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foundations

A NEW WAY TO THINK... AND LEAD.



By Bob Sitze

Okay, men. Listen up, especially if you used head-butts to win tetherball games in elementary school.

Here's the deal: Those injuries may be the cause for both

that arthritis in your nose and a possibly decrepit mindset about how to live and lead others as a follower of Jesus.

The dilapidated kind of thinking I'm talking about is everywhere—people who approach leadership, ministry, and life with this thought: “If we had some ham, we could have some ham and eggs... if only we had some eggs.” These folks think that leadership is mainly about solving problems, so they never get anything done because they always come up short. Their basic temperament is dour and sour on

good days—and on bad days downright hopeless—when they keep losing tetherball games to little kids or their grandkids.

Start with what God has given you

As a man with a purpose and mission in life, you can avoid perpetually paralyzing neediness with what's called “asset-based thinking”. It's a practical approach to life that starts with what God has given you instead of what isn't there. (Asset thinkers know that the glass is always completely full—one-half water and one-half air.)

When you start with an asset-based frame of mind, you sidestep your body's automatic stress/fear process, call into action much more of your brain's

capacities, allow for the brain's feel-good chemicals to do their work, and thus have a greater chance of

*We have everything we need
to live a life that pleases God.*

2 Peter 1:3 (CEV)

being successful.

Asset-based thinking and planning addresses needs without being trapped by them. Assets tell you what to do—they're the stuff of your work. Even a quick process of identifying assets yields more actionable results than brainstorming. And when mapped in a more thorough process, the assets of an individual or group become a powerful motivation for collaborative action.

Finding assets

To find assets in yourself or in a group, start with “What's useful here and now?” Then look at the big picture around you, scanning horizons and life constructs so big and obvious that they are overlooked. At the same time, examine the seemingly tiny elements of life, finding delight in the possibilities embedded in something small. Finally, keep at this until it becomes a habit. Good asset-finding questions are:

- What do you like to do?
- What are you good at doing?
- What did you used to be good at doing?
- Who do you know (that owes you)?
- What do you know and what have you experienced?



• What's just so crazy it might be useful? (And remember, most of your useful gifts are evident outside of what happens at church!)

When you approach leadership and planning in an asset-based way, you

(continued on page 5)

This newsletter is sent to all who contribute to the ministry of Lutheran Men in Mission.

Your contribution ensures that foundations will continue to be sent to you.

It is our desire that foundations will be a source of personal spiritual growth, as well as a source of information for those involved in congregational men's ministries.

Please drop us a line or e-mail us, and share your stories of men's ministry that we can use in this newsletter. We're also interested in knowing what topics and issues you'd like to see featured.

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For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.

Ephesians 2:8 (NRSV)



What kind of men are we?

I don't know about you, but so much of my self-talk reminds me that I am not the husband, son, father, friend, or man I want to be—or others want me to be. Never mind the one God wants me to be.

Much of the time the church does not help me. Several years ago, we were dealing with some family issues and I was struggling, wondering if I was being the best dad I could be. There was a small band of Christian brothers that came together to support me, many of them my fellow men's ministry leaders from other denominations. But others let me know that if I were more of a Christian dad (whatever that meant) then surely everything would be fine.

Some of my self-shoulding comes from my pietistic Hauge Norwegian Lutheran roots. That's not a bad place to start, with a love of scripture and a desire to see people come into a deep relationship with Jesus. But it can turn deadly when it's reduced to a laundry list of dos and don'ts in order to measure up in God's eyes.

Then there's the men's movement of the last 25 years or so. Out of the hunger that we men have for significance and meaning movements sprang up on "the left" and "the right" leaving the mainline church in the dust. On the left, we had guys with little or no theological background gathering together to deal with their anger and other issues. On the right, we had guys gathering by the thousands being told very directly that they needed to come to Jesus and clean up their act.

Many of the leaders of these movements are friends of mine, and I celebrate any ministry brings a man to encounter Jesus. Under the best of circumstances, men on the left and the right, come home from these experiences having found other Christian men who encourage them to grow in the grace they have received in Jesus Christ. In the worst of circumstances, they either give up or live under the law—a heavy list of "what I should do to measure up".

Jesus tells us he is the vine and we, as the branches, bear fruit. Paul tells us the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. What Lutheran Men in Mission has to bring to the table of men's ministry is the fruit of the Spirit.

When we lived in Northern California, our house was located in an old pear orchard. All of our trees were pear trees. Every year those pear trees would do what they were created to do, and we had pears—many more than we could use! A fruit tree has no choice, it bears fruit. As branches, we bear the fruit of The Vine we are connected to.

