

## HISTORICAL MARKERS THE MINISTERS COUNCIL

- 1935**
- ☞ Ministers Council organized.
  - ☞ Office set up at Second Baptist Church, Chicago.
  - ☞ Membership 2100, Dues \$1.00 (50 cents to National Council, 50 cents to State Council).
  - ☞ The Ministers Council was organized to: Promote fellowship and provide counsel for its members; help pastors and missionaries to develop their spiritual and vocational efficiency; suggest helpful means for the exchange and settlement of pastors.
- 1936**
- ☞ State committees on ordination proposed.
  - ☞ Development of a course of study to raise clergy standards.
  - ☞ Sabbatical principle proposed.
- 1937**
- ☞ Code of Ethics for ministers adopted.
  - ☞ Resolution regarding ageism adopted (This was a response to a "church fad" to hire younger men as ministers rather than considering older experienced men.)
- 1938**
- ☞ A standard ordination procedure was proposed.
  - ☞ The Code of Ethics was published.
  - ☞ Book clubs were started. Each member would buy one book which would circulate through the club. The benefits would be that those with a limited budget could read several books for the cost of one book and the development of a network of communication and a stimulus to the self discipline of reading.
  - ☞ Proposed booklet for the work of pulpit committee.
- 1939**
- ☞ "The Pulpit Committee in a Baptist Church" and "Ordination to the Baptist Ministry" were published in cooperation with the National Council of Northern Baptist Men. Through the years these booklets have been revised but are still in use.
  - ☞ The Council officially became an associated organization with the General Council of the Northern Baptist Convention. The first financial support, \$500 was received from the denomination. This support has continued through the years.
- 1940**
- ☞ Close ties between the M&M Board and the Ministers Council were evident.
  - ☞ Programs begun to be developed for the rural church.
- 1943**
- ☞ Concerns were raised over a shortage of pastoral leadership created by the war.
  - ☞ There was a felt need for a pastoral newsletter.
- 1944**
- ☞ Pastors conferences begun at the American Baptist Assembly at Green Lake. These continued for many years.
- 1946**
- ☞ Pre-convention program for clergy started.
  - ☞ The need for a full-time director was addressed.
  - ☞ The need for a Trade Journal was expressed.
  - ☞ Concern expressed for the re-entry of military chaplains into the pastoral leadership.
- 1948**
- ☞ Suggested Ordination requirements: licensed for one year, approved by the local church, hold a college degree, and completed three years of theological study, and completed one year of active service.
  - ☞ First mention of a woman being active in Ministers Council business meetings (Mrs. Eva Henderson).
  - ☞ Home study course proposed.

- 1949**
- ☞ Baptist-Disciples of Christ Assembly
  - ☞ A plea for a joint meeting of the Roger Williams Fellowship and the Northern Baptist Fellowship. This was initiated due to the Fundamentalist controversy.
  - ☞ Pamphlet published on the Ministers Council.
  - ☞ Evangelism conference at Green Lake.
- 1950**
- ☞ Life memberships for retired ministers who had been active in the Council were established.
  - ☞ Free membership for newly ordained, later discontinued.
- 1951**
- ☞ Pastoral change study.
- 1952**
- ☞ A study of Social Security for clergy was initiated to determine the ministers eligibility for the program.
- 1954**
- ☞ Dr. Charles Carman was approved as one-half time Executive Director.
  - ☞ The Pastors Round Table was published by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. This was an information newsletter.
- 1955**
- ☞ The establishment of the Green Lake Conference to coincide with the annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Ministers Council with the hope that state presidents would attend both meetings.
- 1956**
- ☞ Open forum discussion meetings: current issues.
  - ☞ Placement plan on a pilot basis.
  - ☞ Development of a kit for newly elected state Council officers.
  - ☞ A professional magazine proposed, the purpose of which would be means of communication among ministers and theological discussion. M&M volunteered financial help with the project which would be published four-five times per year.
