



March 15, 2007

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

Desmond Hoffmeister Resigns as Interim Executive Minister



Desmond Hoffmeister has announced his resignation as Interim Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains effective March 9, 2007.

His resignation comes as a result of expiring options with the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services. Rev. Hoffmeister felt this step would be the most beneficial for both the continued progressive work of the Region and his family's immigration process.

Desmond Hoffmeister has served with vision and creativity in our

Region since July 2004. He has been instrumental in bringing wholeness and healing to the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains. He led the Region Board through a process of restructuring and revisioning for ministry, planted seeds for transformation within the Region entities and local churches, and united the leadership around the quest to "*Discover Your Passion and Realize Your Mission.*"

ABCRM President, Rich Schweissing noted that Rev. Hoffmeister's leadership was a major factor in putting a nearly bankrupt organization on a solid financial footing. Further, on the issue of homosexuality which has been so divisive within our denomination, his leadership contributed significantly to the fact that ABCRM has a clear position that has such broad support within the Region that it has ceased to be an issue of division among our churches. It took a man of his unique leadership abilities to move us so rapidly beyond these paralyzing issues to be able to look forward to real ministry together.

Schweissing expressed extreme regret at the loss of Desmond's valuable leadership.

While serving as the Transitional Executive Minister, Desmond impacted ABCUSA as well. Most recently he served with others to develop a strategic succession plan for the American Baptist Seminary of the West. As a member of the General Executive Council of ABCUSA, he served on the writing team charged with preparing a proposal for organizational change within the denomination.

Prior to coming to ABCRM, Desmond served as the Drexler Scholar in Residence at the American Baptist Seminary of the West. A native of Cape Town, South Africa, he played an integral part in the liberation of South Africa and later served as the General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of South Africa. He has spoken across the United States on the subjects of racial reconciliation, globalization, and international mission.

The Region Board will host a Celebration of Service Rendered for the Hoffmeisters at a date and time yet to be determined.

Region Board Meets in Regularly Scheduled Session



The Region Board met on March 9-10, 2007 in Centennial, CO. The sessions were chaired by Rich Schweissing, ABCRM President.

The Executive Committee of the ABCRM Region Board announced the resignation of Interim Executive Minister, Desmond Hoffmeister, effective March 9, 2007 (see page 1). His resignation came as a result of expiring options with the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services. The Executive Committee created a gracious financial parting love gift to support the Hoffmeisters during this time of transition.

The ABCRM Search Committee is scheduled to meet on April 2, 2007 with Jeff Woods, Associate General Secretary for Regional Ministries.

The Board welcomed the new Region Administrator, Karen VanValkenburgh. She has assumed full responsibility for the inhouse management of finances and is also responsible for managing Human Resource policies. (For more information about Karen, see the February 15 issue of *RMAB* at http://www.abcrm.org/news_archives/2007/abcrmn10215.pdf .)

After a year of work by the Ministerial Leadership Committee, the chair, Nancy Darnell, presented the *Manual for Ordination of Minis-*

ters to the Board for adoption. After some editorial changes, the Manual was adopted and will soon be available on the ABCRM website in the pastor's pages. This addition to the website makes it possible for ordination candidates and other interested individuals to download the manual (or applicable sections) and begin the process of ordination online.

During most of the remaining time, the Board received reports on the many, varied ministries in the Region. A summary follows.

Palabra de Fe

This church continues to grow and strengthen. In April the Spanish-speaking congregation (Oscar López, pastor) and their host congregation, Aurora Community Baptist Church (Anne Dondapati, interim minister) will celebrate one year of ministry together. The Region has supported *Palabra de Fe* in the amount of \$25,000. The new congregation has raised approximately \$30,000 in the first ten months and has begun to contribute to United Mission. They have targeted the *America for Christ* offering as their first major ABC offering. Approximately 130 people associate with the new church plant.

Mission Trip to the Bahamas — July 6-14

An all-female mission team will work with Dan and Estela

Schweissing in a VBS ministry at a Bahamian church and a Haitian church. They will also assist Estela in her work with Haitian women who are at risk.

The trip is open to young women in college and older. The deadline to sign up for this mission experience is March 24. For more information and to apply, contact Mary Tellis, Ministry and Mission Coach for the Metro Denver Cluster, by calling 303-988-3900 or e-mailing her at mtellis@abcrm.org.

