

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

My Incredible Journey and the Peace I Found



The ABCRM Mission Experiences have touched the lives of people across the oceans. The lives of the people who attend the mission experiences are touched as well. Here is an inspiring story about one of those touched lives.

I am a recent widow. My husband of almost 50 years died suddenly May 30, 2007. I was so sad and depressed as I had just retired the end of March from a job I loved so that we could travel in our RV. Now he was gone. I planned to go to the Palm Springs area of California where my daughter, Lisa, lives for the winter to get out of the snow. A poster about a Mission Experience at First Baptist Church, Colorado Springs caught my eye. "Thailand" leapt out at me. I had visited Bangkok as a military wife years before and loved it there. Maybe my traveling days did not have to be over yet. I read the cost of the trip and thought, "Oh well"—I didn't know where I would get that kind of money on such short notice. I mentioned the trip to my neighbor Meredith and she suggested we pray about it. Two weeks later a check came in the mail from an insurance company who had earlier denied the claim for accidental death. The amount was enough to cover the trip.

The Thailand experience was wonderful. The weather was warm, the people were so friendly and the food was good. I was staying in the home of Ruth and Chuck Fox—who are missionaries in Chaing Rai—so I could work with the young women at the New Life Center next door to their home. New Life Center houses 50 young women who are getting an education. I taught them the basics of knitting. They were so eager to learn and caught on so quickly, I was amazed. They were such a delight to work with. One of my fellow team members commented, "Barbara you are glowing!" I realized then the feeling of *peace* that had come into my life and the *joy* that filled my heart. I was happy for the first time since I had lost Chuck. I told the girls, "I have found a *new life* at the New Life Center."



I hope to be able to return later this year to continue instructions so that knitting might be a source of badly needed income for these young women who are mainly from the Hill Tribes of Northern Thailand. *God is good!* I still feel the peace that God has given me.

Barbara M. Fuller
First Baptist Church
Colorado Springs, CO

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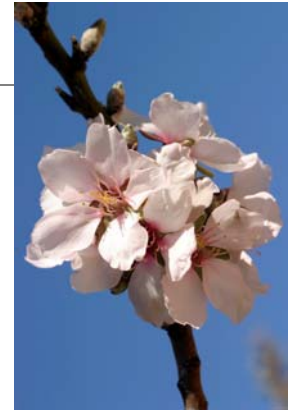
The RMAB is used to connect all the congregations and constituents of the Rocky Mountain Region. Please let others know about this newsletter.

To subscribe to this bi-monthly newsletter go to <http://www.abcrm.org/communication/newsletter.htm> and enter your email address, or contact Jessica Fischer at the Region office to receive a hard-copy.





Consider the Trees



The fruit trees are beginning to bud and blossom in many parts of the country. Our celebrations of Easter, in addition to celebrating the resurrection of our Savior, also seem to be a calling to the trees. Soon there will be beautiful

flowers on the Bradford pears, dogwoods, and redbuds in many parts of the country. Other parts will follow a bit later. With the blossoms there is the promise of fruit.

Our home in Topeka had a number of fruit trees that I was charged with tending—well at least a few of them. We had some apple trees in the back that the first couple of years bore well, but the insects, birds and deer feasted on them. So last year I was determined to treat them just to see what we would get. But then we had a late spring freeze after the trees had blossomed and bloomed. No fruit was there last year or even the year before. That was a summer of drought and there simply was not enough water for the fruit to form correctly. The year before that I didn't get the spraying done so the apples were so wormy that I simply let them fall and raked them into the compost pile. The deer loved it.

There was also a Bradford pear that was gorgeous both in the spring with its flowers and in the summer with its abundant foliage. Though it is a tree that bears little fruit, its limbs spread out all over the back yard. It was not only my family's refuge, for sitting and talking or to read a book on a hot summer day, but also the refuge of many families of birds. However, there was an ice-storm that came suddenly and the weakened trunks of the tree gave way, splitting down to the ground. I had no choice but to take it the rest of the way down. Its remains in the back yard waiting for some special occasion to serve as fuel for the fire.

