~RETREAT OR CONFERENCE? By Joe Kutter

In planning an event with the Ministers Council of the ABCCR, the regional Executive Committee made a decision to focus on having a “Retreat” rather than a “Conference.” What is the difference? I don’t know of a formal definitional difference but this is where we focused our attention.

The event focused on relationships and encounters. First, we developed processes to give serious time and attention to our relationship with God. I’ve given up on engineering or planning an encounter with God (i.e. You will meet God at 3:15 p.m. as we reflect on Acts 2. It doesn’t work!) but we can carve out time and space within which our relationship with God may be refreshed. We tried to attend to both the extroverts in conversational groups and to the introverts in times of solitude.

Second, we gave serious attention to our relationships with colleagues in ministry. In settings both formal and informal, meals and breaks are as important as the planned sessions, we made the space that allowed friendships to be made and nurtured. I can only guess at the hundreds of conversations that happened in which life, both personal and professional, were shared. New friendships were made and existing friendships were deepened.

Thirdly, many of us had fresh encounters with the center of our own being. In a variety of informal settings, memories where shared that revealed a fresh encounter with the soul shaping events and memories that helped to form the person’s life and attitude towards life. We did not program for these personal moments but they happened as colleagues spent time together.

Was there a dimension of “cognitive learning” present? Absolutely! But this may be the difference between a “Retreat” and a “Conference.” The “Conference” seems to focus on the “Cognitive” and may or may not expect relationships to happen in an accidental way. Conferences are a good thing and we need to continue to have them.

In the “Retreat,” the cognitive dimension becomes a partner with the relational. Why is this important for ministerial leaders? We know that ministerial identity and ministerial skills are best honed within the context of relationships. More often than not, it’s a significant relationship or a significant cluster of relationships that brings us to Christ, nurtures us in Christ, and shapes our skills as ministerial leaders.

In my experience, conferences that impart information separated from a relational context are generally ineffective as agents for improvement or change. When the question is asked, was the information applied, the answer is usually “No.”

So my observation, subject to your scrutiny, is this: There are times when we need to focus on the information. There are times to focus on the relationships. But most of the time, we need to focus on both.
~FANNING THE FLAME CONFERENCE – MAY 24-27, 2010

For information on the Fanning the Flame Conference please click on the link below.


~WOMEN TOGETHER: LIFTING AND ENCOURAGING ONE ANOTHER; A CONFERENCE FOR FEMALE CLERGY

Women Together: Lifting and Encouraging One Another; a Conference for Female Clergy will be held August 19-20, 2010 at Prospect Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit, MI. Please consider attending. This is a great opportunity for fellowship and learning with other women in ministry! For more information click on the link below.


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~CONFERENCE FOR CHURCH MUSICIANS

The Fellowship of American Baptist Musicians Conference for Church Musicians will be held at the Green Lake Conference Center, Green Lake, WI, July 17-24, 2010. Conferees of all ages are able to work with nationally and internationally acclaimed clinicians in ensemble and workshop settings. Choral, handbell, instrumental, and worship workshops are designed to further educate and train those involved in church music leadership as well as congregation members who just love to make music! In addition to daytime activities, the conference features six evening concerts.

Go to www.fabm.com for more information and to register online or by mail.

~MONEY AT CHURCH: CAN YOU SEE THE TRIANGLES?

Triangles are everywhere in church life. A triangle occurs when the relationship between two people becomes troubled, and a third person (or group) is pulled in to manage the anxiety between the two. Given the high-anxiety nature of money in church life, we can expect triangles to show up frequently. To read more click on the link.....

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~HELP US KEEP YOU INFORMED

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THE MINISTERS COUNCIL OWNS THE DOMAINS www.ministerscouncil.org AND 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.

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

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