



July 15, 2006

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

2006 Gathering to Offer Opportunities for Discovery

You're aware of the dates:
October 20-21.

You've been introduced to
the speaker: **J. Alfred Smith
Sr.**

You know the hosts: **New
Hope Baptist Church of Den-
ver, 3701 Colorado Boulevard,
Denver. Housing and some
meetings will be at the
Radisson Hotel, Denver,
Stapleton Plaza, 3333 Quebec
Street in Denver.**

You may even remember the
theme: **"Got Water?"**

And now we want you to know
about the **Discovery Sessions**
that will be available during
this year's Gathering. Topics
and facilitators include the
following:

- **Discovering God through Baptist Identity/James Peters, Jr.** This class will examine with simplicity and clarity the basics of Baptist identity. It will explore the beliefs and faith that stem from our Baptist roots and will assist participants in understanding and living out their rich heritage.

- **Discovering God through Caring for the Caregiver/Kathy Bird-DeYoung.** When caring for someone else, caregivers find it difficult to make time for themselves. In this session, participants will discover the biblical basis for self-care, discuss common challenges of caregiving, and learn strategies for self-care while caring for another.

- **Discovering God through Church Administration/Cheryle Messenger.** All administrative assistants and church secretaries are invited to attend this discovery session. Come and discuss the joys, expectations, and frustrations of the profession. This will be a get-acquainted session; participants will explore the benefits of having follow-up gatherings.

- **Discovering God through Conflict Transformation Skills/Arlene Bowie.** Conflict is a normal human interaction. Yet, how do we as church leaders handle these conflicts in a way that is honoring to God and edifying to all involved? This session will offer an overview of a longer workshop in conflict transformation that your church can implement. *(cont. on p. 2)*

Inside Information

In this issue of RMAB, you will find articles about our ministry and mission:

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**Myers Preparing to Return
to Bulgaria
and more. . .**

Discovery Sessions...

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- **Discovering God through Becoming a Praying Congregation/Jane Vennard.** Prayer is often a low priority in our churches. Participants in this session will learn how a congregation can become a place where people talk openly about prayer, sharing their experiences, questions, and doubts as they wrestle with what prayer means in the Christian life.

- **Discovering God through the Stephen Ministry.** The Stephen Ministry is a confidential, lay-caring ministry grounded in Jesus' command to love one another. The ministry is named after Stephen, one of the first deacons in the early Christian church, commissioned by the apostles to care for the needs of people in the Christian community.

- **Discovering God through Strategic Planning/Bill Brackett.** If you have never tried a planning process before, attend this session. Bring all the voices to the table, empower your team, learn tools that give both staff and congregation a roadmap to the future with benchmarks and evaluation. Begin now to make change happen.

- **Discovering God through Worship/Mike Williams.** Avoid the worship wars! This Discovery Session will give participants practical ideas and motivation to implement worship changes which will appeal to the pre-boomer demographic, while also being embraced by those who favor traditional worship styles and practices.

Registration materials are coming to your church soon or available online at <http://www.abcrm.org>

RMAB 7/15/06

Christian Leadership That Makes a Difference

The following is an excerpt from my book, *In His Service*:

“I remember attending an election rally in Chatsworth. It was a summer evening. I told my wife, Eva that I would be going to the Chatsworth Stadium to listen to Nelson Mandela. I managed to get a seat on the ground. The stadium was packed, mainly with Indians from Chatsworth. Several busloads of Africans later arrived. As they made their way from the car park, they sang freedom songs. We all waited anxiously for the arrival of Nelson Mandela. It had begun raining lightly. I did not have an umbrella but this did not deter me as I was determined to catch a glimpse of this world famous man. Anyway the light rains felt so appropriate for such an occasion. On the one hand, it seemed as if the rains were watering the new seeds of hope being planted in our country, and on the other, it was as if the rain was gently washing away old hurts, bitterness, struggles and tears.