Healthy Congregations Training Event — October 17-18

The Lombard Mennonite Peace Center provides a variety of programs in Christian peacemaking to churches, schools, and community groups. "Healthy Congregations" is a workshop designed by Peter Steinke, author of *How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems* and *Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach* (both available through <http://www.alban.org/Publishing.asp>) A key concept at the heart of "Healthy Congregations" is self-differentiation—one's capacity to calmly articulate what he/she thinks and values, and to act on that basis, while staying in active relationship with those who disagree.

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This crucial training for both clergy and laity will be led by Richard Blackburn of LMPC. It will be held in Grand Junction as a Pre-Gathering Event. The cost per person is \$40.

Healthy Small Congregations — April 7-11, 2008

Alvin Wilkerson (pastor of First Baptist Church in Flagler, CO, burningheartforjesus@yahoo.com) and Mike Oldham (Ministry and Mission Coach for Southeast Colorado/NM and the Western Slope, moldham@abcrm.org) are planning a conference for small churches which will be held in April next year. Dennis Bickers will be the major presenter. It will be a one-day event held in each of the Region's clusters.

2007 Gathering — October 19-20

This year's ABCRM Gathering will be held at the Two Rivers Convention Center in Grand Junction and hosted by FBC/Grand Junction (Jerry Springston, interim minister). Region Board and Executive Committee member, Jim Witt is the local point person for the event (jkwitt811@aol.com).

SoulJourners Retreat — September 25-27

The former Senior Adult Conference has been renamed the

SoulJourners Retreat. It will be held at the St. Francis Retreat Center at Colorado Springs, CO. Roy Medley, General Secretary, ABCUSA and Deborah Van Broekhoven, Executive Director of the American Baptist Historical Society will be the guest speakers. The cost for the retreat and two nights' lodging will be \$156/single, \$126/double, and \$112.67/triple.

For more information, read an introductory article on page six of the January 15, 2007 issue of *RMAB* at http://www.abcrm.org/news_archives/2007/abcrmn10115.pdf.

Camping Ministries

Front Range

The week for Front Range Camping is July 8-14. A descriptive brochure has been mailed to churches. Detailed information and registration forms are available online at <http://www.abcrm.org/ministries/camping.htm>.

Wyoba

July is the month for American Baptist camps at Wyoba. To learn more about the schedule and related costs, visit http://www.wyoba.org/baptist_camps.html. Watch for details regarding Wyoba's 75th Anniversary Celebration on August 3-4 this year. The Wyoba Board has received word that they have first right on all the spring water, thanks to Gene McCracken's research.

Grand Mesa

Summer camps at Grand Mesa begin the first week of July and run for three weeks.

Worship Conference — April 28

A pilot one-day worship conference will be held at the new chapel at Regis University from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. It is being planned with Metro Denver Cluster churches in mind, but is open to the entire Region. Under the leadership of Brad Bergland, presenters will encourage the congregation to be the primary praise choir, teach ways to invite the congregation into meaningful ritual, and encourage participants to come into the presence of God and be more vulnerable. Other leaders/presenters include Daryl Walker (New Hope Baptist Church/Denver), Benita Edwards (True Light Baptist Church, Denver, CO), and the praise band from *Palabra de Fe* in Aurora, CO. Mary Tellis (mtellis@abcrm.org), Ministry and Mission Coach for the Metro Denver Cluster, is also working with the planning team.

The cost will be \$30/person, including a box lunch. Additional worship events in other areas of the Region have not yet been scheduled.

Threshold - third Sunday night of each month

Co-leaders Ashley Seaman (Presbyterian) and Brad Bergland (ABCRM) spoke to the Board about their vision for "Threshold," the worship experience held monthly at First Baptist Church in Denver. "Threshold" connotes being invited by God to step over into something new. To what is the church being

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called in the years to come? In this emerging world-wide conversation, four streams of thought have been identified:

- return to historic spiritual practices/disciples,
- desire for an ancient/future style of worship,
- grace-based theological discussion, and
- holistic view of evangelism.

American Baptist Women's Ministries

Colorado

This year's annual conference will be held June 8-10 at the Rio Grand Hotel in Alamosa, CO. Joyce Camp, national conference chair for ABW Ministries, and Chris Marziale of International Ministries will be the speakers.

Wyoming

On June 8-9, the women of American Baptist churches in Wyoming will meet in Lander at First Baptist Church. IM missionary to Nicaragua, Kris Guterrez will speak to the group. The mission focus is based on Romans 10:14-15 and 17-18. Workshops and group activities will also be offered during the conference.

