



LTi E-Newsletter
December 2004

*"Talk about Transformation!"
Depth of Soul ~ Vitality in Service*

From the Ministry Journal of Steve Macchia

Personal Reflections...

For the past year, the LTi board has read and prayed through *A Guide to Prayer for All Who Seek God* compiled by Reuben Job. He has been our prayer journey leader as we consider new themes each week, accompanied by daily biblical passages and reflective readings. It has been transformational nourishment for our souls. Reuben Job wrote in one of our final readings before Advent, "New beginnings are available all the time. Life itself provides a constant opportunity to grow, and to grow is to become new, to have a new beginning. What areas of new life are waiting to be born in you?" Advent 2004 provides a venue for new beginnings...may it be so for you and yours as you experience renewed spiritual life throughout this holy season.

Coming Alongside...

We want to encourage you in your personal spiritual development. Soul Care Retreats seem to be our most unique opportunity for coming alongside leaders in the vitality of their souls. We've enjoyed our first year of retreats and have made a commitment to hosting three more this coming winter/spring.

Our Soul Care Retreats are a great place to nurture your soul. Each retreat is held at Emery House, situated along the banks of the Merrimack River in West Newbury, MA. The dates are: February 28-March 1; April 11-12; and May 16-17. Registration information is on our website – space is limited!

In addition, we are available to serve as leaders and facilitators for local church and ministry "soul care retreats" for congregations and/or teams. Churches are contacting us for the coming year, so if you are interested please submit your date requests ASAP for 2005 and beyond.

Other ways we come alongside leaders and teams include: individual spiritual direction; ministry team consultations; spiritual formation groups; leader and team ministry health assessments. Call Sage at 978-646-4175 for information.

Recommended Readings...

I've recently completed the manuscript for a new book, *Becoming A Healthy Team* (Baker Books, 2005). I've outlined five compelling traits of healthy ministry teams, utilizing true team stories, lots of helpful principles and practical ideas.

I've based my understanding of team vitality on the primary biblical texts of 1 Corinthians 12 and 13. The uniqueness of this book on teams will be the emphasis on becoming a Christ-centered team, serving cooperatively and within a context of spiritual community. Please pray for the final editing process and look for additional information about the book's release this coming summer.

In my research on teams, I have read nearly a dozen excellent books on team development. If you'd like the full bibliography, please send along an email and I'll forward to you ASAP. A few of my favorites include:

- *Leading the Team-Based Church* by George Cladis
- *Doing Church as a Team* by Wayne Cordeiro
- *The Wisdom of Teams* by Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith
- *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni
- *The Performance Factor* by Pat MacMillan
- *The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* by John Maxwell

Be sure to check out our website for additional resources for ministry teams:

www.LeadershipTransformations.org

Here you will find the full complement of ministry services and resources LTI is currently providing our constituents. Note some of the free resources available, the new *Becoming A Healthy Disciple Small Group Study and Worship Guide*, as well as the growing number of language translations now available for *Becoming A Healthy Church*. And, every time you enter the CBD (www.ChristianBook.com) site through our website, a donation is provided to our ministry – another way to support LTI!

Renewal Yearnings...

I close with words from Howard Thurman's *The Mood of Christmas*:

"The symbol of Christmas – what is it? It is the rainbow arched over the roof of the sky when the clouds are heavy with foreboding. It is the cry of life in the newborn babe when, forced from its mother's nest, it claims its right to live. It is the brooding Presence of the Eternal Spirit making crooked paths straight, rough places smooth, tired hearts refreshed, dead hopes stir with newness of life. It is the promise of tomorrow at the close of every day, the movement of life in defiance of death, and the assurance that love is sturdier than hate, that right is more confident than wrong, that good is more permanent than evil."

And the words of Holy Scripture...that symbol of Christmas foretold:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end." Isaiah 9: 6,7

May you and yours find great joy in celebrating the coming of the Jesus
into our world and into your heart!

I trust you will continue to be an active part of the team – through your love, prayers, gifts, ministry suggestions and participation!

Your grateful brother in Christ,

Steve Macchia

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