

MINISTRY CHALLENGES BEING ADDRESSED BY PARTICIPATING PARTNERS IN FIRST ROUND OF TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT—WINTER/SPRING 2012

Regions and Associations—21 Participating

Evergreen Baptist Association—Marcia J. Patton

- ***Creating Community across Geography/Cultures that Makes a Difference:*** We need deeper relationships, more diverse relationships that results in the inclusion of all people/persons. We have been working on this and making progress, but we need to stay concerned and continue to work on this in keeping our focus. We added to this remembering that one of those “cultures” we need to be aware of is the youth culture.
 - ***Adaptive Challenge:*** As American Baptists who believe in soul freedom and autonomy of the local church, the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches (EBA) is blessed with many diversities that include, but are not limited to geography, race, gender, culture, age and theology. As such, our challenge is to name these diversities, learn from them, and live in them in order to commune at Christ’s common table where there will always be room for more people. In doing so, we could offer the gift of Christian witness to other churches, denominations and communities while we also prepare a legacy for future generations of the Evergreen Association of American Baptist Churches.
- ***Church Leadership:***
 - ***Adaptive Challenge:*** Our ministry challenge is to recognize, seek, embrace, and implement adaptive church leadership in our changing culture. We recognize the need for not only ministers to embrace adaptive leadership, but also for the lay leadership and congregation as a whole to embrace adaptive leadership in our rapidly, radically changing culture. We recognize the following cultural shifts that directly affect our churches:
 - New look of commitment
 - New look/expressions of community
 - New ministry assumptions and needs
 - Potential Adaptive Leadership
- ***Church Growth:***
 - ***Adaptive Challenge:*** We are pastors with good education and good experience and most of all a love of God, God’s church and the mission of God for the world. US churches in general are declining and there doesn’t seem to be ways to stop it. We acknowledge that God is at work in the world and we want to be aware that God is at work in a variety of different ways. Although all of our churches are doing okay at the moment, we are aware that reality is at all times fragile and

seems even more apt to be in the foreseeable future if we do not lead differently than we have been taught and indeed done in the past. One of us put it this way, “I am well taught to lead my father’s generation, I’m not sure what to do for even my generation and the one’s that follow.” On the other hand, we have a commitment to the church and believe our society needs the church to be strong and relevant in new and different ways today. Indeed we believe that God calls us to that end. We seek the Spirit to guide our steps and understanding.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC Metro Chicago—Larry L. Greenfield

- **The Associational Principle Retrieved and Recast:** Out of our Baptist heritage, how do we retrieve and recast the "associational principle" in light of the enduring and changing character, composition, dynamics of our metropolitan region and the ecclesial, civic, and cultural/societal challenges of the region--that is, how do we freely revitalize the truths and benefits of mutuality (with God and one another in churches and society) with a strong sense of faithfulness.
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** Though called together as disciples of Jesus and empowered by the Spirit to be heralds of God’s promised reign of love, wisdom, justice, and peace, *we as an association of American Baptists centered in the Chicago metropolitan area have not done well in becoming the associational community we must be in order to follow our calling and to minister to the changing realities we face:*
 - (1) the cultural disestablishment of Christianity and the dislocation of our churches from the lives of urban/suburban/exurban individuals, families, neighborhoods and municipalities;
 - (2) our seduction by secular models of success for individuals and families, organizations and institutions, communities and governments, which are strikingly contrary to the Gospel and which result in functional atheism and even idolatry;
 - (3) the constant immunization of our minds, bodies, and spirits by agents of “the powers and principalities” against the provocation and invitation of God in Word and Spirit to become lively expressions of the Beloved Community; and
 - (4) the resulting dissipation of the new vibrancy (soul force) we need *together as an association* for cultivating a vital Christian faith within congregations of diverse size and character that leads to compassion and reconciliation, justice and peace, for the poor, for immigrants and refugees, for the currently and formerly imprisoned and their families, and for the land upon which we dwell.

