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Rev. Dale Edwards  
Region Minister

Christ says, "Behold, I make all things new." *Rev. 21:5*

**THE AMERICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES OF VERMONT AND NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**"Mission at our Doorstep:  
Renewal, Restoration, and New Beginnings"**



**June 2015 Newsletter**

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**Food for Thought**

**The Richest One Percent Will Soon Have More Money than the Other 99**

According to a new report from Oxfam, global wealth inequality is set to hit a shocking milestone in 2016: The richest 1 percent of people in the world will possess more than half the world's wealth. Currently, the richest 85 individuals in the world have the same amount of money as the poorest 3.5 billion combined. The director of Oxfam told *The Guardian* that "one in nine people do not have enough to eat and more than a billion people still live on less than \$1.25 a day."

- As reported in *Relevant*, May\_June 2015

**Does your church love its ZIP code enough to cry over it?**

Jesus cried over a person (Lazarus) and a place (Jerusalem). Does your church know its ZIP code enough to cry over it? How can you help people to become topophiliacs (lovers of a place)?

- Leonard Sweet (*Outreach*, May/June 2015)

## From Our Region Minister: “Buzzing About Pew”

In my travels this past week, I have often been questioned about the latest Pew Foundation report “America’s Changing Religious Landscape.” The report has unleashed media cries that Christianity in America is in precipitous decline. I have found some pundits gleeful at the prospect, a sort of rejoicing in secularization. I am reminded of a pastor friend of mine from London, nearly 20 years ago predicting that one day the religious environment of the North-eastern United States would become more like secular Western Europe’s. To some degree I think my friend’s prediction is coming true.



The latest Pew report surveyed 35,000 adults in both English and Spanish. The report reveals that the American church is in decline. The largest single group, self-identified evangelicals, declined from 26.4% of the population to 25.4%, Roman Catholicism from 23.9% to 20.8%, and mainline Protestants from 18.1% to 14.7%. This decline occurred from 2007 to 2014. Simply put, there are 5 million fewer self-identified mainline Protestants than existed 7 years ago. Those identifying as “nones” (those having no religious affiliation) rose from 16.1% to 22.8%.

When I read these figures, I am not sure where American Baptists fit into the new landscape. We are the only old Protestant denomination to have grown during this 7 year span, and that by only 0.3%. But it is understood within ABC leadership that this growth is almost exclusively credited to non-white and non-English speaking congregations. It has been the acceptance of global south Christian communities into the ABC that has stemmed decline and even brought about growth.

Now sifting through the buzz, I draw some rather simple conclusions, which I venture to share.

1. Nothing in the report surprises me;
2. I suspect there are some believers within the “nones” who are just soured on labels;
3. Because the survey was only conducted in English and Spanish, there are likely Christian people groups that were overlooked;
4. Yes, we are in a process of cultural secularization, and the landscape is challenging. We can’t flee from the obvious;
5. Yet, no need for panic; God is sovereign, Christ is risen, the Holy Spirit is still about.

Fight or flight needs to give way to gracious Christian confidence. If we only try to save churches and denominations, then we find a hollow, meaningless journey. But should we proclaim the Gospel, live out our faith, seek first Christ’s kingdom, in the end all will be well. In knowing Jesus Christ, the buzz is put in temporal perspective, and the gleeful pundits set aside. Challenges yes, grief provoking challenges certainly, but despair? Never. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

In Christ, Dale

## Prayer Concerns

Prayers of healing for **Rev. Karen Mendes**, First Baptist Church, Burlington, who recently had surgery for cancer and will be undergoing chemotherapy.

Prayers of healing for **Rev. Jim Malkemes**, Newton Junction Baptist Church, who suffered a cardiac episode at the Annual Gathering. He has been transferred from Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center to a rehab center in Haverhill, MA.

Condolences to **David and Shirley Marcroft**, New Life Church of the White Mountains, on the passing of David’s father, Arthur Marcroft, on April 22.

Condolences to **Rev. James Waugh**, Water Village Community Church, on the passing of his wife, Virginia, on May 7. A celebration of her life was held on May 11. Virginia was a former board member of the ABC-USA General Board and Board of International Ministries.

If you wish to send cards to any of these people, please contact the Region office for their addresses.

