



The Oregon Baptist

ABCO . . . resourcing, empowering and equipping congregations to discover and fulfill their unique mission in their corner of Oregon . . . and around the world.

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Dates to Remember

Annual Gathering
October 22-24

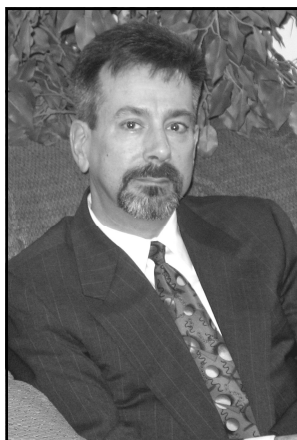
ABCO / Rivergate Habitat for Humanity Build Day
October 30

ABWM White Cross Mission Trip to Rainbow Acres
November 1-6

United Mission

By Steve Bills, Executive Minister

The largest portion of the American Baptist Mission Support budget is called **United Mission (UM)**. These contributions from local churches provide the foundation of support for God's mission through us. From the very beginning, Baptists in America have been a people of mission. The forming of the First American Baptist Church in Rhode Island was itself an act of mission in an often hostile environment. Mission pastors



were soon preaching the Gospel and forming churches throughout New England in all 13 colonies.

Mission brought these Baptists into closer fellowship and cooperation. *Adoniram Judson* and *Luther Rice*, who left

Massachusetts as missionaries of the Congregational Church, studied the teaching of Believer's Baptism, and were baptized by *William Carey* in India. Suddenly, without prior planning, the Baptists had a foreign mission. Rice eventually returned to the United States to organize support for Judson's mission in Burma.

Luther Rice encouraged a growing interest in mission as he traveled throughout the colonies and the burgeoning frontier. Interest in establishing new churches resulted in mission at home. Interest in proclaiming the Gospel to the whole world resulted in

mission overseas. Interest in training pastors and laity, providing Bibles and teaching helps for the unchurched led to educational mission. Interest in strengthening local churches by helping them bond together in fellowship and service resulted in regional mission. A network of societies emerged, giving direction to the American Baptist system of fundraising for mission. The societies spearheaded the promotion and development of mission within the family of churches eventually known as American Baptist Churches USA.

The societies each approached churches directly with appeals for support of their ministries. But in 1907, with the formation of the Northern Baptist Convention to merge the societies, a cooperative strategy for mission support fundraising and a unified mission budget developed. In its early form, all dollars raised by any group were put into a common fund and shared with each ministry for a negotiated percentage distribution.

In 1977, the American Baptist General Board adopted a Budget Covenant that recognizes and assigns responsibilities of cooperative distribution of mission receipts by affiliated boards and regions. American Baptist Mission Support provides a variety of ways to support the mission, including four annual offerings for specific board ministries. The largest category, which provides vital and basic support for all American Baptist mission and ministries, was named United Mission.

Whether your church's United Mission budget is a tithe or an offering, your faithful response and increased support of

(continued from page 1) **United Mission**

your church's mission budget throughout the year is vital to our shared ministry. Including mission support in your vision and strategic plans for your church are paramount for growth in God's ministry through us.

If you've been around American Baptist Churches for any length of time, the acronyms can get confusing. **UM, AFC, WMO, OGS, BIM** . . . they can make your head spin. UM, United Mission, is the bread and butter, meat and potatoes, most basic way that we collectively do and fund ministry in the ABC family. Both at home and abroad, United Mission absolutely essential to ministry. It is the primary vehicle through which the regions (like ABC Oregon) get ministry accomplished, and is of significant importance to the work of the Home Mission Societies, International Ministries and the General Secretary.

Every UM dollar given is apportioned to these areas. Hopefully you know and appreciate the ministry your region does together with, and on behalf of, our churches. The American Baptist Home Mission Societies (formerly National Ministries) includes Alaskan and Native American ministries, Neighborhood Centers, Refugee Resettlement, Homes and Hospitals, etc. International Ministries is self-explanatory, but broader than most of us realize and the Office of the General Secretary provides the shepherding and leadership to keep us working together and have a voice through the representative process and other traditional denominational functions.