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;

Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of Connecticut—Judy Allbee

- **Viable Camp:** Change is acceptable as long as it does not affect me. In the American Baptist Churches of Connecticut, change about the way in which our Camp Wightman is used and run is particularly difficult. Individuals, families and congregations have a great love and devotion to the camp. It made a significant difference in our younger lives. We want others to have the same meaningful experience we had. At the same time successful camping ministry has undergone significant changes in the last two decades. Our camp has been on a downward trend both in camp usage (summer and winter) and financially. We need help in thinking through a new way of being camp so that it is utilized to its fullest and is fiscally viable. We need to bring both the camp and our mindset about camp into the 21st century.
 - In process with the work.
- **Viable Congregations:** Many of churches struggle with the overwhelming and increasing costs of maintaining cumbersome and energy consuming structures. The high cost of oil, electricity, insurance and maintenance of their buildings is eating up valuable resources, assets, and time. Unfortunately, doing ministry is taking second place to keeping the roof over our heads. We need to find creative ways for these church leaders to do the important ministry so needed in their community without being consumed by the overwhelming physical plant needs.
 - Finished three meetings and will wrap up in mid-June.

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

ABC of the Dakotas—Riley Walker (in process of finalizing wording of challenge)

- **Raising Up and Training Leadership:**
 - *Adaptive Challenge:* We know that God gifts God's people with spiritual gifts and invites them to exercise these gifts in and through the church in order to participate more fully in God's mission. Yet, there seems to be a disconnect between this understanding of God's intent and what so many of our congregations are experiencing—where many of our members do not appear to know their giftedness, or if they do, are not finding ways to engage effectively in ministry. Why this disconnect?
- **Monologue Relationship with God:**
 - *Adaptive challenge:* Most of our attempts to communicate with God are monologues. We understand God wants to be in dialogue. Why are so many of us willing to settle for a monologue prayer life? How can this model be changed?

• Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of Central Region—John Williams

- **Common Identity and Mission:** Our Adaptive Challenge is to create and nurture within our churches a common identity and sense of mission as American Baptist Churches of

the Central Region. As we do mission together we will work to change our churches, our communities and the ABCCR to reflect the presence and power of Christ transforming our world. Even though we are different in many respects we are linked together by the common thread of our commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the work of His body, the church.

- **Adaptive Challenge:** We are challenged as the American Baptist Churches of the Central Region to create a common identity and sense of mission. Even though we are diverse, we are linked together by the common thread of commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior as we change our congregations, communities and our Region to reflect Christ and transform the world.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of Greater Indianapolis—Joan C. Friesen

- ***Planting New Congregations:*** Over the last 20 years, our Region has welcomed five new churches into our midst—but none of them were started by Regional initiative. Our adaptive challenge is feeling the call to plant new churches to meet the growing need here in Indianapolis, but having a dismal success rate at doing so. How do we approach this in new and innovative ways that will help new ministries succeed and overcome the stigma with which we are branded?
 - In process with plans to finish on or before June 15.
- ***Community Connections:*** With the changes in the neighborhoods around our churches, and the shifts in our culture, our congregations often find themselves out of step with the community in which they were planted. How do we adapt to meet the needs of the neighborhood, reestablish ourselves as a beacon of light and safe place, and build new relationships in order to further God's agenda?
 - In process with plans to finish by May 28.

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;

Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of Great Rivers—Dwight Stinnett

- ***Churches and Pastors Transitioning to Part-Time Pastoral Leadership:*** We need pastors who can lead in a different "mode" and are prepared to serve smaller churches with fewer resources. A large financial investment in the traditional seminary path is not feasible and is of increasingly uncertain value. Full-time ministry is a luxury for growing numbers of our churches. Expectations of both pastors and churches need to change.
 - In process with plans to finish by mid-June.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of Massachusetts—Anthony G. Pappas

- **Multicultural Inclusion:** Increasing our ability and capacity to incorporate multicultural diversity into all aspects of region life, but especially in our governance—tied to the work of our Ethnic Liaisons.
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** “Build our relationships to incorporate multi-ethnic inclusion in all aspects of our common life to respond to God’s call for lasting Christ centered unity and service.” Common Life defined as; that of pastors, congregations and church members, staff, adjunct staff, partner organizations, associations, regional teams and broader American Baptist Churches; behavior, practices and policies tied to the work of our ethnic liaisons.
- **The Form of Future Congregations:** Discovering how local congregations will be shaped, formed, and incarnated in today’s world in our ministry context, and developing capacity to start and support such congregations.
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** Since many congregations seem unaware of the ministry challenge/adaptive challenge concept or if aware, are unable at this point to engage in a helpful process, TABCOM must help congregations see and identify their own ministry challenges and begin to seek their own adaptive challenges to address them. In short, how can TABCOM expose congregations to the ideas of ministry and adaptive challenges in ways that will encourage and enable congregations to take responsibility for living into their own futures?

