



Mourning Dove Ministries, Inc.
P. O. Box 2113, Roswell, GA 30077
(770) 649-1949

December 2006

Dear Friends and Family,

Blessed Christmas Gary and Elvira hope that each of you has a wonderful Christmas season that creates many delightful new memories with friends and loved ones. And may the new year be filled with many unexpected blessings for both you and your family. ***Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!***

**Changing Family
Legacies**

Only four months ago we sent out the letter in which we announced that Mourning Dove Ministries should be a *full-time* counseling, coaching, and training ministry. The response to that announcement has been incredible. Your investment in this ministry has already changed the future for many marriages and families. Together we have created new family legacies – replacing a legacy of aloneness, hurt and divorce with one of intimate relationships and healing.

As Molly White, of Columbus, GA, wrote in September 2006:

“I didn’t want to divorce; I simply felt there was no way to heal what was left after years of us bungling up so many aspects of our marriage. Escaping seemed the only way to find emotional and mental peace.”

After opening their hearts to the process, Molly and Ritchie went through a two-day Marriage Intensive with us. She went on to write at the end of the process:

*“I know that this has been a pivotal experience for our marriage. It really almost feels like a new marriage, free from the weight of the past. ...now we know how to get there, and how to stay there no matter what obstacles are put in our way. Our marriage is new in Christ, and **we are rejoicing!**” (Her emphasis).*

Through Molly and Ritchie’s commitment and your partnership with this ministry, a new legacy has been created for the White’s young son Elijah.

**We’ve Only
Just Begun!**

As we build on the foundation of the past few months, we need you to partner with us to save more marriages, to prevent more broken homes and to free individuals from life-long hurt and pain. **“We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you – your energy, your prayers, and your money – in this work to which God has called us.”** – Henri J. M. Nouwen. Please consider a year-end gift or a monthly pledge to Mourning Dove Ministries to sustain this work. The ministry needs you as an active, invested partner!

**What Your
Investment Does**

The financial investment you make into Mourning Dove Ministries impacts the ministry and the lives of families and individuals in many ways:

- Sustains the growth of the ministry as we develop a solid base of clients and referral sources.
- Subsidizes counseling for couples who cannot afford the costs of traditional counseling. The ability to pay will never be a consideration when helping couples create healthy, intimate relationships.
- Provides Gary and Elvira with the opportunity to speak to groups on God's plan for marriages and alternatives to divorce.
- Supports other ministries and benevolent activities. Since the creation of MDM in 2001, we have tithed 10% of all gifts and income received by the ministry. During the first eleven months of 2006, your contributions have helped launch other new ministries, provided benevolent assistance to two families, sent books to needy children in the Dominican Republic and aided an organization for women fighting addictions. A scholarship fund will be established in 2007.

**Lawrence and
Teresa Bishop**

Lawrence and Teresa Bishop made the decision that they wanted deeper intimacy in their relationship and less tension in their home – to create a different legacy for their five children. Excerpts from Teresa's letter:

"We were in a difficult place relationally. We had been to other counselors and both felt misunderstood by the counselor of the opposite sex. In the situation with the Delaplans, there was no hiding behind gender-misunderstandings. It truly was a wonderful benefit to work with both Gary and Elvira."

"Gary and Elvira also had credibility in our eyes, not so much because of their formal training, although we value that too, but because they have been down the difficult road themselves. They weren't a couple that already had it all together and couldn't relate to the struggles we were having."

"Gary and Elvira both bring unique qualities to the counseling situation for couples. Their individual personalities and life experiences were a very helpful backdrop in their ability to really hear each of us. Being able to see behind the obvious has been very important for our healing."

"Our marriage was at the very tippy edge of dissolution. Our experiences at the Delaplans' home and with their help we have completely turned our marriage around. We will be forever grateful for all of their deep and diligent care for us."

**Ben Franklin,
1730**

The happy State of Matrimony is, undoubtedly, the surest and most lasting Foundation of Comfort and Love . . . the Cause of all good Order in the World, and what alone preserves it from the utmost Confusion . . ."

**The Mystery of
Marriage...**

“God designed marriage as a mystery. You may or may not know it, but you are married to a living mystery. You may have lost sight of that mystery and feel your marriage is simply a matter of choice or a commitment. But Christ wants you to be yoked with Him to understand the mysteries of God’s love and how that love can unlock the soul of your husband or wife.”

