

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

T-H-A-N-K-S-G-I-V-I-N-G



Thanksgiving is a time to count our blessings, which too often we take for granted. I am going to use the letters of *Thanksgiving* and list some of the physical and spiritual blessings I appreciate. I am sure that each person could insert other words for mine, but maybe this list might get us started thinking about the blessings we have, instead of complaining about those items which we do not have.

T—At this time of year, I think about the delicious

Turkey which most of us will enjoy at the dinner table and also their *Truth* about God which I can know through belief in God's Son, Jesus Christ.

H—It is good to have a place we call *Home* where we live with our families and an eternal home called *Heaven* where we will live with God.

A—I appreciate having an *Automobile* which gets me where I need to go and I am awed with the fact that the *Angels* came to earth to celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem.

N—I feel privileged to live in a *Nation* called the United States of America, where we have freedom and opportunity and I am thankful for the *New* life which Jesus offers to those who will believe in Him.

K—It is good to be the recipient of the *Kindness* which a fellow Christian will show us during a crisis in life because we are part of the *Kingdom* of God here on earth.

S—I appreciate the clothes I wear and the *Shoes* which make it much safer to walk and of course I can not think of the letter "S" without being in awe of the *Salvation* which Jesus purchased for us on the cross so many years ago.

G—I think of the *Good* food which we have available in abundance at the local grocery stores and the *Grace* of God which we need but do not deserve.

I—I enjoy *Ice cream*, especially the home made kind and I am glad that Christ *Invited* me to accept Him as Lord and Savior.

V—Being able to *Vote* on issues and leaders is a great privilege in our country and knowing that I can have *Victory* over sin through Jesus Christ.

I—This could stand for *Iron* and other natural resources in our land and also that each of us is *Important* to God.

N—I appreciate good *Neighbors* and the beauty of *Nature* which can be seen in this area and was created by God.

G—I am thankful for the *Grain* which is grown on the farms and for *God* from whom all blessings flow.

We know that our country is not perfect and each of us has things we could gripe about, but I would not want to give up what we have or move somewhere else. So let us take time this Thanksgiving to thank God for all the good things in life.

Bill Shermer
Interim Pastor
First Baptist Church
Lander, WY

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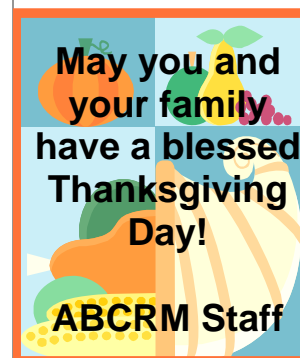
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Early Christmas Decorations

It was only three days after Halloween when I saw the first outdoor Christmas decorations go up. To be fair, it was in a mountain town that probably was taking advantage of good weather just in case. But still, I thought it was a little early. So that being said, you will probably think it strange that I want to encourage you to start thinking about your summer plans. Very specific plans to be sure, but summer plans none the less. I want to encourage you to start thinking about getting your church to do a mission trip this summer!



Now, before you say “We’re too small, we can’t do that!” or “We’re too old, that isn’t for us!” hear me out. Yes, I am talking about the trips where a group from your church get in a van and travel together to Anadarko Christian Center or Rainbow Acres or Bethel Neighborhood Center or some other field where your people get to experience a bit of life different from their everyday experience. Mission is not only what has called us together as a family, but it is also a Biblical mandate. And while your support of United Mission and our Mission Offerings does take one step toward filling the Biblical mandate, it’s not enough. It is like paying for a gym membership without ever using it and saying you are doing all you can do to be healthy. So let’s talk about how you can do a “mission trip” in your church this summer, no matter what the size, location or demographic of your congregation.

First of course, you can do the traditional trip. Organizing such a trip takes a little time and effort, but it is ultimately well worth it. And while the work you do for the people or churches where you go is necessary, that really is not the greatest benefit. The greatest benefit is the way in which the trip changes the life and the theological understanding of those who participate. By working with others from a different culture who are brothers and sisters in Christ, you come to see a bigger God. It is like the way you see a picture downloading on the internet (pre high speed days). As the packets arrive you first see a dim outline and pieces missing here and there. Then you see it a little clearer and then a little clearer. Not until all the packets arrive do you have a clear/sharp picture. Mission experiences help download additional packets of our view of Christ, God and God’s Kingdom!

