

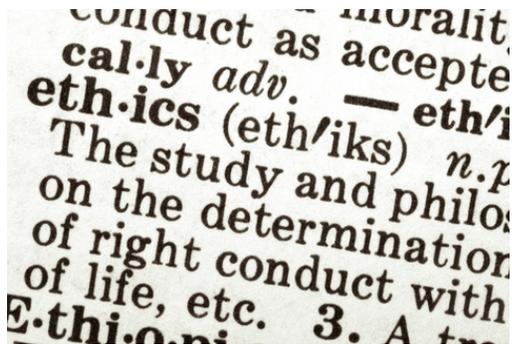


Ministers Council Newsletter

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director

July 2013

From the Desk of the Executive Director



What is ethical? A question was raised to me regarding whether it was ethical to provide benefits and discounts to members of the Ministers Council. After all, the Covenant and Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches says, "I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ministerial status." And we understand the motivation for such a statement. None of us wants to be guilty of unfairly using our influence to obtain special considerations or curry unwarranted favor. That would be unethical. However, I see leveraging the strength of our association as ministerial leaders in a completely different light.

First, you, as the individual leader, are not advocating for personal benefit, which is the clear violation. The covenant is very specific and is stated in first person. You, as an individual, will not use your position to seek personal favors based on your ministerial status. You cannot go to the local car dealership and ask for a discount because you are a minister. You cannot expect that people are going to extend special courtesies or indulgences to you because you are a man or woman of the cloth. You as the individual cannot do these things. Doing so is a violation of our code of ethics. However, you as the individual member of the Ministers Council are not seeking these benefits. The organization is seeking benefit on behalf of the constituency of the organization. To me there is no conflict. You, as the individual, are not lobbying for personal favor and you, as the individual, are not taking unfair advantage.

Secondly, the Ministers Council was established in part to advocate for the ministerial leaders of our denomination. While advocacy takes many forms, I would argue that securing certain benefits or rights is very much in our charter as an organization. This is why we care about fair standards for ministerial pay. It is why we promote women in ministry. But it is also why I seek to secure benefits that are going to help you be better and do better in ministry. For example, having paid over \$300.00 for a boxy robe that makes me look frumpy, I wanted to see us establish relationships with people who could help us be appropriately attired without costing an arm and a leg. Knowing how much it costs for continuing education, I want to see us be retooled and equipped without going into debt. Knowing how much I like to read and keep current on the ministry issues that face us, I wanted to give us the means of doing that without financial strain. In short I am advocating for you because it is what the Ministers Council does. We equip leaders to be more effective in their ministries so that they can in turn provide better service and

support to their communities. The Ministers Council is seeking favors and discounts for the good of the body – the ministerial leaders who are members of the organization. To me this is completely ethical because it is part of the responsibility of advocacy on behalf of our members.

Thirdly, we are a professional society that has cooperative relationships with other professional societies that recognize the shared value of partnership. What does that mean? Those of you who attended the Ministerial Leaders Breakfast in Overland Park, KS heard me say it: Yale Divinity School, recognizing that they benefit when the pool of prospective students is increased, saw the value of being in relationship with us, so they offered a discount to Ministers Council members for their summer course offerings. Bride of Christ robes, recognizing that they benefit when more women clergy know about their collection, saw the value of being in relationship with us, so they offered a discount to Ministers Council members for women clergy robes. Judson Press, recognizing that they benefit when their offerings are made more readily available to a primary audience of ministerial leaders, saw the value of being in relationship with us, so they offered a discount to Ministers Council members for free shipping on non-curriculum materials. No one is twisting the arms of our partners. They recognize the value of the relationship. There is a benefit for them just as there is a benefit to us. And I can tell you, that there are other partners who are now waiting in the wings to structure a relationship with the Ministers Council. Through these life-giving relationships, both partners are strengthened.

My grandfather used to say, “A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.” Some will still see such relationships as splitting hairs if not an outright violation of the code of ethics. Because of that, no discount will be foisted upon anyone. You do not have to take advantage of any of these offers. However, if you recognize the intent of a professional organization that wants to advocate for you and partner with those who want to better you, then I say, come on in. This is about equipping ministerial leaders and to me, there is nothing unethical about that.

