

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

Learning to Navigate the Difficult Issues

Dr. Tarris Rosell, Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology at Central Seminary in Kansas City, KS, began the Saturday session of the Ministerial Ethics course by reading these words from I Timothy 4:12b-16:

"Set an example for believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you. Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save yourself and your hearers."

The class participants were reminded that today's world is filled with ethical uncertainty punctuated with countless examples of moral failure. In the midst of this environment, Rosell challenged ministers to be models of positive morality just as Paul challenged Timothy.



To help individuals navigate through these difficult days, Dr. Rosell developed a Ministerial Ethics course which he describes as "designed for enhancing knowledge of ethics for the purpose of intentional reflection and dialogue concerning ethical issues commonly faced in ministry." Topics of professional boundary issues, plagiarism, responsible sexuality, ministry ethics in medical contexts, financial accountability, confidentiality, and ministerial self care were discussed.

Dr. Rosell gave the group a process for making thoughtful ethical responses rather than reacting to the challenges in life. He called it a 4-D view for meeting dilemmas.



- Step one: **discerning**. Ask what is going on spiritually, clinically (emotional, familial, cultural), financially, politically, institutionally, and legally. Who is response-able?
- Step two: **deliberating** what should be done or not done? What are the options?
- Step three: **deciding**. This is the most fitting of available options.
- Step four: **doing**. Respond with what ethically fits the situation.

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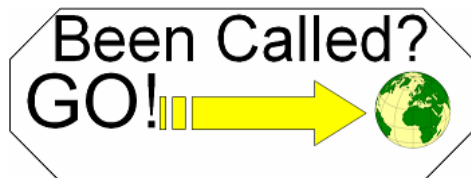
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“Projects & Dates Set for 2008 ABCRM International Mission Trips” Correction



There are a few corrections to the article “Projects & Dates Set for 2008 ABCRM International Mission Trips” from the September 15th RMAB.

- The previous article stated that the trip to Cambodia was April 26-May 9. That is incorrect. The correct dates are **March 26-April 9**.
- The applications to go on this mission trip need to be received no later than **12/31/07**.

Please make this correction in any publications in which you may have reprinted the article.

Learning to Navigate *(Continued from page 1)*

Among the reading and writing assignments given to the participants was the challenge to write a personal ministry code of ethics that includes four areas: personal and family relationships, congregational relationships, collegial relationships, and community relationships. In preparation for this assignment, Rosell led the group through a time of study and application of “The Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial leaders of American Baptist Churches.” (See <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/CodeofEthics/EngEthics.aspx>.)

Those attending this class sponsored by the Ministerial Leadership Committee of ABCRM were (as pictured below—left to right): Jason King, Bobby Palmer, Rick Morse and Gina Gibson all of First Baptist Church in Cheyenne, WY, and Ken Pettis of First Baptist Church, Austin, CO. (Terri Rossell is pictured far right.)



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

There is still time!

**Register for
The Gathering**

You can register online at
<http://www.abcrm.org/gathering.htm>
or your church office has registration forms.

Remember to register as soon as possible.

Please note the changes in the Gathering workshop options. The change is noted by an (*).

The Gathering Workshops

Session 1: Saturday, Oct. 20, 2007 9:00 a.m.

The Power of Short Term Mission Projects – John Turnage

This workshop will explore the impact short term mission projects can have on the local church and on those being served. Learn basic information about planning, implementing and evaluating short term mission projects.

Immigration and the Christian Response – Bruce Talbott & Michael Jamison

Politicians are using this issue like a football. Many Americans worry about immigration issues. Farmers feel like they are caught in the middle. How do we respond as Jesus would have us respond? How do we move the debate from fear mongering to a Christian dialogue on the serious issues of immigration?

Session 2: Saturday, Oct. 20, 2007 10:45 a.m.