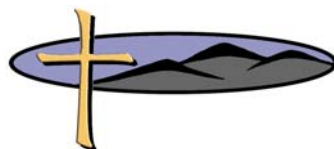
Ministers Council

The Ministers Council was not able to meet at the 2006 Gathering, and therefore, were unable to elect officers for 2007. Since Mark Jervis had completed one year of Paul Martin's term as Senator to the ABCUSA Ministers Council and



two three-year terms of his own, he could not continue as the ABCRM Senator. In order to continue functioning, the Executive Committee of the ABCRM Ministers Council determined that they would shift positions for 2007 thereby enabling them to have representation on the national Senate and also in an effort to get the ABCRM Council active and healthy again. In so doing, the following are the officers pro tem: Mark Jervis, President; Mike Sayler, Senator; and Gary Bowser, Secretary/Treasurer.

It is the goal of these officers to work hard at getting back on track. They intend to make every effort to secure needed time at each Gathering for a business meeting. At that time they plan to have an election of nominated officers. They are communicating by e-mail with Region pastors.



American Baptist Churches USA

Mary Hulst, Vice-President of ABCUSA, highlighted the 2007 Biennial as a centennial celebration for our denomination. She also reported that the Office of the General Secretary ended 2006 in the black financially. Since United Mission giving has decreased, others have recognized the value of the work done by OGS staff and have picked up the challenge to support their work. She also announced that some significant structural changes will be presented to the General Board for consideration this summer.

Other Reports

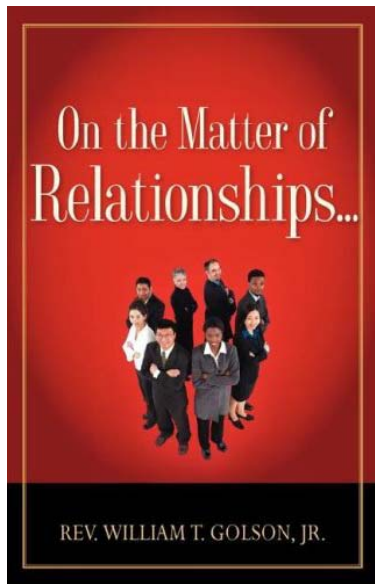
In addition to the verbal reports, the Board received written reports from Gordon Kieft, Wayne Dvirnak, Mike Oldham, and Ingrid Dvirnak.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Region Board will be held on August 24-25, 2006.



Bill Golson Authors New Book



“In the church there is seemingly an exorbitant amount of time given to preaching and teaching the matter of salvation (and rightly so), to financial prosperity, to the exercise of faith, and to other doctrinal matters. Oftentimes, these matters are addressed to the exclusion of hearing what God has to say on the fundamental matter of just learning to live with each other, relationships.

More than ever, there is a need for people— young and old; single and married; with children and without—to hear clearly the biblical foundation upon which our relationships are to be established. Those who are engaged in turbulent relationships, seeking a mate, and wrestling with gender issues,

need to find biblical guidelines for understanding their roles.

As you read this book, it will be a source of enlightenment to you personally, and to those whom God brings your way for sound counsel.”

The above quote is from the back cover of Bill Golson’s new book, *On the Matter of Relationships . . .*. The book resulted from a series of sermons on relationships delivered as part of his pastoral ministry at True Light Baptist Church in Denver. It was, and remains, his goal to address significant issues that often go unaddressed in our churches. Pastor Golson notes, “The church is, among other things, a hospital where those embroiled and embedded in sin, those challenged to compromise, can find strength, healing, and deliverance. The problem is often that those of us who are supposed to be spiritual physicians are not prescribing the proper spiritual medicine.”

Bill Golson is a member of the Region Board and serves on the Executive Committee as well. We celebrate with him the publication of his new book. *On the Matter of Relationships. . .* is available for purchase directly from the church or on their secure website: <http://www.truelightonline.org>. Books may also be ordered from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Target, Borders, and other book ordering websites.



Meritorious Service Award Presented to Fort Morgan Baptist Layman

According to a *Fort Morgan Times* reporter, “Meritorious Service Awards are presented to citizens or businesses for significant assistance rendered to the police.”



