

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

ABCRM Board Calls Rev. Dr. Steven Van Ostran to be the New Executive Minister



At a special meeting on Saturday, January 12th of the ABCRM Board, a unanimous call was issued to Rev. Dr. Steven Van Ostran to be our next Executive Minister. Rev. Dr. Van Ostran has targeted the February 29th-March 1st regular Board meeting to be on site pending final obligations in his current position.

Steve comes to us after 18 years in pastoral ministry serving congregations both in rural and urban settings. For the last 5 years he has been the Associate Executive Minister for ABC of the Central Region

(primarily Kansas). He is married to Debbie, an interior architect, and they have three children. Their oldest, R.C. is a senior math major at Kansas University. Peter, their second, is a senior at Washburn Rural High School and plans to remain in Kansas for college, possibly Washburn University. Debbie noted that one of the hardest steps in this move will be leaving their sons behind. They will be bringing their youngest, daughter Paige, who is currently a seventh grader at Washburn Rural Middle School.

Before recommending a candidate to the Board, the Executive Minister Search Committee went through an extensive process of sifting through candidates culminating with inviting the two finalists for a face-to-face interview, a process outlined in the last *Rocky Mountain American Baptist* dated December 31st. (For more details go to www.abcrm.org/news_archives/2007/abcrmn1123107.pdf.)

At the interviews the overarching question for one pastor on the Search Committee was, "Can I follow this person?" After interviewing Steve, I turned to him and asked him if he had an answer to his question. The answer was a resounding, "Yes!" During the interview as well as in a set of questions submitted to the candidates in a previous round it was apparent that Rev. Dr. Van Ostran approached his ministry from a sound theological base consistent with the perspective of people in our Region. Further, his experience in his current Region staff position has prepared him well for leading staff and churches in the Rocky Mountains.

[Continued on page 2](#)

What's in this RMAB?

The View From Here: "Celebrating the Man and the Dream"

[Page 3](#)

Watch Your Inbox

[Page 3](#)

Thank You to the Executive Minister Search Committee

[Page 4](#)

Invitation to Rev. Lyn King's Installation Service

[Page 4](#)

Back Then...

[Page 4](#)

Home Mission on Our Doorstep

[Page 5](#)

2008 ABCRM Thailand Mission Team is Ready to Go!

[Page 5](#)

ABCRM Directory Update

[Page 6](#)

Rev. Dr. Steve Van Ostran Called as New Executive Minister

[Continued from page 1](#)

Van Ostran received his Master of Divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky in 1987. His Doctor of Ministry degree was conferred by Northern Baptist Seminary in Lombard, Illinois.

Rev. Dr. Van Ostran stated in his application that, "I was raised, licensed, and ordained as a Southern Baptist.

This has given me a unique understanding of church growth, theology and holistic worship. I have chosen to be a part of and to serve American Baptist Congregations because I am better able to live out my faith here." His entire ministry has been in the American Baptist family.

At the Board meeting Steve was asked to comment specifically on why he was attracted to American Baptists.

While there were several reasons, his response focused primarily on how American Baptists do missions. He believes the strategy of International Ministries to partner with the indigenous church is the bedrock of successful missions. Specifically, he cited the on going witness in Myanmar (Burma) even after foreign missionaries were expelled.

Steve was called to ministry out of a study beginning with Ephesians 4:11 which emphasized the equipping and preparation of fellow Believers for Christian service. When called to Regional work five years ago he believed he was able to live out that passion and purpose more fully by working with multiple congregations.

Further, he stated, "My call to regional work has grown out of the calling and practice of being a local church pastor." He has shared that his vision for the local church is to reclaim the "incarnational" nature that is described by the Apostle Paul by depicting the church as "The Body of Christ" (1 Cor. 12:27). It is his desire to help local churches reconnect with their community and to discover new avenues of ministry within those communities. In so doing, Van Ostran believes that the church's ongoing witness to Christ will once again become effective, even in our post-modern world.



