

From the Ministry Desk of Stephen A. Macchia

LTi E-Newsletter September 2007

www.LeadershipTransformations.org

Personal Reflections

Are You Experiencing Fully The Gift of Being Yourself?

“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 eyes of love.”

From David Benner, *The Gift of Being Yourself*

One of the most life-giving services we can offer one another in the body of Christ is the encouragement to be and become all that God intends for us as His children. Each of us is gifted and blessed, endowed with qualities that are unique to our DNA. When we have people in our lives who encourage us to live that to its fullest, we discover afresh what the “abundant life” is all about.

My summer reading included several books that circled around this theme, amplifying the above quote. I highly recommend Benner’s *The Gift of Being Yourself*, a text we are using with young, aspiring leaders and groups of committed believers entrusted with spiritual authority in their ministry settings.

Other books I read this summer which emphasize the importance of becoming the people God intends: *Telling Secrets* and *A Room Called Remember* (Frederick Buechner’s refreshing looks at authenticity in relationships); *Lullabye* (an uplifting collection of autobiographical essays of a redeemed life by Howard Freeman); *Henri Nouwen: A Spirituality of Imperfection* (a wonderful text outlining the imperfect life of a beloved spiritual leader by Wil Hernandez); *Ruth Bell Graham 1920-2007* (Decision Magazine’s Special Commemorative Issue remembering a life well lived); *Seeking the Secret Place: The Spiritual Formation of CS Lewis* (a tremendous compilation of Lewis’ spiritual priorities); and *No Future Without Forgiveness* (Desmund Tutu’s spiritual reflections on his experiences with Nelson Mandela and others who sought reconciliation with their former oppressors in South Africa). Each of these notable Christian leaders lived out the “gift of being themselves” and the world they served has been richly blessed as a result. May their testimonies be an inspiration to us all.

Coming Alongside

“There is no deep knowing of God without a deep knowing of self and no deep knowing of self without a deep knowing of God”

From *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* by John Calvin

“Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I may know thee.”
St. Augustine’s prayer (quoted in *Christian Spirituality in the Middle Ages*)



Stephen A. Macchia
Founder and President



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Think back to a time when you received a word of encouragement from a friend or family member. In that moment you knew you were special in their eyes. Who among us doesn't need such a gift from time to time? In the body of Christ there is a crying need for those who pour courage into our hearts by reminding us of three important truths...we are unconditionally loved by God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit; we are deeply sinful human beings who are in daily need of God's mercy and forgiveness; and we are continuously in the process of redemption and sanctification. In other words, we are beloved in the eyes of the heavenly Father who longs for us to abide in His love...we are sinful, broken and in daily need of the forgiving grace of Christ...and, we are blessed with the empowering presence of the Spirit who longs to redeem us from our sinful past and release from within us His life-transforming power.

I'm fortunate to have a VP, Rick Anderson, who has become an agent of God in my life. He reminds me often of my belovedness, he is grace-filled when he sees first hand my brokenness, and he offers me affirmation to lean into my blessedness as I seek to honor God in fulfilling His mission for me. Rick recently coined a marvelous statement, "true spiritual community is exhibited when we are the arms and voice of God for one another." He embodies this incredible prin-

Recommended Resources

Every church has a unique thumbprint given to them by God. Enter into a discernment process with your church by listening to your leadership team and congregation. Our Church Health Assessment Tool (CHATSM) has already been used by churches spread across the country and in one eastern European nation. CHATSM is a listening tool for church leaders who are interested in having a "heart to heart conversation" with every member of the congregation. It's a 72 question assessment based on research with thousands of churches and individuals. Over the past decade, this survey has been used by hundreds of churches – but in its original paper form (which required labor intensive tabulation from the church). The newly revised online version is completely auto-

matic and comprehensive, giving users the opportunity to get a holistic view of their church's health in 30 days or less. The survey questions are biblically centered and based on the cross-denominational, principle-based traits from *Becoming A Healthy Church* (BakerBooks, 1999/2006).

Inviting you to become the person God intends...

Soul Care Retreats offer you a two day experience of listening to God in prayer, biblical reflection, and community conversation. As a result, we grow in our awareness of being the beloved, broken and blessed children of God. Our next Soul Care Retreat will be held on October 25, 26 on beautiful Cape Cod. Join us at Craigville Conference Center by signing up today!

In addition, we continue to come alongside leaders and teams in a variety of ways... Spiritual Leadership Communities, Soul Care One-on-One's, *Selah* Certificate Program in Spiritual Direction, Team Care Retreats, and Team Care Intensives. Visit www.LeadershipTransformations.org or call toll free 877-TEAM-LTi for more information on these services.

CHATSM is both easy to use and cost-effective. Since it's web-based, all surveys can be completed in as few as 20-25 minutes from the convenience of home or office. CHATSM also tracks the responses of the congregation and leadership team separately for direct comparison. Best of all, CHATSM does all the work but the church is in the driver's seat from start to finish via our Pastor's Console. At the end of the

The LTi board of directors is pleased to welcome **Ellie Beatty** and **Gary DiCamillo** to the team!

They join existing board members Diana Bennett, Kathy Crowell, Todd Klipp, Brian Lacey, David Schultz, chair, and Steve Macchia, president.

"CHATSM ... ALLOWED PEOPLE FROM VARIOUS ISOLATED CORNERS OF MINISTRY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LARGER PERSPECTIVE OF THE OVERALL MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH."

OWEN STEPP, ASSOCIATE PASTOR, SIGNAL MOUNTAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TN

data collection window (dates chosen by the church), an easy to read, full color report is sent directly to the church contact's email inbox. This user friendly report will clearly identify the strongest areas of your church as well as the soft spots, discrepancies between congregation and leadership team responses, participant demographics, open-ended comments from the participants, and suggested next steps which will empower you and your leadership team to make needed adjustments for increased ministry health and effectiveness.

CHATSM is unlike any other resource available to the Church today – check it out at www.HealthyChurch.net and recommend it to your church leaders..it's the best way to listen intently to your leadership and congregation!

Visit our newly updated website for additional resources for leaders and teams:

www.LeadershipTransformations.org

Renewal Yearnings

“There is nothing I can do to make God love me more, for God loves me perfectly already. And wonderfully, there is nothing I can do to make God love me less. God loves me as I am to help me become all that I have it in me to become, and when I realize the deep love God has for me, I will strive for love's sake to do what pleases my Lover.”

From *No Future Without Forgiveness* by Desmond Tutu

“A humble self-knowledge is a surer way to God than a search after deep learning”

From *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis

As you continue your search for God and a deeper understanding of the gift of being and becoming all that God intends for you, “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your heart through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep in the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3: 16-19).

Your Brother and Friend in Ministry,



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Founder and President

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Here you will find the full complement of ministry services and resources LTi is currently providing our constituents.

Becoming A Healthy Church (available in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese and Thai), Baker Books, 1999/2006 –a Baker Bestseller!

Becoming A Healthy Church Workbook, Baker Books, 2001

Becoming A Healthy Disciple, Baker Books, 2004

Becoming A Healthy Disciple Small Group Study and Worship Guide, LTi, 2004

Becoming A Healthy Team, Baker Books, 2005 – a Baker Bestseller!

Free pdf's for your ministry use

E-newsletters and ministry updates

Meet the LTi Team...in picture-perfect smiles!

“A HEART TO HEART CONVERSATION WITH EVERY MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION”

www.HealthyChurch.net



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