



August 1, 2015

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

Annual Gathering

Dear Friends,

The book of Acts records the time when Peter received a vision... a *Dangerous Dream* from God... the vision that Christ died for all people, not just the Jews. And since that time, men and women of God have been receiving *Dangerous Dreams*, dreams that have helped to shape how we live out our faith in Christ and dreams that have changed the world, making it more like the promised kingdom of God.



Recent events have reminded us that we still have more to do. The church can lead the way in bridging the gaps that divide people today: race, gender, economic inequity, geography, and others. There is still more to do, so God is still giving visions... *Dangerous Dreams* to the church.

And so, we invite you to come to the 2015 Annual Gathering of the American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains to consider some of those dreams at Macedonia Baptist Church of Denver, September 25 and 26. We have strong leaders who will guide us in times of thoughtful and faithful discussions about matters of race, the future of the church and human sexuality. And we will have time for you to sit down with others to discuss how you personally and how your church might be able to help some of these God given dreams come to bear and how we can live out our understanding of God's Word when it doesn't agree with cultural and societal values.

To help prepare us for this time, you are also invited to come on Thursday, the 24th to participate in an **"Improv Workshop: Go with the Flow"**. This will be a fun way to consider some of the challenges and obstacles to needed change in our lives and in our churches and the lessons we can learn about this based on this fun and humorous art form.

I always look forward to the gathering of our people but am especially excited about seeing you all in Denver for this important time. Come and join the fun and the dreaming....

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Steven Van Ostran
Executive Minister

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WHAT WILL WE DO?

The Gathering promises to be an exciting time where we can dream together about our communities being safe places for all, dream about our churches being more effective servants of Christ in those communities and dream over our common love of Christ trumps over differing views of Scripture.

We hope you will come and be part of this special time together.

WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?

- * Visit with friends from around ABCRM
- * Meet new friends
- * Learn new things
- * Listen to others
- * Hear inspiring speakers
- * Tour Wings over the Rockies at the Clergy Appreciation Dinner
- * Laugh as you learn during the Thursday Training event
- * Discuss things that matter to your church & community

HOW MUCH?

Early Registration Deadline: August 24, 2015

Go with the Flow Workshop (includes lunch) \$45

Clergy Appreciation Dinner

ABCRM Clergy & Spouse
free with paid Gathering registration \$0

Non-clergy individuals \$40
and persons not registered for the Gathering

Gathering Registration:

Church Delegate (voting member) \$60*

Church Member (non-voting member) \$60*

August 25 thru September 14

Go with the Flow Workshop (includes lunch) \$60

Clergy Appreciation Dinner

Same as early registration

Gathering Registration:

Church Delegate (voting member) \$80*

Church Member (non-voting member) \$80*

*Cancellations must be received by **September 18, 2015**, and are subject to a \$10 non-refundable processing fee. Cancellations after **September 19** are non-refundable.*

- * *Cost includes snacks and refreshments, Gathering materials, and two meals — Friday lunch & dinner*

Registration forms are available from our office.

Call (303) 988-3900 for more information.

Pastors, Lay-Leaders, Youth Leaders, and anyone wanting to learn more about the Region are welcome to attend this Annual Gathering of churches and people from around the

American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains.

The Gathering Training Day

Thursday, September 24, 2015

11:00 a.m.—4 p.m.

Macedonia Baptist Church

\$45 (bargain price if you register before 8/25)

Improv Training: Go with the Flow

What words would you use to describe your last continuing education event?

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| * Exciting | * Engaging | * New insights |
| * Laughter | * Practical | * Valuable |
| * Stretching | * Entertaining | * Fun |

In today's quick paced world, organizations that can't (or won't) change swiftly, find themselves irrelevant. An improvisational mind-set is all about change, flexibility and adaptation. Using the training techniques developed in improvisation, this workshop will give you the tools to embody and, hopefully, learn to embrace change in a positive light.

Would that help your church and ministry? What would happen if people in your church started saying "YES / AND" instead of "NO / BUT". A small but transforming change. This workshop is a great value, so get a group from your church to participate in an exciting, informative, valuable, engaging and fun day!



