**Nazarene Theological Seminary**

**Nazarene Clergy:**

**Moving from Financial Bondage to Liberation**

**Objectives**

* Determine the extent to which a variety of factors impact the retention of graduates as active pastors and develop sustainable solutions.
* Educate students on how to financially support their calling into ministry.
* Increase student access to the best available financial aid services.

NTS administrators and Jim Copple of Servant Forge have met together numerous times to discuss the organization and the structure of the Nazarene Clergy: Moving from Financial Bondage to Liberation project. On December 10, this same group met with those responsible at NTS for academic administration, finance, and development. The chair of the NTS Board of Trustees also participated in this meeting.

This group decided to locate this project in the newly created Center for Pastoral Leadership with Dr. Jesse Middendorf as the Project Director. Dr. Middendorf is General Superintendent Emeritus for the Church of the Nazarene and has experience as a pastor and as a district superintendent. Dr. Keith Schwanz was asked to serve as the consultant on this project. Schwanz is the NTS Assistant Dean with responsibility for graduate placement and has experience as a pastor. He has written a bi-monthly personal finance column for clergy for eight years and has completed training in financial planning and income tax preparation.

The denominational advisory group met on February 27, 2014, for an orientation to the project and discussions on how best to organize for the sake of the denomination, not just NTS.  In addition to personnel from NTS and the Center for Pastoral Leadership, representatives from the Global Ministry Center included the directors from the offices of clergy development, International Board of Education, clergy pensions and benefits, and denominational research. Directors from the offices of USA/Canada mission strategy and stewardship ministries will hopefully be available for the next meeting, April 22, 2014.

Dr. Schwanz created a report which came from a study of NTS graduates from 2002-2012, a 2011 pastoral survey with special focus on bi-vocational ministry, and responses from denominational pastors reports in 2013. In the February 27 meeting, Dr. Schwanz led a review of this data concerning student debt and NTS graduate placement in ministry.

Drs. Middendorf, Schwanz, and Jerry Lambert (NTS Institutional Advancement Director), met on March 4, 2014, to plan for the collection of baseline data for this project.

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