



## MINISTERS COUNCIL NEWS YOU CAN USE – PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR NETWORKS

Joe Kutter, Acting Executive Director

April 2009

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### ~MY AGENDA

“What is your agenda for the Ministers Council? The question keeps coming around and it is a good question to answer.

As the Acting Executive Director, my primary task is to find ways to strengthen the constituent (the local) council. Eight months of travel and conversation have convinced me of the obvious; most of us experience Ministers Council through the work of our local council or we don't experience it at all. If the constituent council is effective, which is always the result of effective leadership, then our colleagues in ministry will experience Ministers Council as a good thing. When the experience with the constituent council is mediocre or worst, the Ministers Council is experienced as worth neither the dues nor the time.

Eight months in this job, following 39 years in congregations, has convinced me of what I have always believed. The national office is effective only as the constituent council is effective. It ultimately comes down to person to person and minister to minister relationships in the service of the cause of Christ and church.

Our mission statement names two foci for our work. The first is a “Deepening Our Spirituality”. We are called together, as colleagues in ministry, for the explicit purpose of an enhanced awareness of the Spirit, a closer walk with God, a growing discipleship to Jesus. We all know the ironic experience that the ministerial role does not always lead to a deeper personal spiritual journey. We are to be the antidote for one another to the damage that our role sometimes inflicts on our spiritual journeys.

Our second focus is to increase our effectiveness as leaders in Christ's church. Our task is to become better practitioners of the arts of ministry, more skillful in the craft of ministry. While the word “professional” does not quite fit who we are, the simple fact is that the fulfillment of our call demands the honing of a set of necessary skills. And the refusal to sharpen those skills represents a cheap and lazy response to the call that God has extended to us. Our second focus is to continually sharpen our skills as ministerial leaders.

We seek a deepened spirituality and to increase our effectiveness through the formation and nurture of a community of ministerial leaders. Collegial relationships are a necessity if we are to become the leaders that God is inviting us to become.

So this is my agenda: Stronger Constituent Councils, a deepening spirituality, continuous improvement of ministerial skills, all within the framework of community. Join me in the journey. *Joe Kutter*

### ~REV. VICTOR MERCADO

Rev. Victor Mercado went home to be with the Lord, Monday, April 27. He was surrounded by family and friends who trust in God's resurrection power and grace.

We in the Ministers Council will long remember him for his powerful advocacy for ministerial leaders and his strong commitment to the Ministers Council both in Puerto Rico and in the ABC-USA. He was profoundly helpful in growing the Ministers Council of Puerto Rico into a vital organization that seeks both, to paraphrase the Mission Statement, to deepen our spirituality and to increase our effectiveness as leaders in Christ's Church.

His Puerto Rican colleagues will know him as an effective pastor, a fearless prophet who spoke to the powers of oppression, and a person committed to the principles of our Baptist heritage.

Others of us will remember him better as the Area Director for Latin America and the Caribbean with the Board of International Ministries where he is honored as a strong champion of the missionaries under his care.

Some of us were blessed to know him through the work of the Ministers Council Senate and as a member of the steering committee of the Together in Ministry program.

Because of Victor Mercado, our world is a better place, the gospel is more clearly seen by some, and we who were privileged to know him have been blessed. *Joe Kutter*

## **~PRE-BIENNIAL IN PASADENA**

**June 25 and 26, 2009**

***With Dr. Leonard Sweet***

The Ministers Council in partnership with Interim Ministries, Women In Ministry, and the Area Ministers Group will host Dr. Leonard Sweet at two pre-biennial events.

Thursday afternoon, June 25, Dr. Sweet will speak to the topic "What's A Gutenberg Groupie in a Google World Going to Do?". All Members of the Ministers Council, ministers in Interim Ministries, members of the Area Ministers Group, and those participating in the Women in Ministry group are invited to participate. The cost will be \$30.00 per person.

Friday morning, June 26, Dr. Sweet will address all who wish to attend at the Ministers Council meeting. His title is "The Metaphorics of the 21st Century: Seven Metaphors that Can Transform the World". This event is made possible by the dues paying members of The Ministers Council.

To learn more about Dr. Sweet, go to his home page, [www.leonardsweet.com](http://www.leonardsweet.com) or if you wish to go directly to a biographical sketch, go to [www.leonardsweet.com/biocv.asp](http://www.leonardsweet.com/biocv.asp). He is a leading interpreter of the present age to the church and a teacher of the gospel to the present age.

## **~SCHOLARSHIP MONEY AVAILABLE**

The Financial Aid office in National Ministries is offering \$300 in Continuing Ed money for those persons who will be attending one of the pre-Biennial events in Pasadena. Again, the money is only available if you are planning to attend a pre-Biennial event. For information on eligibility and how to apply, please click on the link - [http://www.nationalministries.org/education/financial\\_aid/index.cfm](http://www.nationalministries.org/education/financial_aid/index.cfm) - When you request the form for scholarship money the form to use is Cultivating New Life.

## **~MINISTERS COUNCIL NEEDS YOU!**

If you are planning on attending the Biennial, the Ministers Council is looking for volunteers to help staff the display booth at the Mission Fair in the Pasadena Convention Center. Please sign-up **TODAY** at the link listed below or phone the Ministers Council Office (1-800-222-3872, extension 2334).

