

American Baptist Churches of **Nebraska**



Aug/Sept 2010

ABC/NE Date Data

ABMen's Conference Aug. 13-14 Moses Merrill

Mission & Finance Depts. 10:00 ABC/NE Board 1:00 August 28 FBC, Grand Island

ABC/NE FAMILY REUNION Sept. 17-19 Grand Island

> Fall Pastors' Seminar October 11-13 Moses Merrill

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The Nebraska Baptist State Convention

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Are You Ready for An Encouraging Word?



You Are Invited to the ABC/NE Family Reunion September 17-19, 2010 Holiday Inn—Locust Street—Grand Island

The ABC/NE Annual Convention, the *Family Reunion*, will be a great celebration faith and you are invited to participate! The event will be Sep. 17-19 in Grand Island. At the same time, youth with gather at Timberlake Ranch Camps for their convention. The children will have a VBS program

in Grand Island. On Sunday morning, all will gather together for a wonderful time of worship.

Enclosed with this issue of The Messenger, you will find registration forms. Please note the deadlines for registration and for room reservations.

EXTRAORDINARY SPEAKERS: Dr. C. Jeff Woods,
Associate General Secretary for ABC-USA, is keynote Cheryl Dudley
speaker. Jeff is a dynamic and respected author, speaker and leader. We
are also privileged have Dr. Cheryl F. Dudley, Senior Advisor to the CEO
of Church World Service. Cheryl is a poet and a former ABC
home missionary and the daughter of an ABC home missionary.



Jeff Woods

MUSIC — A number of different musicians will share their gifts throughout the convention, including a musical ensemble from Bacone College.

WORKSHOPS — Great "equipping sessions" include: What's With Today's Kids?; The Role of Sunday School in the 21st Century; Ministry With Persons At the End of Life; and What Would Jesus Ask?

HOTEL — The convention will be in a new location this year. The Holiday Inn Convention Center on Locust Street in Grand Island is rolling out the red carpet for ABC folks.

RETIREMENT RECOGNITION — Saturday evening will include the Retirement Recognition for Susan Gillies who has served ABC/NE as Executive Minister for 10 years.

Youth Convention
Timberlake Ranch Camp
Sept 17-19
Extraordinary
Awesome
Authentic

Registrations form inside this Messenger.

Family Reunion VBS
Special Program for Kids
Sept 17-18
Great Activities
Great Stories
A Great Time!

Registrations form inside this Messenger.

Bind Us Together With Love

In thinking of your church, can you sing, "We are one in the bond of love; We have joined our spirit with the Spirit of God, We are one in the bond of love."

Sometimes it is easy for us to take our church for granted. Do any of these thoughts go through your mind?

- My church will always be there when I need it.
- There will always be someone to teach Sunday School.
- There will always be someone to give a major financial gift when money gets tight.
- I've done my part, let someone else do what needs to be done.
- If the pastor is out of town, that's the Sunday I sleep in.
- If this pastor leaves, it's no problem to get another one.

In addition to taking our church for granted, some of us develop bad habits of judgment. Do any of these thoughts go through your mind?

- If the pastor preaches on stewardship, I'm not going that Sunday.
- If the music is old hymns, I don't like it.
- If the music is praise songs, I don't like it.
- Visitors are fine, just don't let them sit in my pew.
- I'm all in favor of change, just don't change anything that affects me.
- Worship is supposed to be exactly 60 minutes.
- The pastor didn't call on me in the hospital. He should have known I was there without my telling him.

What if we tried to express our thanks to God for our church by starting to fill our minds with thoughts like these?

- I'm going to encourage at least three people at church on Sunday.
- I'm going to give an extra financial gift just to show my love for Christ and the church.
- I'm going to see if it would be OK to bring flowers from my garden, or cookies for fellowship time, or offer to clean one room in the church
- I'm going to pray daily for my church and pastor.
- I'm going to really listen to the sermon and tell the pastor something that I think was God's word for me in that
- I'm going to be more mission minded . . . Praying for a missionary, helping at the food bank, some act of love and care to people in need.
- I'm going to become the person God created me to be.

"As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." (from Colossians 3:12-14)

Each of us has the power to think differently. Fill your minds with goodness, and goodness is what will come out.