## **New ABC/VNH Officers Elected, New Churches and Pastors Welcomed and Ordination Anniversaries Recognized at Annual Gathering**

### **The following were elected at the Annual Gathering on May 1:**

President: **Mr. Rich Warren**; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President: **Rev. Isabel Rivera**; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President: **Rev. Moa Imchen**; Treasurer: **Mr. Albert Hall, III**; Board of Trustees: **Rev. John Cerrato** (2 year term) and **Rev. Kathleen Blackey** (3 year term).

### **The following churches were voted and welcomed into the membership of ABC/VNH:**

**Grace and Hope Community Church** of Andover (pastor, Rev. Karen Heavey) and the **Union Church, Community in Christ**, Westmoreland (pastor, Rev. Donna Gage).

### **The following pastors and spouses were welcomed into the Region:**

**Mr. Chris Dunaway and wife Jaime** – Middle Street Baptist Church, Portsmouth  
**Mr. Todd Eaton and wife Ruth Lynne** – United Baptist Church, East Poultney  
**Rev. Duke Gray and wife Gloria** – interim at Congregational-Baptist Church, Chester, NH  
**Rev. Dr. Samuel Hollo** – interim at Community Church of Alton  
**Rev. Moa Imchen and wife Akum Longchar** – First Baptist Church, Hudson  
**Rev. Dr. Evelyn Lavelli and husband Gary** – United Church of Hardwick  
**Rev. Patty Marsden and husband Jim** – Newmarket Community Church  
**Mr. Jeremy Pataro and wife Cristen** – South Hampton Baptist Church  
**Mr. Craig Ray and wife Brianna** – First Baptist Church, Barre  
**Mr. Jeff Robie and wife Jolie** – interim at Bow Lake Baptist Church, Strafford, NH  
**Rev. Terry Robinson** – interim at Vernon Union Church  
**Rev. Renee Rouse** – interim at United Church of Warner  
**Rev. Jon and Mrs. Patti Stratton** – First Baptist Church, Rutland

### **The following pastors celebrate 5 year ordination anniversaries this year:**

**60 years:** **Rev. Gordon Bourne**, Retired, West Rutland, VT; **Rev. Dr. Norman de Puy**, Retired, Concord, NH;  
**Rev. Robert Ketcham**, Retired, Wolfeboro, NH; **Rev. Dr. Robert Williams**, Retired, Concord, NH

**55 years:** **Rev. Donald Maughan**, Retired, New London, NH; **Rev. W. Ransom Rice, Jr.**, Retired, Lincoln, VT

**45 years:** **Rev. Thomas Hiltley**, Interim, First Baptist Church, Bennington, VT; **Rev. Everett Palmer**, Retired, Belmont, NH;  
**Rev. E. Lon Schneider**, Retired, Center Rutland, VT; **Rev. Kent Schneider**, of Chocorua, NH

**40 years:** **Rev. John Babson**, Chaplain, Ctr. Tuftonboro, NH; **Rev. David O'Brien**, Retired, Richmond, VT;  
**Rev. Harry Woodley**, Retired, Laconia, NH

**35 years:** **Rev. James Dowse**, Interim, Calvary Baptist Church, Springfield, VT; **Rev. Dr. Maggie Lewis**, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Nashua; **Rev. Mary Robbins**, Retired, New Castle, NH

**30 years:** **Rev. Carolyn Clarke**, Retired, Center Strafford, NH; **Rev. Dr. David Doyle**, Retired, Concord, NH;  
**Rev. Dale Louise Nicholas**, Pastor, United Church of Cornish, NH

**25 years:** **Rev. David Abbott**, Pastor, Passumpsic (VT) Community Baptist Church; **Rev. Jamie Moynihan**, of East Kingston, NH; **Rev. Wayne Santos**, of Barnstead, NH; **Rev. John Somers**, Retired, St. Johnsbury, VT

**20 years:** **Rev. Henry Frost**, Interim, United Church of Danbury, NH; **Rev. Mark Heinrichs**, Interim, Freewill Baptist Church, Sutton, VT; **Rev. Lynne Hubley**, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Bradford, NH; **Rev. Stephen Payne**, Pastor, Addison (VT) Community Baptist Church; **Rev. John Ward**, Pastor, East Washington (NH) Baptist Church

