



Ministers Council Newsletter

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director

June 2015

From the Desk of the Executive Director

I was absently listening to Satellite radio, as I'm apt to do. Music is often background noise for me as I work. But lyrics of a song playing started to filter into my consciousness:

*Thinking 'bout the world looking at the nation
Suicide... genocide... homicide
Three words come to mind...
Times are changing...*

"Oh, a protest song," I thought, figuring that I would simply to return to the work at hand. I didn't, however; because for some reason, a part of me kept listening to the song. In the next moment, I heard:

*People of God don't even read their Bibles
There's no faith no trust in the word...
But everybody seems to be quoting scripture...
It's just another word they heard...*

Those lyrics reminded me of a Pew Research study from 2013 (<http://www.religionnews.com/2013/04/04/poll-americans-love-the-bible-but-dont-read-it-much/>). While 88% of survey respondents said that they own a Bible, only 26% said they read their Bible on a regular basis. Sadly, the majority of respondents, 57%, said that they read their Bibles fewer than four times a year. It's just as the lyrics said. People don't read their Bibles, so scripture becomes just words that we have heard.

But then I came to a full stop when the recording artist with the stage name Mali (Kortney Pollard) said,

Pastors leaving pulpits 'cause their tired...

Lord have mercy! This is a reality that seems particularly pointed as we stagger into June. I remember the fatigue of holding the church together through June. Everyone was anxious to shift into the summer church attendance schedule, which in New England meant "See you in the fall, pastor." For you see people had cottages on Cape Cod or homes in New Hampshire or Maine. Surely I understood that people wanted to get away. Never mind that I had to hold on and hold it together until they came back in September refreshed and tanned.

Ah, but just as God does not leave us hopeless, neither did the song. At what could have been a moment of despair, Mali sang,



*I'm just one a them ole people who's got to hold on
Sometimes I can't see but I still believe
He's taking care of me...
I'm just one a them ole people God's got a hold on
And I believe, I believe, ...*

And for me, despite the times of fatigue or discouragement, this is the bottom line. We must lift one another up with the words of the faith and with the knowledge of our God. We cannot see the end, but we believe. We persevere and press on. We may not understand and we may not have answers, but God's hand is upon us, and that gives us hope.

I was asked to give the invocation and benediction at the commencement ceremony of Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Never being one to offer the simple "sandwich prayer" that people expect clergy to render, I delivered a "sermonette" before the invocation. Statistics say that young people have fallen away from the faith, but I recognized that people were listening to the invocation. I even got a few "Amens" in response. Yet as commencement droned on, that initial engagement was lost and the crowd became restless. People were ready to be done so that they could commence with the parties.

But as I was introduced once again to give the benediction, something miraculous happened. People started saying, "Shhhhh!" Can you imagine? They quieted one another so that they could hear the Word of God. Nothing else commanded attention during that 2 ½ hour commencement like the Word. And this gives me hope, because truly I'm just one of them ole people God's got a hold on and I believe, I believe.

Find the song "I Believe" by Mail at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZsC8y6gac0>.



Giving Day Thank You!

On May 20th, the Ministers Council hosted our first Giving Day, as part of a month-long Annual Giving campaign. The reality of who we are as an Affiliated Member Organization of the American Baptist Churches, USA means that we must be a self-sustaining entity. We have a mission to enrich and equip ministerial leaders. Yet our ability to fulfill that mission and make a difference in the lives of clergy across the nation is the result of the dues of members, and the generosity of donors and partners. Without such support, we would cease to function.

Recognizing the value that we provide, many of you responded to the call. Because of you, we raised \$7,458.15. Thank you so much. If you would like to contribute to the work of the Ministers Council, please [click here](#).

Join the Ministers Council

Are you a member of the clergy, a missionary, a seminarian or a lay leader? Do you belong to the Ministers Council? If not, why not? We are the organization of ordained, commissioned and lay Christian leaders who are serving American Baptist Churches. And as an organization, we nurture, encourage and strengthen ministerial leaders. We provide fellowshiping opportunities; spiritual enrichment; and educational programming to fuel the effectiveness of the men and women called of God to advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Become a member or renew your membership in the Ministers Council. Contact your local council or go to www.ministerscouncil.com. This is our organization and you should belong.