From the Associate Executive Minister Dave Lundholm

PASSIONATE WORSHIP

When I was in college I always read ahead. I would begin reading my text books when I bought them, not waiting for the first day of class (I finished the text for one of my computer programming classes before the first day of class.) I always thought this was kind of eccentric but apparently lots of you have been following this practice.

The original plan of the Department of Church Vitality (DCV) was to focus on one practice (from the book Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations, by Robert Schnase) each year from 2009 through 2013. But from what I hear, many people in many churches have finished the whole book and are applying ALL the practices. So the original plan is "out the window."

What we will do, instead, in this and the next three Messengers is finish up consideration of the Five Practices. This time we will look at comments of some DCV members on chapter 2 "Passionate Worship."

If I were asked to rate the most important and inspirational events that happen at church, worship would be number 10 from the top. It did not occur to me that "People are searching for worship that is authentic, alive, creative and comprehensive, where they experience the life-changing presence of God in the

presence of others." (Schnase) challenges us to "imagine" what can happen where "the motivation for enhancing the quality of worship is not only about deepening our own faith but also about allowing God to use us and our congregations to offer hope and life and love to others." -- Dick Gee, FBC Grand Island

> I believe chapter 2 really put the "foot" in our business when it gave us a breakdown of what Passionate worship is not... One other thing I appreciate about this chapter, it is not gender nor racial bias(ed)

--Charlene Morris-Quarrels, King Solomon, Omaha

Worship must be a priority. All the music and scripture. children's story, sermons are all tied in together and people remember the message well when it (is) all put together. ... things need to be well done... -- Brian High, FBC Tekamah

I was always told that worship is the one thing we do on this side of heaven that prepares us for what we are going to do once we reach our heavenly destination. Worship (is) "those times we gather deliberately seeking to encounter God in Christ." We are to see beyond what people do to see with eyes of faith what God does. Worship . . . "bends hearts

(CONTINUED ON PAGE THREE)

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Fall Women's Retreat Features Rest and Renewal



The theme of the Fall Women's Spiritual Retreat is "Clay Jars." The theme scripture is 2 Corinthians 4:5-9

The retreat will be held at Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center, Oct 1-3.

Grace Wisthoff will lead the Bible Study. Grace is a mem-

ber of Second Baptist in Lincoln and formerly served on the staff of the ABC of the Dakotas.





Ideas from Nola Oberhelman ABC/NE Christian Education Consultant

Take five hints for filing teaching/learning materials:

- 1. Get a system going (hanging files, accordion, thin flat boxes).
- 2. Label categories, list them at the front of files and stick with them.
- 3. Handle acquisitions once--label with category and date, file it, or TOSS it out.
- 4. Date materials when used, accompany with any note, and return to file.
- 5. Review files regularly, date, tossing out-of-date and unused materials.

From the Associate Executive Passionate Worship continued



toward God as it stretches hands outward towards others"... what a beautiful picture of what we should all desire worship to be! One thing that spoke to me was how many of us enter into the worship service in an evaluative posture. We began to rate everything from the prelude to the prayer time... I think we live in such a "critical" society anymore that we have trouble seeing the positive in things... What would happen if our members took a vow to view the worship service from the joyful angle instead of the unpleasant angle? -- Shelly Knott, Arthur Baptist Church, Arthur

These members of the Church Vitality Department have shared their perspectives. We've considered Radical Hospitality and Passionate Worship. In the next three issues of *The Messenger* we'll look at the rest of the book.

If you haven't read Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations, by Robert Schnase, the Dept. of Church Vitality invites you to do so. If you have a worship committee, they might want to give special attention to the chapter on Passionate Worship. A Sunday School class might want to begin the fall with a study of the book.



"Thank you" to all ABC/NE churches for United Mission giving throughout the year!

Special Opportunity in October: — The World Mission Offering

Supporting ABC mission outside the USA.

"Henry" was a wounded child when he was rescued by Hope Unlimited, a residential ministry of restoration and education in Campinas, Brazil. Through the work of ABC's International Ministries missionaries Corenne and $\bar{\ }$ Philip Smith, "Henry" experienced life in a safe, caring Christian environment. His training included a paid internship, which led to employment. This transformed young man is now an industrial carpenter. He was able recently to " invite his sister and her family to leave their troubled situation and join him. Having experienced Jesus' healing power, he has become an agent of Christ's healing for his family.

