

Lutheran
Building
Men in
Men for
Mission
Christ

foundations

Our vision is for every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ.

A NEW WAY FORWARD

Fall gathering brings together an A-Team to chart course for men's ministry

By Vic Williams

Young pastors from Chicago's South Side and the Pacific Northwest. A middle-aged pastor from Cleveland. A church leader from South Carolina. Two men's ministry renegades from Reno. A retired cop from Brooklyn. A poet from Minneapolis. Seventeen guys in all – Christian men of all ages from across the country, coming together in a hotel near O'Hare Airport in the nascent days of fall to talk, listen explore, discern and create: that was the gist of a special "mission and vision" weekend hosted by Lutheran Men in Mission Executive Director Doug Haugen this past Oct. 3-5.

Jim LaDoux of Vibrant Ministries led a series of full- and small-group sessions with one simple agenda: To envision the way forward for men's ministry at every level – congregation, town, region, national – and find, via ad hoc community and guidance by the Holy Spirit, the building blocks for “cradle to grave” ministry engagement, growth and success. By the time everybody headed home after a simple yet deep Sunday morning service, the guys had come up with an equally simple name for at least the time being – “The A Team,” or “Advancement

Leadership Team.” One attendee and longtime LMM champion, Kyle Pedersen of Des Moines, Iowa, had a Facebook group page up before the final prayers.

"As I reflect on the October weekend with the A-Team, what comes to mind is preseason jitters," Kyle says. "We are not sure of the outcome of what we're

doing but we have hopes and dreams, and as we look down the bench we see amazing talent. With God's help, this is going to be good. Let's lace up and step onto the court!"

Adds Pastor Joel Martyn of Central Lutheran in Yakima, Wash., “The visioning gathering with the A-Team was an eye-opening, hope-filled event that brought men from all over the country together to dream big for LMM – or go home. We dreamt big. What an amazing full of excitement, passion and the future of men’s ministry.”

Digging into the good stuff

Men told their faith stories in a stirring icebreaker session on Friday night, then dug in for the good stuff all day Saturday as a steady light rain fell over Eaglewood Resort near Chicago. LaDoux helped the guys recognize and sharpen the tools of meaningful and lasting ministry – friendship, trust, discipleship, invitation, intergenerational mentorship, free expression, hospitality, advocacy and Bible study – all built on a “bold and daring” foundation. The group vowed to be on the constant lookout for “wild encounters with the Holy Spirit.” They talked of each other’s brokenness. They reaffirmed their powerlessness in the face of God’s grace, and spoke of bringing their newly

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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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From the Executive Director

"...so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us..."

Romans 12:5-6 (NRSV)



Calling together the gifts of many

I looked around the group and thought; this is what our ministry is called to be. There were young, old and middle age men. Men of various ethnicities from all over the United States. Most of us identified with ELCA Lutheran, some non-ELCA Lutheran and some from other denominations.

We had been called together to discuss the future of our ministry in the next five years. We studied, we struggled, we laughed, we prayed, we played and we planned. All ages, different skin colors – all men with extraordinary gifts and talent from throughout the country. Our leadership believes it's important to plan ministry *with* more than *for* those you wish to reach and involve. Most of the group has not been involved in the heart of Lutheran Men in Mission's work. And there was one reason they were all there.

This group, referred to as the "A-Team," came together as we leaders asked, "Who are some of the most out of the box, creative guys doing men's ministry?" We asked ourselves; we asked each other; we asked leaders of ethnic communities. When we connected with these guys we had three questions. We're planning the future of men's ministry, would you be interested in coming with us? If so, would you share your basic philosophy of men's ministry with us and share highlights of what you have been a part of? The two words that ran through their responses were not programs and resources, but relationships and accountability.

The work of the A-Team will include new research dealing with what is going on in the lives of men of all ages so that our ministry may respond. They will discover what some of the best resources for men's ministry are "out there" right now, and what is missing that we need to produce. Finally, the A-Team is the beginning of a group of creative, supportive leaders starting a virtual network that will expand and change our ministry.

By the end of our first weekend together this group had come up with nine ideas for resourcing men's ministries, ten ideas for training and mentoring leaders and five ideas for online/social media contact and outreach. Just as important as the ideas, man-by-man they stepped up and have started working on making them become a reality.

Is this how your ministry/group looks? If your group is one hair and skin color, and you want to reach out and grow, I encourage you to follow the model we have laid out. Why have these guys come together? They were asked.

Let's plan with, not for.

Doug Haugen, executive director
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the
impossible
is often
the
untried

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GROWING MINISTRY FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

You've driven that road a thousand times. All of a sudden you notice a little BBQ place and you stop. You discover amazing succulent brisket done just right. You have to share this knowledge with your buddies because it has changed your life and you want to share your joy. We've all had a similar experience. Somehow we came into possession of knowledge that we had to share. It might be BBQ, or how great marriage is, so you are trying to setup all your single friends. If you're reading this, you most likely have had an encounter with the living Christ, and you want every man to experience Jesus as you have.