Together in Ministry – The Continuing Story of Continuing Success



The Ministers Council has promoted Together in Ministry as a means to help leaders be more spiritually grounded, strengthened in their leadership, nurtured through clergy friendships, enhanced in preaching and teaching and more positive toward self and congregation. The result of this initiative has been increased effectiveness and sustained pastoral excellence.

In an effort to continue the good work of Together in Ministry, we want to encourage you to send your stories and share the successes of Together in Ministry in your area. This month, we are featuring a response from Pastor Bob Barone in the North Country of New York.

In the North Country we have a challenge called dispersion; that is to say we are really spread out. Every time we hear about another program, the attitude is "here we go again, more idealism from the donut hole." Since I arrived in Carthage about seven years ago, I could see a blind spot. We have been limiting our collegiality to ABC pastors. We need to gradually dissolve denominational barriers.

In this village of Carthage of less than 4,000 people we have 13 churches: ABC, SBC, CBA, COG, 2 AOG, UMC, CONAZ, RC, SDA, UCC, MENNONITE, EPISC, and INDEP. There is great reciprocity between all of us, but there is deep fellowship between ABC, SBC, RC, MENNONITE, UCC, UMC and the CONAZ.

The American Baptists and the Southern Baptist, and the Mennonite and the United Methodist pastors meet together once per month for fellowship, Bible Study and discussion pertinent to our ministries. This really is our cell group. In the past we have had very helpful discussions based upon Scott Rodin's book, *The Steward Leader*. We spent an entire year on that one. This year we are studying and discussing

Steve Saccone's book *Protégé*, a great book on mentoring. We do a lot on holistic pastoral care. The composition of our group is 2 ABC, 1 ABC protégé, 1 SBC, 1 Mennonite, 1 UMC retired minister. We have synergy. We also serve each other by being accountable to each other. We are interlocked by prayer.

Aside from the above I am actively involved in the North Country Association, since our reorganization enthusiasm has grown as well as our cohesiveness. We had an over organized structure, but due to new leadership we are showing signs of life. I take an active part in meetings whenever possible, as well as TIM opportunities as finances allow.

Pastor Bob Barone
PastorFBCCNY@aol.com

The End of the “Do it Yourself” Church – The Need to be Together in Ministry

Excerpt from the sermon delivered by Rev. Matthew Sturtevant, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Lawrence, KS at the Mission Summit in Overland Park, KS – Sunday, June 23, 2013. This is a word that we all need to hear.

Before long, we will officially see the end of the “do it yourself” church. Following the high institution era of the Baby Boom, we all got used to being able to do it ourselves. Denominations got used to having their own staffs and large programs. Each church got used to having their own large staff, their own programs, their own youth group, and their own Vacation Bible School. But now, practical shortfalls of resources and disheartening statistics of clergy burnout show us we must change. Fifty percent or more of new clergy today will be out of the ministry in 5 years – not just out of their current job, but out of *the vocation*. They will cite multiple reasons for leaving, including unreasonable expectations, low pay, depression, and isolation. Something must change. We cannot “do it ourselves” anymore.

In its place, my hope is that we find the church of “better together than we are apart.” My hope is that denominations and church organizations will begin to be less divided and more intentional about sharing resources, sharing vision, and sharing the work of the Gospel together. My hope is that churches will share the “on the ground” work of ministry in new and dynamic and creative ways. My hope is that clergy will stop trying to do it all themselves, and join peer groups such as Together in Ministry, in order to gain perspective and encouragement. I stand here tonight, representing a “great cloud of witnesses,” including my TIM peer group that helped me with the brainstorming and the exegesis for this sermon. They have surrounded me with prayer as I stand here tonight. I am better together than I am apart from my peer group, from Ragan and Jessica, Wallace and Kyle, Corey and Meredith. My hope is that we will not only have pastors who join peer groups, but that we have church members who demand that their pastors do so, and support them when they do. Then we will become the church of “better together than we are apart.”

Scholarships for American Baptist Students



BaconeCollege
Value & Opportunity

Bacone College is pleased to announce the following scholarships for American Baptist students:

1. For the children of ABC Staff members (Pastors, local church, regional or national staff person) and ABC Caucus Church members (Full Pell eligibility required)



The children of American Baptist staff persons and members of ABC caucus churches are offered a **full 100% of tuition, room and board scholarship**. Called the Christian Ministry Learning Work Community (CMLWC) this scholarship offers the ABC student the greatest value and opportunity. Students may study in any academic program of their choosing and out-of-state residence has no impact on the scholarship opportunity. This scholarship is in effect for the Fall of 2013 and following semesters. This scholarship requires that students have a valid US Social Security number, permanent residence and be full Pell eligible as determined by a FAFSA application.

