



August 1, 2016

# The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

## Recommended Changes to the ABCRM Bylaws for 2016

The 2016 ABCRM Bylaws review committee is pleased to present to you the follow summary of proposed changes.

These changes are slated to be voted upon at the 2016 Annual Gathering which will be held September 30-October 1, 2016 in Colorado Springs.

The following information highlights the changes and presents the rationale for each.

### Quorums (Article IV Part D)

The ABCRM has found it to be increasingly difficult over recent years to achieve a quorum to consider issues other than those of electing Board members.

### Secretarial Duties Reassigned (Article III – Article IX)

In keeping with a move considered desirable by many corporate and non-profit bodies, the ABCRM would like to reassign the duties of Secretary to the Executive Minister. Where in some organizations the Secretary serves as the conduit for communications with other organizations within the ABCRM this is not the case. Traditional duties of the Secretary typically have been recording activities. Under this proposed structure, recording responsibilities would be normally delegated to a non-voting staff member. The number of *At Large* members of the board would be increased by one to ensure that board representation is not diminished.

### Disposition of Property (Article X)

Though it was possible to dispose of property through ABC organizations within the confines of the existing Bylaws, this proposed change makes it a more explicit requirement.

A side-by-side comparison of the existing bylaws and those being presented for approval will mailed to each church on August 2. If you have questions on the recommended changes, please feel free to contact me by email.

*William Warren*  
Chairman, Bylaws Committee  
[williamwarren@comcast.net](mailto:williamwarren@comcast.net)

### What's in this RMAB?

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## What If the Mission Field is in Your Backyard?

When most American Baptists think of missions, they think of traveling to a foreign country or perhaps travel across the United States. We have done a very good job of painting this picture of missions and we never lose sight of this kind of mission work, however, sometimes the mission field is right in our backyard working with our own neighbors.



Almost six years ago, the Backyard Mission Project was developed as a seminary project. It really wasn't new; it was an attempt to take a fresh look at how small churches can engage their neighbors in their backyard. It attempts to answer some very basic questions:

- We are a small church; how can we afford to do any kind of significant project in our community?
- We are a small church; how can we recruit enough volunteers to get the work done?
- We have so many needs as a church; can we really reach out to others?

At the 2016 Gathering, Mike Oldham will re-introduce the Backyard Mission Project. You will learn how to build the relationships with other churches to do ministry in your own community. You will receive resources that will help you implement this project in your own community or partner with neighboring churches.

If this peaks your interest, even a little, you are encouraged to participate in the Backyard Mission Project workshop. The BMP is simple, but it is not easy. You should pay heed to the following warnings:

- You and others in your church will have to do the hard work. The BMP is simple, but it is not

easy.

- You and others in your church must do hours of planning and preparing before the BMP or it will fail miserably.
- This is a church transformation project, but it will not "fix" all the challenges your church is facing.

The purpose of the BMP is to help your church reconnect with your community. It is also a pre-evangelism event, intended to help you gain credibility so that in the future you can say, "Come see Jesus." Your goal is to build relationships with people in your community.

Churches who have participated in the BMP have seen participants who were on the fringe of the church get actively involved in BMP, the community has noticed the church for the first time in years, and churches are drawn together in common ministry.

*Mike Oldham*  
*ABCRM Mission and Ministry Coach*

# 2016 ABCRM Gathering

**September 29–October 1, 2016**  
**Hotel Eleganté and First Baptist Church**  
**Colorado Springs, CO**

## The Winding Road to Chiapas

Every day, most people receive innumerable requests for money. Many of these requests are clearly fraud, but some are legitimate needs. From political campaigns, to Syrian refugees, to Scouts, to baseball teams, to the woman sitting at the corner of the entrance to your local supermarket, even to the youth group from your own church, most people are inundated with requests. Why should you pause to meet Denise Osejo-Aragón and Juan Aragón? Rest assured, they will be asking for your financial support, so why should you listen?

For almost ten years, ABCRM has had a special relationship with Chiapas Mexico. ABCRM has partnered with Chuck and Ramona Shawver and Doris Garcia and Ricardo Mayol. Over the years, we have worked on a number of projects:

- Constructing Churches
- Providing low-smoke stoves
- Teaching classes at the seminary
- Providing training for pastors
- Providing dental clinics
- Building houses for pastors
- Partnering with local churches in an economic development project.

