

# The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

## It's a New Day!

We've heard the phrase, "It's a new day!" often from our Interim Executive Minister in these last few months. I've heard it and experienced the positive changes that I've seen in staff and among many in the churches across our Region.

Our ABCRM Board met November 16-17 and I walked away elated. It truly was a new day for us in positions of leadership as well. This was an additional meeting from our normal annual schedule and was called at the request of members who wanted to address the concept of becoming a real "working board." A transformation has been taking place over the last year regarding the commitment of Board members. We have become more and more aware that while we don't want to micro-manage our staff—we have excellent leadership in place to do that work—we needed to be more involved in what the Region is and where it is going. Gone are the days when the Board met twice a year to affirm a hard working staff that basically set the course for the Region without serious collaboration with the elected leadership. This meeting, by the way, came as much from impetus by a staff that wanted to work with elected leadership as it did from the Board.

So, on this particular weekend we gathered together to determine what a "working

board" would be/do. The first couple of hours were spent dealing with the required business and then we dove into the question of being a "working board." What did that mean? How would we function? What should be left for staff? When is oversight too much? Too little? How much does a board need to be informed between meetings? Needless to say, as good Baptists, the nearly 20 Board members and staff who sat



around the table had just as many answers to these and other questions that were raised. However, all dove into the task with enthusiasm, and a cooperative spirit that allowed varying views to actually be the glue that pulled us together to become stronger rather than divide us. As I drove home, I could not think of a single member who did not actively participate, including our new members who were at the table for the first time. That, in itself, was very significant.

As we worked, it became apparent that this was such a radical change from where we have been that we wouldn't achieve complete answers in this first meeting. Further, knowing that our new Executive Minister could be in place even as soon as our March meeting, it was important that this person be involved in the discussions before the role of this working board was fully established.

[Continued on page 2](#)

## What's in this RMAB?

**ABCRM Missions Corner: The Lord is Calling You From Your Life's Chaos to a Parade**

[Page 2](#)

**The View from Here "The Lazarus Effect"**

[Page 3](#)

**Differences; Approach Their Positive Potential**

[Page 4](#)

**Jody James Ordained**

[Page 5](#)

**ABCRM Baptisms**

[Page 5](#)

**Update on Volunteer Missionary and Church Consulting Done by Boulder FBC Member Kerry Hassler**

[Page 5](#)

**ABCRM Pastor Publishes Second Book**

[Page 6](#)

# It's a New Day!

[Continued from page 1](#)

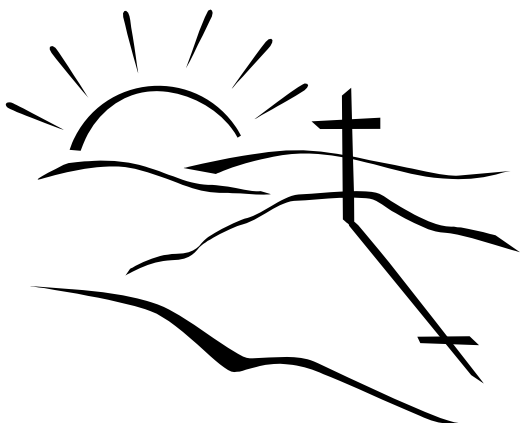
The Board did complete a first step. That was a step to establish the values under which we will function. As we shared all of the things we thought a working board should be doing, we found that these readily grouped under seven values that will guide our behavior. These values are in no particular order of priority except the first:



- CHRIST-CENTERED**
- VISION**
- COMMUNICATIONS**
- COMMITMENT**
- ACCOUNTABILITY**
- COLLABORATION**
- DIVERSITY**

At this point if you were to talk to any two members of the Board, you will likely get two different answers about what each of these values mean to the functioning of the Board. By the time we left the weekend we had brainstormed many ideas in each category. We left knowing that much diligent work is ahead. This initial process only determines *how* the Board will function. It is clear that when we are done with this phase we will then move on to the next step of setting vision, policy, and programs within the parameters of these values.

