



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

Joe Kutter, Acting Executive Director

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**MAY THE SEASON BRING YOU MUCH JOY!**

Click here to view this message as a webpage: <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/Periodicals/Publications.aspx>

### **~CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM JOE**

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

We are in the midst of a season of intensive ministry – an intensive calendar, intensive pastoral concerns, and an intensive gospel. This is the darkest season, the month of the shortest day of the year and this is the time when we celebrate the coming of the light in Jesus Christ. This is a time of enormous contradiction and a time for the revealing clarity of God's love. During these days of babble, we proclaim "the Word made flesh."

Sisters and Brothers in Ministry, for who you are and for all you do as Ambassadors for Christ, thank you. May the Creator of all that is peaceful and joyous grant you grace during this Holy Season.

Joe Kutter  
Acting Director  
American Baptist Ministers Council

### **~JOE KUTTER SPEAKS TO REGION EXECUTIVE MINISTERS COUNCIL**

The Region Executive Ministers Council recently extended a gracious invitation to Joe Kutter to speak with them. After expressing genuine gratitude for the experience, he began with this description of the Ministers Council focus.

As a Ministers Council, what is our focus? Our focus is:

- Ministers and Ministry
- The person and the vocation
- Healthy people and a vibrant sense of God's call

Our focus is on the practice of ministry, on the women and men who are called to that practice, and on the building of a community of ministerial leaders that is essential to the effectiveness of that practice.

He concluded his remarks with a request that we partner together to enhance our ministry.

To read his remarks, click on the link below.

<http://www.ministerscouncil.com/JoessWriting/documents/RemarkstotheRegionExecutiveMinistersCouncil.pdf>

## **~THE XTREME TEAM IS HEADED FOR EGYPT. DO YOU KNOW A YOUNG ADULT THAT COULD BE XTREME?**

The Xtreme Team, a program of International Ministries, ABC-USA is designed to connect young adults with the global mission of American Baptists. Our purpose is to grow a passion and interest in mission for the here and now as well as to cultivate global mission leadership for the future.

The Xtreme Team is called Xtreme for a reason! It's not your everyday mission trip. You see, the team members are not told what they will be doing on a daily basis, they are not told who else is going on the trip, they are not given any details about the trip at all! All they know for sure is the country they are visiting and when they will arrive and depart. The rest is a mystery! It's an intense faith walk in following Jesus to the Xtreme!

The team will start off their Xperience with an orientation in Detroit, MI. The team will then spend three weeks in Egypt Xperiencing mission firsthand then return for debriefing in Detroit and cap off their xperience by joining the ABWomen's conference in Columbus, OH for a couple of days. The entire Xperience goes from June 14 to July 13, 2010.

Each participant is requested to contribute \$4200\* which will cover all food, housing, transportation and accommodations costs while they are in Egypt as well as all transportation, housing and food for orientation and debriefing. The team member is also responsible for their airfare from their home to Detroit (RT) and Detroit to Egypt (RT). \*Cost may change due to exchange rates and other unavoidable circumstances.

The Xtreme Team has a website where you can find past team Xperiences, everything you need to apply, and more information about the program. You can also send us an email to request a DVD. The website is [www.xtremeteamonline.org](http://www.xtremeteamonline.org). To view a short video, go to : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmcswaterEpY>

Applications encouraged by February 28, 2010.

## **~RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE NICER – *Jeff Woods***

Recently, I had the opportunity to listen to an address by Robert Putnam offering advance insights on a new book due out next summer. As you may recall, Robert Putnam is the author of many books, include *Bowling Alone*, in which he coins the term "social capital" as the benefit to society that accrues when people help and support one another. The new book is based upon the finding that more than one-half of all social capital in the U.S. is created by church going people.

Over the last several years, Putnam and his team of researchers have discovered that people who go to church are significantly "nicer" than people who do not attend church. In other words, they add to the social capital of their community (not just church community) much more than people who do not attend church. For instance, people who attend church on a regular basis are about twice as likely to do the following as people who seldom or never attend church:

- \* join civic minded and community enhancing organizations
- \* return change from a retailer when too much is received
- \* give up their seat to someone else
- \* attend nonreligious public meetings
- \* assist with the poor and elderly

- \* volunteer at school
- \* give generously
- \* and vote

Interestingly, how many church friends a person has is an even better predictor of how “nice” someone is, as defined by the examples above, than how often the person goes to church.

People who are viewed as deeply spiritual are also considered to more trustworthy by others, even more trustworthy than the consider themselves to be.

The above findings are true even when controlling for over twenty additional variables including age, ethnicity, gender, neighborhood, income, interests, etc. Essentially, given two very similar people who differ only by the fact that one attends church and the other does not, the churchgoer will add much more social capital to the community.

### **~FAITHTRUST INSTITUTE - *Carolyn Scott Brown***

FaithTrust Institute is a national, multifaith, multicultural training and education organization with global reach. FaithTrust Institute provides religious leaders and community advocates with the tools and knowledge they need to address the religious and cultural issues related to abuse.

[www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org)

### **~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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