During the time that Van Ostran was the Associate Executive Minister he served two terms as the Acting Executive Minister due to the sabbatical and subsequent disability and retirement of their Executive Minister. His experience in that capacity prepared him for practical, substantive responses to questions from the Search Committee and later the Board that led all to believe he is prepared to lead us in that position in the Rocky Mountains. In his capacities in the Central Region he was responsible for directing the Interim Ministry Program of the Region, consulting with congregations on a variety of issues

including pastoral placement, conflict transformation processes, Natural Church Development, Appreciative Inquiry processes and financial concerns. He also worked with a regional task force looking at structure and redesign for the region.

When informed of the Board's decision Steve and Deb stated that events over the past few months has confirmed that this has been God's leading and they are excited to be here so Steve can begin his work. Because of a senior in high school and commitments to her current position, Deb and the family will remain in Kansas until mid summer while Steve comes ahead to begin work here.

He challenged the Board to be available to introduce him to the many facets of our Region and looks forward to meeting quickly with as many pastors and churches as he can. Please welcome the Van Ostrans as they settle in to this new ministry. Pray for them as they prepare for the move. Pray that God will give them discernment in how they go about settling in.

An added note of interest: Deb stated one other regret at leaving and that was leaving their home church where she has been cooking the Wednesday night dinners for the last few years! Any church out there interested in making her feel at home?

*Submitted by
Rich Schweissing
ABCRM President*

The View From Here: “Celebrating the Man and the Dream”

March 25, 1965, Montgomery, Alabama, in front of 50,000 non-violent marchers from across the nation, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered an impassioned prophetic message. There was great optimism in the air. Voting rights legislation loomed as a certainty in the weeks ahead. Those gathered represented every race, every religious faith, and almost every occupation. His words of hope and justice and the spirit of his non-violent Christ-centered invitation echo across the years in his proclamation, “How Long? Not Long.”



“We are on the move now. The burning of our churches will not deter us. We are on the move now. The bombing of our homes will not dissuade us. We are on the move now. The beating and killing of our clergymen and young people will not divert us. We are on the move now. The arrest and release of known murderers of our people will not discourage us. We are on the move now.” (The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr., Clayborne Carson, p. 285)

Of course, the movement toward the ideals of equality that this country was founded upon has been and continues to be very slow in coming. In Dr. King’s vision that day he cautioned that the suffering and injustice was not over.

“I must admit to you there are still some difficulties ahead. We are still in for a season of suffering. I must admit to you there are still jail cells waiting for us, dark and difficult moments. We will go on with the faith that nonviolence and its power transformed dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows.

Our aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the white man but win his friendship and understanding. We must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience. That will be a day not of the white man, not of the black man. That will be the day of man as man.” (Carson, p. 286).

There are still legitimate questions of “When will we get there?” Dr. King’s words of 40+ years ago are sadly not

out-dated today. I’m sure all of us are aware that, based on today’s attitudes and conditions there continues to be a *season of suffering* for our friends of color.

“I know you are asking today, how long will it take? I come to say to you this afternoon however difficult the moment, however frustrating the hour, it will not be long, because truth crushed to earth will rise again.

How long? Not long, because no lie can live forever.

How long? Not long, because you still reap what you sow.

How long? Not long, because the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

How long? Not long because mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord, trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword. His truth is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpets that shall never call retreat. He is lifting up the hearts of men before His judgment seat. Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him. Be jubilant, my feet. Our God is marching on.” (Carson, p. 286)

The march for God’s truth in valuing every child of God continues today and every day. The truth is the Church has not always led the way for justice and truth...yet it is clear from the gospel of Christ that we are called to do so, for however long it takes. I hope and pray for that time to come, this side of heaven! “How long? Not long,” is my prayer. I pray you will make that prayer yours. Amen.

*Submitted by
Rev. Larry VanSpriell
ABCRM
Interim Executive Minister*



Watch your email inbox for a special devotional on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 21, 2008. This day is set aside to honor a great American Baptist man that had a profound change on the United States and on the world.

Thank You to the Executive Minister Search Committee

ABCRCM wants to thank the Executive Minister Search Committee for all their hard work and their diligence in finding the Region a new Executive Minister.

The committee included;

- Jan McCormack (co-chair)
- Kim Skattum (co-chair)
- Deanna Dyer
- Yvonne Whisenhunt
- Jim Peters
- Barbara Graham
- Tom Shoaf
- Marie Heaton
- Jackie Arnold
- Jeff Woods

If you have contact with these members, please let them know how much they are appreciated.