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

ABC of Michigan—Michael Williams and Scott Arnold

- **Missional Outreach and Evangelism:** Ministry in the local context must become creative, compassionate and consistent in response to the needs of the community in order to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** *Contemporary American culture has been inoculated against Christian faith by the church itself. At the same time, the church's understanding of itself and its mission is faulty and maybe broken - we do not seem to understand ourselves as people on mission. When it comes to bringing/sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, we currently face the dual challenge of the culture's low view of the church and the church's low view of its mission.*
- **Discipleship and Spiritual formation:** Discipleship in the commitment and growth of mature and faithful followers of Jesus Christ is increasingly difficult to achieve, especially for new members and upcoming generations.
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** *Despite our best efforts and intentions, the status of discipleship in today’s church is too often characterized by: **A. Self-centeredness:** Faith that is evidenced by a predominant concern for our own needs and desires being met than that we seek to live by the will and purpose of*

*God. **B. Superficiality:** An emphasis upon outward and minimal observance of the Christian faith with little substantial and lasting spiritual transformation. **C. Disconnection:** Life is increasingly fragmented as we are out of touch with the presence and power of God through His Word in Scripture, His Son Jesus Christ, and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. While we confess this is the reality of the church now, we place our hope in the transforming power of God to break down the barriers that would keep us from going deeper in our discipleship with Jesus Christ.*

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

Mid-America Baptists—Marshall Peters

- **Mission Beyond Church Walls:** Our congregations are in need of addressing the common ministry challenge of seeing mission outside the church walls.
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** Our challenge is to refocus our resources of time, talents and treasure from inside the church to outside the walls of our buildings as we rediscover where and how the Spirit of God is already at work in our communities. By building relationships and partnerships for ministry, we can begin to envision and understand how God would have us work together to fulfill His desires.
- **Cultivating Lay Leadership:** We need to learn how to cultivate the active involvement (or lack thereof) of the laity in both local church and regional life in a context that has professionalized leadership.
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** Our congregations face the adaptive challenge to re-envision both congregational and pastoral leadership as a practice of spiritual discernment, spiritual giftedness, and maturity in matters of faith rather than as a function of organizational philosophies of a past era when life was less complex and change occurred more slowly.

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;

Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of Maine—Al J. Fletcher

- **Communication:** There's a myriad of issues concerning communication. As ABCOM transitions, local churches and leaders "want to know" what is happening. Communication is a way of managing the level of angst felt in our churches. Determining what information needs to be communicated, in which ways, and to who is a real need.
 - In process and will likely complete this phase in the summer.
- **Financing:** With shrinking congregational budgets, how will our common mission be financially sustained?
 - Not yet in process, so will roll into the 2nd round of ACT work.

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;
Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

ABC of Nebraska—Robin Stoops

- **Upgrading Infrastructure of Our Buildings and Camp:** We need to find new ways to deal with our aging infrastructures. How do we pay for the maintenance and upkeep our buildings? How do we conserve and make better use of what we have been entrusted?
 - *Adaptive Challenge:* People are our most valuable resource. In what ways do our aging infrastructure, buildings and facilities challenge our understanding and practice of God-centered ministry. What actions do we take as congregations and/or as a region to be a prophetic voice for God, serving as the hands and feet of Christ in helping communities encounter Christ's love?
- **Authentic Baptist Disciples in Nebraska:** We need to find new ways to begin ministry and mission in our neighborhoods. How do we train and encourage followers of Christ to live out their faith in new ways that will have an impact for the Kingdom in their neighborhoods.
 - In process and will finish soon.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder
Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of New Jersey—Lee B. Spitzer