Remembering G. Daniel

There are people that you meet in life that are meant to make a lasting impact. One of those people in my life was Rev. Dr. G. Daniel Jones. Dr. Jones passed away on May 27, 2015 and I thought it fitting to share my memories with you.

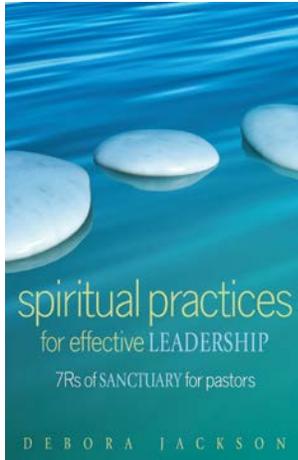
I met Dr. Jones in February 2012. Through the generosity of MMBB and ABHMS, I had been invited to the African American Leadership Conference in Fort Lauderdale, FL. I remember well the experience. Reading the roster of attendees, to say that I was a bit intimidated was an understatement. The pastors invited to this gathering were leaders of significant churches, renowned in their own right, many enjoying virtual “rock star” status. These pastors preached to hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of people each week. They were a part of this gathering and I understood why. But me? I had a little congregation south west of Boston. Who had ever heard of me? How did I even make the invitation list?

Yet there was a man. He was humble and personable. He saw me looking lost and he and his wife, Geraldine, invited me to join them at their table. That man was Rev. Dr. G. Daniel Jones. Dr. Jones was small in stature, but large in every other possible way. Colleagues called him the Dean of Preachers and extended to him great deference in the meeting. When he talked, it was an “EF Hutton” moment (remember those commercials?). And while he enjoyed such celebrity, what I remember was how he and his darling wife made me feel. We sat together and enjoyed each other’s company. In our time of sharing, I learned of our commonality. He served Messiah Baptist in Brockton, MA and St. John’s Baptist in Woburn, MA. He knew the places and pastors I knew. In fact, he not only knew everyone, but he was also able to fill in the detailed history of the churches in my area. After spending time with G. Daniel, I felt as though I belonged.

In September 2012 it was announced that I was the new Executive Director of the Ministers Council. One of the first people I heard from was my friend G. Daniel. And once again, he was extending the hand of welcome to me in this new role. I quickly learned that Dr. Jones had been President of the Ministers Council. In fact, he was the only person to serve in the role twice (1998-2001 and April 2002 – August 2002). Dr. Jones took the time to give me the history behind the history, helping me to make connections and understand how to best engage others in the work of the Ministers Council. He was a veritable “Who’s Who,” having been the founding president of both the PBA and ABCOTS Ministers Council. And he knew exactly with whom I should connect.

Of course it made sense that Dr. Jones would serve as that kind of bridge. He had a long history of leadership and involvement in the American Baptist Churches, USA. Over an 18 year period, Dr. Jones served in various capacities of the General Board. In 2006 and 2007, he served on the Executive Committee of the General Board as Chaplain. Dr. Jones also served on the Board of Educational Ministries, as a member of the Judson Press Subcommittee and the Affirmative Action Committee. A pastor’s pastor, Dr. Jones served churches in Massachusetts and Virginia before serving for 31 years as Senior Pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Germantown, PA, where he was named Pastor Emeritus. He will also be remembered as the long serving President of the Black Caucus of the ABC, USA.

However, I remember G. Daniel as the humble man who made me feel welcome. I remember G. Daniel as the man who was devoted to his wife – driving all over the country with Miss Geraldine, who was clearly the love of his life. He left this world seven months to the day of her passing, undoubtedly to be reunited with her around the throne of grace. I remember G. Daniel – fast talking, whip smart, habitually late, and flush with candy. And because I remember, I will be ever grateful to have known him.



New Release from Judson Press

Judson Press announces the nationwide release of *Spiritual Practices for Effective Leadership: 7Rs of Sanctuary for Pastors*, by Debora Jackson. This book offers a way-of-life process to help you regain balance, spiritual wholeness and enhanced leadership effectiveness.