Do You Have A Will?

It is an act of responsible Christian stewardship to plan for the distribution of your assets after your death.

Consider including a gift to your church and to the ABC/NE and/or Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center. This is a wonderful way to

invest in the future ministry of your church and the region.

Suggestion: It is important to indicate a percentage gift rather than a specific dollar amount.

If you want to talk with a region staff person about your plans, contact the region office 877-244-7339.

Trivia Answers

from page 8

- 1. C. The last Spring Mission Festival was in Norfolk. Next year it is in Holdrege.
- A. One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is the ABC offering that raises money for emergency relief. Church World Service (CWS) [NOT College World Series!] is the organization that sends hygiene and school kits to people devastated by disasters.
- 3. B. Moses Merrill died 7 years after coming to Nebraska as a missionary.
- D. We do not currently have an Evangelism Dept. We have a category called "Special Emphasis Departments." From time to time we can put our energy into one emphasis or another. This allows greater flexibility and focus.



GROWTH IDEAS!

Grow spiritually
Grow in mission impact
Grow in numbers

The local church can have a huge impact on the lives of members by helping members develop good financial management skills.

Two popular guides are Crown Ministries, and Dave Ramsey. There may be others. The region office can connect you to ABC/NE churches that have used each so that you can find out more.

A NEW GROWTH IDEA IN EACH ISSUE - ABC/NE MESSENGER

Churches Seeking Pastors

The number of ABC/NE churches seeking pastors at any one time runs from 4 to 12. Most of the time, there are about six.

Fairbury is in the search process.

Fremont continues their search.

Gibbon Baptist is in the search process.

 $\label{eq:mccook} \mbox{McCook is in the process of federating with another church.}$

Miracle Hills in Omaha is in the search process.

Oxford is in the search process.

Bridgeport completed their search, calling Rev. Jurdan Counts, a graduate of Ottawa University who has served as a United Methodist pastor and is returning to the ABC.

Scottsbluff called Rev. Gary Cole to be their pastor. Gary pastored in North Dakota and has served on the ABC-USA General Board.

WELCOME to Rev. Counts & Rev. Cole!

The Trip of a Lifetime for Your Pastor (or You!)

The next ABC-USA Biennial Convention will be held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, June 24-26, 2011.

celebrate...
GOD's Glory
GOD's Power
GOD's Way

- Reunite and fellowship with family and friends
- Be inspired by preachers, speakers, missionaries
- · Witness transforming ministries across ABC and our partners
- Share in the forming of the future of our denomination
- Experience God's movement with our ABC/Puerto Rico family
- Renew yourselves and revive your ministries

For more information: www.abc-usa.org

Update on The Penny Project

Nationally, the 162 churches participating in The Penny Project, sponsored by American Baptist Home Mission Societies, have collected more than three million pennies to raise awareness of child poverty and to support programs that serve these children and their families. I

The project, which launched a year ago, was inspired by 60,000 pennies gathered by youth of First Baptist Church, New London, N.H., to represent the number of children living in poverty in their state. The Penny Project's ultimate 14 million penny goal is based on the number of children whose lives are constrained by poverty across the United States and Puerto Rico.

American Baptist churches participating in the project are discovering that the lessons learned often extend beyond helping children. At Mount Zion Baptist Church in Madison, Wis., the penny jar used to collect coins offered a teachable moment for lessons about forgiveness and redemption. Visit the www.abhms.org home page for the full, inspiring story along with a podcast featuring a minister and a youth from the church talking about the experience.

Has your church signed on to this nationwide effort on behalf of children? With more than 11 million pennies still needed to reach the goal, this is your congregation's chance to be part of something really big, to make an impact and learn a lesson or two along the journey, too.

Sign-up with Dave Lundholm 308-389-4818 or area.minister.ne@charter.net



ABC/NE Churches have collected 325,378 pennies! There is still time for your church to join in.



Retired pastor Bob & Fayetta Molby admire the new Snack Shack at Moses Merrill. It was built as an Eagle Scout Project by their grandson, Nathan Steele.



