



The Rocky Mountain American Baptist

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

Ebenezer

It was an extremely cold afternoon when I pulled up to the apartments in Aurora. Not an afternoon you would expect to see shoes sitting outside someone's door. But as I approached the apartment in which the Ebenezer Baptist Church was preparing to meet, there sat 20 or more pairs of shoes on the front stoop. I rang the doorbell as I slipped off my shoes and was welcomed by the deacon in whose apartment the congregation meets.

Pastor Debora Di and thirteen members meet in this little two bedroom apartment every Sunday.

They have 27 families that they consider a part of their congregation, but just the thirteen members at this point. The fellowship is important to them, even though they have had neighbors complain on occasion, even having had the police come to tell them to quiet down. But right now, this is where they have to worship, so they continue to meet.



Most of the families in this congregation have been in this country less than two years. Pastor Debora has only been here for about nine months. But for many of these, she was their pastor in the resettlement facilities in Thailand. Their fellowship is warm and genuine, filled with families. By families, I mean from cradle to seniors. The littlest ones sit on their parents laps and they all listen intently as the worship service begins, in Karen. John and I (Pastor John Sitner, Missions Pastor at Crossroads American Baptist Church) are allowed to sit in the few seats that are available, but we are also asked to bring the message for the af-

ternoon (there's a passage about that somewhere, be prepared in season and out of season!). We don't understand any of the prayer, but when the music begins the hymns are familiar to us—*Holy, Holy, Holy* and *Joy to the World*, along with more. The youth stand to sing special music—they do several different songs all done very well—some in their native language, some contemporary songs in English, but all done in a spirit that shows their love and devotion to Christ.

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Wishing you and your family a Happy New Year!

ABCRM Board and Staff

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After the service, we are asked to visit with the church about their needs and about how they can be a part of our Region. They share with us that their greatest need is a building in which to worship. Right now, they need it mainly on Sundays, but they can see a time when they will need a more permanent place. I promised to work with our churches to see if there would be some possibility on this (fair warning pastors), and promise also that we want to welcome them to our family and will be present as they have additional needs. They are especially concerned about getting Pastor Debora properly credentialed, and I assure them that we will work with them to make this happen. They invite us to come and worship with them on Christmas day, but both John and I have to decline because of family plans.



As we continue to build our relationship with this new congregation, I hope to share in

this experience with others of you. I guarantee you will leave their worship having been blessed and experienced God's presence in a powerful way.

*In Christ,
Steve Van O*

To the Future



“Run! The bus in here and unless you want to sleep in the barn with those horses you need to hustle.” What started as a mad dash up the huge hill quickly diminished into an exhausted trudge. My shouts of encouragement from my comfortable position at the top of the small mountain only helped a few; the rest strutted their way to the summit. One little girl stopped right in front of me, held up her foot for a short intermission, “Ms. Killi, I got mud on my shoes from the barn.” I responded, “Sorry to say, I don’t think that’s just mud.” Her nose wrinkled and her two friends giggled as she let out an “Oh gross.” I promptly reminded them the bus was still waiting and they quickly loaded up and headed off for the evening.

That day over 80 students ranging from 5 to 11 years of age came to Kodiak Baptist Mission. They took part in a wide range of activities, made some incredible memories and left feeling a bit more excited about life. I, along with a committed group work day in and day out with these students, investing more than just time into their lives. On this day it was evident that something momentous had happened. Wednesday, October 15, 2008, I got a glimpse into the future of Kodiak Baptist Mission (KBM).

I first must catch some of you up to speed. For many years, countless people have come to KBM for one reason or another. Children gather to take part in preschool, after school and the summer day camp programs. Activities are the base for many other groups as they ride horses or take on the challenge of our obstacle/ropes course and families have gotten the support they have needed through the Kodiak Island Food bank. However in recent years it has become increasingly evident that our 1930s facility is having a hard time keeping up with the needs of the 21st century. While dedicated Mission Teams have given hours of service helping bring us up to code, we still face insurmountable difficulties. These difficulties come with thanks however. If our programs were not busting at the seams and people were not investing their lives in the work being done here there would be no need to plug away in our efforts. As is, more children are learning about the man Jesus, and how much He loves them. Families rest assured that they will have food for their next meal; young adults are having life changing experiences by giving freely of their time and energy to serve and the list goes on. We have been blessed and with each hardship and find the opportunity to grow, change and develop into something the great carpenter could only construct.

I know the work is only beginning, Lord only knows what the next five years will hold, but I am confident that our God will continue to build a strong heritage to share with more children and families. Soon it will have just been five years ago as I stood looking down the hill at a group of children full of passion and fervor. I’ll explain how many of those then small children have become some of our greatest helpers. Their interests were peaked and now they are actively involved in our obstacle/ropes course or horse program and of course the list will continue. Seeing the love of Jesus radiate from these children does more than make me feel good. It gives me hope for the years ahead and there is joy in that. Many of these children have such a long way to go, but I am confident in the foundation they have found in Jesus through the Kodiak Baptist Mission.

*Kelli Foreman
Kodiak Baptist Mission Staff*