

MissionNorthwest

Resourcing and developing churches that connect people with Jesus Christ

“BETTER TOGETHER”

A Message from Executive Minister, Charles Revis

One of the most under-appreciated words in Scripture is “**together.**” The expectation that Jesus-followers would meet together and work together is a running theme throughout the New Testament. The Holy Spirit launched the church into mission on the day of Pentecost. Note how togetherness is reinforced in Luke’s account of that day: “*When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.*” As the church’s story unfolds Luke tells us that the church continued to meet together in the temple courts every day. (Acts 2:42)



Paul picks up this togetherness theme and urges the churches to work together with one purpose and one mind. He knew that if the emerging churches—not just one, but all— pulled together in mission the Gospel would spread like a California wildfire. On the other hand, if the churches slipped into internal squabbling Jesus’ rescue mission project would stumble even as the church was hitting its stride.

To this end Paul urges the Ephesians, “*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*” (Eph 4:3) Note the muscular phrase, “make every effort.” Unity takes work. Paul proceeds to reinforce this call to unity by repeating the word “one” seven times as he highlights spiritual examples of unity, “*There is one body and one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all,*” (Eph 4:4-6)

The take away from these examples is clear: If God is one then His body should be one! Unity in the Lord, in faith, in Spirit and in purpose is fundamental for church health and effectiveness. The early churches’ success in mission rested on the foundation of oneness. Unity doesn’t come easy. Rather, it requires focused attention and labor to attain. This is why Paul is so insistent that the church roll up its sleeves and work diligently to attain and maintain unity.

Fast forward 2,000 years. Togetherness and unity still matter. The churches of Mission Northwest didn’t spring into existence from thin air. They emerged because Baptist

churches worked together in association to plant them and sustain them! The expanding associations of churches across the northwest were made up of congregations deeply committed to one another, whether small, medium or large (most were small). Churches sent messengers to the annual meeting. Messengers reported baptisms, finances and attendances. Pastors and church leaders were committed to their association, a family of churches on mission together. Over the course of several decades these humble associations gave birth to over 200 churches bearing faithful witness to Jesus Christ throughout WA, ID, MT and UT. In addition to planting churches: the churches nurtured each other, provided pastors, offered training and teaching materials, and sent out missionaries. This all happened because churches leaned into the value of working together as one.

Mission Northwest continues this historic and biblical commitment of working together for the purpose of “resourcing and developing churches that connect people with Jesus Christ.” This is our shared mission. And its success hinges on the commitment, engagement and support of each church within our regional membership.

Unfortunately, across the American religious landscape radical individualism has undermined the biblical value of working together. Independence is prized over interdependence. Church planters look for “partners” (translated “donors”) who will finance their projects without feeling any obligation to participate or contribute to the original partnering organizations. This is wrong. Some pastors avoid accountability from colleagues, and at times from their own church boards. Some leaders move their church out of its historic relationship with its denominational tribe. This too is wrong. All of these behaviors (and so many more) ultimately weaken the church and are simply unbiblical.

If you are still reading at this point I thank you. And, I want to encourage you to go against the individualistic trend that weakens the church. Deepen your commitment to your local congregation, and with the same spirit deepen your commitment to our association of churches known as Mission Northwest.

As we work together we will better attain what Paul describes in Ephesians 4: 16, “From Jesus the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

What might this look like? Here are some suggestions:

- 1. Connect.** Make the effort to connect through participation. If you are a pastor connect with your local LLC. If you are a church leader or church member connect in with our Zoom meetings and other opportunities for in-person gatherings. Invite Patti or me to preach in your church. Exchange pulpits with another Mission Northwest church.
- 2. Learn.** Learn about your sister churches in your immediate area and across the Region. Be curious about their ministries and pray for them on a regular basis.

3. Communicate. Receive communication from Mission Northwest through our Email Updates, Facebook postings and Web page. (Sign up by sending a note to office@abcnw.org). Send us a ministry story, a personal testimony or advance in your church so we can celebrate with you and share your stories with others.

4. Give. Give to the work we do together. Our work is supported by the churches in our association who give through their missions budgets. We also receive support through special offerings and donor gifts. Consider giving if your church doesn't presently give. If your church is struggling with finances because of the pandemic, we understand. We don't want you to feel pressure. However, most churches can contribute something, even it means taking a special offering in support of the Region once a year. Every gift counts!