Moses Merrill News

2849 Rd. 31 Bldg. 3, Linwood, NE 68036 (402) 666-5639 E-mail: campmerrill@nntc.net Web site: www.campmerrill.com

Children's Music & Drama Campers Stage Final Show for Parents & Friends



Some of the M.A.D. campers in the energetic and powerful final performance at Friendship Chapel in July.

From Camp Cat . . .

"Summertime, and the livin' is easy." Well, that's how the song goes. And for me it's true. Summer is great. Now, for the staff and volunteers, they just about run themselves ragged. Sometimes they are so tired, I don't even fuss if my supper is a little late. Have you let these folks know lately that you appreciate them? You know as well as I do, a few words of thanks can make a big difference. I'll trust you to take care of that.

I see some interesting things when I go out to patrol the forest. Some kind of badgers started making trouble out here but Bob and Ron took care of them. I think they just talked them into moving to Camp Luther.

I get along great with most of the animals but there are a few I could live without. I guess you feel that way about people, too. I did learn at Junior Camp this summer that you need to be nice to everybody—even the ones you could live without— God created them for a reason, just like He created you for a reason.

Whew! I get tired when I think too hard. Please come see us this fall.

Your friend, Camp Cat



Need a Project?

Calling everyone who loves Moses Merrill Ministries How about helping out with a PROJECT, or two or three?

PROJECT #!

BE A SHAREHOLDER — invest in projects at Moses Merrill. What are the benefits?? You get the satisfaction of knowing you made a difference in year-round ministry with children, youth and adults. Shareholders contribute money monthly to the support of this ministry.

PROJECT #2

BE A "HANDS-ON" VOLUNTEER — Volunteers make a commitment to come to camp once or twice per year (or more!) to help with needed tasks. There are many tasks from trimming trees to paperwork to construction to photography to washing dishes!

PROJECT #3

BE A CAMP AMBASSADOR — Ambassadors help tell the story of Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center. They promote MMCCC and encourage others to participate in camp programs and financially support the camp.

PROJECT #4

BE A PRAYER POWERHOUSE — Prayers are needed all the time! If you want e-mail prayer requests, let us know!

INTERESTED?? Contact MaryBeth Robertson, mrobertson@campmerrill.com or 402-666-5639

Are We Still Talking About Sewers ???



Well, we hope and pray that we are just about done talking about sewers! The project required by the state is nearly complete. The contractor has adjusted to the camp schedule so that as little ministry would be interrupted as possible. It is hoped that everything will be done by Labor Day.

Take Another Look At The Good Samaritan

From the ABC of West Virginia Newsletter By Dr. David L. Carrico, Executive Minister

Across our nation, the debate about immigration is heating up. That subject will be the next national battleground for our culture. It would be great if immigration was a simple argument over what is legal or illegal. The debate runs deep and wide into many issues, such as states' rights, human rights, the protection of property and racial profiling.

As Christians, we must go to the scriptures for guidance. The gospel of Luke asks the question, "Who is my neighbor?" What follows that question is the parable of the *Good Samaritan*. There are occasions when we may be too familiar with a Bible story, so it is good to revisit the event now and then for new insights.

The world had been a long time discovering who "the neighbor" is in life. In the past, if a stranger came to a village,

they would set their dogs on them. A "stranger" or "foreigner" meant an enemy, one not to be trusted. In this parable, Christ shows us the person with the spirit of concern was the one who understood how to be a good neighbor. The Samaritan

saw on the roadside not a Jew or a foreigner, but a suffering man. He asked no questions of his nationality or religious preferences; it was enough for him to know this was a fellow man who needed help. The Samaritan was a practical person who used practical means to help. He saw to the needs of a stranger with great compassion, and was a good neighbor.

The **Good Samaritan** displayed unselfishness and gave his help personally. He bound up the man's wounds with his own

hands and poured oil and wine in those wounds. It cost him time and the expense of a place of refuge for the injured. The help was given in a dangerous place along the roadside, but the Samaritan did not cross over to the other side of the road. He did something to make a difference. His help was personal, practical, time-consuming, unselfish and bold.

There may be those around us who are hungry, who have fallen by the roadside of life in

heathenism, who have lost their way with all the vices the world offers. What an opportunity we have to display the love of God! Maybe it's time for us to look around with the eyes of Jesus and be a *Good Samaritan*. We have many direct and indirect ways to help our neighbors. This month, be a neighbor to your neighbor, in Jesus' name.