So when the pastor, or the missions committee, or the finance department talks about UM as it relates to

your church budget, understand that what they are talking about is your participation in the larger ABC family and mission. Because UM is so important to how effective we are as a family, our ABC Oregon bylaws uses the following language to describe in part the covenant among the churches, *"any congregation seeking affiliation . . . shall agree to . . . contribute at least the major portion of its mission funds to the American Baptist Mission Budget [United Mission]."*

We ask our church members to tithe to the church and we ask our churches to tithe to United Mission. As individuals we may wish to make gifts and offerings beyond our tithe. Likewise, churches may also wish to support outside mission work above and beyond their foundational obligation to United Mission. The annual offerings to Oregon for Christ, America for Christ, One Great Hour of Sharing, World Mission Offering and the Retired Ministers and Missionaries Offering are examples of such gifts. It would be contrary to the spirit of the covenant to count monies given to those offerings as part of the 10% covenanted to United Mission.

Below is a list of our churches together with their 2010 UM contributions through September. Compare what your church has given with its income. Ask your leaders if your congregation couldn't set an example of tithing for its members in this and future years by giving at least 10% its income to UM. Some mission-minded congregations have determined to increase the percentage of their budget to UM every year and are well beyond the 10% minimum. We are thankful that God allows us to be a part of what He is doing, and for the committed partners He has brought together here in Oregon!

Astoria, First	2,634.47	Portland, Antioch	0.00
Athena, First	6,316.28	Portland, Cedar Hills	8,615.06
Bandon, First	0.00	Portland, Fellowship	400.00
Camas, Parkside	600.00	Portland, First	16,172.19
Carlton, First	2,256.61	Portland, Friendship Christian Fellowship	0.00
Coos Bay, First	3,130.67	Portland, Grace	15,266.29
Cottage Grove, First	2,968.85	Portland, Grant Park	2,831.85
Eagle Point, Butte Creek	800.00	Portland, Morning Star	0.00
Eugene, Emerald	4,684.94	Portland, Mount Olivet	0.00
Eugene, Valley River	1,280.00	Portland, Mt Gillard	0.00
Grants Pass, Cornerstone	0.00	Portland, New Jerusalem	0.00
Gresham, First	2,601.00	Portland, Pleasant Valley	3.54
Irrigon, Irrigon Community	0.00	Portland, Rivergate Community	0.00
Lincoln City, First	0.00	Portland, Woodland Park	2,523.00
Mc Minnville, First	11,976.10	Portland, Word of Life Community	0.00
Medford, Eastwood	15,327.06	Riddle, First	883.71
Merlin, Merlin Community	0.00	Salem, Calvary	7,760.03
Milton-Freewater, First	3,415.54	Salem, Judson	0.00
Mulino, Mulino Grace Community	9,016.95	Springfield, First	2,937.00
Oregon City, First	6,583.99		

The American Baptist Woman ... A Weeping “Prophetess”?

By Trudi Bils, President, ABW of Oregon

Jeremiah, the “weeping prophet”, has been the subject of speculation in devotional circles and Bible studies for years, as people identified with his tears and sadness. Given the message he bore for God to the wayward families of Israel, it’s no wonder he was downcast. As he moved forward in obedience to God’s call, he began to see these folks as they really were...as God saw them. This only served to deepen his sense of despair.

*“For my people have done two evil things:
(1) they have abandoned me — the fountain of living water. And (2) they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns that can hold no water at all!”*

-- Jeremiah 2:13, NLT

Jeremiah, unlike the prophet Jonah, seemed less angry, and more...**saddened**, by the struggles he observed. Here were God’s people, Jeremiah’s own brothers and sisters...rejecting the eternal love of God. Foolishly, they tried in vain to satisfy their unquenchable thirst with contaminated water in dirty, leaky containers!

As an American Baptist woman living in a society which parallels that of Jeremiah’s, I submit that it’s okay to weep, to feel deep sadness, to bear the brokenness of others. Oddly enough, it’s those who

go forth weeping, sowing precious seed, who will one day rejoice at the overflow of that which is reaped.

