

American Baptist Men of the Great Rivers Region
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	<h1><i>UpStream</i></h1>	<p>Winter 2012-2013</p> <p>Editor: Brian Romanowski (309) 826-8116</p>
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American Baptist Men
of the Great Rivers Region
Men on a Mission - from God

A Word from Our Sponsor

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”
– 1 Peter 2:9-10 (NIV)

The Hopi Indian Reservation

Last year, AB Men from all over the U.S. converged at Second Mesa, AZ for Phase I of our project for the church and mission located there. Phase II of the project is tentatively scheduled to begin April 8 and expected to last for three weeks. The project is dependent upon the necessary funds being available. Please visit www.abmen.org for more information and to donate to the project.

Mark your calendars for the AB Men’s fall gathering: September 20-21, 2013



UPDATE

Informing **Disaster Relief Volunteers**
and **Supporters** of our ongoing
mission and ministry.

“Because Jesus Came, We Come”

Mac and LaVerne Shotwell, Editors
Brian & Julie Romanowski, Publishers
Vol. 9, No. 1 February, 2013

TEAM RESPONDS TO HURRICANE SANDY IN NEW JERSEY

With the initiative and leadership of John McConnel, Jr. a team of nine were among the earliest disaster responders to help along the east coast. They left on Nov. 14, 2012 and arrived on Nov. 16 at Pilgrim Baptist Church in Red Bank, New Jersey, their host church until November 19. The team worked at four sites giving 111 man-hours of volunteer labor. The scene at the right is at the home of Mrs. Mae Caldwell, pictured below receiving a Bible and a devotional book from John and members of his team. The Bible was a gift from the First Baptist Church in Mahomet, IL and the devotional book, “when your whole world changes” was made possible by the Salvation Army. (These two gifts are left at each site where our teams meet with victims.)



Members of the team (pictured left to right in the picture at right) are Terry Maurizio, Craig Luginbill, Clifford Ruyle, Jack Cobb, Alex Sroczynski, John Hoenig, John McConnel, Sean McConnel and Chuck Johnson. Not pictured is Joe Mitchell. Team Leader John wrote: *“In terms of Christian ministry, I think this is about the most successful mission I have been on todate. We really touched a lot of people’s live. Some of whom will carry on our example of service to the Lord.”*

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

We regret to report that two of our team leaders have had to resign because of health problems: **Gary Short**, team two assistant captain and assistant trailer coordinator, and **Paul Webb**, team five captain. Both of these men have been on numerous response teams and will be greatly missed.



Good news is that these leadership spots have been filled. **Ellis Loper** (right above) will be the new team two assistant, working with Ron Greenfield.



John Hoenig (left above) will be the new team five captain, working with Bill Humenczuk.



Harold Monroe (left above) will be the new assistant trailer coordinator, working with Bob Gebhardt (middle). Gary Short is pictured at right.



The above scene is from our 10th training event held on Sept., 21, 2012 at Lake Springfield Baptist Camp. Thirty-three volunteers received training in chain saw and mud-out know how. 315 have participated to date in these events.

The next training event is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 20, 2013 at Lake Springfield Camp. Final plans will be made at the Leadership Team meeting on March 2. If you have suggestions, please share them with one of the leadership team members before then. Van Peters (at left) giving instruction in mud-out at our last training session.

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Mac's Musings...

On the previous page you read of the resignation of two of our outstanding leaders, Gary Short and Paul Webb. Both have added much to the success of our ministry and I, personally, will miss their support and leadership. In announcing his resignation to his team members, Paul Webb wrote: *"It takes a lot of members to find an adequate response to a given need. For this reason I encourage all of you to remain on the team as long as health makes it possible. Invite others to join.... Jesus taught us that what we believe is important. However, he commanded us to follow our belief in him with service as we are able. I leave you with these familiar words from James 2:14-17: **"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him: 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed', but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."***

Then Paul wrote: *"I would like to add these words: **compassion, love and justice, in the spirit of Christ, must be a central part of faith and works.**"*

As I ponder Paul's meaningful words, I am thanking God for the 592 volunteers who have responded to the 29 disaster relief responses we have made since we reorganized this ministry in 2004. Indeed, compassion, love and justice have been incarnated along with faith and works by those of you who have helped at 470 sites for 183 days in 33 communities, giving 11,597 volunteer hours and saving victims over a quarter of a million dollars in labor costs. (\$260,932.50 to be exact!)

To each of you and to your families who probably had to pick up other responsibilities while you were putting your faith to work, I want to express my heart-felt thanks. And I would add another thank you to all of you who will find the time to say YES when the next disaster call comes our way. What a joy it is to work with men, women and youth who are willing to be the hands and feet of Jesus when there is a need to help. It is also heartening to know many who support this ministry with generous monetary gifts.