But believe it or not, men *want* to connect with other guys, just not in the way the church usually wants us to. We desire community – we were built for it. But we don't call each other to see how our week's going or how that "sin issue" is working out. We need excuses to show up at the same place at the same time doing something other than just connecting with each other – that happens naturally between half times, commercial breaks and rest stops. With a little love, encouragement and direction, you'll see us at our best. We will begin to want to engage in the congregation because we are accomplishing things side-by-side with other

How do we help men encounter Jesus? I started out making a list of ways to get guys involved with the local congregation. Then I looked at it and decided few things on it would be enticing to our uninvolved men. What I realized is that it comes down to effectively communicating a common vision and walking alongside each man to the foot of the cross.

Men don't need more programs, Facebook requests and church to-do items to add to their list. Men are saying "Don't assume who I am, don't try to fix me and don't give me more to check off my list." But, often the church thinks our men need more programs and should be "plugged in," and as a result, pushes many men even further away. I recognize there are a lot of men who do "plug in" to the local congregation, but it is a disproportionate number to the total.

So, where are the men? We are here, but we're exhausted and a little fearful. We fear being judged since we spend our days putting a mask on and pretending things are okay. We fear committing to yet another thing because when we can't meet the commitment we feel like a failure. We're hesitant to be categorized into a church program because we don't want to be forced into a neat 'n' tidy church box or be labeled.

men. Got a problem? We will work to solve it. Got a mission trip where kids are without water, being mistreated or some other kind of injustice, we'll knock down the door with such a passion to see that things are made right that you'll likely need to restrain us. Got a bunch of guys getting together to pray? Well... that's a little more difficult, but we'll try our best.

So, if you want to engage with men of all ages and make us a force locally and globally for Christ put down your committee vacancy list and usher scheduling calendar and **start conversations with us**. We need it to be simple, non-threatening, and not a bait-and-switch deal. Over time and mixed with some grace and truth, you'll see us gain confidence in our identity as men and our identity as Christ-followers – and then we'll start to engage. We'll invite our friends. We might even volunteer for the building committee.

Kyle Pedersen

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.

Lutheran Men in Mission Heritage Club

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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A NEW WAY FORWARD



The LMM A-Team is exercising their imagination, creativity, skills and diverse perspectives – guided by the Spirit – to develop new directions in men's ministry.

(continued from front page)

kindled A-Team spirit to men from every economic, social and cultural background, and all Christian traditions.

"I was struck by the fact that so many men from so many diverse backgrounds can come together to unite in one vision, to bring men to Christ in one church," said Tim Crout, a lay leader at his congregation in South Carolina. "The workshops were informative and connected to life in a purposeful way, something you could take home and use each day to make a difference in your radius."

There's plenty of fleshing-out to come, but the workshops produced a wealth of ministry-building ideas: New social media channels including professionally produced YouTube videos; a robust website with links to popular blogs and organizations, accompanied by "man of the week" stories and a men's group search engine; training outlines for mentorship, faith practices, family support, male sexuality, research and outreach; intergenerational messaging and publicity; and other resources to help build a bigger, more inclusive tent.

To Louis Tillman, a young pastor from Chicago, this retreat was just the spark needed to strengthen men's ministry in the face of every 21st challenge ... and opportunity.

"I noticed a strong need for us as men of God to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to each and every person in our country, no matter what social location or context they derive from," Louis said. "As an African American young adult male, I have wrestled with various systemic issues and questions that often get swept under the rug. The birth of the A-Team allowed for us to come together and hammer out some of these issues. As bold and daring followers of Jesus Christ, we have to be vulnerable and cross boundaries to reach our lost brothers. We are creating a level of trust that allows us to start breaking down barriers and be sensitive to the adventures in ministry that God will deliver unexpectedly at our doorsteps."

Men led by the Spirit

What made this gathering so successful was the fact that no one came in with any hard and fast expectations. Every guy

simply relished the chance to hang out with his peers and let the Holy Spirit do its thing.

"What I remember is being really impressed with everybody else and wondering what I was doing there, among them," said Todd Mauldin, who helps lead a growing group called the A-Men at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Reno, Nev. "But there was a great spirit of shared discovery and, for me, a feeling of, 'I don't know what we're doing, but it feels like something important is happening.' I have high hopes that meaningful and revolutionary ideas will come out of all this ... that we'll truly advance the art and science of ministering to men. With God's help, I look to this team to generate the ideas and create or identify the resources that can be used in every congregation."

To check out the A-Team's new blog **Reaching Men** and become part of the conversation, visit <http://reachingmen.blogspot.com>.



Vic Williams is a longtime professional writer and editor, and a member of Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Reno, Nev. He is currently the events director for The First Tee of Northern Nevada, a non-profit organization that teaches kids life skills through the game of golf.

THRIVENT ACTION TEAMS

Make an impact with Thrivent Action Teams

Men, what's your passion for action and service? Thrivent Action Teams are a new way for Thrivent Members, their friends, family and church community to get involved to make a difference at church or within the community. The project should bring people together for a one-time fundraiser, service activity or educational event that can be completed within 90 days.