... as I sat there in that stadium, [I realized] I was in the company of a great leader, a leader who promoted forgiveness, reconciliation, and working together in spite of having been unjustly imprisoned for 27 years. I listened attentively to his speech where he called for national reconciliation and invited us to help build a new South Africa. I left the stadium with a new determination to make a difference in the lives of people.”

The many pressing demands of most leaders take them away from the relational element in leadership. So much time is spent on vision casting, meeting deadlines and attending board meetings that very little time is spent on building healthy relationships with their teams or colleagues. I recently read a book by a world renowned author on leadership, but I was disappointed at how little emphasis was placed on human relationships. Many of his principles are noteworthy and have proven to yield great results. In addition, many of the examples of men and women cited in this book have made significant contribution to the business and the corporate worlds, yet somehow it felt incomplete because the relational aspect was missing.

The leader of a corporation, business, or organization without Christ will go about his or her work with a goal to make the company bigger and better. However, for the Christian leader, this should not be the only goal. S/he will need to make a difference. Christian leaders should take moments along their paths to touch the lives of people and influence them in positive ways. They should work to build up those around them and pick them up instead of putting them down. They should work to be a healing and calming balm in a world that seems to always be severely stressed.

Let's take our cue from Christ. In addition to his many ministries and miracles, he took time to care for the widow, embrace the toddler, and lovingly lead his disciples.

Rodney Ragwan, Global Mission Partnership Specialist and Doctoral Student at Palmer Theological Seminary in Philadelphia



Rock Springs Calls Bi-Vocational Pastor

First Baptist Church of Rock Springs, WY has called their new pastor, Lori Dvirnak Lundblad. June 18th was her first official Sunday; however, she had preached at the church several times previously. Lori will be a bi-vocational pastor.



Pastor Lori grew up on a cattle ranch in North Dakota where she attended a small American Baptist church. It was there she first learned of Jesus Christ and God's love for all people. During her high school years, she began to sense a call to some type of Christian service, which led her to attend the University of Sioux Falls (USF). She graduated from USF with BA degrees in Religion and Psychology. While attending USF, she served as spiritual life coordinator, was active in theater productions, and in STEP 1, a ministry of encouragement.

It was also at USF that she met Martin Lundblad whom she married a few weeks after graduation. Soon after their marriage, they moved to

Philadelphia, PA where Lori attended Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. She served as seminary intern at First Baptist Church of Malvern, PA for two years. As seminary intern, she led the youth group, drama ministry, assisted in pastoral care, and worked in several other ministries as the church began to experience revitalization.

After seminary graduation, she accepted the call to the Baptist Church of West Chester, West Chester, PA as Pastor of Youth and Christian Education. During her time there, the youth group grew in numbers and in spirituality, a second contemporary worship service was born, and a children's ministry focusing on using the creative arts to experience God was developed. They made the difficult decision to leave that ministry when their first son, Micah, was born a year and a half ago.

Lori and her husband, Marty, moved to Wyoming in 2005. Marty, a Wyoming native, is employed as a computer DBA with Union Telephone in Mountain View, WY. They now have two sons; Ben was born in Wyoming and is three months old. They live in Lyman, WY.

Deb Adkinson, a member of FBC/Rock Springs, says, "We are looking forward to a rewarding time under her guidance and pastoral care! Please pray for Pastor Lori and our church."

Wyoming Women Gather in Lander



AB Women from across Wyoming met at the First Baptist Church of Lander on June 16-17. They worshiped together, studied together, prayed together, ate together, and were inspired by each other to continue doing God's work.

Alicia Luquin, national ABW Ministries Coordinator of Personal Development, encouraged the women with a study of Romans 12: 9-13 which reflected the theme: *Born to Be Wild About Jesus*.

The highlight of the conference came when it was decided to spend \$3000 above the budget that had accumulated over time. These extra funds will be going to Camp WYOBA, scholarship recipients, Curtis Park Community Center, and our special interest missionaries.