It's All About Witnessing by Caring, Sharing, Helping, Giving



TODAY'S GOOD SAMARITAN

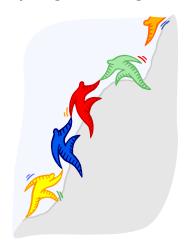
All of us know the story of the Good Samaritan. In fact, this is probably one of the best known stories world-wide. We've all read it as Jesus presented it, as an answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor?" It is a story of kindness and of love. Yet it can also be seen as a story of the appropriate attitude toward material possessions.

The robbers in the story live by the idea that "what's yours should be mine." They want what somebody else has and will use any means to get it.

The priest and the Levite in the story are governed by "what's mine is mine." They have worked hard for their possessions, and are not prepared to give them up.

The Samaritan believes "what's mine is yours as you need it." Even at great expense and inconvenience, he is willing to share what he has.

It's clear which of these attitudes Jesus endorsed. What have you shared today?



We are best when pulling together!

American Baptist churches in Nebraska are joined together as a region in a covenant partnership (ABC/NE) to:

Encourage, challenge, and empower one another to be transforming Christian communities in the world.

Mission Statement, ABC/NE

First Baptist Church of Chapman

First organized in 1885, First Baptist of Chapman has been an active church since that time. The congregation honored their 125th anniversary this year with a special day of celebration in April.

The church has enjoys a special relationship with FBC, Grand Island — perhaps because Chapman Pastor Beth Gregory is married to Grand Island Pastor Charles Gregory! The choirs of the two churches joined together for the presentation of their Christmas cantata last winter. (and is planning a joint appearance at this year's ABC/NE Family Reunion)

The congregation sold the parsonage and tithed the proceeds to Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center and Murrow Indian Children's Home in Muskogee, OK.

This summer the church had a fellowship time at Bader Park offering rolls and coffee to campers during the Sunday School time. They are trying to do this once a month.

The church building is next door to the elementary school. Church leaders are in conversation with the principal about a plan to offer homework help once a week this fall.

This summer, instead of VBS, the congregation hosted a day camp led by Nola Oberhelman, on Tuesdays every week for 6 weeks. A picnic in the park for families of students followed activities on the last day.

This is the time of year for planning for fall and winter activities and the church is busy doing so. They will have a joint Thanksgiving dinner with the Methodist church for the community. They are also in the planning stages for some fall and winter family night activities for the community.

First Baptist Church of Oxford

Located in the Republican River Valley of South Central Nebraska, First Baptist Church of Oxford was first organized in 1881. Early services were held in private homes. The original church building was dedicated in 1883. In 1890 the church was disbanded due to tension in the congregation, however it was reorganized one month later.

The current church building was built in 1971 with a classroom and gym addition completed in 2001. The large multipurpose facility has enabled the church to offer a variety of opportunities to the congregation and the community.

In 1985, the church organized a deeply appreciated community Preschool Program.

Following the successful ministry of David Hunt, the congregation is currently engaged in a pastoral search for a new Senior Pastor. ABC/NE Assoc. Executive Minister David Lundholm is assisting the Search Committee. Jason Dowell continues as Administrative Pastor.

Music is an important part of the life of the church.

This summer the church hosted the community Vacation Bible School with about 75 kids. Leadership for VBS rotates among the Oxford churches.

The church is involved in the life of the community in other ways, too. They have a community gathering at the church after the Turkey Days parade in June. Pie and ice cream is served at the church. Proceeds this year are going to a youth mission trip to the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico.

Members also enjoy taking part in community Christmas caroling and a hay rack ride during the Christmas Season

First Kachin Baptist Church of America, Omaha

Since coming to Omaha, the members of the First Kachin Baptist Church of America have made church life a priority. The church was formed and welcomed into the ABC/NE officially in 2002. The founding pastor of the church Rev. Gam Lahpai is active in region life, serving on the ABC/NE Board.

When the congregation first formed, it worshipped at Calvary Baptist in Omaha and built a close relationship with their hosts. After Calvary closed, the Kachin congregation moved to Parkside Baptist Church in Omaha. The two congregations share communion Sunday worship each month and work together in other ways as well.

