


# Strong Minds For Tough Times

 **ON** THE  
**LEVEL**



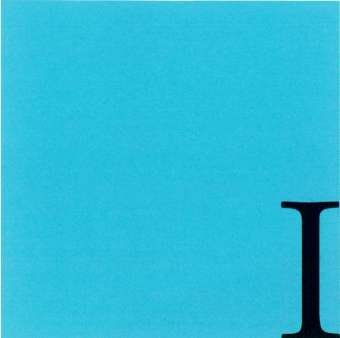


# Man – I Cried



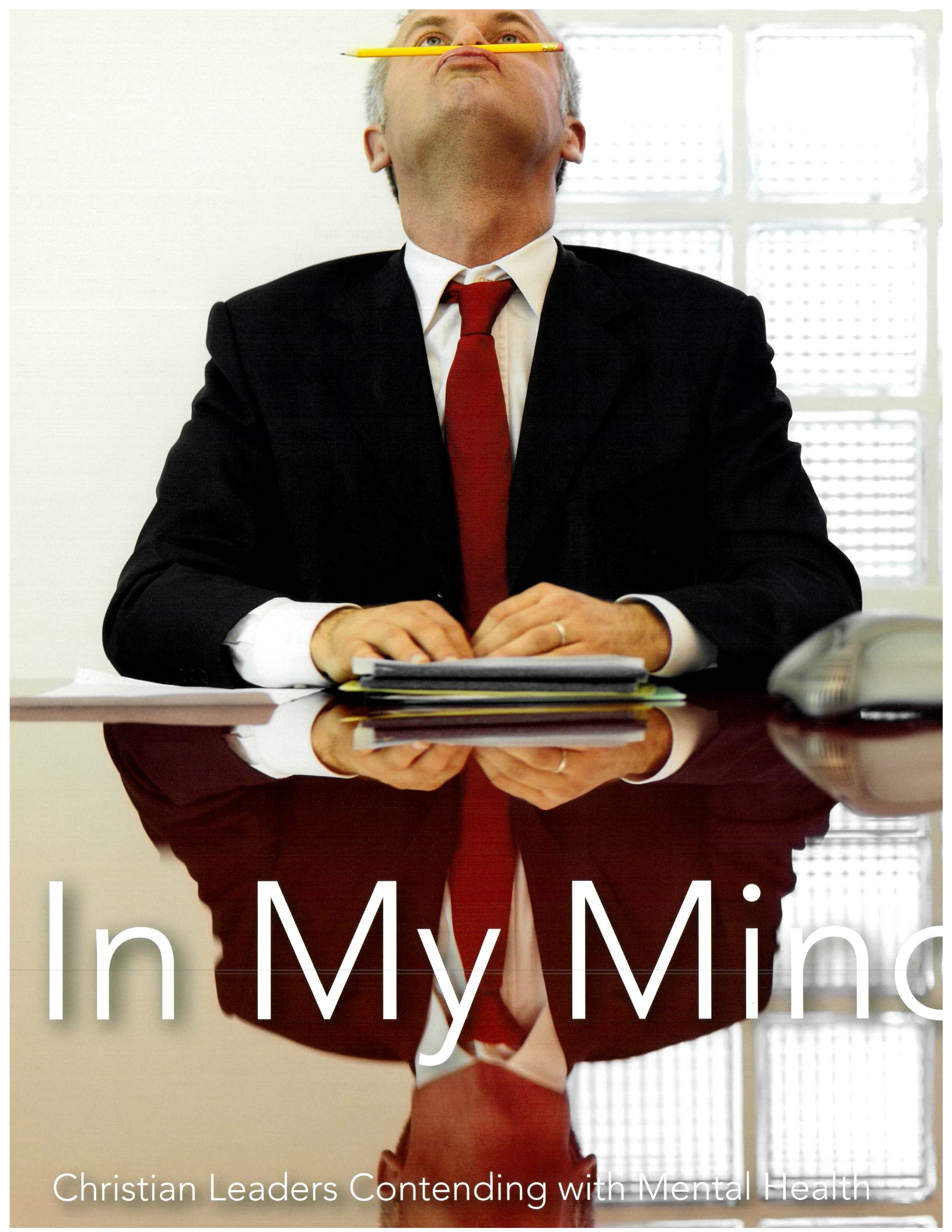
By Salt Wall (Denver 2003)