Paul Erickson, who has been a trustee and deacon at FBC/Fort Morgan over the course of many years, was nominated to receive this prestigious

award by Sgt. Doug Schossow. On December 11 Erickson comforted and talked to an injured pedestrian who had clung to a moving vehicle in the Wal-Mart parking lot and subsequently fell off. Police determined through investigation and a surveillance video that several people either walked by or didn’t offer any assistance. Paul was an exception to this. As evidenced in the video, he didn’t hesitate to respond to the injured individual. “Paul has a reputation in the community for assisting and making Fort Morgan a better community. Others that day hesitated, but Paul, a stranger, helped another stranger in a difficult situation,” Chief of Police Keith Kuretich pointed out.

We join First Baptist Church of Ft. Morgan along with their pastor and Region Board member, Tom Wheeler, in congratulating Paul Erickson for this award. The story sounds strangely familiar, doesn’t it? Read the account of the original Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37.

Sources: *Fort Morgan Times* and Tom Wheeler

Training Academy's OT Course Enrollment Remains Open

ABCRM's Training Academy will offer an Old Testament Course on May 4-6. See related article in the last issue of *RMA*B at http://www.abcrm.org/news_archives/2007/abcrml0228.pdf. To receive additional information about this course and registration forms, contact any office staff person at 303-988-3900 or e-mail office@abcrm.org or contact Wayne Dvirnak at 307-638-8247 or wdvirnak@abcrm.org.

ABCRM Region Board Roster

Officers

Rich Schweissing, President
Cynthia Rigsby, Vice-President
Beth Sullivan, Secretary
Debra Clark, Treasurer
Jan McCormack, Immediate Past President

Geographical Representatives

Alvin Wilkerson, Southeast CO/NM
Jim Witt, Western Slope
Bill Golson, Metro Denver
Mary Beth Mankin, Wyoming
Tom Wheeler, Northern Front Range

Committees

Nancy Darnell, Ministerial Leadership Committee Chair

Affiliated Ministries

Jackie Arnold, President, ABW Ministries/CO
Barbara Vinzant, President, ABW Ministries/WY
Deanna Dyer, Wyoba Board Chair
Clint Walker, Youth Representative
Mark Jervis, President, Ministers Council

At-Large Members

Marie Heaton and Bruce Greer

ABCUSA General Board Members

Mary Hulst and Jim Peters

*RMA*B 3/15/07

Keeping a Spiritual Lent

For most Christians, Lent is a special time of the year. It is the six weeks preceding Easter beginning with Ash Wednesday. Also by the tradition of the early Church, it was a time for penitence and fasting. Penitence was seen as throwing off an old life of sin as collected over a year's time and preparing for the re-birth of the self at Easter. One helpful way to get there was through fasting, i.e. giving up great amounts of food so the body would undergo a cleansing experience. For most American Christians, Lent is never taken quite that seriously.

In some of our traditions, Lent has become a time for giving up meat (usually just red meat). For others it means giving up something that is either harmful (cigarettes, alcohol or chocolate) or something that may be for especially pleasurable (once again, cigarettes, alcohol or chocolate). For others, Lenten discipline may mean "taking something on" such as a service project or taking time to read spiritually inspiring books. All of this derives from scripture where Jesus underwent temptation during his 40 days and nights in the wilderness of the desert.

However, in today's fast paced and consumer oriented world, Lent is becoming harder to keep. It takes spiritual discipline just to remember Lent exists. Sacrifice and self discipline are no longer American, and maybe never were.

In the midst of all of this however, there are many who do make the effort to make Lent a Holy experience. The most popular way is to take time out of our crazy lifestyles to re-discover a time of peace and serenity. Taking long walks, spending quiet time alone, or simply doing nothing for a while becomes a true Lenten experience. People who do this on a regular basis during Lent may even discover a way to change their life for the better. Their Easter renewal may be a profound one which is really what Lent is all about.

But as anyone who tries these disciplines may discover, this is not easy. We tend to be a people obsessed by the idea of always doing something or being entertained at all times. The invention of the IPOD has allowed individuals to avoid silence even when performing solitary acts. Even the threat of silence terrifies some people. Except for the Quakers, most of our worship tradition is uneasy with silence. Try just five minutes of silence in a worship service sometime and see what happens.

We are now in the midst of the challenge of Lent. My own prayer is that those who have entered into an intentional Lent are having a holy experience. I also pray that those who are still unfamiliar with Lent will give it a try even in these later weeks. Lent can be a joyful time. This will only happen when you discover that trying a new spiritual experience can itself be joyful.

