

Rev. Dr. Debora Jackson, Executive Director

Aug 2016

From the Desk of the Executive Director

For what do you make time? I know that may be a cryptic question, but it is a serious one. I know we make time for sermon preparation. We make time to visit someone who is sick or shut in. We make time to prepare for committee meetings, leadership meetings, and denominational meetings. We make time to go everywhere we need to be, and we rush to do it. But what is the cost?

My family had a sobering reminder of the fleeting nature of time and how we spend it this past week. My niece was rushing to work. Maybe she was running late and in a hurry, so she didn't fasten her seat belt. She was on a twisting and winding road, perhaps a shortcut selected to save a little time. She was driving faster than the posted speed limit, we think. But isn't that something that many of us do when we're in a hurry? And then she was texting. I imagine she wrote something like, "I'm running late" or "I'm on my way." But the combination was too much. On Saturday, July 30th, Montrecia Thomas was involved in a single car accident where she was thrown from the car and presumably died upon impact. She was 21 years old.



So as my family is left to mourn this terrible tragedy, I cannot help but wonder about time. If we're honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that we've done most if not all of the things that ended my niece's life: no seatbelt, speeding, texting while driving. We rush about for various and sundry reasons, but I cannot help but wonder whether those reasons are all that important in the grand scheme of things. Would it have been so bad to have been a few minutes late? If you had to send a text, couldn't you have taken a few seconds to pull over? Of course given the cost in hindsight, we can all say that the risk wasn't worth it.

And then what are we missing out on because we are so busy spending our time rushing about? That thought gripped me as my son and I rode in my car. You see, I too am guilty of rushing through time like Adam Sandler's character in the movie "Click." So a drive in the car, rather than being an enjoyable time of bonding, becomes a perfunctory "let's quickly get from point A to point B" affair. But yesterday, with the image of my niece firmly in mind, I drove and smiled and tried not to cry as my son warbled Queen's "Seaside Rendezvous." How many times had I missed opportunities to share like this? How many times was I too busy or preoccupied with my own thoughts? How many times?



But this time, I was better. I was as present and as engaged as I would have been had I been speaking to a congregant or a pastor. And this time it was a greater gift. I was giving my best self to my son and in giving my best self to him, he gave his best right back to me. We laughed and talked as we drove from Massachusetts to New Hampshire. We even took a few minutes to rock out when "Bohemian Rhapsody" started to play. It was a moment of sheer joy made possible because I took the time to enjoy the moment.

I can only conclude that sometimes, we take time for granted. We assume that there will be time enough for the things that we push to the background while we busily do the things that we deem priority. We assume that we have got to rush through because what we are rushing to is so important. But as the old hymn says, *“Time is filled with swift transition; naught of earth unmoved can stand...”* Time is fleeting and we cannot recover the moments lost, like a child’s first steps, or a perfect sunrise, or an afternoon spent with a loved one. Moreover, we should not delude ourselves that our time is better spent rushing about or filling each moment with things that will not make a difference. No one is indispensable and if any of us were called home right now, the things that we are so urgently trying to do would be picked up by someone else if they really were important, or abandoned if they were not. So take the time today to notice a late blooming rose, or call a friend who crossed your mind, or do nothing. No day is promised, so take the time now.



Registration Closes August 15: Register now for the 7R's of Sanctuary Program

Registration for the *7Rs of Sanctuary* program is now open and applications are being received for a year-long cohort to begin in September 2016. Apply now by clicking [here](#).

The *7Rs of Sanctuary* is a program designed to help leaders realize greater personal and professional efficacy in leadership by integrating contemplative, spiritually-grounded practices, both personal and communal, into their daily lives. Through this 12-month program, participants will engage in a variety of contemplative practices, alone and together, while learning strategies that will help them address some of the most pressing leadership challenges. The results will be transformative as leaders attain increased well-being and wholeness for themselves in community, while mastering skills that will strengthen their organizations. The program features one three-day residency to be held **September 19-21, 2016 at the Wisdom House Conference Center, 229 East Litchfield Rd., Litchfield, CT**; four one-day follow-up sessions to be scheduled quarterly, supplemented by reading, reflection and peer group learning.