I had been in ministry for long time and everybody assumed life was just great for me, but that wasn't true. One day my wife observed how angry I had gotten while working on our car after the Bronco's lost to the Steelers. Slamming tools, jamming the hood of the car and [cussing], I threw an adult temper tantrum. My wife said, "You've got problems, you need help!" There were other times when I pounded the dining table demanding the kids sit down. My son took notice and asked what's wrong with me? I thought I had anger issues and they were beginning to impact my relationship with my wife and kids and probably others. I decided to see a counselor and explained the tantrums. The counselor would always ask me how I was feeling even though I wasn't the kind to be in touch with my feelings. He told me life is like an iceberg in that you can always see what's above the surface, but there are two levels you can't see; what's beneath the surface and what's deep beneath the surface. He would facilitate my conversations with God and I began to reflect on how as a kid I kind of raised myself and how that impacted my behavior as an adult. One of the things that we dealt with was the timing of my mother's death. I was nine years old when she passed and I told the counselor I felt robbed because she wasn't there for many of my life's important events. We would pray and ask the Lord to heal my hurts. We had deep intimate prayer times and dealt with some deep stuff. For a whole year I saw this counselor twice a month. Man, I cried more that year than I had cried my entire life. At the start I didn't know what to expect but when it was all done my counselor said, "There's not a whole lot left to talk about," and I felt lighter than a feather. It's been seven years since getting counseling and I don't feel robbed anymore.





# In My Mind

Christian Leaders Contending with Mental Health





d, I'm Okay

By Karin Wall, LICSW (Boston 2000)



On any given day we might walk past two people having a conversation and overhear the following: “He’s crazy.” “She must have ADHD, be bipolar, depressed, borderline.” Or my favorite clinical reference just plain “nuts.” These terms have made their way into our daily vernacular. While the mental health profession has come a long way in the last 30 years, it may not mean “we the people” nor “we in the church” understand more about mental health, the importance of caring for our own state of mind, and how to care for others.

Most people, including Christians, are about as comfortable discussing mental health as we are discussing race or politics. There is still a stigma attached to this subject even though 1 in 5 individuals in America HAS or will have an emotional or mental health challenge at some point in their lives. These challenges must be acknowledged and managed. People in our lives, even some of us, are suffering from depression, PTSD, and anxiety among other things. We still hear the voices of our families or culture:

“Mental means crazy.”

“What happens in this house stays in this house.”

“It will ruin your career.”

“It’s a sign of weakness.”

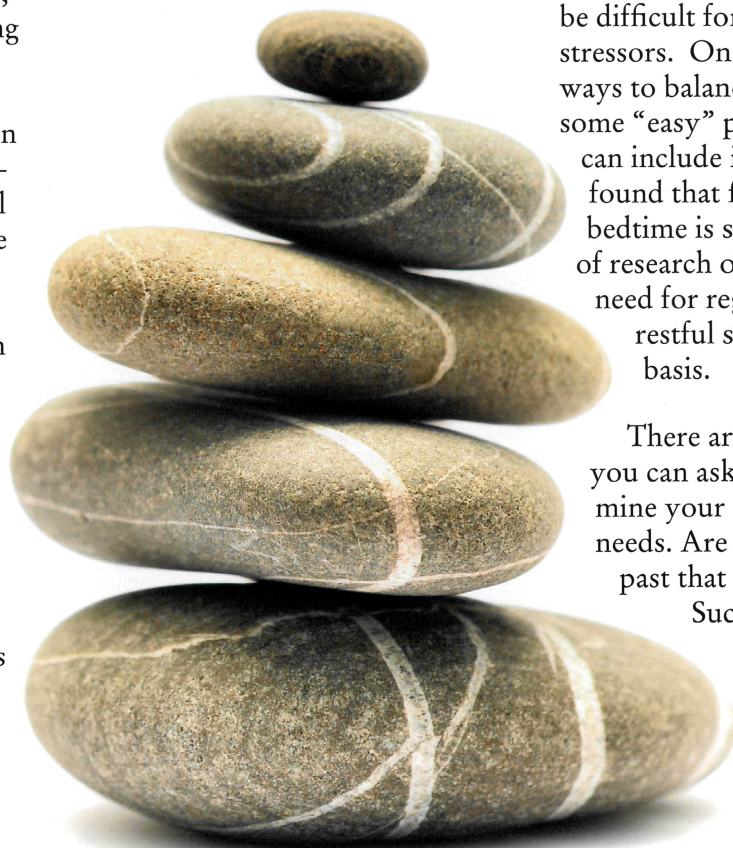
“Where is your faith?”