State officers were installed at conference to continue the work into the future. These officers are: President, **Barbara Vinzant**; Secretary, **Ann Orndorff**; Treasurer, **Dorothy Beatty**; Mission and Service Coordinator, **Cynthia Rigby**; Church and Community Coordinator, **Mary Ann Golden**; Personal Development Coordinator, **April Johnson**; White Cross Coordinator, **Ann Chladek**; Love Gift Coordinator, **Kay Harvey**; Conference Coordinators, **Linda Roller and Bonnie Wilhelm**; and *Baptistar* Editor, **Jenita Calton**.

Jenita Calton

COME . . . AND BE REFRESHED!

Information packets are being mailed to your church office. Ask about it at church!



2006 GATHERING October 20-21

Got Water?
John 4:13-14

Wyoming Cluster Plans Fall Gathering

The Wyoming Cluster will hold a gathering at Camp WYOBA on September 15th - 16th for the purpose of working, worshiping, and fellowshiping together. Several work projects will be available on site. Recreation will be interwoven during the weekend as well. Additional information and details will follow later.

Please put this event on your calendar and promote this gathering. It will be a fun and relaxing time to meet and make new friends from across the big state of Wyoming.

New Judson Resources for our diverse American Baptist family

Children's Choir Curriculum from Urban Ministries, Inc. focuses on teaching children the spiritual and traditional songs of the African American church. There is also a series of adult Bible studies based on African American spirituals.

Estudios Biblicos LifeWay offers materials for Spanish-speaking children from preschool through school-age children.

Additional titles have been added in the *Just Add Kids: Pick Up 'n Do* series for large/small group Sunday schools.

Acquire the Fire teen devotional magazine is a quarterly resource for teens.

The Encyclopedia of Practical Ideas is helpful for those working with any type of small group.

Women to Walk With is a contemporary Bible study series for women.

In addition, Judson offers resources for teaching and reaching "tweens."

1-800-4-JUDSON or
www.judsonpress.com

A Year of Transition for Camp WYOBA



Camp WYOBA, situated on Casper Mountain south of Casper, WY has been in existence for almost 75 years. It is a beautiful place with lodgepole pine trees reaching tall into the heavens and a small creek running through the middle of the grounds. There are log cabins, a chapel, a dining hall, nurse's station/cabin and an athletic field where kids of all ages play and have time to re-energize.

This year is a transition year for the camp. Camp WYOBA is the only camping facility ABCRM owns and a change in management is in process. The WYOBA Board is working to take over the on-site management, which would include paying all bills locally. This year, however, ABCRM is still paying the bills as we continue to work to get all the details in place to take over this aspect as well.

The camp staff for the summer has been hired. Zach Becker is the Camp Administrator/Maintenance person. He hit the ground running and hasn't quit. Jackie Bruner is the cook; Jesse Martinez is her assistant. Shereen Mosier works in the camp office every day from 9:00 a.m. until noon, keeping track of the

financial records and being a receptionist for the camp.

American Baptist camps are scheduled as follows:

- **Senior High** (*Barbee Stanfield, Director*) was held July 9-15.
- **Junior High** (*Sylvia Hansen and Deanna Dyer, Directors*) July 16-22.
- **Junior Camp** (*Eric Moorhouse, Director*) July 23-29.
- **Primary Camp** (*Liz Adams, Director*) July 30-August 2.
- **Conference on Grace** (*Doug Carr, Director*) August 18-19.

If you would like to send kids to one of the remaining camps, contact Shereen Mosier at 307-234-6240. She will forward registration forms. You may also download camping forms from http://www.wyoba.org/baptist_camps.html. If you are interested in the Conference on Grace, please contact Calvary Baptist Church in Cheyenne, WY (307-634-4198). If you want to visit the site, please call Shereen at the camp office. Visiting just requires a notification that you will be there so food can be prepared with you in mind.

Our God is good and has blessed us with a place of peace and tranquility set in the middle of the craziness of our world. It is our hope that the camp will continue to operate long into the future. Donations for the facilities are always welcome. Send them through your church, marked "WYOBA Facilities."

