

How Does Moment Ministries Work?

Short answer—it doesn't. It's not the way to go if building an institutional type organization is a goal. It's not the way to go if an income is necessary. It's not the way to go if results are important to a sense of worth. We're not an MBO (Management By Objective) type organization.

For instance—finances. We don't solicit donations. Never have. Although we have expenses which have always been covered by checks, almost all arriving at the end of the year. We confess to being an IRS non-profit organization for tax purposes. We encourage people to finance meaningful causes personally (and to do acts of ministry personally).

I have a 2011 MM Financial Statement in front of me. Eight months with no deposits. An unusual surge came in April due to an in-and-out travel expense (getting me back from California by train for a Memorial event, then back to California to my car - and wife). Other than that...just enough to pay for Insurance (mostly to cover fire liability for Christmas candle-lighting at the Old World Deli and Pub), a couple of ads for Christmas and Easter, supplies related to our publications and communication. Total deposits came to \$2,405. Expenses came to \$2,433.45. There is a balance now of \$919.55, although our actual year-end balance was something like \$12.00! That's it. No salaries, no building, no staff, no program. (And thank you to those who helped).

Un-paid Ministers—keeps expenses down. We're overeducated, unusually talented (humbly said), exceedingly generous. Paul always furnishes ice-cream for our potlucks (along with food and better music than you find in many churches). Art furnishes bread and wine, plus a house and other things. We don't get car or travel allowances, of course, so travel to ministry-related events has always been unreimbursed (with an occasional out of town wedding or funeral sometimes at least partially subsidized). I claimed 3112 miles of minister-related driving in 2011 (not to mention \$2145 in motel expenses). Free Ministry costs somebody.

Limited Ministry—no committees, projects, fund-raising or re-distributing, a limited number of services, no programs other than occasional "Moment," pastoral service as required (both of us are ordained clergy—"Honored Minister" pins as well!) I am in daily contact via e-mail with numerous "blue sheet constituents." 2011 was unusual, I admit, but I managed to actually visit 80 "blue sheet" people this year! I saw them in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Idaho and Montana. We passed by many, and of course never got near those in other states. Like I say, limited. My personal priorities have always been more pastoral than organizational.

Results—who knows? This is our 34th year of undefined results "ministry." One is present in body or email, invited or not in most cases. We get some very kind notes that give clues that we are valued in some way or another. It's not the kind of thing you could put on a resume or into a report to a managing Board. I like to think that what I do is the kind of thing that most caring people do each day. I get a bit of insight into the virtually unintentional words and actions of Jesus that proved so memorable and meaningful to more than he knew.

Do it again?—I doubt it. It was only intended as a one-year experiment, to give me a front for continuing a pastoral life-style while waiting for a return to a "real job." It sort of got away from me—for 33 plus years. It has been an interesting ministry. I was able to study, write, think, be, and do whatever came next in ways few would be happy with. I would encourage a non-stipend approach to ministry as very freeing, and not a burden on other people. Maybe sort of like Jesus operated. Building up a church that can pay one's living can take up a disproportionate amount of time and energy. I've been there, done that. Wouldn't trade my last 33 years for anything. So be it.

— Art Morgan, March 18, 2012