



The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

Leadership Lessons of Lent

For a number of years, I have practiced giving up something for Lent. During the spring of this year, I was beginning to think that my ambitions had finally exceeded my abilities. In previous years I had given up coffee, soft drinks, deserts, television, interstates, etc. This year, I decided to give up the unwanted brush and briars surrounding our home into which we had moved the previous year. This Lenten project proved to be a very different process than in previous years.



To accompany my physical activity, I read verses about branches, vines, trees, growth, etc. I drew particular insight from verses related to pruning. Unlike previous Lenten

seasons, when I could simply accomplish my task by avoiding the named item, 20 years of avoidance is exactly what had caused this problem. I realized that the Scriptures also taught that some problems will not go away by avoidance. I learned a great deal about removing unwanted brush; but even more about myself, about leadership, and applying new understandings of familiar passages of Scripture.

Near the end of the Lenten season, I had nearly accomplished my goal, except for one major problem. I had drug the unwanted brush down from the hillside, but had simply piled it around my house, which had only made it more visible rather than less visible. (Another leadership lesson I learned is that leaders normally make the problem worse before they make it better.) So, I entertained suggestions from friends as to how to complete the process of removing the brush entirely from the premises. The best suggestion, and the one that most closely aligned with my scripture reading, was to rent a "chipper" and turn the unwanted brush into wanted mulch for our yard. Little did I know that

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Inside Information

In this issue of special edition of RMAB, you will find articles written by your sisters and brothers on leadership.

Laity:

**Bill Brackett
Bill and Anne Mills
Lynette Blazier Thayer**

Clergy:

**William Golson, Jr.
Mary Beth Mankin
John Roberts
Kim Skattum
Keith VanArsdol**

Staff:

Wayne Dvirnak

PLUS

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Leadership Lessons...

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this decision would provide one final leadership lesson for the Lenten Season. Hadn't I learned enough already?

While I had run "solo" on this project up until the rental of the chipper, I decided that this final phase of the project must involve others; besides, I was getting worn out. I have a 19-year-old son and a 17-year-old daughter. My wife and I regularly feed a houseful of teenagers every Wednesday evening for "pasta night." "Cashing in" on our years of hospitality to teenagers proved helpful.

On the day of the chipper rental, six teenage boys showed up with pick-up trucks to help. The first task was to get the chipper up the hill. As self-appointed manager for the day, I suggested that we all pitch in and drag the chipper to the top of the hill and then walk it down the hill to get things started. Of course, this suggestion was refused. Even though my leadership abilities engender great respect in many other spheres of influence, this never seems to translate to my own family. Do you ever experience this problem?

My son and his friends quickly took over. Manual labor was never again considered. Two of them tried to pull the chipper up the hill attached to their trucks, but were quickly thwarted from making further ruts



in the grass (as a rain shower had come overnight). They all quickly concluded that my son's big tires on his newly acquired "dune buggy" would certainly do the trick. As I started to point out the mechanical difficulties related to the newly acquired vehicle, the least of which was the fact that this vehicle had no hitch attached to it, I was interrupted by a conversation among the boys that I will never forget.

In the span of five minutes, one knew where a hitch could be secured, another agreed to retrieve a grinder to cut a hole in the angle iron to attach the hitch, yet another where to get a drill to make a hole for the hitch, and still another a spot welder. Those remaining on site installed a "kill switch" because it

was believed that if the vehicle did start and go into gear (neither of which had happened since the acquisition) that the possibility of getting it back out of gear would present an even greater concern.

In 30 minutes, all returned with their supplies, attached the hitch, installed the switch, launched the vehicle, and watched the dune buggy pull the chipper to the top of the hill with "I knew this would work" looks on their faces. Their self-appointed and less-confident leader stood in awe. I had learned one more lesson in leadership from this Lenten project, this time from a new generation.

Everyone has a gift or talent to contribute. The only leader in the group is the one who knows the most at a particular moment. No one ever questions that it will not work, and all share in the celebration. As I reflect, that was the most important leadership lesson of all during the Lenten Season of 2006.

*C. Jeff Woods
Associate General Secretary
ABCUSA*



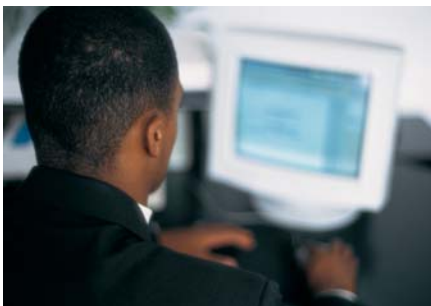
Jeff's Leadership Lessons...

