



October 1, 2005

# The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

## Come, Let's Discover God Together

I have a book of poetry in my library entitled *The Faces of God*. The authors, Gordon and Gladis DePree, preface the book with these words: "In the past few years a restlessness has taken hold of many of us. We have felt a hunger to reach out beyond the old bounds of denominationalism and doctrine, a longing to know what it is that binds us not only to those whose faith is expressed like ours, but to all [human-kind]."<sup>1</sup> They go on to explain that the book grew out of their spiritual restlessness.

Their poems meld the sacred and secular. In fact, they depict life as being so filled with God's presence that there is no ungodly place. They make it possible for the reader to look with them into the faces of people they meet and see there the faces of God.

What if we were to take this approach in our Region-wide quest of *Discovering God Together*? What if we were to truly look into the faces of those we meet at the 2005 ABCRM Gathering with the intent of seeing God? What if we turned our attention toward one another in order to learn more about God? What would happen?

God is full of surprises, so I can't predict the outcome. But theology comes to life when God's presence is expressed through human experience. I believe we will discover afresh God's rich diversity. Likewise, we will discover new insights about ourselves. When we look closely at God's creation, we learn about the Creator. We are created in the image of God and are to reflect that image. Yes, we—the art-form, the handiwork—have been created to reflect the style, the process of the Master Artist.

While the discovery of God is generally considered to be personal and private—an experience between the created and the Creator—it is also corporate. When I discover God, and you discover God, the next step is for us to get together. I suspect there have been plenty of life-changing moments of discovery in the personal spiritual journeys of American Baptists in the Rocky Mountains. You know about yours; I know about mine. But we know little or nothing about the discoveries of our brothers and sisters in this Region. Let's get together and tell our stories. Together, we'll create a new story for the Region we call ABCRM.

Ingrid Dvirnak  
Newsletter Editor

### Inside Information

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- **Meet Our Ministry and Mission Coaches**
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- **Kreative Kids**
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### Ministry and Mission Cluster Dates

SE WY/NE CO - October 4  
American Baptist Church/Ft. Collins  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Western CO/Moab, UT - October 8  
First Baptist Church/Grand Junction  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Denver - October 12  
Aurora Hills Baptist Church/Aurora  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Eastern CO/NM - October 13  
Lake Avenue Baptist Church/Pueblo  
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

West and East WY - to be scheduled  
after the 2005 ABCRM Gathering

<sup>1</sup>Gordon and Gladis DePree, *Faces of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974) preface.

## The 2005 ABCRM Gathering to be Held in Colorado Springs on October 21-22

The word is out! You've already heard that this year's Gathering of the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains will be hosted by First Baptist Church in downtown Colorado Springs where Mike Sayler is the senior pastor. Information has been mailed to your church about the 2005 ABCRM Gathering.

If you wanted just a few more details than you already have, this article is a narrative of the event as proposed by the planners. Gathering under the theme, "Discovering God Together," we will discover God through our worship, discovery sessions, fellowship and prayer times, and our worshipful work. Larry Van Spriel, pastor at FBC/Greeley serves as program coordinator.

We will be joined by Jeff Savage, the pastor of First Baptist Church in Springfield, OR. Jeff will also be a key presenter during the clergy/spouse event, scheduled for October 20-21. (*See related articles, p. 3.*)

Youth events are being planned in conjunction with this year's Gathering. Katherine "Kay" Farley is primary staff person organizing these youth events.

**Additional documents available:**  
[registration form \(download\)](#)

[proposed interim transitional bylaws for consideration by delegates \(download\)](#)

Most of the events (with the exception of Friday night's worship, childcare, and the pre-Gathering clergy/spouse event) will be held at the Antlers Hilton Hotel, located near the church at 4 South Cascade Avenue.

Registration will open at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, the 21<sup>st</sup> at the Antlers Hilton Hotel. Following registration, attendees will have an opportunity to personally meet and greet missionaries Tom and Terry Myers and Dan and Estella Schweissing before lunch. The Judson Press Bookstore and displays will also be open during these morning hours.