5. Pray. Pray for the work we are doing together and the needs among our churches.

As we continue in our work together I am reminded of these words from Jesus: *"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true."* (John 4:35-37)

Note the joy that comes through working together as God's people when we sow and reap as one! May we, with God's help, be better together as we link arms and work as one in the rescue project Jesus has entrusted to us!

The remainder of this document presents basic facts about Mission Northwest and a brief overview of the work we have been doing over the last two years.

Celebrating our unity in Christ,



MINISTRY OVERVIEW – 2020 & 2019

Who: A historic and vital association of churches primarily in WA, ID, MT, and UT along with one church each in AZ, CA, NV and AK. Our oldest church is True Hope Boise, ID (formerly known as FBC) at 156 years.

Mission: *Resourcing and developing churches that connect people to Jesus Christ.*

Staff: Dr. Charles Revis, Executive Minister; Rev. Patti Duckworth, Associate Executive Minister; Cherie' Vidovich, Office Manager and Accountant, and 14 Mentor Pastors.

Offices: Located on the campus of Ross Point Camp, 601 S. Ross Point Rd, Post Falls, ID 83815 208.777.2733 office@abcnw.org

Web: www.missionnorthwest.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/abcnw/

Although our churches are mostly Baptist churches, our network includes various forms of church. We have several churches that are multi-denominational, or see themselves as “non-denominational” while relating to our association for fellowship, resourcing and mission.

Some of these churches include: Florence-Carlton Community Church, MT; Praise Chapel, Everett, WA; Praise Chapel, Juneau, AK; City View Church, Renton, WA; Cornerstone Christian Fellowship, Osburn, ID; Hamilton Methodist-Baptist Church, MT; Palouse Federated Church, Palouse, WA; Church on the Rock, Oak Harbor, WA. At present we are seeking to extend our association of churches to unaffiliated churches. These churches appreciate the advantages of being in a relationship with other like-minded churches while remaining autonomous.



We are inclusive of various ethnic churches such as Calvary Baptist Church, a strong and active African-American church in Salt Lake City, UT; St. Paul Baptist Church in Boise, ID; Chinese Baptist Church in Seattle, WA; Blessed Life Church (primarily Cantonese speaking) in Bellevue, WA; Grandview Primera Iglesia Bautista, WA; Iglesia Roca de Refugio; First Crow Indian Baptist Church, MT; Crow Agency Community Church, MT; and Community Baptist Church in Wyola, MT among many others.

Some of our churches are multi-ethnic. Examples include First Baptist/Comunidad Cristiana in Yakima, WA; FBC Everett with a large number of Congolese immigrants; Praise Chapel, Everett, WA; City View Church Renton, WA and Newport Hills Community Church Bellevue, WA.

Structure: Our region is an autonomous non-profit corporation with its own board and budget receiving no funding from ABC-USA. Our region board system is based on a simple accountable governance model, influenced by John Carver.

Four Landmarks focus our ministry efforts:

1. LEADERSHIP

- **14 Mentor Pastors leading Leadership Learning Communities (LLCs) for clergy support, fellowship, accountability and learning.** A grant provides financial help with resources and travel expenses for pastors who do not have funds to cover participation expenses. Mentor Pastors are adjunct region staff. Because of our distance challenge several of our LLCs meet via Zoom video conferencing.

- **Search Consulting—guiding and resourcing churches as they search for their next pastor.** With an increasing shortage of pastors coupled with large numbers of retiring baby boomers we expend significant energy recruiting new pastors in to the region. We deploy trained search consultants to assist search teams. Searches over the last two years include:

- FBC Jerome, ID (just opened, pastor recently retired)
- New Directions Church, Nampa, ID (investigating options with coaching)
- FBC Gig Harbor, WA (presently searching)
- UM-ABC Hamilton, MT (recently completed)
- FBC Everett, WA (completed)
- Park Heights Church, Spokane, WA now with a new name of Engage Church (completed, a restart project, called a church planting style pastor)
- FBC Castleford, ID (completed)
- Laurel Church, WA (completed)
- FBC Midvale, ID (completed)
- FBC Des Moines, WA (completed)
- FBC Twin Falls, ID (completed)
- FBC Hoquiam, WA (completed)
- The Summit Church, Boise, ID (completed)
- Mud Lake Community Church, Terreton, ID (completed)
- First Baptist/ Comunidad Christiana in Yakima, WA. (completed)
- FBC Sunnyside, WA (completed)
- Chinese Baptist Church, Seattle, WA (completed)
- New Life Bible Fellowship, Caldwell, ID (completed)

