



The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

Senior Resource Team Works!

The Senior Resource Team has been hard at work, and what they're doing is working. The ABCRM Senior Resource Team (SRT) is composed of volunteer retired American Baptist ministers and chaplains, as well as qualified American Baptist laity, who reside in the Region, who exhibit a positive attitude and congenial spirit, and who wish to volunteer their energy, experience, and expertise to benefit churches and their leaders among the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains. Members of the SRT serve as they are able and available at the request of the Transitional Executive Minister of ABCRM.

Several SRT members have been very busy in recent months.

Bob Frykholm, who resides in Buena Vista, CO, worked with the search committee that called Betty Weaver to the First Baptist Churches of Center and Monte Vista, CO. Bob was instrumental in bringing the two congregations together in their pastoral search effort.

Bob reflects, "After serving as a pastor in the Region for almost 16 years, then being away from Colorado for ten years, and now

living in retirement some 80 miles from the nearest ABCRM church, I was out of the loop of regional activity. Facilitating the search for a pastor enabled me to re-enter regional life. I think my insider's knowledge of churches, church people, and pastors was helpful to the joint search committee, and the members of the committee, by their prayerful and faithful diligence in the process, encouraged me to know that together we were engaged in a task of great importance to the churches, the pastor who would come, and the Region."

Don Lambert of Fort Collins, CO reports, "I recently concluded a ten-month volunteer task on behalf of the Region as consultant with the Pastoral Search Committee at Laramie First Baptist. It was a pleasure working with the people there, and hopefully my service was helpful to them. They unanimously selected Mary Beth Mankin of Boulder as their new pastor beginning January 1. I wish them well!"

Dwight Neuenschwander of Boulder, CO is serving as the Interim Pastor at FBC in Laramie, WY. Interim pastors work themselves out of a job, so Dwight has received his "pink slip." He will finish his work in Laramie at the end of 2005.

Inside Information

- Multiple Mission Articles
- Your American Baptist Resources Are Waiting
- Cluster Chooses Name and Plans 2006 Gathering
- Honor Simplicity
- RMMO Reminder

Commenting on his stint in Laramie, Dwight writes, "It has been a challenging and productive time for us at FBC/Laramie. This is a great congregation—diminished in number from previous years, but determined to be healthy and faithful as an American Baptist congregation. Aladine and I are grateful that we have been asked to serve in this special way!"

John Pipe of Englewood, CO has served as the Interim Pastor at Aurora Community Church in Aurora, CO. He too has worked himself out of a job, and has turned the interim work over to Bruce Greer.

In reflecting on his work with Aurora Community Church, John says, "During my interim period at Aurora Community Baptist Church they made a unanimous decision to

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Senior Resource Team Works!

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start a new Hispanic ministry focused on the people in their community. With the help of National Ministries, ABCRM, and local churches they are in the process of searching for an Hispanic pastor. They also voted unanimously to continue to have a part-time pastor to meet the needs of the members and friends of the church. Their former pastor of 22 years, Le Roy Fox, helped plant the seeds for this ministry and the present interim pastor, Bruce Greer, continues to encourage the congregation in its call to serve Christ in their community.”

We appreciate all of the work members of the SRT are doing. While they are not “on call,” they are valuable members of the team when their schedules allow them to be “on duty.”

Winter Mission Trip to Chile



A team from First Baptist Church of Loveland, CO will be traveling to Chile in 2006 to support Dwight and Barbara Bolick’s ministry.

The program will include a dentistry mission as well as an agricultural, educational and discipleship element.

The group will leave Denver February 19th and return the 4th of March.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Becca at the church office 970-667-4418.

Global Mission Conversation Partnership

I have, on the request of Desmond Hoffmeister, put together a brief proposal for Global Mission Conversation Partnership with the view to generate passions and possibilities in our mission thinking. This is not a formally adopted proposal of the Region, so you may treat this as an heuristic exploration toward our mission thinking.

Mission Basis

Our God is a God of relationship and connection. God enters into relationship with all creatures, not only human beings. God’s mission is to create and build relationships with and among creatures, engendering new webs of relationship with and among persons of all races, tribes, and nations. Christians are called to be partners in God’s mission of saving, renewing, and creating relationships.