The Gathering will convene during the opening luncheon which begins at 12:00 noon. After some of the ABCRM family business has been conducted, Areas will meet to tend to remaining items of business, such as finances. Following the official disbanding of Areas, attendees will meet in Ministry and Mission Clusters. Their primary task will be to choose representatives to the Region Board.

Leaders of ABW Ministries of Wyoming and Colorado are planning Friday's dinner event. An evening of worship will follow at First Baptist Church, 317 E. Kiowa. Brad Berglund is coordinating worship; the preacher will be Desmond Hoffmeister, Transition Executive Minister.

Saturday's Gathering begins with a 7:00 a.m. Prayer Breakfast coordinated by Tom Wheeler, pastor of FBC/Ft. Morgan, CO.

Prayer will set the tone for the remainder of the day which includes a variety of Discovery Sessions. Choices include:

- *Discovering God through Conflict*, Bill Mitchell, facilitator.
- *Discovering God through Worship*, Janice Newman, facilitator.
- *Discovering God through Life Transitions*, Jan McCormack, facilitator.
- *Discovering God through Strategic Thinking*, Desmond Hoffmeister, facilitator.
- *Discovering the Challenge of Being a Baptist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Slayden Yarbrough, facilitator.
- *Discovering God Through Spiritual Disciplines*, Jeff Savage, facilitator.
- *Discovering God: Generation Next*, Katherine "Kay" Farley, facilitator.

Additional business will also be conducted during the morning. The closing "Sending Service" will include communion. The Gathering will adjourn at 1:00 p.m.

A memorable capstone to the Gathering will be an opportunity to remember and celebrate at Black Forest Camp and Conference Center. Lunch and activities at the BFCCC site will begin at 2:00 p.m. BFCCC is located north of the city off I-25 at 780 East Baptist Road.

## This Year's Gathering at a Glance

### Thursday, October 20

1:30 p.m. Clergy/Spouse Event begins

### Friday, October 21

10:00 a.m. Registration opens  
Meet and greet missionaries  
Displays and bookstore

11:00 a.m. Clergy/Spouse Event concludes

12:00 noon Lunch  
2005 ABCRM Gathering convenes  
Worshipful Work

3:30 p.m. Areas Meet

4:15 p.m. Ministry and Mission Clusters Meet

5:30 p.m. Dinner

7:30 p.m. Service of Worship

### Saturday, October 22

7:00 a.m. Prayer Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Discovery Sessions

11:00 a.m. Worshipful Work

12:15 p.m. Service of Worship

2:00 p.m. Lunch and Activities at Black Forest

## Guest Presenter: Jeff Savage

Jeff Savage is Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Springfield, OR, where he has served since 1988.

A graduate of Westmont College (1979) and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (1983), Jeff completed his Doctor of Ministry degree through Fuller Seminary in 2001. The focus of his doctoral work was on the development of spiritual leaders by attention to spiritual formation through the practice of spiritual disciplines in the context of Christ-centered small groups and intentional spiritual friendships.

An American Baptist since his teens, Jeff has been involved not only in the life of the local church, but denominationally as well. He has served as a member of the General Board of American Baptist Churches USA, the Board of Educational Ministries, and a previous General Secretary Search Committee. He has also been privileged to serve as the chair of the ABC Nominating Committee and the Biennial Program Committee. He is currently a member of the Ministers Council Senate. Through these opportunities he endeavors to serve our wider family, enrich the ministries of the local church, and strengthen leadership abilities that foster spiritual renewal and empower every disciple to practice spiritual leadership.

Jeff and his wife, Janet, have been married for three years.



## Personal Spiritual Growth Will Be the Focus for Pre-Gathering Clergy and Spouses Event

Beginning at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 20, ABCRM Clergy and Spouses will gather at First Baptist Church, 317 E. Kiowa, in Colorado Springs for a time of renewal. The event will close before noon on Friday, the 21<sup>st</sup>.

The First Baptist family will host the pre-Gathering event and provide Thursday night's dinner. Rooms are available at the Antlers Hilton, located at 4 S. Cascade Avenue in downtown Colorado Springs for a reduced rate of \$45/double occupancy for Thursday night. (The room rate is being subsidized by Region funds.) Please see more detailed information on the registration form (available for download, page 2).

