



Winter Reflections



The weekend of March 7-10 will be fondly remembered as the “Blizzard of 08.” The ABC/Ohio Staff was at the region office for our monthly meeting as the snow began to fall. By 1:00 p.m. I announced an early dismissal and sent everyone home. Late Friday afternoon I shoveled the first four inches of snow off my driveway, and that was just the beginning. By Sunday we had shoveled nearly twenty (20) inches of snow. Fortunately we have good neighbors with snow blowers who pitched in. Nearly every church in Newark cancelled services so Linda and I simply worshipped at home and spent the day thankful for a warm home and a loving God who kept us safe. I am sure you have blizzard stories of your own to tell for years to come.

While the blizzard weekend was slow, the winter months have been busy for the American Baptist Churches of Ohio. We welcomed Rev. Mark Click to the staff as the Southwest Minister of Congregational Development. The churches in the Western, Dayton, Miami, and Clinton Associations are welcoming Mark to his new ministry. As you get to know Mark you will discover his passion for Christ and the ministry of the church. God is good!

Board Retreat – February 8-9:

The Board of Regional Ministries gathered at the region office in Granville, February 8-9 for its annual retreat. The theme for the

retreat was “Getting Connected.” The theme scripture came from John 15:5 that says *“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides (connects) with Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit.”*

The Board focused on getting connected with each other, with the ABC/Ohio vision, and with member churches in the region. Saturday was spent discussing strategies to reach out to ABC/Ohio churches that will result in meaningful connections. The key characteristics needed in connecting churches are:

- Meaningful relationships
- Relevant ministry opportunities
- Renewed church health and missional ministry opportunities
- Adequate financial support to maintain ABC/Ohio ministries

The Board members participated enthusiastically and look forward to 2008 with hope as ABC/Ohio serves you.

Staff Retreat – February 12-15:

The staff gathered with consultants from Design for Ministry™ for our annual ministry development retreat. Time was spent discussing coaching skills that staff will use in working with ABC/Ohio churches. Team building dynamics were also explored that will be used to strengthen the region staff as we work together.

The majority of the retreat time was spent further developing the **Rise Up & Build** church transformation vision. Each staff member led a working session on an aspect of the vision that will be strengthened. Transforming churches into healthy missional ministries is our passion and commitment to every ABC/Ohio church.

The staff left with a sense of hope and eagerness to return to the ministries God has called us. We are thankful for you and look forward to serving a wonderful God and the ABC/Ohio family.

Lawrence O. Swain, Executive Minister