*Warren Murphy, Director
Wyoming Association of Churches*



ABCUSA Applauds Nomination of Neville Callam As Baptist World Alliance General Secretary



Neville Callam, a Jamaican pastor, theologian, author, media manager and educator, has been nominated to

succeed Denton Lotz as General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). Lotz retires in December 2007.

“American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) is pleased with the choice to recommend Rev. Neville Callam as the nominee for the position of General Secretary,” said Leo Thorne, Associate General Secretary for Mission Resource Development, ABCUSA. “I applaud the choice of someone from the Caribbean, not only because that is my homeland, but also because the church is growing at its fastest pace in the southern hemisphere. Rev. Callam is a dedicated servant of Christ. The American Baptist family will find in him a committed leader to the Baptist World Alliance.”

Callam has had a long history of involvement in the BWA beginning in 1985. He served the international body as vice-president from 2000 to 2005 and sits on its influential Implementation Task Force, which has the mandate to make recommended structural and other changes to the BWA. In addition, he has been a member of the Executive Committee and the General Council. He served for ten years on the Faith and Order Commission as the BWA representative to the World Council of Churches.

In the Caribbean, he served as president of the Jamaica Baptist Union (JBU) between 1985 and

1987, and from 2000 to 2002. He has held every senior position in the Jamaican convention, including vice-president, general treasurer, and acting general secretary, and has given unbroken service on its Executive Committee since 1980. He is a former vice-president of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, one of six continental federations that make up the BWA.

Callam holds several senior positions in media in Jamaica. He is chairman of the board of management and former general manager of The Breath of Change, a Christian radio station he founded, and is chairman of the board of the Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica, a public statutory organization. He is also a founding director of the National Religious Media Company of Jamaica, the largest religious radio and television broadcasting company in the country. Callam formerly chaired the Media Commission of the JBU which is responsible for the denomination’s radio and publication ministries.

A sought-after lecturer and teacher, Callam has taught at the United Theological College of the West Indies, Jamaica Theological Seminary, the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology, and as visiting lecturer at the Barbados Baptist College. He sits on the University Council of Jamaica, the major accreditation body for colleges and universities on the island.

The author of five books has also written for several journals and has made presentations at numerous conferences, workshops, symposia, and fora internationally. He was one

of the leading presenters at the BWA Centenary Congress held in Birmingham, England, in 2005.

In speaking of his commitment to the Christian gospel, Callam said, “Living for Jesus is what my life is about. My calling is to serve the cause of Christ. I have had reason to be very thankful for my Baptist heritage, which I celebrate.”

Callam has been an ordained Baptist pastor since 1977 and currently serves as senior pastor of the Tarrant Baptist Church in Kingston, Jamaica’s capital. He holds degrees from the University of the West Indies and Harvard Divinity School. He and wife, Dulcie, are the parents of two adult children.

Callam’s name is forwarded for the position of General Secretary after a long and exhaustive international search conducted by the Search Committee, chaired by John Sundquist, former Executive Director of International Ministries, ABCUSA.

Sundquist said, “In reviewing the documents and references and after the interviews, it is clear that Neville Callam is the kind of ecclesiastical and Christian statesman that we can have pride in. It is wonderful to meet someone whose biblical and theological grounding is not only deep, but whose life is such that his relationship with Christ and commitment to the Church is so obvious.”

The vote for General Secretary will take place during the BWA General Council meeting in Accra, Ghana, in July of this year.

*BWA and ABCUSA Press Releases
RMA3 3/15/07*

Dates to Remember

April 28

Metro Denver Cluster Worship
Conference at Regis University

April 29

Northern Front Range Cluster
Meeting, American Baptist Church,
Fort Collins

May 4-5

Old Testament Course at ABCRM
Office

June 8-9

Wyoming ABW Ministries
Conference in Lander, WY

June 8-10

Colorado ABW Ministries
Conference in Alamosa, CO

June 29 - July 3

ABCUSA Biennial, Washington, DC

July

Baptist Camps at Grand Mesa

July 6-14

Bahamas Mission Trip

July 8-14

Front Range Camping
Wyoba Junior Camp

July 15-21

Wyoba Junior High Camp

July 22-28

Wyoba Senior High Camp

July 29-August 1

Wyoba Primary Camp

August 3-4

Wyoba 75th Anniversary
Celebration

August 23-24

Region Board Meeting

September 25-27

SoulJourners Retreat in Colorado
Springs

October 17-18

Healthy Congregations
Conference (Pre-Gathering Event)
in Grand Junction

October 19-20

Annual Gathering in Grand
Junction

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