



ABHMS Encourages Connection via Missional Networking Website

VALLEY FORGE, PA (ABNS 3/ 21 /13)—American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) encourages mission volunteers and those offering mission opportunities throughout the United States and Puerto Rico to connect via the ecumenical website [MissionalNetworking.org](http://www.missionalnetworking.org) (www.missionalnetworking.org).

The purpose of the website, according to its home page, is “to connect missional faith communities with volunteers, resources, and one another in service that transforms the lives of individuals and communities, making visible the Kingdom of God.”

Features include the following:

- a Google Maps-powered interactive map that allows users to indicate their entity’s location and categorize it via color coding as a “Mission Field,” “Volunteer Team,” “Resource Site,” “Missional Community” or “Disaster Relief”;
- resources, including mission-related terms and definitions;
- “Missional 1-2-1” blog about the missional church as a model and its theological/biblical basis; and
- “Stories from the Front Lines” blog, offering personal narratives about mission experiences.

The site was founded by a handful of Wisconsin pastors who were using the missional model in their own communities. Seeking to expand, they contacted the Rev. Dr. Ronald Carlson, ABHMS missional church strategist, regarding ABHMS sponsorship.

“These pastors said, ‘We don’t know who else is doing this, and we want to start connecting with each other,’” says Carlson. “The first concept was to develop a map to see who is located where. Then they asked, ‘What if we would like to have others come work with us?’ so the Mission Field piece was added, and the map began to evolve.”

Eventually resources and blogs were added. A National Campus Ministry Association page is expected soon.

“For some churches, the website will start the missional conversation because they haven’t yet moved into this model,” says Carlson.

Individuals of all faith traditions are invited to post on the map and to submit blog posts for consideration. Submissions will be edited, and Carlson ensures contributors that an academic writing style is not required.

“The purpose of the site is not to promote any one organization but for mission engagement. The other aspect is that it would become a source of free resources,” says Carlson. “We’re not looking to generate revenue by selling materials. We want to get resources out into the hands of churches that will help them to be better equipped and empowered to do mission within their own context.”

For additional information regarding www.missionalnetworking.org, contact Carlson at ronald.carlson@abhms.org or 1-800-222-3872, x2416.

ABHMS—the domestic mission arm of American Baptist Churches USA—ministers as the caring heart and serving hands of Jesus Christ across the United States and Puerto Rico through a multitude of initiatives that focus on discipleship, community and justice.

American Baptist Churches USA is one of the most diverse Christian denominations today, with over 5,200 local congregations comprised of 1.3 million members, across the United States and Puerto Rico, all engaged in God’s mission around the world.