I'll take the fruit that grows naturally out of The Vine over the stuff I try to graft on myself in order to "measure up" in God's eyes.

Part of my personal mission statement is about creating safe places for men to encounter Jesus Christ and grow in relationship with him. I believe that's what men's ministry is about.

Jesus came to love you, and love the world through you. The fruit you bear through being connected to The Vine will be far more productive than the "shoulds" you have for yourself and others.

Doug Haugen, executive director
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THAT'S IT?

Growing ministries with young men

During a recent weekly guys group, the conversation turned to dreaming big about how God can use a small group of young men to impact the local church through modeling authentic relationships and inviting other men into raw Christian community to do life together. The ideas were lofty. The words spoken were words of revival and renewal. However, within a few minutes, several guys started to verbalize unseen barriers, and place limits on what God could do due to limited access to resources.

One guy was adamant that without a building, without a program, without a staff person, without shiny modern media, it would never get off the ground. If we wanted success, we had to have most of that in place before we could start. Another spoke up and started limiting God, articulating via buzzwords the lack of catalytic leaders, lack of missional community, and the fact that we had no “hipsters” sitting in our midst.

At this point, one of the young men in the room redirected the conversation. He held up the proverbial mirror and asked how this group of passionate Christ-centered men had come to be in that room that night; none of the items or factors that had been listed as critical stepping stones had played a factor. Here is what this group realized and what is relevant for all of us:

Ears, hands, mouth

Guys gather because they feel a bond. They feel respected, honored, and missed when they are not there. When in doubt about tools at your disposal, look at what you're born with. Ask questions and listen to the responses. Remember what other guys share. If they miss something, track them down and let them know the empty stool or chair was noticed. Use your hands to serve. Most guys don't like to ask for help. Offer your support and help often, and show up in their lives even more often. Be the hands and feet of Christ to the people in your life. It is noticed.

Blessed to be a blessing

Every guy has it in one form or another.



prepared for God to make his presence known as you bless others!

Remembering God

Sometimes we forget about our only essential resource. We can do all kinds of things under our own power and steam, but without God, it's just empty action—busy work. God doesn't need a building, social media, special music, or a staff person to accomplish great or small things. Spend time with God in prayer and reflection and discover how your faith and God's Spirit show



Even a guy with a motorcycle can be a valuable resource for ministry with young men.

up in every area of your life. Ask God how to reach the men in your life with the abilities and gifts you already have or know where to find. Pray to be alert and open for opportunities, and be prepared to be caught by surprise.

That's it! It doesn't have to be what some would call professional; it just has to be faithful and grounded in the assets, gifts, and blessings God has already placed in our lives and surrounded us with in our congregations and communities.

Check out the resources on asset-based thinking and planning that Bob Sitze mentions in his cover article for this issue. They offer some tangible suggestions and help for how to go about being a leader and developing ministries based on the gifts and assets God has already placed in—and around—your life.

Now go be the church... and take us young guys with you!

Kyle Pedersen is a brother, a son, and walk-along-sider who is journeying to the foot of the cross with an amazing crew! When not doing his day job in Des Moines, IA, he serves as a Young Men's Specialist with Lutheran Men in Mission.

Resources for leaders and men's ministry

Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking, by Susan Cain. New York: Crown Publishers, 2012. This author describes how the leadership potential and gifts of introverts is often overlooked in organizations. She makes a plea for restoring leadership involving both extroverts and introverts.

The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business, by Charles Duhigg. New York: Random House, 2012. You can easily translate this and apply it to “Why we do what we do in the church and ministry.”

A BOOK EVERY MEN'S MINISTRY LEADER SHOULD READ!

By Doug Haugen

"Men's ministry is about attraction more than promotion." When I heard a congregational men's leader say this recently my reaction was, "Well, duh. Of course!" Yet for some reason it sounded so profound. One of the biggest mistakes that men's ministry leaders make is thinking that somehow if they put together a great program and promote it correctly men's ministry will happen.

LMM emphasizes that men's ministry is about relationships. Our programs, projects, and events are simply the bridges over which those relationships develop and grow. Our work is about creating safe situations where relationships among men can happen. That's why I am often skeptical of books and other resources that present a "do this" kind of program and "it will work".

I really appreciate and recommend Wes Yoder's book, *Bond of Brothers: Connecting with Other Men Beyond Work, Weather and Sports* because it takes a different approach from a different perspective. Men's ministry is about men changing as we draw closer to Christ. Having gone through "accountability" and other kinds of men's groups and

programs, Yoder says, "Change comes through relationships, and relationships are a journey." He sees manhood as not so much about what we do as it is about who we are. Manhood is



first of all about being authentic, "for God who created masculinity calls men to be honest and alive in the presence of others... it means being alert and honest, available..."