With all that noise ringing in our heads, there is also the reality that some conditions have a familial connection while others are related to our own poor choices (drug use, or hurtful and ungodly assaults inflicted by another).

Some of us come from family tradi-

tions where taking care of ourselves was a luxury not a priority. Tending to our personal needs and anxieties is a learned skill. It’s never too late to acquire it. It begins with first giving attention to the fact that we as God’s children are body, mind and Spirit. Attention to each area is necessary to live a balanced healthy life.

The following questions will help you to take a look at where things may be for you emotionally. Be brave and be honest as you consider



each question.

Do I:

Get easily stressed?

Know what stresses me?

Know what stress is?

Have natural ways to de-stress?

See things as all good or all bad?

Have a regular bedtime?

Value and take vacations regularly?

As you ponder these questions realize that becoming easily stressed or over reacting to minor annoyances, believing that situations are going to turn out bad and having a generally negative perspective on life are pretty reliable indicators that your overall outlook could have an unhealthy effect on your life. If you have not spent much time reflecting on the balance in your life, it may be difficult for you to identify your stressors. Once you do, consider ways to balance those stressors with some “easy” positive habits that you can include in your life. I have found that for me having a regular bedtime is sacred. There is tons of research out now supporting the need for regular, rejuvenating and restful sleep on a consistent basis.

There are more questions that you can ask of yourself to determine your own mental health needs. Are there things in your past that are touchy subjects?

Such as family events or members or relationships that I would rather forget or words and phrases from childhood that bring back painful memories. In the same

vein, are there unhealthy family traits that I just accept as “the way it is”?

You may be reading this thinking, “She just doesn’t know my story.” Honestly, I have been there, done that... and got the t-shirt! Even more important than the fact that I understand, God knows your story and never intended for you to be



“captive” to anything. For all of us in any situation, there is healing and restoration for your soul.

If healing and freedom appeals to you, ask yourself the following questions. Am I willing to:

Accept help?

Speak up?

Confide in someone who I know will give me honest feedback?

Examine my spiritual/mental disciplines? Do I practice them “religiously”?

Pay the consequences for leaving this area of my life unattended to?

In order to improve our situation we may have to be like the woman in the New Testament who was ostracized because of her consistent bleeding. She reached a point where she didn’t care about the laws or what people thought. She just wanted to be made whole! I believe she considered the consequences of doing the same thing she had been doing, yet expecting a different outcome. We should do the same.

This is particularly relevant for us as leaders because “Leadership” can be

a lonely place, especially Christian leadership. Who do you and I go to with concerns, doubts, and insecurities? What will they think of me as a Christian if I’m going through \_\_\_\_\_?

As a Christian, a wife, a mother of leaders and a leader myself, there came a time when I had to make a decision to be different. I knew I could no longer extend myself, while not investing in myself and still expect things to be okay. I knew I had to take care of me regardless of how it appeared to others.

If you are ready like I was, there are a few steps you can take now.

1. Start with your primary care doctor. Make sure there are not physical issues that need to be ruled out. A good doctor should be willing to listen to your concerns and refer you on to a practitioner such as a therapist, support groups, or even a nutritionist.