1. Avoidance doesn't solve most problems.
2. Leaders may make the problem worse before they make it better.
3. A leader's abilities may not be respected by his/her own family members.
4. Everyone has a gift or talent to contribute.
5. The only leader in the group is the one who knows the most at a particular moment.
6. No one questions whether a proposed solution will work.
7. All share in the celebration.

The Pastoral Challenge: Moving from Management to Leadership

The church is a living organism and any living thing never remains the same. A living organism that does not change, in effect move, or become different, could be assumed dead. Some churches, while intended to be living organisms, by the dated methodology and lack of creativity and change expressed in them, are in essence “functionally” dead. The challenge before pastors is to keep churches in the process of growing, maturing, and remaining relevant in changing times, and in some cases to transform them once again into living organisms.

Many books have been written on the matter of change. Most are business models and assume, to some extent, the aspect of monetary motivation either in the maintenance of the business or in the hiring of capable staff, managers, etc., and they seem to assume the ability to secure the most competent help. The church (particularly, the small church) is in the unique position of not having either the economic or the personnel resources readily available. We have to work with what we have. Our employee base is often all volunteers, willing workers, but not always the most knowledgeable, or the most capable. We are often called to use “whosoever will.” This puts us in a unique



position in the matter of vision casting and implementing change. However, in spite of our uniqueness, we can glean principles from the business world that can help us to be better change agents.

While God has called us to do more leadership, we often find ourselves doing more management.

Although we are often relegated to the roles of managers, we are called to be leaders. While God has called us to do more leadership, we often find ourselves doing more management. This dilemma is reflected in Acts 6 where the disciples recognized the difference between management and leadership and said, “*It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.*” They established a diaconate that they might give themselves “*continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*” The result of their change in focus from management to leadership was that “*the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.*” They had to respond to a changing environment. In like manner, as pastors, we need to respond to our changing environ-

ment, particularly in the area of changing our focus from being managers to leaders, recognizing the need to change, and becoming effective change agents.

Pastors by calling are meant to be out front. Followers may see the problems, but they will usually wait for leaders to take the risks to bring about change. As pastors, we need to see farther than the congregants see, and see before they see it. We should take followers to places they would not tend to go on their own. We must be out front, but not so far in front of our congregations that they mistake us for the enemy and shoot us in the back. If we are going to succeed, we must continually be monitoring the spiritual climate of our churches and act in advance of critical changes occurring in society and our church environment.

*William Golson, Jr.
Senior Pastor
True Light Baptist Church
Denver, CO*



True Light Baptist Church and ABCRM Are Teaming Up to Bring National Artists to “Gospel on the Green” Aug. 18-20

More information available at <http://www.abcrm.org/ministries/youth.htm>

Youth Learning; Youth Leading

*Amazing grace, how sweet
the sound/That saved a wretch
like me. . . .*

Are these words to an old hymn or a new praise song? Both! The praise and worship movement appears to be going the way of rock and roll: it's here to stay! And it seems to be attractive to the youth of our Region.

Last summer a number of the youth from American Baptist Church, Fort Collins, were "caught" singing praise songs learned at camp. At that time it was decided that they should continue singing those songs during the school year and learn more songs. So once a month during the school year, during the second half of the worship service, the youth (3rd – 12th grades) met in the church basement for approximately 30 minutes of singing praise music with an acoustic guitar and an old fashioned overhead projector. The youth requested songs, led songs, and sang songs for each other. Behind a closed door, they sang what they wanted to sing, made mistakes, started over, changed keys, laughed at each other, and had an easy-going experience. They also shared their music with the rest of the church family twice during the year: at the Thanksgiving dinner and at their spring program.

Last spring it was decided to push our youth a little bit more. So this summer, twice a month, they are now leading praise music sessions after the regular worship service in our smaller chapel. Anyone interested in singing five or six praise songs or in supporting the youth is invited to join them. Words were



typed into the church's laptop computer and are now shown on a screen. A high schooler plays an amplified acoustic guitar and another high schooler runs the computer. The other youth stand up front and lead the singing.

Sometimes a youth will lead the group in prayer; one time a few of the youth shared a little about their experiences at camp.

Every session we learn something new, like who needs to be amplified, what songs work best, which songs need to be pitched lower. Every session we make mistakes and learn how to smile and move on. Every session we start "fresh" because a different combination of youth is there to lead. Every session more and more adults join us for the singing. (Their moral and prayer support are invaluable as the youth attempt to not only do something new in our church, but also learn how to take on leadership roles.)

Every session I am reminded that these youth are not only the church of the future—they are also the church of today! They will not do things the way you and I would. These youth will do new and exciting things, because

they have new and exciting options from which to choose. As adults we need to discern when to lead the youth, when to encourage or challenge them, and when to get out of their way and let them go for it!



