



# INTERCOM

January/February 2007

Minnesota Church Ministries Association

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## A QUESTION OF CHARACTER

It has become an unfortunate but almost predictable pattern in American Church life. A leader who has been trusted implicitly for his integrity and forthright stand for the truth is found caught in an adulterous relationship or in compromising situations. There may be initial denials and dodging. Eventually the full story comes out, leaving the Church disappointed and disillusioned and the general public further driven into cynicism about the state of the Church.

It is very easy for us in the Church to look down our noses at those in leadership who have been guilty of such transgressions. It may do us well, however, to think twice before we cast stones.

It is clear from scripture that leaders are to be held to a high standard of behavior and those guilty of sins of passion must be properly disciplined and even set aside from service. However, the high-profile instances of sexually infidelity or deviancy are not the most regularly encountered questions of character in Church work.

I ask you these questions:

**Have you ever participated in a strategic planning process in which unrealistic goals were set which you never really intended to pursue?**

**Have you ever promised to do things in a board or committee meeting and then almost instantly put it out of your mind with no follow-through?**

**Have you ever preached or taught the straight-shooting truth of the scripture knowing that in the secret recesses of your own experience you were guilty of gross hypocrisy?**

**Have you ever claimed to be a caring, compassionate shepherd of your flock and yet refuse to do personal visitation or communication with people who are hurting?**

**Have you ever challenged your people that thorough and prayerful preparation for their service in the church must be a high priority and yet you cut corners wherever you can, claiming to be a good time manager?**

**Have you ever refused to take phone calls, claiming to be *dedicating yourself to the study of the Word and prayer* and yet failed to return those calls later?**

**Have you ever soft-pedaled the truth of scripture and replaced its hard-edge with happy talk that makes people feel good about themselves?**

Oh, my questions could go on. But...do you get the point? Though gross sins in leadership should be addressed, we also need to deal with the daily inconsistencies that may actually impact the spiritual life of the Church in more profoundly subliminal ways.

When we are not fully committed to the truth, personally trustworthy, dependable, hard-working, compassionate, and consistent as leaders...we set our people up for disillusionment and even spiritual derailment.

This does not require perfection on the part of pastors and leaders. It does require, however, a humble transparency, a relinquishing of self-centeredness, and a recognition of the need for genuine sacrifice for the sake of the flock. With those attitudes in place, we can it make clear how God is leading us to serve and work with the fellowship, consistently follow through in those ways, and then offer humble apologies when we fail.

It is a question of character. The real test of our leadership is whether we, in integrity, are faithful to our calling with the gifts God has given us. In reality our people are reviewing our performance every day and it is the authenticity of our character that will largely determine whether we are as Paul put it, "above reproach" in our service. May God give us grace in 2007 to reflect Christ-like attitudes and actions as we lead our people.

*Timothy A. Johnson*, Exec. Director

## ***The Association At Work***

### **MCMA Africa Ministry Breakfast**

**Saturday, January 20, 2007**

**9:00-10:30 am**

**Prairie Hill EFC**

**17200 Valley View Road**

**Eden Prairie, MN**

Please join us for an enjoyable time of food and fellowship as we review the great ministry accomplished in our 9th trip to Africa in November.

Become informed and inspired! FREE!

**Call by Thurs., January 18th**

**952-934-6777**

◆ **BEYOND BOREDOM: Sunday Mornings That Engage!** is a dynamic 1/2 day seminar featuring Kenton Anderson, Bill Allison, Shawn Brown, & Tim Johnson helping churches develop engaging preaching, teaching, worship, and environment! Call for full program details or registration!

◆ **Conference on Women's Retreats** will be offered as an On-Target Seminar at Prairie Lutheran Church on March 24th. Full program available soon. Be in touch!

◆ **REGIONAL INSTITUTES** will be held in Bemidji on March 3, Baxter on March 10, and Duluth on March 17. Full program information is available now...call MCMA!

◆ **MINNESOTA CHURCH EXPO** at Edinbrook Church on Sept. 29 will include Ruth Tucker, Bill Allison, and Many More!

### **PRAY – PRAY – PRAY!!!**

- ◆ Exciting new programs above.
- ◆ Financial needs--praise for a strong year-end campaign--but the needs in the first quarter 2007 a brand new!
- ◆ Continued expansion of the team of supporters for Executive Director Tim Johnson--would you consider becoming a "team member?"

# MCMA

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## MCMA 2007 MINISTRY SCHEDULE

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
<b>Church Ministries Institutes</b> <i>Always Advancing</i> <i>Following Christ's Forward Lead In The Church</i>	March 3 March 10 March 17	Evangelical Covenant Church - Bemidji Lakewood Evangelical Free Church - Baxter Bethany Baptist Church - Duluth
<b>On-Target Seminars</b>	January 27  March 24	<b>BEYOND BOREDOM:</b> Sunday Mornings That Engage! Oxboro Evangelical Free Church - Bloomington <b>Conference on Women's Retreats</b> Prairie Lutheran Church - Eden Prairie
<b>MCMA Pastors' Roundtable</b> Discussion of <b>EXPERIENTIAL WORSHIP</b> 9:00-10:30 am	Jan. 31; Feb. 28; Apr. 11 Feb. 1; Mar. 1; Apr. 12 Feb. 7; Mar. 7; Apr. 18 Feb. 8; Mar. 8; Apr. 19	Lakewood Evangelical Free Church - Baxter  Duluth Gospel Tabernacle - Duluth  Rosehill Alliance Church - Roseville  Greater MN Association of Evangelicals - Richfield
<b>Minnesota Vespers</b>	January 14 February 11 March 11 April 15 May 6	St. Louis Park EFC - St. Louis Park Colony Park Baptist - Edina Crosstown Covenant Church - Minneapolis First Evangelical Free Church - Minneapolis Oxboro Evangelical Free Church - Bloomington
<b>Celebration 2007</b>	April 26	A Twin Cities Location
<b>Minnesota Church Expo</b>	September 29	Edinbrook Church - Brooklyn Park <b>With Ruth Tucker; Bill Allison and Many More!</b>

***Helping Churches Build a Generation of Confident Leaders and Teachers***

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