
Dakota Baptist

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American Baptist Churches of the Dakotas

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We Have Reached The Tipping Point!

We have reached the tipping point! For the last 15 years I have known it was coming; now I believe we have arrived. Regardless of your church's preference and experience, if your church is seeking seminary trained clergy, women will become part of the equation. In 1994, 30% of seminary students were women, in 2008, 51% were women.

Churches only considering men have fewer candidates to consider. Often the same church considering only men, also consistently eliminates men older than 55. This fixed bias can lead a church to take a lesser talented candidate. From a "numbers only" consideration, churches willing to consider women have a larger talent pool.

Women are entering seminary with the same motivation as men, responding to the call of God to serve the Church. If we hold to the view that women can't be pastors, we have to assume that one half of seminary students failed to understand God's call on their life and shouldn't be there. That is a profound assumption, when a person considers that we are willing to accept a man's response to God's call without much reflection.

"Should women be pastors"? I believe that is the wrong question. When we ask that question, we tend to answer from our own perspective, and part of the answer should come from our Lord. It will be more informative to ask if God is gifting women for ministry. And then we must analyze the gifts God is giving women. If the gifts enable women to function as pastors, it then appears God intended such women to serve as pastor. The converse is also true: if God did not intend for women to serve as pastors, why are they gifted for the responsibility?

The region's goal in the search and call process is to provide names of persons who match the identified ministry skills desired by the church involved. We tell search committees our intention is to provide names of quality persons who meet the committee's criteria closely enough that they will have a hard time choosing between the possible candidates. Increasingly 40% or so of the good matches of skill and experience that the church identifies are women. And yet many churches reject this group of persons who meet the criteria that they set.

An excellent resource for study and reflection is posted on www.abc-dakotas.org

[A Biblical Basis for Equal Partnership:
Women and Men in the Ministry of the Church](#)
by Rev. Dr. David M. Scholer

In Christ,

Riley Walker
Executive Minister

2008 BIENNIAL RECAP

In a setting layered with Baptist history and long service to God, the ninth ABCD Biennial convened at First Baptist Church in Vermillion, SD. With the Vermillion church celebrating its 140th year in ministry, program planners decided to lift up the theme verse used at the first SD Baptist Convention meeting in Vermillion in 1892: "*We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands,*" 1 John 2:3. "*Steadfast in Coming to Know Him*" became the theme which echoed throughout the weekend.

On Friday night, Rev. Dr. Harold Salem gave attendees a truly unforgettable and often humorous retrospective of American Baptist history in the Dakotas, noting that he had "...worn out six 'Executive Secretaries' in my time in ministry here." Again and again he found the humor in "little known facts" of ABCD history, but concluded seriously by reminding participants that this region has been able to go forward and prosper with God's blessing because it has always endeavored to remain true to the teaching of scripture.

On Saturday morning, Dr. Riley Walker introduced the upcoming Discernment Process for which input will be sought at all levels in the region. He noted that for the past eight years region focus has been on congregational renewal and transformation and that a substantial number of region churches had entered into the process. Dr. Walker stated that he believed that the time had come to wait on God for the next area of focus in region ministry. The region will begin this process on Oct. 21-23 at Camp Judson with a Discernment Process for ABCD clergy led by Dr. Jeff Woods at Camp Judson.

During the weekend, attendees heard bios and saw pictures of faithful servant leaders from 16 ABCD churches. They heard how God used key people in large and small ways to keep region congregations moving forward and sharing Christ's love since those early days in 1892.

On Saturday evening attendees were treated to the music of Rev. Daryl and Cecilia Dachtler and the words of another beloved voice in the history of the ABC of the Dakotas, Rev. Dr. Roger Fredrickson. Roger opened his time with blessing: sharing a blessing over Executive Minister Riley Walker, and urging participants to choose someone present with whom to share words of blessing. He then moved into his message on the transformative miracles that can occur when people spend time "Hanging Out with Jesus". He urged listeners, "Let's hang out with Jesus! The church needs to be a community of grace." And he reminded everyone with the simple but sobering thought that, "If you met Jesus, you met his people. If you met his people, you met Jesus."

Participants appreciated the varied meeting elements and the great food provided by FBC Vermillion, as well as the church's wonderful hospitality. In many ways, this time together celebrated the steadfast work and belief of those who came before us and urged us as well, to continue serving in steadfast faith.

