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MC2003

*“to fan into flame the gift  
of God”  
II Timothy 1:6*

## Together in Ministry



Ministers Council  
American Baptist Churches USA  
and Puerto Rico  
Collegial Covenant Group Grants

**STEERING COMMITTEE**  
*(pictured on front, left to right)*

**Joe Kutter, Topeka, KS**  
**Ken Tang-Quan, Rolling Hills Estates, CA**  
**DuWayne Battle, Montclair, NJ**  
**Shawn Zambrows, W Lafayette, IN**  
**Virginia Smith, Philadelphia, PA**  
**Victor Mercado, Rio Piedras, PR**

*(not pictured)*  
**Larry Bethune, Austin TX**



**In Summary**

The rewarding yet challenging work of pastoral ministry demands creativity in the provision of opportunities for growth and nurture. The preliminary assessment of current Pulpit and Pew project data on pastoral leaders indicates the likelihood of enhancing ministry practice through focus on collegial relationships, spirituality and effectiveness. Both the mission and structure of the Ministers Council as well as contemporary pastoral need have prompted Minister Council members to create a program of collegial covenant groups for sustaining pastoral excellence. *Together in Ministry* will:

- Overcome the sense of personal and professional isolation
- Enrich ministerial leaders' perspectives and visions of themselves and their ministries
- Provide a supportive network of peers who will pray for one another
- Offer opportunities for disciplined focus through specific study
- Create a climate for checking in and mutual accountability
- Enhance the current network of Ministers Councils to become more supportive

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

National Ministers Council Member?  Yes  No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

National Ministers Council Member?  Yes  No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

National Ministers Council Member?  Yes  No

## FOCUS

**FACILITATOR** (name, contact information, credentials—why the group chose this person)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Upon selection of a group to receive a grant, the facilitator will be expected to provide Social Security #).*

**COVENANT** (attach with signatures of members and facilitator)

**MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 31**

Mail to: Ministers Council (address on back page)

## **TOGETHER IN MINISTRY**

The **Ministers Council** of the American Baptist Churches USA has received a grant of \$1,959,600 from the Lilly Endowment for sustaining excellence in the pastoral ministry. The money will fund ***Together in Ministry***, the formation of **collegial covenant groups** for the strengthening of ministerial leaders.

Each group that forms can receive **\$1,800 per year** to pay a trained facilitator to lead the group. An additional \$100 per year will be provided to each National Ministers Council dues-paying member participant for incidental meeting costs such as books or travel.

Participants are encouraged to tap other financial resources to enhance the possibilities for group study materials, retreats, attendance at conferences, and so on. It is suggested that other possible resources be sought from continuing education funds through ministry context professional expenses, through ABCUSA Renewal Grants, or through regional funds set aside for continuing education.

The following pages will tell you how to apply for ***Together in Ministry*** funds.

**A COLLEGIAL COVENANT GROUP** is a meeting of ministerial colleagues around a specific topic whose ultimate goal is to be supportive of colleagues in ministry. The development of these groups is to get the job done of clergy support and encouragement so that ministry might be enhanced and improved because the minister has a sense of well-being and support.

**Regional Ministers Councils are invited to encourage and receive applications from their colleagues and submit them to the national office by October of the current year for group funding the following January. Grants are renewable each year through 2007. Each application will present this information about the group:**

- **FRIENDS**
- **FOCUS**
- **FACILITATOR**
- **COVENANT**

See page 13 for application form.

There are several decisions to make as one develops a covenant group. They are:

- Who will be in the group? What **FRIENDS**, (present or potential) do you want to ask to be a part of your group?
- What exactly will the group be doing: What will be the group's **FOCUS**?
- Where will the group be meeting?
- When or how often will the group meet?
- Who will be giving leadership to the group or who will be the **FACILITATOR**?
- What **COVENANT** will express the group's intentions on accountability, attendance, confidentiality? A covenant model is provided on page nine.

## **TOGETHER IN MINISTRY APPLICATION**

(Complete here or on a separate sheet.)

**FRIENDS:** (name of each plus contact information and if a dues-paying member of National Ministers Council)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

National Ministers Council Member? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

National Ministers Council Member? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

National Ministers Council Member? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

National Ministers Council Member? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

National Ministers Council Member? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Brian D. McLaren. *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Reggie McNeal. *A Work of Heart: Understanding How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.

