



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

Joe Kutter, Executive Director

January 2012

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~THE SEARCH PROCESS PROGRESS REPORT

The Search Committee received 17 applications for the position of Executive Director of the Ministers Council. Applications are no longer being received. Meeting in Orlando, during the “New Land” conference, the committee gave the information careful and prayerful consideration. Several persons will be contacted for continuing conversation. Communication will come from the OGS Director of Human Resources, Johnson Eapen and the chair of the committee, Rev. Alice Greene. (Please do not contact Joe Kutter or Sue Sechrist for information. What is reported here is all we know and we’ll have to refer you to Mr. Eapen).

The plan is to present a candidate for the position to the Ministers Council Senate which meets August 11 – 14, 2012 in Green Lake. During that meeting, the Senate will vote its decision on the nominee.

In the meantime, the search committee will continue in conversations with potential candidates seeking a shared discernment of that person who will best lead us in the next era of our life together.

I have been asked if the process is a sham for a decision already made. It’s a fair question and I’ll share my perception. I am not a part of the process and, like you, receive reports. Applications and nominations were received from the broad spectrum of our Council. The decision to continue conversation with several indicates a commitment on the committee’s part, to conduct a process of discernment that gives the very best opportunity to identify the right candidate for the job.

For that reason, I seek your prayers for the process. I plead for your prayers. In this process, both the candidates and committee need to be in a mode of discernment. Your prayers are a key component of that discernment process.

For your prayers and support, we are grateful.
Joe Kutter

~GO TO A NEW LAND A PERSONAL OBSERVATION - *Joe Kutter*

It’s been my privilege to participate in each of the last four ministers conferences in Orlando. With each conference, there were some things that were exceptionally good and other things that failed to engage, which is true of nearly every conference.

For me, the New Land Conference was among the best. As you consider the conference in 2014 and your budget of time and money you should ask why. For me, the joy was in the spirit of the event. In hallways, dining rooms, and meeting rooms, the sense of the room was, "We are glad to be here." More than any speaker, worship service or workshop, the uplifting spirit of the place and time was its hallmark. I feel good for having been there. As a young colleague said, (with some paraphrase) "I've attended ABC events and left with a sense of depression. About this one, I leave feeling good."

We had the right mix of speakers and leaders. Most of the platform and workshop leadership are ministerial leaders who engage their work among us. It was an experience of members of the family working with other members of the family to enhance the family ministry. As one ABC veteran expressed it, "There may have been moments when the presentations lacked a bit of polish but they had a spirit that said, 'I am really glad to be here spoken loudly and clearly.'" This is not to say that any presentation lacked genuine quality, they were all good, but the spirit was the defining quality.

The content was good, very good. I personally, if informally, asked several of the seminarians and new pastors to rank their experience of the orientation. Every seminarian knows how to offer a critique and there were critiques aplenty. But when asked to give it a number between one and five, five being the best, the number four came back more often than not. Not perfect but for an orientation, very, very good.

I loved the preaching and the lectures! Every sermon and lecture said, in one way or another, "God is alive and well and calling us to ministry." "We are being seriously challenged but we are not forsaken. God is just beginning anew with the ABCUSA." (My short summary)

The keynote lectures provided by Alan Roxburgh provided both content and inspiration as we move forward with the "Transformed by the Spirit" initiative. Alan's insistence that the process is theological and not just pragmatic, a matter of discernment rather than prescription, is both encouraging and challenging. I continue to be prayerful as we move forward.

A seminarian said that she leaves with hope grounded in the investment that the denomination made in her, to introduce her to the family. "Seeing this group of seminarians and new pastors has stirred my hope in our future," said a mature pastor who has attended conferences for as long as I.

I believe that this conference will prove to be a significant marker in our life together. We were led to engage our most difficult and frightening challenges and to remember that in the midst of those challenges lives the God who, in Christ, gives us life and ministry.

As a cheerleader, I would be tempted to say that God is moving in us. But I failed cheerleading class!

This I say with both hope and reservation. God is alive and moving and we have been invited to come along, to share the journey in all of its fullness and challenge. As with all invitations there is an RSVP.