“What is Spiritual Leadership?”

It differs from plain, ol' leadership: Henry Blackaby's checklist.

While spiritual leadership involves many of the same principles as general leadership, spiritual leadership has certain distinctive qualities that must be understood and practiced if spiritual leaders are to be successful.

1. *The spiritual leader's task is to move people from where they are to where God wants them to be.* This is influence. Once spiritual leaders understand God's will, they make every effort to move their followers from following their own agendas to pursuing God's purposes. People who fail to move people to God's agenda have not led. They may have exhorted, cajoled, pleaded, or bullied, but they will not have led until their people have adjusted their lives to God's will.
2. *Spiritual leaders depend on the Holy Spirit.* Spiritual leaders work within a paradox, for God calls them to do something that, in fact, only God can do. Ultimately, spiritual leaders cannot produce spiritual change in people; only the Holy Spirit can accomplish this. Yet the Spirit often uses people to bring about spiritual growth in others.
3. *Spiritual leaders are accountable to God.* Spiritual leadership necessitates an acute sense of accountability. Just as a teacher has not taught until students have learned, leaders don't blame their followers when they don't do what they should do. Leaders don't make excuses. They assume their responsibility is to move people to do God's will.
4. *Spiritual leaders can influence all people, not just God's people.* God's agenda applies to the marketplace as well as the meeting place. Although spiritual leaders will generally move God's people to achieve God's purposes, God can use them to exert significant godly influence upon unbelievers.
5. *Spiritual leaders work from God's agenda.* The greatest obstacle to effective spiritual leadership is people pursuing their own agendas rather than seeking God's will.

Too often, people assume that along with the role of leader comes the responsibility of determining what should be done. They develop aggressive goals. They dream grandiose dreams. They cast grand visions. Then they pray and ask God to join them in their agenda and bless their efforts. That's not what spiritual leaders do. (They) seek God's will, then marshal their people to pursue God's plan.

—from *Spiritual Leadership* by Henry and Richard Blackaby (Broadman & Holman, 2001)

The Departments of Evangelism of the ABC of Nebraska and the Dakotas have teamed up in each of the last eight years to minister at the annual gathering of over 400,000 people in Sturgis, South Dakota for Bike Week! (Attendance in 2008 was estimated at over 445,000.)

The ABC Emergency Services Center was created in the basement of the [First Baptist Church of the Northern Hills in Deadwood](#) to help those who became stranded due to injury, abandonment, or mechanical breakdown. The local law enforcement and social services agencies were encouraged to contact our workers when they ran across people in need. Throughout the week calls come in at all hours of the day and night from churches, police and rescue workers, and individuals, wanting us to help men, women and children in need. In addition to the two regions and their churches, the Christian Motorcyclists Association, the Bond Slaves Cycle Club, the Cornerstone Mission in Rapid City and the Artemis House in Spearfish provided invaluable assistance in a genuine spirit of ecumenical cooperation.

Volunteers don't need to be motorcyclists, but ought to have a heart for evangelism. We have discovered that it is helpful if we have more women volunteers due to the large percentage of women and children that we end up assisting. If you can come for all or part of the week we can find a job for you!

For more information, contact . . .

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Interested in Sturgis Rally Ministry 2009? Here are more details . . .

- The ABC Emergency Services Center will be open August 18. Volunteers wishing to help set up can plan on arriving as early as July 30.
- Sleeping accommodations are provided. RVers will be provided with space to set up.
- This mission project is designed for adults. High school students will be permitted when accompanied by a parent..
- Routes to Sturgis will be planned for bikers who wish to ride to the event in a group.
- Follow-up on those ministered to will be coordinated by contacts in ABC regions around the country.
- Each participant is asked to contribute \$100 toward the cost of this project. Local churches are encouraged to assist their participating members in raising this amount. Churches and individuals may also make contributions to this project through their regional office.

Powers Lake & Minot Group Take Mission Trip to SD

A group of ten from northwest North Dakota ventured on a mission trip to South Dakota Nov 22 and 23, 2008. Led by Ruth Skar, Associate Executive Minister of the American Baptist Churches of the Dakotas, the group visited Church of Hope in Pierre, SD and First Baptist Church in Huron, SD.