But what if your church can’t quite pull off such a trip by itself? Well, why not consider partnering with another congregation nearby to plan a trip. I am thinking primarily of course of partnering with another ABC congregation, but you don’t need to be limited to that. The local Disciples church or the Brethren or an unaffiliated congregation might make good partners with whom to plan a trip. Our mission partners

would love to have the opportunity to share their mission with congregations besides our own. If you need an idea of a place to go on a mission trip, well there are lots of possibilities. You can contact the Volunteer Coordinator from National Ministries and she will have a list of ABC related organizations who wish to have mission teams this coming year. You could also look at groups like Habitat for Humanity who work with volunteer teams on a regular basis. But all of these are still “traditional” mission trip models. What are some other possibilities?

Well, perhaps you don’t even need to go out of state to do a good mission trip. What about contacting your congregational coach to see if there is another congregation in the Region who may need some help next summer with Vacation Bible School or a camping program? Maybe you could take a team to volunteer for a weekend at homeless shelter? There are lots of possibilities to do low cost cross-cultural experiences. The main thing is to look around and to intentionally do something outside your congregation to embody Christ’s love for the world.



Now, let’s talk about those congregations where none of these options will work. Perhaps for you the best way for you to engage in a mission experience is to sponsor someone to participate in another mission trip. The Region of course is sponsoring a number of trips that you could participate in. If one of those wouldn’t work, perhaps another congregation would have a team you could connect with. Who to sponsor? Has your pastor had the opportunity to do a mission trip? How about the chair of your deacons? Is there a young person your church thinks needs to consider ministry as a career? What about your ABW Ministries chair? There are a lot of people who could benefit from a mission experience that will come back changed. As they come back and share with your congregation, it will change the face of your congregation, because when you experience the power of Christ in a mission experience, you want that for your local congregation.

Still not able to pull this off? Well, then, how about doing a mission trip by Skype®. Contact one of our missionaries to discover what their needs on the mission field might be. Enter into an intentional time of meeting that need and then engage your group in conversation with that missionary about how your project will help them in their ministry.

All of this is to say, that with a little planning, you can see a bigger God this summer through intentional, personal mission experiences. I hope you will find a way to do this.

*In Christ,
Steve Van O*

Rev. David L. Davis Called to Lamar, CO as Pastor



First Baptist Church of Lamar, CO welcomes Rev. David L. Davis as their new pastor. Dave accepted the position on October 19th and moved later that week. He comes to Lamar after almost two years serving as the Director of Church Outreach for Ottawa University in Ottawa, KS.

While at OU, Dave began rebuilding and building relationships between the school and the American Baptist Churches of the Central Region. In addition, Dave preached at OU chapel services, at football chapel services, and at Sunday night (9 pm) on campus worship. He has also trained OU students over the last 11 years

to lead Bible studies for summer camps. Dave has led the adult Bible study for the past 5 years at OU's Braving Discipleship. Most recently, he briefly helped with their baseball team. One of the rewarding aspects of this work was the relationships established with the students helping them see and grow in Christ.

Dave grew up in First Baptist Church of Kansas City, MO and graduated from Ottawa University and Central Baptist Seminary. His B.A. is in Health, P.E. and Recreation, while his M.Div. has a focus in Christian Education. After seminary the Lord started Dave in ministry in Nebraska (4 years), then moved the family to Eureka, MT (5 years). In 1986 they moved to Kansas. In the Central Region, Dave served churches in McLouth, Hutchinson, CedarVale, Goodland and Holton. The ministry that the Lord has given Dave seems to focus on helping churches to heal and become healthy, vibrant churches.

Other aspects of wider ministries that Dave has participated in include camping as director and pastor; community service clubs; mission work trips; starting sports leagues; coaching and refereeing public school sports. He has served on the ABCCR minister's council and has been their national council senator. Dave served two different terms on the ABCCR Board of Directors with the last term being President-elect and then President of the region, which ends December 2008. He has also preached revival/renewal services over the years. People have told Dave they see in him the spiritual gifts of preaching, teaching, evangelism and administration.

Dave has been married to Becky for 31 blessed years. They have worked together in serving the Lord. Dave and Becky have three daughters. Abie, who is married to Kalith Smith live in Roswell, NM with their daughter Brenna. Dave and Becky's middle daughter, Marney lives in Colorado Springs. Katie, the youngest, is a senior at Ottawa University and scheduled to graduate in December 2008. All three girls will have graduated from OU. Becky is a Sioux Falls graduate and a fantastic wife, mom, and grandma. Dave and Becky both love to cook. Desserts are Becky's specialty. Dave likes to play golf and other sports.

*Becky Davis
Member
First Baptist Church
Lamar, CO*

Colorado Council of Churches Meeting

Calvary Baptist Church of Denver hosted the November Full Council meeting of the Colorado Council of Churches (CCC). New pastors, Rev. Brian Henderson and Rev. Anne Jernberg along with Rev. Gordon Kieft led the opening worship. New officers were elected for the coming year which included Rev. Andrew Simpson (African Methodist Episcopal [AME]) as President; Rev. Gordon Kieft (ABC) as Vice President; Mr. Jim Logan (Presbyterian) as Treasurer and Sondra Tilsley (Disciples of Christ) as Secretary.