  - ☞ Objectives and goals reiterated and specific methods for fulfillment were suggested.
- 1957**
- ☞ The areas of responsibility of the Ministers Council to the local Councils were defined.
  - ☞ Concerns about placement were addressed.
  - ☞ **PASTOR** published.
- 1958**
- ☞ The Rev. Fred Erion was appointed as one-half time Director.
- 1959**
- ☞ Proposed reorganization of the ABC. Concern was expressed about the proposed loss of influence by the Ministers Council in the reorganization.
- 1960**
- ☞ The position of Executive Director was full time.
  - ☞ Pastoral Information Bureau was established.
- 1961**
- ☞ Pastors Procurement Parlays were begun.
- 1962**
- ☞ The identity of clergy as represented by clothing (clerical collar) was an issue.
- 1963**
- ☞ Code of Ethics for the congregation was proposed.
  - ☞ Study on Pastoral Placement was begun.
  - ☞ Educational aid fund was discussed.
  - ☞ Credit unions were discussed.

- 1964**
- ☞ Certified lay ministers program was established.
  - ☞ Pastor/Church agreement was proposed.
  - ☞ Dr. Charles Forsberg became Associate Executive Director.
- 1965**
- ☞ The Pastoral Exchange Program with Great Britain was inaugurated.
  - ☞ A new Code of Ethics for Church and Pastor was developed in conjunction with American Baptist Men and American Baptist Women.
- 1966**
- ☞ Charles N. Forsberg appointed the Executive Director of the Ministers Council to succeed Fred Erion.
  - ☞ Suggested Minister Church Agreement pamphlet developed and printed.
- 1967**
- ☞ Regional model of a "Center for the Ministry" proposed by the Commission on the Ministry with the Ministers Council's full support.
- 1968**
- ☞ The Council voted to become a professional society, emphasizing "Excellence" in ministry as an objective for all clergy.
- 1969**
- ☞ The Council working in cooperation with the Commission on the Ministry and the National Boards helped develop the American Baptist Personnel Services.
- 1970**
- ☞ President's (Roger Fredrikson) Conversations with pastors across the ABC.
- 1971**
- ☞ The National Ministers Council Senate came into being succeeding the former Board of Directors.
- 1972**
- ☞ The Ministers Council voted to become an advocate for Women in Ministry.
  - ☞ President's (Gene Bartlett) conversations with pastors across the ABC.
- 1974**
- ☞ Welcomed the new Ministers Council of the ABC of the South and this included ByLaw provision for the Vice President of the South (six Vice Presidents instead of five).
- 1976**
- ☞ SWIM study authorized by the Ministers Council.
- 1977**
- ☞ Six Goal Statements adopted by Senate - which included Advocacy, Women in Professional Ministry, Collegiality, and Placement.
- 1979**
- ☞ SWIM study completed and adopted by the Commission on the Ministry.
- 1980**
- ☞ President's (William Keucher) Conversations with ABC clergy across the ABC.
  - ☞ Placement Consultation sponsored by the Commission on the Ministry, with the General Staff Council, American Baptist Association of Seminary Presidents, and the Ministers Council as participants.
  - ☞ **MINISTER**, redesigned and republished as a professional journal for American Baptist church leaders.
- 1981**
- ☞ Task Force on clergy Alienation study and report.
- 1982**
- ☞ National Convocation on Preaching held with co-sponsors: Board of National Ministries and the Ministers Council.
  - ☞ Recommended that Open Listing of vacant church position be made available to ABC church leaders.

- 1983** ☞ The Ministers Council president was accepted as a non-voting observer with voice on the Executive Committee of the General Board.
- 1984** ☞ Together in Ministry Conference held at Green Lake, sponsored by American Baptist Women, American Baptist Men and the Ministers Council.  
☞ National Pastors Convocation on Teaching held at Green Lake.  