Jeff Savage, Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Springfield, OR, will be the main presenter. He will help the group to focus on personal spiritual growth. In addition, Jan McCormack, ABCRM President, will lead a session on dealing with compassion fatigue. Transition Executive Minister, Desmond Hoffmeister, will bring an update on regional life.

Whether you are currently employed or retired, all ABCRM clergy and spouses, and chaplains and spouses are invited to join your colleagues in ministry for a "time away" that will be well-spent.

## Delegate Information

*(Excerpted from the ABCRM Bylaws, Article III, Section D, items 2-6)*

“Each cooperating congregation is entitled to two (2) delegates to Region meetings for the first 150 resident members or fewer, plus one (1) delegate for each 150 additional resident members. (More than 75 additional resident members will entitle the congregation to an additional delegate.) These delegates shall be certified by the congregation as its official representatives.

“Each delegate shall have one (1) vote.

“An alternate delegate may be elected for each delegate.

“Voting members of the Region Board shall be voting delegates.

“Others who are not delegates are encouraged to attend and may participate in discussion of motions, but have no vote.”

Delegate cards and additional information have been sent to your church’s moderator.

**Let us help you share your stories!**

*Send us ministry and mission stories and ideas that work in your church.*

*Submit them to [advirnak@abcrm.org](mailto:advirnak@abcrm.org).*

**[Discovering God Together](#)**

## Kreative Kids Experience God Together and Inspire Others Too!

The Kreative Kids of First Baptist Church of Fort Morgan, CO, kicked off their new season of kids gatherings this fall by making their own pizzas, doing puppet dramas, singing, and visiting church members who reside at two retirement homes: Valley View Villa and Eben Ezer. The children gave residents gift bags which they had made during summer Bible School.

Their leaders were Pastor Tom and Nancy Wheeler, along with drivers Clarine and Milton Tormohlen of Fort Morgan. A special guest on the mission outing was Pastor Peter Doluony of the First Sudanese Baptist Church of Omaha, Nebraska. The kids learned about the elephants, lions, tiger, and hippos of Pastor Doluony’s homeland.

During the three visits made at Eben Ezer, the children sang in English, and Pastor Doluony sang in the native language of the Sudanese people. Those visited were FBC members Thelma Ford, Edith Hubbard, and Dot Taylor. Arvilla Patskowsky was visited at Valley View Villa. The young people included Charlie and Danny Rinebarger, Justin and Cody Scheidt, and Kelby Gregg, all of Fort Morgan.

*Submitted by Tom Wheeler  
Pastor, FBC/Fort Morgan*



**Kids learning puppetry:** (r to l) Justin Scheidt, Charlie Rinebarger, and Kelby Gregg.



**Kids making pizza:** (r to l) Nancy Wheeler, Kelby Gregg, Justin Scheidt, Charlie and Danny Rinebarger.

# Meet Our Ministry and Mission Coaches

## Denver



Katherine “Kay” Farley comes to the Region as a member of New Hope Baptist Church in Denver where she considered it an honor to have been the Assistant to the Pastor, James D. Peters, Jr. and Minister of Education for the last six years. She served on the Board of Christian Education, taught New Members Classes, Bible Study, Vacation Bible School, led workshops, seminars, and had a variety of other duties and responsibilities.

Kay received her Bachelor Degree from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee and her Master of Divinity Degree from Boston University School of Theology in Boston, Massachusetts. She has been the recipient of numerous awards.

She is married to Douglas Farley who is a minister at New Hope. They are the proud parents of six-year-old Little Miss Angela Faith, affectionately known as “Angel.”

She enjoys working for the Lord, preaching, walking, reading, watching nature, being a wife and mother. Her favorite Scripture is Proverbs 3:5; her favorite book is the Bible, her favorite song is “Precious Lord;” and her favorite theologian is the late Howard Thurman.

## West Wyoming, East Wyoming, SE WY/NE CO

Wayne Dvirnak has served churches in Wyoming, North Dakota, New Jersey, Oregon, and Colorado. During his 33 years of pastoral and denominational ministries, he has worked in both rural and urban settings.

Prior to coming to Colorado, he served as Associate Executive Minister of the Dakotas. In addition, he has served on the General Board, ABC/USA and has been involved on numerous national, regional, and ecumenical boards and committees.



