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**Sent:** Wednesday, December 29, 2010 11:46 AM  
**To:** mtmfoundation@verizon.net  
**Subject:** "When the fog lifted, I left 'the ministry'."



Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc. Newsletter  
December 28, 2010

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Carson Springs  
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**January 10 - 14, 2011**

**"Is Y'all Preachers?"**

When my companions, all of us board members of the Ministering to Ministers Foundation, left our table to get seconds at the buffet, a large, heavily tattooed woman leaned over from her table next to us at the Golden Corral restaurant to ask me, "Is ya'll preachers?"

"Yes," I said.

"I knew it! I knew it! I'm a church-girl. I could tell. I'm a church girl. I knew you was preachers." She grinned at me and turned back to her table and her companions.

**I was lying about me to the church-girl. A little. I WAS a preacher, but left "the ministry" (vocational ministry) in 1997.**

I never had a conventional ministry. I was ordained in 1980, but the closest I came to conventional was traveling from Louisville, Kentucky, every weekend to pastor the First Baptist Church of Thomasboro, Illinois, while I was a seminary student. Thereafter I served full-time as a chaplain and pastoral counselor and part-time as an interim pastor of small churches. My ministry was standing with people during periods of crisis and transition and helping them find their way through. I was successful and happy in my work.

I moved to Atlanta, Georgia, in 1995 to get married. I had started four successful ministries in Alabama, so expected to succeed in becoming established as a pastoral counselor in Atlanta. I found three churches willing to partner with me and started work with enthusiasm. I was used to counseling with 25-35 people per week, but found so few people to help in Atlanta that I became discouraged and then clinically depressed. I started taking medication for depression in 1997. As the fog of

## Quick links:

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Click this link to let us know the kind of articles we could provide that you would find enlightening and interesting.

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### MTM Website

## 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.

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depression lifted, I realized that I was marching in place at a dead-end. I did not understand how I got to a dead-end, but realized that I needed to step out in a new direction.

I did not know which direction to go and explored two possibilities before finding an open door into the area of computer networking in 1998. I liked computers and found their logic simple after dealing with the complexities of people and churches. I enjoyed a series of computer jobs until another door opened for me in 2001. Nowadays I am employed full-time as the Senior European Stocks Analyst of a financial forecasting company. I have made my living forecasting and trading financial markets over the past decade.

I have become a wiser and kinder person over the years and am a better Christian than I was. It made me happy that the tattooed lady at Golden Corral thought I was a preacher, but I think leaving "the ministry" was the right thing for me to do. On the other hand, I am ready and willing to stand with anyone in ministry who feels at a dead-end and unsure of which direction to go. I don't know which direction anybody should go, but ministers especially deserve support while they figure it out. I'm glad to help in any way I can.

Come to think of it, maybe I am still a minister. I just earn my living in a different vocation.

Tom Denham  
MTM Foundation Trustee

## There is a More Excellent Way

Three words describe much of my experiences and feelings from my pilgrimage with MTM during 2010. The words are *heartbreak*, *challenges* and *gratitude*. Let me explain.

It is always heartbreaking when I hear another minister /spouse share the pain and trauma in which they are living or through which they have just emerged. In most of these cases, it did not have to end with such brutality. The Apostle Paul explained to the conflicted church at Corinth that there is "a more excellent way." (I Corinthians 12:31-13:9).

Ministers and their families, congregations, and communities are left with scars which may never heal. The gospel message is dampened. Too many lives are impacted. When love and compassion are shoved aside, a mob mentality develops and values evaporate. And, there could have been a more excellent way! Such a waste must also break the heart of our Lord because so much of the action was cloaked in "His Name."

The MTM Ministry continues to grow. The ministry's multi-pronged initiatives can be seen on the [Ministry Facts Sheet](#) linked here. But the challenges grow as fast - or faster - than the ministry.

The economic downturn has had an enormous effect on all organizations. When "dis-ease" invades society, it makes its way into organizations and especially congregations. The volume of calls to MTM has multiplied greatly during the past couple of years. Recessions threaten the way of life that people have become accustomed to. Fear builds. Even those whose jobs have not been affected are fearful that they will be. The anxieties are brought into all relationships, including covenant relationships. Some relationships are strained while others erupt as violently as a volcano. The scene is a disaster. The challenge is

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to have sufficient resources and leaders who can make a difference before the tensions erupt. Or better still, put in place cautions and procedures that help prevent the tensions from exploding. Then there are the pieces to be picked up - lives, ministries, congregations - and new directions.

But in the midst of the despair is also a huge sense of gratitude. I'm grateful for the more than 60 people who volunteered their time, energy, and expertise through the MTM ministry last year. An inventory shows that the fair market value of their gifts of service and gifts-in-kind totaled over \$350,000.00. Without these people, the ministry could not have taken place.

I'm grateful for more than 700 prayer partners who undergird the MTM ministry in prayer, especially during the *Healthy Transitions Wellness Retreats*. The power of prayer is felt by the participants as well as the leaders.

I'm also thankful for each person who has contributed financially to the ministry. The recession has impacted most non-profit ministries including MTM. If you would still like to contribute during 2010, click on the [Donate Now](#) link in this newsletter so you may make a contribution through PayPal.

And, I'm thankful for God's presence and leadership as we offer gratitude for the past and look with eager anticipation to 2011.

God bless you and Happy New Year!

Charles H. Chandler  
Executive Director



**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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