**15 years:** **Rev. Katherine Arthaud**, Pastor, United Church of Fairfax/Interim at Westford United Church;  
**Rev. Leroy Dixon**, Pastor, New Alpha Missionary Baptist Church, Burlington, VT; **Rev. Isabel Rivera**, Pastor, First Spanish American Baptist Church, Nashua, NH; **Rev. Dr. Lori Wiley**, of Bedford, NH

**10 years:** **Rev. Karen Heavey**, Pastor, Grace & Hope Community Church, Andover, NH; **Rev. Robert Lemieux**, Pastor, Meredith Center Free Baptist Church

**5 years:** **Rev. Zachary Crowell**, Youth Minister, CenterPoint Community Church, Salem, NH; **Rev. Cindy Johnson**, Assoc. Pastor, First Baptist Church, New London, NH; **Rev. George Keeler**, Pastor, North Springfield (VT) Baptist Church

## [IM Missionary Mercy Gonzales-Barnes Available to Speak at Churches this Fall](#)

United Baptist Church of Concord is hoping to have International Ministries Missionary Mercy Gonzales-Barnes come and speak at their church sometime this fall. Mercy would be better able to travel to New England if there are other churches that would like to have her come and speak as well. If your church would like to have Mercy come and speak, please call United Baptist Church at 603-224-7755.

Mercy works with the Dios Con Nosotros Baptist Convention of Baja California, Mexico. Her ministry in Baja includes leadership development for new church planting, teaching at the Seminary, and work with short term mission groups from the United States. Her ministry area includes Mexicali, Tecate, Ensenada, San Luis and Tijuana. She is married to Rick Barnes, a former IM missionary. For more information on Mercy and her work, go to <http://internationalministries.org/teams/46-barnes>.

## [MyCircle Training Resources Available](#)

Jim Murphy, who spoke at our Annual Gathering and presented a workshop on MyCircle Training for personal evangelism, can be contacted if you have questions regarding MyCircle, mission, or anything else. He can be reached at [jmurphy@clearcreek.org](mailto:jmurphy@clearcreek.org). The *MyCircle* website is up and running. There will be more resources added to it, but for now, the workbooks and training videos can be accessed through the site. The web site is: [www.mycircletraining.com](http://www.mycircletraining.com).

The Region office has two copies of the *MyCircle Training workbook* available for \$5.00 each, which includes postage.



## [American Baptist Women's Ministries VNH](#)

**American Baptist Women's Ministries is a Christ-centered ministry with a commitment to encourage and empower women and girls to serve God.**

### **JUNE BUGS**

Those June bugs are clacking at the window screens during the night. Not the greatest bugs to have around, but God made them as He made us, and we all are beautiful in His sight. He can SEE them and He SEES us and knows it is good because He did it.

### **ABW Retreat**

Looking ahead toward our ABW Retreat June 30 – July 1<sup>st</sup> in White River Junction, VT, probably planning started as a bunch of clacking, but now has been honed into a Spirit-filled plan. We will be exploring Bible studies encompassing our ABW theme of "See . . ." : exploring relationships, sharing our Christian growth, eating good food and doing exercises to keep our body moving, as we lean on the Lord to keep our heart and soul and mind (Matt. 22:37) moving.

Our AB Women's family is growing and the Retreat is an opportunity to all come together to SEE each other and rekindle old relationships and build new ones. We all have the Lord Jesus in common for the beginning of our relationships and we don't need to clack like the June bugs; we just need to step out and speak softly. Susan Whittemore will be playing the piano and we are hoping to have special music from New Hope Baptist Church, Portsmouth. If any of us play instruments, bring those. All of us bring our singing voices.

Bring our God-given gifts to share and build more on our fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Gal 5:22) We can't go wrong keeping our eyes on the Lord.

The registration form can be found in the June Calendars of Events and both the registration form and the flyer can be found online at [abcvnh.org](http://abcvnh.org) >> Events/Event Registration.

Ladies, it has been such a joy to serve as your President these last four years. I've had the wonderful opportunity to meet friends, both in NH and VT, and both silver and gold friends. The Presidency is a task that only the Lord can get a person through, and I thank Him and you all for all working together.