*Servant-Leadership – Larry VanSpriell

What might leadership in the church look like? Jesus washing the disciples' feet is the image of servant-leadership. This workshop will explore some of the principles and qualities that make up a leadership style and way of life called "servant-leadership." What are the values one discovers in serving that inform and inspire excellent leadership? The best leaders are servants first. Pastors and lay leaders are called to be servants first. A genuine commitment to learning and practicing the values of servant-leadership will definitely transform the person and perhaps the church, too.

Small Group Ministry – Jim Witt & Cheryle Messenger

You know that they are important. The question is, "how do you do small groups?" This workshop will explore the "nuts and bolts" of how to develop and continue a healthy small group ministry in the local church.

New Horizons in Senior Adult Ministries – Veda Patterson and Kathy Bird De-Young

How do our churches intentionally reach and minister to the quickest growing segment of our population? What is working in local ABCRM churches? This will be a time to share and receive ideas that are successful in local churches.

Principles of Natural Church Development – Mike Oldham

We often talk about church growth. What does it take for a church to grow? How do we figure out the specific areas on which a local church needs to focus? This workshop is based on the Natural Church Development principles developed by Christian Schwartz.

Worship Is MORE! – Thom Jones

Worship is so much more than what most churches experience. It is more than hymns or choruses. It is more than music. It is more than the sermon. Worship is more than "what I want" and "what I like." Worship is about the church encountering the living God? Can our worship services be more inspiring? How do we recruit and train our worship leaders? Worship is more!

Improving Your Church's Initial Impact – Steve Wamberg

Every time you walk into a Wal-mart, you are greeted by a friendly face. Each of the stores has a carefully laid out floor plan. Do our churches think as much about how people first experience our churches? What do people see when they see our building? Our phone directory listing? Our web-site? We often say, "we are a friendly church." Unfortunately, people simply don't take the time to "fit in." This workshop will explore practical ways that we can improve our initial contact with our community.

Scenic Train Ride

What is your favorite way to travel? Do you drive? Do you fly? Or do you take the train? Traveling has become very common in this era. Yet, not so long ago, it took a very special occasion for a person to leave their hometown to go and visit another. Then, at that time, a person would go to the train depot and ride the train to their destination.



Train travel not just a past time, or something you can do when you are sight seeing. Trains are an excellent mode of transportation. For those who are environmentally minded, trains help to reduce emissions by providing a mass transit option for those who are traveling.

Why not take the train to Grand Junction? You can get round trip tickets for under \$100. You can sit back and relax while someone else takes control of the traveling. Plus, you don't have to worry about burning out your brakes with all that mountain driving.

Amtrak runs a train from Denver to Grand Junction that leaves at 8:00 a.m. and gets to Grand Junction around 4:00 p.m. The train leaves Grand Junction at 11:45 a.m. and gets into Denver around 8:00 p.m. It is about an eight hour train ride, but the scenery is spectacular. Some of the ABCRM Staff are going to be making the trip on the train, why don't you join them? You can book your tickets online at <http://www.amtrak.com>, or at 1-800-USA-RAIL (1-800-872-7245).

However you choose to travel, please join us in Grand Junction for The Gathering. We hope to see you all there. It will be "A Fruitful Harvest" for all!

Northern Front Range Cluster Focuses on History and Mission

The Northern Front Range Cluster churches gathered at the American Baptist Church in Fort Collins on Sunday afternoon, September 23, to hear from two women at the center of American Baptist life and ministry. Special guests were Deborah Van Broekhoven, Executive Director of the American Baptist Historical Society, and Terry Myers, International Ministries missionary to Bulgaria.

Debra Van Broekhoven opened the afternoon's activities by telling the group that history matters. During her workshop she noted that the American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS) has the finest collection of Baptist materials in the world. Currently, these materials are stored at Valley Forge, PA, and Rochester, NY. ABHS has accepted the invitation to move to Mercer University in Atlanta, GA, where ample space will be provided for the proper storage, display, and use of the growing historical collection. It will take an estimated 16 semi-trucks to transport all of the materials from their current locations to Atlanta.