At each step we will report to you, the churches and church members. We are enthused and inspired with this process to claim ourselves as a working Board. There will be critical steps when we will ask for your reaction, input, and contributions. It is clear that if we as a Board are to be successful in owning the work of the Region and partnering with staff, we must work with you, the constituents, so that you will be able to confidently say you own it as well.



It is a new day!  
The journey has begun and we invite you to travel with us.

*Submitted by  
Richard  
Schweissing  
ABCRM President*

## ABCRM Missions Corner: The Lord is Calling You From Your Life's Chaos to a Parade

Been Called? You may be unsure of how to answer this question. Luckily the manual of *Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth* can help answer this question.

Isaiah had a vision of the Lord: of seraphs, of buildings shaking, and of the air filling with smoke. In the midst of this chaos, Isaiah kept his mind on the important thing: the Lord. He was even able to hear the Lord speak. "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" said the Lord. Isaiah answered, "Here am I, send me!"

Sometimes my life gets chaotic. How about yours? My world is shaken when people or institutions behave in "non-ordinary" ways. The air is filled with smoke when I can't see my way clearly. In the chaos of my life, there is the Lord.

The Lord is always there; I just don't perceive God's nearness. The Lord is always speaking; I just don't hear God's words. While the ebb and flow of life can be chaotic, the character of the Lord is like bedrock, strong and stable.



As God's people in ABCRM we are being asked, "Will you go for us?"

There are people in Thailand, Cambodia, Nicaragua and Bulgaria who need to see, touch and hear of God's grace and love through ordinary folk. Will you go?"

Up to forty of us from the Rocky Mountain Region get to go and be the living, walking testimony of God's grace and love. A hundred of us may give financially so that others can go and many more of us will pray so that God's grace floods these four trips in 2008. In different ways, we have the opportunity to say, "Here am I, send me!"

Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 2, "But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him." You are called to join the Lord's parade. How will you answer that call? May it be with a 'Go!'"

For more information on the ABCRM mission experiences, go to their website at <http://www.abcrm.org/mission/missionexperiences.htm>

*Jenita Calton  
ABCRM Missions Team*

## The View from Here “The Lazarus Effect”

In John 11 we find a familiar story. “The Lazarus Effect” is about resurrection theology, about being raised up and released from the tomb. Resurrection theology is about God and Jesus making something good out of life’s crucifying experiences. The Lazarus Effect is about new life. Jesus came to the cave that was Lazarus’ tomb and he said: “Take away the stone. Lazarus come out!”

Please note that resurrection theology is not just for Easter morning. Resurrection theology is *everyday* theology. This business about God raising people up from physical death, spiritual death and psychological death is evidenced throughout the Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament:

- from the Israelites continually being loved and led by God, when it seemed as though they wanted neither,
- to the numerous physical, spiritual and emotional healings by Jesus,
- to the building and nurturing of the early Church by the Apostle Paul,
- we see new life and another chance happening throughout the Biblical trail from beginning to end!

The Lazarus Effect is about being released from a tomb that confines us, oppresses us, holds us back from living and loving fully, holds us back from fully being who God created us to be.



Because of God working through Jesus, Lazarus was released from his tomb.

The Lazarus Effect is about new life and another chance. It is, at the very least, a reminder that God is not through with us. I

suppose it could be summed up by a Yogi-ism by the old-time NY Yankee catcher who has turned into quite a philosopher in his later years: “It’s not over till it’s over.” When someone asked Mother Theresa, “How do I know when my mission here on earth is complete?” she answered, “My dear soul, your mission here is not over until you draw your last breath.” Another response that I have heard to that question refers to simply checking one’s pulse for the answer.