Our joy in the Lord is not supplanted by such sadness, however, neither is it crippled. Rather, our joy, our labor, our determination to carry on, is enhanced by the energy and encouragement of the Spirit of God and His people. Our motivation is fueled by observing and understanding the vain struggles of those we try to help. Longing to reach in and replace their empty, filthy, broken containers with an *eternal fountain of living water*, we gather together to plan, pray, work, and encourage each other. And undoubtedly again and again, we will return rejoicing.

A busy fall and winter calendar awaits us, filled with appointments designed to bring water to thirsty souls. Can we weep and rejoice simultaneously? You’d better believe it! Yet the encouragement factor feeds our deepest need, and compels us to continue.

Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, whenever possible. Our upcoming **Annual Gathering** in October is designed to do just that...to refuel, reboot and rebuild one another in preparation for the days ahead.

The American Baptist woman is a modern day Jeremiah, a weeping prophetess bringing **good news** to souls struggling to survive the 21st century. And I am proud to be numbered among her.

The ABWM White Cross Convoy to Rainbow Acres

The American Baptist Women’s Ministries of Oregon is hand-delivering its White Cross quota to Rainbow Acres this year. Instead of packaging each church’s individual collection and shipping it to Camp Verde, they will transport it all in a caravan of vehicles.

Rainbow Acres an American Baptist ministry. It is the Southwest’s premier Christian community for adults with developmental disabilities. At Rainbow, residents receive the finest care and enjoy a beautiful, state-of-the-art campus amid the scenic beauty of Arizona’s Verde Valley.

This year’s White Cross quota includes items that Rainbow Acres has indicated would be especially valuable to it in carrying out its mission. By delivering it personally, those who choose to make the trip will have the opportunity to see first-hand the ministry at Rainbow Acres and how their

contributions are used. The trip is not limited to just women; anyone who would like to join is welcome.

The cost of the trip is funded in part by the contribution each church or circle is encouraged to make (\$20 per box sent, about what the shipping would have been). Individual participants are responsible for their own meals and lodging.

The caravan will depart Portland Monday morning, November 1 and will stop along I-5 to pick up quotas and participants. ABWM encourages those collecting quotas to bring their collection to the Annual Gathering in Medford to minimize the number of stops necessitated along the way. They will return to Oregon on Saturday, November 6.

Individuals desiring to participate should contact Trudi Bils at trudib@abwomenoregon.org for more information. She is still hoping to find one or two more willing to drive their van or SUV on the trip.

Camp Arrah Wanna Resolution

At the 2010 Annual Gathering in Medford, delegates are going to be asked to approve a Board of Ministries resolution which will provide for the financial stability of Camp Arrah Wanna in the future, and maintain its ties to its American Baptist Churches of Oregon heritage. Below is the resolution that will be presented and voted upon.

Resolution: Camp Arrah Wanna

Resolution

“That the American Baptist Churches of Oregon be authorized to transfer financial and operational responsibilities for Camp Arrah Wanna via a property management agreement on such terms and conditions as the Board of Ministries deems appropriate. Prior to January 1, 2011, the Board shall consider a proposal from Camp Arrah Wanna, Inc, a non-profit entity formed for the exclusive purpose of operating the facility as a camping and retreat center in relationship with ABCO. To be considered by the Board, any such proposal must be accompanied by a business plan, which in the judgment of the Board, realistically proposes ways the facility can be operated in a solvent and self-sustaining manner.”

Background

At its meeting in April 2010, the ABCO Board of Ministries (“BoM”) reviewed and approved a Transition Covenant setting forth the conditions and timeline for divesting itself of the financial responsibility and management of Camp Arrah Wanna (“Camp”), while retaining complete ownership of the land, buildings and other property.

The BoM proposes to enter into a property management agreement with a separate non-profit entity established by those within ABCO who wish to see it continue as a camp and retreat facility for ABCO purposes, as well as for other religious and non-profit groups within the region.

The BoM assures the delegates that Camp Arrah Wanna will continue to be used for ABCO church camps, retreats, and other purposes. However, it must be operated more independently to reach into private foundations and the wider ecumenical and non-profit communities for it to maintain its viability.