Dee Rickets of Colorado Springs, Colo., loves the simplicity of the new program. "Whatever anybody's passion is, they can dream a little bigger now because support is so easily available," she says. "Any member can do it!"

Getting started is easy

A Thrivent member identifies an unmet need and then completes an online application at Thrivent.com/actionteam. Once approved, the Thrivent member will soon receive a Thrivent Action Kit in the mail. It comes complete with



The Thrivent Action Team program helps fund one-time fundraisers, service activities or educational events.

promotional signage, T-shirts and other resources to make your project a success. It even comes with a Community Impact Card with \$250 in seed money to help cover some of the project costs like promotional, material and rental expenses. It's not intended to be used as a gift or a grant. The idea is to inspire more people to take action and together make an even bigger impact.

In fact, a community of only 50 people drew in 500 people to a fundraising potluck and auction to help local residents facing the challenges of surgery. The Thrivent Action Team volunteers grew the seed money of just \$250 and turned it into more than \$73,000. You can read the full story on Thrivent.com/actionteam > Member Stories > Small Town Draws Big Crowd.

If you are not a Thrivent member and would like to learn more about membership and all of the benefits, visit Thrivent.com to find a Thrivent Financial representative near you.

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Elected officers as of August 8, 2014.

Please feel free to connect with a board member or regional director with your questions, ideas or news to share about men's ministry in your congregation or synod.

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Thank you and God bless

The ministry of Lutheran Men in Mission continues to grow thanks to the creative, dedicated work of our staff, board and volunteer leadership. We would not be experiencing this dramatic growth without- by God's grace- your generous financial support. Listed below are the donors who contributed through October 31, 2014. Please refer any additions or corrections to this list to Kimberley Moseley-Cannon at Kimberley.Moseley@elca.org or 800-638-3522, ext., 2595. Thank you for your support!

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We regret that in the Fall 2014 edition of *foundations* we failed to give credit to Dale R. Horky and Photoprose PhotoGraphics for the wonderful photographs of the 2014 Lutheran Men's Gathering. You may view more pictures of the Gathering at www.photoprose.com

Moving forward and taking action

The recently elected Lutheran Men in Mission Board has been reading the book *The Corporate Person* by Harold Everson to better understand its role in corporate governance. A key point in the book is that the board needs to “give its primary attention to thinking, planning and visioning for the future.” How has the LMM board put this into action?

Starting two years ago, the then LMM board had an agenda item for its meeting to spend time visioning, that is, thinking about the future direction of the ministry. There were no boundaries on what could be envisioned as long as it was realistic and potentially doable. At subsequent meetings, the board added to and subtracted from the initial ideas to develop a proposed 2014-2017 Ministry Plan. That plan was then presented to the delegates at the Nashville Assembly for approval as required by the LMM bylaws.

The delegates had a lively discussion about it, amended it and ultimately adopted it. The approved plan has four key emphases:

- Develop a network of men
- Implement “cradle/font/table to grave” ministry
- Develop resources and events
- Evolve as a tax qualified, nonprofit organization

Each of these key thrusts has five or six specific objectives. To see the full “Approved 2014-2017 Ministry Plan,” go to lutheranmeninmission.org/resources/gathering and look under 2014 Assembly & Gathering Documents.



It is the responsibility of the new board to put the plan into action. At our recent board meeting, we prioritized the objectives, realizing that we cannot do them all at one time. The highest priority objectives all focus on reaching out and that will be our initial emphasis. We also created four task forces (Reach Out, Infrastructure, Finance and Research) and then assigned every objective to one of the task forces. Each board member is assigned to one task force along with one member of staff. The task force will meet via telephone and email to establish a timeline to assist in stewarding its progress.

The objectives are not static. As we address each one I am sure that there will be changes made to make the objectives more effective when implemented. We may also find one or more that are not doable given our current resources or structure. Input from the A-Team (see page 2) and others may also result in changes to make the end product more effective.

As we move forward, please be assured that we will not lose focus of our vision for every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ.

Praise be to God!

Rich White
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Please Note: After January 31 the cost for the *Master Builders Bible for Men* will increase to \$25 per Bible (plus shipping/handling) and \$20 per Bible for quantities of 10 or more (plus shipping/handling).

2015 LMM Events

Go to www.lutheranmeninmission.org for updated events, program information and registration details, or to submit LMM events to be posted.

One Year to Live Retreat

Feb. 6-8, 2015
Camp EWALU
Strawberry, Iowa

April 10-12

YMCA Camp Santa Maria
Grant, Colo.

High, Deep & Wide Retreat

March 6-8
Camp Carol Joy Holling
Ashland, Neb.

March 27-28, 2015
Camp Kinard
Leesville, S.C.

March 13-15
Feliciana Retreat Center
Norwood, La.



One Year to Live Retreats

One Year to Live is a retreat designed to be a life changing, lay led event followed up by small groups, encouraging men to look seriously at their lives, make significant decisions about their spiritual journey, and work with other men to hold one another accountable for those decisions.

Find a One Year to Live retreat to participate in at www.lutheranmeninmission.org.