As the research clearly articulates in the book [Spiritual Practices for Effective Leadership: 7R's of Sanctuary for Pastors](#), leaders who take time apart to engage in spiritual practices are more effective in their leadership. Leaders must become competent in taking an action and simultaneously reflecting on the action to learn from it. The challenge is in making space for that time of reflection so that leaders can restore their sense of purpose, put issues in perspective, and regain courage and heart. This is the goal of the 7Rs of Sanctuary program. In this time apart, participants are revitalized, and decision making is enriched in a spirit of peace and certainty.

The cost of the year-long program is \$1000. However, as a result of a generous grant from the Pastoral Excellence Network, scholarships covering up to 75% of the program expense are available.

Click [here](#) to register. Space is limited for the program and registration closes on August 15, 2016. Program acceptance and financial aid decisions will be communicated by August 29, 2016.

Don't just read this ... Do something!

In response to recent acts of racially-motivated violence during this time of heightened racial tension across the United States, American Baptist Home Mission Societies has launched a Facebook group to encourage dialogue that will offer comfort, provide hope and promote healing. Please join the discussion! Share your thoughts and impressions on this “Creating a Groundswell for Racial Justice” page at <http://facebook.com/groups/groundswellforjustice>.

**“New Era Baptist Institutes”
Subject of Lecture sponsored by
ABHS**



Deborah Van Broekhoven, outgoing Executive Director of the American Baptist Historical Society, will present a lecture on “New Era Baptist Institutes” on the evening of Friday, September 30th. As the latest in a series of lectures sponsored by and held at ABHS, this lecture on of the 1890s and first decade of the 20th century explores the challenges experienced by black and white Baptists who cooperated to sponsor New Era Institutes. Featuring both white and black ministers as teachers, these “institutes” lasted from three days to two weeks and encouraged black church leaders in the South to enroll in courses that ranged from biblical studies and sermon preparation to theology, church history, missions and Christian education. Ministers, deacons, Sunday School teachers, and other laypeople flocked by the thousands to these traveling seminaries.

“White” Baptists from the home mission organizations for northern and southern Baptists discussed and planned together how best to support this movement. Black Baptists of several types also cooperated, with all parties agreeing that more education was key to the vitality of black churches, most of which struggled to find well-educated pastors. All parties also agree that the interracial composition of those who planned, promoted, and taught courses at the New Era Institutes was helpful in defusing ever-present racial tensions.

This event is free and open to the public. All are invited.



Did Your Church Receive its World Mission Offering Materials Yet?

The 2016 World Mission Offering educational material put the spotlight on the spiritual revival happening in Baptist churches right now in Cuba.

The free educational materials should have been received in your church by now. They include a full-color 24-page [Global Mission Study Guide](#), a full-color poster and 16 short videos on DVD (seven are in Spanish), plus bulletin inserts, clip art, a newsletter article and much more. [Click here](#) to download additional materials or call 1-800-4JUDSON to request that materials be mailed to you.

The 2016 theme, “on Earth as in Heaven” (Matthew 6:10) underlies the story of the Holy Spirit in Cuba. It’s a story of perseverance and faithfulness even during times of great adversity, of God’s merciful providence and the churches’ response to opportunities.

And it’s a story of how International Ministries (IM) and our ABCUSA churches are helping to fuel this revival. You will find out how your church and churches around the world can learn from the great and surprising growth of Christianity in Cuba. And you’ll find contact information for people with whom to connect at IM who can help your church or individuals plan trips to volunteer with Baptist partners in Cuba.

Congregations' gifts to the WMO make ministries like this one possible.

Many of the global ministries that IM supports could not continue, and new areas of mission could not be established, without generous contributions to the WMO. Individuals and churches can give to the WMO now and year-round.

Two-thirds of all people still do not know the fullness of God's love through Jesus Christ. Gifts to the WMO help IM touch human lives through holistic ministries that invite people to be disciples of Jesus Christ, proclaim God's reign and equip the body of Christ -- in more than 70 countries around the world.