The church is very supportive of Moses Merrill Camp & Conference Center and has hosted two national gatherings of Kachin people there. At the first of these gatherings, the traditional Kachin dance was done for the first time in North America. The dance was repeated at the second event. The church raised money to support the Building Bridges Campaign and was able to name one of the rooms in Calvary Lodge for missionary Ola Hanson. The church also has provided work teams at camp and has held church retreats, the most recent one was the July 4th weekend.

Ola Hanson was the ABC missionary from Nebraska who served the Kachin people in Burma for nearly 40 years, returning to the USA in the 1920s. He put the Kachin language into an alphabet, wrote the Kachin-English dictionary, translated the Bible into Kachin, and translated many hymns into Kachin. First Kachin Baptist with the cooperation of the Oakland, NE, cemetery, replaced the grave markers on Ola and Minnie Hanson's graves. The new

markers more fittingly honor the contribution of the Hansons to the spreading of the gospel around the world.

United Faith Community Church, Valley

This congregation has deep roots in three traditions. The First Baptist Church of Valley began as the First Scandinavian Baptist Church in 1878. It consolidated with the Second Swedish Baptist Church in 1917 and began to use the name First Baptist in 1919. It feder-

ated with First Presbyterian church of Valley (which had been organized in 1891) in 1943. The congregation had a long, fruitful ministry as the Baptist-Presbyterian Church of Valley. In 2005 they welcomed First Methodist into the family and now worship as United Faith Community Church. Rev. Carl Ratcliff serves as pastor.

The church is engaged in a number of projects. On Sunday evenings they are doing a community meal called "Loaves and Fishes Project." They began with \$140 seed money in March. They feed people in a tent on the church's "other property." So far they have fed 2500 people. They have received contributions to continue even from out of state. They still have their original \$140 available to continue the project.

Spring floods resulted in 150 housing units in the Valley area being condemned. The congregation is reaching out to assist families in need.

The church conducted a day camp in lieu of doing a week of Vacation Bible School. They were able to do this at no cost to the campers by using the funding normally used for VBS materials.

The church supports "Safe Water International Ministries" SWIM that provides chlorinator units for individuals and small villages to enable them to have clean drinking water. Some of the parts for the chlorinators are made by the church.

They have sent medical supplies to Haiti and care packages to the troops.

Christian Leadership Seminar In Kearney

Central Baptist Seminary and First Baptist of Kearney are offering a great opportunity designed for pastors, those desiring to become pastors, church leaders, and lay counselors. It will be led by three long term leaders in the state.

When: Thursday, October 14, 2010 Where: First Baptist Church of Kearney Time: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Cost: \$15, lunch is provided

Rev. Victor Karg, retired Pastor and respected Pastoral Counselor, founder of Family Crisis Retreats and the Lighthouse Counseling Center will lead a session on "Bringing spiritual help to families going through crises and conflicts".

Dr. Paul Welter, Seminary trained, Licensed Psychologist, and Life Transitions Counselor, will lead a session on "Working with the two major causes of couple turmoil-family of origin conflicts and contempt".

Rev. Stan Murdoch, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Kearney, will lead a session on "The importance of church history to the contemporary church and its leaders".

Please call First Baptist Church of Kearney to register or with questions (308) 234-2311 or email secretary@kearneyfirstbaptist.org or go to www.kearneyfirstbaptist.org

These presentations are not academic course offerings by Central, but rather are brief, practical seminars on situations faced every week by church workers. By registering early you will help us organize the day.

ABC of Nebraska Staff

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ABC/NE Trivia

- Where was the last ABC/NE Spring Mission Festival held?
 a. Lincoln, b. Chadron, c. Norfolk, d. Broken Bow
- What sets of initials have to do with ABC/NE emergency relief?
 - a. OGHS & CWS, b. OGHS & GRR, c. ABCOPAD & RMMO How long did Moses Merrill serve as a missionary in Ne-
- braska?
- a. 5 years, b. 7 years, c. 11 years, d. 14 years
 4. Which of the following is not a department of the ABC/NE Board?
 - a. Finance, b. Mission, c. Professional Ministry, d. Evangelism

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