In the front of the house there is a huge crabapple tree. The beautiful pink flowers will soon be in bloom, and unlike its cousins in the back of the house it recovered from the freeze last year. I've never tried making crabapple jelly, but the little hard fruit that came were as great an attraction to the birds as they were an annoyance to Debbie and me as we tried to mow under the tree and were forced to drive over them when they fell on the driveway.

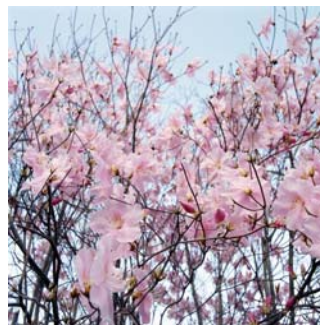
For all of this, spring came. The trees flowered and began the process of bearing fruit last year. Some of the trees had the potential to bear fruit that was useful, others did not

(okay, crabapples may not be entirely useless, but they are certainly an annoyance). The Bradford pears fruit is all but non-existent from years of grafting and changing God's original design, the desire for a full flower but less annoying fruit like the crabapple. I'm not sure if this tampering is what makes the tree so susceptible to wind damage or not, but have my suspicions. And there is always the danger of a late freeze or summer drought for the apple and pear and other "normal" fruit trees. But despite all of this, the blossom bears the promise of fruit, and nature faithfully marches ahead year after year, doing what God has created it to do.

This makes me wonder about the church. If the blossom is a promise of bearing fruit, I wonder what the blooms of the Easter service promise for us. I think they promise the potential of great fruit. The extra people there on that Sunday morning, instead of being seen as outsiders who only come twice a year might be seen as seeds of new life and the promise of new things to come. Oh, there will be storms that threaten and freeze from time to time, but most years, if we tend the bud, nature will bring the fruit. But too often we expect the tree to tend itself, and leave it to the insects and bugs and birds and instead of the promised fruit, we get wormy compost.

Then there are the churches that have tweaked their nature to bear beautiful flowers and lots of foliage but little fruit. I worry about the storms that may come and whether the trunk is strong enough to bear the storms. There are also those trees that bear fruit, no matter what, and that fruit is useful primarily to nature, not to humanity. Yes, there are churches like that as well.

Jesus made a statement about a fig tree one day that bore no fruit. He cursed it and it withered and died. He also told a parable about the tree that the owner would have cut down and thrown into the fire but the gardener asked to be allowed to tend it and give it the nurture it needed before this happened. As I consider this and the beautiful blossoms of spring, I wonder what it all means for our churches today. Maybe, just maybe, it means it is time for us to get to work.



*In Christ,
Steve Van O*

The Amazing Race

June 15-21, 2008

That is the theme for the 2008 Front Range Camping program based on Hebrews 12:1-2. As Christians, we are called to run the race. The campers will be challenged to train for the race and run to win the prize.

Front Range Camping will be held at Quaker Ridge Camp near Woodland Park, CO. This facility allows the campers a wide range of activities. Campers can worship in the chapel, hike wonderful trails, ride horses, shoot air rifles, swim in the pool and much more. The older campers also go rappelling at Cheyenne Canon near Colorado Springs.

Front Range Camping starts early this year. Camp for all ages will be held June 15-21. This way Sr. High students can go to camp and the national ABC youth gathering at Estes Park, CO, **More than a Week**, which will

be held July 5-11.

This summer Front Range Camps will have three age groups: Elementary, Middle School and High School. The Elementary camp coordinator is Jessica Fischer (Calvary, Denver) and Alvin Wilkerson (Flagler) will be the camp pastor. Middle School camp coordinator is Chris Oldham (Highland Park, CO Springs). Senior High camp will be coordinated by Casey Blanchette and her husband Rich will be the camp pastor.

Steve and Annie Wamberg will be returning to lead the worship team. Their goal for this summer is to take a step back from the worship team to allow the Sr. High youth to do more "hands-on" leading and learning.

We are still looking for volunteers. As always, the greatest need is for adults

who can come for the whole week as group leaders. We also need people who can come on Sunday to help with registration. Another need is for people who can come up for one or two days to lead crafts or even play field games with the campers. If you would like to volunteer, E-mail Mike Oldham at moldham@abcr.org or call the Region Office (303) 988-3900.