In Jesus' Love and Service, Marsha Omand

## SAVE, SAVE, SAVE For Missions

ABWM VNH is continuing to collect the following items for missions:

Campbell Soup labels, General Mills BoxTops for Education, beverage can flip tops, fronts of greeting cards, eye glasses, hearing aids, cancelled stamps, S&H Green Stamp books or other stamp books. For more information or to mail your items, please contact Mrs. Josephine Clark at 938 Shelburne Rd, Apt. 2, South Burlington, VT 05403 or 802-735-3455 or Mrs. Alys Martinson at 1 Luneau Court, Northfield, NH 03276.



## Ministers Council of ABCVNH

### Annual Meeting Recap

The Ministers Council held a social for pastors and spouses at First Baptist Church, Rutland, the evening before the Annual Gathering. Those present enjoyed a time of fellowship, which included a hymn sing, stories by Steve “Rock Johnson” Hammond, and ice cream sundaes.

The Ministers Council held their annual meeting on May 1 and 2. The following officers were elected for 2 year terms: President: Rev. Stephen Hammond; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Rev. Karen Heavey; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President: Pastor Wayne Toutaint; Local Chapter Representative (to the National Ministers Council): Rev. Greg Vigne.

The proposed revised constitution and by-laws was voted on and approved with a couple of amendments. Once the amendments are made to the document, a link to the document will be posted on the Ministers Council page on the Region website.

A budget of \$133,376 was adopted. Treasurer, George Keeler, expressed concern about the amount of money that we will be withdrawing from investments this year as it greatly exceeds the amount of anticipated income. He noted that we will not be able to continue such withdrawals in the future if we want to keep investments at the board recommended level of \$500,000. The board will take that under advisement.

Kevin Van Brunt gave an update on the construction of the new Wixson cottage being built at Camp Sentinel. The construction costs are higher than anticipated due to a change of location. The council voted to increase funding to a total of \$90,000. It is anticipated that the cottage will be ready by the end of the summer. Ministers Council members will be able to use the cottage at no cost. Other pastors will also be able to use the cottage for a nominal fee.

### Fall Cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee

Registration information for the lunch cruise for pastors, spouses and families scheduled for Saturday, September 12 about the Mt. Washington on Lake Winnepesaukee will be available in June. Ministers Council members who joined by May 8 will be able to attend free. Those who join after that will be able to attend for \$25 each. Non-members can attend for \$38.

### New Visions: A Retirement Planning Workshop for ABC Ministerial Leaders and Spouses

Brought to you by *The Center for Career Development and Ministry* and *MMBB*.

**June 17, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at Trinity Baptist Church, 428 North Main Street, West Lebanon, NH.**

This is a life-planning opportunity for professional church leaders who are 55 & up, including recent retirees. What might “retirement” mean for you? How might you manage this new phase of life and make it yours?

Join us on June 17 for what we promise will be a fun and exciting adventure. Rev. Maggie Lewis, Executive Director of CCDM and pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashua, will be your facilitator. She will be joined by Rev. Melody Chartier, CFP and Member Service Manager at MMBB. Melody will offer private financial consultations and help you with your own personal plan.

Thanks to the generosity of MMBB, the cost to you for this workshop is only \$50 per couple or \$35 per individual (Ministers Council members pay \$40 or \$25 respectively).

To register, please contact Jessica Harrington, CCDM’s program manager at (781)329-2100 or [info@ccdmin.org](mailto:info@ccdmin.org). Any questions? Maggie can be reached at [exec@ccdmin.org](mailto:exec@ccdmin.org).

## National Ministers Council Retreat June 29 – July 1

All members of the Ministers Council are invited to attend the annual National Ministers Council Retreat on June 29-July 1, following the ABCUSA Mission Summit. This event is open to all ages 12 and up. The theme is “Let Go, Behold, Sing!” The retreat will be held at Unity Village Retreat and Conference Center near Kansas City. Sign up today. Go to [www.abc-usa.org/coordinatedcalendar/event-registration/](http://www.abc-usa.org/coordinatedcalendar/event-registration/) and scroll down to “Ministers Council Events.” For a registration tutorial, click the [Registration Guide](#).



## Time Away for Pastors

**CAMP SENTINEL:** Sentinel has dedicated a place of rest for Pastors, Missionaries and ministry leaders and their families. As you nourish others for God’s purpose and glory, it is important to take time and “be still”. There is no charge for this experience. Contact Pastor Kevin at [kevin@campsentinel.org](mailto:kevin@campsentinel.org) to schedule your time of rest and renewal.