SINCERE THANKS to the following who helped with the expenses of our trip to New Jersey: John McConnel and area one disaster relief funds; Dwight Stinnett and One Great Hour of Sharing funds; ABMen from Kansas; Pilgrim Baptist Church in Red Bank, New Jersey (for food and shelter) and the team members who dug into their own pockets. Our ongoing thanks to the following churches who have sent monetary gifts since our last UPDATE: First Baptist Churches of Macomb, Marissa, West Frankford and Wood River. Personal thanks to Jacob and Shannon Swartz for the gift of a new Stihl MS362 with an 18 inch bar and to Darrell Fritz for the loan of his truck to pull our trailer to NJ.

Reflecting on the number of people mentioned above and the names behind the statistics causes me to pause and thank God for the many, many people who make this ministry an ongoing reality. To one and all a big THANK YOU! --**Mac Shotwell**



Our Disaster Relief team to New Jersey left their mark in more ways than one! In addition to the letters on the fallen tree, they --and other ABMen's teams from around the country--left their mark on lives and churches and communities. Read more below:

REPORT FROM OUR NATIONAL ABMen's PRESIDENT

“Praise God you're here!”- “Seems like the 'church people' are the ones who really care.” - “God did send us angels.” --These are a few of the exclamations, many through tears, which I personally heard from people to whom we offered assistance. The New Jersey coastal area was hit very hard by “Storm Sandy”. Many people still are not able to stay in their homes while the mold and decay continue. Volunteers from Illinois, Massachusetts, New York, New Hampshire and West Virginia responded with large groups. Of course, several ladies did a fantastic job along side the men.

Hundreds of trees were cut, tons of brush, logs and debris were hauled to the curb and moldy, rotted furniture and personal belongings were thrown in the dumpster. The volunteers made a lot of new friends. They were adopted and well cared for by the congregations at Pilgrim Baptist Church in Red Bank, NJ and also by the members of Ardena Baptist Church in Freehold, NJ. They had lunch a couple times in the homes of a family for whom they cleared trees. Another young couple provided a great supper of chili to the crew and another family allowed some of the volunteers to sleep and bathe in their home.---**Lucky Ray, President ABMen-USA 12/21/12**

Read more about this mission at www.abmen.org and view more pictures on our own website: www.abm-grr.org Click on “pictures” and go to “New Jersey”.

AB Men Website

Thanks to Terry Maurizio, we have a website again: www.abm-grr.org. Be sure to check it out!

Upcoming AB Men Work Projects

Judson University: The AB Men and women from the Great Rivers Region will spend the week of June 3-7 at Judson University in Elgin, IL doing a variety of projects.

University Baptist Church & Housing Ministry: We will be working on a variety of projects for this ministry on the campus of the University of Illinois at Champaign the week of July 15-19.

Green Lake Conference Center: After a great trip last year, the AB Men & Women will again be headed to Green Lake, WI. The trip will be the last week of September or first week of October.

Murrow Indian Children's Home: A work project is being planned for June at the Children's Home in Muskogee, OK. The trip will include some youth from our region. People are needed with plumbing and electrical skills on this project, as well as people to oversee the work of the youth.

If you would like to participate in these projects or want more information, please contact George Meyer, our Work Projects Coordinator, at 217/488-7190.

American Baptist Men will Celebrate at Mission Summit 2013

The American Baptist biennial meeting – Mission Summit 2013 – will be held from Friday, June 21 through Sunday, June 23 in Overland Park, Kansas, a Kansas City suburb just three miles from the Missouri state line. The location means that it will be a day's drive, or less, from any church in the Great Rivers Region. A great variety of reasonably priced accommodations are available close to the Overland Park Convention Center and the registration fee structure allows individuals to register for just \$35 per person once their church has paid a modest registration fee. The promotional video may be viewed on youtube.com by searching for: ZQ3SPK_f5nw. The Mission Summit 2013 website has full information on the event, including the video, schedule, and registration materials and may be found at: www.americanbaptists2013.com.

Among the events being celebrated at the Mission Summit 2013 is the 90th Anniversary of the American Baptist Men which will be celebrated on Saturday, June 22 with a morning meeting, celebration worship service, and lunch at First Baptist Church of Kansas City, Missouri just four miles east of the convention center. Plans are underway for this celebration and we hope to have men's and boy's choirs which demonstrate the diversity of American Baptist congregations in Kansas City as well as reports of American Baptist Men's activities from around the country. The cost for the event has not been set, but will be very reasonable.

Plan to attend the Mission Summit 2013 and especially the American Baptist Men 90th Anniversary Celebration. If you have questions about the men's program or alternate hotels in Overland Park, please contact Bill Humenczuk at bhumenczuk@kc.rr.com or 913-338-4478.

Applications for Youth Representatives at the Biennial

The AB Men will sponsor a Regional Youth Representative (RYR) as representatives of AB Men-USA to the Biennial. The AB Men will provide transportation, food and lodging for the selected representative. The candidate should be at least 18 years of age, up to 21, prior to June 15, 2013. He should be an active member of an ABC Church, and obtain a letter of recommendation from his pastor. He should also have knowledge of AB Men-USA Ministry and have participated in AB Men activities. The candidate must write a letter of at least one paragraph, but no more than one page explaining why he should be selected. Applications should be e-mailed to our AB Men-USA president, Lucky Ray, at luckyray1@suddenlink.net no later than March 10, 2013.