2. For students who do NOT qualify for a full Pell Grant (Christian Ministry Students of Promise)

Any American Baptist student who wishes to come to Bacone but does not qualify for a full Pell grant may receive a **100% of tuition scholarship**. Please note that the scholarship is for tuition only. The student will be responsible for room and board, fees, and books. This scholarship is called the Christian Ministry Students of Promise as we believe these students have the promise of having a great impact on the Kingdom. Out-of-state residence has no impact on the scholarship opportunity. Non-residential students will receive 35% of Tuition.

3. Christian Clubs for any Christian Student:

Any student of any Christian faith tradition may come to Bacone to participate in one of our Christian clubs. Students may be a part of the Gospel Choir, Praise Team/Band or Worship Arts Club and receive a **scholarship of 35% of tuition, room, and board** while studying in any academic program of their choosing. This is a great opportunity for students to prepare for their future, do ministry and receive a scholarship to make it financially possible.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting Rev. Dr. Leroy W. Thompson, VP of Christian Ministry at Bacone College by email at thompsol@bacone.edu or by phone at 918-360-9694.



Mission Summit Update

I had the opportunity to attend my first Mission Summit – well, it was everyone's first Mission Summit – but my first biennial. I wanted to share some of the highlights of the gathering for me and for the Ministers Council.

On Thursday morning, I had the privilege of leading the opening worship for the Regional Executive Ministers' Continuing Education Event. The day featured Don Everts who presented on the topic "Reaching the Next Generation." For worship, I preached from Romans 12:6-8, which the Message Bible renders as, "...If you preach, just preach God's Message, nothing else; if you help, just help, don't take over; if you teach, stick to your teaching; if you give encouraging guidance, be careful that you don't get bossy; if you're put in charge, don't manipulate; if you're called to give aid to people in distress, keep your eyes open and be quick to respond; if you work with the disadvantaged, don't let yourself get irritated with them or depressed by them. Keep a smile on your face." I shared that reaching the next generation requires that we do as the Message translation of the Bible suggests – use our gifts without taking over or being bossy. The next generation wants to be included and allowed to exercise their gifts. They are not interested in operating within the limits of our vision for them. By knowing our gifts, and by knowing the next generation and their gifts, then we can recruit other next generation folks to be a part of our churches' future.

On Friday, we held our Ministerial Leaders Breakfast. What an awesome time! Nearly 240 leaders gathered for breakfast and fellowship. The breakfast came off especially well because of our incredible planning committee led by Rev. Holly Bean. Also serving were Rev. Cheryl Harader, Rev. Dixie Potratz Lehman, Rev. Jackie Saxon, and Rev. Alan Selig. Our breakfast was opened by Rev. Patricia Hernandez, National Director of the American Baptist Women in Ministry, who set the occasion for us by

reminding us that we have been called for such a time as this. Furthermore, like a marathon runner, we keep going in this race that has been set before us. Rev. Dr. Steve Wisthoff led us in singing the Twila Parris song, "Make Us One." And after a very gracious introduction of me by Rev. Dr. Dee Dee Turlington, President of the Ministers Council, Rev. Donald Robinson, American Baptist Indian Caucus President, offered us a blessing in both his native language and in English.

I had the privilege of addressing our guests sharing our thanks for serving for such a time as this, and making clear our purpose as an organization. Many of us as ministerial leaders are perishing in ministry. However, the Ministers Council was established to foster collegiality, centeredness and competence among our ministerial leaders. As such, being a part of the Ministers Council is an opportunity to support not only our colleagues, but to also realize support for ourselves.

In the spirit of the Mission Summit, we then engaged in table discussion. The Ministers Council has consented to adopting a new adaptive challenge to be added to the challenges already being discussed and considered within the Transformed by the Spirit initiative. Our new challenge pertains to clergy health and self-care. Participants had the opportunity to review language for a proposed adaptive challenge and provide their insights to help us get started with this new challenge. It was exhilarating to see so many engaged in animated conversation about the things that we could do to help one another realize the encouragement and care that we all need in ministry. I was particularly heartened by those who have added their name to serve as members of this new Adaptive Challenge/Action Learning Team. I should note that if you are interested in participating as part of this Adaptive Challenge team, please contact me at Debra.Jackson@abc-usa.org.