*Deanna Dyer, Chair
WYOBA Board*

Campers Enjoy New Experiences at Quaker Ridge

Many questions faced the leaders as they prepared for the first year of camping without the resources of Black Forest Camp and Conference Center. Who would coordinate the camps? Where should it be held? How can we appeal to a new generation of potential campers?

After exploring many location options, Quaker Ridge Camp near Woodland Park, CO was selected as the site for the 2006 Front Range Camping program. Factors contributing to this decision included its location (near BFCCC) and the improved facilities available to us. One of the potential drawbacks of using Quaker Ridge was that all camps had to be held simultaneously in order to make the camp financially viable.



From June 19-24, American Baptist campers and volunteers gathered at Quaker Ridge Camp for a new camping experience. Over 90 campers participated in the camping program during the week.

Quaker Ridge outdid themselves in preparing for the week of camp by adding a brand new low ropes course, air rifles, archery, and horseback riding. The consensus among campers, however, was that the swimming pool was the best addition to the summer camping program for American Baptists.

In addition to these activities, the older campers also went rock climbing at the Garden of the Gods, repelling at Cheyenne Canyon and white water rafting down the Arkansas River.

The theme for the week was *J. C. Crew*. Each age group explored what it meant for them to be committed disciples of Jesus Christ. Several campers recommitted themselves to following Jesus and a few others made first time professions of faith. This information will be forwarded to their home churches for followup.

At the end of the week, the campers were asking for more time at Quaker Ridge. That's always a good sign!

The leaders for the week were:

- **Lynnette Thayer** (American Baptist Church/Fort Collins), New Adventure Coordinator;
- **Sylvia Hale** (FBC/Colorado Springs), Elementary Coordinator;
- **Tom Wheeler** (FBC/Fort Morgan), Pastor for New Adventure and Elementary;
- **Becca Giffin** (FBC/Loveland), Middle School Coordinator;
- **Clint Walker** (FBC Colorado Springs), Middle School Pastor;
- **Artie Power** (North Parkersburg Baptist, Parkersburg, WV), High School Coordinator/Pastor;
- **Emily Thomas** (Woodmoor Community), Mountain Bike Coordinator;
- **Margo Keur** (Lake Avenue Baptist/Pueblo) Nurse;
- **Karen Bradfield** (FBC/Longmont), Nurse

Mike Oldham, Ministry and Mission Coach, Southeast CO/NM and Western Slope



69th Annual ABW Ministries Conference Held in Fort Collins

The 69th annual conference of the American Baptist Women of Colorado was held June 9-11 at American Baptist Church in Fort Collins. The women of the Northern Association joined with the women of Fort



Collins to provide hospitality. Of the 111 registrants, 35 were first-timers.

The 2006 Conference Committee worked hard to provide a worthy conference offering spiritual nourishment, mission information, fun, and Christian fellowship. Fran Lambert and Betty Moseley served as conference co-chairs.

Eight AB Girls were among this year's conferees. They interacted with the adults and had special sessions and activities of their own, including workshops, crafts, discussions, and a swimming/pizza party. (They are pictured above during a skit.)

Mission education was a priority for the conference planners as evi-

denced in the theme, *Women Impacting the World. . . in and through Missions*. Terry Myers (Bulgaria), Judy DeRolf (Japan) and Ruthann Stevenson (International Ministries) were the featured speakers. They also presented workshops and delivered the sermon during Sunday morning's worship time.

Fellowship was an important piece of the conference as well. Someone mentioned that even though her own mother was ill and she was an only child, she felt the love of her Christian sisters and mothers at the conference. No wonder one of the conferees has been returning each year for 54 years.

Jackie Arnold, President Colorado ABW Ministries

The Conference of the Teddy Bears

by Grace Merkey
June 11, 2006

*A bear is here; a bear is there.
Look, the bears are everywhere.
Some are big,
and some are small.
Some are sitting by the wall.
In fact, 'most anywhere
you look,
A bear has found a cozy nook.
The bears who sit
upon the pews
Should be taught to tithe
and pay their dues.
With these bears
can we bear to part?
They will bring joy
to some child's heart.
So we'll send them off
with a prayer.
The space they leave will seem
quite bare.*

This poem expresses the sentiments of many who attended the 2006 Colorado ABW Ministries Conference. Truly, it may be remembered by many as the "Conference of the Teddy Bears." The Teddy Bear Project was a smashing success with 825 total animals being donated by American Baptist women from across the state. The donations were given to A.J. and Nathan Myers to take to kids in Bulgaria, the Loveland Police Department, the Larimer County Sheriff's Department, Mountain Vista Nursing Home, Curtis Park Community Center, and the Loveland Hospital.