- **Placing Transitional Pastors and Interim Ministers in open churches.**

Transitional/Interim Pastorates provided over the last two years include:

- New Directions Church, Nampa, ID – Gary Cooper
- FBC Buhl, ID – Kurt Smalley
- The Summit Church, Boise, ID – Gary Cooper
- FBC Hoquiam – Gary Shirbish
- FBC Twin Falls, ID – Gary Bassham
- FBC Des Moines, WA – Melinda Jarrett
- FBC Everett, WA – Bill McCready; Fred Delano
- Midvale Community Church, ID – Clayne Beck
- Park Heights Church, Spokane, WA – Glen Douglas
- FBC Castleford, ID – Kurt Smalley



Annual Leadership Tune-Up at Ross Point Camp

- **Training opportunities for continuous development of pastors, church staff and church leaders.** (Annual Leadership Tune-Up, Area Meetings, FX Vision Days, Organic Outreach/Oikos Evangelism Training and Ethics Training Conferences.)

- **Coaching, formal and informal provided region staff and mentor pastors.**
- **Region guided ordination recognition process through the Ministerial Standards Team.** We offer either an ABC-USA recognized ordination or Mission Northwest recognized ordination. Revocation of ordination process and restoration process in the event of ethics violations.
- **Women in Ministry monthly Zoom support meeting.**
- **Stewardship and funding resources.**
- **Providing pastoral compensation guidance in partnership with MMBB.**
- **Financial reviews for churches that cannot afford audits.**
- **During COVID-19 we have provided numerous Zoom Meetings offering advice on PPP Loans, Online Streaming, Church Re-openings and just giving encouragement during a tough time.** Additional topics have focused on racism, emotional health, prayer and leadership during challenging times.

2. CHURCH TRANSFORMATION

- **Church Assessments** – Church assessments over the last two years include: FBC Port Townsend, WA; FBC Filer, ID; Laurel Church, WA; FBC Eureka, MT; FBC Everett, WA; Emmanuel Baptist Church, Roundup, MT.
- **Church Unique** – An intensive process for discerning mission, values, & strategy.
- **Organic Outreach and Oikos resourcing.**
- **Coaching pastors and church boards through the transformation process.**
- **Resources and coaching for church restructuring** (some form of accountable governance is our preference, but ultimately each local church chooses its own organization).

3. CONNECTION

- **Foster associational interaction between pastors and churches.**
- **Leadership Tune-Up annual gathering for worship**, fellowship and learning at the Leadership Tune-Up each fall at Ross Point Camp. The 2020 gathering was offered through a webinar format. The theme was “Deep and Wild: Rooted in Jesus—Creative in Mission” with Michael Beck and Verlon Fosner as presenters. The 2019 theme was “Cultivate: Cultivating a Christ-Centered Church Culture” with Jim Powell and Kelly Legg. Area meetings and occasional geographic specific training events.
- **Zoom meetings** (GenNex leaders monthly meeting, Women in Ministry, and Interim Ministers)
- **Staff preaching, church visits, etc.**
- **Connections with other denominations and networks.**

4. CHURCH PLANTING

- Presently seeking a church planter for a project in Helena, MT
- Several successful church plants (Blessed Life Church; New Community Church; The River; ReCalibrate Church; Praise Chapel in Juneau, AK).
- Successful mergers between new church plants and struggling churches.
- Church restarts. (Blackfoot Christian Fellowship; Praise Chapel in Everett; and Engage Church)
- Encouraging and resourcing Dinner Church and FX plants through partnership with Fresh Expressions (see www.freshexpressionsus.org for more information).
- Micro-grants provided for FX forms of church launches.



Lunch Church at The Junction Church in West Seattle, WA

Beliefs and Policies

- Our doctrinal statement, “Common Essentials” declares our essential theological stance. Adopted at the 2002 Biennial and updated September 2020.
- We hold to a traditional biblical understanding of human sexuality as expressed in our policy statement: “Resolution on Human Sexuality.” Adopted at the 2002 Biennial.
- We affirm the ABC-USA national “Code of Ethics” for ministers.

Camping Partnerships: We partner with seven regional ABC camps: Ross Point (ID), Cathedral Pines (ID), Camp Burton (Vashon Island, WA); Camp Bethel (WA); Cascade Meadows (WA); Temples Hills (MT); Camp Utaba (UT)

ABC-USA Partnerships: International Ministries; Ministers & Missionaries Benefit Board; American Baptist Home Mission Societies; ABC Extension Corporation; and more.

National Partnership: Fresh Expressions USA.