**ALTON BAY CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE CENTER:** Pastors are invited to spend up to two nights at the Conference Center on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday free of charge (subject to availability). There are no meals included, just a comfortable room, quiet time for study and reflection, and the natural beauty of the Lakes Region of New Hampshire.

**FOREST HAVEN:** A place of healing hospitality and spiritual refreshment for pastors and other Christian workers. 29 Hogg Hill Road, Bradford NH; 603-938-2964; [Revrandy3795@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Revrandy3795@sbcglobal.net). Looking for a get-away place? Forest Haven is an apartment attached to the home of Randy & Jill Thompson, who have answered God’s call to provide this place for you. It is a faith-based ministry so there is no charge. Randy is Pastor at Immanuel Community Church in Concord. Visit their website at <http://foresthavennh.org>.

Check out the Ministers Council’s website for online resources, information about forming a “Together in Ministry” small group, a monthly newsletter, Women in Ministry information, ministry stories and more. Go to [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com). Also check out the Ministers Council’s Facebook page: [click here](#).

Rev. Stephen Hammond – President, Ministers Council of the ABC/VNH ([sjhammond@gwi.net](mailto:sjhammond@gwi.net))



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*The purpose of Sentinel is to create a welcoming environment for Christian relationship building and spiritual renewal. Within the stillness of God's creation and through the guidance of the staff, people are moved from discovery into authentic relationships with others and with Jesus Christ.*

Since 1949, Sentinel has been that place for thousands of children and adults to come and enjoy the refreshment of God’s powerful stillness. We strive to never turn a child away for the inability to pay. One of the favorite parts of my job is to match your missions support with a child in need. When parents call and explain they can’t afford to send their children due to financial reasons, together we make the experience happen for that child.

Through the support of friends, churches and first time visitors falling in love with this special place, Sentinel is growing. We have outgrown our current dining hall space. Last summer we purchased an event tent to go beside the dining hall for the overflow of campers. This year we made the decision to expand the dining hall and work has already begun, with the goal of having it open by the first week of camp. This expansion will allow us to grow into our current cabin capacity.

To pay for this expansion, we have a goal to raise \$120,000. To date we have raised \$40,629. Every amount will help us achieve the goal. Just last week, we received an anonymous envelope with 4 crumpled dollar bills in it. This envelope was a testimony of sacrificial service. Currently we have a dollar for dollar match, up to \$4000, until June 28<sup>th</sup>. Would you stand with us to support Sentinel’s future? Support and pledges may be made online at [www.campsentinel.org](http://www.campsentinel.org) or through the camp office.

Sentinel Ministries has touched thousands of lives over the past 65 years, all for God's purpose and Glory. Thank you for your dedication and consideration to support this life changing ministry.

In His Service,  
Rev. Kevin Van Brunt, Executive Director, Sentinel Ministries



### Homebuilding 101 *Matthew 7:24-28*

Summer is just around the corner! Have you signed up for summer camp yet? Summer program weeks are filling up, so sign up today at [www.campsentinel.org](http://www.campsentinel.org). Boys and Girls **overnight camp** for youth 7-15 is offered this summer during the following weeks: June 28, July 5 (almost full), 12, 19, & 26, and August 9. **Day Camp** is also offered each week, but the following weeks are already filled: July 5, 12, and 19. The first three weeks of **Staff in Training** are also filled.

This summer we will learn the importance of what it means to have a firm foundation in Christ, by using the example of building a house. We will "dig in" and explore the purpose for the foundation, windows, walls, electrical, plumbing and roof and understand how each relates to our personal faith journey with God.

Additional programs for teens, adults, and families are offered throughout the summer. Download a summer brochure at [www.campsentinel.org/downloads/campsentinel.pdf](http://www.campsentinel.org/downloads/campsentinel.pdf) or call the office at (603) 539-4839 and we would be happy to send one to you.

Sentinel employs 33 summer staff from 26 area churches. Staff either grow-up through our program or come with fresh new ideas to strengthen program. Staff are background and reference checked and attend staff trainings. Our staff retention rate is high. When staff serve for a summer, they want come back.

