



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

*Joe Kutter, Executive Director*

*June 2012*

---

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

### **~SENATE 2012**

Representatives (Senators) from the constituent councils of the American Baptist Ministers Council will gather at the American Baptist Assembly in Green Lake, WI August 11 -14. The Senators will be engaging two issues of historic proportion in addition to a variety of other issues that pertain to the ministerial leaders of the ABCUSA.

A candidate for the position of Executive Director will be presented to the Senate for election. Completing his fourth year of service as the Executive Director of the Ministers Council, Dr. Joe Kutter will retire and the plan is for the successor to assume office in the fall of 2012. The precise dates are still contingent on several factors but the transition should happen before mid-November.

The Senators will also hear reports on the Together in Ministry Capital Campaign. The expectation is that the plan will be adapted to fully engage the gifts and skills of the new Executive Director and the Senators will be invited to fully participate in that process.

Other items for discussion and action include:

- The budget, now without the help of funding from Lilly Endowment
- New Recommended Standards for Ordination
- Bylaw revisions that accommodate the ABCUSA restructuring and new realities for the Ministers Council
- A Membership drive that is designed to more fully invite our constituency to participate in our ministry together

The Ministers Council utilizes the principles of “Worshipful Work” in the conduct of its work and the senators will be invited to participate in significant times of prayer and reflection.

This is a meeting of historic proportion for the Ministers Council and the Senate leaders earnestly seek your prayers. *Joe Kutter*

### **~TRANSFORMED BY THE SPIRIT UPDATE** – *Jeff Savage, President National Ministers Council*

The Transformed by the Spirit process is at work inviting the congregations, regions, and national organizations of the ABC-USA to participate in a journey of discernment and renewal. Presently there are twenty-seven (27) partner organizations which have chosen to be involved—twenty-one (21) regions and six (6) national organizations. The first step in the process was for each of the participating... partners to identify the key ministry challenges they are facing at the present time which result from answering the following question: “What ministry challenges are we currently facing, for which we presently do not have

an answer, but which we must address if we are to live into God's future for us?"

The participating partners have identified over fifty (50) such challenges (a number of which are similar or which overlap). They have formed Adaptive Challenge Teams which are now at work attempting to identify what is being called the specific underlying "adaptive challenge" that stands behind each of these named challenges. As this work is completed, the process will transition into a second phase running into the winter of 2013 where Action Learning Teams will engage in setting into motion a variety of "experiments" in seeking to address each challenge.

There are at least sixteen (16) distinct ministry challenges identified by the participating partner organizations dealing directly with congregational ministry. We are interested in securing input and feedback from all of the congregations across the ABC-USA.

The survey is found at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ministrychallenges>. Would you please take a few moments to complete the survey? And then, please invite others to do so as well. Thank you!

## **~ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES ADDRESSED BY THE MINISTERS COUNCIL**

Ministers Council teams are addressing two adaptive challenges. The first focuses on the realities of Women in Ministry and the difficulties that many women have in finding places of service in our congregations. Doug Harris and Carol McVetty are leading the team that is refining that challenge.

The other challenge focuses on the stark reality that about 50% of all men and women who enter ministry will drop out within the first 5 years. The team led by Liliana Da Valle has completed the task of clarifying this challenge. Here is that report in full.

### **Ministers Council Adaptive Challenge: Pastoral Attrition**

#### **Adaptive Challenge:**

Attrition is a natural process in any profession, and is not necessarily negative for young (and newly ordained) clergy. Unfortunately, some new clergy leave ministry not because of a clarification of God's purposes for their life, but because of their experiences in ministry. The Adaptive Challenge for the Ministers Council is to enter an intentional process for learning about the current challenges facing local congregations and young clergy, and to experiment with new ways of helping new clergy clarify their sense of call, and providing support to these young clergy. The Ministers Council will also need to find new ways of working with other ABC organizations to help congregations learn to work with and support young clergy.

#### **Rationale:**

We live and minister in an age of great disequilibrium. Small churches are finding it ever more difficult to pay their ministers. Young clergy increasingly express doubts about their calling. Only 30% of seminary students see full-time congregational leadership as their calling. Many people outside of traditional congregations no longer see these traditional congregations as relevant to their lives.

Young clergy often have a better understanding of these changes, but they are also most susceptible to the forces that lead to pastoral attrition. They feel the financial strain of serving as pastors in small congregations, and experience the conflict of attempting to lead congregations to new models of ministry.

The Ministers Council will need to work with Regional and National agencies to provide support networks for clergy in their first five years of ministry. These "cohorts" would enable them to process their experiences with other clergy in similar situations. They will also need to work together to help congregations understand the tectonic shifts in culture that are affecting their ministry, and how young clergy understand their roles.

Finally, the Ministers Council will need to help young leaders understand their own sense of calling. This should begin in the local church, continue through seminary or other education, and into the early years of ministry. A key component of this process is establishing partnerships between seasoned pastors (mentoring), local congregations, and seminaries that help clergy navigate the changes necessary in local churches and minimize clergy attrition.

## **~FREE BOOK OFFER FOR NEW JOURNEYS SUBSCRIBERS**

If you've never used [Judson Bible Journeys for Adults](#) with your Sunday school class or small group, now is the perfect time to give it a try. New and returning\* *Journeys* subscribers will receive a free copy of Israel Galindo's [How to Be the Best Christian Study Group Leader](#). This offer requires a minimum order of one leader's guide and three student books. To order, call 800-458-3766 and mention this promotion, or order [online](#) and enter HOTOBE in the discount/promo code box at checkout. Offer expires Oct. 1, 2012.

\*Available to those customers who have not purchased *Journeys* since July 2011.

## **~A PRAYER FOR MINISTERS – Joe Kutter**

Difficult People

*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4: 31-32, NIV)*

Forgiving God

Hear this prayer for your ministers

We know the instruction

We have listened to Jesus

We have enjoyed the promise of your forgiveness

Jesus said to forgive

Our neighbor

Our enemy

Seventy times seven

Are you aware that some people in our churches have difficult personalities

Some

Challenge us on every front

Have harmed our spouse and children

Want to be rid of us

Make life hard for others in the church

We've heard the instruction

To turn the other cheek and to forgive

But Lord

There are some within our churches

Who damage and even destroy the fellowship by

The failure or refusal to love others as they want others to love them

We know that there are times when the problem is within ourselves rather than in the one who challenges us.

Grant us grace to confront ourselves when that is the required remedy

Forgiving God

We want to be like Jesus

Who forgave sinners and challenged sinners

Who knew when to comfort and when to confront

We seek his wisdom and his courage

We want our nasty neighbor to be well but we want others to be freed from the nastiness and the harm that is spread  
Grant us wisdom to engage in the ways that affirm your kingdom and courage to do that which your wisdom reveals  
In the name of Christ we pray  
Amen

## **~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**

Web: [www.ministerscouncil.org](http://www.ministerscouncil.org)  
Mail: The Ministers Council  
PO Box 851  
Valley Forge PA 19482-0851  
Phone: 1-800-222-3872, extension 2333, 2334  
FAX: 610/768-2066

**Join the Ministers Council through your local constituent council. Contact information is posted on [www.ministerscouncil.org](http://www.ministerscouncil.org) under the WHO WE ARE link.**