When ABCRM heard about the retirement of Chuck and Ramona shortly after the departure of Doris and Ricardo, we began praying for the next step of our partnership. Many people who had been on short term mission trips were concerned that we not abandon the years of work.

Along the way, as God so often does, he prepares people to serve. Juan and Denise came to the United States from Nicaragua. In 2008, they became missionaries to the migrant workers of West Virginia. They provided pastoral care to these workers who were often far from home and who rarely spoke English. Along the way, they became U.S. citizens, Juan graduated from Palmer Seminary and was ordained, and they had two beautiful children, Juancito and Ziba.

At the 2012 “Hear the Call” Conference, they began to hear God’s call to the next phase of their ministry. Could God be calling them to serve as American Baptist missionaries? How would they ever be able to raise the required support? In 2015, Denise went to Chiapas on a short term mission project. She returned convinced that God was calling them to Chiapas. Juan was not convinced. In January, Juan went with Mike Oldham and others on a teaching and pastoral support trip to Chiapas. In a week, he visited more than a dozen churches and pastors. Before the end of the trip, he too was convinced that Chiapas was where God was leading them.

Before he left Mexico, Chuck Shawver began praying for a young Spanish speaking couple who could invest in learning the Mayan languages of Tzotzil and Tzeltal. Well . . . God has answered this prayer with Denise and Juan.

The next step for the Aragóns is to begin the process of raising their financial support. Why should you attend their workshop at the 2016 Gathering in Colorado Springs? Because deep in our Baptist bones is a belief that God still calls people to serve as missionaries. Because, we have invested almost ten years in the lives of people and churches in Chiapas, and God has not released us from this partnership. Because, when we find where God is at work, we are called to join Him there.

Come meet Denise and Juan at the 2016 Gathering. You won’t believe how God has led them on a winding road from San Marcos, Nicaragua, to the hills of West Virginia, to the people of Chiapas.

The Aragón’s will be in our Region from September 24 to October 2. Please contact Mike Oldham at [moldham@abcrm.org](mailto:moldham@abcrm.org) if you would like them to speak at your church.

*Mike Oldham*  
*ABCRM Mission and Ministry Coach*

**Who Is Your Neighbor?**  
**Luke 10:29**

## Disaster Relief Workshop at the Gathering

Five years ago, a catastrophic EF5-rated multiple-vortex tornado struck Joplin, MO, late in the afternoon of Sunday, May 22. The tornado killed 158 people, injured some 1,150 others, and destroyed 9,000 homes, churches, and other buildings.

A group of 20 volunteers from ABCRM went in July to help with the cleanup efforts. The devastation was appalling and cleanup had barely begun. We worked for a week in 100+ temperatures, cleaning up debris and gutting the interior of two houses in preparation for rebuilding. We had borrowed a trailer of equipment and supplies from Kansas American Baptist Men.

Tornadoes, floods, and wildfires continue to happen. After our Joplin experience, we decided we needed to organize to be able to respond to such disasters. We acquired a trailer and equipped it with tools and supplies, and recruited volunteers for a Disaster Relief Team who trained at Camp Wyoba in June.

At the Gathering, there will be a workshop about disaster relief. Additional volunteers are needed to train to be ready for deployment as available for future disasters in the Region and nearby areas.

*Bill Mankin*  
*ABCRM Mission and Ministry Coach*



Who is Your Neighbor?  
Luke 10:29

# Gathering Workshop

Thursday, September 29, 2016  
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

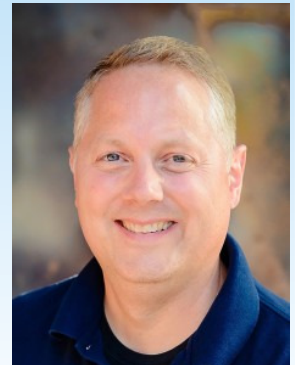
## ***"Who Is Your Neighbor?"***

Workshop Leader

**Tom Anthony**

CoFounder

**Neighborhood Collective and the  
Minister of Community Life  
Oak Hills Church, San Antonio, TX**



**Are we doing what Jesus said  
matters most?**

- Come develop a deeper understanding of who is your neighbor
- Learn how to be a good neighbor
- Obtain practical advice on connecting with your neighbors
- Discover what it takes to support a neighborly culture in your church
- Come and feed your mind

**Cost:**

**\$45.00** (early bird by Aug 26)

**\$60.00** (after by Aug 26)

Includes lunch and book  
*The Art of Neighboring*. You can  
receive the book in hard copy or  
Kindle (email) format. Please  
make your selection on your  
registration form.