- **Bridging Generational Gaps:** What kind of congregational and regional transformation will be necessary for our churches to bridge generational gaps and reach younger adults and youth more effectively?
 - *Adaptive Challenge:* One of the reasons that young adults are leaving the church is that their experience of Christianity is shallow. The church must establish a stronger spiritual community through the cultivation of intentional and meaningful inter-generational relationships, where people of each generation minister together as co-laborers for Christ. These strong personal relationships may encourage younger Christians to pull in their peers, to grow spiritually and to explore the depths of Christian discipleship.
- **Evangelism as a Way of Life:** How can our members and churches embrace evangelism (and church growth) as a way of life, so that our witness flows more naturally from our discipleship journeys?
 - *Adaptive Challenge:* How can congregations grow deeper in discipleship, *so that each person – both pastor and people - experience the transforming new life in Jesus Christ in such a way that evangelism becomes a way of life?*
- **ABC Identity Crisis:** How should we address the "identity crisis" we face as American Baptists, in which pastors and lay members seem disconnected from associational and denominational life (except when they need services or support from us)?

- **Adaptive Challenge:** The local church is a place/group of people who are willing to change and to grow. The offer is to invite other people to come and to help us be changed and to grow with us. If we are a missional church, then what we need to be involved with are people who are non-churched and even anti-church. What we need to address if we are going to have a future? Go to where the people are. Invite people to bring their gifts into the Kingdom of God. Present multiple avenues for love and faith. Create clear expectations for membership. The key challenge we are currently facing for which we do not yet have the answer: will we jettison the whole concept/reality of Baptist identity? Or, are we willing to keep the fact that we have been a prayerful mission that did not see itself locked in the church walls but going out with the Good News about Jesus wherever the people were? In the past, as in the present, there have been people that rejected the messengers and the message but some joined in because their lives were changed. Has sporadic/constant rejection made us abandon our message?

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

ABC of Rocky Mountains—Steve VanOstran

- **Connectedness:** We need to find a way to help our congregations reconnect to one another in meaningful ways in our new structure and particularly following years of conflict and theological fighting.
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** Connectedness—understanding that we are in times of change, and searching for solutions, we challenge and encourage local congregations and individual members of ABCRM to be connected in significant ways.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

American Baptists Womens' Ministries—Virginia Holmstrom

Organization Specific

- **Engaging Younger Generations of Women:** We haven't been able to create ministry approaches and develop ministry structures that connect with younger generations of women. We're missing conferees below age 40 at our national events for women; local church ABWM groups tell us their members are steadily "graying" and wish the young women would participate; participation is declining in ABWM's longstanding programs for mission support (White Cross, Love Gift); and there is generally a "us/them" mentality at all levels of our organization and an expectation that young women should come and participate. Stories have been told of young women's groups that form in churches and are rebuked or ignored

by the ABWM group because they aren't "following the rules". We're surely having a hard time getting rid of that book of rules.

- **Adaptive Challenge:** As women currently involved in American Baptist Women's Ministries, we need to determine if we can corporately promote the vision of identifying a core of younger women who will serve as the leadership of American Baptist Women's Ministries, equipping them with resources, providing them with a history, and offering support for their future vision to be realized.

Consultant Coaching Contact: Keith Tanis

- **Outreach Beyond "Our Own":** We haven't been able to initiate and sustain dialog with constituencies of American Baptist women and girls that are underrepresented or absent in our ministries/events. At the crux of this challenge is authentic engagement with women and girls in racial/ethnic churches, women and girls in duly-aligned churches, persons whose first language is not English, and refugee and immigrant communities. Our Spanish-language resources do not sell well. Attendance at women's conferences sponsored by national ABWM or Region ABWMs does not reflect the diversity of ABCUSA church membership. Officers on our national board and most Region ABWM boards are largely Euro American. Women and girls in the D.C. region align themselves with Women's Missionary Union of SBC, and rarely in ABWM; we haven't nurtured relationship with Hispanic women in Southern California and New Jersey that host well-attended women's events. These are borderlands for ABWM and we must learn to enter and dwell among these Baptist sisters.
 - (adaptive challenge—tentative) The AB Women's Ministries desire to be more effective by creating new methods to reach out, engage, and communicate with our diverse constituency. We understand that diversity encompasses theology, socio-economics, denomination, race, age, culture, language, ethnicity and national origin. We aim to explore options for being more inclusive in our AB Women's Ministries participation and leadership at all levels.

