

MINISTERS FORUM NEWSLETTER

INFORMATION MINISTERS CAN USE

'INDEPENDENT' & EMANCIPATED'

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It is a known fact that pain and wounds of the past influence and spills over into ministry and has caused conflict and personality issues in churches.

A life-giving leader understands the difference between being led by the Spirit of God and being driven out of an unmet need.

The month of August for Jamaicans has always been a very important month mainly because this is the month in which they, among others were Emancipated "from slavery" and became an Independent nation. Exploration of these two words shows that **Emancipation** is defined as an *act by which a person, who was once in the power of another, is rendered free*; **Independence** can mean a variety of things, but in this context and historically, the term Independence is often used when referring to the birth of nation states. After a nation has declared itself independent from whatever state they were formerly a part of; they now have the ability to make laws strictly for the good of their country possessing the capacity and capability for **self-government**.

Jamaicans celebrate freedom from slavery and the fact that they now have choices and a 'say' in the decision-making process; which according to many is a wonderful feeling having the freedom and power of choice to decide what happens to us as a nation. If we should compare this with human physical independence it is really what happens in the mind, heart and soul that makes us truly independent.

To the Christian emancipation and independence from sin and the devil has also made us free through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Many will say that although Jesus told us to have faith in His ability and His divine direction some of us have not accepted what he has liberated us from but are still enslaved by wounds of the past hence have not fully accepted the freedom given by Christ as indicated in Psalms 147:3, "He healeth the broken in heart and bindeth up their wounds"

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"...not emancipated to acknowledge their pains and struggles..."

. I know I am writing to Ministers and Pastors who may rebuke me for thinking that they could ever lack faith and trust in God Almighty. I was never a Pastor or an Ordained Minister but for over fifty years in the Christian faith, conversations with and writings from ministers/pastors have **awakened my thinking and desire to encourage ministers who are living and sometimes preaching through personal pain and wounds that have not been healed and are not emancipated to acknowledge their pains and struggles and minister to themselves**. It is a known fact that pain and wounds of the past influence and spills over into Ministry and have caused conflict and personality issues. Personality - driven ministries or church are usually driven by a person who has a deep need for approval stemming from a fear of failure and rejection.



According to Julia Mateer writer/author of Life-Giving Leadership, a prevailing sense of worthlessness is often manifested in ministry by a need to achieve, perform for God, and win the approval of Christians. The apostle Paul warns in Philippians 2:3–5, to have humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourselves and to not look merely out for personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

A life-giving leader understands the ***difference between being led by the Spirit of God and being driven out of an unmet need.*** A ministry or church that is personality-driven is inherently personality-led, making it not difficult for one to become focused on the person rather than on Jesus Christ. It is also not difficult for a person's gifting, though God-given to be distorted by arrogance and pride from wounds of the past.

Wounds that spill into Ministry -

According to Pastor Rick Warren "Too many churches are led by wounded pastors and leaders who can't really love people or be vulnerable or focus on the future because of past rejection and hurt. But there is healing for wounded leaders!". ***Wounds that spill into Ministry can be the result of growing up in a family where emotional and verbal abuses were everyday occurrences; and having unmet emotional needs which have not been met by parents for one reason or another. It is also not difficult for a person's gifting, though God-given to be distorted by arrogance and pride from wounds of the past.***

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Minister Julia Mateer

Soul Wounds are emotional wounds, that result from events in our lives such as rejection, abandonment, abuse, neglect, violence, insecurity and being embarrassed, shamed, terrorized, scared, manipulated or otherwise controlled.

Our concern is with hurts, wounds and pain that remain long after the events that caused them, hurts that have not healed and therefore disrupt people's lives.

Contrary to the feelings of many that Ministers have all the answers and are 'on top' of their emotional stability, ministers do live in unhealthy relationships both in the church and in their homes. These unhealthy relationships often times evolve into emotional insecurities –***soul wounds*** - which many times manifest themselves in the need to perform to satisfy unmet needs for affection and acceptance from those who are served.

Sealing Soul-Wounds

Soul wounds emotional wounds, that result from events in our lives such as rejection, abandonment, abuse, neglect, violence, insecurity and being embarrassed, shamed, terrorized, scared, manipulated or otherwise controlled. Our concern is with hurts, wounds and pain that remain long after the events that caused hurts that have not healed and therefore disrupt lives.

Dear Ministers, If you recognize/realize that a soul-wound is driving your need to lead and minister, ask yourself this question: "Am I leading because I am being led by the Spirit, or am I leading because it fills a need to be loved and gain approval?" It might be hard to admit but it is important that you accept your Soul-wounds and a willingness to be healed.