Comments from past participants:

"WOW! I left feeling good ... I can learn while having fun or as one American Baptist professor told us "Holy Play"! Now I know what that feels like." Pastor Kay Farley

"I learned how to respond on the fly and how to handle tough situations." Pastor Jason King

Pastor Jason King

Lunch Keynote Speakers:

Comedians: Bone Hampton & Rich Praytor will provide insights into **Humor & Hard Topics**



Clergy Appreciation Dinner

Thursday, September 24th @ Wings over the Rockies

5:30 pm Informal tours of the Air & Space Museum

6:30 Dinner & Entertainment

ABCRM Clergy & spouse—Free with paid Gathering registration
Non-Clergy individuals and persons not registered for the Gathering is \$40



Entertainment



Bone Hampton

comedian, actor, keynote

www.bonehampton.com



Rich Praytor

comedian, speaker, church outreach

www.richpraytor.com

SoulJourners Adult Retreat September 15-17, 2015 Franciscan Retreat Center, Colorado Springs

LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

When I was baptized, my parents gave me my first Bible. Inside the cover they had inscribed 2 Timothy 2:15, which reads: *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth .”* Throughout my growing up years, this did not mean as much to me as it has since throughout my ministry and my adult life. Though sitting through years of Wednesday night Bible studies under my father still remain with me and have been a solid source of my understanding of Scripture. My own nearly 40 years of preparing Bible studies, sermons, and attending seminars and retreats under many different teachers and Bible scholars has played a vital role in my evolving understanding of God’s Word and how its teachings need to play out.

Even in retirement this continues to be as true as it ever was. Hearing the same passage again, but this time from the pew, or from the various leaders at our SoulJourners retreats, still helps me grow in my understanding of God’s Word. In John 16:13, Jesus tells his disciples that after he leaves he will send the Spirit to help them and that specifically, *“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth”*. Think about that. You and I are still to be learning truths about life and God’s purpose for our lives through God’s Spirit.

The SOULJOURNERS ADULT RETREAT has played a significant role for many of us over the years, and we have one more opportunity to avail ourselves of this. This fall retreat will be the last one of these under the SoulJourners Planning Committee. After many years of planning these excellent retreats, your committee’s members need to move on to other things. The region staff has committed to continuing adult ministry in some form, but what it will be exactly after this year’s retreat we do not know. The fact is, we are going out on a high note with Dr. David May, New Testament professor at Central Baptist Theological Seminary as our retreat leader. He will be leading us on the theme, **UNDERSTANDING JESUS: HIS CULTURE AND CONTEXT**. The theme scripture is from Matthew 5, *“Jesus taught them saying, ‘you have heard it said to you....but I say to you..”* We find it difficult to understand the motivations and actions of people without understanding their cultural context. Dr. May will give us insights into the culture of Jesus’ day, and help us understand how to interpret Jesus’ teachings in light of the cultural context. And so our life-long learning continues.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE FOR YOU TO REGISTER FOR THIS RETREAT. THE DEADLINE IS NOT UNTIL AUG. 25TH. YOU WILL FIND LINKS TO THE REGISTRATION FORM AND A DETAILED BROCHURE ABOUT THE RETREAT ON OUR REGION’S WEBPAGE AT: <http://abcrm.org/ministries/souljourners/>

PLEASE JOIN US ON THIS ADVENTURE OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING ABOUT GOD’S WORD UNDER DR. MAY’S LEADERSHIP AT THIS YEAR’S SOULJOURNERS RETREAT, SEPTEMBER 15-17.

*Carroll Morony
SoulJourners Committee*



Schweissings Ministry

It's amazing how yet another school year has flown by and summer is already well underway! We are thankful for the many opportunities that God has given us to work with refugees and immigrants in our community.

MOVING INTO SUMMER

In mid-May, we wrapped up homework tutoring for the 2014-15 school year. Over the course of the year, we served a total of twenty-five students, grades 1-12, and were assisted by a total of five volunteer tutors, two of whom were Karen high school students from Ebenezer Ethnic Baptist Church.

One of the highlights of our year was attending Eh Doe Nay's induction ceremony into the National Junior Honor Society at our neighborhood middle school. Eh Doe Nay was one of the very first students to enroll in homework tutoring back when we got started five years ago, and it has been a real joy to watch him transition from a bright-eyed second-grader who spoke only a few words of English to a very talkative yet studious young man about to enter the seventh grade.