☞ Plannaging training of first group of trainers completed.
- 1985** ☞ Celebration of 50th Anniversary of Ministers Council, along with the retirement of Charles N. Forsberg.  
☞ Commonality Study conducted.  
☞ Harley Hunt called to become the third Executive Director of the Ministers Council.
- 1986** ☞ Sponsored the Presidential Forums of Dr. Walter Pulliam in 1986-87.
- 1987** ☞ Changed the Code of Ethics provision regarding confidentiality, to seek to be responsive to ethical dilemmas such as those surrounding child abuse and confidentiality.  
☞ Biennial Ministers Council Event: "The Pittsburgh Preach Off" with Norman DePuy and Paul Nichols.
- 1988** ☞ Welcomed new Philadelphia Ministers Council.  
☞ Adopted Sexual Harassment Guidelines.  
☞ Adopted the Together in Ministry document (jointly with American Baptist Women's Ministries and American Baptist Men).
- 1989** ☞ Welcomed new Ministers Councils in Los Angeles and Washington, DC.  
☞ Biennial Ministers Council Event on "Sexual Ethics in Ministry" with Karen Lebacqz.  
☞ Changed the ByLaws to make the process for changing the Code of Ethics more rigorous--requiring a two-thirds vote of the Senate and a ratification vote within two years of two thirds of the constituent Councils.
- 1990** ☞ Published "The Stained Glass Fishbowl: Strengthening Clergy Marriages," a product of the Healthy Marriage Task Force.  
☞ Together for Growth brochure (to help start clergy support groups) developed by the Pastor-to-Pastors Task Force.  
☞ Over 50 Task Force documented the impact of ageism on the pastoral selection process.  
☞ Welcomed new Ministers Council for Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors.
- 1991** ☞ Biennial Ministers Council Event: "Bioethics in Ministry" with Marian Gray Secundy.  
☞ Revision of "The Suggested Minister Church Agreement" brochure to bring it in conformity with changes in the tax laws and other issues.  
☞ Welcomed new Ministers Council of Metro New York.  
☞ Adopted the recommendation of the Involuntary Termination Task Force, "Conflict Mediation and Conflict Intervention: A Suggested Process."
- 1992** ☞ New Humanity Task Force developed "Bridges of Partnership" program--to develop understanding, mutuality, and partnership between colleagues in ministry across ethnic barriers. Uses a covenant group model. The Task Force also developed "Celebrating Our Identity"--a process for an ethnic group to explore and affirm the uniqueness and gifts of their tradition.  
☞ Managed the President's Dialogues of Dr. James Scott in 1992-93.  
☞ Compensation Task Force developed and published the Compensation Workbook.

- 1993**
- ☞ In March Harley Hunt left the Ministers Council as Executive Director
  - ☞ Biennial Ministers Council event in San Jose, "Human and Spiritual Intimacy," Aidsand Wright-Riggins, presenter.
  - ☞ Biennial Preaching Pavilions planned and staffed by the Ministers Council.
  - ☞ Gene Wright began serving as Interim Executive Director.
- 1994**
- ☞ The Futures Task Force presented revised ByLaws which among other things changed the basic structure of the Ministers Council from regional vice presidents to a committee structure.
  - ☞ Lodgment of the Ministers Council changed from being administratively related to the M & M Board to the Board of Educational Ministries.
  - ☞ Covenant of Administrative Relationship with BEM adopted by the Senate. Endowment provided by M & M to be administered by EM to provide for the Ministers Council staff and office needs.
- 1995**
- ☞ Pastor-to-Pastor final report issued.
  - ☞ The Ministers Council, along with National Ministries sponsored a pre-Biennial event, "Dialogue on Biblical Authority/Interpretation.
  - ☞ Led two Mission Encounters at the Biennial in Syracuse - New Dimensions in Worship.
  - ☞ Produced a new brochure, along with the Ministerial Leadership Commission and Women in Ministry, "Working Together We Can Make a Difference."