Global Mission Conversation Partnership (GMCP)

GMCP seeks to celebrate the God-given diversities and richness of Baptist Christians around the world and to invigorate our connectedness through interaction, sharing, and listening to one another’s stories with loving and open hearts.

Setting the Context: New Mission Thinking

Today we live in a world that is increasingly becoming integrated and necessarily interconnected. Ours is an age of technology and

international information exchange and transfers. Many of us are amazed at the speed and convenience with which most information can be sent and received. The World Wide Web, satellites, televisions, and a host of other communication networks make it possible for the world’s dispersed and disparate inhabitants to be connected to one another to the extent that distance and border are crossed in an instant. Put simply, the world we live in is already a web of relationships.

What does this mean for the Church? What does it say to us as mission workers? What might this mean for the Church’s mission?

Traditionally, Christian mission has always been synonymous with the clergy and lay persons sent by Western churches to “convert” the non-Christian world – Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the inhabited islands of the Pacific Ocean. The mission field has always been known to be outside of and somehow other than the Western world. This notion persists to this day. American Baptist Churches USA, through International Ministries, has missionaries all around the world, and most of these are serving in non-Western countries.

However, two important factors have come into play in contemporary mission thinking. First, let us consider the changing Christian landscapes of today’s world. Indeed, the majority of Christians today are concentrated in the former non-Christian world – i.e., Third World Countries. Europe and the United States are reduced to minority



Honor Simplicity

I spoke with a friend recently, and when I asked her how she was doing, she said, “Well, you know, it’s the Christmas season, and it’s sorta hard to keep up.” We all know the feeling, don’t we? As each day passes, and the countdown gets into the single digits, we become a little more exhausted. There are still gifts to wrap and parties to attend. Many people seem to feel our Christmas festivities have gotten out of hand.

This is no recent discovery. As far back as the fourth century, preachers were telling congregants to take it easy. In A.D. 380, Gregory Mazianus, a bishop in the area that is now Turkey, urged the people in his congregation to not try to outdo each other while others are hungry and in need. It seems the parishioners were spending a lot of money on expensive gifts, clothes, and foods. According to Gregory, people were missing the point.

In the Middle Ages, St. Francis inspired his fellow citizens to refocus their holiday merriment by creating the first creche. Shortly before Christmas in 1224, Francis gave a wealthy friend a list of ingredients for a live manger scene. Volunteers helped with construction, and on Christmas Eve, people gathered around, carrying candles and singing carols. Francis delivered a sermon about the birth of Jesus. According to legend, an eyewitness reported, “Simplicity was honored, humility commended—there was made, as it were, a new Bethlehem.

As you celebrate the coming of God to humanity, honor simplicity!

status. Second, as a consequence and in recognition of this shift, there has also been an adjustment in how mission is conceived. Now it is recognized that in contemporary context, the whole world is God’s mission field so that both the US and Europe are viable sites for mission.

This new understanding opens space for greater appreciation, personal interaction, and partnership among Christians around the world. Churches are now increasingly recognizing the need for cross-cultural mission exchange among and between West and East, North and South. Through such partnerships in mission, churches around the world may enrich one another, learn from one another, and better appreciate each other’s ministry. Through the GMCP initiative, the ABCRM hopes to facilitate such enriching experiences among and between Baptist families around the world.

Objectives and Goals

GMCP will have the following as its goals and objectives:

- To keep Baptist Christians around the world connected with one another.
- To provide avenues for learning from each other and each other’s ministries for the sake of the greater mission.
- To engage in mutual conversation between and among Baptist

Christians of diverse race, ethnic groups, and cultures, believing that diversity is the heart and soul of God’s purpose of creation.

- To provide opportunities and venues for responding to the challenges and needs to bring about a world in one accord and purpose.