Yoder goes on to say manhood is also about initiating a confessional life,

acknowledging, "When I am weak, then I am strong." It means allowing your weakness to become visible. "You cannot know and experience your true strength until your weakness is no longer a precious secret within you."

Being a man eventually, according to Yoder, involves being an initiator of things that really matter. That includes learning to say what you think about the things you do not want to talk about. It means being a spiritual provider, a defender, and a spiritual leader for your family and for the poor in your community who cannot do these things alone or for themselves. It means you have the lifelong privilege of practicing kindness, of being a servant, of giving away your life in order to gain it, and of providing identity, strength, and character for your family.

Every men's ministry leader should read this book. If you were to read this book, along with two or three friends, I'm convinced you would have a life-giving core of relationships that would benefit your life, ministry, and leadership for years.

Bond of Brothers: Connecting with Other Men Beyond Work, Weather and Sports by Wes Yoder. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing, 2010.

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(continued from page 1)

encourage an entrepreneurial, can-do, creative spirit. Gradually you purge “needy” language, thinking, and behaviors from your identity. And when you lack sufficient assets, you stop doing what you can’t. You begin ministries grounded in what’s possible and achievable using the available gifts (assets) of a few or many.

It works!

This way of thinking works in almost every area of life. Loaded with capacities that are useful anywhere, you’re much more capable of getting God’s work done. In

Two resources for asset-thinking leaders

(NOT) *Trying Too Hard: New Basics for Sustainable Congregations*, by Bob Sitze. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2001. A counter-intuitive approach to ease frenetic congregational leadership.

The Power of Asset Mapping: How Your Congregation Can Act on Its Gifts, by Luther K. Snow. Herndon, Virginia: The Alban Institute, 2004. The undisputed gold-standard book about this revolutionary way of thinking. It gives you the ABCs of discovering, mapping, and using assets for planning ministry.

your various roles, you show God’s power at work, an inevitable form of witnessing to all of what’s good about God’s good news. Because you get good things done, you’re appreciated. Because you draw on the gifts and interests of others, you

expand your leadership abilities. Because you’re side-stepping unnecessary stress, you’re healthier.

And eventually you learn to play tetherball again with a new strategy, only this time without the head-butts!

*Not yet decrepit, Bob Sitze is an author (most recently **It’s NOT Too Late: A Field Guide to Hope**, Alban Institute), blogger for The Lutheran (www.thelutheran.org/blog/simpleenough), and congregational consultant. A former meat worker and tetherball player, Bob lives and writes in Wheaton, Illinois. You can contact Bob at bob.sitze@att.com.*

Thanks to God for working through the following generous donors who are helping the ministry of Lutheran Men in Mission continue to change men’s lives. Our need for gift support has increased significantly this year in order to keep LMM’s ministry growing. **Seven donors have stepped**

forward with challenge gifts totaling \$70,000. Please prayerfully consider how you might help. Listed below are donors as of August 10, 2012. Please refer any additions/corrections to Kim Moseley-Canon at 800-638-3522, ext. 2595, or e-mail at Kimberley.Moseley@elca.org.

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These members of the Lutheran Men in Mission heritage club have helped to secure the future of this ministry by remembering Lutheran Men in Mission in their will/estate planning. If you would like to know more about including LMM in your will, please contact us at 800-638-3522, ext. 2566.

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to 7.4% at age 81, to 9.5% at age 90 and over. (Rates for Two Life Annuities are slightly lower because the income is paid over two lifetimes.)

If you would like to learn more about this wonderful method of receiving an income you will never outlive through making a gift to Lutheran Men in Mission, send for our free folder entitled *Your Will to Help*. This clearly written resource will provide specific information about the many benefits you will receive through a Charitable Gift Annuity.

To receive your free copy of this helpful folder write, e-mail us, or send the coupon below to Lutheran Men in Mission. You can also call Doug Haugen (1-800-638-3522, ext. 2566) or Kimberley Moseley-Cannon (1-800-638-3522, ext. 2595) at Lutheran Men in Mission and request your copy. There is no cost or obligation.

Clip, Complete, and Mail to:

Doug Haugen,
Executive Director
Lutheran Men in Mission
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago IL 60631

Please send me, without cost or obligation, a copy of the helpful folder *Your Will to Help*.

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☐ I would like to talk to someone about creating a bequest or Charitable Gift Annuity to help the ministry of Lutheran Men in Mission.



