



ABCOPAD's Vision: To build Healthy Partnerships with Churches, Pastoral Leaders, and the wider ABC Family, to fulfill Christ's Mission in our world.

Key Scripture Passage: Philippians 1: 3- 6: I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

When ABCOPAD determined its vision in 2010 – 2011, one of its core values was partnership. We, as a region, would strive for partnership in all we do. One key strategy in our vision was the development of ministry teams. Ministry teams would be developed by pulling together people of passion around a focused area from across the Region. Some of our initial ministry teams we attempted to launch included, refugee resettlement and adoption. While both these ministry teams launched successfully, they were unable to be sustained. Regional staff were able to bring together people from across the Region for a meeting or two but traveling a great distance to meet was nearly impossible and communication between team members was challenging. While the concept of a ministry team was good in theory, it was very difficult in practice.

In December 2016, ABCOPAD launched a new format for its prayer ministry. It had become increasingly evident that the ABCOPAD e-mail prayer format was no longer the vibrant, regularly used means for communicating prayer needs as it been when we started it almost 20 years ago. ABCOPAD Prays would not be email based but instead would be built using a social media platform. People from across the Region and beyond could join the ABCOPAD Prays Facebook group. Geography would not be an obstacle. Communication would no longer be one direction as was the case with email and Constant Contact. Instead, communication would be bi-directional with Prayer team members able to talk with one another. The ABCOPAD Prays Facebook group would not be Regional Staff dependent, nor would it be clergy dependent (Pastoral leaders disseminating information to their congregations). Information would be available in real time and accessible via computer, tablet or cell phone. The ABCOPAD Prays Facebook group would consist of people with a passion to pray. The group would be made up of passionate practitioners who could pray for prayer requests, not simply people who wanted to talk about prayer.

The initial launch of ABCOPAD Prays started with a mere 23 people but in less than two months grew to over 200 members. A ministry team was born. It did not take long to realize this format could be used to launch other ministry teams in ABCOPAD. This month we are launching ABCOPAD VBS. Like ABCOPAD Prays, ABCOPAD VBS will exist on a social media platform and will invite people who are

passionate about Vacation Bible School to join the team. Group members will be able to share VBS ideas, coordinate sharing resources, post pictures of successful programs and mutually support and encourage one another.

We will also be launching ABCOPAD Serves. This new ministry team will be a place where people of passion for mission trips can communicate. Local, Regional, National and International trips can be posted in the ABCOPAD Serves Facebook Group. A local congregation might post their church serving at a soup kitchen and other people in the Association could choose to participate. This group will be a place where disaster relief efforts can be posted along with national trips to places like West Virginia or New Jersey or international trips to places like Mexico and Nicaragua. People with a passion for mission trips can share pictures and testimonies with the ministry team.

ABCOPAD Prays, ABCOPAD VBS and ABCOPAD Serves represent-only the start of these ministry teams. Plans are underway to use this concept to reorganize ministry to refugees / immigrants as well as launch a ministry team to help financial leaders in local congregations.

If you haven't noticed, I am very excited about the possibilities. A part of our vision born over half a decade ago is finally coming into focus. If you have an idea for a ministry team please connect with me. Thank you so much for your support of our Regional Vision and Ministry. By building healthy partnerships we are seeing Christ mission fulfilled in our world.

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