
In this issue

- * **Committed to Connection**
by Dr. Charles Revis
 - * **Fall Area Celebrations**
 - * **All Region Ministers Conference**
 - * **Online at abcnw.org**
-

“I continue to believe that Jesus Christ, the Lord of His church, is at work through our association of American Baptist Churches. He wants to use us to change the spiritual landscape of the Northwest.”

the north *west* baptist

news from American Baptist Churches of the Northwest **Fall 2009**



Dr. Charles Revis is leading the ABCNW to grow healthy, mission-focused churches that multiply disciples in the Pacific Northwest. Visit his blog for updates and insights:
<http://missionnorthwest.blogspot.com>

online at abcnw.org

Region Survey (closes 9/16/09)
Sign Up Form for Email Updates
All Region Ministers Conference
Fall Area Celebrations
Calendar

ABCNW Region Office
601 S. Ross Point Road
Post Falls, ID 83854

208-777-2733
office@abcnw.org

Committed to Connection

Dr. Charles Revis, Executive Minister, ABC of the Northwest

Often I find myself explaining to people that we live in a “post-denominational age.” I mean by this that we live in a time when denominational brand loyalty is extremely low. Many Christians, when given the choice, attend a church without a denominational label. Statistical evidence demonstrates that over the last 20 years non-denominational churches have outpaced denominational churches in growth. More often than not denominational affiliation is seen as a weight dragging down the local church, rather than a boost to its effectiveness.

I know it’s swimming against the current to assert this, but I am one who stills believes in the value of denominational connection. I believe it, not in the sense that one denomination is superior to another, or that the independent churches have it all wrong. No, I believe it in the sense that the advantages of belonging to an association of like-minded churches far outweigh the disadvantages. I believe it because it’s healthier to be in a relationship of accountability and mutuality, than to be a satellite drifting along in solitude. I believe it because I value loyalty to those who came before me and on whose shoulders I stand. I believe it because as a Baptists we have always believed we can accomplish more for God’s Kingdom when we are working together rather than going it alone. All of these values find their source in Scripture and Baptist history. And, pragmatically they have proven to be effective in evangelizing a geographic area.

In this article I am arguing, without apology, for our connection together as an association of American Baptist Churches within the Northwest. It is a historic connection. It is a Christ-centered connection. It is a missional connection.

In terms of history, many of our churches would not exist apart from the efforts of the Baptists who established churches in this region from 1880 to

1930, the golden era of church planting among American Baptists in the Northwest. Some churches may spring in to existence without any denominational backing, but most do not. The values of loyalty and generativity suggest that it is important to give back to the source that first gave life, so that the process can continue and even expand.

In his epistles Paul expects the new Hellenistic churches to support the mother church in Jerusalem during its time of difficulty. He wrote, *“At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need.”* (2 Cor 8:14) Paul appeals to a mutuality that is rooted in their common history, but also in a shared future. There is the anticipation that at any given time each church will have a need that may be met by the assistance of the others. This cannot happen without mutual commitment. But, even more importantly, the expansion of the mission together calls for continual re-investing in the body that first gave life to each church. That’s why the healthiest church associations that are invested in church planting insist that all new churches give back to the association from their inception. They know that this is the only way to sustain a missional movement. Furthermore, giving back and remaining connected to one’s original tribe is a mark of high integrity.

In terms of Christ being the center, our commonality in Jesus Christ is a powerful glue that causes us to bond together. Baptists have historically formed associations through their shared love for Jesus Christ. This love for Jesus fuels their love for each other, which matures into mutual devotion. This outranks any other bond that can be formed. I think this is why Baptists have shied away from forging their connections through creedal statements or denominational hierarchies or structures. It is love for Christ that knits Baptist hearts together. Again, I find examples of this truth in the Bible. For example, Paul demonstrated great love for the Philippians. He described his relationship with them as a *“partnership in the Gospel”* and a *“sharing in God’s grace with me.”* He wrote: *“I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now...It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.”* (Phil 1:5,7-8) It seems to me that Paul’s example of devotion should be the rule, not the exception, between individual followers of Jesus and between churches. Our devotion to Christ leads us to be devoted

to one another. This devotion does not stop at the boundaries of one particular church, but should extend from church to church.

