

Don't Be Another Statistic

Never before in the history of the church, have pastors been faced with more work, problems, and stress. This is taking a frightening toll on the ministry. Since Carol and I set forth full-time in BMI, statistics continue to be overwhelming. In 2002, 1400 pastors a month were leaving the ministry. Some left because of moral failure, some because of spiritual burn-out, and others because of contention in their churches. That number has since increased to over 1500 pastors leaving the ministry each month.

Check Out These Statistics*:

- 50% of pastors' marriages will end in divorce.
- 70% of pastors admit to fighting depression.
- 80% of pastors' wives feel left out and unappreciated by other parishioners.
- 85% of pastors report that their greatest problem is dealing with problem people such as disgruntled elders, deacons, worship leaders, and associate pastors.
- 90% of pastors cite that the most difficult thing in ministry is dealing with uncooperative people.

* *The above statistics were cited from the following ministries: Focus on the Family, Ministries Today, Charisma Magazine, and Global Pastors Network.*

How can pastors avoid becoming one of these statistics??? The following guidelines must be kept in mind:

- 1) Build relationships with other pastors who encourage you;
- 2) Get into a positive relationship with a mentor;
- 3) Study the Word of God because you actually love it – not merely to find sermon material; and
- 4) Spend personal time in the Presence of the Lord.

Be encouraged!!! *You don't have to be another statistic.* We, here at BMI, care! You are in our prayers and hearts.

I Plight Thee My Troth

Tomorrow Macel and I will celebrate our 33rd Wedding Anniversary. We were married in a little Army Chapel in Hawaii. We had planned before Macel left for Vietnam that during his week of R & R (rest and recovery), we would meet in Hawaii and get married.



Macel and Carol Ely

I remember during the ceremony that the Army Chaplain said, "Repeat after me . . . I plight thee my troth." Troth! Troth? I had no idea what it was but I plighted it and so did Macel. Many years later we discovered that *troth meant faithfulness*. We laugh about it now, but the vow of faithfulness is no laughing matter.

Recently we were in a small church of approximately 100 people. We were shocked when the Pastor told us that 13 couples in his church have divorced this year. We received a call for help recently from a Pastor who has been overwhelmed. He said, "I have not had time lately to Pastor my own church because so many Pastors and their wives from my surrounding area are coming to me for counsel and it is taking up too much of my time."

In today's world, 33 years of marriage is a great accomplishment. Statistics from George Barna says that one-quarter of all Americans have experienced at least one divorce. It also says that Christians continue to have a higher likelihood of getting divorced than do non-Christians. I believe that part of the reason for that statistic is because more Christians get married than do unbelievers; therefore, there is a larger percentage that potentially could get divorced.