



The Northwest Baptist

May 2007



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Expanding the Kingdom through New Churches

Dr. Charles Revis, Executive Minister

One of the most important tasks of leadership is to assist an organization in determining its purpose and vision, and then to lead the organization in selecting strategies and tactics to bring the vision to reality.

At the ABCNW 2002 Biennial Convention the churches of the Region established Four Landmarks they wanted to pursue together. These Landmarks function as the four broad goals of the Region. They are Communication, Leadership, Discipleship and New Churches. Each Landmark is fleshed out with a simple goal statement. For example, the Discipleship landmark states: *75% of the Region's churches will have defined a disciple-making process and will be implementing that process in their church.*

The Church Planting Landmark stipulates that we will *increase the number of church plants to eight every three years*. This was a tall order for a Region which was in the midst of a split and struggling for its existence. The Region was in financial freefall and many churches

had withdrawn from Region involvement. Add in the fact that many churches had become so inward focus they had little motivation to plant churches. (Planting new churches is usually the last thing on the mind of a survival focused church, although getting involved in a new church project is an excellent way to shift the focus in an outward direction.)

In spite of the dismal prospects for church planting the folks of this Region did the right thing in establishing this audacious goal of New Church Planting. I believe the original impetus for this commitment to planting new churches springs from biblical convictions. The Region expressed this in its Purpose Statement which was affirmed at the same 2002 convention:

- American Baptist Churches of the Northwest hold in common as Essential
- The grace of God, the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit;
 - The authority of the Scripture;
 - The church of the Lord Jesus Christ;

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- And the Great Commandment (Mark 12:29-31)
- And the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20)

There is an important connection between Jesus' marching orders in the Great Commission and concentrating resources in the planting of new churches. Jesus' instruction couldn't be more focused. Our Master didn't offer us a menu from which we're free to choose whatever we like, and ignore the rest. No, in His last words Jesus gave a primary mandate, "Go and make disciples, starting in your immediate vicinity and expanding outward from there."

Christians are to be consumed with making disciples. There is nothing more important in Jesus' eyes for a church to do than to make disciples. It's Job Number One! So, what's the connection between making disciples and new church planting?

It's quite simple: new churches are the most effective at reaching the lost and developing them into fully devoted followers. If we have a passion for making disciples then it would be logical for us to have a passion for planting new churches since they are so effective at outreach and discipleship.

Recent statistical findings bears this out:

- Churches under 3 years of age reach an average of 10 people per year for every 100 members.
- Churches 3 to 15 years of age reach an average of 5 people per year for every 100 members.
- Churches over 15 years of age reach an average of 3 people per year for every 100 members.

In other words, the younger the church the more likely it will experience a high conversion to membership ratio. On the other hand, the older the church the more likely this ratio will be lower. New churches are simply more effective in reaching the lost.

But, you might say, "*Yes, but aren't there plenty of churches in America already?*" After all, if someone wants to attend church there seem to be plenty to go around.

For as many churches as there are in America, the truth is, there are less churches per capita in America today than at any time in the nation's history. Consider these statistics:

- In 1900 there were 28 churches for every 10,000 Americans.
- In 1950 there were 17 churches for every 10,000 Americans.
- In 2000 there were 12 churches for every 10,000 Americans.
- In 2004 there were 11 churches for every 10,000 Americans.

Not only are there fewer churches, most established churches are not growing. Only 14% of the churches in America are growing mostly through transfer growth. Only 2% of the churches in America are growing because they are actually baptizing new believers.

American Baptist Churches in the Northwest were some of the first churches to be planted in this part of the country. The missionary zeal and evangelistic fervor of church leaders in the late 19th century resulted in a significant expansion of new churches. Over time this missionary zeal waned, and the result, fewer ABC churches exist in the northwest today than 50 years ago, or even 25 years ago.

I want to see this trend reversed! I believe the Lord wants to build His church, and that includes His church throughout the northwest. To put it another way, I would love to be the Walgreens of Baptist churches in the northwest. Not because we are trying to get a bunch of Baptists to come

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to our churches. (A foolish notion, because our market isn't other Baptists.) But, because there are so many unchurched people in our Region, and we need more new churches to reach them. This is a kingdom endeavor!

The ideal way to plant new churches is to employ an "Extended Family Model". That is, a group of churches work together to plant a church. Two churches can act as the "mother and father" of the new church by taking the lead in providing funding and personnel for the project. Sister and brother churches pitch in as well. They offer funding and people resources, too, but in smaller proportions. Aunt and uncle churches join in with the project as well. Essentially, this was the method used by the Far West Area churches when they planted the Union Community Church ten miles to the west of Belfair, WA four years ago.

My expectation is that pastors who are connected together through the Leadership Learning Communities (LLC) will eventually develop a plan to lead their churches to sponsor a new church plant in their area. This is a significant portion of the "dreaming" aspect of each LLC meeting. Until these plans mature the Region is initiating new church planting in various parts of the Northwest as we locate church planters, and as we raise funds for the work.

Presently, we have four active new church plants that are underway. Each of these have emerged in a unique way:

Comunidad Cristiana El Camino in Pasco, WA.