Camp Arrah Wanna, Inc. (“CAW”) is a nonprofit corporation formed in the State of Oregon under the Oregon Nonprofit Corporation Act, and is requesting tax exempt status under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code.

The BoM recommends approval of this resolution.

Rev. A. Wayne Johnson Elected President of GBC of the Northwest

On Friday, July 30, 2010 in Seattle, Washington, the *General Baptist Convention of the Northwest* held a presidential election in which The Reverend Albert Wayne Johnson was elected President. This state convention’s membership consists of Baptist Churches in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

Rev. Johnson is the pastor of Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church in Portland. Morning Star is dually aligned with the American Baptist Churches of Oregon and the General Baptist Convention.

In February 2007 Morning Star burnt to the ground in a devastating fire. You can check on their rebuilding efforts at <http://www.morningstarportland.org/>.

PARTNERS TOGETHER

The 2010 ABCO Annual Gathering will be held in Medford on October 22-24, 2010. The keynote speaker of the Gathering will be Eddie Cruz, Associate Executive Director of National Ministries. In addition to Rev. Cruz, other speakers will include Rev. Don Ng, Pastor of First Chinese Baptist of San Francisco.

The gathering will begin with a Gathering Dinner on Friday evening, and conclude with a 10:30 am worship service on Sunday at Eastwood Baptist Church.

In addition to conducting region business on Saturday, there will be opportunities for worship and to attend a variety of workshops. These will include: Planned Giving led by Rick Barlow, Mission Opportunities and ABCO Work in Haiti led by Gregg Sneller and Tim Moore, Conflict Resolution and Use of American Baptist Personnel Services led by Dwight Lundgren, and other sessions led by Eddie Cruz and others.

Included in the weekend will be a Ministers Council continuing education event on Friday from 1:00-4:00 pm. This event is entitled "Conflict Transformation" and will be led by Dwight Lundgren, Director of ABPS.

There is also a youth event in the planning stages, and there will be more information to follow.

This is a great opportunity for the ABCO family to get together to worship, learn, and celebrate. Come and see that you are not in God's work alone. We are "Partners Together."

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Annual Gathering
October 22, 23, and 24**

**Eastwood Baptist Church
in Medford, OR**

Please make plans to join your church as they attend our Annual Gathering again this year. It is a major opportunity to connect and rub shoulders with your extended American Baptist family in Oregon.

Check at your church for a registration form.

Tod Scheler
Annual Gathering Task Force

Ministers Council News

The 2010 American Baptist Ministers Council Senate met at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin from Saturday, August 14 through Tuesday August 17. The meeting was convened by president Jeff Savage under the theme of "Creating a Community of Spiritual Leaders," based on Mark 2:1-12 and Psalm 121:1-8. The Senate was joined in a time of worshipful work by various ABC leaders from the national program boards and several local regions.

In anticipation of the approaching conclusion of the Lilly grant funding the collegial covenant groups known as TIM (Together in Ministry) groups, the Senate approved a \$2.5 million capital campaign to support the work of the Ministers Council at the national and constituent council levels into the future. The campaign steering committee, convened by acting senate treasurer Thomas Gilmore, will work closely with Dr. Joe Kutter, who was named executive director by the Senate, removing the word "acting" from his title for the duration of his term. The Senate also increased member dues for the first time since 1997.

Are You Working Hard or Overfunctioning at Church?

by Margaret Marcuson

Are you working hard at church? I assume so. Does that mean you are overfunctioning? Not necessarily. Overfunctioning involves taking responsibility for others, especially for their problems and shortcomings. In the short term, helping others can be a good thing. But if it becomes chronic, it can contribute to sustaining the limitations of others, and burning us out.

But let's recognize that ministry is truly hard work, as is accomplishing most things of value in this world. Working long hours may not necessarily be overfunctioning. If you can't take a break without feeling anxious, that's something to pay attention to, however.

Here are some ways to assess your own work:

Do you feel satisfied, or resentful? Resentment is one clue that you might be overfunctioning.

Can you say no? People who are working hard at their own work can say no to requests that contradict their own goals. Overfunctioners tend to say yes compulsively.

How do you feel when you get up in the morning: excited or exhausted?