Church of Hope, located in the South Dakota Women's Prison, the group worshiped with prison inmates and took communion together. It was a moving and uplifting experience as the women sang and moved to the beat of the music. During prayer time, many voluntarily prayed aloud asking God to "help me have less self-pity and to love others more," "be with my family," and "be with and comfort those in the hole (confinement)."

According to Rev. Michele Bradley, the church pastor, the inmates are serving sentences for a variety of offenses, and some life sentences. Despite the sadness and loneliness of prison, joy filled the room. It was evident on the faces of many. Through Rev. Bradley and Church of Hope, God has touched lives, changed hearts and given hope.

Church of Hope, an American Baptist mission church, needs monetary donations. It is a mission church within a prison, and therefore it will likely never be completely self-sustaining.



On Sunday morning, the group worshiped at First Baptist Church, Huron, home of approximately 80 Karen Baptist refugees. Rev. Ken Hunt led the service in English, and Eh Mwee, a Karen Baptist woman, translated announcements and scripture for the congregation. Following the service, everyone gathered for dinner and fellowship in the church basement. After dinner, the Karen met again in the sanctuary for an all

Karen service. Many of the teenage Karen were actively involved in the service by singing special music or reading scripture.

Mission trip participants were:

Dean and Sandra Huseby, Kari Enget, and Janice Hegstad - all from Bethel Baptist Church, Powers Lake, ND; Brian and Ruth Skar, Tanya Skar, Sayna Kannika, Alyssa Holmen and Karen Holmen, from Immanuel Baptist Church, Minot, ND.

Cannon Ball Hosts Group From Powers Lake/Bismarck



On Sunday, March 2, seven members of Bethel Baptist Church, Powers Lake, North Dakota accompanied Pastor Steve and Grace Wisthoff, First Baptist Church of Bismarck to Cannon Ball.

Our church has been looking for different types of mission projects to get involved in and this seemed like a good way to get our feet wet. Several members of our group rode the bus with Pastor Boots Marsh through the town of Cannon Ball and picked up the children who would be attending the 3:00 service that day. The rest of the group helped in the kitchen preparing a snack of chicken nuggets, chips, grapes, cupcake and kool-aid for the children.

Once the bus arrived with the kids Grace Wisthoff told them the story of Joshua and how he marched around the walls of Jericho as God commanded. After the story was read several kids, plus our own Les Faul, made a circular wall and the others marched around the wall reenacting what God commanded. This was followed by the snack. The kids were hungry and took whatever leftovers they could stuff into their pockets home with them. The kids were friendly and we felt well received by them. We saw a lot of need and opportunity for ministry in the Cannon Ball area. We are prayerfully considering the next step.

Those attending Cannon Ball: Dave Sellie, Marlow Nelson, Kari Enget, Les & Sandy Faul, Dean & Sandy Huseby

One hundred seventy one women from several areas of western North Dakota congregated in Powers Lake Oct. 18, 2008 to attend the [Bethel Baptist Women's Retreat](#). North Dakota author Roxanne Henke, Wishek, was the featured speaker for the fall event, which also included a luncheon and tea party.

Henke, who has written seven books and has an eighth being published in January, spoke about the value of friendship between women. She told the story of her personal friendship with Lori Abentroth, a former Powers Lake resident who had moved to Wishek with her husband, Vince, in 1980. Henke said she and Lori became such good friends that one of their husbands once joked that being with them was like being in the room with two persons sharing one brain because the two women would finish sentences for each other and answer questions from the other one before the question had been entirely phrased.

Lori developed cancer during her pregnancy with her second child and Henke transported her friend to appointments and sat with her through physician's visits. Henke was there the day a physician told Lori there was nothing more they could do for her. When Henke told Lori she didn't know what to do or say any more, Lori responded, "Put it in your book."

"We had shared all our dreams and I had told her how I'd always wanted to write a book," Henke said. Lori died a month after the birth of her second child. Henke was a young mom with a busy life, living in Wishek. She kept waiting for the right time or maybe a move from Wishek to a bigger city where it would seem easier to write a book. Twelve years later, she said, she realized she wasn't going anywhere but Wishek and she felt God directing her to pursue the dream she'd had of writing a book. So she began writing a novel, basing it on Lori's life experiences and their mutual friendship. It took another two years after finishing the book to find a publisher. Henke persisted and *After Anne*, that first book, opened the door for her to begin her writing career as well as honoring the friendship she'd shared with Lori.