My brother-in-law, Philip, had a Lazarus experience a couple of years ago. He was found in his car along a roadside by a state patrolman. He was taken to a local hospital ER and then placed in the ICU where he was hooked up to a respirator. Brain activity was not discernible. The EEG registered a flat line much of the time. The family was contacted and out-of-state family and friends began to arrange for travel to Michigan. Philip’s brother began to clean out his apartment, giving away Philip’s clothes. Local family members began planning the funeral service.

On the fourth day an ICU physician came to the bedside to begin the process of disconnecting the respirator. In her wonderful bedside manner she spoke to Philip, saying, “Now Philip, I’m going to turn off the respirator, remove the breathing tube, and you will probably die. Is that ok?” **And Philip said, “OK,”** scaring the day-lights out of the doctor and the nursing staff. Three days later Philip left the hospital and is functioning just fine!

The Lazarus Effect: God is not through with you, Philip! Your mission here is not complete. And Jesus said, “Take away the stone. Philip come out!”

The Lazarus Effect usually isn’t so dramatic. God often moves very quietly to raise up and bring new life into



being. Of course, the Lazarus Effect means change. It can’t happen without change.

If I come out of the deadly-tomb of “my cup is half-empty” to the life-giving “my cup is half-full,” that is a whole new perspective. Everything in my life changes because I have heard Jesus’ invitation to come out of that tomb. “Take away the stone. Come out of your tomb!”

I believe that ABCRM has heard Jesus’ plea to step out of our tomb(s). May I suggest that the Spirit and the energy and the positive responses to the recent Gathering at Grand Junction are evidence that we have left the tomb seeking new life in Christ! Comments by many across the Region that the values of trust and partnership are being renewed may well be evidence of other tombs being left behind.

The Lazarus Effect applies to every one of us on our personal journeys of faith. We know about tombs that we ourselves and others have placed us in. “Take the stone away.” We also know about church bodies and regional organizations being entombed in the past with such a need for “fresh air” and resurrection. “Take the stone away. Lazarus come out!”

Blessings,  
Larry VanSpriell  
ABCRM Interim  
Executive Minister

## Differences; Approach Their Positive Potential

When differences have hurt our relationships or disturbed the peace of our lives where do we turn to begin to understand God's purpose in conflict? How about Genesis one?

We read of light and darkness, earth and sky, water and dry land and an opening theme of creation begins to unfold—contrasts and differences pervade God's creative work. The Lord created fish and land animals with similarities but also with very obvious differences and then pronounced this idea "very good." Then God ends the 6 days of purposeful creation with creating a masterpiece—humans, male and female. Even in this delicately balanced organism—the most complex of all God's creations—God emphasizes a determination to inject into their experiences and into their very makeup "differences."

Standing off God looks at this design and pronounces it very good, sending us a message that differences are good, not bad—not just good; they are very good "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good!"



When we arrive at chapter three we are introduced to the con-

lict caused by opposites—good and evil, freedom and bondage, obedience and disobedience. And it doesn't end there. In chapter four our attention is directed to conflict in the very first family. Differences of temperament, motivation, goals and actions make up the story. Conflict arises out of these differences and we are led to accept that differences in our human hands often become the catalyst for destructive conflict. As early as this in human history something that is very good is being misused and misunderstood.

But why would a God who was so busy creating a universe full of beauty and wonder have created differences? God must have known they contained the potential of conflict, even violent conflict? Doesn't God want to avoid conflict? Often in our perception conflict is bad. Ask any family member. Perhaps we should start by understanding his purpose for creating differences in the first place.

### Why did God create differences in almost everything made?

God clearly viewed differences as good. To be truly a human as the Lord intended us to be, yet walk with God, is to face differences and to be happily related to them in a wholesome way using them for some noble purpose. Differences challenge us to show that by being able to overcome their potential for conflict we are made in the image of God. Cain and Abel flunked the test and human society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is doing no better.