A few days ago, we completed this year's summer day camp, which was held from June 15-26 and was staffed by summer mission teams from First Baptist Church of Delta (week 1) and Ecumenical Church of Pueblo West (week 2). We'll provide a brief update on how things went in the next newsletter.

BEGINNING A NEW CHAPTER

Recently, Dan was offered and has accepted a full-time position teaching English as a second language (ESL) at the Community College of Aurora beginning this coming August. Thus, we will be resigning from our position as region missionaries effective July 31, 2015.

While we will no longer officially be serving as missionaries for ABCRM, we will continue to reside in the midst of the refugee and immigrant community here in northwest Aurora. Estela plans to scale back her current part-time work as a bilingual substitute teacher in Denver Public Schools so that she can focus more fully on doing volunteer work through local neighborhood ministries. And while Dan believes that his gifts are best utilized in teaching refugee and immigrant students the academic language skills they need in order to be successful college, he too anticipates being involved in volunteer ministry outside of his formal employment responsibilities.

In addition, we will continue to be available, as time permits, for speaking, training, and consulting with churches that are interested in learning more about American Baptist missions work and, especially, ministering to refugees and immigrants in their own communities.

Words cannot express our gratitude for your faithful support of our ministry during our past five years of service to refugees and immigrants here in Aurora (2010-15), our previous ten years of service in theological education and ministry to Haitian immigrants in the Bahamas (2000-2010) and, for a few of you, Dan's volunteer missionary service in the Dominican Republic (1993-1995) and subsequent work at Curtis Park Community Center while studying at Denver Seminary (1998-2000). It's been a long journey, and we've been privileged to have you accompany us.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

We are and have been 100% dependent on donations from churches and individuals for our support, *and ABCRM will continue to receive contributions on our behalf through our resignation date of July 31st*. Following that date, we would encourage you to consider redirecting your support to one of the ministries of our fellow American Baptist missionaries:

- Barbara and Dwight Bolick (Chile) – Economic Development
- Annie and Jeff Dieselberg (Thailand) – Urban Ministry
- Terry and Tom Myers (Bulgaria) – Economic Development



From Left to Right: Daniel and Estela, Eh Doe Nay, Eh Doe Nay's Parents.

- Ray Schellenger (Latin America) – Peace and Refuge (Victims of Domestic Violence)

More information about these and other American Baptist missionaries whom you may be interested in supporting can be found at www.internationalministries.org.

Contributions to either our ministry (through July 31st) or to the missionaries for whom you choose to redirect your support can be made by sending a check to the following address:

American Baptist Churches of the Rocky Mountains
9085 E. Mineral Circle, Suite 170
Centennial, CO 80112

Be sure to include a note indicating the names of the missionaries whom you wish to receive your support.

Once again, we are thankful for the many opportunities that God has given us to minister to refugees and immigrants in our community and, especially, for your ongoing support, which has made it possible for us to do this ministry.

*Serving Christ in Aurora, Colorado,
Daniel and Estela Schweissing*

Wyoming Women's Retreat

It's not too late...

Wyoming Women's Retreat

August 7-9th

Camp Wyoba

You will find: hard hitting teaching on

Matthew 5-7

meaningful worship

four hours of free time

a free spa experience

lots of time with other Christian women

Register today by visiting wyoba.org or call

Jenita at 307-321-4681.

American Baptist

Women's
MINISTRIES

The Power of "Yes, and"

In life, it is important to be able to think on your feet. That is why some business schools and large companies are using improvisation classes to teach skills such as creativity and embracing change. Improvisation isn't about being funny; it is about reacting—being focused and present in the moment then being able to adapt quickly to unexpected events.

On Thursday, September 24, 2015, ABCRM is sponsoring a workshop titled "Go with the Flow". Participants will start at 11 am with a delicious lunch and insights from two Christian comedians providing insights on "Humor and Hard Topics". After lunch we will split into small groups to learn and practice the skill of improvisation. Improv experts will lead us through a bunch of games, ask us what the game taught us, then how that insight can be applied to what we do. It is fast paced, interactive and practical.