**Location:**

Hotel Elegante  
2886 S. Circle Dr.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80906  
Phone: 719.576.5900



*For additional information,  
Contact ABCRM at 303.988.3900*



# Gathering Workshop Leaders



**Mike Oldham**  
**Ministry and Mission Coach**  
**Southeast/New Mexico and Northern Front Range**

***Backyard Mission Projects***

Many of us have grown up in the church thinking that “missions” are over there somewhere. But what if “mission” is right outside the doors of the church? This workshop will help you discover how to partner with other congregations to reach out to this mission field in one weekend, making a difference in the lives of the people around you and helping you connect with other congregations and people as you work together.



**Greg Manual**  
**Associate Executive Minister for the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska**  
**and Region Missionary**

***Joining God In the Neighborhood***

Scripture teaches us that God is already at work in our world – so instead of having to create a new way to minister to the people in your neighborhood, perhaps you can simply join God in what is already being done. This workshop will teach a process for a church groups to spend time studying and discerning Scripture, studying and discerning God at work in your community, and discovering ways you can join with God in being His hands and feet to your community.



**Juan and Denise Aragon**  
**Missionaries to Chiapas, Mexico**

***Meet Your New Missionaries***

Recently endorsed for service in Chiapas, Mexico, come and hear from this young couple about the work that God is calling them to do, learn how you can support them in that calling and how ABCRM has already been a part of God’s work in the farthest Southern state of Mexico!



**Amber Shearer**  
**Disaster Relief Trailer Coordinator**

***Disaster Relief Ministry***

After a tornado, flood or fire, people need help. Far too often in recent years, communities near to us have been affected by these types of natural disasters and our response has been limited because we were unprepared to send an organized, effective team to assist. This workshop will discuss the Region’s efforts to organize, train and have ready a team of volunteers and the tools necessary to respond to future disasters. Come find out how you and your church can be a part of this preparation.

## Clergy Dinner Offers Something New! “Flying Potatoes and Exploding Soda”

Thursday, September 29th starting at 6:00 p.m.  
Hotel Eleganté, Colorado Springs

The Annual Clergy Appreciation Dinner has been held in an aircraft hangar that houses “Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, a big tent at Camp Hale (home of the training facility for the 10th mountain division during WWII), and the Wyoming Territorial Prison built in 1872. We have been entertained by well-known comedians and excellent musicians. So how are we going to top that? This year we are bringing in a science teacher!

Steve Spangler is the science teacher you always wanted to have in school. Things just happen to fizz, pop, smoke and explode, and before you know it, you’re a part of his learning experience. His passion is to find the most creative ways to make learning fun. His methods might be unconventional, but the goal is to turn ordinary science experiments into unforgettable learning experiences.

His regular appearances on the Ellen DeGeneres Show have taught viewers how to blow up their food, shock their friends, create mountains of foam and how to turn 2,500 boxes of cornstarch and a garden hose into a swimming pool of fun. Thanks to YouTube, Steve may be best known for teaching millions of people how to turn an ordinary bottle of Diet Coke and Mentos into an erupting soda geyser. His catalog of over 1,000 YouTube videos gets nearly 80 million views each year, and his secret for creating unforgettable learning experiences earned him a spot as one of YouTube’s Top 100 Original Content Channels earlier this year.

On the business side, his Denver-based educational toy company, [SteveSpanglerScience.com](http://SteveSpanglerScience.com), is itself an experiment in how to create a business culture where employees are rewarded for the unforgettable experiences they create for their customers. The company’s unique business strategies and attention-getting creations have been featured in the Wall Street Journal, Inc. Magazine and TIME Magazine where readers voted Steve Spangler #18 in the Top 100 Most Influential People of the Year.

Whether he’s whipping up a cool new science experiment for his new television program, producing a new YouTube video, or designing a hands-on science lesson for kids, Steve is always seeking out new ways to create unforgettable learning experiences.

Guaranteed fun... but watch out for the flying potatoes.

Steve Spangler — Author, Teacher, Toy Designer and the Creator of a Huge Soda Mess  
[www.stevespangler.com](http://www.stevespangler.com)

*Karen Van  
ABCRM Region Administrator*



## Angels Among Us—Great African American Women



One of our angels is Rev. Angel L. Sullivan (pictured) who lives in central Florida. She serves as a Board Certified Chaplain, and has been an ordained minister for ten years.

Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School was her Seminary; she graduated in 2004. Before this work she had an exciting job in television news photography, and worked at that for six

and a half years. But she “somehow knew that God had something different for her.”

Her father was a gifted landscaper and had a strong influence as she grew up. She appreciates the beauty of nature and as a pastime takes photos of the landscapes she is fond of seeing. Her father told her every tree, every flower is unique, beautiful and in a landscape the diversity of colors engage to produce a wonderful sight. This is true of our human relationships; she believes diversity can create unity.

Rev. Sullivan’s service now includes her office as president of the National American Baptist Women’s Ministries. Previous to this, she was the coordinator of AB Girls. She saw in the girls that lead, a focus and passion to serve the younger girls, and a strong foundation in God.

The following article from our spring 2016 national ABW newsletter exhibits an example of her leadership, and our gratitude to her for serving.

*Carol Weale*

*“I will teach you the way you should go; I will instruct you and advise you.” – Psalm 32:8*

A few weeks ago, I had an opportunity to attend my first NABWU (North American Baptist Women’s Union) meeting. During our meeting we engaged in leadership development, meaningful conversations, and celebrated our rich Baptist diversity. In celebrating our diversity, we realized that we had one major commonality; our desire to embrace the younger generation, the “now” generation, in our churches and ministries. During our time together we engaged in conversations with three of four young women who were part of a focus group created by NABWU to help understand the challenges of women between the ages of 18-35.

The consistent challenge was time constraint and fami-

ly commitment. It was out of this challenge that one woman shared her new model for ministry. She said, “I wanted to be in ministry, but I did not want to burn out to do ministry like my parents, so I decided to make my life my ministry.” She shared that she and some friends moved into a low-income neighborhood with a significant number of refugees. It helped her to build relationships, develop trust, and learn firsthand the systemic structures and constraints that keep persons from succeeding in life. She felt more committed and was able to collaborate and empower the persons she felt called to help. In addition, she said she felt more balanced in her call and personal life.

After our conversations it became very apparent that if we are to continue to be a place of transformation, peace, and shelter for the children of God, then we must be creative in ministry models, work together with women of all ages and diverse backgrounds, and continue to evolve.

As American Baptist women we have a rich history of pioneering new ministries, and meeting the needs of the “now” generation; therefore, I close with some ideas that could generate collaboration, conversation, and ministries for *all* generations:

1. Find out if you have young women in your congregation who are away at school and send them a care package of cookies, lotions, scriptures, and inspirational books. Sometimes college can be lonely and stressful, and to go to your mailbox and have a care package from home can brighten someone’s day. In return you may receive a thank-you letter and build a long-lasting relationship.
2. Think outside the box: Reach out to women who are not in your church, such as in a local homeless shelter, and have a Pizza and Prayer party. Most people like pizza and many people welcome prayer. You can create a space where relationships can be built through meaningful conversation and food.
3. Finally, pick up a phone and call someone. Life is busy, and to take the time out just to ask, “How are you?” can be the beginning of building relationships.



## Wyoming Women's Retreat

It's not too late to register for the Wyoming Women's Retreat, August 12-14 at Camp Wyoba. Visit [wyoba.org](http://wyoba.org).

*Jenita Calton*



**Save the Date!**  
**The American Baptist Churches**  
**Biennial Mission Summit**  
**will meet in Portland, Oregon,**  
**June 30-July 2, 2017.**

*A number of exciting events occur before and after the official Mission Summit Dates, so plan to come for the full event!*

[www.americanbaptists2017.com](http://www.americanbaptists2017.com)

## Calendar

### August

- 11-12** Willow Creek Leadership Summit
- 12-14** Women's Retreat at Camp Wyoba
- 16-18** Central Regional Sectional  
Franklin, Indiana
- 21** Darren Stroh Installation  
FBC, Lamar
- 23** Mission Committee Meeting

### September

- 5** Labor Day
- 18-23** Missionaries Dan and Sarah Chetti  
visit Colorado
- 20** Dan and Sara Chetti Open House  
1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
Region Office
- 29** Pre Gathering Workshop
- 29** Clergy Appreciation Dinner
- 30-Oct 1** Annual Gathering  
Colorado Springs, CO



## The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



By adding a gossip section to the church bulletin, Wonka Wesleyan Church of Spudville Idaho increased readership by 37%.

### *The Rocky Mountain American Baptist*

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