This is a project sponsored by Yakima Valley Hispanic Ministries Committee. The planting pastor is Guadalupe Vasquez. Guadalupe is an experienced church planter who has a keen passion for the lost and for growing the church. He is making significant progress in the new plant.



Guadalupe Vasquez

Shalom Church in Wenatchee, WA. Planted by Sam Detwiler with limited start up assistance from the Inland Northwest Area. Sam is active in his local LLC and reports that already they have brought many people to Christ through the witness and ministry of the new church. For more information check out www.wenatcheeshalom.com.



Sam Detwiler

New Churches (Continued from page 3)

Yellowstone Church in Billings, MT. This is a project of the Big Sky Area Church Planting Committee. The committee called Mike Iverson to be the church planter in September 2005. Mike was recommended to be a church planter from the TeAmerica Assessment Center in Green Lake. His coach is Dr. Gary Rorhmyer, a leader in new church planting. After conducting children's outreaches, preview services and Bible Studies the church is now meeting every Sunday at the Billings West High School. Their vision is "extraordinary church for ordinary people." For more information go to their web site at www.yellowstonechurch.org.



Mike Iverson

Grace Pointe Church in Missoula, MT. The Bitterroot Valley has experienced significant population growth over the last ten years. Since the unchurched population stands at 77% this is an area in need of new churches just to keep pace. Alan Coler is the church planting pastor. This is a joint project between ABCNW and Growing Healthy Churches (formerly ABCW). Much of the funds for the project were raised privately. Oversight of the project is conducted jointly between ABCNW and GHC. Alan is an experienced church planter having planted and pastored a church in McCall, ID.



Alan and Debra Coler

I rejoice that the Lord is at work through these four new churches. I encourage you to become involved in new church planting as well. How?

- Pray daily for the pastors and new churches that are listed in this article.
- Dream of the possibility that your church will get involved in new church planting.
- Give to ABCNW new church planting out of your missions dollars. You can designate your gifts to be used anywhere in the Region, or you can restrict your gift for use only in your Area. You can also give in support of any of the four new churches listed here.
- Pray that the Lord will raise up new leaders called to plant churches. The most important element in planting new churches is the church planting pastor.

All Region Ministers Conference, Ross Point Camp, September 24-25, 2007

Pastors from across the Region are invited to attend the annual ministers conference for fellowship, encouragement, worship and great leadership training at Ross Point Camp in Post Falls, ID September 24-25, 2007. Rick Rusaw and Duncan Davidson are this year's speakers.

Rick Rusaw has served as Senior Minister at LifeBridge Christian Church, Longmont, CO since 1991. During his leadership, LifeBridge has become a leader in the Externally Focused Church movement, engaging over 1,000 people in community service by partnering with public schools, non-profits, city, county and state agencies. Rick desires for the church to be relevant to culture while maintaining high integrity with the Gospel message. He is passionate about people seeing the everyday intersections in life as opportunities to serve and share gracefully. Since 1991, LifeBridge has grown from 700 to 3,300, including two multi-site church ministries. He is co-author of *The Externally Focused Church* and *Living a Life on Loan*, and *60 Simple Secrets Every Pastor Should Know*.



Duncan Davidson is the pastor of Rock Harbor Christian Fellowship in Morro Bay, CA. When Duncan was called to the congregation in 2000 it's name was Calvary Baptist Church. Unfortunately, it had garnered a poor reputation with the surrounding community as a church with a history of internal conflicts. Struggling to exist Duncan led the church's leadership to face their current reality: Without radical change there would be little hope that the church would survive another two years. After closing down the church, holding no services for nine months, and embarking on a quest to seek God's future for the congregation, the church was re-launched in the spring of 2003. Today the church is growing, reaching many people for Christ and is starting multi-site venues in order to have a greater impact for the Kingdom of God.



The format of the minister's conference will be the same as in past years starting at 1:00 PM on Monday, Sept 24 and concluding late on Tuesday evening, Sept 25. The camp will provide an early breakfast on Wed morning, Sept 26 before people travel home. Conference cost and registration forms are available through the Region office or the web site.

Search Committee Prayer Needs

Please pray for these Church Search Committees as they continue in the process of searching for their next pastor:

FBC Twin Falls, ID
 Belfair Community Baptist Church, Belfair, WA
 FBC Anacortes, WA
 FBC Bellingham, WA
 FBC Renton, WA
 Big Sky Church, Froid, MT
 Community Baptist Church, Kittitas, WA
 Clearfield Community Church, Clearfield, UT
 Community Baptist Church, Osburn, ID
 Vida Community Church, Vida, MT
 FBC Buena, WA

FBC Pocatello and Pastor Bill McCready Win NEW LIFE 2010 Award

The Board of National Ministries will present the 2007 NEW LIFE Award to First Baptist Church of Pocatello, ID and Pastor Bill McCready during the American Baptist Biennial Meeting in Washington, DC this summer. The NEW LIFE Award has been established to recognize excellence in ministry that has led to congregational transformation through church planting, evangelism, or caring ministries. NM board members made their selection from nominations that were submitted by American Baptist clergy and laity.

