

LTi E-Newsletter Summer 2006

From the Ministry Journal of Steve Macchia

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

**□ Personal Reflections**

*“Come to the Table and eat this book, for every word in the book is intended to do something in us, give health and wholeness, vitality and holiness to our souls and body.”*

Eugene Peterson’s *Eat This Book* (Eerdmans, 2006) reminds us to feed on the Scriptures. “Holy Scripture nurtures the holy community as food nurtures the human body. Christians don’t simply learn or study or use Scripture; we assimilate it, take it into our lives in such a way that it gets metabolized into acts of love, cups of cold water, missions into all the world, healing and evangelism and justice in Jesus’ name, hands raised in adoration of the Father, feet washed in company with the Son.” Quoting John in Revelation 10:9-10, Peterson encourages us to “take and eat” the Word, taking it all in and allowing the Scriptures to assimilate into the tissues of our lives. The words of Holy Scripture are given to us to do something transformative *in us*, giving us health and wholeness, vitality and holiness, wisdom and hope.

Yes, *eat* the Word...and absorb every morsel. There is no greater daily nutrient than the Word of God. May your study and reflection on the Scriptures bring health to your weary soul and life to your every act of service.

**□ Coming Alongside**

The opening line to the ten traits of a healthy church (from *Becoming A Healthy Church*) reads, “The healthy church is prayerful in all aspects of church life and ministry, is reliant upon God’s power and the authority of God’s Word.” The Scriptures and prayer are the bedrock of our existence as Christ’s followers, yesterday, today and forever. Both the study of, reflection on and obedience to the Word of God *and* the cultivation of our relationship with the Almighty One in prayer are to permeate our experience and expression as Christians. When we prioritize what matters most to the Lord, we are well on the way to becoming a healthier church!

LTi has many helpful resources to assist leaders, pastors, and teams in the process of discerning God’s will for their shared life and ministry. Coming this summer are two *brand new* on-line tools, the “Church Health Assessment Tool” (CHAT) and the “Team Health Assessment Tool” (THAT). Within a few short weeks we will be unveiling these to the public and you will be one of the first to hear the good news! We are working feverishly to complete this exciting initiative and trust that the Lord will use these tools to unearth spiritual vitality and encourage community-based ministry in local churches and ministry teams world-wide! I am confident you will be wowed by these exciting, web-based products.

In addition to providing practical resources, we also come alongside leaders and teams by offering: soul care retreats; individual spiritual direction; spiritual formation groups; team care retreats; ministry team consultations; and facilitation of strategic ministry planning processes. Call 978-646-4175 or email my assistant, Sage Chang ([Sage@LeadershipTransformations.org](mailto:Sage@LeadershipTransformations.org)), for more information.

Serving with me as we come alongside leaders and teams are faithful members of our board of directors: Diana Bennett, Kathy Crowell, Todd Klipp, Kevin Parke, Brian Lacey and David Schultz, Chairman, and our staff team: Rick Anderson (VP in our Colorado Springs office), Sage Chang (my multi-talented assistant), David McKiel (our accountant). In addition, our team associates are positioned to serve the body of Christ in particular areas of expertise: Warren Schuh (church consultations), Susan Currie (training in spiritual direction) and Diana Bennett (leadership communities). When you pray for our ministry, please remember to commit the work of our board and staff to our gracious and loving Father. We will enter our fourth year of service July 1 as a team of twelve!!

## □ Recommended Resources

One of my favorite periodicals of late is *Conversations*, a new journal focusing on spiritual formation. Its mission statement says it all, “Conversations: A Forum for Authentic Transformation provides spiritual accompaniment and honest dialogue for those who long for radical transformation in Christ. It stimulates hunger and illuminates the path by drawing on classical wisdom and practice, exploring the vital role of community, and illustrating the journey with realism and hope.” This is a must read for all who are hungering for a deeper, more intimate walk with Christ. Visit their website ([www.conversationsjournal.com](http://www.conversationsjournal.com)) and subscribe today (be sure to watch for future articles to appear in *Conversations* by yours truly!).

Adele Calhoun, my long-time friend and colleague in the ministry of spiritual formation, recently released a fabulous resource for individuals and groups entitled *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (InterVarsity Press, 2005). In this treasure trove for fellow pilgrims on the spiritual journey, Adele introduces her readers to the myriad ways we can all make space in our lives for God. I highly recommend this resource for all spiritual leaders and devoted followers of Christ.

Starting in January, 2007, I will have the privilege of co-teaching a new Doctor of Ministry track at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary with Dr. David Currie entitled “Spiritual Formation for Ministry Leaders.” We will be joined by three outstanding resources, Dr. Jeanette Bakke, Dr. Larry Crabb, and Dr. Leighton Ford. Each residency of this three year cohort will begin on retreat for the first few days, which will lead us prayerfully into the classroom for the remaining time we are together. If you or someone you know would be interested in this D.Min. track focusing on the Word, prayer, and reflective disciplines, then check out the track on Gordon-Conwell’s website, <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/dmin/tracks/spiritualformation.php> for more information.

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

**[www.LeadershipTransformations.org](http://www.LeadershipTransformations.org)**

Here you will find the full complement of ministry services and resources LTI is currently providing our constituents. If you haven’t picked up a copy of *Becoming A Healthy Team*, then be sure to order one today. In *Becoming A Healthy Team* I focus the reader’s attention on the importance of learning how to lead and serve ministry teams in a cooperative, community-based fashion. The primary biblical focus is the book of I Corinthians, with particular emphasis on chapters 12 and 13. I offer a holistic definition of healthy ministry teams based on the image of the body of Christ and outline five key traits of vital leadership for effective teams: Trust, Empowerment, Assimilation, Management and Service (which spells TEAMS!).

In addition, note some of the free resources available on the website, the *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 *Becoming A Healthy Disciple*.

## □ Renewal Yearnings

Let me close this newsletter with words from *Falling for God* by Gary Moon (Shaw, 2004), “God has offered us an incredible invitation to enter into intimate relationship with himself. Relationship. Loving connection with the One who sketched out the first atom, hung the stars without string, and crafted your soul with greater love than your mom felt as she knitted your first booties...it boggles the mind. Why would God want to develop a loving relationship with me? It’s difficult to wrap my brain around the fact that I am not just saved *from* but *to*, that I’m saved to join in with the Trinity as part of their eternal community of love. And with it the offer to enjoy intimate fellowship that surpasses what is possible in the best of marriages.”

May the summer months be for you and yours a time to ponder the reality of the unfailing love of the heavenly Father, the spectacular grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the empowering presence of the Spirit we call Holy.

*I trust you will continue to be an active part of the LTI team – through your love, prayers, gifts, ministry suggestions and participation! We value your companionship as we journey together in this uniquely meaningful way.*

Your grateful brother in Christ,



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