### Year Round Retreats *Rest. Renew. Reenergize.*

Sentinel offers over 600 acres and a mile of water frontage in which to explore God's Creation through:

- **Summer Camp:** for youth, adults and families
- Year-round **group retreats:** for churches, families, school and community groups
- **Pastor's Sanctuary:** a place for those in ministry to find rest (Psalm 46:10)
- **Community Programs:** adventure classes, school groups, youth group.
- Pines adult and family **camping:** 33 tent and RV sites

### Amazon Smile. Help send a youth to camp when you shop

Help support Sentinel's scholarship fund when you make Amazon purchases. Amazon has set up a way for .5% of your purchase to go to Camp Sentinel's scholarship campaign. There is no cost to you and you still pay the same price for items on Amazon. Amazon makes the donation above and beyond your purchase. Simply click this link, <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/20-3562406>, select Sentinel as the charity and shop as usual. Thank you for your support in helping children have a life changing Christian camp experience!

### Wish List

Without the support of individuals and churches Sentinel would not be able to operate. Thank you for your prayers and support. Here is our current wish list and projects for the upcoming 2015 season. If you would like to partner in ministry with us, our wish list may be found at: [www.campsentinel.org/support.php](http://www.campsentinel.org/support.php).

### Sentinel on Facebook and Instagram

Stay up to date with the most recent pictures, stories and news, join at [www.facebook.com/campsentinel](http://www.facebook.com/campsentinel) and [http://instagram.com/camp\\_sentinel](http://instagram.com/camp_sentinel).



## Institute for Learning

### **IFL Searches for New Dean**

Rev. Dr. Lori Wiley was called to be a full time pastor starting in June. She submitted her resignation as Dean of the Institute for Learning on May 14, 2015, effective immediately. The IFL Governing Board held a special meeting on May 15th to accept her resignation with recognition for all the hard work that she has put in as Dean, and for the many hours she spent helping the board to develop their new by-laws and handbook as they reorganized as part of the All Things New initiative.

The IFL remains committed to supporting free church principles as congregations call, license and ordain their own pastors by providing continuing education and training for pastors, church leaders and life-long learners. The summer courses will be postponed as we step back, develop temporary working relationships during the search process, and prepare to resume activities with our fall courses.

A search committee composed of Rev. Cliff Vendt, Rev. Abraham Gross and Rev. George Keeler was appointed to begin the search for a new dean. The board will also be meeting to review the job description for the dean and make appropriate revisions to create a better balance of work between the board and the dean. Any interested candidates or anyone wishing to make a nomination should contact the search committee through the IFL Governing Board email at [iflvtnh@gmail.com](mailto:iflvtnh@gmail.com).

Contact the Vice-Chair and Secretary of the Board, George Keeler, at [keelergl@gmail.com](mailto:keelergl@gmail.com) or 802-598-1093 for additional information.



## ABCUSA News

### **Interested in Global Missions and volunteer work?**

International Ministries sends out a weekly email about volunteers in global missions. Each email shares a volunteer missionary's experience, volunteer opportunities, and features a snapshot of one of IM's missionaries and how you can pray for him or her and their ministry. To receive the weekly emails, email IM at [volunteers@internationalministries.org](mailto:volunteers@internationalministries.org).



### **Mission Summit 2015**

ABC's Biennial Mission Summit will be returning ... June 26-28, 2015. We want to see you there! Join us in Overland Park, Kansas for the celebration – bigger, better than 2013!!! Additional events occur before and after the official Mission Summit dates - check the schedule to make sure you don't miss out. Register your church and yourself today at [www.americanbaptists2015.com](http://www.americanbaptists2015.com).

Check out the [Mission Summit video!](#)

### **Mission Summit – Women's Day**

On Friday, June 26, join AB women from around the country for Women's Day! Raise your voice in thanks and praise to God with your sisters in Christ. Be informed and inspired to be Christ's hands and feet in the world. See . . . what God has in store for you in Kansas this summer!

On Women's Day we'll be celebrating our heritage, our current ministry, and our hope for the future. We celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of American Baptist ministry with girls, and we begin a year-long celebration of our 65th anniversary as American Baptist Women's Ministries!

We're especially glad this year to have participants in the [G.I.R.L.S. Leadership Academy](#) with us for Women's Day. Our worship celebration will be enlivened by their presence.