  - ☞ Called Dr. Kate (Penfield) Harvey to become the fourth Executive Director of the Ministers Council.
  - ☞ The Ministers Council celebrated its 60th anniversary.
- 1996**
- ☞ Significant input to Conference on Local Church Vitality for ABC staff.
  - ☞ Production of Dialogue Video on Homosexuality.
  - ☞ Established annual Ralph Garfield Schell Presidential Award for Excellence in Ministry.
  - ☞ Began working with *Baptists Today* board, newspaper for sharing Baptist stories across Baptist denominations.
- 1997**
- ☞ Adopted a new logo depicting colleagues together encircling the cross.
  - ☞ Published *Another Look at Bivocational Ministry* by Jimmy Reader.
  - ☞ Sponsored at Indianapolis a pre-Biennial by Robert Webber on worship, attended by 1000.
  - ☞ Compiled Biennial *American Baptist Quarterly* issue, "Holding on to the Gospel and Each Other."
- 1998**
- ☞ Convened a Common Ground dialogue meeting of executive committees of American Baptist Evangelicals and Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists.
  - ☞ Began two-year regional tour for conversations with ABCUSA President James Johnson.
  - ☞ Initiated *ministerscouncil.com* web site to resource ministerial leaders.
- 1999**
- ☞ Initiated Des Moines Biennial theme of Jubilee.
  - ☞ Sponsored pre-Biennial on Substantive Dialogue: A Tool for Congregations Dealing with Potentially Divisive Issues Without Becoming Divided, with Common Ground facilitator Adrienne Kaufmann.
  - ☞ Compiled Biennial *American Baptist Quarterly* on Jubilee.
  - ☞ Published brochure *Building up the Body: Sustaining and Improving the Professional Ministerial Leadership*.

- 2000**
- ☞ Provided key leadership for *God's Servants Together: Keeping Sabbath*, gathering for regional and national ABCUSA staff.
  - ☞ Produced *A Productive Partnership*, a 25-minute training video for pastoral relations committees.
  - ☞ Amended Bylaws to include on the Executive Committee two Senators elected by Regions.
  - ☞ Distributed a Senate pastoral letter on reciprocity among regions on recognition of ordination.
- 2001**
- ☞ Presented at Providence pre-Biennial hymn sing with newly commissioned hymn, *God Gives Us a Song*, and look at history with Ed Gaustad and Roger Williams.
  - ☞ Published *Together in Ministry* brochure as covenant model for congregation and pastor.
  - ☞ Published with MMBB an updated *Compensation Workbook*.
  - ☞ Compiled a General Board Executive Committee Task Force on the Care of the Ministry report.
  - ☞ Issued a statement on Vieques by the Senate, calling for cessation of US bombing of the Puerto Rico island as part of military preparation.
  - ☞ Provided a sabbatical for Executive Director Kate Harvey as a Harvard Merrill Fellow.
- 2002**
- ☞ Produced a brochure on *Healthy Habits for Ministerial Leaders*.
  - ☞ Produced two targeted brochures to resource the work of Ministers Councils, *Pointers for Programs* and *Tips for Treasurers*
  - ☞ Produced *Minister to Minister*, a devotional guide by and for ABC ministerial leaders. Colleagues have put words on paper expressive of faith convictions and struggles, growing edges and prayers.
  - ☞ Received a Valparaiso Project Grant of \$10,000 for the Valley Forge Ministers Council on the faith practice of honoring the body.
  - ☞ Awarded from the Lilly Foundation in a national competitive grants opportunity of "Sustaining Excellence in the Pastoral Ministry" a grant of \$1,959,600 for *Together in Ministry (TIM)*. The project seeks to further the stated mission of the Ministers Council in fulfillment of the call of II Timothy 1:6 "to fan into flame the gift of God."
