

Lutheran
Building
Men in
Men for
Mission
Christ

foundations

Our vision is that every man to have a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through an effective men's ministry in every congregation.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION—PRAISE GOD!

Building Lutheran Men in Mission

Guys love to build things

Home projects, decks, inventions, Web pages, businesses, home theater systems, custom cars and motorcycles, networks of friends and colleagues, and organizations—to name a few.

And let's be honest, men's ministry and Lutheran Men in Mission has been a fine a piece of work from the beginning. What has been built with the effort of many faithful, determined men guided by God over the past 25 years is cause for celebration, thanks and encouragement for the future.

God has been at work among men of all ages for a very long time—long before the birth of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Darrell Rice of Ohio, the first secretary for the Board of Lutheran Men in Mission, has a deep and long sense of history when it comes to men's ministry in the Lutheran church. "Some men have been meeting in congregations every month and occasionally in conventions since the turn of the century, even as Lutheran churches changed names, merged and reorganized over the years. As a result, many men's ministries and organizations don't count their beginnings with the beginning of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. They just kept evolving and continued their ministries with the beginning of Lutheran Men in Mission and the ELCA."

Good food doesn't hurt

"The common purposes of these groups stretching back to the 1800s—often called brotherhoods—were service, learning, Bible study, fellowship and probably good food. Every successful event I ever went to rose or fell on the quality of the food and



The first Executive Committee of Lutheran Men in Mission.

Left to right: Harry Arne, President; Marvyn Garza, Vice President; Darrell Rice, Secretary; Jim Gerking, Treasurer.

fellowship," reflects Darrell with a sense of humor and understanding of mission.

"Men's ministry had its ups and downs over the years, and they often seemed related to the availability of men to help accomplish tasks and develop program materials across the larger church. When there were no paid staff, lay leaders took the initiative to gather men and encourage ministry with men.

"In congregations during the lean years of the 70s and 80s, men were 'ticked off' and felt the church [denominations] had deserted them. They shut off their

magazines, annual discussion topic books, program materials and events. But there were men—lay men and volunteers—who wanted to keep going even without the support of the church bodies; they were a voice for men's ministry everywhere.

"Even with this ongoing interest, some congregations began dropping men's ministry before the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Still, there were men who couldn't let go of the desire for men's ministry to re-establish itself, both locally and nationally—a churchwide organization."

Speaking up for LMM

Heber Rast was one of those early advocates for an organization for Lutheran men. His experience in South Carolina fueled his vision, voice and commitment to ministry with men and the desire for a national organization.

"Lutheran men in South Carolina knew what men's ministry and an organization specifically for men meant to them, and we realized what an asset that could be for the church if every synod and congregation had such an organization. We were among those that pleaded for men's ministry to be included in the new church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, but we had to be pretty creative and persistent to make it happen."

"Having served on the first Board for Lutheran Men in Mission, I remember a group of dedicated men who basically had little idea of how to get started

(continued on page 4)

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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Lutheran Men in Mission: a dream both realized and still unfolding

This July, Lutheran Men in Mission will celebrate our 25th anniversary. Lutheran Men in Mission was born at the constituting convention at Texas Lutheran College in Seguin, Texas, on July 17, 1988. It was an idea conceived by a small band of men who had a dream that there should be a ministry with and to Lutheran men, and they would not give up until their dream became reality and LMM came into existence.

Lutheran Men in Mission began as a program area within the Division for Congregational Ministries of the ELCA. When my professor Bill Pollock and I interviewed for the position of director at the board's first board meeting that fall the board was also working to develop a constitution and a budget. (Bill, of course, got the job).

The dream from the beginning was that Lutheran Men in Mission would one day be a strong, stand-alone ministry. There have been times when that dream was in question. Along with the first boards, Bill set up the structure of the LMM, developed the first resources, and cultivated leaders—including me.



Bill mentored me into, among other things, this position. As I arrived in the office to start my 20th year this past January, my thoughts flashed back to times of great struggle and even greater progress. Many leaders have heard me share that at my first board meeting in 1993, I asked the board if I should be buying a house in the Chicago area or not, because if we had a year in 1993 like we had in 1992, it would be our last year. On the other hand, I thought of the steps of faith we have taken to produce things like the Master Builders Bible for Men, One Year to Live retreats, our Building Men for Christ systematic leadership training, the work we have done inter-generationally with men, our tri-annual gatherings and other events... and the list goes on.

Finally, I could not help but reflect on how the dream of that small band of men has grown and flourished.

We are reaching an increasing number for men for Jesus Christ with a growing number of programs and resources supported by a magnificent, steady increase in financial support. What is our secret? I believe it's that we have kept the MAIN THING the MAIN THING. That MAIN THING is our vision: *that every man have a growing relationship with Jesus Christ through an effective men's ministry in every congregation.*

This work is a God thing and I'm excited that a growing number of us are allowing ourselves to be a part of what God is up to. As exciting as the first 25 years has been, it's just the beginning of what God is up to with you, and me, and thousands of other men.