Differences help us learn and grow. They challenge us to engage them with the renewing power of acceptance and, if need be, forgiveness; and forgiveness means to love with real content and meaning. Spiritual 'muscles' must be exercised and developed to face the challenge of our differences. The purpose of differences should be making itself clear.

Perhaps the humility of not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think stands at the heart of the challenge. Why do we think that our opinion is the only one that has validity, our point of view the only true angle? Why do we think we don't have to listen to another's interpretation of the truth? Where do the feelings that we are somehow superior to others come from—humility or pride?

Differences only become conflict when we think of our thoughts as more valid than those of our fellow believer. When the dust settles we often find we shared the same goals—surely a sufficient ground for finding a way to resolution in relationships. As the story of Cain and Abel indicates there are wrong ways to settle differences. We are challenged to find ways that will settle them before the surges of emotion take control of us and an ugly passion dominates our mind and enslaves us.



And the responsibility lies with us all. Abel, if aware of Cain's jealousy and anger, seems to have done nothing to calm

his brother's distress. He suffers ultimately from Cain's anger and may well have been able to contribute to a better end.

Before the murder takes place God, in contrast to Abel, attempts a healing. Listen to God's reasoned plea. "You haven't sinned yet," God says to the jealous Cain. "Do what is right and you too will be accepted and your jealousy will fade." Differences need not lead to destructive conflict. Differences can lead us all to higher levels of social harmony and spiritual unity. Our relationship to God is positively impacted by our humble adjustment to the challenge of differences, too.

So we learn differences display both the diversity of God's creative genius and provision of a means for our growth and development! By the motivating power of God's grace, resolve to use differences and your differences of opinion to bring the Kingdom of God into your daily engagements. Live the purpose!

*Submitted by  
Ray Lincoln  
Biblical Life Coach*

## Jody James Ordained

Sunday, October 14th, First Baptist Church of Denver celebrated the ordination of Jody James. Jody, a former member of First Baptist Church of Boulder, joined the First Baptist Denver professional staff several months ago and subsequent to that joined First Baptist Denver.



Jody is continuing her education and is moving toward Master of Divinity studies in order to be recommended for a ABCUSA recognized ordination. Currently Jody's ordination is a regional ordination. Jody is married to Gary James, who has been a productive and supportive spouse during their tenure. Jody has a powerful testimony and a wonderful personality for ministry to people. We, at First Baptist Denver, look forward to exciting days ahead as we work to discover the direction in which God wishes to take our congregation and our staff.

*Gary Bowser  
Senior Minister  
First Baptist Church of Denver*



**First Baptist Church** in Cheyenne on November 11, 2007.

- **Leslie Butler**
- **Justin Kinsley**
- **Amber Murnahan**
- **Meghan O'Connor**
- **Eric Ramirez**
- **Joelene Ramirez**

*Share the names of those who have been recently baptized in your church with the ABCRM family. Send information to the RMAB editor at [jfischer@abcrm.org](mailto:jfischer@abcrm.org). The names will be published once a quarter.*

[What's in this RMAB?](#)

## Update on Volunteer Missionary and Church Consulting Done by Boulder FBC Member Kerry Hassler

As described in the [May 15, 2007](#) edition of the ABCRM newsletter, Kerry Hassler was commissioned by First Baptist of Boulder on January 28, 2007 to do volunteer "global technology consulting" for ABCIM (International Ministries). Missionaries and churches around the world need help with their local ministries and outreach to people in need. Since February, Kerry has provided free consulting for 12 separate projects providing Missionary Partnership Team (MPT) websites for their financial/spiritual support and for other activities related to their ministries. These projects involve the following:

- Three IM missionaries in Thailand (Chuck and Ruth Fox, Mike and Becky Mann, and Jeff and Annie Dieselberg)
- Two IM missionaries in Japan (Dwight and Kari Davidson, and John and Tomoko Armagost)
- IM missionaries in the U.S. (Duane and Marcia Binkley)
- ABCRM Regional missionaries in Bulgaria (Tom and Terry Myers), and for their Sofia Baptist Church's Training Center.