Dvirnak is a 1972 graduate (M. Div.) of Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. His undergraduate study was completed at Dickinson State University and Bethel College. He is a native of North Dakota.

He describes himself as a visionary person who is always looking for a creative way to make things better. The greatest challenge and reward as a Ministry and Mission Coach will be to help local churches, clergy, and laity realize their potential. Wayne began working full-time on August 1, 2005. He is working with three clusters: East WY, West WY, and Southeast WY/Northeast CO.

## West CO/Moab, UT East CO/NM



Mike Oldham has been in the Rocky Mountain Region since September, 2001. Mike received a B.A. from Eastern New Mexico University in 1985 with a major in Religious Studies. He then received his M. Div. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1990. While in seminary, Mike served as Associate Pastor at the First Christian Church (Disciples) of Jeffersonville, IN.

After seminary, Mike served a yoked ministry, FBC of Pt. Marion and Oak Hill Baptist Church of Smithfield, PA, for five years. Mike continued to serve as pastor of Oak Hill Baptist Church until August of 2001.

In September 2001, Mike began his ministry in our Region as a church planter. Then he served as the Manager for Black Forest Camp and Conference Center.

Mike began as a Ministry and Mission Coach on September 1, 2005. He works with two of our newly created Ministry Clusters, the churches on the Western Slope of Colorado and Moab, Utah and the churches of Southeastern Colorado and New Mexico.

# What Makes a Successful Missionary Visit?

We have the blessing of having two missionary couples living in our Region this year. Tom and Terry Myers, missionaries to Bulgaria, and Dan and Estela Schweissing, missionaries to the Bahamas, are on home assignment. As a result, many of us have the opportunity to host missionaries in our local churches. What makes a successful missionary event? That depends on what the local church sees as its goal for hosting that event.

Essentially, missionary visits fall into two categories. The first is a formal event (such as a Sunday morning service) that achieves maximum exposure for the missionary. The second is the more informal event where there may be fewer people, but there is maximum opportunity for interaction with the missionary. Each has its purpose and value. The Sunday morning service allows the majority of the people of the congregation to put a name with a face and acquire some understanding of the work that the missionary is doing. This can be valuable for raising mission awareness. The down side is that it provides very little opportunity for the missionary to get to know people or for the people to get to really know the missionary. This is a key to building lasting relationships.

Informal events, while not involving as many people, are more likely to create lasting relationships between

church and missionary. These are the kind of relationships that lead to the church becoming involved in the mission in many practical ways. About a year ago a missionary visited one of our Region churches. The time was used to meet small groups over meals. (Often a noon and evening meal will fit the schedule, but please don't expect the missionary to sample everyone's dish twice a day! Plan meals that will respect the needs of the missionary.) Out of the relationships that were developed, several things happened.

First, those few people have covenanted to share the emails they receive from the missionary and have built a strong prayer network to support the missionary. Over the year that missionary has begun to share more and more of her heart because she has felt the support of the people.

Second, the missionary has come to know the people and the church. She regularly prays for the church. The people, in turn, are blessed by the knowledge of her interest in them.

Third, the missionary has struggled with some difficult tasks on the field. Through the newly established correspondence network, she finally felt comfortable enough to ask the church if people would contribute their expertise on a short-term

mission trip to assist with those tasks. The church is now beginning to search out people who could provide that support and planning for ways to support those people who will participate in the trip.

Sunday morning or a weekday informal? Many of the closest relationships have been built between churches and missionaries where the missionary has never spoken to the congregation on a Sunday morning. In fact, most missionaries prefer the informal opportunities to get to know people. Realistically, when missionaries are on home assignment, only a relatively few churches will see them on Sunday morning. Six times that many churches can see them during the week.

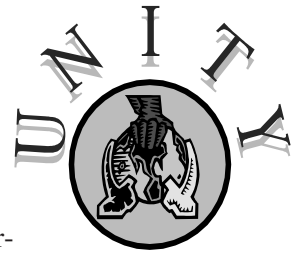
So what makes a successful missionary visit? It clearly depends on your goal: maximum exposure or personal relationships? Determine your goal, and make your request for a missionary visit by contacting Beverley Hoffmeister at the Region office (303-988-3900 or [bhoffmeister@abcrm.org](mailto:bhoffmeister@abcrm.org)).

