

Christian Counseling Ministries of WNY, Inc.

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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2006

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Dr. Timothy P. Chambers, Executive Director

UNWRAPPING THE GIFT OF RELATIONSHIPS

By Cheryl Chambers, MA

Tim and I are in the car driving to visit our daughter and son-in-law for Thanksgiving. We found ourselves prior to departure engaging in the timeless battle of getting out on time. I always underestimate the amount of time it takes me to get ready. Then I defend myself by how much more I have to do to get out of the house, e.g. prepare food we are taking, wrap gifts, make sure we have everything we need for the visit, and leave the house in order. (Okay, I didn't have to disinfect the kitchen counters!) Then we banter about who has more to do and how much time each of those things take and before you know it, we've reached a gridlock with neither of us willing to concede. Once in the car we discussed how to avoid the same pitfalls whenever we take a road trip. Needless to say, it took energy and humility coming up with a plan that was workable for us both.

We found ourselves talking about how much work it takes to have a healthy relationship and the hopes we have for the many couples we counsel. When we have our own issues to deal with it puts us in a better position to see how and why so many marriages can become fragmented and polarized.

One of the foundational principles we emphasize when counseling clients is the need for a vital relationship with God. Without the power of the Holy Spirit at work in our hearts, we surely would destroy ourselves and we would certainly have no reason to surrender our own pride. Pride is that nasty vice that keeps us imprisoned in our own self-centered world. Without God's light shining in the darkness of our hearts we cannot see the truth about ourselves. God has given us this great gift to be in relationships but our tendency is to focus on surface issues and not the deeper heart problems. Unfortunately, we rarely take the time to find out what the underlying issues are because we may not like what we see. It would be like receiving a present for Christmas and not wanting to unwrap it because we are afraid we won't like the gift. Why mess up the beautiful paper?

However, it's only when we are willing to look at our heart issues that we are able to love each other like Jesus loves, sacrifice for each other like Jesus did,

and humble ourselves like Jesus modeled for us. A healthy relationship requires that we die to ourselves on a daily basis in order that we may gain deeper intimacy with both God and others. Without the Holy Spirit working within us, it is impossible to love selflessly and give unconditionally.

It grieves us, as a staff, when marriages we work so hard to preserve, end in divorce and/or separation. We put in so much effort, and pray so fervently for wisdom, that we are saddened when our efforts and prayers are not enough. Thankfully God's grace covers all of our mistakes, weaknesses and sins so that we can remain in fellowship with Him at those times when we do step out of His will. We need His grace and love in order to responsibly accept the consequences of our choices. Hebrews 4:14-16 reminds us that "we can approach the throne of grace boldly to receive the grace and help in our time of need because we have a great high priest, Jesus, who sympathizes with our weaknesses and has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." Our responsibility is to "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ to demolish strongholds and every pretension that sets itself against the Word of God." (II Corinthians 10:5)

Like Jesus, we do not have to be enslaved by temptations because "No temptation shall overtake us, such that is common to man, for God is faithful who will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able but with the temptation will provide a way of escape also that we may be able to endure it." (I Corinthians 10:13)

Regardless of the relationship, family, marriage, friendships, or co-workers, God desires to build our character so that we can represent His love to others.

Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for becoming one of us so that you can understand the battle within our hearts. May we keep our eyes fixed on you so that our choices are based on your Truth because you know what is good, right and pure and what will satisfy our longings. As we approach the end of 2006 and look ahead to the New Year, may our lives be surrendered to your ways. May all of our relationships represent your

*glory as you build our character and conform us to
your image. Amen.*

SEARCH THE WEB FOR INFORMATION ON OUR MANY SERVICES

CCMWNY.ORG

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS: info@ccmwny.org

*** END OF YEAR GIVING ***

Has God blessed you this year? In turn, will you be willing to bless us with a year-end donation? While many had to adjust and recover from the October storm, the impact on the counseling center was substantial. Since we were unable to schedule the majority of our appointments, the center lost significant income. We are currently experiencing a \$4,000 deficit and are in need of additional funds. Will you consider giving a year-end donation to help us meet this need?

All gifts are tax-deductible and any amount will be greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your contribution to our mission of providing affordable services to the Body of Christ in Western New York.

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**WE WELCOME A NEW COUNSELOR
SANDRA TICEN, MS, LCAT, CAS**

Sandy joins the center with over 22 years of experience in professional counseling. She specializes in eating disorders and women's issues, and works with couples and families as well. She is a licensed art therapist in the State of New York and received her master's degree from State University College at Buffalo. She is certified as an addiction's specialist with an emphasis on food addictions. We are excited for the contribution she will make to the center. She will see clients in both the West Seneca and Williamsville offices. All appointments are scheduled through our main office at 716-674-6747.

† Merry Christmas †

THE STAFF AND BOARD OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELING MINISTRIES EXTEND OUR WISHES FOR A CHRISTMAS FILLED WITH THE WONDER OF CHRIST'S BIRTH AND THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE. MAY YOUR CELEBRATIONS WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS BE A REFLECTION OF GOD'S LOVE AND AN EXTENSION OF HIS GRACE AND MAY THE NEW YEAR AHEAD BRING YOU INTO CLOSER FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM.

† Our Love to You †