Ella Pearson Mitchell, Ed. *Those Preaching Women*, Volumes 1-3. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2003.

Marino Miguel Muñoz. *Manual Capacitación Líderes Célula*. España: Clie, 1996.

Charles Olsen. *Transforming Church Boards into Communities of Spiritual Leaders*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1995.

Parker Palmer. *The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity and Caring*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

J. Dwight Pentecost. *Marchando Hacia Madurez Espiritual*. Grand Rapids: Portavoz, 1ra ed. 1979, última ed. 1996.

James C. Perkins. *Building up Zion's Walls: Ministry for Empowering the African American Family*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1999.

Gilbert R. Rendle. *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*. Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 1997.

Ken Sande. *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997.

Darryl D. Sims, Ed. *Sound the Trumpet! Messages to Empower African American Men*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1985, 1988, 1996.

Frank A. Thomas. *What's Love Got to Do with It? Love, Power, Sex and God*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2001.

Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol and Ken McElrath. *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.

Craig Van Gelder. *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000.

Iyanla Vanzant. *One Day My Soul Just Opened Up: 40 Days and 40 Nights Towards Spiritual Strength and Personal Growth*. New York City: Fireside, 1998.

Susan Willhauck and Jacquelyn Thorpe. *The Web of Women's Leadership: Recasting Congregational Ministry*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

Jeanette Yep and Peter Cha, Eds. *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents: Asian American Discipleship*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

## Who (FRIENDS)

Groups may be made differently depending upon individual needs and situations.

- The group may be a number of American Baptist colleagues who can get together often and long enough to accomplish the general goals.
- A group may invite ministerial leaders of other faith groups (such as a ministerial association).
- A group (either ABC or ecumenical) might get together with spouses.
- If your situation warrants and you are isolated enough, you might also want to consider an on line collegial group. Alan Selig (revselig@prodigy.net) has agreed to facilitate an online group and can be contacted at his e-mail address.

## What will be done/discussed? FOCUS?

Whatever a group decides to "do" must be part of the covenant that it develops. Again, there are various possibilities, keeping the general aims in mind:

- Overcome the sense of personal and professional isolation
- Enrich ministerial leaders' perspectives of themselves and their ministries
- Provide a supportive network of peers who will pray for one another
- Offer opportunities for disciplined focus through specific study
- Create a climate for checking in and mutual accountability

Although the design is for all these needs to be met, it is best to select one focus or the thing that you will major in.

## For example:

- The group could decide to do a book study and hold each other accountable to putting the practices the book recommends into practice in ministry.
- The group could decide that prayer is the main thing and that the majority of time will be spent in prayer, preceding the prayer time in sharing and updating one another on your ministry concerns.
- The group could decide that accountability is most important and set up a procedure for making individual covenants with one another on ministry and personal concerns.
- The group could decide to meet as an affinity group, such as those with a common language, women in ministry, ministry specialty, urban or rural ministers, to focus on shared issues.
- The group could decide to follow a case study presentation model and collaborate together on best practices for particular ministry scenarios.

Feel free to imagine the possibility that best suits group interest.

As you begin, be aware that some group activities that might be exciting or beneficial will not be funded, such as golf retreats, shopping trips or tours of various retreat centers.

## Bibliography

The list below is a beginning list of possible books that can be used for discussion.

- Dorothy C. Bass. *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for Searching People*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.
- Rodney Clapp. *A Peculiar People: The Church as Culture in a Post-Christian Society*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Duane Elmer. *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994.
- Kenneth Uyeda Fong. *Pursuing the Pearl: A Comprehensive Resource for Multi-Asian Ministry*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1999.
- Richard Foster. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*. San Francisco: Harper, 1998.
- Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee. *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2002.
- Jim Herrington, Mike Bonem and James Furr. *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000.
- Jim Herrington, Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor. *The Leader's Journey: Accepting the Call to Personal and Congregational Transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Kirk Byron Jones. *Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2001.
- Laurie Beth Jones. *The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and for Life*. New York: Hyperion, 1996.
- Robert Lewis. *The Church of Irresistible Influence*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- Tom Lin and David K. Gibbons. *Losing Face & Finding Grace: 12 Bible Studies for Asian-Americans*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- John C. Maxwell. *Corramos Con los Gigantes*. Miami: Unilit, 2002.
- John C. Maxwell. *17 Leyes Trabajo en Equipo*. Nashville: Betania, 2001.
- John C. Maxwell. *Liderazgo Eficaz*. Miami: Vida, 1989.