Methods and Strategies

GMCP, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, seeks to achieve the set goals by undertaking and engaging in the following, both at the local (churches) and regional levels:

- Mutual conversation: Organize events and programs that facilitate mutual conversation on issues of denominational importance and concerns.
- Sharing/Speaking engagements: Facilitate events or forums where we can share our stories – stories of our church life and mission.
- Cultural exchange programs: Organize events in which we can all share and learn one another’s experiences and cultures so as to gain appreciation for one another’s God-given cultures.
- Engage in mission partnership: Explore ways where we can become effective partners in carrying out the God-given mission.
- Sponsor Missionaries-in-Residence.

*Ahao Vashum
Global Mission
Conversation Partner*

*Ingrid Dvirnak
Newsletter Editor*

Introducing the Schweissing Missionary Partnership Team

In our September 19, 2005 issue of this newsletter, we introduced International Ministries' new model for missionary deputation: missionary partnership networks (MPNs). MPNs comprise the churches and individuals that support the missionaries they choose to assist. The new model is intended to facilitate: 1) support and involvement, 2) missionary deputation, and 3) consistency in relationships.

In this issue, we are introducing Dan and Estela Schweissing's missionary partnership team (MPT)—the folks who work behind the scenes to keep their MPN running smoothly. When the Schweissings return to the mission field in January 2006, it will be important for them to maintain and develop the relationships with churches which they have initiated during their home assignment. In order to help them do this effectively, Dan and Estela have formed an MPT. Basically, the MPT is the nucleus for their MPN. It is a group of ten volunteers that serve as a liaison between the Schweissings while they are on the mission field and their network churches here at home.

Now, we'd like to introduce you to the members of the Schweissings' MPT:

Terry Ketelsen is the Schweissings' MPT chair and financial advocate. Terry has been a member of Crossroads American Baptist Church in Northglenn, CO for 25 years, serving in a variety of lay church positions. The role of mission has been an area of interest and prayer with Terry and he feels serving in the capacity of financial

advocate for Dan and Estela is an honor and a privilege. In his role as financial advocate, Terry will work with Dan and Estela and their MPT to develop and implement a financial support-raising strategy that will include contacting potential partner congregations and individuals who would like to join the network. Many of you already know Terry as he has been busily making follow-up contacts with the churches that the Schweissings have visited during the past year.

Eileen Schneider is the Schweissings' prayer advocate. As a member of Crossroads and longtime friend of Dan and Estela, Eileen sees the need for the covering of prayer support as they minister on the field and counts it a great privilege to be a part of that. As prayer advocate, Eileen is responsible for writing up prayer requests and praise reports and posting them to the Schweissings' newsletter list, organizing prayer chains, and doing whatever else it takes to make sure the Schweissings' ministry is covered in prayer.

Gary Thompson serves as the Schweissings' communications coordinator. Gary is a member of the diaconate and mission committee at Crossroads American Baptist Church and a long-time member of the Gideons International. He is also a retired chemical engineer/chemist. Gary is responsible for producing newsletters on the Schweissings' ministry to be shared with current and potential partner congregations and individuals in the network. These updates will supplement the newsletters that are already regularly published by the Schweissings.

Ron Veatch is the pastoral care provider for the Schweissings. A member of the Crossroads staff, Ron has a Ph.D. in psychology and serves as the director of the Crossroads Counseling Center. He is a retired professor, a member of the Crossroads Prayer Team Steering Committee, and serves on the Crossroads Men's Ministry Leadership team. Ron's job is to communicate with Dan and Estela on a regular basis, encouraging them to maintain personal devotions, prayer, and Bible study, in addition to setting aside time for personal renewal.

John Pipe is the Schweissings' human rights advocate. John is a retired ABC pastor, having served several churches as minister of Christian education as well as a variety of administrative positions with the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains and the [former] Board of Educational Ministries. He continues to be active in ministry, serving as a volunteer chaplain at Craig Rehabilitation Hospital in Denver and, recently, serving a three-month interim pastorate at Aurora Community Baptist Church. John is also a member of Calvary Baptist Church in Denver. As human rights advocate, John will help to educate the Schweissings' network churches about the human rights situation of Haitians in the Bahamas and the Caribbean basin. He will also help to mobilize U.S. churches for political advocacy on Haitian rights issues.

