

A BETTER WAY - A COMMUNITY OF MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP

EXPERIENCE IT AT A MINISTERS COUNCIL COP WORKSHOP

SPONSORS: The American Baptist Ministers Council and one or more local Constituent Councils.

WHAT: A workshop designed specifically to enhance both the effectiveness of constituent Ministers Councils and the ministerial leaders they serve. To do this, we will use the insights of “Communities of Practice” leaders and literature.

WHY: We, who are called to ministerial leadership in the church of Jesus Christ, want to be both faithful and fruitful. To paraphrase the Ministers Council mission statement, we covenant together both to deepen our spirituality and to increase our effectiveness as leaders in Christ’s Church.

WHO: Ministerial Leaders who are willing to participate in a community of learning, share their ministerial experiences, and learn from others.

WHEN: This process works best with an over-night retreat. Contact Dr. Joe Kutter at the American Baptist Ministers Council, Joe.Kutter@abc-usa.org, to schedule the retreat.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE:

At its root, the Community of Practice (COP) is a community of practitioners who share common goals, issues and concerns. American Baptist ministerial leaders are a community of practice when they are in communication with one another. The basic assumption is that knowledge, and therefore learning, is a social process best discovered, shared, learned and applied within the dynamics of community. The workshop will bring American Baptist leaders together as practitioners to experience the possibilities of participation in a COP.

While primarily being used by members of the business community as a way of acquiring, developing, and applying knowledge, the tenants of the process are as old as Jesus and the disciples. One could argue that with the twelve disciples, Jesus formed a Community of Practice. The current COP insights are a nearly perfect fit for ministerial leaders who understand that ministry skills are best learned and improved with a community of colleagues who share a common commitment.

The concepts of the COP process will be applied to our shared lives as ministerial leaders, the Ministers Council and to our ministries.

WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED:

1. Worship
2. A fresh experience of the community of ministerial leaders
3. Skills that will enhance both the Ministers Council and one’s personal ministry
4. Affirmation of your expertise as a practitioner of Christian Ministry

5. The power of a “Time Line” to enhance community (time permitting)
6. A format for “Case Studies” that will enrich mutual learning (time permitting)

WHAT YOU WILL GAIN:

1. A renewed vision for both ministerial leaders and the Ministers Council
2. An understanding of the way that community enhances ministry
3. Biblical and theological grounding for ministry as a shared vocation
4. The fundamentals of a Community of Practice and how our ministry can be enriched by COP processes
5. A re-energized Ministers Council using COP

WHERE:

At a site to be selected together that is geographically accessible to members of the participating Constituent Councils

COST:

All program costs, Dr. Kutter’s costs and all materials used in the retreat, will be covered by the Ministers Council, ABC-USA.

Remaining costs, participant travel, housing and meals will be negotiated with the constituent councils but will, to some extent, be underwritten by Ministers Council grant monies.

LEADER:

Dr. Joe Kutter has served as a local church pastor for 39 years in 5 congregations. He is now serving as the Acting Director of the American Baptist Ministers Council. He came to the COP process as a result of the recommendation of Lilly Endowment and time spent with one of the principle leaders of the Communities of Practice movement, Dr. Etienne Wenger.

TO PREPARE:

1. Read ***Cultivating Communities of Practice*** by Wenger, Snyder and McDermott published by Harvard Business Press
2. Go to Dr. Wenger's website, <http://www.ewenger.com/theory/>
3. Google "Communities of Practice" and follow some of the links
4. Read the Ministers Council Mission Statement
5. Read "A Beginners Guide to Communities of Practice" on the Ministers Council web site www.ministerscouncil.org
6. Read "The Ministers Council as a Community of Practice" on the Ministers Council website.

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*Together in Ministry
...to fan into flame the gift of God.*



MINISTRY IN THE REAL WORLD:

We have two kinds of experience.

1. Profound joy and deep satisfaction – there are days like that
2. Frustration and isolation:
 - a. What we learned in seminary doesn't seem to fit
 - b. We lead and few follow
 - c. Loneliness creeps in
 - d. The spiritual life fades