

From: MTM Foundation [mtmfoundation@verizon.net]
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Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc. Newsletter
August, 2010

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Reflections of a Recent Retreat

Click the following link to read what one of the Wellness Retreat leaders had to say as a follow-up to a recent retreat: [Are We Killing Our Ministers?](#)

**"What an Outrage!
Somebody Ought to do Something!"**

It was on a bus, deep in Slovakia in 2003, that I happened to stumble into a conversation with Roberta Damon, a fellow choir member at our home church in Richmond, Virginia. We were both on the same two week mission trip, teaching young Slovak students to learn English; "English Camp," as they called it, which was sponsored by the very tiny Baptist church in Ruzomberok, Slovakia. It was a bold effort for a church of less than 40 members in a Catholic culture, but a successful one, as daily attendance this year grew to over 175 students.

I suppose I was ranting to Roberta about some trivial irritant at our church back home in Richmond. You know how minor things can get under your skin. Fortunately for me, Roberta turned the conversation to the big picture and related to me how many ministers lose their positions-some 1,600 per month, nationwide - just because a small group of disgruntled church members don't like how things are going. "No way, Roberta. You mean to tell me that approximately 1,600 times each month in the United States a minister gets fired just because a small vocal minority, typically 8-10 members, mount a smear campaign to rid the church of its pastor in order to take control?" Worse, the minister is blackmailed into a position where he must appear to "resign gracefully" in order to retain any vestiges of a severance

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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.

Upcoming Retreats

August 23 - August 27

Chanco on the James
Spring Grove, Virginia

November 15-19, 2010

Geneva Camp & Retreat Center
Holland, Michigan

Nov. 29 - December 3

Baptist Theological Seminary
Richmond, Virginia

stipend or possibly an extension of 1-2 months of housing allowance. What an outrage! How can this be? "Charlie, it happens all the time. I'm involved with an organization called MTM; you ought to check it out."

Upon my return to Richmond I made an appointment with the MTM Executive Director, Charles Chandler, and asked him lots of questions to verify what Roberta had told me. All true, and even worse. When a minister is forced out, typically he and his family must pack up and move on in order to seek a position elsewhere, since his reputation has been tarnished, or at least blemished in the eyes of some. It must appear easier to start over in a new town than stay and fight it out. Consequently, the spouse gives up his/her job, the kids are displaced in their schooling, and many relationships are severed. What an upheaval, not to mention the financial distress of abrupt loss of income and the hurt and anger that follow. During my hour or so with Charles he asked several times if I were a reporter. I guess I was pretty blunt and almost unbelieving of the firing scenario he described, carried out by so many churches each month. In most cases the majority of the congregation has no knowledge of what really happens. All I could envision was being in a paintball battle with colored blasts coming at you from all directions: Find a new job, move to a new place, pay your bills with no income, nurture your family, question God and your calling, deal with an imputed sense of shame and somehow keep your anger under control. Except these colors and hurts don't easily wash off when the game is over.

I must confess I went into my "interview" with Charles wondering if MTM was worth some of my limited volunteer time. Quickly, it was obvious the need was there to try to heal these wounded, dismissed ministers. This kind of treatment coming from church members? It really inflamed my sense of outrage and notion of fair play. Somebody needs to do something . . . and MTM was. Gee, I was already over committed as a volunteer with school alumni councils, several hobbies, heading two civic associations, committees at church, treasurer of a land trust, president of a local planning group, and working full time as a consulting editor and running two non-profit associations with three lobbying contracts on the side.

Maybe I could just sit in on a few board meetings to see how MTM works and learn how they are tackling the problems. That's all it took. Now I am committed to doing what I can, helping to raise funds to pay for the wellness retreats, organizing awareness dinners, giving talks to church groups and letting others know of the need. I can tell you first hand, it is a mission worthy of your time, and when I am able to let go of the pesky notion of working for a living, I'll be in a position to help more.

*Charlie Finley, Editor
Verbatim Editing*

January 10 - 14, 2011

Carson Springs
Newport, Tennessee

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C.A.R.E. became the purpose of MTM:

Communicating
Advocating
Reclaiming
Equipping

**C.A.R.E. for ministers and churches as together
they reach people for Christ..**

On-line Shopping Benefits M T M

More and more people are now shopping on-line. Usually the prices are cheaper because of less overhead expense. We at MTM would like to introduce you to a plan that enables the MTM ministry to benefit from your on-line shopping at many of the same stores where you have been shopping on-line. The Skyhouse Mall can be accessed through the [MTM Website](#). Approximately 100 stores are included in the mall. The names of the stores will be listed along with the percentage of your total purchase which will go to MTM. Though you will be shopping from the same store, for MTM to benefit you must go through the Skyhouse Mall. We are not trying to change your shopping habits, but if you shop on-line, it makes sense to let the MTM ministry benefit.

**"Healthy ministers help produce
healthy churches
and healthy churches help produce
healthy communities."**

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