Turning to our missional connection, missions is at the heart of American Baptist life. Study the missionary activities of the first Baptist association in America, the Philadelphia Baptist association. Examine the first overseas efforts, such as that of Adoniram Judson. Explore the history of Baptist missions in the Northwest. One will discover that Baptists, when they are that their best, unite together to expand the reach of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They themselves have been so transformed by Jesus’ love and grace that they want all to come to know this same wonderful Savior. By working together, Baptists have discovered that not only do they muster more resources for the mission, they work smarter. Again, this cooperation is found in the Scriptures. Paul commends his co-laborers in just about every epistle he wrote. These were partners, both men and women, who served alongside him in expanding the church, growing the church, and keeping the church healthy in order that it would capture the world with its life-changing message.

So, how does this play out in our life together here in the Northwest during this “post-denominational age”? I would call on all of our churches, pastors and leaders to commit anew to making connection with the sister churches of this Region. This may be as simple as calling up a nearby church and asking if there are needs in that congregation that can be prayed for. It may include making an extra effort to show up at an Area or Region event with a core group who are determined to learn and fellowship with other Baptists. It includes supporting the Region financially through missions giving. It may be a willingness to serve in one of several roles that help keep our Areas and Region working. As a pastor it means engaging in a Leadership Learning Community (LLC). It may mean joining with other churches to support a new church plant. All of these require time, sacrifice and commitment. But, the end justifies the extra effort expended. Which end? Healthier, mission-focused churches intent on reaching the Northwest for Jesus Christ.

I continue to believe that Jesus Christ, the Lord of His church, is at work through our association of American Baptist Churches. He wants to use us to change the spiritual landscape of the Northwest. I am confident that this is what our churches want, too. May we link arms together, across our distant geography, that we may grow strong together in the Lord, for His glory alone, and for the expansion of the Gospel in the Northwest.

Fall Area Celebrations abcnw.org/connection/area-celebrations

Big Sky—September 18-20 **Passing on the Flame: Living and Leaving a Godly Legacy**

Emmanuel Baptist Church * 602 Main Street * Roundup, MT 59072

Speaker: Dane Aaker Senior Pastor of Centerpoint Church in Colton, California

Big Sky Area has planned a jam-packed event with three messages by Dane Aaker (see IMA's info for biographical information). Also, Patti Duckworth and Charles Revis will be speaking. Participants may also choose from the following workshops:

- ◆ Meetings that Matter — Rev. Patti Duckworth
- ◆ MOPS International — Mrs. Jennifer Iverson
- ◆ Making Sense of Today's Economy in Your Church — Mr. Paul Weers, MMBB Representative
- ◆ Impacting your Community By Reaching Its Youth — Mrs. Trish Christensen
- ◆ Writing Your Legacy for Future Generations — Mrs. Lynn Schrag
- ◆ The Bible Story Experience — Mrs. Jana Mertons



Far West / North Puget Sound—October 10 **Healthy Church—Fruitful Church**

First Baptist Church * 22415 19th Ave. South * Des Moines, WA 98198

Speaker: David T. Olson Director of the American Church Research Project

and Director of Church Planting for the Evangelical Covenant Church. He is a graduate of Crown College and Bethel Seminary. He has pastored, planted, and supervised churches in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Florida, and California.

David's new book, *The American Church in Crisis*, is based on groundbreaking research from a database of over 200,000 churches, showing the problems as well as the potential of the American church, by confirming hunches, exploding myths, and offering a clear path to a brighter future.

David and his wife, Shelly, have four children and live in the Minneapolis area.



Intermountain—October 17 **21st Century Church Ministry**

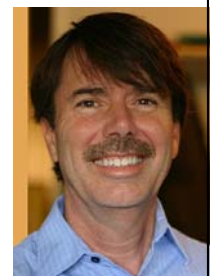
First Baptist Church * 910 Shoshone St. E. * Twin Falls, ID 83301

Speaker: Dane Aaker Senior Pastor of Centerpoint Church in Colton, California

Dane Aaker has been at Centerpoint Church for 25 years. During that time the church has turned around from being a declining congregation and has experienced significant growth by reaching young, previously unchurched people. The median age of attendees at Centerpoint is between 20 and 30 years of age. The church meets in its original building which is 120 years old. There are five Sunday services held each week which reach over 1,000 people.

