



Ministers Council Newsletter

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director

March 2013

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From the Desk of the Executive Director

I had this moment where past, present and future all came together into alignment. Was it during worship or in the midst of prayer? No, it was during the Grammys.

I was channel surfing when I happened to flip on the Grammys. Neil Patrick Harris, who will forever seem to be “Doogie Howser” to me, was introducing the band “Fun.” So, cool parent that I am, I sent my son a text message saying, “Hey, the band Fun is on the Grammys,” (yes, we are reduced to texting in my house...) My son’s response via text was, “Really mom, really?”

I thought I was so cool, I knew a band that my son listened to. I thought it would be cool to be able to relate. Instead, I glimpsed my teenaged self who cringed as my mom would say, “Doesn’t she ‘go with’ him.” The words that I said every day sounded so foreign coming across parental vocal chords. I didn’t like it. It was creepy or in my son’s words, “Really mom, really?”

But as I sat puzzling and trying to make sense of how I felt, the roles so completely reversed, on to the stage came Prince. Again I was transported back. I was in high school and college when Prince burst on the scene and was all the rage. So cool then; and so cool at the Grammys. And as great as it was seeing Prince, I was struck because as he announced the award for best song of the year, he said, “I love this song.” Then songwriter Goyte could hardly get through his remarks. Being given the song of the year Grammy seemed to pale in comparison to receiving it from Prince. He said, “Many years listening to this man’s music growing up, and a big reason I was inspired to make music.”

And so I went full circle and back around in only a few minutes. But in the journey, I couldn’t help but be reminded of the church. Consider the Emerging/ Emergent/ Emergence faith of

today. Is the faith that is capturing young adults today so foreign? It may seem as foreign for us as it is for these younger believers to hear their expressions of praise from our lips. But rather than shrink away because of the awkwardness, it is incumbent upon us to stay connected in order to listen, to hear, and perhaps be transformed. If we would do this, I am persuaded that the day will come when we will be able to say, "I love this song." We will say, "I love this praise. I love this word." And in the reciprocated response, we just might hear our children and grandchildren say, "Because you praised, I can praise. Because you sang, I can sing. Because you love God, I love God." Past, present and future comes together and the faith grows.

Tonight, we are young. So let's set this world on fire and we can burn brighter than the sun... Fun.

Could you use some prayer support for your ministry?

The Spiritual and Personal Wholeness Committee of the Ministers Council is sponsoring a time of prayer every Wednesday in Lent, continuing through March 20. We'll be praying together for 20 minutes via phone each week on Wednesdays at 10 am Pacific/11 Mountain/noon Central/1 Eastern. Call toll-free: 866-906-0123, then enter the participant code 2925027# (if you have difficulty with the call, you can access the operator at any time by pressing *0).



Update on the 2013 Report to the Lilly Endowment – Sustaining Pastoral Excellence

Each year that we have received money from the Lilly Endowment for the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, we have been required to respond to questions about the program and the results. The responses that were received regarding the impact of the TIM program were so gratifying that I had to share some of the excerpts with you.

One group leader said:

I think the biggest benefit of the Bi-vocational group has been that it provides a place where the participants do not need to feel alone in their ministry. A connection has developed over the time we have been meeting which provides encouragement, questions motivations, explores alternative ways of doing ministry and encourages the personal spiritual growth of participants.

Another said:

[My TIM group] has served as a place and space to receive support from other women of color ministers who either had been pastors, were currently pastors or waiting to be called. It is a place to share practical hands on tools about the pastorate, which has been helpful in developing and organizing services, liturgical themes, and addressing sensitive issues. A great impact has been the heightened discipline with devotional practices.

Still another said:

My TIM group is diverse. Women and men. Conservatives and liberals. Young and old. Black and white. AND I AM NOT A STRANGER HERE. I am cared for here and deeply valued and definitely not rejected by those who hold different views on issues. This is completely different from what you experience [State name] Baptists in general. My input is respected and I know I can share without judgment.

Then I heard:

[Our TIM group], according to many participants has made a tremendous impact in our female clergy community. Although many clergywomen "groups" exist in our area, participants have shared their appreciation for the "vehicle" provided by TIM. Through our online directory, our website and our "eblasts," we carry information from clergywomen throughout area about upcoming events (seminars, programs, workshops, worship services, etc.) honors given, preaching engagements, scholarships and other educational opportunities.

And then:

Our first TIM grant has helped us spiritually. When we meet, we pray and sing together; we share the Word and our thoughts together; we listen and comfort one another in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ; and we help and support one another...

Secondly, the TIM grant made direct social impacts on our lives as colleagues... We were able to meet more often and thereby, get to know each other more personally, and we've become closer collegially, and as leaders of the same faith...

Lastly, we've become more goal-tasked and result-oriented organizationally. The frequent meetings that the TIM grant afforded us financially led us to discern a larger role our group had to play in the wake of increasing social needs facing our local churches...

... not only has the TIM grant afforded us the financial opportunity to meet more regularly, to share meals together, to share our thoughts and concerns together, but it also has kept the bond of our Baptist heritage, has nurtured our Christian tie and more importantly it has deepened our faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

It is clear that through the Together in Ministry program, we have sustained pastoral excellence. If you want to learn more about joining or forming a TIM group, contact Debora Jackson. Gathering together is the greatest benefit of all.



The Callers Are Coming! – Update on the TIM Capital Campaign

We continue to make progress toward our capital campaign goal for Together in Ministry. Thus far, we have raised a total of \$339,513.05. Of that, \$273,153.05 is cash and \$66,360 is in-kind donations. This is toward our goal of \$800,000.00 in cash contributions and \$300,000.00 in in-kind donations.