Consultant Coaching Contact: Cheryl Harris

Consultant Contact: Craig Van Gelder

ABCUSA Office of General Secretary—Roy Medley

Organization Specific

- **Identity and Function:** In SCODS, ABCUSA/OGS was stripped of its identity and its program functions that it held as "the convention," – the we – and was reduced to primarily an administrative unit. With a return to a quasi-society new structure, ABCUSA/BGM is the only organization that has a board that is intentionally representative of the whole. How does ABCUSA/BGM provide the "we" function with a focus that is bigger than any one aspect of ABC structure and life? What are our unique contributions to the life of ABC as we embody a concern for the welfare of our churches and those in ministry and offer the possibility for a richer imagination of our life together?

- **Adaptive Challenge:** Within the new denominational structure, ABCUSA now has an intentionally representative board (BGM); as such, ABCUSA occupies a unique, wholly representative role, both symbolically and practically, in the denomination. The ministry challenge embedded in this reality calls for ABCUSA, on the one hand, to discover and craft a clear identity that goes beyond its administrative ministry. On the other hand, it is critical that ABCUSA see itself in a prophetic and pastoral relationship primarily with its churches as it defines, celebrates and leads the ABC family as a people committed to mission as revealed in The Great Commission. At the same time ABCUSA has a responsibility to our regions and covenanting partners to model and articulate our common and mutually shared values while respecting differences, autonomy and interdependence. As the most representative expression of the denomination, ABCUSA needs to perform its function with insight, imagination, creativity and servant and sacrificial leadership that enhances our covenantal life together, as we maintain connection with the whole family of faith.
- **Becoming the Beloved Community:** In the Sixties and beyond, ABC out of biblical convictions became a major voice for racial justice and intentionally sought to become a body that reflected the rich diversity of humankind. In the Seventies and beyond, ABC out of biblical convictions reaffirmed its belief that the gifts for ministry are bestowed equally by the Spirit upon both men and women and began to advocate for women in ministry. How does ABCUSA/OGS assist the denomination (churches and denominational entities) to more effectively live into its new reality of being a multi-cultural/multi-ethnic denomination that affirms the giftedness of both men and women in ministry?”
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** American Baptists value living as the Beloved community where all of the gifts and all of God’s people are celebrated. Being one body and one people challenges us to create a safe space to provide opportunities to build trusting and respectful relationships. Living into who we are in Christ requires repentance for past and present wrongs and a willingness to sacrifice our way for God’s way.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

MMBB—Sumner Grant/Harold Leibovitz

Organization Specific

- **Practicing Strategic Inter-organization with Regions:** Most ABCUSA churches enroll their church staff in MMBB. As a result, the growth strategy is focused on African-American, Latino and white evangelical churches outside ABC. This leaves fewer resources available to serve and support ABC regions. How can MMBB remain a trusted, valuable partner with fewer human and monetary resources available? MMBB remains an important source of information on compensation for ABC regions. How can we expand and leverage our knowledge on compensation and church administration?

- **Adaptive Challenge:** How will MMBB, despite fewer resources and staff, balance its responsibility to expand constituency while maintaining its primary commitment to support American Baptist Churches?