Effectiveness in leadership is a primary concern for leaders. However, our ability to be effective is made difficult as we are confronted with increasing complexities in ministry, challenges, and issues without easy answers. Because such challenges can leave us feeling burned out and exhausted in ministry, what can we do to increase our effectiveness while realizing greater well-being?

Leadership theorists have demonstrated that our ability to be effective is enhanced as we increase our mental capacity. In other words, as we are able to step back and gain perspective on situations and challenges, we have an increased ability to objectively discern directions. The key strategy to gain such objectivity is reflection. As we become competent in taking an action and simultaneously reflecting upon it, we are able to learn from our reflections and competently move forward in our actions.

Our faith affirms such a strategy. The Bible commends the practice of Sabbath to us as a means of refreshment and restoration. But it is also a means through which we take time apart from the daily routine to rest and reflect in God. Sabbath as a sanctuary in time gives us the capacity to be objective and discerning. And recognizing that Jesus observed Sabbath, we can conclude that he too found such restoration in Sabbath. But Jesus also observed a kind of daily Sabbath. He took time apart to pray and seek God during the day or night, and in a variety of ministry situations in order to receive clarity, renewal and strength. As followers of Christ, we need to similarly engage, seeking time apart to enhance our ability to discern while also being restored.

The 7Rs of Sanctuary provides that process. Through it, you will learn how to:

- **Retreat** from your ministry – your leadership context;
- **Release** from confronting challenges so that you can disconnect;
- **Review** your current leadership context in a mindful way;
- **Reconnect** with God's call on your life;
- **Reflect** on the disconnections between your current context and your call;
- **Recalibrate** by determining strategies that will help you realign;
- **Return** to you ministry context grounded and prepared to lead.

Realize this transforming method for your effectiveness and wholeness. Order *Spiritual Practices for Effective Leadership: 7Rs of Sanctuary for Pastors* today and enjoy free shipping with your Ministers Council Membership. Get your copy by clicking the link:
http://www.judsonpress.com/product.cfm?product_id=18676.



Local News Anyone?

What is going on in your local chapter? Share the word so that others might join in. Did you know that more than 2000 people view this newsletter every month? Share your news so that others might be informed and inspired.

AMAZING GRACE

A New Broadway Musical

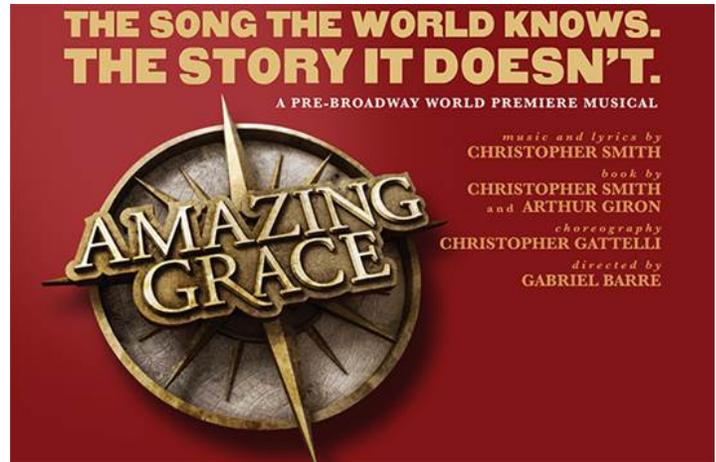
BROADWAY PREVIEWS BEGIN
JUNE 25TH

SAVE UP TO 35% FOR GROUPS OF 12
OR MORE

\$85 (Reg. \$135) Orch/ Front Mezz

\$65 (Reg. \$98) Mid/ Rear Mezz

\$42 (Reg. \$65) Student Mezz



Following an acclaimed, sold-out world premiere in Chicago, the musical **Amazing Grace** is thrilled to announce the full 31-member company returns for the Broadway engagement. Based on the awe-inspiring true story behind the world's most beloved song, **Amazing Grace** will play Broadway's **Nederlander Theatre** (208 W. 41st Street between 7th and 8th Avenues) with performances beginning Thursday, June 25.

WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING...

