



MINISTERS COUNCIL NEWS YOU CAN USE – PLEASE SHARE WITH YOUR NETWORKS

September 2008

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~I'M GLAD TO BE HERE

I want to say first how grateful I am for the words of encouragement that have come to me during my first days on the job. And with those words have often come the observation, "We will all miss Kate." Yes we do miss Kate Harvey.

Kate and I, to use her phrase, have tag-teamed in Ministers Council roles for a long time and I have watched, and sometimes helped, as she has led the Ministers Council through the most significant season of transformation in its history. When the history of American Baptist life is written, and we look at recent years, the Lilly Grant making possible the Together In Ministry Groups will be a singular high-light of our life together. The testimonies are in and we know that the lives of ministerial colleagues have been enhanced and sometimes transformed and the lives of the congregations and institutions they serve have been the beneficiaries.

During this time, she has represented the MC with grace and wisdom, trying, in sometimes impossible circumstances, to reach out to all persons both in denominational meetings and in personal relationships. We will miss her.

And...we will move forward. My role, over the next 2 to 3 years is to help the MC make the transition into "the time after Lilly". The good people at Lilly Endowment have made it clear that there will be no more grants in this series. So the question is, what next? Who shall we be? What will our ministry be? Won't we have fun praying and thinking and looking for answers to those questions? For those who suspect some kind of sarcasm in the question, I really do think that we will have fun. I'm too old not to have fun!

For the next season in our life together, the focus will be on the constituent councils and identifying ways within those councils for ministerial leaders to effectively covenant to deepen our spiritual lives and strengthen our effectiveness as ministerial leaders. (See our Mission Statement) To speak more colloquially, I believe that we need to become more "grass roots" oriented than ever.

Grace and Peace,
Joe Kutter

~WORLD MISSION CONFERENCES, INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Announcing a new location – ARIZONA!

That's right folks, get out your planning calendar and choose your location. The World Mission Conferences are NATIONAL events, so it doesn't matter where you live. You can go to one down the road, or across the country.

Maybe you long to be in New England during fall foliage, then head for Suffield, CT on Sept. 19 – 21. We promise there will be fresh apple cider at the coffee breaks. Featured speakers include Bible study

leader Rev. Daniel Martino, and the Sunday sermon will be given by international guest Rev. Hanna Massad who heads the ONLY Baptist church in Gaza!

If you've always wanted to visit the Heartland of America, then come to Marshalltown, Iowa on Oct. 3 – 5. Everyone's toes will be tapping to a Caribbean rhythm thanks to special musical guests the Maranatha Band from the Dominican Republic! During this conference, we are going to be welcoming not one, but TWO brand new congregations forming in the Mid-America region.

Looking to take a mid-winter break in a warmer climate? Then circle Feb. 20 – 22, 2009 in Sun City, Arizona on your calendar. This World Mission Conference will be held in 2 locations: Bellevue Heights Church, and its off spring Palm West Community Church. Afterward you can visit the Grand Canyon, Sedona, Tempe or take in some spring training.

The World Mission Conference is on the move! Keep your eyes open for dates in California, New Hampshire and Indiana!

Check http://www.internationalministries.org/read/world_mission_conferences to read about the missionaries, programs for kids and teens, see a weekend schedule or to register.

~JUDSON PRESS

To promote the new release ***On the Road to Emmaus: A Travel Guide through Grief***, Judson Press is offering an additional 15% off online orders which include this unique grief recovery resource by Myrlene Hamilton Hess and any of Judson's other titles related to **grief** or **death and dying**. Order must total \$15.00 before shipping and handling. Enter code GRIEF in the discount/promo code box at checkout. Offer expires Oct. 31, 2008. www.judsonpress.com

~RURAL MINISTRY

Earlier this month, I spent a weekend with the American Baptist Churches of Nebraska at their annual family gathering. (My thanks to Susan Gillies, Steve Bils and Paul Marine (region Ministers Council president, for their warm hospitality.) Driving from Topeka to Kearney, Nebraska, I was reminded again of the magnificent ground beauty of the rich agricultural lands of the heartland. You've not really seen earth-tones until you have seen the real thing in the earth of the Midwest.

The Executive Committee of the Nebraska Ministers Council spent an hour with me talking about their Ministers Council and it became clear again that ministry in a rural environment is distinctive and carries its own opportunities and challenges. For urbanites, it may be hard to imagine having your nearest pastoral colleague an hour or two away even when you drive 75 mph to visit.

Thanks to an invitation from Jack Gilstrap, ABCCR Ministers Council president, I'll get a bit of a different view as I travel south to Tulsa to meet with the Central Region October 9.

Duke Divinity's "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence" website recently carried a group of 4 articles on rural ministry. You can find them going to: www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/spe/articles or by using our search engine to search "Sustaining Pastoral Excellence". They are in the August articles. ~ JK

~ADVENT IS COMING -- HELP

I know that you first have to get through the rest of the September start-up process. When we are barely through September, here comes, for many of us, the October Stewardship Drive and the World Mission Offering. Every board and committee in the world wants to meet in October! And you know that you need to be ready for Thanksgiving Sunday when all the choirs are ready with their first big offerings and lots of congregations bring special offerings for the needy. Even though you may be scrambling to get through all of that and it may not sound like good news now, ready or not, Advent is coming.

Let's help each other out. Will you please share with me one or two advent resources that have been helpful to you? Articles, books, ideas, YouTube, internet sites, share what has been or you hope will be helpful.

I'll do some editing and see if we can offer some help in October. ~ JK

~WHY SHOULD WE GIVE?

The easy answer to the above question is that it is a Biblical mandate. There are countless Scriptures, both in the Old and the New Testament, that make our obligation clear.

However, as with many Biblical mandates, the benefits to the obedient follower go well beyond simply following the rules. As Don Campbell writes in *Taking the Stew Out of Stewardship*, many givers experience "the life change experienced by godly commitment to sacrificial giving or the sense of joy in giving and being part of something exciting and growing." To give to a church usually increases the sense of community felt by the giver, and his/her sense of belonging grows. As with many of God's commands, this one benefits the doer at least as much as anyone else.

Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

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If you have news, ideas, events or websites from your Ministers Council to share with colleagues, please email to joe.kutter@abc-usa.org. The more we share with one another what works, the stronger we will all be.

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

II Timothy 1:6-7

"For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline."