



American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware

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July 31, 2010

Greetings in the ever-capable name of Jesus,

Earlier this year we wrote to you to inform you that our region was facing some serious financial challenges as a result of a pattern of decreased and shifting mission support by the churches in the region. In order to maintain the same level of ministry to our churches, we have over the last several years, balanced the regional budget through the use of undesignated endowment monies, but those funds are now depleted, and we find ourselves faced with a projected budget deficit of over \$150,000 for 2011.

In light of those realities, the ABCOPAD Regional Board empowered our President, Reverend Mary Lewis, to form a Realignment Task Force to bring a proposal back to the Board that developed a strategy for staffing to allow our regional vision to move forward, as well as balance our regional budget. The Task Force, made up of lay and clergy representatives from every Area in the region, came together and prayerfully considered how best to navigate the challenging realities that we are facing. Through interviews and conversations with existing staff, along with consideration of staffing models in other American Baptist regions, and much prayerful discussion, the Task Force made a preliminary report to the Board in April, and then presented a final proposal in mid-June. Following two weeks of prayerful deliberation, the members of the regional Board voted overwhelmingly at the beginning of July to adopt the recommendations of the Realignment Task Force—a decision that will radically change the look of ministry here in ABCOPAD.

At its heart, the new staffing model is built upon the three components of our regional vision, which is,
*To build Healthy Partnerships with Churches, Pastoral Leaders
and the Wider ABC Family to fulfill Christ's Mission in our world.*

Beginning in January, 2011 we will have three Regional Pastors that will resource our mission and vision to build healthy partnerships with Churches, with Pastoral Leaders and with the Wider ABC Family. (Rev. Eric Kraihanzel will continue in his regional efforts in Student Ministry.) These three leaders will work collaboratively with Ministry Teams throughout the region to advance the vision God has given us, and we will be developing a number of adjunct leaders to help us work with pastoral placement, church conflict and pastoral mentoring. In creating this new model, some painful changes are required, the largest of which include not filling the positions in the Southwest and Pittsburgh, as well as eliminating the position held by Richard McIntyre, who currently serves as our Northeast Area Minister. In addition,

there will be significant cuts in the Treasurer's office, and Carol Bicking's position will be reduced to part time. (Denise Veselicky will continue on in her current position in the Western Office.) An Implementation Team began meeting this past week to help us discern the steps that we need in order to launch this new model of ministry in 2011. A key component of this effort will be a series of gatherings throughout the region in the coming few months to allow everyone the opportunity to hear our vision for how the new ministry model will help us fulfill our regional vision and provide outstanding ministry to our churches. The schedule for these meetings will be shared in the next few weeks and we hope that you will make it a point to attend one of them.

Change is challenging for all of us, and while the coming months will involve significant readjustments in how we partner together for the cause of Christ, we are confident that the LORD will guide us as we move forward. We would covet your prayers for the staff, the Implementation Team and the members of the Regional Board as we continue to seek God's Wisdom and Direction for the decisions and details that are before us.

This new staffing configuration represents the most sweeping changes in our Region's structure in the last 30-40 years and will require new ways of thinking about ministry as well as new ways of carrying it out. This kind of change is always a challenge. But those of us who have been "sitting with" these changes and thinking through the implications over the last few months see the possibilities for renewed ministry across the region and are catching a sense of excitement about what God has for us as a Regional Family.

Trusting in His Provision and grateful for the Partnership we share,



Reverend Mary Lewis
President, ABCOPAD Regional Board



Reverend Frank Frischkorn
Executive Minister, ABCOPAD