Lorna Carlson and Sandy Faul, both Powers Lake, also acted out a skit depicting the unique relationships between women. Then the women attending the event put friendship into action as they shared lunch and conversation in the church fellowship hall. Bethel Baptist's decorating committee had set every table with linen table cloths, china and crystal, and center pieces that featured a variety of tea pots and fresh flowers. A delicious lunch of croissants with chicken salad, fruit salad, carrots, pickles and toffee bars was served.

"We never anticipated that we'd have such a huge turn-out but we were thrilled – and a bit nervous about pulling it all off," said Kathy Barenthsen, who co-chaired the retreat with her sister, Sandy Huseby. "It took a lot of hard work by many people and everyone doing their part."

Powers Lake music teacher Sue Gunderson provided the special music and led the group worship time. Jeri Holmen headed the decorating committee, which included Judy Hegstad, Karin Knudsen and Holmen's sister Thea Donna Johnson, who lives in Arizona, and and a cousin, Elaine Cortez, who lives in Oregon.



Geri Holmen, Elaine Cortez, Judy Hegstad and Thea Donna Johnson decorated tables with colorful themed china and crystal settings for the Bethel Baptist women's retreat.

Jane Sem and Tammy Moody were among table hostesses at the Bethel Baptist Church women's retreat where North Dakota author Roxanne Henke was the guest speaker.



First Baptist Church Reaches Out in Unique Mission

The members of First Baptist Church of Stanley have held fast to a long tradition of mission support through the American Baptist Churches - USA. Over the years, the congregation has faithfully given to the ABC mission ministry both at home and overseas; financially, prayerfully, and in personal encouragement to various missionaries serving around the world. Numerous times in the past, the members of First Baptist have been recognized for their generosity and faithfulness in this important task.

Even though the number of members is smaller now than in previous years, the work of mission continues unabated. Local mission coordinator Mary Yonker, who has a true heart for mission work, has been very creative in helping the congregation to not only meet mission goals, but surpass them in surprising ways. A recent mission project proves that.

One of the ministries supported through our National Ministries Board of the denomination is to assist families who have experienced the devastation of natural disasters, like the flooding now occurring in the Midwest states. A call has gone out for "clean-up buckets" to be used to help homeowners following the disaster. Each bucket comes with a good assortment of cleaning items needed for the difficult task of putting homes back together. Knowing that the cost of mailing these items would be almost as much as the materials themselves, the Ministry Council of the church set a goal of raising enough funds to purchase 4 buckets filled with the cleaning supplies, and sending that amount through our national headquarters for that express purpose.

Mary Yonker set up a sample display in the church of what our dollars would purchase, and asked the members to drop their offerings in the bucket. Now, it may seem that one small gift would only be a "drop in the bucket" when faced with the needs that are present, but drops tend to collect, and before long the church had raised enough funds to purchase not just 4 buckets, but 10! And the offerings continue to come in - bit by bit, but ever so faithfully.

This is just one of the many ways the members of First Baptist Church have continued to carry on the ministry of reaching out in the name of Christ to meet the needs of people in times of distress. If you would like more information about this ministry, or the other ways First Baptist is reaching out, feel free to give the church a call at 701-464-4652, or better yet, drop by the church any Sunday morning at 9 AM to join the folk in worship and service. You'll be glad you did!

WINNER NEWS

On Sunday, August 24, 2008 the ABW of Winner First Baptist Church were in charge of the services as Pastor Steven Swanholm and several of the men attended Men's Round-Up at Camp Judson. The theme was "Quilt Parables" and at least 50 quilts were displayed representing several generations of quilters.

(see photo) In front is long-time member Millie Larsh. Middle row left to right: Diane Graber, Gladys Harter, Betty Korb, Margaret Meyer. Back row left to right: Berneice Harter, Jessie Elsasser, Alice Minchow and Karleen Swanholm.

Millie Larsh has been a member since 1953. Her daughter is Margaret Meyer.



Liberty Baptist, Kief

Praise The Lord! The last few months at Liberty Baptist Church we received 6 new members.

February brought a successful Happy Hearts dinner with 58 attending. Our great camp cooks made an awesome meal for use. Several of our gals decorated the Fellowship room. It was a memorable evening.

March 13, 2008 our church sponsored a Blood Drive in our Fellowship room.

On March 23, 2009 Easter, following our service, we had a Fellowship Brunch.

We thank the Lord for our new pastor, Luis & Jan Coca.