Get a group from your church and sign up for this fun and valuable class. It is a bargain for only \$45 per person. This is the perfect way to prepare for the 2015 Gathering dealing with "Dangerous Dreams."

Thursday, September 24 from 11 a.m.—4 p.m.

Macedonia Baptist Church

Cost \$45 per person includes lunch, lunch speakers & Improv Training

International Ministries Seeks First the Reign of God

With thanksgiving to God and to all those who have contributed to its special bicentennial effort of spiritual discernment, the Board of Directors of American Baptist International Ministries (IM) gathered in Overland Park, Kansas, unanimously and enthusiastically approved a fresh statement of vision and priorities to guide its work during the next few years.

Drawn from the Lord's Prayer as recorded in Matthew, the vision statement for IM's new guiding document is simply, "On earth, as in heaven." These five short words point to the fullness of what Jesus announced in word, embodied in action, made possible through his death and resurrection and will bring to completion at the end of time. It is this sweeping, holistic vision of the mission of Jesus Christ that will guide the actions of IM into the early years of its third century of mission.

The vote of IM's governing Board came as a crucial step in its spiritual discernment process. It built upon the fruit of an extensive and intensive listening process, as IM interviewed some 1,800 people all around the world. Interviewees were invited to share both their experiences of God at work in the world and their hopes and dreams for the future of their own churches and ministries and for IM.

"The results of the widespread interviews," commented IM Executive Director the Reverend Dr. Reid Trulson, "reinforces IM's unwavering invitation to know and follow Jesus Christ our Lord in a wide range of holistic service, carried out in partnership with fellow servants of Christ everywhere."

Supported by a global prayer network, the 26 members of a diverse Discernment Team studied, discussed and prayed together for God to speak to IM through the testimonies and hopes of the larger body of Christ. The fruit of their efforts was distilled into a brief statement of vision, purpose, context, core values and ministry priorities entitled "**Responding to the Call.**"

"We were inspired by deep discussions, energized by powerful stories about great moments in mission and renewed by the sense of belonging to each other and serving a common task as we wove our hopes and dreams about the future into a collective tapestry," said Karen Smith, IM director of Mission Design and IM missionary, about the nature of the interviews and the discernment process.

The Board's actions launch IM into the second phase of the discernment process, during which Responding to the Call will be translated into specific objectives, concrete operational plans and tools for measuring progress on these ministry priorities:

- **Inviting People to Be Disciples of Jesus**
- **Proclaiming God's Reign of Justice, Peace and Abundant Life**
- **Equipping the Body of Christ to Engage in God's Mission**
- **Pursuing Organizational Excellence**

The crucial work of phase two will be carried out over the next nine months.

"These are days of great possibility for IM," said Trulson. "I believe the Lord desires to accomplish many things for the reign of God through IM and our worldwide partnership network."

For additional information, visit [Responding to the Call](http://www.internationalministries.org) on www.internationalministries.org.

Several groups in our Region as well as individuals were interviewed in this process, Cynthia Rigsby and Yvonne Whisenhunt served on the prayer team and Rich Schweissing was on the Discernment Team. Our Region was well represented both in process and input.

*Submitted by Rich Schweissing
ABCRM Region Board*



IM Executive Director Reid Trulson introduces the Responding to the Call discernment process to IM staff and global servants.

ABCUSA Awards Spring Matthew 25 Grants



American Baptist Churches USA is excited to announce the **ABCUSA Matthew 25 Grant**. Created through the monetary gifts of a generous donor, this fund is designed to channel gifts to help meet the needs of “housing, feeding, education and health with regard to the less fortunate.” The donor’s primary wish is to help ameliorate poverty. The **ABCUSA Matthew 25 Grant** fund has been established to respond to this donor’s generosity. ([View Application](#))

In order to be eligible for funds, ministries must have a relationship with American Baptist Churches USA. Awards from the fund will be disbursed twice a year, in April and in October, and the maximum amount given to any ministry or church will be \$5,000 per year. Due to the limited funds available, the application process will be competitive, with grants being awarded to ministries that best exemplify the goal of helping end poverty. A committee has been formed to review the applications and make the awards. The committee will consider only one application per ministry/church in any calendar year.