Now while we are still climbing, the speed at which we are climbing has slowed pretty significantly. So, the callers are coming. Ok, truth be told, the callers were coming anyway, but the fact that contributions have slowed only gives us more impetus.

Our donor database consists of those who have given in support of the Ministers Council and the many leaders who have participated in Together in Ministry groups. There are literally thousands of you who know first-hand the power of coming together to pray, fellowship, and study together. You have reported that you have felt supported in your ministries because you now had a network of folks who created a safe space for you to be yourself, people who would pray for you, and people from whom you could learn.

That's why we will be calling. To those whom much is given, much is required. You've received from your TIM colleagues who have supported you and the Ministers Council who made the financial support possible. Now we hope that you will give back a portion of what you have been so graciously given through a one-time donation, a pledge to be paid over a three year period, or your donated expertise.

Folks who have volunteered to make phone calls will be trained on April 12th. It will then be our intent to begin canvassing using lists of donors in our database as soon as possible after the training. My hope is that when you receive the phone call, you will be kind and generous, giving back to the campaign. Better yet, why wait until April or May to receive a phone call? You can give right now! Go to <http://www.ministerscouncil.com/CapitalCampaign2012/documents/12TIMResponsePrintFINAL.pdf> and thank you in advance for your support.

SurveyMonkey® **Need for Nonviolence Resources** **An Update**

Thanks to all those who participated in the recent survey to understand the need and demand for nonviolence resources for ministry. Of the 121 respondents, nearly 74% said that they desired more resources for ministry that engage the issue of violence. Moreover, 24 individuals submitted contact information, expressing their interest in working with the Ministers Council to determine how to best to meet these needs. Emails will go out to those who have volunteered in April. If you are interested in adding your name to the list of participants, please contact Sue Sechrist at Sue.Sechrist@abc-usa.org.

American Baptist National Women's Conference – Designed to Serve

Rev. Valerie Andrews, Events Coordinator

If you have not made plans for the summer (for you or you and the family), I'd like to cordially invite you to join me in Phoenix, AZ at the American Baptist National Women's Conference, July 27-August 1, 2013.



Presently, I serve as the Events Coordinator, and I would be honored if you decided to come, and join other sisters from diverse cultures and backgrounds, but with a common purpose: A Love for the LORD. Our theme this year is, “*DESIGNED TO SERVE*”, with sub-topics to include: “*Serving God, Serving Others and Serving Self*”. The conference promises to be a great one: held at the Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort (of which I had the privilege of visiting last month...and it was absolutely breath taking); filled with Encounters (workshops), excellent preaching and teaching, occasions to serve, food, fellowships, opportunities to connect with other women across the world, and so much more. In fact, as I think about it, this conference is taking on the look of the Kingdom of God!

If you would, take a few minutes to visit our website at: www.abwministries.org . Be sure to read the “Welcome from the Events Coordinator”, and then peruse through the links that connect you with: 1) Pointe Hilton Squaw Peak Resort,--this is a family resort, so bring your spouse (be sure to visit its website); 2) National Women’s Conference; 3) National Young Adult Women’s Conference; and 4) National Gathering for Girls (if you have teens). There are a few scholarships being offered, but you have to apply.

ABHMS Calls for Volunteers to Help Rebuild New Jersey

In response to Hurricane Sandy, which hit the East Coast on Oct. 29, 2012, American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) seeks volunteers for four 2013 work weeks to rebuild New Jersey. Co-sponsored by ABHMS and American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, “Coming Together for New Jersey...Rebuild, Renew and Restore” will be held May 4-11, June 1-8, July 13-20, and Aug. 10-17.

For more information, visit www.abhms.org and click “Volunteer,” or contact ABHMS’ Kim Wilkins at 1-800-222-3872, x2413, or kwilkins@abhms.org.

To register to participate, visit www.abhms.org and click “Volunteer.”



Green Lake Holy Spirit Conference

Ignite the Fire!!! Make plans NOW to attend our annual Green Lake Holy Spirit Conference. It will revolutionize your life!! For more information on keynote speakers and to register for this conference, please click on the link below.

http://hsrm.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46:2012-green-lake-holy-spirit-conference&catid=1:latest-news

Other Events

- Presidents’ Conference Call
 - March 18, 2013 at 8:00 PM
 - April 15, 2013 at 8:00 PM
 - May 13, 2013 at 8:00 PM
- Emmanuel Baptist Church, Malden, MA – Women’s Weekend – March 9
- Transformed by the Spirit Partners Meeting – March 12-13
- Together in Ministry Re-Visioning Retreat – March 19-20
- Soul of Leadership, Duxbury, MA – April 8-11
- TIM Capital Campaign Canvasser’s Training – April 12

- ABCOTS Annual Gathering – April 17-19
- Ministers Council of Michigan Clergy Retreat – April 22
- Ministers Council Greater Indianapolis & Ministers Council Indiana/Kentucky Retreat – April 29-30
- New York Ministers Council Annual Ministers Enrichment Day – May 6
- Ministers Council of Maine Clergy Retreat – May 6-7
- Baptists Lunching Together Retreat, Oakland, CA – May 11
- Ministers Council of Rhode Island Retreat – May 13-14
- First Baptist Church of Greater Cleveland Retreat – May 18
- Ministers Council of New Hampshire and Vermont Retreat – May 31 – June 1



Do you have events coming up in your regions? Share the word so that others might know your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Send email announcements to Sue Sechrist at sue.sechrist@abc-usa.org.

Remember Us!

When planning your estate, please remember The Ministers Council.

Ministers Council Contact Information

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Join the Ministers Council through your local constituent council. Contact information is posted on www.ministerscouncil.org under the WHO WE ARE link.