Aug 17th 2008, Kief Baptist Church had "Biker Sunday". The church has numerous motorcyclist and we selected that day for a Church Ride and a day of fellowship. After church service, the group rode to the Pizza Ranch in Harvey for lunch. From Harvey to Rugby for a Dairy Queen treat. Then to Towner and back to the church.

It was a great time of fellowshiping and riding the open road seeing God's beauty in His creation. It was a little over 130 mile road trip.

*Pastor Luis Coca
Liberty Baptist Church, Kief*

Have You Been Blessed Yet?

It has been a time of blessing for First Baptist Church in Huron, SD. In December, 2007, a group of Karen refugees from Burma came to our church in Huron. Many of them had been recruited to work at Dakota Provisions. They moved here as a large group to raise their families and make a home in this brand new country, state, and town.

Since last year, the church's average weekly attendance has doubled, but what is also a blessing is that the average age has gone from 70 years to about 35 years. The church is now filled again with five generations of people. As we find a new "normal" and a common language, we are finding that God is blessing in all we share.

Some of the church's ministry has changed to helping people with contacts for permanent residence status, and young people getting married and sharing in their celebration. As the rhythm of life beats, so does the dynamic face of FBC Huron's ministry. Our new friends, brothers, and sisters bring a joy and sweet vitality, which is changing the face of worship. Last week I found it hard to keep from laughing for joy as the young children, two boys aged three and four, rolled up and down the aisles during the sermon. The great pleasure of seeing the youthful energy and excitement of children participate in the service is a blessing. And as always, if any extra communication is needed, just talk to the children, who are much faster at learning a new language and customs than we adults are.

FBC Huron is a mission field, where it is hard to tell who the missionaries are. One of the blessings God is giving us is an even greater renewed hope for the future. In the months to come, we are expecting to double again. It is great to have the problems which come from God's bounty; where will we put this new class, who will be a teacher assistant? After years of decline, growing pains are also a blessing. We are being blessed in ministry, by staying home and ministering to the people God is sending to us. We have long thought that if we could not be missionaries, if we could not go, we should send; if we could not send, then we should pray. Here in Huron, God is doing the sending and we are continuing to pray and thank Him for his daily blessing of our new Karen brothers and sisters.

Pastor Ken Hunt

We Welcome These New Members to the ABCD

Joining by Baptism:

- Sarah Zander, Bismarck
- Jacob Holmen, Minot
- Micah Holmen, Minot
- Tessia Samuelson, Minot
- Charity Strilcov, Minot
- Eli Hudgens, Trent
- Brenda Hudelson, SF 1st
- Duane Hudelson, SF 1st
- Kevin Ketterer, SF 1st
- Sophia Koball, SF 1st
- Lauren Kunz, SF 1st
- Courtney Rasmussen, Viborg

Joining by Letter/Christian Experience:

- Bernard Buck Elk, Dickinson
- Beth Long, Minot
- Keneth Long, Minot
- Brian Skar, Minot
- Ruth Skar, Minot
- Les Wiedrick, Minot
- Wanda Lindholm, Trent
- Atty Boyd, SF 1st
- Betty Mincer, SF 1st
- Bob Mincer, SF 1st
- John Jochims, Viborg
- Cindy Jochims, Viborg
- Daniel Jochims, Viborg
- Kayla Jochims, Viborg

Holy Cow!

The Camp Judson Holy Cow herd has been running wild this year. Another 12 cows have been added to the herd, putting the total number up to 92 cows adopted out t farmers and ranchers across the state. The Holy Cow "Steering Committee" has enough funds to purchase another 4-5 cows and a ranching family has committed to providing a home for these cows. Our SD AB Men recently gave a generous gift of \$4,000 to CJ during the Men's Round-Up. That gift gives us enough funds to purchase the remaining cows needed to get to 100 Holy Cows for Camp Judson! Holy Cow! - who would have thought that!! That was a dream of our former Executive Minister, Ron Cowles, to have a herd of 100 cows and we inch ever so close to doing just that! But we need to find homes for the remaining 3-4 cows. Can you help us? If you can provide a home for some, or one, of these cows, or know of someone who can, will you please let us know or talk to them about the Holy Cow Project. We are ever so grateful to our Holy Cow host families for providing cows and for the many folks who have given so generously to purchase cows for the Holy Cow Project!

Rich Kallander, Camp Judson Manager

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