After the Breakfast, I had the privilege of attending the Chaplain and Pastoral Counselors Training Event on Moral Injury, where I had the opportunity to bring greetings on behalf of the Ministers Council. Special thanks to Karen Pickler who kindly introduced me.

Our trade show booth opened on Friday. I cannot tell you how grateful I was for all of the folks who helped with booth set up, serving and shut down. They were Rev. Joy Amick, Rev. Holly Bean, Rev. Jackie Belile, Rev. Jerry Bertelson, Rev. John Clark, Rev. Mary Fabin, Rev. Dr. Randall Harris, Rev. Cheryl Harader, Rev. Michael Harvey, Rev. Dr. Shane Kinnison, Rev. Cliff Kirk, Rev. Dr. Joe Kutter, Rev. Dr. Ross Lucas, Rev. Jackson Oliveira, Rev. Alan Selig, Rev. Dan Taylor, Rev. Dr. Dee Dee Turlington, and Rev. Dr. Steve Wisthoff.

We worked that booth: passing out brochures, talking up the Ministers Council, signing up new members, taking donations for Together in Ministry and even in some cases, pulling people into the booth for a chat. The hit of all hits was the afternoon popcorn. At 2:00 PM on both Friday and Saturday, the smell of hot, buttered popcorn began to waft across the convention center and you could literally watch the noses sniffing the air trying to figure out, "Where is that coming from?" Within minutes, we had a line extending beyond the booth of people wanting popcorn, but then hearing about the Ministers Council at the same time. It was outstanding.

On Friday evening, I was blessed to have been invited to be the keynote speaker for the Black Caucus dinner. Not surprisingly, my remarks sounded a lot like preaching and I had the opportunity to encourage the "congregation" to take advantage of the Mission Summit. Specifically, I encouraged folks to engage in the process and cross-pollinate with others so that we could increase our learning and share broadly from our own experiences as we engaged in the Mission Summit dialogues. Having cross-pollinated, we needed to return to our communities and plant these ideas, giving ourselves wide berth for the new, emerging growth that would come from the experience. It was a powerful evening and I was humbled by the Black Caucus' recognition of me.

I was also grateful for the collegial sharing that was evident in our various events. I was honored to be a special guest at both the MMBB and International Ministries luncheons. I was thrilled to be asked to participate in the REMC event as well as the Chaplains and Pastoral Counselors training through ABHMS as the recognized endorser of our chaplains and pastoral counselors. I was humbled by the turnout of Ministerial Leaders, including so many of our national and regional leaders. I had the opportunity to

connect with representatives from Bacone College, American Baptist Seminary of the West, Andover Newton Theological School, and Virginia Union University. I also met with Judson Press and the Christian Community Credit Union. I additionally met with so many of you – my colleagues who are faithfully serving in a variety of capacities as God has called you. While I loved the worship and I appreciated the summit conversations, I enjoyed most of all being with you, my brothers and sisters in Christ.

During this Mission Summit, the Ministers Council had the opportunity to introduce or re-introduce ourselves and make an impact as an organization that is committed to the success of our ministerial leaders. Because of the many hands and the many supporters of our work, we did just that. It was a great Mission Summit and I am grateful to God for the grace of the experience. I hope that you will be a part of the next Mission Summit in 2015.

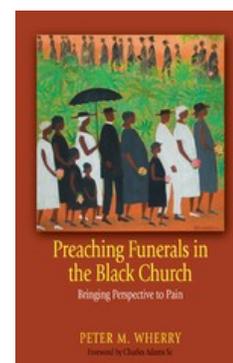
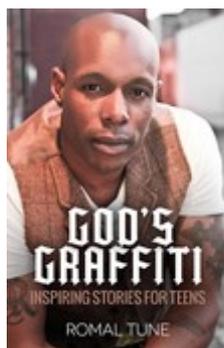
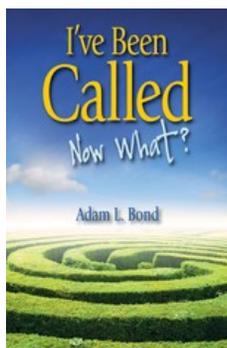
Debora Jackson



Membership Benefits for Ministers Council Members – Discount on Women’s Clergy Robes

Designer Tina Scott of Bride of Christ Robes is partnering with the Ministers Council so that members of the Ministers Council may order women’s clergy apparel and receive a 5% discount on your order. You must present a copy of your valid 2013 Ministers Council Membership Card to receive the discount. See the collection at <http://www.brideofchristrobes.com>.