What is at stake? Is it something that is truly a key value for you, or are you simply insisting on imposing your standards on others in an area that doesn't matter as much as you think it does? (My husband, Karl, says, "Just lower your standards, and you'll be happier!")

Vern Sanders, church musician and publisher of Creator Magazine, says, "accepting people for who and what they are is a first step. The second step is to teach/mentor them in what you know. The third step is to let them take responsibility. That's the hard part. But at this stage of my life it is working well, I'm working just as hard, but with less concern about what I can't change, and I am MUCH happier."

What do you notice about your own work? Are you working hard? Too hard? Overfunctioning?

Rev. Margaret Marcuson works with churches that want to create a ministry that lasts and clergy who want more impact on the people they serve best. She is the author of *Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry* (Seabury, 2009). She is a member of First Baptist Church of Portland. Get the free mini-course, "Five Ways to Avoid Burnout in Ministry" at <http://margaretmarcuson.com>.

ABCO Build Day at Rivergate Commons

ABCO will be sponsoring a build day on the new Habitat for Humanity build in north Portland. The build site, which is named Rivergate Commons (after Rivergate Community Church), is on property next to, and formerly owned by, this ABCO-affiliated church.



The ABCO build day will be Saturday, October 30 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm. Twenty-five to forty able-bodied volunteers, over the age of 16, are needed to help with the build day. In addition, others are needed to help with a potluck lunch for the day.

If you are interested in

helping you should contact Frank West at pastorfrankwest@gmail.com or (971) 732-0702.

Rivergate Community Church will provide coffee and donuts to start the morning. And rumor has it our own Rev. Steve Bills may be offering the invocation.

The only thing you need to bring is closed-toed shoes in order to work on the site. All other materials and tools will be provided.

The partnership between Habitat for Humanity and Rivergate Community Church has been getting some press lately. You can check out a couple of newspaper stories at http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2010/09/a_north_portland_congregation.html or <http://djcoregon.com/news/2010/09/08/portland-church-gains-a-lift-by-providing-one/>.

ABC/USA shot a video of the Habitat/Rivergate partnership, and will be using it to help promote the next America for Christ offering.

Rivergate has produced its own video that you can find at <http://vimeo.com/14984257>.



On Being Family

By George Nye, President, American Baptist Churches of Oregon

With no traditions to pass on, and the value of past ideals all rejected, young people must instruct old people on how to get along in a high tech world, rather than old people instructing young people on how to get along in a value-driven world. In nearly every past generation, old people were revered for their wisdom and connectedness to a past that identifies who we are in the present. But in today's world, past knowledge, traditions, even relationships are thought of as superfluous knowledge. So, instead of the eight year old listening to Grandma explain to her the child's place in society and her value as a person, Grandma is trying to make sense of the instructions that eight year old is giving her on how to use her upgraded cell phone and digital camera.

Through countless generations of every society and culture, families have been the means by which individuals know themselves. With the disintegration of the family, we are hard put to find the means of establishing our personal identities. As author Virginia Owen put it, "Even Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome, and Mowgli, Kipling's jungle child, were adopted into wolf families" [*Feast Of Families*, p. 14]. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was the destruction of the family system by Europeans that made African slavery possible. In the 1970s, it was Alex Haley's *Roots* that gave identity and empowerment to African Americans, as he inspired a race of downtrodden descendents of slaves to find their family connections. Haley's contribution to our society was every bit as important in giving status and value to the Black experience of positive identity as was the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s.

From ancient Greece's Oedipus, Electra, and Medea, to the Medici's and Stuarts, to the Waltons and Simpsons, of modern times, "*family has always been our way of explaining us to ourselves*," Owen observes. Family is also the Bible's way of explaining not only us, but God, and our relation to Him and to one another, (which includes our most important metaphor: God as Father). One more valuable observation that Virginia Owen makes is that "*We cannot change the metaphors without changing the meaning. As we deny our heavenly Father we do damage to our own identity as His children.*" To deny our spiritual family connectedness and identity is to render ourselves autistic and isolated.