The Schweissings' will return to the Bahamas in January. Their calendar is virtually full. However, the Myers are accepting speaking engagements for the winter and spring of 2006.

*(Adapted from the Schweissing's newsletter)*

**October is World Mission Offering Month. The WMO is vital to the work of International Ministries. Please give generously.**

# Unity: Living Out God's Reality



“Believing that God has established the unity of the Church through our relationship in Christ Jesus, the Christian Unity Commission of the Colorado Council of Churches seeks to enable the different parts of Christ’s Body to give witness to and to live out that already existing unity.”<sup>1</sup> These words plus a meeting announcement comprised my background information as I met for the first time with other members of the Christian Unity Commission. I came out of the meeting with some ideas on unity that I want to share:

## Unity was at the forefront of Jesus’ mind.

*“The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they have become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:22-23 NRSV).*

This was Jesus’ prayer. These words weren’t just a “wouldn’t it be nice” thought. They were his prayer on the last night of his earthly life. You don’t talk about trivia on the last night of your life. Christian unity speaks to the entire world, not just the local church, about God.

## Unity mattered to Paul too.

*“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all” (Ephesians 4:4-6 NRSV).*

Because there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, we don’t have a choice about whether or not we will come together to give witness to the unity of Body. We cannot say “if” we find a common concern, “then” we’ll come together. Rather, our position must be “because—therefore.” Because there is one body, therefore we will come together to give witness to the unity of the Body and to offer ministry in Jesus’ name.

## Unity is an imperative.

We do not *work* for Christian unity. We don’t *strive* for it. We can’t *achieve* it either. Christian unity is the already-present gift of God through Jesus Christ. We can either live out that reality or choose to stand in its way.

Won’t you join me in working with our brothers and sisters in living out this reality?

<sup>1</sup>[www.coloradocouncilofchurches.org](http://www.coloradocouncilofchurches.org), "What We Do."

Wayne Dvirnak, Ministry and Mission Coach  
and Christian Unity Commission Member

**A Youth Slam is planned as part of the Friday night ABCRM Gathering activities. Tell the youth in your church and bring them with you. We’re all part of the same family. Come, let’s discover God together!**

Also of special interest to youth:  
a Region-wide youth choir and a discovery session on Saturday morning.



## Housing Information for the 2005 ABCRM Gathering

This year's Gathering will be held at the Antlers Hilton Hotel, 4 S. Cascade Avenue in Colorado Springs. With the exception of Friday night's worship service, childcare, and the pre-Gathering Clergy and Spouses Event, all meetings will be held at the Antlers Hilton. The negotiated "church rate" is \$99.00 per night. Please ask for the "church rate" when making your reservations. Telephone number: (719) 955-5600. Space is limited.

Special rates up to \$69.00 per night have also been negotiated at the hotels listed below. They are located within one to three miles of the Antlers Hilton. Please ask for the "church rate" when making your reservations.

- Rodeway Inn, 2409 E. Pikes Peak. (719-471-0990),
- Econo Lodge, 714 N. Nevada (719-636-3385),
- Howard Johnson Express Inn, 1231 S. Nevada Ave. (719-634-1545),
- Ramada Inn, 1703 S. Nevada Ave. (719-632-7077).

***The Rocky Mountain American Baptist***

is published by the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains

**Desmond Hoffmeister:** Transition Executive Minister  
**Ingrid Dvirnak:** Newsletter Editor

## ABCRM Response to Hurricane Katrina

The ABCRM responded to a call from Homeland Security to give needed items for the families that were being sent to Lowry. Katherine "Kay" Farley, Ministry and Mission Coach for Denver, set up three of our churches as drop off centers. They were Calvary and New Hope in Denver and Crossroads in Northglenn, Colorado. The success was so overwhelming that it took two days to move all the items given. Clergy and laity from several churches came together to help sort items and load the truck.

Thank you, ABCRM, for your love, support, time, and energy in helping those who lost so much. May God bless you in a very special way.