Where will the American Baptist Church of Fort Collins go from here? Only time will tell, as we are just beginning to plan for the fall. So much depends on the risks the adults and youth are willing to take and the sacrifices the adults are willing to make for the youth. Stay tuned. . .and while you are waiting, what are the youth in your church doing?

*Lynnette Blazier Thayer
Lay Leader
American Baptist Church
Fort Collins, CO*

Formula for Leadership—99:1

I have just returned from a mini-vacation to my hometown. I learned on the trip of a crisis in the home church. The pastor allegedly fired the youth director without consulting with the board. People are leaving. The ministry is hampered. It is not really a matter of policy but rather of perceived authority.

According to an issue of *The Christian Century Foundation* magazine, the number one disruptive conflict in the church involves pastoral leadership style. (By the way, changes in worship style was number three.) As a pastor I have always wrestled with authority. Should the minister have it? Should he/she delegate it? Are pastors called to serve or to rule? Or both?

In order to appear prepared for this little writing assignment I did a Google search of “minister leadership styles.” Within 40 seconds I received twelve million responses. Evidently there is either great confusion or amazing clarity regarding the topic. Whatever the case, it continues to be a thorn in the flesh of churches and pastors.

One thing I know from my experience is that real authority does not come with the job description. It is earned with the people over time. There is correlation between how much a pastor loves the people and

how much the people trust the pastor. In my first encounter with a “master-pastor,” I was asked one very direct question to determine my readiness for ministry: “Do you love people”? Herein lies the secret to ministry. Do ministers love their people and do their people know they are loved?



Jesus revealed this truth in the story of the “pastor” who leaves the 99 attendees to seek the one absent. In doing so, the pastor did not neglect his duty but fulfilled it. As the 99 realized that the pastor would risk it all for each of them, they came to understand that love existed in their relationship. The authority to leave the many and seek the few rested in the love of the lost. In finding the

lost one, the pastor actually brought joy to the many.

Today many pastors get caught up in counting and recounting the many. If there are enough, one might ignore the few. But the truth is that each of the 99 eventually becomes the one. The joy of ministry is going after them. The pastor who goes and seeks lovingly will be given whatever authority he/she needs to serve the many.

Ministry is less about managing people and more about loving and serving them.

Ministry is much less about managing people and much more about loving and serving them. This is why I think it is important that a minister be called and surrender to ministry rather than select it as a profession. When we think of ourselves as professionals, we consider first how we can succeed. When we consider ourselves as servants, we already know that success is in loving God and those who need God most that day.

*Keith VanArsdol
Senior Pastor
Community Church
Moab, UT*



RMAB 7/31/06

Leadership Changes (since 6/15/06)

Kyle VanArsdol, Senior Pastor Molina Baptist Church
Molina, CO

Todd Olson, resigned
Hillcrest Baptist Church,
Arvada, CO

John Marshall, Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church
Casper, WY

Roger Harris, Interim Minister
First Baptist Church
Fowler, CO

Dwight Neuenschwander,
Interim Minister
First Baptist Church
Grand Junction, CO

Long-Term Pastor Leads FBC/Sterling

An interview with John Roberts

John Roberts is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Sterling, CO. In the interview that follows, he gives us glimpses into his leadership style and into the congregation he serves.

RMAB: How many years have you served as the pastor of FBC/Sterling?

JR: I've served God at FBC in Sterling since April, 1985, or just over 21 years.

RMAB: Please describe the congregation you serve.

JR: First Baptist is a loving multi-generational congregation with a wide diversity of stylistic and religious backgrounds. Most of the church does not come from a Baptist background, and many have no church background at all. By virtue of this, there is a very large diversity of expectations about what a church should be, which necessitates an accompanying commitment on the part of the church leaders to offer a very diverse program, in terms of Sunday School, worship, fellowship, and mid-week outreach.

RMAB: As pastorates go, yours is a long one. What are the ingredients that have created this partnership of 21 years?

JR: I see two primary contributing factors. First, the patience and love of the church is really quite extraordinary. The fact that they have "put up with" me all these years speaks highly of their ability to love unconditionally.

Second, I made a commitment to God long ago (and to the church) to pursue tenaciously what I believe God called me here to accomplish. We are not there yet, so I am still here.

RMAB: During these years, you've also had struggles to overcome. What did you learn during those times?

JR: The trials have indeed been diverse in nature, but two crucial lessons stand out. The first is a lesson that could be phrased in the words of Churchill's famous 1941 speech at Harrow School, namely that once you know what God wants you to do and/or pursue, "Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never—in nothing, great or small, large or petty—never give in . . ." The point is that if we allow difficulty to deter us from the manifest call of God, we will never accomplish anything of eternal value for the Kingdom of God.