- 2003**
- ☞ Planned move from Administratively Related Organization of the Board of Educational Ministries to temporary lodgment in the Office of the General Secretary.
  - ☞ Began process toward 501(c)(3) incorporation.
  - ☞ Presented a pre-Biennial event on Ministry to Millennials with Bart Campolo and John Polite.
  - ☞ Updated the Suggested Minister-Church Agreement
  - ☞ Formation of Greater Bay Area Ministers Council.
- 2004**
- ☞ Launched 153 funded collegial covenant groups through *Together in Ministry*, with 1,161 participants
  - ☞ Held Strong in the Lord national conference for ministerial leaders in Orlando
  - ☞ Received 501 (a)(3) tax exempt status
  - ☞ Formation of Evergreen Baptist Association Ministers Council
- 2005**
- ☞ Continued the formation of collegial covenant groups through the *Together in Ministry* project
  - ☞ Conducted a series of Jerusalem Councils around the country for discernment and dialogue on implications of differences over homosexuality on our common life
  - ☞ Began planning for "Wait on the Lord," a national conference on spiritual formation for ministers, April 17-20, 2006, at the Rosen Centre Hotel in Orlando
  - ☞ Celebrated the 70th birthday of the Ministers Council on July 1 at the ABC Biennial

- 2006**
- ☞ Held “Wait on the Lord” conference, April 17-20, 2006 in Orlando, FL.
  - ☞ Focused on strengthening constituent councils
  - ☞ Orientation Conference for seminarians and persons new to ABC ministry, Executive Director Kate Harvey preaching
  - ☞ Rapid Response voted – first use to address issues concerning Mission Center sale and relocation of ABC entities
  - ☞ Professional Effectiveness Committee developed a Learning Guide for the Covenant and Code of Ethics for ABC Ministerial Leaders  
(<http://www.ministerscouncil.com/WhoWeAre/CodeofEthicsLearningGuide.aspx>)
- 2007**
- ☞ Received Lilly Endowment Sustaining Pastoral Excellence Grant of \$979,800 for 2008-2012
  - ☞ An eighty-page issue of *Minister* magazine on the theme of Together in Ministry collegial covenant groups was published
  - ☞ A Together in Ministry DVD was produced to tell the story of collegial covenant groups
- 2008**
- ☞ Celebration of the first ethnic Ministers Council, el Concilio de Ministros Latinos de New Jersey
  - ☞ Transition at retirement Executive Director Kate Harvey and selection of Acting Executive Director
  - ☞ *Minister* magazine on transitions
  - ☞ Plans for a joint pre-Biennial event in Pasadena, June 2009, Leonard Sweet on Evangelism in Postmodernity; plans for sponsoring a young clergy dinner in Pasadena
  - ☞ Joe Kutter becomes Acting Executive Director of the Ministers Council effective September 1.
- 2009**
- ☞ A strong pre-Biennial program with Dr. Leonard Sweet that was sponsored with partners Interim Ministries, Women in Ministry, and Area Ministries.
  - ☞ Renewed focus on strengthening constituent councils utilizing the Lilly Endowment grant and developed workshops utilizing “Community of Practice” insights.
  - ☞ *Minister*, now completely an electronic magazine, will be published 3 times a year under the guidance of the Communications Committee. The 2009 themes include - The Impact of the Proposed ABC Restructure on Local Ministry; The Significance of Community in Sustaining Ministry; and Nurturing a “Culture of Call” (to be published in the fall).
  - ☞ Planning “Together in the Lord,” a conference for ministers to be held January 4-7, 2010 in Orlando, FL.
- 2010**
- ☞ In partnership with the Office of General Secretary, we sponsored another national clergy conference in Orlando entitled “Together in the Lord.”
  - ☞ The major emphasis for the year was to encourage and strengthen constituent councils through workshops that utilize “Community of Practice” insights.
- 2012**
- ☞ Dr. Joe Kutter concludes his tenure as Executive Director of the Ministers Council.