



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

Joe Kutter, Executive Director

February 2011

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### ~THE NEC INITIATIVE - A REFLECTION - Joe Kutter

The old contemporary song says that “It only takes a spark to get a fire going.” I’ve just sat with the members of our National Executive Council (NEC), which includes the General Secretary and the Executives of The American Baptist Home Mission Societies, The Board of International Ministries, and MMBB as well as the Executive Director of American Baptist Women’s Ministries. The NEC invited about 15 of us, including Regional Executive Ministers, local Pastors and me as the Executive Director of the Ministers Council to sit for a day and talk about the future of our life together as a denomination.

With Alan Roxburgh and Greg Van Gelder (Missional Church Network) serving as our consultants, we talked about engaging our mission as the Church of Jesus Christ in the days and years to come. The great blessing of the event is that it was wonderfully free from talk about restructuring and budget-covenants. Instead, using some of the language and insights of “Adaptive Change” and “The Missional Church,” we talked about things that are no more and things that may or may not be tomorrow and how to be faithful in the midst of a time when the future is largely unknown.

A day is not nearly enough to engage the questions but I came away with the feeling that something new of the Spirit may be blowing in our midst. It was as healthy and positive a conversation as I have encountered in my denominational life. Our leaders may see through the glass darkly but they have forged a consensus among themselves that this is the time to lead and to engage their tasks in a different way, with a different spirit. As each one said in one way or another, “We know that whatever we do, we must do it together.” It is the right spirit and the right message for our time and I am grateful for it.

You and I know that some sparks end up as ash on the floor. But once in a while a spark catches on and a flame is ignited and then the flame grows into a fire. It may be that this is the time. I fervently hope that it is.

Say a prayer. There is something different and hopeful in this new conversation.

### ~ARE YOU DOING SOMETHING FOR YOURSELF IN LENT? – Margaret Marcuson Vice President Spiritual and Personal Wholeness Committee

Baptists have not always observed Lenten practices, but I’ve found it valuable to undertake some kind of daily discipline. Giving up coffee or ice cream have been ways to remind myself that God is bigger than my daily indulgences! But you don’t have to give something up. During a difficult year, I made my Lenten practice doing something nice for myself every day.

Here are a couple of suggestions:

1. Add some additional daily prayer or spiritual reading. Sacred Space, <http://sacredspace.ie/>, offers a daily prayer/reflection guide. Prayers are available in a number of languages, including Spanish. Another option is The Daily Office, <http://dailyoffice.wordpress.com/>, which you can read online or sign up for e-mails. (It also has a Facebook group).

2. Do something small to help yourself be healthier physically or emotionally. Take a 10-minute walk, read something funny, spend five minutes talking with your spouse about something that is not church-related.

Jeff Savage, Ministers Council President, has found Lent to be a time to “lie fallow, so that you are preparing for new life, new growth.” He tries to find something to do or to give up that fosters that experience. One year his church, First Baptist Church of Springfield, OR, let their congregational business “lie fallow” through Lent. “We had no committee meetings. All we did was worship and Bible study, but no business,” Jeff says. This was one of his most meaningful experiences of Lent.

May this season of Lent be not simply a time of frantic preparation for Easter, but also a time of renewal for you personally.

## **~THE MINISTERS COUNCIL – IS IT THE BEST KEPT SECRET IN THE ABCUSA?**

To view or download this PowerPoint Presentation created by the Membership & Constituency Committee chaired by Vice President Shakespeare Osorio, click the link below.

[http://www.ministerscouncil.org/WhoWeAre/documents/WhyJoinMinistersCouncil\\_000.ppt](http://www.ministerscouncil.org/WhoWeAre/documents/WhyJoinMinistersCouncil_000.ppt)

## **~ROY MEDLEY MESSAGE BOARD – Joe Kutter**

Roy Medley, in his current "Message Board" has offered some observations and "hunches" about ministry and church. I commend them to you for reflection. Click on the link below to read more.

<http://www.abc-usa.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=M3qGBUGOI%2fc%3d&tabid=36>

## **~TAX GUIDE FOR MINISTERS FILING 2010 RETURNS**

We encourage you to take advantage of this free resource available through your MMBB membership. It provides insight into issues clergy need to consider when filing, written by an acknowledged expert in the field. You can find this helpful guide.

[Read more>>](#)

## **~JUDSON PRESS RELEASES NEW IMMIGRATION RESOURCE WITH BLOG TOUR**

A virtual book tour will launch the release of *Listen to the Children: Conversations with Immigrant Families*, a new bilingual resource by American Baptist Elizabeth Conde-Frazier. *Listen to the Children* will be featured on more than a dozen blogs and websites from March 1–8, 2011. Participants include high profile sites such as Citizen Orange, Immigration and the Church, Undocumented.tv, ImmigrationProf, and Latino Leadership Circle. Bloggers will offer reviews and reflections on the book, and feature guest posts and interviews with the author.

More information about the book and blog tour can be found at [www.judsonpress.com/blogtour.cfm](http://www.judsonpress.com/blogtour.cfm) and the book can be ordered by calling Judson Press at 800-458-3766 or visiting [www.judsonpress.com](http://www.judsonpress.com).

## **~CHILDREN IN POVERTY GRANTS**

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) is now accepting applications for its Children in Poverty (CIP) grants.

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

**~YOU ARE INVITED TO THE PREACHING PAVILLION OFFERED BY THE  
MINISTERS COUNCIL AT THE BIENNIAL SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO JUNE 24-26,  
2011**

You will have the opportunity to hear six of our excellent American Baptist preachers over a three hour period. Taken together, the six preaching-worship sessions will provide an opportunity to hear the gospel in a way that portrays the rich diversity of our American Baptist family. Plan to join us in San Juan.

[Click here for the schedule.](#)

**~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.**

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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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