The second lesson perhaps sounds very simple, yet I find it to be very profound, and it is this: there is always an answer in God's Word. When I have a problem, I need to seek God's answer in the Word before I seek it anywhere else. If God won't give me an answer, I'm wasting my time and deceiving myself to seek an answer anywhere else.

RMAB: Ministry at FBC/Sterling is going well right now and the church is growing. Did you have a formal visioning process to

arrive at the point where you are today?

JR: Well, yes and no. The process was not so much formal as it was just what we do in the Church Council. In 2004, the Council determined that what we were lacking was an effective Children's Ministry. We publicized this lack, and asked people to pray. Late in the year, a member of our church came to us and said she felt after much prayer that perhaps God was calling her to be our Children's Minister, very part-time. After more prayer and consultation with the Church Council, we called Mona Bowey in January, 2005. She has been serving in a part-time capacity since then, and there are plans to bring her on full-time this fall.

RMAB: Where are you investing your current energies and resources ?

JR: Currently I am working on a Doctor of Ministry degree in Church Growth and Evangelism through Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY, which is where I received my Master of Divinity degree in 1979, and where my daughter is pursuing a Master of Arts in Theological Studies. Much of the recent growth in our church may be attributed to God's blessing upon our efforts to apply the lessons of evangelistic intentionality I have learned in these classes.

Indeed, that one phrase, "evangelistic intentionality," is the rallying point God used to move us to begin

Awana in September, 2005. Several other elements in the life of the church have grown out of our increased efforts to be very intentional about evangelism. We have a long way to go, but we're moving that direction.

(Editor's note: look for an article by Mona Bowey about Awana and the church's growing Children's Ministry in a fall issue of RMAB.)

RMAB: How would you describe your leadership style?

JR: I didn't know I had a "leadership style." Seriously, this is the weakest area of my ministry. When I feel certain I have a clear leading from the Lord, I am very assertive. When I sense a personal need, I share that need. I make suggestions. I persuade. But I still feel like a poor leader.

One vignette highlights this. In June, 2005, during my first Dr. of Ministry class, comprised entirely of pastors, students were describing their churches. After I was done telling about my tenure here in Sterling, the professor said, "Tell us again, John, how long you have been the pastor at FBC in Sterling." When I told them I had been here 20 years, the professor responded, "Well, John, when are you going to quit whining and start leading?" It was one of those "come to Jesus" moments I will never forget, and I made a commitment on the spot to begin being more purposeful about leadership. So, although I'm not sure what my leadership style is, I'm certainly trying to lead.

RMAB: What has the congregation at FBC/Sterling taught you?

There is not enough time or space in the newsletter to answer this question, but here's a brief try: The congregation has taught me not to take myself too seriously. Nobody wants to follow someone who is stuck on himself. I have learned humility. I have also learned that failures to succeed in the past should never be used as excuses for failure to obey God in the present, or failure to trust God with the future. Finally, the congregation has taught me that every human being needs to know Jesus as his or her own personal Lord and Savior. If we give people everything, but don't give them Jesus, we've given them nothing.

RMAB: What advice would you offer a seminary graduate who is interested in serving as a pastor in ABCRM?

JR: Be sure you understand the history of your church. Find the high points, those places where God was obviously moving the church forward. Discover also the bad times, and see if you discern, with the Holy Spirit's help, what the causes were. Then ask God to show you God's vision for the church. Once you find that out, never give in. Gently, but tenaciously, love and lead people into what God has called them to become. And above all things, develop your prayer life and your personal study of God's Word. If you can't hear from God in prayer, and you don't know what God says, there's no point trying to lead a congregation.

RMAB: What else would you like your Region family to know?

JR: Well, it's more a series of questions than a statement:

Failures to succeed in the past should never be used as excuses for failure to obey God in the present, or failure to trust God with the future.

Do we really believe God has a calling for us as American Baptist Churches in the Rocky Mountains? If so, are we willing to sacrifice habit and our way of doing things for the sake of rediscovering and fulfilling that calling?

What about the lost people around our churches? How are we reaching out to them to share the Gospel with them?

Do we still believe, as our denomination stated in 1946, that "the New Testament [is] a divinely inspired record and therefore a trustworthy, authoritative, and all sufficient rule of our faith and practice"? If so, how does that affect what we do as churches?

Finally, are you and I willing to personalize these questions, and turn "Do we. . ." and "Are we. . ." into "Do I. . ." and "Am I. . .?"