To view more conference photos, visit <http://www.abcrn.org/ministries/2006ABWIMCOpics.htm>



Colorado Springs' FBC Sends Twelve to Gulfport



First Baptist's mission team of 12 left Colorado Springs in shifts with the goal of arriving in Gulfport, MS by Sunday evening, April 23rd. Work commenced the following morning.

Each day we had a simple breakfast followed by a 7:00 a.m. planning meeting. Our project home for the first day required a lot of sweeping, interior primer and finish painting, along with completion of the siding and soffit material. Most of the simple work had been done, but the complex siding work was not yet started. (This was the case during all our time in Gulfport.) At this point God intervened, teaming us up with Doug Johnson from Parker, CO. Although Doug was volunteering alone, he swiftly assimilated into



our group, becoming our invaluable team leader. About half of our group had the construction savvy to get the job done, while the rest of us filled in as painters, go-fers, cleaners, and general laborers. For the jobs

assigned to us, there was plenty of labor to go around.

There is very little in the way of a material control system. A large trailer full of tools and supplies is at the church site, along with piles of lumber and donated paint, but the volunteer teams frequently sent go-fers to hunt for materials. At some locations we would then discover the very supplies that we had just purchased. The immensity of this recovery project is unfathomable!



We were glad to join with St. James' congregation for Bible study and worship on Wednesday evening, with a featured guest musician from N. Carolina. This

gentleman had written a poignant ballad about the hurricane, which he sang while accompanying himself on his guitar, to much nodding of heads and many tearful faces.

One of the women from the church coordinated our dinner meals. We were very well fed!

At each work location we received appreciation from the residents and neighbors. Everywhere we went, we felt a sense of compassion for all the trauma and displacement still being experienced.

As a team, we are grateful to have had the opportunity to serve as short-term missionaries helping others take small steps toward recovery. In the midst of all the devastation, there is a growing sense of hopefulness and encouragement as people continue to pick up the pieces of their lives and move forward.

Moe and Barbara Graham

Schweissings Transition to Bahamas

As you can imagine, the last two months have been a very hectic transition from the States back to the Bahamas. We spent the month of May packing and storing the contents of our apartment in Denver before flying back to the Bahamas on Memorial Day. The month of June has simply been a reversal of this process: house hunting, emptying out our storage unit, and beginning the process of unpacking. Unfortunately, the housing market in Nassau is much tighter than when we first moved here five years ago, so we are currently residing in a temporary, out-of-the-way location that we hope to be out of by the time school starts in September. In the meantime, we are living in the midst of piles of boxes, trying to unpack as little as possible so as to make things less complicated when we actually move to a long-term location.

As for our ministry, we've had the opportunity to worship at a number of the churches that we previously worked with and are beginning to renew old acquaintances. This, of course, has made us anxious to get past the chores of settling in so that we can give our full attention to ministry.

Please keep us in your prayers as we continue our search for permanent housing located near the churches where we minister. And please update your address books!

**Daniel and Estela Schweissing
American Baptist
International Ministries
SB-51486 Nassau,
New Providence
The Bahamas**

New Address

Myers Preparing to Return to Bulgaria

As we prepare to return to Bulgaria on July 31 to begin our second term of service with International Ministries, we want to take this opportunity to thank each of you for all you have done to support our family and our ministry in Bulgaria. We have enjoyed getting to see many of you throughout the year and want to thank you for the generous hospitality we have enjoyed in many ABCRM churches. We have been well-fed, well-housed, and especially well-loved during our time of home assignment! For those of you with whom we did not connect, you will just have to come see us in Bulgaria!