The Justice Commission presented much of the agenda and was represented by Rev. Anne Dondapati (ABC) at the meeting. Issues included updates on the Health Care Reform education program designed to help develop health care for the underserved in Colorado. Hunger for Justice and Housing Justice are working with us as Council Churches to reduce poverty and hunger in the state and promote more housing opportunities for lower income families.

The education program on Immigration has been sent to all churches. Congregations are encouraged to use it for adult education programs in the churches. It is a four session program with manual and DVD. The Council has been working with a coalition of organizations to help maintain Affirmative Action to ensure broader representation of minorities across the state. The Unity Commission is beginning a new Christian/Muslim dialogue to foster better understanding of Islam in our state, country and around the world. The new budget was approved for 2009. It was a very productive meeting.

*Gordon Kieft
ABCRM Representative
CCC Executive Committee*

Missions Corner

The ABCRM Region was blessed by having several missionaries visiting our region in September and October. Chiang Mai ABC-IM missionary Karen Smith visited ABCRM October 11-21 (see the article at http://www.abcrm.org/news_archives/2008/abcrml103108.pdf).

September 19-24, Chiang Rai ABC-IM missionaries Chuck and Ruth Fox, as well as teen-age son Kenny, were hosted by members of FBC of



Colorado Springs and FBC of Boulder. Chuck and Ruth spoke during the Sunday, September 21 FBC of Colorado Springs morning service and at a later Sunday evening gathering of FBC of Boulder congregation members during which they received a \$5000 check donated by this church to help Chuck provide clean-water systems to three more Akha villages.

On Tuesday, September 23, Chuck and Ruth also spoke at the Tuesday women's Bible-study meeting at Calvary Baptist in Denver. On each occasion, Chuck talked about his ministry in northern Thailand to help provide clean-water systems to northern Thailand Akha tribal villages. Ruth spoke about her ministry to help Akha women earn family income by providing resources to assemble and sell their hand-made crafts through the Chiang Rai "Akha Crafts Store" and the "Akha Crafts Internet Store" (<http://akhahilltribe.org/>).

Chuck and Ruth also reminded everyone about the importance of giving to this year's World Mission Offering where all WMO contributions go towards sustaining ABC-IM missionaries located around the world.

Chuck and Ruth also enjoyed a September 21 reunion, hosted by FBC of

Colorado Springs members Bruce and Beth Cook, with the 2008 ABCRM Thailand mission team members who they worked and had fun with in Chiang Rai. (Note: Shown in the photo right is also FBC of Colorado Springs member Marveen Thomas.) February 11-25, 2009 ABCRM Thailand mission team members will be working with Chuck to build a clean-water system at an Akha village as well as with Ruth to do teaching and crafts projects in Chiang Rai.

ABC-IM Chiang Mai missionary Becky Mann visited our region from October 2-7 and again from October 24-27 to speak to ABCRM congregation members about –

- The ministry of Becky and husband Mike to help tribal hillside farmers in northern Thailand by showing them how to grow and sell coffee to provide family income,
 - The Mann's ministry to provide clean-water systems to many tribal groups in the Chiang Mai area in northern Thailand,
- And the importance of ABCRM church members to give to the annual World Mission Offering.

On Sunday October 5, Becky spoke during the Harvey Park Baptist Church's morning service and enjoyed lunch with congregation members afterwards. Later on Sunday evening Becky was the guest speaker for the "Current" contemporary music service at FBC of Boulder.



On October 25, Becky spoke during a lunch gathering at Aurora Hills Baptist Church in Denver on Saturday. She traveled to speak on Sunday October 26 to FBC of Cheyenne's morning service and later to FBC of Laramie's congregation during a Sunday evening potluck at the church.



Thanks to the many ABCRM church pastors and congregation members who helped make these recent ABCRM visits by missionaries Chuck and Ruth Fox, Becky

Mann, and Karen Smith possible through their assistance with missionary itinerary planning, hosting, and missionary transportation. It is enriching and encouraging to be able to meet and talk with our ABC-IM missionaries who do so much to help people where they serve. By helping those people they share the message of Jesus and the Love of God to those who don't know these truths. If you haven't done so already, please keep our missionaries in the field through your generous donation to this year's World Mission Offering.

