary service, effective February 1, 2006. "It is with deep joy and thankfulness to God that we take this step with Susan, who will embody the love of Jesus Christ to the victims of human trafficking in Europe," stated Jones.

Linderman, a native of Huron, SD, is the first new missionary to be appointed after the lifting of the freeze mandated by IM's board of managers in 2004 and 2005. She has extensive volunteer missionary experience serving with the International Baptist Theological Seminary and with Project Hope, both centered in Prague, Czech Republic. Project Hope, led by IM missionary Lauran Bethell, is a ministry to persons caught up in the global sex trade, especially the victims of human trafficking.

Wait on the Lord: An opportunity for all clergy and lay ministers

Spiritual Formation Conference

Presented by American Baptist Churches USA

April 17-20, 2006



Psalm 27:14: "Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!"

It's not too late to register for the "Wait on the Lord" conference to be held in Orlando, FL. Deadline is February 26, 2006.



Top Ten Reasons to Go to Orlando in April!

Number 10: The Rosen Center is a beautiful place to relax, swim, soak and rest after Easter.

Number 9: God will surprise you and transform your life.

Number 8: Eight workshops designed to help you explore and deepen your spiritual journey.

Number 7: You'll renew old friendships and meet new colleagues in ministry.

Number 6: The seafood in Florida is amazing.

Number 5: God will surprise you and transform your life.

Number 4: Jamie Clarke-Soles will unfold the Gospel of John through inspiring morning Bible study.

Number 3: Frank Colon is an incredible musician (and takes requests).

Number 2: John Kinney is one of the most engaging speakers you will ever hear.

AND, the number one reason you should go to Orlando in April is:

1: God will surprise you and transform you life!

For more details about leaders and workshops, or for a conference schedule and registration information, go to <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/WaitontheLordInformation.aspx>.

Discover.....

“The Spiritual Riches of the Republic of Georgia”

June 20 – July 1, 2006

Join a contemplative exploration of what it means to be Baptist in an authentically Georgian way. The team will explore the possibilities and gifts of the arts in worship including iconography, dance and drama, a Georgia Baptist approach to the monastic disciplines and the ascetic life, and deep ecumenism and dialogue between Protestant & Orthodox Christians.

Led by Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili (Rep. of Georgia)
and Rev. Brad Berglund (USA)

Other Discovery Teams include:

Mexico (Tijuana), June 16 – June 25

Mexico (Mexicali), June 24 – July 1

Cuba, July 5 – 12

Bahamas and Jamaica, September 8 – 18

Cuba, November 1 – 8

Haiti, Dates, TBD



Or build your own Discovery Team!! Contact us for details!!

**Check out the Discovery Team website
for registration, training, and lots more information!**

www.discoveryteams.org

For more information:

call 1-800-222-3872, Jonathan Hilsher ext. 2367
or Angela Sudermann ext 2164.

Email Jonathan.Hilsher@abc-usa.org
or Angela.Sudermann@abc-usa.org.

*International Ministries, PO Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19428
Fax 610-768-2088*

ABCPartner\$ With Office Depot

American Baptist Churches has partnered with Office Depot Business Services to offer all of the American Baptist churches & affiliates significant discounts on office supplies, furniture, and technology products. ABC has negotiated very aggressive volume pricing, and any church or affiliate that participates in the ABC-Office Depot program receives that volume discount. The program offers many other benefits beyond the significant savings opportunity, as outlined below.

Organization Benefit\$

- Up to 75% or more off manufacturer's suggested retail price on core list items, plus very aggressive pricing on other catalog items.
- A core list of over 200 aggressively priced items – a list that can be completely or partially customized for your organization.
- Additional discounts available to high-volume purchasers.
- Next day delivery of in-stock products to most areas (orders placed by 5:00 p.m.).
- No minimum orders, no shipping and handling charges, no fees, no term or volume commitments.
- Store purchasing cards for last minute emergency purchases at Office Depot retail stores.

More Information

For more information, including specific pricing, contact Doreen Dierolf, Business Development Manager of Office Depot at 1-800-334-2447, ext 3308, or by email at ddierolf@officedepot.com. To open an account with Office Depot under this ABC program, download the Registration Form in PDF format from www.abc-usa.org.

\$ A V E S O M E \$ \$ \$ \$

**Investment Report for 4th
Quarter of 2005 now available
on the ABCRM website.**

View the new report at [http://
www.abcrm.org/communication/
regional_financial.htm](http://www.abcrm.org/communication/regional_financial.htm)

Please include me on your mailing list for church newsletter. I will appreciate receiving either hard copy or e-copy. Thanks!

Ingrid Dvirnak
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Cheyenne, WY 82009
ldvirnak@abcrm.org

ABCRM Transitional Executive Board to Meet at Eaton Terrace February 16-18

The Region Board will meet at Eaton Terrace in Lakewood, CO on Thursday evening, February 16. The session will continue until midday on Saturday. Please pray for the Region leadership as they work together during these days.

Eaton Terrace Residences provides a congregate, subsidized housing program to seniors 62 years and older. Eaton Terrace II offers affordable, coordinated, 24-hour access to staff assistance in a residential setting to seniors 62 years and older.

Someone You Should Know . . .



Patricia L. Hunter
Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board
Member Service Representative for ABCRM

Pat is available for consultation with individuals and congregations.

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