Across a broad spectrum of cultural identities and nationalities, the earliest apostles established local congregations of Christians, and then told them they belong to each other, and are responsible for each other's welfare. No church congregation stands alone; as disparate as their natural backgrounds may be, in Christ we are all family, as brothers and sisters of our heavenly Father. When one is down, all the others are to rally around to give support and restore that spiritual

sibling to wholeness. For good or for ill, our individual actions reflect upon the whole family, just as with biological families. In the same way as in the New Testament church, we are accountable to one another for our social actions and our theological anomalies. Frankly, there are occasions when we just don't like one of our siblings, as she/he lives out her/his life in rebellious, in-your-face ways. But over a period of time, we learn patience, restraint, encouragement, and openness to new understandings about life and truth, as we remain faithful to our honoring commitments which we make in a family bond. And one day, we find that we possess an identity that we didn't realize would be so important; and we discover others coming along side, who bear our name, to give support that is more meaningful than we can express, because we belong to something much greater than ourselves, and our own little congregation. We become aware that in our forbearance we have gained wisdom, become more resilient, and remained truer to enduring principles than we would have on our own, had we just withdrawn and ignored those who bear similar *spiritual genes* to our own. This is a significant part of what it means to be part of our American Baptist denomination.

One family is not superior to another. Each has its faults, weaknesses and strengths. One's position is more valued for a time; then another rises up for a season and replaces the first one. But all are vulnerable to the same issues and temptations to harm; and each possesses resources for accomplishing significant good.

We have become so enamored with products and fads that have a shelf life of a few months, and settled for such shallow and misleading "friendships" with hundreds of people that we've never met, that we have sacrificed those ties that are abiding for a lifetime, and strengthening for each struggle that will confront us through the years.

I have been an American Baptist for over sixty years. On occasion I have been discouraged and frustrated with others in the family, just as they have been with me. At other times I have been exceedingly proud of what we have accomplished through our loving Lord. But I have been able to maintain a steady course because I have always known who I am and Whose I am, along with those whom I represent with our common name, in my daily choices. Virginia Owen is correct: "*Family has always been our way of explaining us to ourselves.*" It also explains us to the world.

I encourage you to be proud of that. For ours is a place where youth can be honored for their skills in describing the lightning fast changes in a techno-driven world, and age can be celebrated for providing the long view of values that give meaning and anchoring to a life that constantly bombards us with disorienting challenges.

ABC of Oregon and . . . ?

The ***Oregon Baptist*** is the newsletter of the *American Baptist Churches of Oregon (ABCO)*. One would assume from that title that all of our churches are located in the state of Oregon and that all of the American Baptist churches in the state of Oregon are members of ABCO. Those assumption would be incorrect.

Parkside Church of Camas, Washington, and First Baptist Church of Yreka, California are members of ABCO. The First Baptist Church of Ontario, Oregon is a member of the American Baptist Churches of the Northwest (Washington, Idaho, Montana, Utah). These churches connect to the ABC family outside of their geographically-defined regions because they have determined that their regional needs are better served where their closest neighboring ABC churches relate.

Elsewhere in the ABC, for philosophical or missional reasons, congregations choose to connect to the denomination through other regions. This is their prerogative.

We have been in conversation with a group of pastors and lay leaders from congregations in northern California who sense a benefit to their congregations to relate to the ABC family through a different region than where they are now. As a result of these conversations, we are expecting

to receive applications from a number of American Baptist Churches in northern California at our January Board of Ministries meeting. In anticipation of these developments, we scheduled our 2010 Annual Gathering in Medford to facilitate the participation of the leaders of these churches together with us.

“Partners Together” is a fitting theme for this year’s gathering. Although the American Baptist churches in Oregon are similar in many ways, the incredible diversity of the larger ABC family makes our work together a rich and rewarding experience. The diversity that these California churches will bring to our region will help us to appreciate the diverse tapestry that is our family of faith.

The Reverend Donald Ng of the First Chinese Baptist Church of San Francisco is one of the leaders who have been participating in these conversations, and we have asked him to be our speaker at the closing worship service of our Annual Gathering on Sunday morning.

If you have not yet made your plans to attend this year’s Annual Gathering, it is not too late! Contact your church office or call Judy at the ABCO office at (503) 228-8394.

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