The application process is structured to help small ministries with limited staff time. Each applicant will need to complete a one-page form, submit a budget for the ministry, and add a one-page explanation about the need for and uses of the funds. Ministries of any size that relate to ABC are welcome to apply, including local churches. The next application deadline is September 1. Grants will be distributed on October 15.

All applications must be submitted electronically to Tina.Turner@abc-usa.org. Since the donor has asked that the funds be used to directly assist impoverished persons, staff positions will not be funded through this grant. Grant funds may not be used to supplement the church budget, although direct ministries that receive funds from the church budget will be eligible to apply.

For more information, visit <http://www.abc-usa.org/2015/04/27/abcusa-awards-spring-matthew-25-grants/>.



Does Church Cost Too Much?

Remember when you had to get up and walk (all the way) across the room to turn the TV channel? Or when you had to actually drive to a store to buy something? Or stop at a gas bar to ask directions? Or go to the Library to research something? It's hard to believe we once went to a Music Store in the Mall to listen to a sample of the latest release from our favorite artist.

Maybe this reveals my age. But as you read these things, you instantly think of the solutions we now have that allow us to do them differently, quickly, and effectively.

No one likes wasting time. Time is money. If you have a TV remote control next to your side, you wouldn't take the time to get up. People are willing to pay for the convenience of a remote in order to save time. So why does someone take the time or effort to pick up the phone and talk to a store — even if they visited a website for the information first?



Pick an answer:

- They couldn't find the information.
- They doubted if the information was correct.
- They wanted to waste time.

People pick a solution based upon need. They either want to solve a concern or to help them reach a goal. The greater the concern the more someone's willing to "pay" with time, effort or money. That's why most people want the fastest, easiest, cheapest solution. But they'll spend more time, more effort, or more money to get something if their concerns or goals are crucial and the solution is unique or rare.

Jesus said to follow Him there's a huge cost (Luke 9). But we're willing to "pay" it because He's the *only* way to Heaven.

But what about local church? There are many solutions to "fellowship". What's the cost of going to your church? Is it too much? It depends on how unique your solutions are.

Never abuse or misuse someone's time, effort, or money. Or they'll pursue another solution. Be Known for "cost" effective and unique solutions. It's the formula for success.

Click [here](#) to view this article online.

Mark MacDonald
Senior Brand Strategist, Creative Director, Blogger
BeKnownForSomething PinPointCreative

Originally published at BeKnownForSomething.com (who holds the copyright); an organization dedicated to effective church communications while helping individuals and ministries become known for something influential; so they'll point to Christ. Printed with Permission.



Planned Giving Workshop August 29, 2015

Stewardship Beyond the Offering Plate

If this is the Golden Age of Philanthropy, why do finances seem so limited? American Baptist Foundation (ABF) will shed insight on proven, yet underutilized, strategies that transform ministry needs into effective stewardship opportunities. Learn how to implement tools and resources to increase member commitment and expand your ministry's stewardship model beyond the offering plate while expanding your reach outside the walls of the church. ABCRM invites pastors and church officers to this very important and informative session with our partner in ministry, ABF.

More details will be available soon.



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Calendar

August

- 6-7** Willow Creek Global Leadership Summit
- 7-9** ABW Women's Retreat @ Camp Wyoba
- 13** Partner Congregations
1st Pastors Meeting
- 29** Planned Giving Workshop

September

- 7** Labor Day
- 15-17** SoulJourners Retreat
- 24** Pre Gathering Training
- 24** Clergy Appreciation Dinner
- 25-26** Annual Gathering

October

- 4** World Mission Offering Sunday
- 6-16** Pastor's Mission Trip to Amsterdam and Hungary
- 22** Calvary Baptist Church Mental Health Workshop at Bethany Lutheran
- 23-24** MLC Meeting
- 26-Nov. 6** Pastor Mission Trip to Bolivia
- 31** Halloween



by Piotr Siedlecki

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson

Oops.. my opinion that washing dishes is woman's work was meant to stay inside my head. please disregard.



Scott's habit of thinking out loud once again had him on thin ice with his lovely bride Rhoda. *Js 1:19*

The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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akeys@abcrm.org*

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