Van Broekhoven gave practical advice on archiving local church items of historical significance. A basic rule to remember in the archival process is to sort materials according to type. In other words, file "like with like" (minutes with other minutes, celebrations with other celebrations, etc.). Within each category, the filing should, of course, then be chronological. ABHS has a kit available for churches to use to determine what should be saved and what should be discarded.

Following the historical workshop, Terry Myers, who is in the United States as part of the [World Mission](#)

[Offering](#) blitz, spoke about her ongoing ministry in Bulgaria. She expressed thanks for the financial support that is coming from many cluster churches and individuals.

Terry described an after-school program that she originally initiated to help students with their homework. She was inspired to do this by a young Roma girl who had been in the same grade in school for three years and was still failing. However, Terry soon found out that what the students really needed was a literacy program to help them work in their individual grade level. She has enlisted help from Bulgarian women in the church in Sofia which the Myers attend.

Terry has also been teaching English in an after-school program at another Baptist church. There she works with Bulgarian children using games as a effective teaching tool.

She is also involved in a feeding program which has been funded by an American Baptist church in Pennsylvania. Each week volunteers assemble packets of food to give to senior adults. This ministry is necessary because their retirement funds are inadequate. In addition, this program gives the volunteers the valuable opportunity to prepare food, feel useful, and have fellowship with each other. First Baptist Church of Boulder, CO, gave money to put the lettering on the church where the feeding program is



housed. The sign denotes the church as "A Christian Baptist Church."

American Baptist women who donated teddy bears for the Myers' ministry in 2006 were informed that all of the teddy bears now have new homes. They have brought untold joy to children in Bulgaria.

Terry's dream as she returns is to organize an Xtreme Team consisting of four to eight young people from Bulgaria who will spend 18 to 21 days in the Rocky Mountain Region. Her intentions are to coordinate this Xtreme Team adventure with the National Youth Gathering at Estes Park in the summer of 2008. She will encourage churches and individuals to host the young people in their homes as well as help to fund the airfare to the United States which will amount to approximately \$1200 per person.



At the close of the afternoon, everyone shared in a Bulgarian dinner. Conversation with old friends was enhanced by the experience of tasting new

foods. (To view pictures of some of the unique Bulgarian foods, visit <http://www.abcrm.org/NorthernFrontRange.htm>.)

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

American Baptists—Stand Up for the Jena 6

In Jena, LA, a rural community of some 3,000 people, there is an African American population of about 350. A tree at the high school, known as the “white tree,” was symbolically labeled “for white students only.” By tradition and practice, only white students sat in the shade of this tree with its branches lifted high into the sky and its roots digging deep into the earth.

One day an African American student, new to the area, asked permission from school administrators to sit under the “white tree.” Permission was granted, and the next day three nooses, in the school’s colors, were hanging from the tree. For African American students, those nooses brought back images their grandparents lived with on a daily basis

On September 20, a judge will determine if 17-year-old African American Mychal Bell will be sentenced to serve 22 years in prison. Bell and five of his fellow African American high school students, ranging from 15 to 17 years of age, are facing lifetimes behind bars for a schoolyard fight stemming from the “white tree” incident. In total, these young men could be sentenced to up to 100 years in prison, with charges of attempted murder. The alleged weapon? Tennis shoes.



Consider these injustices related to this case:

- The school’s principal recommended expulsion for the three white students responsible. The school superintendent overruled the expulsion and gave the students a three-day suspension for “an adolescent prank.”

- African American students organized a sit-in under the tree following the fight; the District Attorney threatened with, “Stop making a fuss over this innocent prank; I can be your best friend or your worst enemy. I can take away your lives with a stroke of my pen.”



- The school was put on lock-down. A still unresolved fire burned down the main academic building.
- An African American student was beaten at a party by white students. A white assailant, who cracked a beer bottle on the African American student’s head, received a “simple battery charge.”
- Six African American Jena high school students were charged with attempted second-degree murder and expelled from school. Bails were set from \$70,000 to \$138,000.