"Amazing Grace the musical is the sort of cultural triumph people have hoped for and prayed for for years—a sumptuous top-flight Broadway entertainment with a gloriously redemptive storyline that will inspire anyone and everyone. When it's over, you'll want to shout both Bravo! and Hallelujah!" -Eric Metaxas, New York Times bestselling author of "Bonhoeffer" and "Miracles"

"Hearing 'Amazing Grace' sung by this cast makes for an undeniably stirring theatrical moment; it brought tears to my eyes. Amazing Grace features stirring, romantic music and lyrics by Smith with catchy, accessible melodies and is vividly staged..." -Chris Jones, Chicago Tribune

"A stirring musical. An epic romance. Artfully produced on the lavish scale of Les Mis. Amazing Grace is a soaring piece of work full of well-crafted lyrics and character-driven melodies" -Hedy Weiss, Chicago Sun-Times

A captivating tale of romance, rebellion and redemption, **Amazing Grace** follows one man whose incredible journey ignited a historic wave of change. John Newton (Tony Award® nominee **Josh Young**), a willful and musically talented young Englishman, faces a future as uncertain as the turning tide. Coming of age as Britain sits atop an international empire of slavery, he finds himself torn between following in the footsteps of his father – a slave trader – or embracing the more compassionate views of his childhood sweetheart (**Erin Mackey**). Accompanied by his slave, Thomas (Tony Award winner **Chuck Cooper**), John embarks on a perilous voyage on the high seas. When that journey finds John in his darkest hour, it those people who he once saw little value in that changed his life and created a transformative moment of redemption that inspired a blazing anthem of hope that we all know and love. Brimming with emotion and adventure, **Amazing Grace** is an unforgettable musical saga that captures the spirit of history's sweetest and most powerful sound: freedom.

If you are interested in this opportunity and for more information, please contact Rev. Nicole Duncan-Smith at Nicole.duncansmith@gmail.com or Marcia Pendelton at Marcia@walktallgirlproductions.com.

Congratulations to the New England Portuguese Speaking Ministers Council



The New England Portuguese Speaking Caucus met on May 30th in Framingham, MA. Under the direction of Rev. Dr. Dalton Said, President of the National Portuguese Speaking Caucus, and Rev. Jackson Oliveira, Caucus Liaison to the American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts, representatives voted to establish a New England Portuguese Speaking Ministers Council. The newly elected leadership is depicted above: Rev. Miguel Ribeiro, Vice President; Rev. Marcos Aurélio Nogueira, President; Rev. Bert Celedon, Secretary; and Rev. Lilia Cavalcante, Treasurer. Also pictured, Rev. Salvador Orellana, ABHMS Coordinator, Latino Ministries Strategist and guest preacher for the gathering; and Rev. Dr. Dalton Said, President, National Portuguese Speaking Caucus.

ABHMS Seeks Volunteers for Various Summer Mission Opportunities

American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS) seeks volunteers for a variety of summer mission opportunities across the United States that will truly make a difference as they undergird individuals and positively impact communities.

Louisiana

On the 10th anniversary of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, volunteers continue to make a difference in the lives of residents of New Orleans' Lower 9th Ward. Slated for Aug. 2-8, this year's "Home Mission: ['Til the Work is Done](#)" effort will again include painting, laying sheet rock, cutting grass and tending community gardens. Details are to come regarding a special project. Neither construction skills nor training is required. Unskilled volunteers will be supervised by skilled workers. Individuals and groups are welcome; youth are encouraged to participate. Volunteers are responsible for round-trip transportation costs. Fee of \$225 includes housing, food and registration. Scholarships are available.

New Jersey

Co-sponsored by American Baptist Churches of New Jersey, the Hurricane Sandy response

effort “[Coming Together for New Jersey...Rebuild, Renew and Restore](#)” continues for the third consecutive year. This year’s dates are July 11-18 and Aug. 8-15. This effort includes hands-on building and the opportunity to encourage those in need. Neither construction skills nor training is required. The \$250 cost includes housing and food; volunteers are responsible for transportation. Scholarships are available.

