



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

*Joe Kutter, Executive Director*

*July 2012*

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### **~THANK YOU**

I write to ask your prayers and to say “thank you.”

First, I solicit your prayers. For many of us, the culture within which we work and the realities of the churches we serve have conspired to generate a set of challenges never before seen by clergy and congregations in our places. I seek your prayers for our colleagues.

I have long been aware that Jesus taught us to pray in two ways. In the “Sermon on the Mount” he told us to go to our closets, to go into a solitary place, and pray. In the “Lord’s Prayer”, he said that when you pray say, “Our Father. . . .” He told us to pray together, to say “Our”. So when we are alone, let us pray for our colleagues in ministry and let us gather together to ask the Lord’s blessing on one another as together we seek to engage the ministry to which we have been called.

The Ministers Council has sought to be an agent for the support of ministry. Most recently, through the opportunities offered by the Lilly Endowment grant, we have been able to offer support through the Together in Ministry program that has provided encouragement and resources unparalleled in our history. But the grant has run its course and it’s time to find new ways to facilitate the process of mutual support in ministry. I seek your prayers (and your dues) for the ministry of the Ministers Council.

Given the harsh economic realities of doing ministry in the current culture, I’ve been asked if the Ministers Council is going to make it. My answer is that I believe so. We have a mission that must not be abandoned and we have the support of a very strong core of ministerial leaders. We will be here to continue the ministry of creating community, deepening spirituality, and enhancing leadership among our constituents. But changes will have to be made to align us with the realities of ministry in this decade. I seek your prayers.

At our Senate meetings in Green Lake, we expect to elect an Executive Director who will succeed me in the fall. It’s time for me to retire from this beloved ministry and for the challenges and opportunities of this position to be assumed by a successor. As we engage the next steps in the discernment process, I seek your prayers.

And I write to say THANK YOU. The past four years have afforded me an opportunity to know and serve the ministerial leaders of the American Baptist Churches. In the process, I have come to believe that every American Baptist gathering is a Pentecostal experience. It is only by the grace of the Spirit that this diverse assortment of clergy can understand one another well enough to engage the work of Christ in our world. I have come to stand in awe of the singular purpose that unites us and wonder at the multiplicity of culture and style that makes it so hard to exercise our unity in shared ministry. There are times when our unity is fractured and it appears that our oneness in Christ has been lost. But after travelling the

country for these past four years, I am convinced that at the center, we have more unity than we know and that in God's time, we'll rediscover the singularity of purpose which God has placed at the center of our communal being.

Thank you for the remarkable privilege of serving you, getting to know you, and loving you. In ways too numerous to count, you have blessed me as I have tried to bless you. What is the transition date? We have some details to work out but I'll be around until sometime in the fall. And for the next year, I am committed to offering all of the help that I can offer to move our capital campaign forward. But after the election, another voice will emerge in this role and I'll be finding another way to serve that is in keeping with my season in life.

May God bless you, your ministries, and all whom you love, *Joe Kutter*

## **~CONFRONTING THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: THE ECONOMICS OF MINISTRY**

Money is an issue. For too many, money has kept us out of ministry, money has been a reason to leave ministry, money has been a stressor in ministry with which we have been required to cope. The following article, which features ABC Pastor and Ministers Council member, Ryan Bailey of First Baptist Church Monticello, IN, talks about the issue and strategies for responding. *Joe Kutter*

To read more on this article from the Lilly Annual Report, please click on the link below.

<http://www.lillyendowment.org/annualreports/2011/LE11ConfrontingtheElephant.pdf>

## **~DO YOU CELEBRATE THOSE WHO GIVE TO YOUR CHURCH?**

I was struck recently by the power of resources to transform ministry. The church I attended as a small child received a large legacy that enabled them to build a new building, enabling them to develop a larger ministry for decades to come. On a recent visit for the first time in decades, I was delighted by the continued vibrancy of their ministry. On a commuter route in Seattle, they now have a café which offers drive-through coffee on weekdays. [Read more>>](#)

## **~NEW BOOK OF SERMONS FROM JUDSON PRESS**

He may be in his early 90s, but the Rev. Dr. Henry H. Mitchell still has much to say! In his new book, [A Word for All Seasons: Sermons from Henry H. Mitchell](#), one of the black church's most esteemed preachers and academics offers a treasure trove of themes and inspiration from which to draw throughout the year. Marvin McMickle notes, "These sermons will accomplish what every preacher should attempt to do over the course of every year: kindle the mind, energize the will, disturb the conscience, and stir the heart." And in the book's foreword, American Baptist Home Mission Societies' Executive Director Aidsand Wright-Riggins writes, "A *Word for All Seasons* goes beyond the question of 'What shall I preach?' Henry H. Mitchell provides proven and practical guidance to help answer the question, 'How shall I preach.'"

*A Word for All Seasons* sells for \$15.99 and can be ordered by calling 800-458-3766 or visiting [www.judsonpress.com](http://www.judsonpress.com). As always, save 20% when you order online!

## **~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**

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