You can read more about Kerry's projects with the above missionaries by going to <http://www.goodsamaritantechnologies.org/>.

Kerry has information for ABCRM churches that may be willing to help the ministries of Mike and Becky Mann, in Chiang Mai, and Chuck and Ruth Fox, in Chiang Rai. The Manns run a micro-economic outreach to the hill-side farmers in their area. The ABCRM churches can buy coffee produced by these farmers. The churches can support Chuck and Ruth Fox by buying high-quality hand-stitched craft items made by Akha women who live in villages in their area (as shown in the photo to the right).



To purchase any of these items, please contact Kerry by calling him at 303-665-7487 or send him an email at [kerryhassler@comcast.net](mailto:kerryhassler@comcast.net). For direct purchases of Akha craft items (a good idea for Christmas presents), you may use the online "Akha Crafts Internet Store" website that Kerry created at <http://akhahilltribe.org/>. All of the proceeds from the sale of coffee and Akha crafts items go back to the people in Thailand who produced them through our missionaries. Thank you for your support of these IM missionary projects through your purchases!

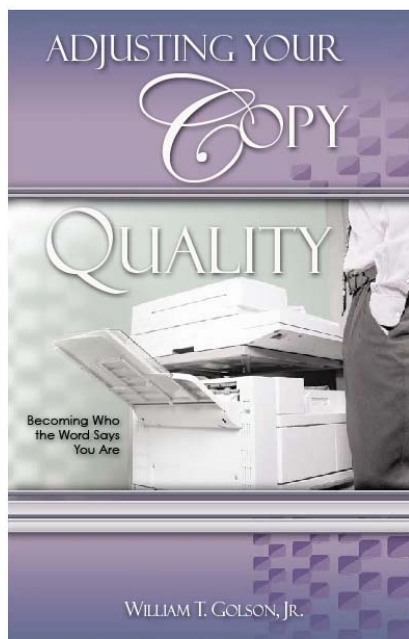
*Submitted by  
Kerry Hassler  
ABCIM Technology Consultant*

## ABCRM Pastor Publishes Second Book

Similar to the way a copy machine faithfully reproduces an original, God wants the way we live to reflect clearly the perfect model of Jesus Christ. The sooner we can get our spiritual understanding adjusted, the sooner we can be brought to look more like the original, Jesus; and the sooner we can get on with the business of living victoriously.

*Adjusting Your Copy Quality* is for the many people who struggle with the matter of daily putting into practice what the Bible declares they are. Failure to live consistently according to the Word can result in feelings of defeat, despair, depression, and not truly being saved. However, the Bible clearly declares a distinction between who we are in Christ (our position) and how we live daily (our practice). Understanding this distinction will allow us to be secure and rest in our salvation while continuing to grow to be what God has called us to be.

True Light Baptist Church is proud to celebrate with Rev. William T. Golson, Jr. on another published writing! Join the church for a book signing on Sunday, December 2, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. True Light is located at 14333 Bolling Drive in Denver.



*The Rocky Mountain  
American Baptist*  
is published by the  
American Baptist Churches  
of the Rocky Mountains  
[www.abcrm.org](http://www.abcrm.org)

**Larry VanSpriell**  
Interim Executive Minister  
[lvanspriell@abcrm.org](mailto:lvanspriell@abcrm.org)

**Jessica Fischer**  
Communications Specialist  
[jfischer@abcrm.org](mailto:jfischer@abcrm.org)

*Publication dates are the  
15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> of each month.*

*Deadlines for submissions are  
the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.*

*Reprint permission is granted to  
ABCRM churches.*

*Discover your  
PASSION!  
Realize your  
MISSION!*

Phone (303)988-3900  
Fax (303) 988-0620

American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains  
6855 S. Havana Street, Ste. 220  
Centennial, CO 80112