

LTi E-Newsletter Fall 2005

From the Ministry Journal of Steve Macchia

“Talk about Transformation!”
Depth of Soul ~ Vitality in Service

□ Personal Reflections

The hurricanes that hit the Gulf Coast this month have heightened our attentiveness to the impact of world events upon all of our lives. We shutter at the implications that will alter our own lifestyles, while we watch the images of lives that are forever changed by these storms considered to be of “biblical proportion.”

The following are some of my reflections on leadership in times of crisis...

- Tragedy – we never know when it will come; being prepared begins with a mastery of the basics so that our foundations are secure.
- Reaction – compassionate and decisive response is key to both short and long-term affects for those who suffer during difficult times.
- Poverty – often left off the radar screen, those who live with little and suffer from lack of daily provision are to be our first priority of selfless service.
- Responsibility – there’s always enough to go around, so be sure to stick with your agenda and bear blame as deemed most appropriate.
- Community – we need one another and when one person suffers, we all share in that suffering and when one person rejoices, we rejoice.
- Cooperation – effective communication and coordination of effort materializes in mutual accountability and dynamic service to others.
- Prayer – in every situation crying out for strong leadership, it’s essential that leaders and teams commit their ways to the Lord and trust him for the outcome...serving others from the inside out with godly vision, pervasive hope and loving generosity.

The leaders and teams we are serving are seeking to apply biblical principles to each of their settings of ministry. There is a tremendous need for godly leadership today, not only in places where the public is most directly affected but also in the Church of Jesus Christ. Leadership Transformations is committed to coming alongside the leadership of the Church on retreats, in consultative services, one-on-one, and in groups of teams... and we are seeing encouraging and dramatic results of our ministry.

□ Coming Alongside

As we enter this new ministry year, we are delighted to be coming alongside six local church leadership teams. Each team has committed to a six-month process of assessment, team building and strategic planning. All are going on retreat together in the middle of the process and are deepening their walks with Christ and with one another. The collegiality among brothers and sisters in Christ is such a joy to observe. Please pray for our effectiveness with two churches in Massachusetts, two in Maine, one in Vermont and one in Toronto, Canada. If you are interested in reviewing our six-month leadership intensive process, please send us an email today.

Other ways we come alongside leaders and teams include: soul care retreats (visit our website for upcoming dates); individual spiritual direction; ministry team consultations; spiritual formation groups; church and team ministry health assessments and strategic ministry planning. Call 978-646-4175 or email my assistant, Sage Chang (Sage@LeadershipTransformations.org) for more information.

Serving with me as we come alongside leaders and teams are members of our board of directors: Diana Bennett, Kathy Crowell, Todd Klipp, Kevin Parke, Brian Lacey and David Schultz, Chairman. When you pray for our ministry, please remember to commit the work of our board to our gracious and loving Father.

□ Recommended Readings

I have been richly blessed by reading some of David G. Benner's books on spiritual formation, soul care and spiritual friendship over the past few months. I highly recommend them to you:

- *Sacred Companions: The Gift of Spiritual Friendship and Direction*
- *Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel*
- *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*
- *Desiring God's Will: Aligning Our Hearts with the Heart of God*
- *Surrender to Love: Discovering the Heart of Christian Spirituality*
- *The Gift of Being Yourself: The Sacred Call to Self-Discovery*

Be sure to check out our website for additional resources for leaders and 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!

To be released in October: *Becoming A Healthy Team* (Baker Books, 2005) by yours truly!

□ Renewal Yearnings

Let me close this newsletter with words from David Benner's *The Gift of Being Yourself* (pp. 48,49)...

“What matters supremely is not, in the last analysis, the fact that I know God, but the larger fact which underlies it – the fact that *he knows me*. We are graven on the palms of God's hands and never out of the Divine mind. All our knowledge of God depends on God's sustained initiative in knowing us. We know God, because God first knew us, and continues to know us. I am convinced that God loves each and every one of us with depth, persistence and intensity beyond imagination. God doesn't simply like you. Nor does God simply have warm sentimental feelings toward you just because you were created in the Divine image. The truth is that God loves you with what Hannah Hurnard calls 'a passionate absorbed interest.' God cannot help seeing you through the eyes of love. Even more remarkable, God's love for you has nothing to do with your behavior. Neither your faithlessness nor your unfaithfulness alters Divine love in the slightest degree. Like the father's love in the parable of the prodigal son, Divine love is absolutely unconditional, unlimited and unimaginably extravagant. The generative love of God was our origin. The embracing love of God sustains our existence. The inextinguishable love of God is the only hope for our fulfillment. Love is our identity and our calling, for we are children of Love. Created from love, of love and for love, our existence makes no sense apart from Divine love...” May you know the depth of that love today and always!

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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