2. Shop for a therapist – but be pre-

pared to ask questions to make sure he or she is the right fit. This is someone you will have to trust and confide in.

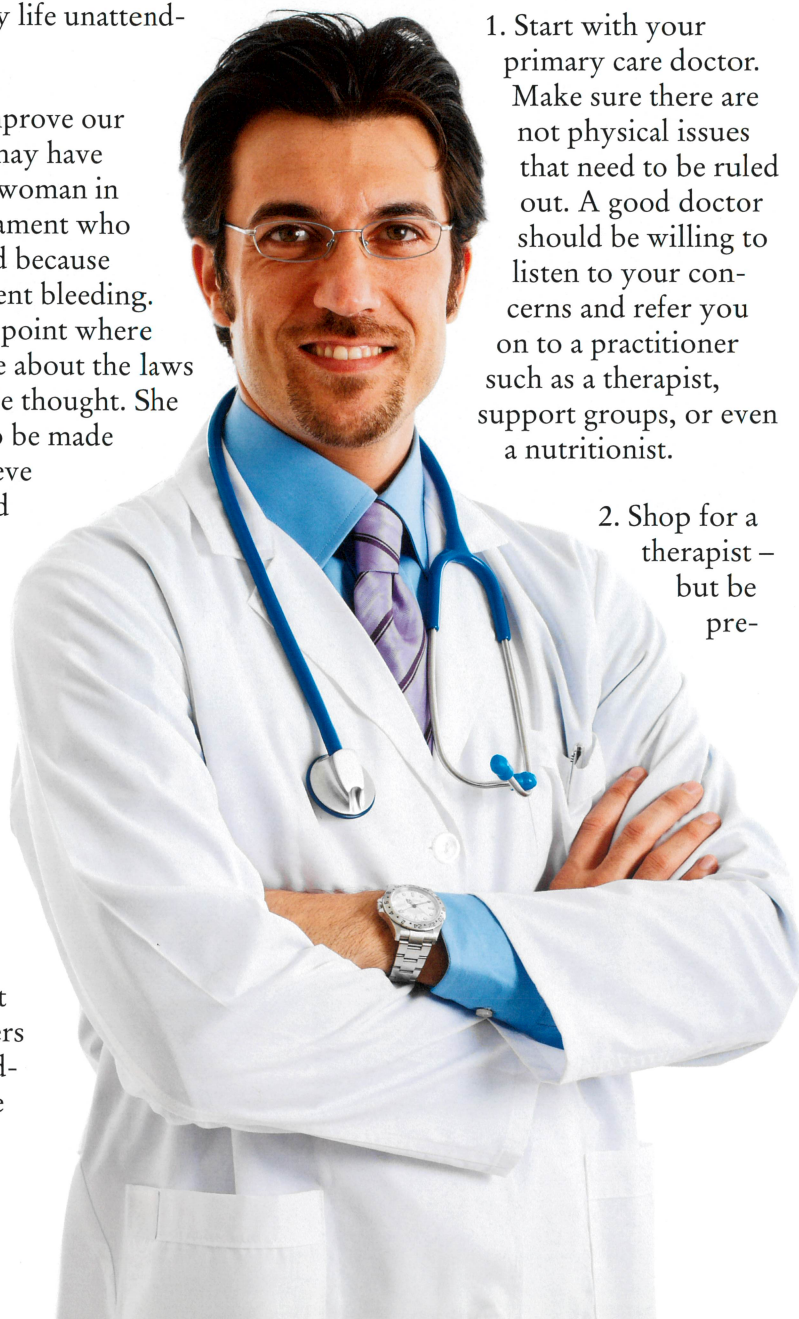
3. Consider augmenting treatment with prayer, meditation on the Word, a good dose of laughter, regular exercise, family and good friends.

These are things we do to balance ourselves.

As you contend with your own mental health and that of those around you, remember that it is not shameful for us as Christians to take care of ourselves. As we allow God to heal us in every way, we become better leaders and ministers of His care.

For thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth.  
Psalm 71:21

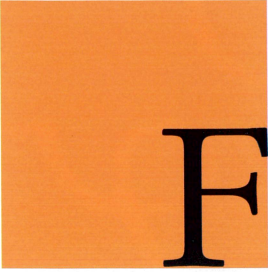
*Karin Wall LICSW (Boston, 2000) is a licensed social worker. She earned masters degrees in social work and African American studies at Boston University. Karin is the Co-Pastor of Global Ministries Christian Church and is an in-school psychotherapist at a Boston-based school. Karin is also an Alumni City Coordinator, Coach, Leading for Life Instructor and First National Conference presenter. She and her husband Bruce are parents of three young adults.*











**F**or twelve years the National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast and Conference has been the primary Hispanic, faith-based gathering in Washington, D.C.

It convenes some 750 Hispanic clergy and community leaders with national policy makers for prayer, celebration, and advocacy in our nation's capital.

This past June a delegation of DVULI alumni and staff attended the 3-day conference. Staff person Zoraida Velez and Liaison Rick Diaz were accompanied by:

Wanda Novales (Philadelphia 2012)

Carlos Sustaita (Dallas 2011)

Michaelanne Helms (Philadelphia 2012)

Samantha Najera (San Antonio 2010)

Daniel Arellano (Albuquerque 2002)

John Torres (Phoenix 2008)

Tomas Sanabria (Chicago 2000)



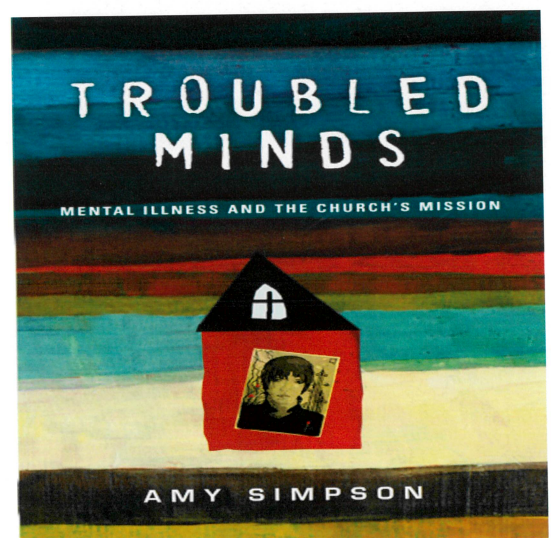
TROUBLED  
MINDS

by Ron Carter





**H**ave you ever wondered why mental illness is rarely addressed or talked about in church? Until recently I had not given it much thought. That is until I listened to Amy Simpson's interview on a national Christian radio broadcast. Amy is an editor for Christianity Today, and the topic of discussion was her newly released book, "Troubled Minds: Mental Illness and the Churches Mission". In *Troubled Minds* she writes candidly about how her own mother's mental illness impacted her family and the role the church played in helping them cope. The 222-page book not only examines Scripture, it also includes surveys of church members and stories of Christians struggling with mental illness. Reading this book will not only provide insight into the daily lives of those battling the mental illness stigma, but it will also encourage anyone desiring to be more sensitive to those who are often suffering in silence.





A photograph of three men standing outdoors next to a yellow excavator. In the foreground, there is a large orange and white striped traffic barrel. The man on the left is crouching, wearing an orange shirt and dark pants. The man in the center is standing, wearing a white shirt and light-colored pants, with his hand on the excavator's arm. The man on the right is standing, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt and dark pants. The background shows green grass and trees.

Cornelius Williams, Atlanta

2014

Juan Garcia, Newark

Gary Wyatt, Seattle/Ta



Fresno, CA and Newark, NJ have been added to the DeVos family, hiking the total number of cities to 35. Joining them in 2014 will be Cincinnati for a second round of training, Atlanta and Seattle/Tacoma for their third round respectively. All five cities have new City Coordinators on deck who are trained and ready to begin the nomination and selection process. If you know an urban youth leader or pastor in any of the above cities who'd make a great participant, please contact our office.