Our time on home assignment has passed quickly. We found this past year to be both incredibly stressful and exceedingly rewarding. Traveling so much and being in a different place every week is emotionally and physically taxing, but we are always energized by visiting churches and sharing with mission-minded folks around the country. God always provided a special measure of encouragement and energy just when we needed it! It has been a blessing to see many old friends again and to meet new ones. We know many of you have been praying for and supporting our ministry in Bulgaria during the past five years, and we thank you.

As we come down to our last few weeks in the United States, we are beginning to anticipate our return "home"—to Bulgaria. We look forward to staying connected with all of you in the Rocky Mountain Region while in Bulgaria through e-mail (myersbulgaria@msn.com) and our Missionary Partnership Team. (For more information about our MPT, go to <http://www.abcrm.org/mission/missionaries.htm>.)

Our door is always open to visitors and mission teams. Your church can plan a life-changing experience for your members with a work trip to Bulgaria! Just contact us if you are interested. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to prepare for our return.

*Tom and Terry Myers
Missionaries to Bulgaria
International Ministries*



MPT members: (standing left to right) Gordon Thayer, Maggi Susman, Mary Beth and Bill Mankin, Kerry Hassler, Dan Lambert; (seated) Lynette Thayer, missionaries Terry and Tom Myers, and Fran Lambert.

Safe Haven Summer Camps for Russian Children



As you read this, our Russian Missions missionaries and indigenous volunteers are

inviting at-risk children and teenagers to one of our free Safe Haven Summer Camps scheduled throughout Russia from early June through the end of August. A week of summer camp can change the life of a child or teenager forever!

These children and young people are marginalized by society—at-risk children who are unloved, physically challenged children, orphans or kids from troubled family situations—children and young people who most need to hear the Good News of the Gospel. For Russian children, one week of summer camp can give a lifetime of hope as they discover God's love, learn from God's Word and grow in faith.

Thousands of Russian children have signed up for one week of free camp. God is ready to use us. God has equipped us and has given us a generation of children ready and waiting to hear. You can be a part of this camping ministry by praying for these children throughout the year, and especially during their time with us this summer. We will also appreciate your financial support. Thank you for your ongoing support of Russian Missions.

Pastor Vitali

vitali@russianmissions.org
www.russianmissions.org

Ottawa University Names New President

Fred Snow stepped into the president's office at American Baptist-related Ottawa University in Ottawa, KS on July 1. He previously served at Norwich University in Vermont for ten years as vice president, dean of online graduate programs, dean of distance education and new business initiatives, director of the MBA program, and tenured associate professor. As proven by his work at Norwich, Snow brings well-honed leadership and organizational skills to Ottawa University.

"We believe Dr. Snow is a strong leader who will drive the expansion of our educational programs while being devoted to academic quality. He is a person of faith who will demonstrate strong Christian values in his leadership of the University," said Patricia Wolf, chair of the Board of Trustees and chair of the Presidential Search Committee.

"With the tremendous dedication and hard work of those within the Ottawa University organization, a fine table has been set. We will now leverage the past successes into a significant strengthening, improvement, and expansion of this organization," stated Snow. "I am pleased to be a part of this hard working and dedicated team. I am humbled that they have asked me to lead them, and I am excited about our opportunities."

Founded in 1865, Ottawa University (<http://www.ottawa.edu/>) is a comprehensive, nonprofit educational institution affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA.

IM Xtreme Teams Travel to Bolivia and Brazil

Through International Ministries' Xtreme Team Program, cross-cultural mission service is an adventure for American Baptist young adults. Acting Executive Director, Charles Jones, said "We are pleased young people can express their faith, explore mission, and examine other cultures in depth through the Xtreme Team ministry of IM. I am sure these young adults will come back excited about the opportunity to bring God glory through this mission experience."

This summer marks the ninth anniversary of the Xtreme Team. Since 1998, teams have engaged nearly 150 young adults, ages 19 to 29, in seeking where and how God may use them in global mission.