Pictured with Pastor John on the left is Conner Polenz and on the right is Natalie Irick, two of the 110 children attending VBS the week of July 24-28.

“Be a light not a judge; a model not a critic”

As I have worked with groups in industry, community organizations, and churches, I have found there are four requirements that men and women must provide if they are to lead others. They are: **Security, Wisdom, Power and Guidance.** These are not original with me; in fact, I probably read them somewhere years ago. Nonetheless, they have proven to be integral tools for success.



Not long ago, a group of 25 conveners of local committees of an organization that spans the country gathered together to share ‘lessons learned’ and refocus their efforts for the coming year. The mission of the group is to help others help themselves. I have included a summary of their comments followed by my own questions and comments that may encourage you to test them out for yourself.

*“We are encouraged to provide **Security** for ourselves and for the committee members. One team saw providing a place for committee members to gather where they felt safe, like a coffee shop or other social gathering place rather than the office. When facilitating the meeting and choosing activities, seek to create an equal playing field whether from a supervision or gender perspective. Create an*

atmosphere that welcomes new ideas from new people.”

Whether we are a church or a Boy Scout troop, we must begin here. Do you feel safe in your environment? Do those with whom you work? You might be surprised when you listen for the answer.

*“We must provide **Wisdom** ourselves and within the group. Perhaps seek outside advisors to help the committee. Be honest. Admit to and learn from mistakes. Always evaluate results. Share knowledge. We must provide an Order of Succession including a solid orientation process.”*

Where does the knowledge come from for you? How do you ensure that there is clarity of history—not rumors of what came before? Is there an attitude of real listening to each other in the room during a meeting? Are there a blend and a balance of all the stakeholders in the room when decisions are being made?

*“We must provide **Power**. We must provide power for the team. One or two people can do a lot. One person is able to motivate the group and power to star—no matter how small. Our message is Power in itself.”*

Encouragement helps, but it is not enough! Clarity of roles and decision making are essential.

*“We must provide **Guidance** to the members of the team beginning with the recognition of people’s strengths. Seek out allied/similar groups and partners with similar goals and interests to learn from them. For the team, provide tools and identify resources including sharing your own experience and contacts. Look in and outside the box because both are good. Help the team set goals.”*

Here is where we must look deep within ourselves first. We can’t help others unless we are open to receiving help. Truly, what are our strengths and our areas for growth?

As you consider each of these tools remember: “Be a light, not a judge; a model, not a critic.” So often we choose to encourage change by being critical of what has come before. We talk of a different behavior for the team and are often the biggest offender on the team. Hold up those things that worked in the past and act as you would like others to act.

*Bill Brackett
Trainer/coach for
non-profit leadership
Laity at Calvary Baptist Church
Denver, CO*



Any Ol' Bush Can Burn

When we think of leaders, we think about people like Moses, David, Esther, Jeremiah, Paul, Mother Teresa, and Billy Graham. These outstanding individuals have impacted the lives of countless others. While we may never consider ourselves to be in that group of dynamic leaders, we all have opportunities to influence the lives of others. This means that we need to be attentive to those moments when we can impact the lives of those around us.

We have many experiences in life that help prepare us for leadership opportunities. I can picture David playing his harp as he spent lonely evenings and nights with his sheep. When Saul needed someone to soothe his troubled spirit, he called David. It was during this time that David became familiar with palace protocol which prepared him for the time when he would be king.

One day, when Moses was tending sheep, he received a dramatic call from God. He saw a bush that was burning, but it wasn't burning up. It was an incredible sight, a dramatic call to leadership. Now, the reality is



that most of us will not receive such a dramatic call. Sometimes God may draft someone through a burning bush, or a bright light, or an audible voice, but most of us feel the gentle tap in our spirit to God's direction.

A city council member was asked; "Why did you choose to run for office?" His response, "I was concerned about my kid's future, and I wanted to bring integrity to government."

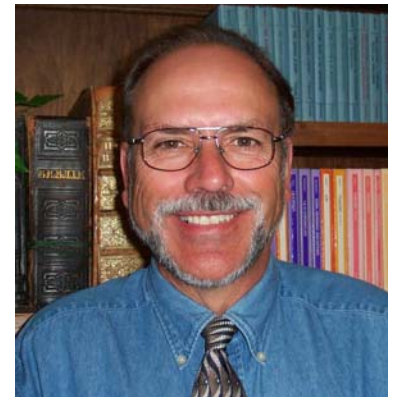
A high school coach was interviewed, "Why did you become a coach?" His reply, "Because I love kids and I love the game, and coaches can have a great impact."

A principal was asked what motivated him. His answer was, "I was

slightly insane, but a teacher is a leader who can cause change. I just had to do it."