FBC Pocatello has experienced a major transformation over the last ten years. When Pastor McCready arrived at the church ten years ago worship attendance averaged eighty. Today average attendance exceeds 320. No longer in decline the church body is composed of all ages with large numbers of children, youth, college students and young families in attendance on Sunday mornings. The praise band leads in worship at each of the packed out morning services. The church engages in

many projects that assist in their efforts to reach their community. Examples include handing out water bottles at the July 4th parade. The praise band plays in the July 4th parade. The church participates in an annual downtown art show. The Improv Team and the pastor host a comedy night at a local night spot on New Years Eve. This summer they will take their VBS to local parks. These efforts to extend the Good News of Jesus Christ has resulted in numerous baptisms and steady growth. The congregation has purchased land for eventual relocation and is considering moving in a multi-site direction.

The New Life Award will be presented during an evening plenary session at the 2007 Biennial Meeting held June 30 through July 2.



Prayer Summit Update and Prayer Summit Leadership Training

A significant number of Intermountain Area pastors gathered a year ago for an area-wide prayer summit at Cathedral Pines. The pastors were so moved by this deeply spiritual and renewing event that they sponsored a Region-wide Prayer Summit that transpired April 16-19, 2007 at Ross Point Camp. Twenty-one people attended the summit facilitated by Dennis Fuqua, the national director for International Renewal Ministries, a prayer summit ministry founded by Dr. Joe Aldrich.

As one would expect the event focused on prayer, lots of prayer. Dennis led participants to draw close to the Lord Jesus Christ before moving into intercessory prayers. Such concentrated focus on Jesus Christ in a corporate gathering established an environment for each person to be renewed in their faith and calling before the Lord of the Church. One of the participants wrote the following in gratitude for the event, "When I first heard about the Prayer Summit, I knew that I HAD to attend. The Lord impressed that upon me right away. It was well worth the time. I have not attended any other Region event that brought such a feeling of unity in the Spirit as the Prayer Summit did. I saw the presence of Christ in all of the participants. I was in awe of His Presence."

Dennis Fuqua invites all pastors from the ABC of the Northwest to participate in "Reaching the Summit" July 24-26, 2007 in Portland, OR. This particular prayer gathering will include training for those who desire to lead prayer summits. The promotional material for the event explains "it is a Prayer Summit Plus, in that the leadership will give explanations, answer questions, supply resources and address specific situations. It will be a 'show and tell' experience with some of the most experienced Prayer Summit facilitators." The primary purpose is to equip Prayer Summit leaders for local settings. As a result of the training pastors will then have the tools to lead their congregation to experience a Prayer Summit. They will also be able to lead Prayer Summits for other ABCNW congregations. To encourage our pastors to attend this training event the Region is offering ten \$100 scholarships on a first come basis. For more information please contact the Region Office. For additional information and to register for the event check the home page of International Renewal Ministries at www.strategicrenewal.com

Thank you for supporting mission
in the United States and Puerto Rico

AMERICA FOR CHRIST OFFERING

As of April 30th the American Baptist Churches of the Northwest have contributed \$25,877 to the America for Christ Offering. One-third of this offering supports the mission of the Region. Thank you for your generous support.



American Baptist Churches USA 2007 Biennial Meeting/Centennial Celebration

will be held at the Convention Center,
Washington DC, June 29—July 2, 2007.

The theme is "Arise and Shine".

Information and registration online at: abc-usa.org or
call the ABC/NW office, 208.777.2733



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"Fanning the Flame" 2008 National ABC Pastors Conference

The Executive Ministers of ABC of the Dakotas, ABC of Indiana/Kentucky, ABC Great Rivers Region, ABC Maine, ABC Michigan, ABC New Jersey, ABC of the Northwest, ABC Ohio, ABC Pennsylvania and Delaware, Cleveland Baptist Association, Growing Healthy Churches, and the West Virginia Baptist Convention are announcing sponsorship of a 2008 National Pastors Conference for American Baptist Pastors.

Pastors who yearn for congregational health and fruitful mission will gather at the American Baptist Assembly at Green Lake from April 22-25, 2008 (Tuesday dinner through Friday breakfast) for the "Fanning the Flame" 2008 National Pastors Conference. The conference will feature inspiring worship, workshops taught by cutting-edge practitioners, and unscripted conversations with

national leaders and pastors. Although training and encouraging pastors is a primary focus of this event, all clergy and lay leaders who yearn for congregational spiritual renewal are welcome! CEU credits will be available.

Rev. Roy Medley, General Secretary of the ABC/USA, has confirmed that he will be at this event along with Rev. Kate Harvey, ABC/USA National Ministers Council Executive Director, to participate as well.

Costs: \$279 per person double occupancy; \$399 single occupancy. This includes conference registrations, meals and housing--but not transportation to and from the conference. Further information and registration materials will be available in June 2007.

Growing Healthy, Mission-Focused Churches that Reproduce Disciples

Leadership • Discipleship • New Church Planting • Connection