

Eastern Regional Association



www.aceasternregion.org

CONVENTION REPORT

Dear Brothers and sisters,

It is so good to have this opportunity to report to you all about our churches across the Region. We serve a wonderful group of churches and the fantastic people who make them up. You strengthen me for the work of ministry and the battle we each face against our adversary the devil.

The Apostle Paul worked diligently during his lifetime to come alongside Barnabas and establish other Elders at the church in Antioch, making it possible for them to go on their missionary journeys. Over three trips around the Roman Empire, they were able to make many disciples, face much persecution, and establish many churches who multiplied on their own even after Paul left. What a wonderful calling that impacted the network of churches.

My friendships, my encouragement, and my joy, come from serving the Lord and His people through the relationships I have. From my childhood friends who are serving in ministry (Josh, Matt, and Heath) to my monthly breakfast club of today (Dave, Randy, and Steve), to boating on the lake with Pastor Bruce, to going on vacation with Chris and Melanie. I love being in relationship with our people. I'd like to thank each and every one of you for the time we get to spend together as part of the family of God. You are a special gift to me, and I pray that you are to one another.

STATISTICS

of Pastoral Transitions in past year – 16

of Prayer Meeting Attendees – 6 avg.

of pastors providing ministers reports – 57 ordained, 12 non-ordained

of churches providing reports – 30 out of 72

of people newsletter is sent to - 502

of people reading newsletter monthly - 204 avg. (Much higher than National Avg.)

27% of No. American Churches give to UM and PC

35 % give to UM and PC in the Eastern Region

Churches without leadership - 5 Sr. Pastors, 2 Youth Pastors

Bookkeeper

We are still in search of a bookkeeper to serve the Region. Missie is filling in so that reporting can continue.

ERA Board

I have an incredible board that I work with. I meet monthly with our treasurer John Jones. Our President and Vice-President attend Prayer Meeting almost weekly, and I meet with President Karl almost weekly. Other members are very good about reading reports, making time for meetings, and being proactive toward the mission of the Region.

SECRETARY

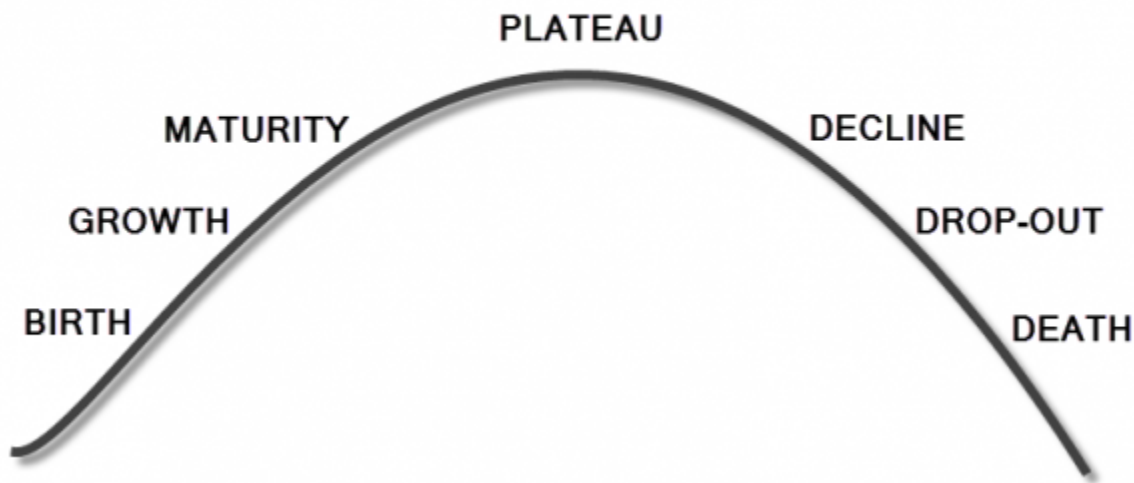
I have worked with Missie for a couple of years now. She does an exemplary job. Showing up on time and doing everything I put on her to-do list. She and I work at keeping a distance between work and home, and she does a good job of this. She does a fantastic job on the phone, Facebook, newsletter, card ministry, and building relationships with our Pastors. We are blessed to have her on staff!

PRAYER

Those of us who regularly attend the Friday prayer meeting have decided to do a survey and choose a new time to meet. We have settled on Tuesday from 9-10am. I am hoping that we will have better attendance and attend to the important ministry of prayer.

