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Sent: Monday, November 29, 2010 11:32 AM
To: mtmfoundation@verizon.net
Subject: "If I had only known then what I know now!"



Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc. Newsletter
November, 2010

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Preventing Personal Crisis in Ministry

Ben Franklin is credited with the saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I'm not sure what he was referring to at that time in our nation's history, but it does have important implications for those in ministry who are going through tough times.

A common response from participants who attend one of our *Healthy Transitions Wellness Retreats* is, "If only I had known then what I know now, I would have handled the situation differently." Well, maybe you can't turn back the clock, but through it all, hopefully, you've gained some insight and wisdom on how to be better prepared in the future...if it should happen again.

Here are five ways you can work towards preventing a personal crisis in ministry.

1. **Lead a life of Integrity.** Ministers need to practice what they preach. Christ calls us to a life of deep obedience. Jesus learned obedience because of his personal relationship with his Father. I have seen clergy who don't always practice integrity. If we expect our parishioners to model integrity then we also have to model it ourselves. Integrity is doing what we say we're going to do.
2. **Know when you Vibrate.** Ministers often get sucked into anxious situations where members bring their issues with fellow

major credit card. The Ministering to Ministers Foundation is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization.

MTM Website

On-line Christmas Shopping Benefits M T M

More and more people are now shopping on-line. Usually the prices are cheaper because of less overhead expense. We at MTM would like to introduce you to a plan that enables the MTM ministry to benefit from your on-line shopping at many of the same stores where you have been shopping on-line. The Skyhouse Mall can be accessed through the [MTM Website](#). Approximately 100 stores are included in the mall. The names of the stores will be listed along with the percentage of your total purchase which will go to MTM. Though you will be shopping from the same store, for MTM to benefit you must go through the Skyhouse Mall. We are not trying to change your shopping habits, but **if you shop on-line, it makes sense to let the MTM ministry benefit.**

What's MTM all about?

Our Mission:

The Ministering to Ministers (MTM) Foundation seeks to be advocates for clergy and their families in all faith groups who are experiencing personal or professional crisis due to deteriorating employment or congregation-clergy relationships.

parishioners to their pastor or other members. They want others to side with them even though it is unhealthy in the life of the church. Increased anxiety produces increased reactivity in others. Vibrators want their pastor to vibrate with them. A calming influence of the leader can help defuse a potentially dangerous arena of conflict. Pastors who are less anxious don't let others control their feelings.

3. **Beware of Over-functioning.** Ministers don't have to do it all! Some ministers try to micromanage their congregations. Over-functioning takes place when the leader takes on more responsibility than necessary. If you are insecure in your relationship with others you probably don't trust them. Good examples of this in the Bible were Moses with Aaron and Martha with Mary. If you dance the over-functioning dance then there will be no room to move forward.
4. **Have a Feedback Group.** The MTM Leadership strongly advocates having a small group of church members who are well respected by the congregation and presently have no official status as a feedback group. They are the E.F. Hutton's in your church, "When they speak, everybody listens!" This group of 3-4 trusted individuals are the eyes and ears of your parishioners. They will share with you what they see and what they are hearing. They will also be brutally honest with what they observe and hear, both positive and negative. They dearly love their pastor and want him/her to do well along with their church. That's why you chose them for their wisdom and insights.
5. **Tend to your Soul.** If you want your parishioners to be "fully devoted followers of Christ," then you need to be a fully devoted follower as well. Jesus calls us to a life of radical obedience, "Apart from me you can do nothing." Too many ministers lead such an insane life that they don't take time for a *reflective life*. Practice spiritual disciplines that will take you into the presence of God (i.e. prayer, meditation, study, fasting). In Richard Foster's book, *Celebration of Discipline*, he reminds us that we are uniquely designed by our Maker "to receive his grace so God can transform us."

Someone once told me that "Christians" tend to be more judgmental than non-Christians. She's probably right. We can't change people's attitudes but we can show them a better way. So "don't be conformed by those around you, but be transformed by the renewing of your heart and mind" (Romans 12:2).

Mark Nieuwsma
MTM Board of Trustees member

Upcoming Retreats

Nov. 29 - December 3

Baptist Theological Seminary
Richmond, Virginia

January 10 - 14, 2011

Carson Springs
Newport, Tennessee

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Testimonies From Retreat Participants

We appreciated your prayer support during last week's Healthy Transitions Wellness Retreat at Geneva Camp and Retreat Center in Holland, Michigan, during which we ministered to 10 participants from Florida, Kentucky, and Michigan. They represented four denominational affiliations.

Here are some comments by the participants:

- *It was great to get to know each of the participants and to know we were not alone in being subjected to the kind of treatment we received at the church.*
- *It was good to be among those who could understand the pain, despair and isolation that had engulfed my wife and I. The transformation that has taken place in our lives has been indescribable due to the care of those who gave of their time, energy and expertise in leading the retreat.*

Please pray that God will provide His guiding and comforting hand as they walk through open doors toward a God directed future.



Past Issues of MTM Messenger on Line

Click this link, [MTM Messenger](#), if you would like to read past issues of the MTM Messenger. Interesting articles, personal testimonies and other information are found in each issues.

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