

## REPORT TO THE SENATE

SEPTEMBER, 2009

September feels a little like the calm before the storm.

The week of the 7<sup>th</sup>, we enjoyed a vacation on St. George's Island. I like vacations.

Much of the month has been devoted to conversations about the COP workshops that we described in Senate. We now have conversations underway with 12 regions with some conversations further along than others. Next month I'll have a New England retreat with leaders from MA, RI, and CT and hold a one day workshop in OR.

I am delighted to report that Holly Bean has agreed to serve as the chairperson of the Ministers Council Task Force on Women in Ministry. Letters of Invitation will soon be sent to prospective task force members asking them to serve for 2 years, to expect about 8 conference call meetings and, provided that money can be found, at least one face to face meeting. The task force will consider the following as its assignment: 1. Consider the current landscape for American Baptist Women in Ministry. 2. Gather biblical and theological resources pertinent to the issue. 3. Form strategies for advocacy. Given that our president, Alice Greene, and our chair person, Holly Bean, are both on Mary Hulst's OGS task force, we expect to form a cooperative partnership that will result in a stronger advocacy for women in ministry.

We had our first call with our finance team and will have another in October. We are pleased that Rev. Cheryl Wade has agreed to serve on our finance team and expect that her expertise will be incredibly helpful as we move forward.

We continue to work toward the Together in the Lord Conference in Orlando, January 4. Registrations are not meeting our "wildest dreams" and we are working hard to correct that. The economy is doing its worst to churches and ministers and for many, getting there is a difficult assignment. If you can make it, I hope that you will register soon. It's a world class program that will be a blessing. Judson Press is offering a free book to all who register in the next two weeks. See the newsletter for the list.

Economic realities continue to impact our expenses at the Mission Center. The rent is directly affected by the number of tenants and the number of tenants has dropped causing our cost to continue to increase.

Ministers Council membership has taken some serious hits in recent years and there are several reasons for it. However, there are some hopeful signs including the revitalization of the Ministers Council in Vermont/New Hampshire. I believe that the season is right to turn the tide.

As Senators, I hope that you are encouraging your councils to conduct well prepared membership drives. It is amazing what a couple of well thought out letters can do.

My September travel schedule has been as follows:

September 4 – 13: Vacation

September 21-23: Valley Forge for the OGS Extended Council and to celebrate the retirement of valued colleagues in National Ministries.

Respectfully,

Joe Kutter