Come for Women's Day, stay for Mission Summit! Women's Day tickets are \$50 per person. Price includes a sit-down plated lunch and program. Last day to register online is June 12, 2015.



Register online on the [American Baptist Churches Meeting Registration webpage](#) and click on “register now” next to Biennial Mission Summit 2015. *(If you're only attending Women's Day, under "Registration Type" select "Women's Day Only (Need Session)."* For more info, visit [www.abwministries.org/events](http://www.abwministries.org/events).

### **ABHMS seeks volunteers for rebuilding efforts continuing 10 years after Gulf Coast devastation**

This year marks the 10th anniversary of hurricanes Katrina and Rita's devastation of the Gulf Coast, and American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) will continue to serve “Til the Work is Done.”

Volunteer with ABHMS to rebuild homes, communities and lives August 2-8 in New Orleans' Lower 9<sup>th</sup> Ward.

Additional information is available by going [online](#) or contacting Victoria Goff, ABHMS national coordinator, Volunteer Ministries, at [victoria.goff@abhms.org](mailto:victoria.goff@abhms.org), 800-222-3872, x2449.

### **Check out what's happening throughout the ABCUSA.**

Go to [www.abc-usa.org](http://www.abc-usa.org) and check out “The Latest News”, “In the Spotlight”, Ministries, Resources, etc.

Go to [www.abhms.org](http://www.abhms.org) or “Like” ABHMS on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/ABHomeMission](http://www.facebook.com/ABHomeMission)) to find out what churches across our denomination are doing, to get information on Home missionaries and ministries, and AB Reads.

Go to [www.internationalministries.org](http://www.internationalministries.org) or “Like” IM on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/InternationalMinistries](http://www.facebook.com/InternationalMinistries)) to find out more about our ABC missionaries and their ministries and to get updates.

### **New Hampshire Council of Churches and New Hampshire Bible Society**

Go to the New Hampshire Council of Churches' website for information about upcoming events: <http://nhchurches.org/>. For information about the New Hampshire Bible Society, go to [www.biblenh.org](http://www.biblenh.org).

The Bible Society invites you to come by their bookstore, at 125 Airport Rd., Concord. They offer a variety of Bibles; study, large print, pew Bibles, in many different translations and languages to meet your needs. The Bibles are available at greatly reduced prices and often they are able to eliminate the cost altogether.

### **Upcoming Conferences**

#### **Holy Spirit Renewal Ministries Green Lake Conference**

**June 28 – July 2** at Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, WI. Theme: “Empowering the Church.” Ignite the Fire!!! Make plans NOW to attend the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Green Lake Holy Spirit Conference. It will revolutionize your life!! Great conference for all ages – for families and singles, for pastors and laypeople alike. Special events and ministry for youth, kids, and young adults.

Inspiring worship – God's presence is life-transforming! World-class speakers and workshops with: Leif Hetland, Scott Thompson, John Piippo, Clay Ford, Annie Dieselburg, and more! Go to [hsm.org](http://hsm.org) for all the information you'll need to know about speakers, registration and youth and kids ministries.

PASTORS SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE! First-time attending senior pastors and denominational leaders and their families may apply for up to \$400 scholarships for this conference. There is a special Pastors Track program designed to help pastors, leaders, and spouses network, learn, and grow. If you are interested and want to apply, email HSRM Chair Clayton Ford at [claytonford@sbcglobal.net](mailto:claytonford@sbcglobal.net).

#### **Rhythms of the Spirit: Nurturing a Transformed Life**

**August 3-7 at Camp Canonicus, Exeter, RI.** Sponsored by ABCUSA and ABC of Rhode Island. Speakers: Rev. Jeff Savage, Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins, Rene Colson Hudson, and Brad Berglund.

Do you struggle for balance between prayer and activity? Do you long for a quieter center; time for silence and reflection? This conference, offered in a retreat style, is a unique opportunity to explore and practice the transformed life together. Download registration from at [www.rhythmsofthespirit.com](http://www.rhythmsofthespirit.com) or call Colleen Tolhurst at 401-294-6318 x110.

## [The Big Problem for Small Businesses – Is Your Church Compliant?](#)

(Editor's Note: "A new tax rule in conjunction with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act may affect many churches that pay or reimburse individual health insurance premiums, and imposes daily fines beginning June 30 for those not in compliance." This issue was brought to my attention last month. We at the Region office do not have answers to this, but are publishing this article so that your church treasurer can be made aware of this and look into the issue to see if your church is compliant.)

Okay, so probably you already know this. Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), most small businesses do not need to provide health insurance to employees.

The actual cut-off? Employers with fewer than 50 employees don't under the law have to provide this fringe benefit.

But here's the rub which too many people don't understand: If a small business *does* provide health insurance for its employees—even if the small business isn't required to provide health insurance—the employer must provide insurance that complies with the Affordable Care Act.

If the employer provides insurance that doesn't comply, the penalty is \$100 per day per employee. That adds up to \$36,500 per year per employee.

I say this without exaggeration: These penalties are so catastrophic that surely they will kill many small businesses.

**Example:** If some struggling small business owner pays the individual health insurance premiums only for two single unmarried employees, but then has (say) three other married employees who get insurance through their spouses' employers, that's a non-compliant healthcare plan. And very possibly the business owner can be assessed \$36,500 in penalties for all five employees. That's \$182,500 in penalties.

**Example:** If some well-meaning small business owner feels he can't provide real health insurance and so provides \$200 or \$300 a month in cash to each of his ten employees so *they* can buy their own health insurance, again, that's a non-compliant healthcare plan. And very possibly the small business owner can be assessed \$36,500 in penalties for each of the ten employees. You can do the math too, of course, but I still want to write the number down here. That's \$365,000 in penalties.

### Why Small Businesses Must Act ASAP

The Obamacare penalties have been in the law since the beginning, by the way. But originally they weren't going to be effective until 2014.

And then, for small businesses, they actually didn't even matter until now because early this year, the IRS issued a notice saying that it would temporarily *not* assess the penalties (see [Notice 2015-17](#)).

But that period of temporary relief ends June 30, 2015.

With the exception of multiple-employee S corporations (which are still waiting for guidance and so are still being granted temporary relief), small business employers need to make sure they are not violating the market reform rules when the grace period ends on **June 30th, 2015**.

Before that date, small businesses need to get with the program and figure out a plan for health insurance that complies with the new market reform rules.

By our analysis, after June 30<sup>th</sup> small businesses only have three options when it comes to providing their employees' health insurance:

- They can purchase health insurance through the SHOP exchange
- They can hire a broker or insurance agent to find them an ACA-compliant group health plan outside of the exchange
- They can "go bare," by not offering any of their employees' health insurance at all

No matter how much small businesses or their employees might wail and gnash their teeth, there are no other options.

From an article by Evergreen Small Business. <http://evergreensmallbusiness.com/will-obamacare-penalties-kill-your-small-business/>.

## American Baptist Mission Support Update

### VERMONT & NEW HAMPSHIRE MISSION GIVING Year-to-Date thru April 2015

	2015	2014	Incr. (Decr.)	% Incr. (%Decr.)
<b>United Mission Basics</b>	<b>\$ 36,256</b>	<b>\$ 33,411</b>	<b>\$ 2,845</b>	<b>8.5%</b>
ABW Ministries Love Gift	\$ 492	\$ 1,387	\$ (895)	-64.5%
America for Christ Offering	\$ 10,892	\$ 11,816	\$ (924)	-7.8%
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering	\$ 2,178	\$ 9,791	\$ (7,613)	-77.8%
World Mission Offering	\$ 2,570	\$ 3,457	\$ (887)	-25.7%
Retired Ministers & Missionaries Offering	\$ 8,800	\$ 11,911	\$ (3,111)	-26.1%
Region Offering	\$ 5,889	\$ 1,160	\$ 4,729	407.7%
Institutional Support	\$ 360	\$ 359	\$ 1	0.3%
Specifics	\$ 3,411	\$ 7,191	\$ (3,780)	-52.6%
Targeted Giving	\$ 12,541	\$ 11,318	\$ 1,223	10.8%
<b>Total American Baptist Mission Support</b>	<b>\$ 83,389</b>	<b>\$ 91,801</b>	<b>\$ (8,412)</b>	<b>-9.2%</b>

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**Deadline for submissions for the July newsletter is Monday, June 15.**