Doug Haugen, executive director
Lutheran Men in Mission
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MOTIVATING YOUNG MEN TO “OPT IN”

Hurricane Sandy blew into the east coast in October 2012, and blew out leaving destruction and hurt. In the days before the storm and for weeks after, many people responded to appeals by charities through online and text message giving. The same generosity occurred in response to the devastation of the 2012 earthquake in Haiti, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and the 2004 tsunami in Japan, breaking records for charitable donations.

As organizations reached out with appreciation and recognition to donors, many younger donors indicated it was a one-time gift, and they did not want information on the organization, their mission, or what the impact was from their gift on the project that money was given to. The donor's response was often “I would like to ‘opt out’ of receiving additional information. Please don't call or solicit anything else from me.”

This opting out phenomenon speaks to a more foundational concern as we strive to disciple and encourage men in their relationship with Christ. Guys are choosing to “opt out” of getting involved in organizations and relationships with people in their community. They feel they have done their part, now keep the messiness—aka, real life—at arm's length.

Guys will show up at worship, and drop a check in the offering plate because they feel it's the “right thing to do”, but they opt out of everything else the ministry is offering. In the same way, guys will keep their lawn meticulously perfect, but opt out of participating in the neighborhood block party. At work, at church, in their family, guys opt out for a variety of reasons, both healthy and selfish.



How do we, as the body of Christ, change the question? Let us begin the conversation about helping guys “opt in” to doing life to the fullest, as Jesus tells us in Mathew 10:10!

Helping Guys Opt In

When the answer to the question “What do I get out of this?” is an obligation of time or money, whatever it is becomes low priority and the opportune moment to opt out. If we invite based on activity and events, it just adds fuel to

the fire of busyness.

When the answer to the same question is opportunity to actively participate in something bigger than themselves, and in the case of men's ministry, for deep friendships with other men and a growing and deepening relationship with Christ, men can be persuaded to opt in and see where this journey can take them

When we invite them into relationships and friendships to do life together, it is an invitation to more than busyness. When guys have other guys that know them for who they are, and continually show up in their lives, there is magnitude in what they have to say. Here is where you can share Christ and help the Holy Spirit

Now go be the church! Help us young guys opt in!

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.

Where are all the young people?

At the top of the list of most troubling and perplexing problems the church faces today is the decline in membership. A growing number of adults and young people say they do not identify with a religion.

According to the Pew Research Center, one-fifth of the U.S. public—and a third of adults under 30—are religiously unaffiliated today. (www.pewforum.org)

This trend and reality impacts every aspect of the church and its mission, including men's ministry.

It's often helpful to know the “lay of the land” or have a sense of the environment you are living in when faced with a problem or a puzzling challenge. A mix of



insight, knowledge, and empathy—among other things—can lead to new and creative solutions and directions for our mission and ministries.

The NPR Special Series: Losing Our Religion aired on the Morning Edition program during January and provided a glimpse into what's going on in the lives and hearts of people who are struggling

with faith and religion.

You can listen to the following programs and interviews online at www.npr.org/series/169065270/losing-our-religion:

- “As Social Issues Drive Young From Church, Leaders Try To Keep Them”
- “Making Marriage Work When Only One Spouse Believes In God”
- “On Religion, Some Young People Show Both Doubt And Respect”
- “After Tragedy, Nonbelievers Find Other Ways To Cope”
- “More Young People Are Moving Away From Religion, But Why?”
- “Losing Our Religion: The Growth Of The ‘Nones’”

NPR can be found at www.npr.org

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION—PRAISE GOD!

and what needed to be done. We only shared a strong desire for this—a men's organization—to succeed.”

By gathering the support of Lutheran men from around the country, sharing ideas and models of men's ministry, and speaking up wherever they could, they succeeded in their work and building efforts, but not without facing the challenges of a being a new organization and ministry in a new church.

We've come a long way

Rast, Rice, and others fought hard early on to create stability and a sense of purpose and mission. They worked to develop relationships and visibility within the churchwide structure as well as in the synods and congregations of the newly formed ELCA.

From the beginning, Lutheran Men in Mission was about men serving Christ through ministry with men of all ages and all backgrounds. The work was, and continues to be, strengthening and deepening the faith of men so they will be more confident and faithful in their lives, families, marriages, relationships, congregations, communities and places of work.

And that's the work that God's Spirit has been guiding us to do ever since.

We've come a long ways since those early years—praise God!

Some of the major benchmarks of LMM's health and effectiveness have included:

- Hiring a staff person at the beginning, and later a fulltime director for LMM. There's been good leadership throughout the years.
- Generous initial funding from the ELCA for a strong start.
- The introduction of the Master Builders program bringing identity, focus, direction and support to LMM.
- Becoming an independent nonprofit 501c3 organization.
- Development of The *Master Builders Bible for Men* and ManTalk Playing Cards as tools for ministry and building faith.
- Creating experiences to help men grow in their faith journey and build relationships in their everyday lives: The One Year to Live retreats, Building Men for Christ workshops, Men's Ministry Summits, and the national Lutheran Men's Gatherings.
- Collaborating and networking with men's ministry leaders in other denominations.
- Men's ministries of every shape and form, every age and interest, every culture and language.
- Elders mentoring young men, and young men bring new gifts, insights, and leadership to men's ministry.
- Congregations with more men enthusiastically involved in worship, leadership, service, and creating new opportunities for ministry.
- A national organization that is growing, is self-sustaining, inspiring new ministries, and is clearly focused on helping every man grow deeper in his relationship with Jesus Christ.