Judson Press Offers Free Shipping for Ministers Council Members



Judson Press offers us an opportunity to stay sharp through their publications. If you are considering a call to the Ministry or know someone who is, consider Rev. Adam L. Bond’s book, *I’ve Been Called, Now What?* Another resource, *God’s Graffiti*, is hot off the presses and offers riveting stories for teens. And then we will all need at times a resource for preparing us to preach a funeral. Peter Wherry offers us the perspective of *Preaching a Funeral in the Black Church*.

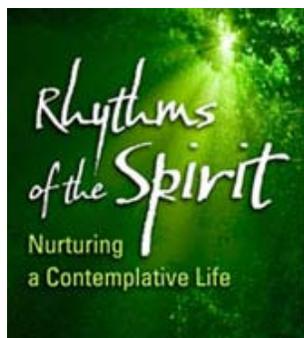
Through our partnership with Judson Press, Ministers Council members will be able to receive free shipping on all orders over \$15.00, excluding curriculum and *The Secret Place*, for 2013. Please note that the discount cannot be used in combination with other offers. Take advantage of this terrific offer and benefit for Ministers Council members. *Please contact your Regional Council President for the discount code.*

Other Events

- Ministers Council Executive Committee – Green Lake, WI – August 11-12, 2013
- Ministers Council Senate – Green Lake, WI – August 12-15, 2013

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.

Take Advantage of Other Formational Opportunities for Ministerial Leaders



Rhythms of the Spirit conference/retreat will give you time to explore the gifts of silence and solitude and how those gifts will enhance your life and ministry. To develop a more contemplative life, time is necessary to practice contemplation. In order to allow time for practice, the schedule offers a focused and expansive approach to each day. The Conference/Retreat will be held on August 5-9, 2013 at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI. Former Ministers Council President Jeff Savage is one of the key note speakers. Get more information at <http://www.rhythmsofthespirit.com/>.

Future Missionaries to Explore Spiritual Call at Embrace the Cause Conference.

Anyone considering a call to global missionary service or who are in the process of responding to such a call will be participating in the Embrace the Cause conference to be held on August 9-12, 2013 at the Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, WI. The conference is being sponsored by American Baptist International Ministries and will feature Rev. Dr. Lee Spitzer, Senior Regional Pastor of the American Baptist Churches of New Jersey.



JANUARY 6-9, 2014 | ORLANDO, FLORIDA



ABC Ministers are invited to the 2014 National Ministers Conference, held in tandem with the **Orientation to American Baptist Life Conference** for seminarians and new-to-ABC ministers, in Orlando, Florida, January 6-9, 2014. The conference will be held at the SeaWorld Doubletree Resort in Orlando.

Major orientation sessions are planned by ABCUSA (General Ministries), American Baptist Home Mission Societies, International Ministries, Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board, Regional Executive Ministers Council, and Associated Ministry Organizations.

Registration fees will be \$75 for seminarians, \$100 for new-to-ABC ministers, and \$150 for Ministers Conference attendees. Room rates at the Doubletree will be \$99 per night. Seminarians are encouraged to enroll in the American Baptist seminarians' database in order to receive communications about the Orientation conference. They can do so at http://abhms.org/education/seminarian_registration/register.cfm. Registration for the January event will be online in July.

Remembering Dr. Gordon Smith

With great sadness we note the death of Dr. Gordon E. Smith on July 8, 2013. In the 1980's and 1990's Gordon served the American Baptist Churches with distinction as Treasurer and Executive Director of The Ministers and Missionaries Benefit Board. He was a friend to the Ministers Council and will be remembered by many not only for his leadership but also for his warmth, intelligence and enthusiasm. In addition to his MMBB ministry, Gordon served as an administrator for two American Baptist seminaries: The American Baptist Seminary of the West and Central Baptist Seminary. He was also director of education and development for the Baptist Hospital Fund. Please watch the MMBB website, www.mmbb.org, for more information.

Remember Us!

When planning your estate, please remember The Ministers Council.

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We welcome your comments or questions on this newsletter. Send you thoughts to Debra.Jackson@abc-usa.org

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