I would also like to have a Concert of Prayer in the winter or spring of next year. This would be a time for sharing a meal. Then having a time for worship and focused prayer together. I'd like to make a weekend of it and do a Friday night at a church in the Eastern part of the Region and then a Saturday in the West.

LIFE-CYCLE OF A CHURCH



The civil war took place from 1861 to 1865. Most of our Conferences in the Eastern Region came into existence between 1840 and 1860. That means that many of our churches have been in existence since before the civil war. This means that most of our churches are 150 years old and many of them are either in plateau or decline and all too many are between decline and death. We have two choices. Either get a new start and a second life for our churches, or give birth to new churches.

History of evangelism in the Region:

From AC History by Albert C. Johnson

“At the session, held at Yarmouth, September 1858, an earnest discussion of plans for further and more extensive work in the State, was followed by the adoption of a report or plan which directed the Conference to appoint a committee of three who should be authorized to employ one or more evangelists to preach “the Gospel of the kingdom in new fields and destitute places.” Prof. C. F. Hudson was one of the preachers at this conference and served on the committee which drafted the above plan of mission effort. Eld. I. C. Welcome was secretary of the conference and was chairman of the standing Committee appointed to carry out the plan as adopted. In line with this effort Dr. O. R. Fassett was chosen “State Missionary,” by the conference in 1861, and he proposed and entered upon a vigorous State-wide evangelistic campaign, and he appealed to every living Adventist in the State to aid the work. He labored for a year with untiring zeal and good

results. In 1862 the annual conference was held in the Second Advent Hall, Portland, and encouraging reports of progress in the cause were made. Eld. R. R. York was appointed evangelist for the ensuing year and Eld. Thomas Smith of Bangor was also chosen to serve three months, his labors to be continued if the funds would allow. In these earnest efforts we evidently have the beginning of those activities which later resulted in the organization of the Maine State A. C. Mission Society." p. 219

Starting churches

It's great that we have invested in the health of our Pastors in some Conferences. But if we don't have any people attending our churches, we won't need Pastors. We have a great history as reported by A. C. Johnson of sending out evangelists to proclaim the gospel. We can see how the bell curve has taken effect by having a great start that was eventually diminished.

I'd like to see us invest our resources to put together a team(s) so that they can work with me to work with local churches to plant across the Region.

ELDERSHIP

I believe that we need to encourage our churches to become elder led for several reasons. Having leadership teams instead of solo pastors makes our leadership stronger. Throughout the New Testament, Jesus sent out the disciples 2 x 2. Paul follows this up by always traveling with a partner. Being Elder led instead of congregationally led is an important way to go. It allows us to have spiritually mature people leading us instead of all members. This is something that all of the Superintendents have discussed and are in agreement on. We believe that it is the best answer to the dilemma we face regarding the shortage of Pastors in our ranks. We should come to agreement on this approach and then work toward convincing our churches to move in this direction. The time is coming and may already be here when we need to learn to work with Elders, Deacons, and Leading Women instead of solo Pastors.

CHURCHES NEEDING LEADERSHIP

We have 9 churches in need of full or part time leadership. 2 of these are youth leaders. I am working with several of them to supply the help they need.

Vision and Mission statement

MISSION

To be a growing network of healthy churches.

This will be accomplished by: Establishing Disciples
 Establishing Leaders
 Establishing Churches

My Leadership roles is like that of Paul. Developing leaders, planting churches, and caring for the health of our congregations. This ministry is different, but just as important as that of a local church Shepherd.

GOALS

- Identify and hire a bookkeeper
- To encourage our churches to become Elder led
- To develop a team of evangelists to spread the gospel
- Identify an assistant to help with property and deeds
- Identify a ministry assistant to lead regional mission trips
- Have a concert of prayer

CLOSING

Almost every great book or movie ends on a positive note. In the Disney movie collection Belle, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, and Ariel get their princes. Ariel gets her feet, and her prince. Bambi and Simba get their loves. Each of the Star Wars movies ends on a positive note with the team, the love relationship, or the heroes of the force.

In the Bible, those who know Jesus will similarly end on a positive note, only better. They will live in relationship with God their father and Christ their brother as the bride of Christ and will live for eternity in relationship with the family of God. As good as any book or movie, life with Christ is infinitely better. In this version, we will never pass away, never suffer with illness, financial loss, or heartache. We will be together forever and will never face disunity for any reason. I love each one of you and pray God's best in the coming year as we each do our part, working in our local ministries and together within our family of churches to be the best we can be for our Savior.