~THOUGHTS FROM A PARTICIPANT

Ashley Whitaker

3rd Year M.Div. Student, Iliff School of Theology

Seminary Intern, Calvary Baptist Church of Denver

I was blessed to have the opportunity to attend the Orientation to American Baptist Life Conference this year. This conference is tangible proof of the ABCUSA's commitment to its seminarians and newly ordained ministers. I attend a seminary that is part of another denomination, and when I explained this amazing event to my classmates, they were duly

impressed; but when I shared how great of a deal it was, they were really envious! The orientation seminars were helpful and informational. Connecting or reconnecting with other leaders from around the denomination and networking face-to-face with pastors and regional executives was priceless. This conference helped improve my understanding of our denomination and built up my love for my Baptist sisters and brothers.

~SERMON CONTEST

The Boston Theological Institute (BTI), a consortium of ten theological schools in the Boston region is sponsoring a Sermon contest that is being conducted by the BTI together with the Lord's Day Alliance, USA (www.ldausa.org). This contest is for seminarians involved in church work, pastors, and leaders involved in active ministry. This invitation is being extended to pastors of all Christian denominations.

Three of the sermons will be judged by competent scholars and will be awarded cash rewards as follows:

First prize - \$ 1,250
Second prize - \$ 1,000
Third prize - \$ 750

Who knows one of our own pastors or seminarians could be the next winner of the contest for 2012. For complete details please visit the website www.ldusa.org

If you have further questions you can either email: isaacbabulal@gmail.com or contact Rodney Petersen, director BTI - petersen@bostontheological.org

~JUDSON PRESS OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING THIS FEBRUARY

Each weekday in February, Judson Press will offer one of its African American Christian titles at 50% off in celebration of Black History Month. The book of the day will be announced on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) where Judson hopes you will join them for promotional offers, articles of interest, and news & notes on books and authors. If you would prefer an email reminder with the Black History Month title of the day, please send your email address to promotions@judsonpress.com and note BHM in the subject line.

Judson Press will also offer two free webinars in February. On Wed., Feb. 1 at 10:00 a.m., Elizabeth Conde-Frazier will discuss the topic of immigration and our ABC Reads selection, [*Listen to the Children: Conversations with Immigrant Families*](#). All are encouraged to join in this virtual conversation regardless of whether you've read the book. [Register here](#).

On Tues., Feb. 28 at 2:00 p.m., ABC pastor John Burns will present "What Wondrous Love is This: Mary as a Guide for the Season of Lent." Prepare your heart and mind for the season with this inspiring webinar based on his book [*Modeling Mary in Christian Discipleship*](#). [Register here](#).

~CHILDREN IN POVERTY GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 25

American Baptist Home Mission Societies is accepting applications for its 2012 Children in Poverty Initiative grants. At least 10 grants will be awarded in amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000. The purpose is to address the needs of children in poverty within local communities.

Accepted projects address quality public school education, access to quality health care and livable wages; greater consideration will be given to projects that focus on partnership with a local public school during the 2012-2013 school year.

Applications must be postmarked by April 25 to the Office of Children in Poverty Initiative, American Baptist Home Mission Societies, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851. No applications will be accepted by email. Recipients will be notified by June 29.

The downloadable application and further information are available on the [website](#).

~HOW ARE CHURCHES USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

A study is being conducted through Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota by Dr. Peggy Kendall, a faculty member in the Communication Studies Department and Kirk Livingston, a freelance writer and social media marketing expert. The research question is simple: How are churches using Social Media? This survey was motivated by the New Normal discussion at the Biennial. To participate in this survey, click on the link below.

https://bethel.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_8wAb8AOB590Lydu&Preview=Survey&BrandID=bethel

~HOW TO AVOID CLERGY BURNOUT

The Upstate New York Ministers Council is sponsoring a retreat February 19-21, 2012. Dr. Margaret Marcuson, of Marcuson Leadership Circle, will be the featured speaker. For more information please click on the link below.

<http://www.ministerscouncil.org/documents/MCRetreatBrochure2012FINAL.pdf>

~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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~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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