In helping to address these wounds the following steps can help to heal your soul-wounds:



1. **Share with a mentor.** Talk openly about your issues with your spiritual mentor, an elder, or someone who you trust and is confidential. James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to each other... so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results."
2. **Seek counseling.** When you receive Counselling from a trained professional, you don't have to worry about that person sharing your issues because they are guided by professional ethics which protect your confidentiality. Make sure that the professional counselor approaches therapy from a Christian perspective.
3. **Have an accountability partner.** An accountability partner is someone you can trust who is not afraid to tell you like it is and encourage you to move forward. Hebrews 10:24 says, "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works."
4. **Seek prayer support.** There are many Scriptures encouraging us to pray for one another. 2 Thessalonians 1:11 says, "So we keep on praying for you, asking our God to enable you to live a life worthy of His call. May he give you the power to accomplish all the good things your faith prompts you to do."
5. **Step aside from front-line leadership or take a Sabbatical.** This step takes great self-awareness, humility, and maturity. If necessary, for your sake and for the sake of the people you lead; give yourself the gift of time to let the healing begin. This doesn't mean that you will never lead or minister again; however, it does mean that you will be able to minister to others from a healthy emotional and spiritual place.

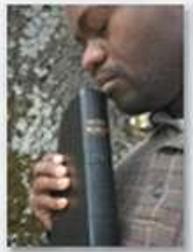
So, what would stepping away look like? Many leaders who have needed to step away take an agreed-upon sabbatical, perhaps three, six months or a year. During this period, it is recommended that you get some help and work through the emotional challenges that hinder your ability to minister effectively. Resting, both physically and emotionally, is restorative to both your body and soul. You may also want to find hobbies that bring joy and balance to your life. Some Ministers may not agree with this one. My response to this that you seek the Lord for Divine Direction and be prepared for wherever the Lord may lead – "but as your faith is, so let it be".

**Isaiah 53:4, "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

**Psalms 23:3, "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake."*

I share with you Rev. David W. Eckman @ lordslaw.com in his writings when he wrote ..."open wounds affect the quality of livesYou might ask him [God], as I did, to heal whatever memory is causing a problem. Don't be concerned if he takes you to a memory that does not seem very significant. When I went to Him for my healing, he chose memories that I had already prayed for him to heal. I expected him to take me to a memory of one of my most traumatic childhood experiences, one that I knew caused a lot of insecurity. He didn't do it then, and even when I've gone back for further healing, he never has. Take whatever he gives you and let him process it and redeem you from it..... "

Just as we started, I close; Jamaicans celebrate freedom from slavery by being emancipated and independent to be part of the decision-making process – **Ministers you do have what it takes to emancipate yourselves from 'soul-wounds'** and the independence to continue making the difference not just in the lives of members/Saints but your own.



A BOOK FOR THE MINISTER

The Wounded Minister by: Kirby L. Clark

Guy Greenfield's latest book helps us understand what happened, why and what to do next. In *The Wounded Minister*, Greenfield, a pastoral counselor and former pastor and seminary professor, says a major cause of forced termination is the work of pathological antagonists in the church.

These are "evil, mean-spirited people" who "inflict disastrous wounds on unsuspecting ministers in the name of religion and 'for God.'" Greenfield writes out of his own experience as a wounded minister, sharing his story and the stories of other wounded ministers.

Part 1, "The Reality of Abuse," describes pathological antagonists as people who "intentionally target ministers for termination." This section also describes the strategy by which these clergy killers succeed in accomplishing their objective, noting that passive lay leaders and a church's polity are major contributors in the attack. **Part 1** concludes with two chapters on the "collateral damage" experienced by the wounded minister's family and his church from these attacks. Included are stories of wounded ministers whose families and ministry careers were destroyed because of the work of antagonists. Collateral damage also includes damage to the minister's health, peace of mind, faith, retirement and idealism.

In Part 2, "Pathological Ministers," Greenfield presents a number of stories from staff ministers or their spouses that chronicle how senior pastors can also be pathological antagonists. Greenfield found that almost 50 percent of the stories he received while researching the book were stories of staff ministers who were abused by their own pastor.

Part 3, "Recovery and Healing," the final section of the book, offers words of hope and encouragement, as well as suggestions for recovery and healing. Greenfield advocates establishing a minister's advisory council and gives guidelines for its implementation.

He also encourages wounded ministers to deal with the anger they experienced as a result of the abuse, urging them to seek professional counseling and to become involved in a ministers' support group. He further encourages wounded ministers to practice the art of forgiving their abusers, even if the abusers don't respond.

This resource should be welcomed by wounded ministers and their families, as well as by churches, all of whom wonder what to do now. It also can serve as a good text in pastoral ministry classes at the college and seminary level.

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**Wounds
that spill over into
Ministry impacts
every level of
ministry, and on
many occasions
leaving
wounded
clergymen
with ruined
ministries,
broken
relationships,
damaged health and
sometimes even
shattered faith.**

*Inner healing
Prayer
Psalms 46*

*0-----
Invite Jesus to heal
your heart and the
hearts of people you
minister to through
praying a Scripture
passage
contemplatively
while remembering
the painful event
from the past.
To pray
contemplatively is to
be still in God's
presence as you
marinate yourself in
the Word.*