<http://www.doodle.com/w5xtdbadu6yaxfdm>

## ~MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY CONFERENCE EVENT

TOGETHER IN THE LORD  
Ministry Renewal Conference  
**Come to Orlando January 4-7, 2010!**

Presented by American Baptist Churches, USA  
To be held at the Wyndham Resort and Conference Center

Speakers and preachers include:

*Miroslov Volf (Yale Divinity School)*  
*Shane Claibourne (The Simple Way)*  
*Trinette McCray*  
*Marvin McMickle*

For registration and conference schedule visit this link -  
<http://www.ministerscouncil.org/Together%20in%20the%20Lord/TITLinfopage.aspx>

## ~JUDSON PRESS

In celebration of its 185th year of Christian publishing (1824-2009) and the 400th anniversary of our Baptist beginnings, Judson Press has released the third revised edition of the classic resource ***The New Life: Six Studies for New Baptists***. In addition to a foreword by Joe Kutter, this edition updates the content to reflect the questions and needs of a new generation. Five- and Ten-copy sets are also now available, providing a discount for quantity purchases.

Judson is also offering a new ***Baptist Celebration Collection*** as part of its anniversary celebration. This collection features 18 Baptist classics, a \$225 value, for only \$185.00. For a list of titles, [click here](#).

***The Audacity of Faith: Christian Leaders Reflect on the Election of Barack Obama*** is a rich and passionate compilation of sermons and essays from religious leaders across the Christian landscape, all reflecting on the historic 2008 election.

[\(Click to read more\)](#)

<http://www.abc-usa.org/news/2009/20090429a.htm>

~**BOOK REVIEW** - *Dr. Stephen Ott, Executive Director, Center for Career Development and Ministry Dedham, MA*

John P. Jewell, ***Wired for Ministry: How the Internet, Visual Media, and Other New Technologies Can Serve Your Church***, Brazos Press, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2004.

For those of us still pondering the difference between "upload" and "download," what to think about "podcasting" and other such technologies, this well written and readable book is a great help. The author's previous book ***New Tools for a New Century: First Steps in Equipping Your Church for the Digital Revolution***, is the best introduction I have seen to the technology revolution around us, giving us definitions of the terms, explaining in basic ways what these technologies actually do, and what their potential is for aiding ministry. He is the Director of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning at Dubuque Theological Seminary. This second book, more theological in nature, goes deeper in painting the potential usefulness and pitfalls of this technology. There are downsides to be considered! There is a time for "technology fasting." He writes about how organizational and educational ministries of your church can be enhanced by a considered use of technology. Guidelines and processes for utilizing technology are integrated with principles of Christian ministry, and the central work of proclamation and witness. There is great website information. It is rare to find books that explain terms and technologies (and the cautions) so clearly. These are useful books!

### **~TIP FOR SCHEDULING MEETINGS – Rev. Alan Newton, Executive Minister, Roc/Gen**

One of the greatest frustrations in serving on committees is scheduling meetings. The number of hours spent in the back and forth of date scanning through email or telephone is a great waste of time which could be devoted to other pursuits. The website [www.Doodle.com](http://www.Doodle.com) is a free service which greatly facilitates a group or committee in finding a mutual date. The convener sets up the doodle then emails the web connection for that meeting to all participants. The result is that everyone can see the mutual dates highlighted in green.

### **~WHY SHOULD WE GIVE?**

The easy answer to the above question is that it is a Biblical mandate. There are countless Scriptures, both in the Old and the New Testament, that make our obligation clear.

However, as with many Biblical mandates, the benefits to the obedient follower go well beyond simply following the rules. As Don Campbell writes in *Taking the Stew Out of Stewardship*, many givers experience "the life change experienced by godly commitment to sacrificial giving or the sense of joy in giving and being part of something exciting and growing." To give to a church usually increases the sense of community felt by the giver, and his/her sense of belonging grows. As with many of God's commands, this one benefits the doer at least as much as anyone else.

*Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7*

### **~REMEMBER US!**

When planning your estate, please remember The Ministers Council.

### **~HELP US KEEP YOU INFORMED**

The hard reality about this newsletter is this: Our email mailing list is not as complete as we would wish. But you can help and your help we ask. Please forward this to your constituencies and friends. Most months, there is something helpful and when there is not, the delete button is only about an inch away and there will be little imposition impressed upon your friends. We appreciate your help. *Joe Kutter*

**THE MINISTERS COUNCIL OWNS THE DOMAINS [www.ministerscouncil.org](http://www.ministerscouncil.org) AND [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com). IF YOUR BROWSER ENCOUNTERS DIFFICULTY IN OPENING ANY OF THE LINKS IN THIS NEWSLETTER, GO DIRECTLY TO THE WEBSITE AND/OR FEEL FREE TO**

**CALL THE OFFICE FOR SPECIFIC NAVIGATION DIRECTIONS TO LOCATE THAT LANDING PAGE ON THE SITE.**

**~SIGN UP FOR FUTURE ISSUES OF NEWS YOU CAN USE FROM THE MINISTERS COUNCIL**

Sign up for future issues of the monthly Ministers Council newsletter by replying to this message from the email address to which you wish issues to be sent. Add the newsletter email address to your address book so that future newsletters will not go into your spam filter.

If you have news, ideas, events or websites from your Ministers Council to share with colleagues, please email to [joe.kutter@abc-usa.org](mailto:joe.kutter@abc-usa.org). The more we share with one another what works, the stronger we will all be.

**~MINISTERS COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Join the Ministers Council through your local constituent council. Contact information is posted on [www.ministerscouncil.org](http://www.ministerscouncil.org) under the WHO WE ARE link.**