When we feel the urge to make a difference and can see the changes we can make, then we shouldn't wait to see a burning bush, hear an audible voice, or some other miraculous sign before we agree to lead. We have been given a greater circle of influence than we can imagine, so let's use it. God may be exposing us to people, places, and ideas that will prepare us for even greater opportunities of leadership in the future.

*Wayne Dvirnak
Ministry and Mission Coach
Northern Front Range
and Wyoming*



ABCRM Department of Ministry to Short Course on Pastoral Care

The Department of Ministry is offering a short course on Pastoral Care. It meets requirements for Region ordination, but everyone interested is invited to attend. The instructors will be Jan McCormack and Gary Bowser.

The class is scheduled to begin with noon lunch on September 22 and end with lunch on September 24. It will be held at Foss Park, a beautiful retreat facility minutes outside of Denver.

The course will cost \$175. This amount includes the course, two breakfasts, three lunches, two dinners, and housing for two nights on site. More information will follow.

Questions?

Contact Nancy Darnell,
chair of the
ABCRM Department
of Ministry
(nrdarnell@fbc-boulder.org)
or
Wayne Dvirnak,
ABCRM Staff
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Some Pointers on Building Consensus



Building consensus within the group while not settling for the easy answers requires each person in the group to understand the scope of the problems being addressed as well as to envision what outcomes can be achieved. The consideration of alternate scenarios, each with a variety of assumptions and investments, can often lead to good discussions and enhance the thinking of all involved.

While achieving consensus is important, it is also essential that each person involved ask the tough questions. These include questioning assumptions, probing feasibility, identifying obstacles, and testing the relevance of the anticipated outcomes. All these activities will improve the success of achieving the desired goals.

Anne and Bill Mills
(see additional article on leadership on this page)

Effective Leadership Calls for Multi-faceted Approach

To be an effective leader, we need to understand and adapt to the organization's situation as well as to the skills and experiences of those with whom we are working.

- For instance, in some situations the primary responsibility of the group is *fiduciary*. This is particularly the case with a church's property committee or the Region's Investment Committee for the Ministry/Mission Fund. Here the primary objective is to use the organization's resources effectively and for the intended purpose.
- In other cases, the situation is *program*-oriented. The leader's responsibility is to implement within defined outcomes using allocated resources. Challenges often include broadening the support for the program(s) from outside the group and considering how to effectively use the available resources. Examples include Christian education committees and mission teams.
- In still other situations, the leader needs to help an organization define how it will move from its present situation to its preferred future. Examples include developing a *strategic* plan for a church to respond to its changing demographics or an organization such as the American Baptist Homes of the Midwest planning its future growth amidst the changing expectations and needs of its clients.

In most cases, the situation may require multiple approaches. It is important to understand the current situation and what is expected, and more importantly, what is possible to achieve.

When we assume a leadership role, we do *not* need to be an expert in the field in order to be effective. We *do* need, however, to prepare ourselves with some basic relevant knowledge. Good leaders will encourage others to participate who do have some of the specific skills and experiences to contribute to the group's work. In addition, experts can be sought out as needed to share their specific knowledge with the group.

Often the most effective leaders aren't operating as part of an organized group at all but, instead, are stepping into a leadership role having recognized an opportunity or a potential problem that needs attention. Being a catalyst in these situations can be personally satisfying. The techniques needed in order to be effective are the same, and the results just as important to an organization. Defining the needs, seeking expert help, identifying desired outcomes, and evaluating the available resources are common to all these situations.

Have you thought about how and where you can be a more effective leader?

Anne Mills, Chair, ABCRM Investment Committee, Ministry/Mission Fund
Bill Mills, Board Chair, American Baptist Homes of the Midwest (ABHM)
Laity, Calvary Baptist Church, Denver, CO

Leadership in the Church—the Body of Christ



My approach to leadership in the local church rests on the understanding of the church as the body of Christ, with all its members contributing their gifts to the body for its proper working. The letter to the Ephesians paints a vivid picture.

“I . . . beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3).

“[Christ gave gifts] . . . to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

While in the church we look to one another for various kinds of leadership, I suggest several important responsibilities of a church leader.

First, *model a Christian lifestyle of integrity and faithfulness*. Be real, allowing others to know one’s strengths and weaknesses. Be humble and prayerful; look with expectation to see where God is

working. Love one another. Effective leadership functions on the basis of trust.

Second, *lead by teaching*. Help people understand the biblical vision of God’s reign on earth and the church as the body of Christ in the world today. Help people mature in the Christian life and see the world through God’s eyes. Help them claim the purpose of the church.