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

Ministers Council—Joe Kutter/Jeff Savage

Organization Specific

- **Women in Ordained Ministry:** Women are still under-represented in ABC ministry in terms of the overall number of ordained women and continue to face difficulties in having access to significant leadership roles.
 - In process and will finish in summer.
- **Pastoral Attrition:** There appears to be a growing level of pastoral attrition (people leaving the ministry—especially in the first five years of ministry), which represents a significant challenge to the ABC.
 - In process and will finish early summer.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris and Keith Tanis

National Executive Council (serving as an ACT)

- **Partnership:** (currently utilizing the statements below that were generated by four of the five organizations to create a combined ministry challenge regarding “partnership”)
 - **Adaptive Challenge:** Currently we see ourselves as inter-dependent though differently-purposed, autonomous, and differently-directed ABC entities. Our recent restructuring has presented us with the potential for two very different futures. The one is a hardening of organizational silos with increased competition, marginalization, and isolation. The other is one of organizational flexibility with new learning, experimentation, and synergies in mission.
As the NEC, we believe that we are being called to live into a new way of partnering to get a fresh understanding of how God is leading us as ABC into God's mission in the world. We as the NEC do not, from here, know how; but we commit ourselves to respond to this calling.

Consulting and Coaching Contacts: Alan Roxburgh and Craig Van Gelder

AB Women's Ministry

- **Building Mutual Mission Partnerships:** We haven't been able to establish true mutuality in our partnerships with other organizations; it seems that we have long functioned in the mode of an “auxiliary” that supports the missions of other ABC organizations. We have practiced allegiance to IM's and

ABHMS's White Cross program without being sought out for input or feedback that could modernize the program for our changing constituency; we have deferred to other organizations and have a history of being asked to essentially rubber stamp decisions about destinations for mission tours that we co-sponsor, mission study themes, mission projects to fund, and even given carte-blanche prime program time at our national women's conferences. Yet concurrently we are recognizing our strengthening voice as an organization that has a unique mission with/to women and girls, and we are sensing God's stirring call to touch the lives of women and girls. We can raise money well; we need to redraw the ways we use funding so that it empowers ABWM's mission with women and girls. An emerging challenge for us is learning how to build partnership mutuality with international and national women's organizations that request funding to pursue a cause that ABWM also values and wants to empower.

OGS

- ***Inter-Organizational Relationships and Partnerships:*** The new structure reshapes our shared life nationally and, therefore, our roles and our relationships with one another. How does OGS foster healthier relationships across national groups and introduce new practices and patterns of relationships that help all of us continue to move beyond the practices and patterns that reinforce silos and undermine our ability to work effectively as a team?

ABHMS

- ***Cooperative, Collaborative, Non-Competitive Church Life:*** How do we (local churches, regional offices, seminaries, ABHMS, etc) best cooperatively, collaboratively and non-competitively address the challenges and opportunities of the United States of America as a fertile field for mission while honoring Baptist principles of autonomy, interdependence and freedom of association?

IM

- ***Partnerships:*** Developing mature, culturally sensitive international partnerships based on relationship and mission rather than resources, and cultivating collaborative domestic partnerships with other ABC organizations and regions.

MINISTRY CHALLENGES BEING ADDRESSED BY PARTICIPATING PARTNERS IN SECOND ROUND OF TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT—SUMMER/FALL 2012 Regions, Associations, and National Organizations

ABC Bay Area—Oregon and Evergreen

- ***Living in a Multi-Region Land:*** For the past 20 years, ABC churches in the Bay Area have become a battleground for theological differences, vision disparity, and mission discord. Even before the new ABC Bylaws were adopted in June 2011 that officially permit a local church to affiliate with a region in another geographical area, Bay Area churches have been doing this for years. Today, churches in the Bay Area are affiliated

with as many as 3 to 4 regions. The result is the loss of a central core that unites and connects churches to engage in faithful fellowship and productive work. In the midst of this multi-region land of ABC churches, how might we address the deep-seated problems that created this reality in the first place in order to begin to move on to becoming an American Baptist witness in the Bay Area? What needs to happen for the churches and their leaders to affirm that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts?

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;
Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of Los Angeles—Sam S. Chetti/Doug Hubbard

- ***Congregations Re-Connecting with Their Communities*** (tentative challenge—to be finalized soon).

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;
Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

ABC of Maine—Al J. Fletcher

- **Financing:** With shrinking congregational budgets, how will our common mission be financially sustained?
 - Not yet in process so becomes part of 2nd round of ACT work.