Alvin Sanders, Cincinnati

Phil Skei, Fresno

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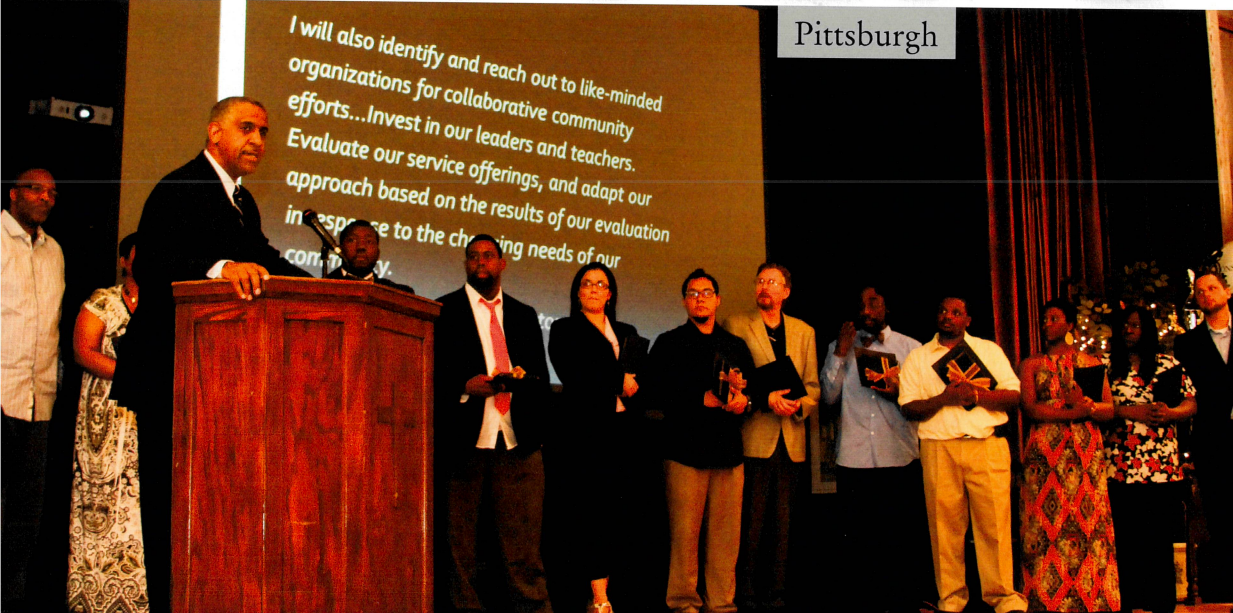


# Class of 2012

Cincinnati



Pittsburgh







Denver



Seattle





Dimas Salaberrios (NYC 2010) named President of Concerts of Prayer Greater NY



Belle Battista (Pittsburgh 2012) and Frank had Zali Mae on 6/11



Angela Smith (Atlanta 2008) and Otis Clark (Minn. 2008) were married on 3/16



Nicole Bernacet (NYC 2010) and Jon had Isabella Lea on 5/15



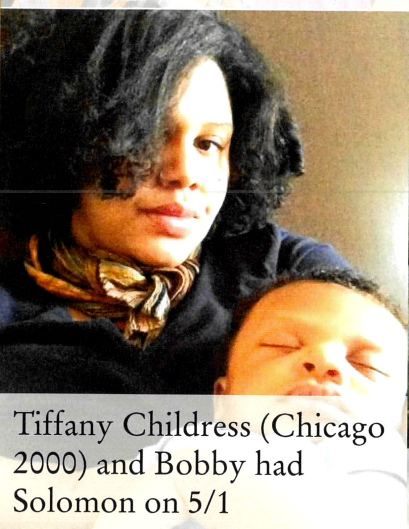
Nes Espinosa (Philadelphia 2002) earned an Urban Masters of Divinity



Juaacklyn Stevenson (Cincinnati 2012) and John had Jaeda on 4/11



James Quincy (NYC 2009) named Pastor of Lee Road Baptist Church in Cleveland



Tiffany Childress (Chicago 2000) and Bobby had Solomon on 5/1



Marcia St. Juste Herrera (NYC 2009) & Ralph had Asher Kristopher on 2/24