



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

Joe Kutter, Executive Director

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~TIM RETREAT FOR PASTORS WITH BURMESE REFUGEE/IMMIGRANT MINISTRIES

It was an honor to serve as one of the leaders of the retreat described below. Many thanks to Beth Fogg for writing the article.

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS), in partnership with the Ministers Council and the Burma Refugees Task Force, sponsored the “Together in Ministry [TIM] Retreat for Pastors with Burma Refugee/Immigrant Ministries” March 16-18, 2011, at the Mission Center in Valley Forge, Pa.

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

“It is at a gathering of colleagues such as this that lets me know that I am not alone.” “This has been one of the best ABC events I have ever attended, and I have attended more than you and I can count.” “The conference was a needed piece of encouragement for me at just the right time. Talking with others dealing with similar issues and knowing we are in this together is a wonderful help. Knowing that ABC-USA considers this important is also very positive.” “The thing I appreciated the most was the opportunity to hear other pastors share issues that I was also dealing with. In my mind I thought maybe I was the only one who felt like they were real problems.” These and other similar comments were made after a March 16-18 meeting of a national group of American and Burma pastors working in congregations doing ministry with Burma refugee immigrants. Meeting in Valley Forge, this group was the result of a partnership between the Ministers Council, the American Baptist Home Mission Societies and the Burma Refugees Task Force.

Together in Ministry (TIM) is a way of helping pastors enhance ministry and personal health through peer support groups. Funded by a Lilly Endowment Inc. grant eight years ago, this program of the Ministers Council has served over 2,300 pastors meeting in more than 225 groups. These groups meet regularly, usually face-to-face. Each can be described as collegial, covenantal and clergy. TIM made this coming together of pastors across cultural lines a possibility.

Many Burma refugee immigrants arrive in the US as Baptists already. Many of our American Baptist churches have been revitalized by the addition of these Burma brothers and sisters. Yet the rubbing of two different cultures is sure to cause small tensions and concerns.

There were a number of powerful moments during the shared time. Ron Carlsen shared of his work with the missional church model. The times of Lectio Divina reinforced the sense of God's call to these pastors at this time. The pastors were able to engage with each other in the presence of the living God. There were extended conversations on ministry realities that commonly exist in congregations which are shared by both the American and the Burma pastors. Each shared what they have heard from each other and realized that they are not alone in this unique ministry.

Six groups of 5 – 7 pastors have agreed to continue the conversations for at least a year. They will support each other as they work together as the hands and feet of Christ in their own neighborhoods and beyond.

One attendee reported, “Mang Sonna told a story of being invited into a delivery room by a mother, whose husband couldn’t make it in time. He told of witnessing a new birth in his congregation and the privilege of being invited into the process. It occurred to our group that this is what is happening with this group of leaders – a new birth of ministry and God has invited us into the room. To God be the glory.”

~THE NEW NORMAL

“The New Normal” is a pre-Biennial event for church leaders that will reflect on the impact of culture on ministry. The Ministers Council, ABC Region Staff, Mission Resource Development and American Baptist Women in Ministry offer this opportunity to learn about coping with current cultural changes in the day-to-day work of ministry. “The New Normal” will precede the American Baptist Biennial on Thursday afternoon, June 23 and Friday morning, June 24, in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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

~BLOGSPOT FOR LENT – *Rev. Cheryl Dudley*

This blogspot is provided by four members of the Sister Other Outside Network (SOON) Together in Ministry covenant group, and three others. One member of the group felt inspired to prompt this work from the group so we are using informal and formal networks to share it. Please click on the link: <http://journeytothecross-2011.blogspot.com/2011/03/introduction.html>

~WOMEN IN MINISTRY

Over a year after our January meeting at the Mission Center, we have made a great deal of progress for American Baptist Women in Ministry. The Steering Committee developed a new strategic approach to ABWIM work (see www.abwim.org) and it was reviewed and affirmed by various ABC entities, including the General Board. A search committee was formed and has been hard at work on the process of finding a new ABWIM national director. We hope that we will be able to present our new national director at the Women in Ministry Breakfast in San Juan. We would love to have a good turnout at that breakfast. For more information please click on the link below.

<http://www.ministerscouncil.org/WIM%20Resources/documents/ABWIMbreakfastnotice3-22.pdf>

~WOMEN IN MINISTRY CONFERENCE

Women Together in Ministry of Greater Cleveland presents Empowering and Encouraging Women in Ministry – a conference for female clergy, August 26-27, 2011. For registration and conference schedule please click on the link below.

<http://www.ministerscouncil.org/WIM%20Resources/documents/WTIMConferenceRegistrationBrochure2011.pdf>

~ABHMS TO BRING PROMINENT SPEAKER TO BIENNIAL

Dr. J. Alfred Smith Sr. will bring his message of “Hope in Troubled Times” to the American Baptist Churches USA Biennial in Puerto Rico as speaker at the “Discipleship, Community and Justice Breakfast” sponsored by American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) on Sunday, June 26.

Noted for his legacy of leadership, ministry and social justice, Smith is a renowned scholar, an acclaimed preacher and an accomplished author of more than 16 books, including *Speak Until Justice Wakes: Prophetic Reflections from J. Alfred Smith, Sr.* He is pastor emeritus of Allen Temple Baptist Church,

Oakland, Calif., professor of Preaching and Church Ministries at American Baptist Seminary of the West, and past president of American Baptist Churches of the West and the Progressive National Baptist Convention. An advocate of peace and righteousness, Smith speaks out for the poor, the downtrodden, the left-outs and the left-behinds and against such injustices as South African Apartheid.

For more information about the breakfast and other ABHMS activities planned for the Biennial, visit the ABHMS [Website](http://www.abhms.org) at www.abhms.org.

~YOU ARE INVITED TO THE PREACHING PAVILION 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.](#)

~JUDSON PRESS

Autism & Alleluias by Kathleen Deyer Bolduc and Tending to Eden: Environmental Stewardship for God's People by Scott Sabin have each been named finalists for ForeWord Review's 2010 Book of the Year Awards. Representing more than 350 publishers, these two Judson Press finalists were selected from 1400 entries in 56 categories.

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

~HOW DO YOU GET LESS ANXIOUS ABOUT CHURCH FINANCE – *Dr. Margaret Marcuson*

In my years as a pastor, I found that I became anxious about money more quickly than almost any other aspect of church life. I tossed and turned over the difficult financial conversations, including the ones about my salary, more than anything else. And I wasn't the only one in the congregation who worried about the money – lay leaders were happy to join right in, too. [Read more>>](#)

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~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*

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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. The more we share with one another what works, the stronger we will all be.

~MINISTERS COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

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