First Baptist Church of Cheyenne

wants to invite you to the installation of their new pastor

Rev. Lyn King

The installation will be January 20th at 3:30 pm at First Baptist Church in Cheyenne, WY. The church is located at 1800 E. Pershing Blvd.

A reception for you to meet the new pastor will follow the installation service. Please consider attending this event.

Back Then...

"Triple Anniversary Convention Will Have Prominent Leaders" was published in the April 1957 issue of *The Colorado Baptist*.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, leader of the Montgomery Improvement Association which directed a year-long Negro boycott against "Jim Crow" buses in Montgomery, Alabama will be one of the speakers at the annual meeting of the American Baptist Convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, May 29-June 4 (1957). Dr. King is pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. He will address the delegates on "Paul's Letters to the American

Churches." Monday evening, June 3, 7:30 p.m., during the presentation of the Council on Christian Social Progress.

The Rev. Billy Graham will conduct an evangelistic rally at 2:00 p.m. on the afternoon of the 3rd. Dr. Graham will make a special trip to Philadelphia from New York City where he will be in the midst of his widely-publicized meetings. He is scheduled to speak that same evening in New York's Madison Square Garden.

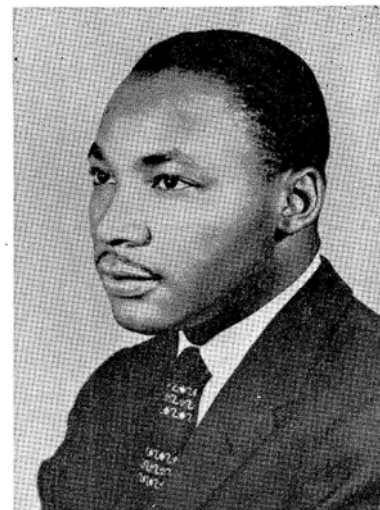
Among the other speakers appearing on the provisional program presented to the General Council in Chicago, March 14, is the Rev. Dr. Elton D. Trueblood, former religious information chief of the U.S. Information Agency now with Earlham College. His message, "Laymen Looking Unto Jesus," will be given at 8:30 p.m., Friday, May 31.

One of the convention highlights will be a historical presentation based on the 250th anniversary of the first American Baptist Association in Philadelphia. It will highlight the 125th anniversary of The American Baptist Home Mission Society and the 50th anniversary of the American Baptist Convention. The choir of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary and other choirs of the Philadelphia area will provide music.

Memorial Day will see American Baptists gather on the Mall at Independence Hall for an afternoon meeting, with the Rev. Dr. Theodore F. Adams as speaker. Dr. Adams is president of the Baptist World Alliance and pastor of the First Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia.

The convention theme is "Looking Unto Jesus." Presiding will be Dr. Harry L. Dillin, president of the American Baptist Convention and of the Linfield College, a denominational institution in McMinnville, Oregon.

CONVENTION SPEAKER



Rev. Martin Luther King will be a featured speaker of the American Baptist Convention in Philadelphia.

**HOME MISSION
ON OUR DOORSTEP**
OBRA MISIONERA A NUESTRA PUERTA

The United States is the third largest

mission field on our planet. We have millions of people right here, on the doorsteps of our churches, our homes, our schools, who have deep hunger—and not just for food or education or a warm bed, but also for comfort, hope, and the assurance that someone, somewhere cares.

It's National Ministries' mission to bring Christ-centered transformation to individuals, churches and communities across our country and Puerto Rico. We share God's love through a host of ministries.

- We have sponsored hundreds of volunteers who have traveled to the Gulf Coast to help rebuild homes and lives following Hurricane Katrina.
- We have helped to resettle more than 96,000 refugees since World War II.
- American Baptist chaplains, endorsed through National Ministries, serve on the battlefield in Iraq as well as in hospitals and prisons.
- The American Baptist Children in Poverty initiative, developed and implemented by National Ministries, is working to transform the lives of children with limited resources.
- And National Ministries' evangelism training is making a difference in sharing God's Good News by transforming regional and church leaders' understanding of evangelism—which in turn is transforming the leadership of those American Baptists they train in their regions and associations.

The **America for Christ Offering** funds all of this important, Christ-centered work.