Richard Schweissing is the regional mission representative for the Schweissings' network. Rich currently serves as Vice-President for the American Baptist Churches

of the Rocky Mountains. He is also a member of the mission committee at Crossroads. He is a retired high school social studies teacher who specialized in teaching about world cultures and global issues. Rich is also the father and father-in-law of Dan and Estela. As regional mission representative, Rich is responsible for coordinating the Schweissings' deputation schedule with the Region. He is also responsible for communicating mission opportunities to those churches interested in the Schweissings' work.

Rita Ackerman is the Schweissings' women's ministries advocate. She has served in women's ministries at her previous church and currently serves at Crossroads on the Women of Worth Ministry Team and Woman to Woman/Heart to Heart Mentoring Team. Rita has previous mission experience through short-term mission trips to India, France, and Germany. Rita will be working closely with Estela to help her collect handicraft supplies from U.S. women's groups and coordinate teams of women to teach handicrafts skills to Haitian women in the Bahamas.

Joe Zepeda is the Crossroads mission committee representative on the Schweissings' MPT. Joe also serves as the chair of the Crossroads mission committee and is the church moderator. When he is not busy with church activities, Joe makes his living working as a project manager for a small Denver-area real estate developer. His recreational activities include running, biking, and hiking/backpacking with his wife Michelle. Joe is the liaison between the Schweissings' MPT and the missions committee at Crossroads. The mission committee has actively supported Dan and Estela's ministry and preparation for ministry in a variety of ways for well over a decade.

Daniel Fowler is the internet technology specialist for the Schweissings. Dan is a member of Crossroads American Baptist Church and a student at Metropolitan State College of Denver, where he is majoring in computer science. Dan is currently developing the Schweissings' website, <http://www.haitianministries.net> an important source of information about the Schweissings' ministry that is already being utilized by many of their network churches.



Virginia Schweissing is Dan and Estela's relocation manager. Virginia is a member of the hand bell choir and mission committee at Crossroads. She also happens to be the mother and mother-in-law of the missionaries. As relocation manager, Virginia is responsible for finding furnishings and a place for Dan and Estela to live when they return to the States on home assignment. She also oversees packing and storing of Dan and Estela's belongings when they return to the field.

As you can see, there is a lot of behind the scenes work being done by the members of the Schweissings' MPT to help build and maintain their network and to support their overseas ministry.

*Gary Thompson
Communications Coordinator
for the Schweissings' MPN*



Inspirational Advent Thoughts Available on ABCRM Website

During this Advent season, our website is featuring inspirational thoughts written by pastors within our Region. You will find them on the home page in the panel at the right side of your screen. We will continue to upload new submissions throughout the season, so check the site weekly. Go to www.abcrm.org. Previous weeks' thoughts are archived there as well.

*Advent is a corporate spiritual journey that calls for expectant waiting and readiness for the coming of Christ.
When the church travels this journey and treats it as a discipline of life and prayer, the joy of Christmas is immeasurably intensified.*

Robert Webber, The Services of the Christian Year

Your American Baptist Resources Are Waiting

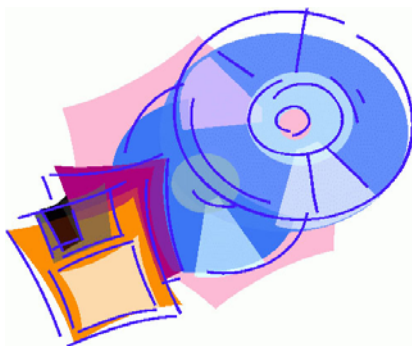
Planning Calendars Now Available Online

The ABC/USA 2006 Planning Calendar is now available online. Go to <http://www.abc-usa.org>. To download your own copy, click on Leadership/Administrative Tools/Planning Calendar and Directory.

Planning calendars and pocket calendars are no longer available for purchase.

2006 Planning Guide for Disciple-Making Congregations on CD

Christian Education leaders look forward to receiving the annual Planning Guide. It's filled with great articles, helpful teaching tools, dozens of Web links to additional tools and resources—everything you need for your church's disciple-making activities.



