

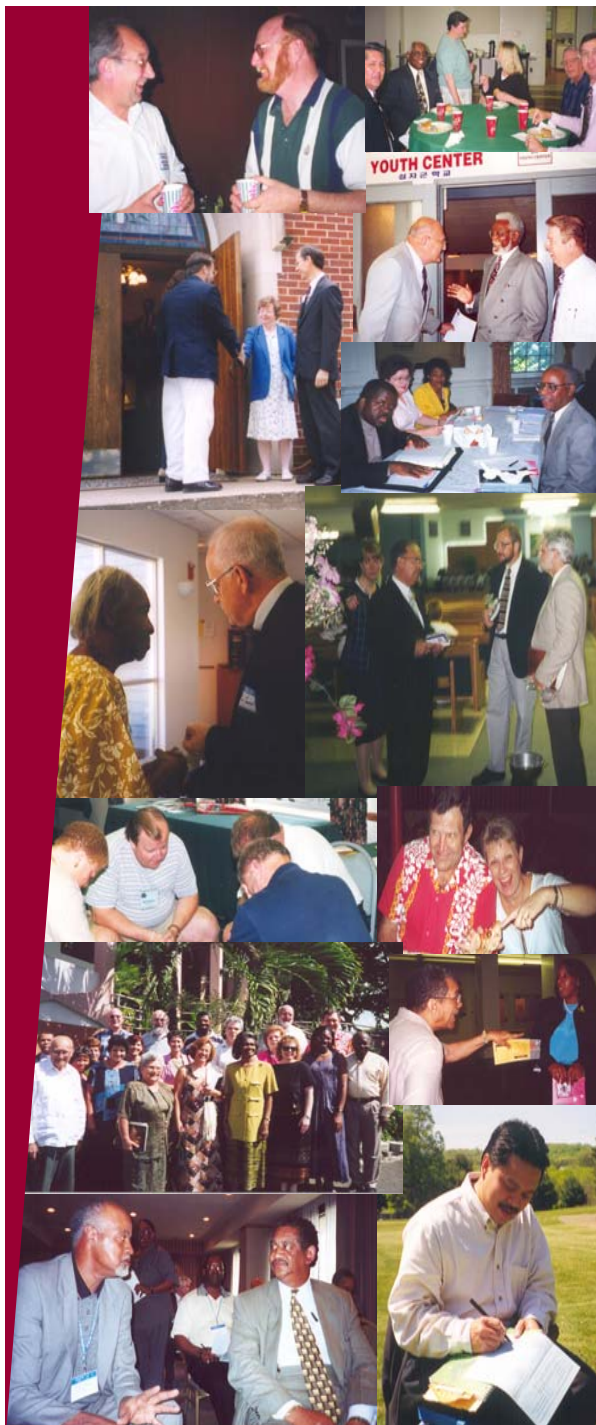
18. Don't forget to publicize events. Apply for a regional Ministers Council mailing permit or send reminders in the regional newsletter.

MAY GOD BLESS
YOU
IN THE PLANNING!

Kate Harvey
Executive Director
kate.harvey@abc-usa.org

Sue Sechrist
Office Administrator
sue.sechrist@abc-usa.org

The Ministers Council
PO Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851
610/768-2333/2334
www.ministerscouncil.com



The Ministers Council

POINTERS FOR PROGRAMS



American Baptist Churches USA
PO Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851

Congratulations!

Congratulations on being chosen to design programs for your Ministers Council. The suggestions in this brochure will assist you as you dream and develop opportunities for your colleagues to gather.

1. Schedule events for the whole year (or as far ahead as possible) and mail with the membership invitation letter, so members can plan ahead. Sticking with the same day of the month helps make attendance a habit. Also mail dues envelope and schedule to church laypersons with budgetary responsibility to ask that dues be covered as a professional expense.
2. Don't be afraid to ask high profile speakers with exciting topics. Asking costs nothing and they just might say yes.
3. But also invite as speakers colleagues with special expertise, as well as retired colleagues with wisdom to share.
4. Be creative in funding programs. If fees for speakers are a challenge, remember that seminary professors may charge nothing or little, because their presence promotes the seminary. Policy is that denominational staff do not accept honoraria but may desire help to defray travel expenses.
5. Offer Continuing Education units for programs. Call Lynne Eckman (1-800-222-3872, extension 2067) for evaluation of CEUs, also to access individual grants.
6. Develop a tradition of annual retreats spanning a few days at a pleasant "away" location to encourage colleagues not to slip away home for meetings. Rhode Island has a tradition of spring retreats on Block Island. Oregon holds retreats at Cannon Beach. .
7. Get on the schedule of the region annual meeting to host a meal or a reception for ministerial leaders. Call the Ministers Council office for a display and brochures for the event.
8. Give Outstanding Church Leadership Awards at annual meetings, in categories of small, mid-size and large church leadership. Along with the honor, give a scholarship to Green Lake, a book certificate, or a cash award. Honor retiring colleagues.
9. Plan an annual evening out for colleagues and spouses or significant others, with a festive meal, entertainment as the program, and plenty of free time for conversation. Consider a nearby camp or park for a recreational gathering of ministerial leaders and families.
10. Be sure to invite the regional executive minister and area ministers to meetings. The opportunity for informal connections is an incentive to attend.
11. Establish collegial covenant groups for prayer, study, checking in.
12. Hold an annual sermon competition to foster excellence in preaching. Ask colleagues not competing to bring illustrations for sermon story swap.
13. Consider practical programs, such as upgrading computer skills. A parallel effort would involve soliciting local businesses for computers they plan to replace, to give them new homes with unwired colleagues.
14. Consider other practical programs on pastor and people relationships, such as pastoral relationships committees, appropriate severing of pastoral ties when leaving a congregation, creating new outreach ministries, involuntary termination.
15. Create partnerships for program and funding. If ABC colleagues are widely scattered, try a gathering of ecumenical colleagues.
16. Invite colleagues to attend events with you.
17. Work toward the future, being intentional in enhancing relationships with colleagues, sending cards, notes or certificates during clergy appreciation month, and supporting special events at their churches. After a year or so you will see an increase in attendance at meetings because no one wants to feel left out.