“God wants you to learn what He knows about your spouse. There are aspects of your spouse that are so exciting and so intriguing, yet so hidden, it will take a journey of a lifetime to discover them. Unveiling the mystery of the person you are married to can infuse your love with an infinite quality that touches the depths of a woman’s soul and captures a man’s heart so completely it defines the very essence of who he is.”

“Think about this. Your spouse has been called to remove your aloneness as has no other person. And of the six billion people on the face of the planet, no one has been called to minister to your spouse’s aloneness as you have. And God is in the midst of your relationship wanting to impart His love through you, and receive pleasure out of removing your partner’s aloneness. Aren’t you overwhelmed and humbled at that thought?”

“God has called you to a very special journey of removing the aloneness of the person you most love. And He wants to co-labor with you on the journey.”
– David and Teresa Ferguson, *More Than Married*

Prayer Team

One of the most important building blocks that we put in place this year was the creation of a Prayer Team to cover the ministry and all who are associated with MDM with prayer.

Brad Hubbard heads the Prayer Team and we have several dedicated people who have joined the team. They have committed to pray daily for the needs of the ministry and for the couples with whom we are working.

We have seen the impact of this powerful group in so many aspects of the ministry. Every couple to whom we have offered the gift of prayer cover has eagerly and emotionally accepted it. If you are interested in joining the prayer team or have a specific prayer request for a marriage, please send us an e-mail at one of the addresses listed on the next page.

**Year-End
Statements**

Mourning Dove Ministries is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. As a result, all contributions and gifts to the ministry are tax deductible. Every partner who has contributed to MDM will receive a detailed summary statement by mid-January 2007 for tax reporting purposes.

**Financial
Accountability**

As stated in our launch letter of August, our commitment to each of you is to maintain the highest ethical standards to those served by this ministry and open financial accountability for every aspect of Mourning Dove Ministries.

Our financial records are always open and available upon request.

Overview of Mourning Dove Ministries

The information on this page is provided for those who may want additional details concerning the services of MDM – for personal needs or to assist other couples.



Warm, Safe and Inviting - A Place of Refuge

The Vision: Strengthening marriages to weather the inevitable storms of life.

The Mission: 1) Create warm, safe, and inviting environments of healing and enrichment for individuals, marriages and families through a creative, non-traditional model of counseling and coaching.

2) Equip pastors and lay people with the tools to create self-sustaining, family-focused ministries through seminars, workshops and retreats.

What we offer:

- A non-traditional approach to coaching, counseling and training for couples. We are also available to counsel individuals, especially when one spouse is not willing or ready to attend.
- Accelerated Care – extended half-day, full-day or two-day Marriage Intensives for those couples who desire faster change in their relationship or resolution of their intimacy issues.
- Pre-Intensive workshops for couples to prepare them for attendance at Marriage Intensives at the WinShape Marriage Retreat Center in Rome, GA.
- Pre-marital coaching and marriage enrichment.
- Workshops and retreats. We are available to speak to groups or to conduct weekend training sessions using the theories of Intimacy Therapy. We have also shared our testimony with Stephens Ministry teams and other organized groups.

How we differ:

Marriage counseling is a valuable resource for those who are struggling through the trials of life and there are many resources for couples, including psychologists, marriage and family therapists, and pastoral counselors. We offer a unique approach that appeals to couples whose expectations may have not been met in more traditional approaches. Mourning Dove Ministries differs from many of those in the following ways:

- Sessions last a minimum of two hours – a full 120 minutes versus 50 minutes – which facilitates deeper discussions and faster progress.
- We meet couple-with-couple so that the clients benefit from the perspectives of both genders.
- Coaching on the basics of relationships, the healing of past pain and the use of genograms are core to our approach. The couple is equipped with tools to sustain their progress.
- The counseling environment is significantly different – one that is warm, safe and inviting.

Contact us for more information:

- Office: **770-649-1949**; Gary's cell: **678-596-9594**; Elvira's cell: **678-592-1815**
 - Web Site: www.mourning-dove.org (launching on December 15, 2006)
 - E-mail: GDelaplane@aol.com (or Gary@mourning-dove.org / Elvira@mourning-dove.org)
-