The format for the *Planning Guide for Disciple-Making Congregations* has changed. As more and more people use computers, they ask for resources that they can use in that way. So 2006 Planning Guide is the first one available in electronic format. The Guide in CD format has been sent to churches.

If the electronic format will not work for you, please contact Judson Customer Service at 1-800-4JUDSON or visit the website, <http://www.JudsonPress.com>. The printed format of the Guide is free, but they are sending it only to those who request it in an effort to exercise good stewardship.



Judson Press Offers Spring 2006 Curriculum Special to New Customers

Looking for something new in Sunday School curriculum? New customers who order two or more age levels of *FaithWeaver*® or *Hands-On Bible Curriculum*® Spring quarter resources will receive a choice of one of the following free items published by Group:

KidsOwn Worship® Spring 2006 Kit

Everything you need to help lead 13 half-hour or full-hour kid-friendly programs that help kids worship God. (\$89.99 value.)

Or you may choose the *Friendship First*™ Children, Youth, or Adult Ministry Kit

A 13-week experience that helps grow friendships with Jesus. (\$59.99 value.)

This information and an accompanying order form has been sent to your church office. Place your order through Judson Press. Call 1-800-4JUDSON. Offer expires February 18, 2006.

Hurricane Katrina Response

Race and Poverty: Five-Session Study Guide

This free resource that examines attitudes and perceptions about race and poverty in America was developed and published jointly by National Ministries, American Baptist Churches USA, and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in response to the human suffering following Hurricane Katrina and witnessed by the world.

In a nation often considered a land of plenty, how could there be so many with so little? Download the sessions and use this guide in a Sunday school class, a mid-week Bible study group or a weekend retreat. No matter where or when you use it, you're bound to be challenged by the questions it raises and the awareness it offers. Available at <http://www.JudsonPress.com>.



**Northeast CO/Southeast WY Cluster is now
Northern Front Range Cluster**

Cluster Chooses Name and Plans 2006 Gathering

The Northeast CO/Southeast WY Cluster has chosen to name itself the Northern Front Range Cluster with the stated purpose to “become acquainted with the other churches of the cluster group, listen to one another and to God as we seek to discover what it is God is calling us uniquely to do together that we may not be able to do alone.”

At the 2005 Gathering of the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains, the Northern Front Range Cluster decided to form a Cluster Core Group to guide the cluster during 2006. This leadership team will consist of a facilitator, gathering coordinator, children/youth coordinator, mission opportunity coordinator, pastor/clergy support coordinator and a communications coordinator.

To begin to fulfill the chosen purpose, a leadership team made up of Myron Reed, Tom Wheeler, and Dan Vincent along with Wayne Dvirnak, Ministry and Mission Coach, began to make plans for the first of two gatherings planned for 2006.

Since becoming acquainted with other cluster churches is one of the priorities, a time of worship, fellowship, and the sharing of successful ministry ideas is being planned for February 26th at 5:30 p.m. The location of this first cluster gathering will be announced in January.



Northern Front Range Cluster team leaders: (l to r) Tom Wheeler, Myron Reed, Dan Vincent.

As cluster activity increases, you will be able to find information on the ABCRM website. Click on the “Cluster” tab and the appropriate cluster.



*May the **JOY**
of the angels,
the
EAGERNESS
of the shepherds,
the
PERSEVERANCE
of the wisemen,
the **OBEDIENCE**
of Mary and
Joseph,
and the **PEACE**
of the Christ Child
be yours
this Christmas.
Amen.*

The Region office will be closed from December 23 - January 2.

This is the final newsletter for 2005.

We wish you a peace-filled Christmas.

WITH GRATITUDE AND CARING

We Thank Those Who
Have Enriched
Our Lives



Since 1935, American Baptists have contributed to special offerings received in their churches for retired ABC **ministers** and **missionaries**, or their widowed spouses. The **Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering (RMMO)** was established in 1977.

Through this annual offering, American Baptist congregations say **thank you** in a tangible way to the denomination's retired ministers and missionaries or their widowed spouses. Please give generously.

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