

## **The Great Resignation Impacts ABC Clergy**

The global pandemic has influenced many life-changing decisions in society. One of these changes has been termed, “The Great Resignation,” coined by professor Anthony Klotz. Indeed, many persons withdrew from the workforce during and after the pandemic citing reasons that include: hybrid and remote work, entrepreneurial explorations, saving money, free time to ponder what is important in life, and extracting oneself from unfulfilling work.

The Great Resignation has also impacted ABC clergy. A recent survey of ABC pastors indicated that “eleven percent of ABC pastors experienced a somewhat to very severe conflict during the pandemic” and “twelve percent of ABC pastors have considered leaving the pastoral ministry fairly or very often during the last year.”

Recently, the Professional Ministries Team, comprised of ABC staff persons whose portfolios relate to providing support for ABC clergy, discussed this topic and offers the following list of resources for clergy who continue to be impacted by COVID-19 and who may be in need of resources to combat stress or who may be contemplating a career change.

Each item below begins with a definition of the resource and suggests where such resources may be found.

List of Resources...

### **Peer Support**

**Suggested by Randolph Miller, President of the Ministers Council**

Christian ministry is not for the faint of heart. The isolation can be profound, and the tasks and responsibilities of ministry can be overwhelming and complex. It is a sacred entrustment requiring a deep sense of call, long-term commitment and rigorous discipleship.

Through a network of local and specialized ministry chapters, the Ministers Council ABCUSA seeks to encourage collegiality, competence and centeredness among American Baptist clergy, encouraging them in their various callings.

Two resources available through the Ministers Council are:

- 1) Together in Ministry (TIM) Funds. Grants are available to all members of the Ministers Council to start up and maintain small collegial support groups.
- 2) Excellence in Ministry (EIM) Funds. Grants are available to local chapters of the Ministers Council to facilitate chapter retreats, conferences and seminars for clergy in their area. When local chapters are inactive or non-existent, these funds can be accessed by regional executives for the same purpose.

For further information, contact Ministers Council ABCUSA at: [Ministerscouncil.com](http://Ministerscouncil.com)

## **Spiritual Direction**

**Suggested by Pat Hernandez, AGS for Transition Ministries and Women in Ministry and Randolph Miller, President of the Ministers Council**

### ***What is Spiritual Direction?***

Sometimes, we find a need for a trusted companion in our faith journey. *Spiritual direction* provides this through the relationship between a person seeking direction, a spiritual director, and the Holy Spirit. Together, the spiritual director and the person listen to the Spirit, discerning God's movement in her/his life. By listening and asking caring open-ended questions, a director serves as a spiritual midwife, helping others give birth to understanding of God and of a life living in loving God, others, and self.

*Judy Fackenthal, ABCUSA Spiritual Direction Team*

### **ABC Spiritual Direction and Formation**

As a continuation of its emphasis on spiritual transformation begun as part of the Transformed by the Spirit initiative, the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary has formed a Spiritual Direction Team of Rev. Brad Berglund, Rev. Judy Fackenthal, and Rev. Betty Wright-Riggins. A website has been developed with a variety of resources to support, sustain and strengthen the practice of spiritual direction, as well as finding a Spiritual Director and connecting with ABC Spiritual Directors.

Website: [www.abcspiritualformation.com](http://www.abcspiritualformation.com)

Contact: Rev. Dr. Patricia Hernandez (Patricia.Hernandez@abc-usa.org)

### **Ministers Council**

Ministers Council is a professional organization of ordained, commissioned and lay leaders. As part of its values of collegiality, centeredness and competence, Randy Miller, former Ministers Council President and certified Spiritual Director, has convened and facilitated an online forum for ABC spiritual directors to connect in community, sharing best practices, and learning from each other.

Website: [www.ministerscouncil.com](http://www.ministerscouncil.com)

Contact: Rev. Dr. Randolph Miller (rtmiller77@gmail.com)

### **The National Network of American Baptist Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors and Specialized Ministers (which includes Spiritual Directors)**

This is a professional support and networking organization developed and sponsored by American Baptist Home Mission Societies. As part of developing this network, the first Spiritual Caregivers Conference was held in September 2022, prior to Space for Grace. Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Spiritual Directors and others in specialized ministries had an opportunity to gather for renewal, resource sharing and reflection.

Website: [www.abhms.org](http://www.abhms.org)

Contact: Rev. Dr. Patricia Murphy (Patricia.Murphy@abhms.org)

## **Stress, Burnout, and Depression Resources**

**Suggested by Miriam Mendez, Executive Minister for the ABC of New Jersey**

Did you know...

**Stress** is caused by overuse of our adjustment capacities. Too much transition or change. Stress can be negative or positive. Bodies can't tell the difference.

**Burnout** is caused by overuse of our listening and caring capacities—sense of being drained.

**Depression** is caused by: crises: death, loss of job or relationship, on-going illness; extended burnout or stress; genetically pre-dispositioned.

### Resources for Pastors/Leaders

1. Anderson, Fil. (2004). *Running on Empty: Contemplative Spirituality for Overachievers*. Waterbrook Press.
2. Cloud, H. (1995). *Changes That Heal*. Zondervan Publishing House.
3. Cloud, H. (1992). *Boundaries*. Zondervan Publishing House.
4. Jones, Kirk. B. (2001). *Rest in the Storm*. Judson Press
5. Marcuson, Margaret J. (2009). *Leaders Who Last*. Seabury Books, New York, NY.
6. Muller, Wayne (2010). *A Life of Being, Having and Doing Enough*. Three River Press.
7. Nouwen, H. J. (1992). *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. New York: Crossroad.
8. Shawchuck, N., & Heuser, R. (1993). *Leading the Congregation: Caring for Yourself While Serving People*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
9. Sine, Christine and Tom. (2002). *Living on Purpose: Finding God's Best for Your Life*. Baker Books.
10. Sine, Christine. (2003). *Sacred Rhythms: Finding a Peaceful Pace in a Hectic World*. Baker Books.
11. Swenson, R. A. (1992). *Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
12. Van Sustain, Lisa and Colino, Stacey (2020). *Emotional Inflammation: Discover Your Triggers and Claim Your Equilibrium During Anxious Times*. Sounds True.
13. Willard, Dallas. (1998). *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God*. HarperSanFrancisco.

A copy of the resource, "Red Flags of Emotional Exhaustion" is also attached in the Appendix.

## **Additional Resources**

**Offered by Gregg Hemmen, Executive Minister of the Central Region**

- Briggs, J.R. – Fail: Finding Hope and Grace in the Midst of Ministry Failure (this is a great commentary on the ordinary failures that most pastors experience on a regular basis)

- Kearns-Goodwin, Doris – No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt (Kearns-Goodwin tells the extraordinary story of leadership during a very difficult period in our nations history. There are many good lessons to be learned from this volume.)
- Manion, Jeff – The Land Between: Finding God in Difficult Transitions (most of life is lived in transition from one thing to the next)
- Noble, Perry – Overwhelmed: Winning the War Against Worry (Noble is definitely a flawed vessel, as we all are. Some of his imperfections have been out there in public, but there are many vitamins worth considering in this work.)
- The Rise & Fall of Mars Hill – See <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/podcasts/rise-and-fall-of-mars-hill/> or find wherever you get your podcasts. This series of podcasts tells a cautionary tale of Marc Driscoll and his leadership at Mars Hill Church. There are lessons here about leadership, conflict, submission, abuse, and healing.

Compiled by members of the American Baptist Professional Ministries Team  
November 2022