Brianna Berglund of Centennial, CO is a member of the Bolivia team. Team members are "Xpected to Xpress" so watch for her written response in an upcoming issue of *RMAB*.

Both teams participated in orientation at Judson College, Elgin, Ill., from June 28 - 30, before departing for their mission destinations. Teams travel from July 1 - 27. After debriefing sessions, they will share their experience at the World Mission Conference at Green Lake, WI, July 29 - August 5.

Team members post regular online journals, photos and slideshows to highlight their Xperiences throughout the trip. To follow the adventures of this year's teams online, visit www.xtremeteamonline.org.

Missionaries in Lebanon Safe After Beirut Bombing

International Ministries (IM) has confirmed missionaries Dan and Sarah Chetti and volunteer Jennifer Wallace are safe in the Middle East country of Lebanon following Israeli air strikes Thursday, July 13, on the capital city of Beirut. The Chettis serve at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut. Jennifer Wallace, from the First Baptist Church in Hamilton, OH, is currently a volunteer at the seminary.

IM staff is in continuing contact with Wallace, the Chettis, and the seminary. Reid Trulson, IM's area director for Europe and the Middle East, is urging American Baptists to be in prayer for our personnel, the students and staff of the seminary, as well as the people of Lebanon and Israel.

The Chettis are the first International Ministries missionaries in Lebanon. This is an exciting new opportunity to be involved in ministry in the Middle East.

Daniel teaches theology classes and provides administrative assistance to the academic dean at the school. For the past year, Daniel has also been actively involved in mentoring and ministering with a Sudanese congregation that gathers at Fanar Baptist Church in Lebanon. Sarah helps with the development and organization of the seminary's library.

Information from IM's website

To learn more about the Chettis' work in Lebanon, visit <http://www.internationalministries.org/profiles/profile.asp?id=548>.

ABCRM and True Light Baptist Team Up to Bring National Artists to "Gospel on the Green"

Performers from far and near will take center stage in Montbello during the jam-packed weekend of August 18-20. "Worship Without Walls" is sponsored by ABCRM and True Light Baptist Church, located at 14333 Bolling Drive in Denver. The event, aimed at reaching youth, families, and community members of the Metro Denver area, will feature a host of comedic, dance, and musical performances from culturally diverse ministries in and around the area.

"Worship Without Walls" will be the fourth major initiative for youth in our Region during 2006. Others include camping opportunities at Quaker Ridge and WYOBA and the Gulf Mission Trip.

The weekend will kick-off on **Friday, August 18th at 8:00 p.m.** in the church sanctuary with a **Christian 'Light' Club** for teens featuring Jive Records Gospel Hip Hop Recording Artist BB Jay.

On **Saturday, August 19th**, participants will move to the church grounds for **Gospel on the Green featuring Tonia Hughes of the Grammy and Stellar-Award Nominated Excelsior Choir**. Bring lawn chairs and enjoy a wide variety of performers of varying ethnicities while taking in an array of food vendors, non-food items, and more. **Kidz Corner** will offer children activities such as pony rides, face painting, inflatable amusements, and a puppet show just for starters!



The climax of the weekend celebration will be held indoors on **Sunday, August 20th** with a **'Worship in the Walls – Out the Box' service at both 8:00 and 11:00 am.**

Pastor William Golson, Jr., founder of True Light Baptist Church, says the weekend of events will help to strengthen the church's presence in the community. He states, "Although there have been many worthwhile events in our community, this one will be unique in that the outreach will be multi-cultural, diverse in spiritual persuasions, and appeal to a broad spectrum of ages."

The weekend is free and open to the public. For more information, call the church at 303/375-0754 or 303/380-0396.

American Baptists Respond to Withdrawal of Pacific Southwest

In their June meeting, General Board members of American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) approved an addition to the denomination's Standing Rules that will accommodate those churches of the former Pacific Southwest (PSW) Region that may choose not to follow that Region's impending withdrawal from ABCUSA. The change in effect approves an interpretation of the rules to allow churches in the withdrawing Region to maintain a "covenanting relationship" with ABCUSA for up to 24 months during a transition to another Region or membership in a new organization affiliated with the national body.