Third, *lead by collaborating*. Get to know the members of your church and their giftedness, for the church needs the gifts of everyone. Expect the best of these co-workers and value their contributions. Include a variety of people in planning sessions. Be a good listener: hear people’s hopes and dreams; be open to hearing many points of view; listen carefully to people’s reservations and why. Discover the ideas that bring people together. Draw out people’s willingness to participate.

Be willing to state your own position. Speak the truth in love—and be willing to change your mind when new information warrants it. Communicate openly, clearly, and carefully, having regard for your own and others’ ideas and feelings.

Fourth, *build consensus*. Discover the common hopes and dreams of diverse members. Brainstorm ways to achieve the vision. Discover which ideas “click” with people and gain general support. When there is resistance to a new idea, talk more. Dialogue about both hopes and concerns. Recognize that the person with a concern may be the Spirit’s gift of helping the group avoid a serious problem down the road.

Recognize the power of synergy—people working together can create something greater than individuals could by themselves. A good leader helps people to plan and work together well. Create an environment where each person’s concerns are heard and views are understood. Help people to find mutually agreeable plans for action. People tend to support what they help create.

Fifth, *be an encourager*. Affirm the gifts that people have; encourage and empower them to use them in God’s service. Be appreciative of people’s efforts and faithfulness; acknowledge jobs well done, especially those “behind the scene” contributions.

To lead implies movement, growth, or change. It may take getting “unstuck” from the past, working through differences, and a concerted effort to seek God’s will for us. *But, speaking the truth in love, we will become more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church* (Eph. 4:15).

Mary Beth Mankin
Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church
Laramie, WY



An Accidental Pastor?

Leadership is no accident. I learned that the hard way.

I became the pastor of Crossroads Church in January of 1993 when our church body elected me the successor of Roland Taylor following his retirement from 29 years of leading, shepherding, and pastoring the church on 104th and Huron in Northglenn. I came to the church in August of 1982 to lead its music and youth program fresh out of college. At that time the church was enjoying a healthy steady growth rate in a suburban setting.

After its start with eight families in 1961, it was drawing a weekly worshipping congregation of 250 at two Sunday morning services by the time I came aboard. When Roland announced his retirement and asked me to consider taking the helm, I did so with excitement, fear, and expectation. I was excited about the idea of getting his big office. I was fearful of living up to the title "pastor." And I was expecting that the ship would sail on its own with little navigation. *What was I thinking!?*

It didn't take long to realize that the fine folks at Crossroads actually expected their pastor to lead them. They'd ask me about things like evangelism, outreach, visitation, and what color I thought we should paint the men's room. They expected me to have a ready answer to questions like, "Pastor, (it took me awhile to

get used to being called 'pastor;' in fact, they usually had to say it two or three times before I got the clue they were referring to me) is it ok to have grandma cremated?" or, "Pastor, does the New Testament require us to tithe?" or "Pastor, are you going to talk to that young couple who just started coming to church and let them know that around here we don't raise our hands when we sing hymns?"

I never asked for this job. I was interviewed for it. I was compared to other worthy candidates. But I never once kissed a baby asking the mother to vote for me. I was put up for a vote before a trusting congregation that resulted in my getting Roland's big office. I was an accidental pastor.

But, for most Christians, that notion of "accidental" doesn't fly. Those who called me "pastor" expected me to lead them. They had no illusions that I was called by accident or luck or good looks (which could have been possible back then, before I got bald and homely).

Within a few months of my installation service, we were growing at a steady rate. What began as a small family of 250 Christians in Northglenn expecting leadership, is now a bigger family of 1,250 weekly worshipping Christians at two campuses in both Northglenn and Thornton still expecting leadership.

I've learned a couple things about leading that have been less than easy to learn. Mostly because of loving, patient people and a good God, I humbly share with you my leadership bullet-points:

- You can't fix them, but you can love them...and loving them is enough.
- Operational question: "Is our community a better place because Crossroads Church is here?"
- Question everything. Ask, "Why do we do this?" "Is this productive?" "What's the purpose of this?"
- Bury dead things with respect. When a ministry is no longer effective, don't keep it alive with artificial respiration. Give it a proper burial.
- Let mission drive budget, not the other way around.
- Three critical, essential truths: 1) Creativity 2) Creativity 3) Creativity. Force yourself to be creative so that you won't bore people into comatose Christianity. The best way to be creative, I think, is to remember: "Creativity is NOT found in certainty. It is found in questions." (Sue Monk Kidd said it first.)
- Add value to the people you lead. Every time you're with them, leave them feeling valued.
- Know that God is God and you are not. God's Word is absolute and true. Teach it, live it, love it, and expect God to stand behind it.

*Kim Skattum, Senior Pastor
Crossroads Church
Northglenn, CO*



F.Y.I.