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;
Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

ABC of Ohio—Larry O. Swain

- ***Part-Time Pastoral Leadership Development:*** The American Baptist Churches of Ohio has a significant number of small congregations who are unable to employ full-time, seminary trained pastors, and yet need quality pastoral leadership. Traditional patterns of providing part-time pastors for smaller churches needs to be expanded with new and different modes that can accommodate these growing numbers of churches in ABC/Ohio. The adaptive challenge is to discover new ways to provide quality level, trained pastoral leadership for small, financially challenged congregations.
- ***Churches Reconnecting with their Communities:*** With changes in culture, church membership, and geography, congregations have become disconnected from the communities and neighborhoods where they are located and called to serve. Thus congregations face the challenge to discover new ways to reconnect with their communities and neighborhoods to impact lives with the Gospel.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder
Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

ABC of Oregon—Steve Bilis

- ***Hispanic Church Planting:*** How do we effectively communicate the gospel to the Hispanic community through new church planting in light of today's multi-cultural and post-Christian realities?
- ***Revitalized Congregations Engaging Contexts:*** How can aging and declining congregations be revitalized to bridge the broadening cultural gaps and effectively engage their neighborhoods as relevant communities of faith?

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;
Consulting Coach Contact: Keith Tanis

Philadelphia Baptist Association—James E. McJunkin Jr.

- ***Discipleship—Nurturing the Next Generation of Church Leaders:*** We need to encourage intentionality among our congregations in passing on our traditions and the responsibilities for church leadership by developing leaders (discipleship).
 - Team in process of being formed to address.
- ***Peace Making—Violence/Guns in Our Communities:*** We need to build a network **among** PBA congregations which have a passion for addressing the number one health issue of violence in our communities.
 - Team in process of being formed to address.
- ***Globalization and Diversity:*** We need to find ways to encourage our congregations to acknowledge and embrace the fullness of the ever increasing diversity in all of our neighborhoods and congregations.
 - Team in process of being formed to address.

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder
Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

ABC of Puerto Rico—Roberto Dieppa-Baez/Juan Medina

- ***Children in Churches:*** Changes in the culture and especially changes in technology have made it challenging for many churches to connect with the next generation of children and youth. This is a critical challenge for many of the smaller churches. In addition, the curriculum often used does not address sufficiently the social reality of the children.
- ***Lay Training for Starting New Churches:*** There is a need for a very practical approach to being able to develop new churches. There is a need for tutors and mentors to assist in this.

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh and Craig Van Gelder, in conversation with Roy Medley
Consulting Coach Contact: to be determined

West Virginia Baptist Convention

- ***Communication and Relationships:*** (description still in process)

Consulting Contact: Craig Van Gelder

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

National and Regional Organizations—JT

- **The form and practice of partnership between national and regional bodies in the new structure of ABCUSA:** A convergence of forces confront ABCUSA: (1) our new structure, which moves us away from the structural interrelatedness and representation created by SCODS/SCOR, (2) the persistent reality of uneven relationships taxed by diverse goals, (3) the complicating and enriching reality of ethnic diversity, and (4) the changed world in which we operate, which not only values but demands collaboration. How can the organizations we have created balance the drive for autonomy and the theological imperative of unity so we can best be the people of God in this time and place?

Consulting Contact:

Consulting Coach Contact:

National Organizations—6 Participating

American Baptists Home Mission Societies—Aidsand Wright-Riggins

- ***The Identity and Role of ABHMS:*** ABHMS has been operating at a frenetic pace, with one third the size staff today than we had serving twenty years ago. We are wrestling with how to do ministry in a whole new way in a complex and rapidly changing world. We are learning that we do not have the capacity to be “the” Program Board for an increasingly resourced-challenged American Baptist family that grows richer each day in its racial, ethnic, linguistic and theological diversity and less homogeneous with regards to their commitments, loyalty and understandings of mission and ministry. We do not know how to proceed to address these realities nor what we should become or whether the ways we are currently “wrestling” with these questions help or hinder us engaging this question.

Consulting Contact: Alan Roxburgh;

Consulting Coach Contact: Cheryl Harris

International Ministries—Reid Trulson

Organization Specific

- ***Partnership with Regions:*** The changing patterns of funding for missionaries as well as the changing culture within the ABC-USA has left IM in a position of needing to re-connect in new ways with the regions/associations of the ABC-USA.

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