Jena is the same place where the Juvenile Correctional Center for Youth was forced to close in 2000 due to racism and choking of juveniles by the guards. Jena now joins the historic and infamous line of gross legal injustices against African Americans represented by the 1999 Tulia, Texas, arrests. The Rev. Alan Bean, American Baptist minister and executive director of Friends of Justice, has been at the center of bringing both the Jena and Tulia injustices to national attention.

This briefing was jointly created by Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, executive director of National Ministries, ABCUSA, and Dr. A. Roy Medley, General Secretary, ABCUSA. Data was provided by the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference. For more information, visit <http://friendsofjustice.wordpress.com/jena-6/>.

American Baptist New Service

The View From Here

The Jena 6 tragedy in Louisiana is another in a series of incidents that occur every day, and we are reminded that we are a broken people greatly in need of God’s healing, forgiveness and grace. I have asked Jessica, our communications specialist, to include in this newsletter the article on Jena 6 we received from our American Baptist News Service because we followers of Christ cannot and must not ignore such injustices lest we ignore Jesus himself. While the Scriptures **always** depict Jesus as a justice-seeker, the Church doesn’t always follow that path. We can do better.

I’ll not pretend or presume to speak for any of our African American brothers and sisters in Christ. They have and will speak with great authenticity and integrity on this matter. I do ask you to stand along side and pray with every sister and brother in Christ for the Jena 6, for the young man who was beaten, as well as for their families and the judge.

It is clear that our friends of color are victims of discrimination every single day. In some sense all of us are collateral-victims as well. The injustice in Jena impacts us all. I think Martin Luther King, Jr. was so right when he proclaimed that when one of us suffers, we all suffer the pain of injustice. Those words come from knowing Christ. At best our culture limps along with regard to ‘progress’ when it comes to equal rights and justice for all. We, the Church, can do better because Jesus Christ is our light and our hope. He is the One who will not ever turn away from the maligned and marginalized. There is no question about where Jesus stands.

Pointing fingers is not an answer. Dropping to our knees is part of the answer—praying for mercy and forgiveness is a start—and living with justice and compassion in our hearts and hands may help our corner of the world a whole lot!

*On my knees,
Larry VanSpriell
ABCRCM Interim
Executive Minister*



“Go Forward”

Published in *The Colorado Baptist* April 1943, by Aaron Schlessman, President.

The Hebrew people were being “pressed on every side,” caught in a pincer movement with Pharaoh’s forces behind and the Red Sea before. Gripped with fear, they cried again to Moses and Moses knew what to do. He had learned to “walk humbly with God.” And the Lord answered, “Go Forward.”

It seemed impossible, but forward they went, passing “through the Valley of the Shadow of death” to victory. The Lord’s people are being pressed on every hand, a fearful pincer movement has us in its grip. Do we, as Moses of old, know where to look for strength?

“Call unto me and I will answer thee, and show thee great things and difficult which thou knowest not” (Jer. 33:3). God asks us to accept His challenge. What He really says is, “I challenge you to find a problem so difficult that I cannot solve it for you if you will bring it to me in prayer.” Are we willing to accept His challenge? Hudson Taylor once said, “There is a living God. He has spoken in the Bible. He means what He says. He will do all that He promised.”

For our need in soul-winning He has said, “Ye are my witnesses.” Witness then! He will honor it to His glory. For our giving-needs, He promises— “And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory through Christ Jesus.” Giving to increasing emergencies is surely a need. Colorado Baptists, let us arise and meet it. For our Christian growth He assures “grace—and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

To my mind we, who are on the home base, must grow stronger spiritually to prevent tremendous reactions and losses, when our boys and scattered forces come home. In our men’s brotherhood meeting recently, I was asked to tell the men what they could do as a group on the home front. Among other things I emphasized the deepening of our spiritual lives. That unless our boys find a deeper spirituality and a richer enthusiasm for God and righteousness, there will be keen disappointment when they return, for they will need it.

May we really glow with divine energy. “Go forward!” says our Heavenly Father, “Go forward!”

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Larry VanSpriell
Interim Executive Minister
lvanspriell@abcrm.org

Jessica Fischer
Communications Specialist
jfischer@abcrm.org

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