

November 10, 2011

Greetings to the Churches, Pastors and Leadership Learning Communities of the American Baptist Churches of the Northwest,

As you are aware, we, the ABC of the Northwest, are in a time of exciting transition following the Region-wide Assessment conducted in the second half of 2009 by Dr. Bill Hoyt. The findings of the assessment were presented at the Boise Biennial Celebration business meeting which convened on May 14, 2010. The report calls for continuing changes in the Region. A copy of the report has been posted at the ABCNW web site for your referral. While transition always includes stress associated with change please know that your Region Board is committed to supporting you throughout the forthcoming transition process.

Previously, we sent you a letter about how the restructure would impact the old "Area" model. Since that letter was sent out most "Areas" in the ABCNW have disbanded in favor of the changes recommended by the Region Assessment. By way of our assessment it became clear that, as a whole, this structure was no longer serving its purpose. Dr. Hoyt had reported to the board: "Areas no longer work. This was overwhelmingly evident from the information gathered in the online survey. Areas aren't what they used to be and they aren't ever going to be. They are an economic improbability if not an outright impossibility. There are now different and better ways to provide connection and resourcing."

This is a follow up to the previous letter written to explain the process for nominating and electing of Representatives from each geographical area to serve on the Region Board. During the transitional period of the Region restructure the Region Board feels that the election process can best be facilitated at the LLC level. With this in mind, the Region Board is asking the LLCs that reside within the boundaries of the old "Areas" to vote to elect these Representatives from within their respective churches. All nominations will be subject to Region guidelines including acceptance of the Commonly Held Essentials, Resolution on Human Sexuality, and affirmation of the new structure and vision of the ABCNW. To this end, the Personnel and Nominating Committee of the Region Board will work in conjunction with the LLCs and the Executive Minister to assure that the above guidelines are met.

For the time being, if there is more than one LLC within a given area boundary they would need to divide the vote between them. For example, the Inland Northwest Area has three LLCs. These LLCs would establish a rotation by which each one would have a vote for a Representative over time. In the old model, each Area had two Representatives who served a three-year term. If the Eastern Montana LLC and the Spokane Area LLC vote on the first two Representatives from within their geographical area, then the Central Washington LLC would have a vote on the following cycle and one of the previously mentioned LLC's would not vote. As you can see, this system has the potential to increase the actual involvement from a greater geographical area.

In order to give these votes bylaw authority, each Pastor in each LLC will be asked to sign a

form acknowledging that they are casting a vote on these Representatives. This form will be kept on record at the Region office and updated whenever an LLC is eligible to vote.

The Area elected Representatives to the Region Board who are currently in office will continue to fill out their term and this new system will begin when their terms expire. This timing will differ based upon the dates at which the currently serving Representatives finish their terms.

If you have any questions regarding the upcoming changes, the suggestions of the assessment or the decisions reported at our Biennial meeting please feel free to contact your Area Representative to the Region Board or the Region staff.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jim Amend
President, ABC of the Northwest Region Board

Dr. Charles Revis
Executive Minister, ABC of the Northwest