



January 2018

Dear Members and Friends,

I am honored to serve as President of the Ministers Council ABCUSA for 2018. Doug Harris has led us effectively the past four years, through some challenging times. The challenges are not over, but your current Board of Governors is stepping up to face them and seek God's leading in creative, sustainable solutions.

Let me give some background, to orient newcomers and to remind long-timers. We are in the middle of a process that began even before Kate Harvey retired in 2010. She warned the Board and Senators then that we could not sustain the draw on endowment that would begin when the Lilly Grants ended. Interim Executive Director Joe Kutter and the Board responded with the Together In Ministry Capital Campaign, which was carefully envisioned with the help of professional advisors. The results are real: we do have some invested monies (\$174,554) from which we can draw revenue to encourage additional TIM programming. But the results were not sufficiently large to fill the gap in operating expenses.

Executive Director Debora Jackson applied her impressive business experience and financial savvy to the issues and with the Board shepherded reductions in spending, actual and projected (smaller Board and reduced Senate expenses, plus new grants and a development team). Even these changes have not turned the tide.

So in 2016, the Board, under Debora's guidance, set a policy that before the endowment fell below \$500,000 we would find a way to function sustainably within a budget that would not reduce the endowment further (in other words, a \$75,000/year budget, compared to more than \$250,000 in recent years). We estimated we had two years before such changes would need to be in place. Because both our Administrative Assistant and our Executive Director found alternate placements in 2016, it seemed wise not to move new people into these old positions, but to move up the question of a sustainable way of

functioning. We are in the midst of that process. Good news: our endowment at the end of 2017 is \$691,314.

Our current plan is to NOT hire an Executive Director. The person soon to be hired in the new position entitled "Member Services Coordinator" will play a vital role in keeping members current and connected, and will also support the Board as we move forward into a more frugal plan fulfilling our mission. (The position was fleshed out in the late fall, and our job description circulated in recent weeks. At present, we have more than 30 applicants and plan to hire by mid-February.)

Your Chapter Representatives also indicated at our last Annual Meeting that they desired some kind of national presence and programming. We are exploring the idea of an unpaid Ministers Council Ambassador, maximizing the internet for connecting and programming, and distributing endowment income funds in partnership with other ABC entities that serve ministerial leaders. The best of the ideas will be brought to the Chapter Representatives, sitting as the Ministries Team. (Hint: be sure your chapter has a Representative named and that he/she is active with the Ministries Team.) The best plan that emerges will be voted on by the Chapter Representatives at the 2018 Annual Meeting, which will be held in November (rather than August) in conjunction with the 2018 Space for Grace in Philadelphia. We will keep all who are interested informed via reports like this.

Right now, and going forward if we stay fiscally responsible, the Ministers Council will depend more than ever on the voluntary efforts of many. We need your help.

- Pray for the organization and its leadership, as well as for your colleagues in ministry.
- Work harder than ever at encouraging competency, connection, and centeredness among ministers in your area.
- Watch for announcements and send to us any Spirit-inspired thoughts and suggestions they provoke.
- Pay your dues for 2018 and encourage others to do so.

*With God's guidance, we can remain a vital and effective means of encouraging excellence in ministerial leadership.*

God bless us, every one,

Darla ("Dee Dee") Turlington  
President, Ministers Council