Changing men's lives—together

One of the questions we have been getting recently is: “My church has left the ELCA but the men want to stay involved with Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM). Is that possible?” Staying involved may mean attending a One Year to Live retreat or Building Men for Christ workshop, receiving our weekly Bible study/prayer request, or any of the other ways that men connect with LMM.

My response to that question is an emphatic, “Absolutely!” We (LMM) want you to stay involved, and we want to continue sharing men's ministry with you—it's that simple. Let me provide a little background which hopefully will put it all in perspective.

Until January of 2009, LMM was considered a unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In that month, we received our 501(c)3 status determination letter from the IRS which, along with our incorporation in the State of Minnesota, made us a separately incorporated ministry. The ELCA governing documents now state that LMM is a separately incorporated ministry that relates to the ELCA. What does that really mean in practice?

- With God's guidance, we are in control of our own destiny. The officers, Board, and delegates to the LMM Assembly determine the direction and policies for LMM.
- Since our inception in 1988, it was always our plan to be an incorporated, self-supporting ministry. We have realized that dream and have not received funding from the ELCA churchwide organization since August, 2008. All of our operating funds derive from gifts from individuals, churches, and some synods along with investment income and grants.
- While our offices are located at the Lutheran Center in Chicago and we use some ELCA services, we now pay rent for the space we occupy and we pay for the services that we use. In the past, these were provided at no cost to LMM. Currently the ELCA is graciously providing us a discount from what they call full costing, but we plan to be at full reimbursement with them by 2014.

At the LMM 2011 Assembly in Denver, the delegates approved changes to the Articles and Bylaws of LMM to address our status. One of the provisions in the revised Articles and Bylaws is that LMM is a ministry to Lutheran men—not just men associated with ELCA congregations. This was a significant change from our previous statement, but one that we felt was important. The revised Articles have been received by the Secretary of State of Minnesota (our state of incorporation) and are in force as of January 2012.

As you can see, Lutheran Men in Mission has gone through a substantive transformation since its original founding in 1988. As leaders, we want LMM to change men's lives, especially Lutheran men everywhere. Please stay connected with LMM regardless of your congregation's status and let us work together to change men's lives!

With you in Christ,
Rich White, President
Lutheran Men in Mission
rwhite743@aol.com

2012 LMM Events

Go to:

lutheranmeninmission.org

for program and
registration information.

One Year to Live Retreats

MacKenzie Center

Poynette, WI

November 9-11, 2012

2012 LMM

Leadership Summit

ELCA Lutheran Center

Chicago, IL

**October 12, 13 (14 optional),
2012**

Building Men for Christ Workshops

Salem Lutheran Church

West Alexandria, OH

October 27, 2012

Mark your calendars for 2014!

2014 Lutheran Men

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Loews Vanderbilt Hotel

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BUMPING INTO YOUNG MEN AT THE 2012 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

Literally bumping!

Lutheran Men in Mission had a very active and engaging presence at the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans this past July—self-powered bumper cars.



Kyle Pedersen, Keith Langford, and Doug Haugen were in the mix of 35,000 youth and adults participating in the ELCA Youth Gathering. What better place to talk to high school age young men about Lutheran Men in Mission and its relevance in their lives; what better place to raise awareness and recognition of LMM. It's never too early!

Many youth found their way each day to the LMM bumper car area as they explored the Gathering's Interaction Center to learn about the church's ministries, listen to live bands, burn off energy in playful sports, work through a challenge course, and socialize with friends.

LMM leaders worked the long lines of youth waiting for their turn in the bumper cars. LMM beach balls were passed out and youth were engaged in conversation as they waited. As we say over and over again, men's ministry is all about relationship building, even while waiting in a line. It's that simple, welcoming, friendly, caring, accepting, unexpected interaction that can make all the difference in the world; the unexpected encounter with Christ in each other.

The 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering will be in Detroit, MI. With the next Lutheran Men's Gathering coming up in July of 2014, there are abundant opportunities for congregations and men's ministries to encourage high school age young men to participate in both events



as part of their faith-building journey. How will you help young men connect the two gatherings? How will you help them bring their experiences home and connect their faith with everyday life?



Sean Forde (right), the first LMM Young Men's Ministry Specialist, and the current Young Men's Ministry Specialist, Kyle Pedersen (left). Sean is still active in men's ministry as a pastor at Zion Lutheran Church in Deerfield Beach, FL, and attended the Gathering with youth from his congregation.

Lutheran Men in Mission online!

www.lutheranmeninmission.org

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