♻ The **ABCRM Investment Report for the second quarter of 2006** is available at http://www.abcrm.org/communication/regional_financial.htm

♻ The **Conference on Grace** will be held at Camp Wyoba on August 18 and 19 with early arrival available on Thursday, August 17. Space remains available.

♻ **Online registration for the 2006 ABCRM Gathering and Clergy/Spouse Event** is available at http://www.abcrm.org/ministries/gathering_reg.htm

Opportunities to Serve . . . Opportunities to Lead . . .

Needed: Strong Candidates for ABHM and BHA Boards

The American Baptist Homes of the Midwest (ABHM), through our owned and affiliated programs, serves over 3,000 people across seven states from Wisconsin to Colorado. We operate two campuses in Colorado: our downtown campus off Colfax (at Franklin and Park), including a health center and a HUD low income housing project; and our Wheat Ridge campus which offers a full continuum of care, including independent living, assisted living, health care and a “state of the art” Alzheimer’s unit. To provide these services ABHM has approximately 1,700 employees and a budget of \$70 million, making us a very significant part of our American Baptist-related caring ministries.

Our goal is “to embrace our Christian heritage and mission, seeking to create and encourage caring communities offering health care, housing, and supportive services to people of many ages, cultures and conditions. We endeavor to provide environments which nurture self-worth, hope and dignity.”

Governance is extremely important for healthy, mission-driven organizations. We need individuals on our ABHM Board, as well as on the Board of our Colorado subsidiary, The Baptist Home Association of the Rocky Mountains (BHA), who are not only committed to our

mission, but who also bring critical skills such as finance, business, health care, legal, and church leadership as we seek to be faithful and effective stewards of our resources. We seek boards that are diverse as to gender and ethnic representation and are geographically representative of the ABC Regions we serve.

As a normal process of turnover due to term limits and changes in personal plans, we will have several openings later this year as well in the next several years. In the past we have found it very helpful to ask our friends, including ABC-USA leaders, pastors, and others to suggest names of individuals for our Board Development Committee to consider as possible candidates for ABHM and BHA Board membership.

Please take a few minutes to consider names of individuals who you think may like to know more about ABHM or BHA and would consider becoming a Director. If you have any questions, please contact me at (303) 660-8321. Additional information, including Nomination Forms, can be obtained by contacting our President/CEO, Bob Inhoff, at 1-800-536-3175.

*Bill Mills
ABHM Board Chair
Calvary Baptist Church,
Denver, CO*

Invitation to ABCRM Annual Gathering Exhibitors

We will again be offering exhibitors an opportunity to host displays during the 2006 ABCRM Gathering, October 20-21. This year the exhibits will be set-up in a room (instead of the hallway, which was the venue last year).

Spots are \$50.00 each. You will be able to set up on Thursday, October 19th after 5:00 p.m. or on Friday morning. To make your reservations or if you have additional questions contact Beverly Hoffmeister at bhoffmeister@abcrm.org or 303-988-3900.

On-call Chaplain Position

Denver Health Medical Center has a job opening for an interfaith on-call chaplain.

Hiring/Application Process:

- 1) Fill in an application online at: www.denverhealth.org. Go to the “career center.” Go to Job search. Do a search under the keyword “chaplain” to view position and apply online.
- 2) Send a copy of your resume to me at dirk.vandervorst@dhha.org to expedite your application.
- 3) As part of the application process you will also need to successfully complete a Talent Plus interview by phone with a Talent Plus interviewer (after you submit an application).
- 4) Top candidates will be selected for a “face-to-face” job interview.

Closing date is August 25 or when an appropriate person is found.

Clergy and Spouses Pre-Gathering Event

This year's ABCRM Pre-Gathering Clergy and Spouse Event will look a little different than last year's. Here's a brief overview:

Thursday, October 19th will begin with pre-registration for the Gathering for all clergy and their spouses at New Hope Baptist Church at 12:00 noon. Pre-register and you will not have to wait in line and register on Friday.

This year's facilitator is Alfred J. Smith, Sr., a renowned scholar, an acclaimed preacher and an accomplished author of 16 books. His passion is preaching the Word of God, and we have asked him to share his passion with us. Smith will offer two sessions between 1:00 and

5:00 p.m. on Thursday, and another between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. on Friday.

Thursday evening's events will begin with dinner at 6:00 p.m. After dinner, we are pleased to announce a special evening of entertainment.

Registration materials have been mailed to each church and are available online at www.abcrm.org. Register for this event by September 18.

**Clergy and Spouses,
Come! Be Rekindled!**
October 19-20

2006 ABCRM Gathering
October 20-21



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