Once again, it's time to bring this critical offering to the attention of American Baptists. Help National Ministries continue to transform leaders and transform lives. Help us to share the Good News that someone, somewhere, does indeed care. Please share our story and our mission with your church. And, please, give joyfully to AFC—"For the love of Christ urges us on."



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

2008 ABCRM Thailand Mission Team is Ready to Go!

Thanks to in-country planning support by ABCIM missionaries Chuck/Ruth Fox in Chiang Rai and Jeff and Annie Dieselberg in Bangkok, an ABCRM 7-person mission team is set to go on their February 6-19 ABCRM Thailand Missions Experience trip. Team members include Carl and Carmen Ferguson (Crossroads Baptist in Northglenn); Bruce and Beth Cook, and Barbara Fuller (First Baptist of Colorado Springs); Karen VanValkenburgh (ABCRM Office), and mission trip leader Kerry Hassler (First Baptist of Boulder).



The ABCRM Thailand mission team will stay in Bangkok from February 8-9 to see the Dieselberg's NightLight ministry. This ministry helps women escape prostitution by offering them jobs to make jewelry sold via their NightLight website (see <http://www.nightlightbangkok.com/>). Then the team will fly to Chiang Rai to experience the ministry of Chuck and Ruth Fox. Chuck spreads the Word of God in Akha villages through his preaching and other activities he organizes to help the Akhas (see <http://foxthailand.akhahilltribe.org/>). Ruth Fox helps the Akha women to make and sell hand-sewn craft items through the Chiang Rai Akha Crafts Center she operates and the Akha Crafts Internet Store (see <http://akhahilltribe.org/>).

During the week of February 11, part of the mission team will renovate a primary/secondary school in the Akha village of Sansuk. Others in the group will help the women who work at the Chiang Rai Akha Crafts Center and nearby New Life Center (a branch of the Chiang Mai New Life Center founded by ABCIM Global Consultant Luran Bethell). In support of the cost of materials for these ABCRM Missions Experience projects, ABCRM has provided \$4500 to the Chuck and Ruth Fox "ABCIM Project Fund" for their use in buying these materials prior to February. To add to the mission trip experience, the team will see a few local sights and go on an elephant ride near Chiang Rai.

For additional information about the remaining three 2008 ABCRM Missions Experiences opportunities, go to <http://www.abcrm.org/mission/missionexperiences.htm>. To sign up for a mission trip, contact the appropriate mission trip leader below. Been called? GO!

*Submitted by
Kerry Hassler
ABCRM Missions Team*

Country Visited	2008 Trip Dates	Application Deadline	Trip Leader	Trip Leader Contact Info
Thailand	Feb 6-19	(Closed)	Kerry Hassler	303-665-7487 / kerryhassler@comcast.net
Cambodia	Mar 26-Apr 9	Dec 31 2007 (extended)	Kevin Lowe	720-937-5120 / kmllowe@juno.com
Nicaragua	Apr 13-26	Jan 31 2008	John Turnage	970-667-4418 / jbkt@aol.com
Bulgaria	Jun 19-30	Apr 15 2008	Kerry Hassler	303-665-7487 / kerryhassler@comcast.net

ABCRM Directory Update

- ABCRM is currently updating our Region Directory for 2008.
- Our directory includes churches and active and retired clergy who reside in our Region. This information is for networking purposes among constituents of ABCRM only. If you have any changes for our directory, please contact Alyce at 303-988-3900 or akeys@abcrm.org. Feel free to list all or as many ministers associated with your church as you would like. You may also complete the Church Directory Change Form or Clergy Directory Change Form found at www.abcrm.org/churches.htm. Please send this information to us no later than **Thursday, January 31.**



Thank you.

*The Rocky Mountain
American Baptist*
is published by the
American Baptist Churches
of the Rocky Mountains
www.abcrm.org

Larry VanSpriell
Interim Executive Minister
lvanspriell@abcrm.org

Jessica Fischer
Communications Specialist
jfischer@abcrm.org

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

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

*Reprint permission is granted to
ABCRM churches.*

*Discover your
PASSION!
Realize your
MISSION!*

American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains
6855 S. Havana Street, Ste. 220
Centennial, CO 80112
Phone (303)988-3900
Fax (303) 988-0620