The PSW Region's board of directors voted May 11 to leave ABCUSA because of a long-standing disagreement focused mainly on implementation of the national body's stance on homosexuality. Its withdrawal is to become effective November 1, but the region has already changed its name to Transformation Ministries.

ABCUSA General Secretary A. Roy Medley told General Board members that recent discussions with the Region's leaders have been conducted "in a spirit of not wanting to do each other any harm, in seeking to bless one another even in separation." National and regional officers are engaged in working out details of the separation, including such matters as disposition of property and status of pastors, he said.

"We continue to work for clarity on issues and resolution of them," he said, noting that the American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles (ABCLA) has been helpful in providing "watch care and oversight" for churches that may remain American Baptist.

Associate General Secretary C. Jeff Woods said it is not yet known how many of the former PSW's 272 churches may decide to keep their current national affiliation. Just over half of those churches took part in an April referendum that preceded the May vote by the directors to withdraw. Woods said a new Association of American Baptists in the Pacific Southwest (ABPSW) is contemplated, with an informational meeting this fall and a formal organizational meeting next spring.

When the PSW withdrawal was announced, Medley noted that "though the vote was not unanticipated, we had hoped and had made many efforts to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

American Baptist News Service

"Baptists have always faced the issue of the proper balance between autonomy and interdependence, between the I and the we. What ought to be evident to everyone is that neither pole of that continuum can be collapsed. Autonomy and interdependence must always be in play with one another for there to be authentic Baptist expression."

A. Roy Medley

Change Begins with Choice

Any day, we can choose to make changes. Any day, we can begin a new habit. Any day, we can learn something new by opening our mind to new knowledge. Any day, we can start the process of life change. We can do it today, or next week, next month, or next year. The choice is ours.

Or we can choose to do nothing. If the idea of having to change makes us uncomfortable, we don't have to do a thing. We can pretend instead of perform. We may choose rest over labor, entertainment over education, delusion over truth, and doubt over confidence. The choices are ours.

Shakespeare said it like this: "The fault is not in the stars, but in ourselves." We created our circumstances by our past choices, and we have the privilege and responsibility to make better choices—beginning today.

Your ABCRM staff is reading Stephen Covey's book, *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness*. Covey says that we have birth gifts that we need to open. The first (and maybe most important) birth gift is our freedom and power to choose. "This power and freedom stand in stark contrast to the mind-set of *victimism* and culture of *blame* so prevalent in society today" (page 41).

So, if we don't like the way things are, let's change them. The choice is ours. We invite you to explore *The 8th Habit* with us as we navigate the challenging terrain of the 21st century.

Ingrid Dvirnak

RMAB 7/15/06

J. Alfred Smith on Baptists Today

J. Alfred Smith, senior pastor of Allen Temple Baptist Church in Oakland CA will be the guest speaker at our 2006 Gathering. (For more information about Smith, see the May 15 issue of *RMAB* at <http://www.abcrm.org/communication.htm>.)

When asked what he thinks is the biggest problem facing Baptists today, J. Alfred Smith, Sr. replied: "Baptist today suffer from historical amnesia. They do not know what it means to be Baptist. They don't understand the Baptist principles of freedom. If they would study Baptist history, they would discover that the Baptists were born in protest—that Baptists historically did not support the empire.

"Baptists, in the beginning, stood over against the empire, but today Baptists worship the empire. They think that God is exclusively American, that God is the God of the *status quo*. There is among them a kind of neo-election theology that says, 'We have been chosen by God to superimpose our value system on the world.' So Baptists are very much in trouble today.

"Baptists don't understand that we have historically been for peace and justice. That's our biggest problem today."

Previously published in the Summer 2006 issue of Baptist Peacemaker, page 8.

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist is published by the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains

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Publication dates are the 15th and 30th/31st of each month.

Deadlines for submissions are the 10th and 25th of each month.

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