Contributions to the WMO will be used to support *all* of IM's global servants and *all* the work of IM.

WMO 2016 downloadable resources can be found [here](#).

For more information, contact [Catherine Nold](#).

IM invites comments on [Facebook](#).



Support the Ministers Council

I had the privilege of co-leading a wonderful group of women in the Soul of Leadership After Event of the AB Women's Conference in Washington DC, July 21-23. During one of our sessions, we started talking about supporting the organizations for which we care. We weren't talking about the Ministers Council, per se, but I couldn't help but go into commercial mode. I warned the participants, saying, "I'm taking off my facilitator's hat now and putting on my Executive Director's hat." And then I went on to speak passionately about supporting our organizations. American Baptist Women in Ministry is in the midst of a capital campaign. Have you given? The Ministers Council had an Annual Fund drive in May and June. Did you give? But I don't have to stop there. Fill in the blank: ABCUSA, MMBB, ABF, ABHMS, IM. We are all trying to do the work of the ministry by soliciting funds to combat constrained and diminishing financial resources. While we might be stirred in the moment thinking that someone ought to do something, how many of us are moved to open up our wallets and contribute?

I am very proud that some of our attendees at our retreat did just that – they opened their wallets and wrote checks to the Ministers Council. In fact as two women tried to pay their dues, I actually tried to dissuade them. After all, here we were in July. The 2016 membership year was more than half over. I didn't want them to feel like their monies were for naught. But they insisted. Providing support to the organization was more important to them than what they were going to get out of it. I remain humbled by their show of faith and support.

It is true that the Ministers Council exists because of the support we get from folks who will pay their dues and financially give to our work. As I said in my Annual report that I am preparing to share at the Ministers Council Annual Meeting on August 21,

"I continue to believe in the Ministers Council and our importance in ABCUSA. I contend that there is no organization like the Ministers Council, because while many are concerned about the welfare and well-being of clergy, that is our sole focus. We continue to be the largest organized constituency of the ABCUSA. We are valued and needed. Therefore, we must innovatively use our efforts to ensure that our impact and influence continues. "

I say this often, but it is true: we are an autonomous, professional, multi-cultural organization of ordained, commissioned and lay Christian leaders within the American Baptist Churches, USA. And we do the work of encouraging collegiality, fostering spiritual centeredness, and promoting professional competence among clergy so that we are our most effective and best selves for the cause of Christ and those we serve. We need your support. Won't you help us by contributing to the work of the Ministers Council? Go to www.ministerscouncil.com and click the donate link to make your tax-deductible donation today and thank you for your support.

Local News Anyone?

We want to share news and events from local Ministers Council chapters and ABCUSA organizations that want to promote their good works across the country. Do you have news to share? Forward your stories and information to Debora Jackson at Debora.jackson@abc-usa.org. We want to share your happenings with others.



Meet Kathy Jachowski

I am delighted to have the privilege of introducing to you Kathy Jachowski (pronounced Ja-husky) as Administrative Assistant of the Ministers Council. Kathy comes to us from the Baptist Church of West Chester, PA, where Rev. David Braneky (President of the ABCOPAD Ministers Council) is pastor. She has extensive experience as a church administrator and assistant, having also served at the First Baptist Church, Hickory, NC and the First Baptist Church, Lincolnton, NC. A Minister in her own right, Kathy holds a Master of Art degree in Religion, and serves as a pulpit supply minister. Kathy is the First Lady of Brownback's United Church of Christ (that means that she's a pastor's wife – for the uninitiated...) and also has two teenaged children. Welcome to the Ministers Council, Kathy!



Travel Schedule

- Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries Intercultural Caucus, Leominster, MA, August 12-13.
- Ministers Council Annual Meeting – 4H National Convention and Conference Center, Chevy Chase, MD, August 21-22.
- 2016 Ministers Conference – 4H National Convention and Conference Center, Chevy Chase, MD, August 22-25.



Ministers Council Contact Information

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