## Where will you meet?

This is dependent upon the situation of the group. Meet in a room where everyone can sit at a similar comfortable level, be heard easily by everyone and not have any distractions. Do not hold the group meetings in a restaurant unless you can have a totally private space for the meeting. Otherwise, the meeting space is what works best for the group.

Persons who live far from any ministerial colleagues may consider participation in an online group. Contact information for a convener may be found on page five at the conclusion of the section on **FRIENDS**, about how to comprise a group.

## How will you begin?

It is recommended to start the groups off on a two day retreat or longer time away. This allows for an initial time of getting to know one another that can set the tone and help folk get into the process.

A model for a regional Ministers Council retreat focused on relational ministry is available. Along with the model some funds will be provided to help your Ministers Council sponsor a retreat to lift up a relational model of ministry and encourage commitment to it through group participation. Please contact the Ministers Council once you have a retreat date established.

## Leadership or FACILITATOR.

The focus of the group will relate to or even dictate the selection of a facilitator. *Together in Ministry* will provide to your group \$1,800 for the year for facilitation of one two-hour meeting each month.

- The facilitator could be a professional, who contracts with you. Some options are: group spiritual director, pastoral counselor, family therapist, seminary instructor, retired pastor, family systems teacher, personal coach or executive mentor.
- The facilitator could be a peer leader who has her or his way paid to meetings, prepares agenda and keeps the group focused. That leader might choose to use a portion of the \$1,800 fee for group expenses, such as an overnight retreat.

Places and people to check for referrals:

- Center(s) on Ministry
- Seminaries
- Pastoral counseling centers
- Universities or colleges
- Hospital chaplaincy departments
- Spiritual development centers such as Shalem Institute
- Retired ministerial leaders
- Respected colleagues of other faith groups
- Region staff

When you select a facilitator, it is important to remember that in addition to skill in the chosen area of focus, it is crucial that she or he have sensitivity and expertise in group dynamics.

## Elements of the COVENANT

- Friends: Who will be in the meeting? The covenant is drawn up and members will sign it.
- Focus: This must be specific and will help everyone know what to expect in terms of the agenda of the meeting.
- Facilitator: Who the leader will be and what the contract is with the leader.
- General expectations or norms of the group. Examples: maintain confidentiality, fulfill accepted assignments, arrive on time, stay through the whole meeting, give everyone in the group an opportunity to speak, use "I" statements, etc.
- When you will meet: Date and time (beginning and ending time).
- Where you will meet: State clearly in the covenant even if you intend to meet at a different location each time, so you know what needs to be decided at the end of each meeting.
- Review of Covenant: It is recommended that the covenant be reviewed every three months. Reviews help you keep on track and make any necessary modifications.

## A Sample Covenant:

The six persons named below will meet the first Tuesday of the month at First Baptist Church Anywhere from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. beginning the first Tuesday in January 2004. We will begin with discussing the book *Leading Congregational Change*, and will decide once we are finished what book we will study next. We agree to set goals from the book for our ministry and to hold each other accountable to those goals. We agree to make this meeting a priority in our schedules and be faithful in attendance unless an unavoidable conflict prevents being at a meeting. We agree to arrive on time and stay until the end. We agree to hold each other in prayer daily. We agree never to violate the confidentiality of the group by telling outside of the meeting any personal information shared in that context. We agree to have J.D. be our facilitator and to pay her \$1,800 for the year. We expect her to facilitate our meetings and to ensure that everyone will have the opportunity to participate appropriately. We will review this covenant when we finish with *Leading Congregational Change* or in three months, whichever comes first.

\_\_\_\_\_ name  
\_\_\_\_\_ name  
\_\_\_\_\_ name  
\_\_\_\_\_ name  
\_\_\_\_\_ name  
\_\_\_\_\_ name