We are planning for 160 campers this summer. In 2006, Front Range Camping had 89 campers. In 2007, we had 138 campers. We are hoping for another 20 campers this summer. Register early. The registration deadline is June 2, 2008. Forms are available online at http://abcr.org/FR_Camping.htm.

Mike Oldham
ABCRM
Ministry and Mission Coach

Senior High Camp

Completed Grades 9-12

Strap your helmet on tight. Senior High Week is a non-stop adrenaline rush. You will test your limits while hiking to Soldier Mountain, rappelling down a 160' cliff and challenging yourself on the Ropes Course.



You will also stretch your faith as you learn to run the Amazing Race.

Because of the increased cost of white water rafting, rafting will be an optional event. The cost for rafting is an additional \$75 per person.

Rate	ABC	Non-ABC
Before May 1:	\$230	\$260
After May 1:	\$265	\$295

Middle School Camp

Completed Grades 6-8

Middle School Camp is just for you! You will experience the thrill of rappelling down a 160' cliff and the challenge of working together on the low ropes course. You will be amazed at the view from Soldiers Mountain. Of course you will have time to play in the pool.

You will also grow spiritually as you apply the daily teaching time to your life and as you sing around the campfire.

Rate	ABC	Non-ABC
Before May 1:	\$230	\$260
After May 1:	\$265	\$295

Elementary Camp

Completed Grades 2-5

Elementary Camp is camping at its best! A week of hiking, playing games, singing camp songs, swimming, riding horses, air rifles, and archery. From the time you climb out of your sleeping bag, you will be on the go



from one activity to the next. Campers will also participate in daily teaching times in which they will learn about God's great love. It will truly be an Amazing Race.

Rate	ABC	Non-ABC
Before May 1:	\$215	\$245
After May 1:	\$250	\$280

Moving News

Packing has begun at the Valley Forge location for the American Baptist Historical Society (ABHS),

and by the time you read this, one truck will have taken fragile artifacts and other pre-packed items to Mercer University's Atlanta campus. The items will be in temporary storage as Mercer continues construction on the extensive space ABHS will occupy.

As lovers of the TV shows such as "This Old House" know, rehabbing space for new purposes and designs is always an adventure, even when working with the best-kept facilities, like the building that will become ABHS's new home.

So it has not been surprising that the concrete floor does need reinforcement in order to carry the weight of compact shelving, or that asbestos was found and needed to be dealt with according to strict government safety guidelines. Or that the delivery for component parts for the new, specialized climate control system was delayed, or that the dismantled and stored compact shelving units which Mercer bought for ABHS will require extra time to rebuild.

Nevertheless, Mercer's progress on our behalf continues, despite the need to push back occupancy dates. Plans now call for initial shelving areas, which will hold collections currently at the Valley Forge location, to be completed by March, with the total space ready in May. Moving the Rochester site will begin then, and will probably take at least four weeks. The end result is that the Society could possibly open, but only on a limited basis, to researchers during the summer months, with our grand re-opening in Atlanta scheduled for Saturday, September 27, 2008.

Continuing are fundraising efforts to cover the cost of the move. Staff have estimated that the move of collections, offices and staff will total between \$600,000 and \$800,000. If you would like to make a pledge to, or learn more about the *History Matters* capital campaign, go online to www.baptisthistory.us, email at abhs@abc-usa.org, or call at (610)768-2269.

*American Baptist Historical Society
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"Unity In Diversity" Ephesians 4:1-6



The SoulJourners Retreat will be at the Franciscan Retreat Center in Colorado Springs, CO, September 16-18, 2008.

Many forms of diversity exist in our world today. Differences of race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, and culture can serve to divide peoples. Our challenge as Christians is to honor our diversity while maintaining "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." At the SoulJourners Conference, we will examine our unity in light of ethnic and religious diversity.



The Speakers will be Dr. James Peters (*left*) and Mr. Walter White (*right*). Dr. James Peters is the retired Pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Denver. He has served on the General Board for



ABC. Mr. Walter White will be the Missions Speaker. He is an ABC Global Consultant at the Valley Forge International Missions office.



Our Worship Leader will be Darrell Walker (*left*), Music Minister at New Hope Baptist Church.

Please join us this year. This retreat is sure to be a time to remember and a time to fellowship. To find more information and the registration form, go to

<http://www.abcrm.org/ministries/seniors.htm>. Hope to see you there.