West Virginia

College groups and youth at least age 17 (age 16 with parent’s signature) are encouraged to participate in the Alderson Ministerial Association’s summer work teams that do carpentry and repair work in the homes of low-income, disabled and senior families. Work weeks begin on Monday mornings and end on Friday afternoons, June 28-Aug. 8. Cost begins at \$275 per person for the week and includes a room at a community center with showers and kitchen facilities; three meals daily; and materials for use at the work site.

Oklahoma

Murrow Indian Children’s Home, a residential home in Muskogee for orphaned Native American children, needs volunteers to help with general construction, routine office work, grounds maintenance and landscaping. Volunteer opportunities are ongoing.

Washington, D.C.

Youth and adult mission groups are invited to participate in week-long urban ministry projects with City Gate, a multifaceted ministry that serves marginalized populations. Short- and long-term ongoing volunteer opportunities include tutoring/mentoring children and youth; staffing summer day camps; serving in the hunger ministry or international hospitality/language ministry; mentoring at-risk youth; and participating in repair/construction projects. A stipend and housing may be provided for summer and long-term volunteers.

ABWIM After Party- Remember to register for the ABWIM After Party!

This year's event will feature women authors. One author who will be present is Ministers Council Executive Director, the Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, whose book "Spiritual Practices for Effective Leadership: 7Rs of Sanctuary for Pastors" published by Judson Press has just been released! In this book, Dr. Jackson invites pastors into a process of retreat and release, of engaging in spiritual practices to become better leaders. The book can be purchased at:

http://www.judsonpress.com/product.cfm?product_id=18676&CFID=3367075&CFTOKEN=858c207f5696367e-991CEE1A-A5A7-3C7B-151D110BC3183E2B#

Another author who will be present is Rev. Chris Smith who chaired the Women in Ministry Adaptive Learning Team. Rev. Smith authored “Beyond the Stained Glass Ceiling” an excellent resource detailing not only the challenges women face in ministry but also how to navigate the way forward. This book is also available through Judson Press: http://www.judsonpress.com/product.cfm?product_id=16736

Don't miss this opportunity to meet women authors, connect with colleagues, and network with denominational leaders!

Caring for You and Your Ministry

The summer months are a good time in many churches for pastors and ministry leaders to slow down, take a deep breath, and look ahead to the new program year starting in September. This is the perfect opportunity to look at your personal and spiritual health, and the health of your ministry.

American Baptist Women's Ministries and American Baptist Women in Ministry have produced *Caring for You and Your Ministry*, a printed resource for women learning how to find balance in their lives and attend to the health of their ministries. *Caring for You and Your Ministry* offers guidance and support from clergy and lay women, as well as medical and counseling professionals. It addresses the issue from the perspective of individual health as well as attending to these same issues in a ministry setting.

"Women engaged in ministry, whether as a professional or a layperson, must attend to their spiritual, physical, and emotional health in order to be effective leaders," noted Virginia Holmstrom, executive director of American Baptist Women's Ministries. "I am glad for the partnership with ABWIM to provide a resource that is relevant to all women who practice servant leadership."

Rev. Patricia Hernandez, national director of American Baptist Women in Ministry, agreed. "Finding balance in caring for ourselves and our ministries fosters health in our ministries and well-being in our personal lives resulting in a spirited vitality overall, one that is healthy in heart, mind, soul, and strength."

Caring for You and Your Ministry [Item #4940/\$13] may be purchased at www.abwministries.org/store. Profits will benefit both American Baptist Women's Ministries and American Baptist Women in Ministry.

Upcoming Events

- Ministers Council Board of Governors Meeting, Overland Park, KS, June 23-24, 2015
- Ministers Council Ministries Team Meeting, Overland Park, KS, June 24-25, 2015
- Mission Summit, Overland Park, KS, June 26-28, 2015
- Ministers Council "Let Go, Behold, Sing!" Retreat, June 29 – July 1, 2015
- Christian Leadership Institute, Jerusalem, July 14-24,

Give to the Ministers Council

Support the work and ministry of the Ministers Council through the Ministers Council Endowment. Visit <http://ministerscouncil.com/the-ministers-council-endowment> for more information.

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