*Kerry Hassler
Member*

ABCRM Mission Committee

Remember the Deadlines

Sign up deadlines for the 2009 ABCRM Mission Experiences are as follows:

Thailand Mission Trip

Date of Trip: Feb. 11-25, 2009

Deadline: November 21, 2008

Bahamas Mission Trip

Date of Trip: May 9-16, 2009

Deadline: February 9, 2009

Murrow Indian Children's Home Mission Trip

Date of Trip: April 19-25, 2009

Deadline: February 16, 2009

Find more details at www.abcrm.org/mission/missionexperiences.htm

Join the Xtreme Team in Russia in 2009

Greetings! I am excited to share the plans in store for the Xtreme Team program in 2009. There are now around 200 alumni of this program and we hear many testimonies of how this experience has influenced participants- from major vocational decision to increased participation in missions in the local community to transforming one's spiritual life.

Here are some key details:

Dates: July 16- August 16, 2009

Cost: \$4200 (plus airfare and visa).

Leadership: Rev. Holley Faulkner of Fairmont, WV. He is International Ministries' Special Assistant for Russia and has a great love for the Russian people

Group: Will consist of around 10 people and participants will be between the ages of 19-29.

Details: Team Orientation will take place immediately upon arrival in Russia. The team spends a total of 27 days in Russia inclusive of travel. Debriefing time in Cowen, WV will be facilitated by Daniel Buttry, American Baptist missionary, well known author, and former Xtreme Team leader to the Republic of Georgia. Conclude the Xperience by attending and sharing the Xperience with others at the *Camp Global* mission event at Camp Cowen, WV.

How to Apply: Visit the Xtreme Team website at www.xtremeteamonline.org to apply as well as view the 2008 Thailand trip Xperience and view videos.

Questions: Call 800-222-3872 ext. 2366 or email bimvolunteers@abc-usa.org for help



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

Background: So, what makes this mission experience a bit different? I'll copy some text from the website (www.xtremeteamonline.org) below. You will see this is not an ordinary mission trip!

The Xtreme Team is designed to connect young adults with the global mission of American Baptists. Our purpose is to grow a passion and interest in mission for the here and now as well as to cultivate global mission leadership for the future.

How do we do that? We carefully select a team of usually no more than twelve participants (including the Xtreme Team staff) and we send them to a country for a variety of mission "Xposures". The team will participate in cross-cultural Xperiences and interact with Xtreme global issues in the context of the many levels of global mission work in which God's Church is involved.

At first this may sound like any other mission Xperience, but the Xtreme Team is called Xtreme for a reason. You see, the team members are not told what they will be doing on a day to day nor told who else is going on the trip! All they know for sure is their destination and when they will arrive and depart. The rest is a mystery! It's an intense Faith Walk in following Jesus to the Xtreme!

During the time in-country, Xfiles (clues about what is coming next) are prepared by the leaders to lead the Xtreme Team members to their next mission Xposure. We choose to use this method for several reasons: it certainly is an Xercise in faith, it forces team building and most importantly it reminds us that much of our Christian walk is a mystery to us, but not God! When we say to God "here am I, send me" we must be prepared to go whenever and wherever God calls!

We seek to accomplish the following on

an Xtreme Team mission experience:

- *Xperience* a variety of "mission", mission-related issues, and people involved in mission
- *Xtend* your hand of friendship and service to people of a different culture and/or faith
- *Xpand* your mind by encountering different ways of thinking, communicating, relating, and behaving and having your current patterns in those areas challenged
- *Xamine* your values, priorities, commitments and responsibilities in light of those held by people of another culture and those involved in global mission
- *Xercise* your faith as you go to Xtremes in crossing culture and are Xposed to Xtremes in climate, standards and quality of living, religions and global issues
- *Xplore* God's word and world, searching for the whole of Christian mission

Doesn't this sound Xciting? It is! It is also Xciting to see how lives are being changed through the Xtreme Team. Young adults are being given an opportunity to serve God in a way that is meaningful to them. In addition, we also

- *Xpect* to meet God in our Xtreme adventure together.
- *Xpress* to others what God is doing in the world and in us through global mission.

Oh, one other thing that is different about the Xtreme Team- the use of media. The team will update a website (www.xtremeteamonline.org) with journals, audio, video blogs, etc that will allow American Baptists everywhere to be Xcited and challenged by your Xperiences.

Jonathan Hilsher
International Ministries
Coordinator
Volunteers in Global Mission
jhilsher@abc-usa.org

2009 Baptist Joint Committee
**Religious Liberty
Essay Contest**



GREAT PRIZES: First is **\$1,000** & airfare and lodging for two to Washington, D.C. Second is **\$500**, and third is **\$100**. **ELIGIBILITY:** Open to all high school students in the graduating classes of 2009 and 2010.

Deadline: March 3, 2009

For more information go online to:
www.BJOnline.org/contest

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Committed to the Gospel!

Learn It, Live It,

Share It, Be It!

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