Dane received his Bachelor's degree in Business from San Jose State University, his Master of Divinity from Talbot Theological Seminary, and a Doctor of Ministry from Fuller Theological Seminary. Dane has been married to his wife Karen for over 25 years and has two adult children.

Dane will also be speaking at the Big Sky Area Celebration September 18-20 in Roundup, Montana.



Inland Northwest —October 23-24

Ross Point Camp * 820 S. Ross Point Rd. * Post Falls, ID 83854

Speaker: Dr. Michael Quicke C.W. Koller Professor of Preaching & Communication

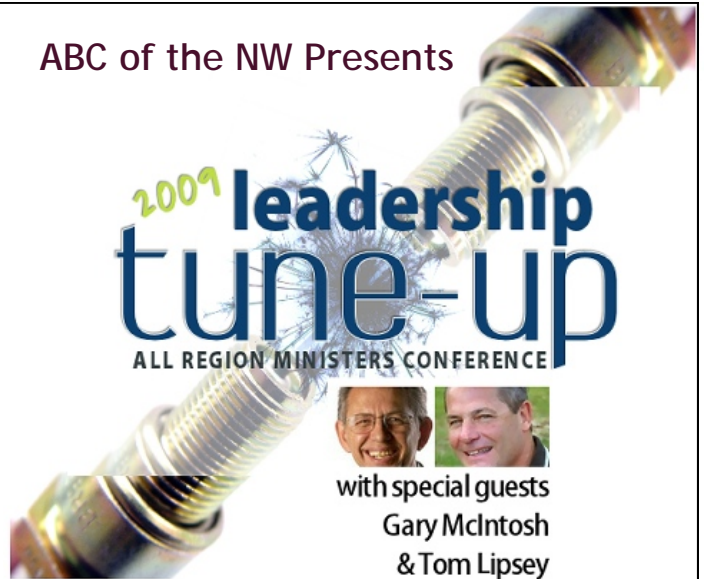
Since arriving in the US Michael Quicke has thrown himself into his vision 'to help inspire a new generation of preachers who will set our churches on fire.' At Northern Seminary he has designed several masters courses in preaching and communication, as well as new courses for the Northern Doctor of Ministry program. He has written the books *360 Degree Preaching* and *360 Degree Leadership*. Michael and his wife of 40 years, Carol, have two adult sons.



Dr. Gary McIntosh, professor, consultant, author and speaker, is President of the *Church Growth Network* and Professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University in La Mirada, CA. Dr. McIntosh, has over 22 years of experience in the field of church growth consultation, coaching of church leaders, and workshop presentations. More than 500 churches in 55 different denominations have been assessed through his ministry. He has authored 13 books on church growth and six manuals on pastoral ministry. Two of these have been on the ABCNW LLC reading list, *Church That Works* and *Beyond the First Visit*. He is also the editor of *Church Growth Network* and the *Journal of American Church Growth*.

Tom Lipsey is the pastor of Montgomery Community Baptist Church, Cincinnati, OH, a member of American Baptist Churches Ohio. Established in 1942, MCC has grown to an average attendance of over 1600 in three weekend worship services. They have twice expanded their facilities to accommodate the growth in people and programming, including adding an Activities Center and Preschool wing in 1995 and a new Sanctuary and Christian Education wing in 1998.

ABC of the NW Presents



with special guests
Gary McIntosh
& Tom Lipsey

September 28-30 at Ross Point Camp

Brochure and registration forms available online at
abcnw.org/leadership/all-region-ministers-conference
or
from the Region Office
208-777-2733
office@abcnw.org

american baptist churches of the
northwest

growing healthy, mission-focused churches that multiply disciples

601 S. Ross Point Road, Post Falls, ID 83854