Christian Community Credit Union Offers \$40,000 in Scholarships

Christian Community Credit Union's Focused on the Future



Scholarship Program is giving \$40,000 in scholarships in 2008. The scholarships range from \$500 to \$2,000 and are open to members of Christian Community Credit Union. To be eligible to apply, students must be enrolled at an accredited college, university or seminary. Also, students must be taking 12 units or more for undergraduate students and 8 units or more for graduate and post-graduate students. The scholarship application deadline is June 13, 2008 and scholarships will be awarded by early August.



Christian Community Credit Union also offers Student Advantage Banking—a money saving program exclusively for students age 17-24. Contact the Credit Union for details.

With assets over \$440 million, the Credit Union has over 29,000 members and has served as a financial partner of Christian churches, ministries and their members for over 50 years. For a scholarship application and/or Credit Union membership information, call 800-347-CCCU or visit www.myCCCU.com/students.

Hope Cardinal
CCCU

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

ABCUSA Responds to Recent Pew Survey

ABCUSA enjoys something no other Baptist or mainline Protestant denomination does: no ethnic majority. In fact, according to 2006 data reported directly from local churches to the American Baptist Churches Information Systems (ABCIS), the largest "minority" is African American with close to 47% of the denomination's total membership. This is followed closely by European American at 45.5%. The remaining 7-8% is comprised of Hispanic, Multi-Ethnic, Asian, Haitian and Native American members. While the Pew Forum's Survey results say that ABCUSA is predominantly white, the truth is that the denomination is not predominantly anything.

"The 2008 Religious Landscape Survey produced by the Pew Forum which recently labeled American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) as 81% white is fundamentally flawed in its methodology," said Rev. A. Roy Medley, general secretary of the denomination.

"Only 406 American Baptists were respondents to the question of ethnic affiliation when interviewed for this survey," said Dr. C. Jeff Woods, associate general secretary for Regional Ministries. "While 91% of those interviewed may very well have been white, there was no method in place to verify that these results were indicative of the whole of ABC diversity. That is unfortunate in that it paints a very different picture from our reality." Dr. Woods went on to address another possibility in the skewed data. "In our own survey work, we have discovered that not all ethnic groups respond equally to inquiries and surveys."

"The intentional strand of diversity in ABCUSA used to be considered the *best kept secret* of the American Baptist Churches," said Medley, "but it was never intended to be a secret. Instead, we rejoice in our blessed diversity and uniqueness among denominations while we keep looking for opportunities to share it with our brothers and sisters in Christ across the country and around the world. We believe that the richness of an ethnically diverse membership is a gift from God and we are truly blessed to experience it."

According to its web site, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life seeks to promote a deeper understanding of issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs. Its Religious Landscape Survey is a product of interviews with 35,000 Americans.

Phone calls and emails made to the Pew Forum to discuss how best to address the flawed methodology of the Religious Landscape Survey were not returned.
American Baptist News Service

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## Grand Piano Duo Concert

Cheyenne First Baptist Church is sponsoring a concert on April 25, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.

The concert will feature pianists Lance Garrett and Jerry Nelson on two grand pianos.

Come and enjoy the music made. First Baptist Church is located at 1800 E. Pershing Blvd, in Cheyenne, WY. For more information contact the church office at (307) 632-9334.

*Sue Kinsley*  
First Baptist Church, Cheyenne, WY



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Volunteers Needed for MtW National Youth Gathering in Estes Park

More Than a Week (MtW)—A National Gathering of American Baptist Youth, July 5-11—needs volunteers for the following positions: airport host/hostess, guest registration, general office worker, intercessory prayer team, and drivers to pick up dignitaries at the airport and take them to Estes Park.



MtW is going to be a youth extravaganza like no other. It will be filled with wonderful worship, dynamic dramas, energetic speakers and thousands of youth and young adult leaders who are on fire for Christ.

Please consider this opportunity to reach out to youth and young adults. For additional information about volunteering, please contact Victoria Goff at vgoff@abc-usa.org or 800-ABC-3USA, ext. 2449.

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*Discover your PASSION!
Realize your MISSION!
To reach the world with the
LOVE of Jesus Christ!*

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