When all is said and done, amid the creative ideas and thoughtful planning for the future, Darrell Rice's words ground us in the sense of mission that guides Lutheran Men in Mission, “Pray and do what the Lord leads you to do!”

Amen!

Contributors:

Darrell Rice - Member of Israel's Lutheran Church, Paris, OH. The first secretary for the Board of Lutheran Men in Mission and involved in men's ministry since “my dad took me to the Brotherhood's annual father and son banquet when I was still in a high chair.”

Heber Rast - Cameron, SC
Past president of Lutheran Men in Mission

Doug Haugen - Chicago, IL
Executive Director, Lutheran Men in Mission

And now for the next 25 years...

The vision for Lutheran Men in Mission's future is to continue to grow until “every man has a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through an effective men's ministry in every congregation.”

What do we think that will look like?

- Men—young and old—talking about their faith in Christ as easily as they do about their favorite sports team or home improvement project.
- Men knowing they have caring, faithful peers they can talk to about anything—faith, family, work, personal struggles, joys, or just life in general.
- Men listening to God's Word and studying scripture—together and alone.
- Every congregation supporting men's

Lutheran Men in Mission online! www.lutheranmeninmission.org

Follow and join the conversations on these Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) channels:



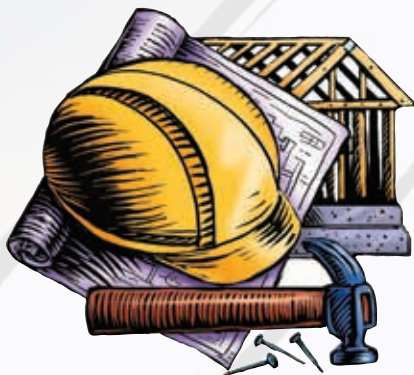
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YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/LutheranMenInMission



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Thanks to God working through the wonderful donors listed below, Lutheran Men in Mission took a great step forward with a significant increase in gift income in 2012—an increase of over 33%. We have come a long way, but we need to continue this generous income in 2013 as we add staff and continue to build this ministry. Please prayerfully consider how you might help with a gift today. Refer any additions or corrections to Kimberley Moseley-Cannon at 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2595, or email Kimberley.Moseley@elca.org.

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SAVE THESE DATES

Lutheran Men in Mission Western States Gathering: "High, Wide and Deep"

Granlibakken Conference Center, Tahoe City, CA - August 23-25, 2013

A REDEMPTIVE GATHERING FOR MEN

HIGH
WIDE
DEEP
LAKE TAHOE, CA | AUGUST 23-25, 2013



There's no place elsewhere in America quite like Lake Tahoe, sitting in the heart of the Sierra Nevada mountains of California. It's truly one of God's greatest creations, and it'll prove a potent site for this year's Western States Gathering, where Christian men of all ages will go "High, Wide and Deep" to strengthen their relationship with Christ and each other through a weekend of fun, fellowship and friendly competition.

It all takes place at Granlibakken Conference Center on Lake Tahoe's west shore near Tahoe City, where we'll set the stage

for a spirited day and a half with special icebreaker activities, food and music. Then comes a Saturday of pentathlon-style activities under the bright Sierra sun designed to make for a memorable, manly excursion into... well, be there and you'll find out. The main thing is that you're there to share in the great fun and food centered around inspiring discussions and presentations from pastors and fellow journeyman Christians.

It promises to be a gathering unlike any other, so set aside the dates today. More information is on the way!

INSIDE OUT: For The Glory of God - 11th National Gathering of Methodist Men

Belmont University, Nashville, TN - July 12-14, 2014



All men of all ages are invited to the National Gathering of Methodist Men—including Lutheran men! From great cutting edge music to classic hymns and workshops that can change a life. Come and celebrate your connection to the body of Christ.

"There will be great music, inspired preaching, wonder-filled worship, humble service, on-target workshops, fantastic fellowship, and time of personal and corporate prayer," says Gil Hanke, top staff executive of United Methodist Men.

We hope Lutheran men will see this as yet another opportunity to gather with other men to grow in faith, support each other's ministries with men, and praise God.

To learn more about the program and speakers, or to register, go to www.ummgathering.org. You can also call 866-297-4313.

Lutheran Men in Mission Western States Gathering: "High, Wide and Deep"

Granlibakken Conference Center
Tahoe City, CA - August 23-25, 2013

BUILDING MEN FOR CHRIST WORKSHOPS:

Metro Chicago

St. Mark Lutheran Church
Chicago, IL - April 20

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Madison, WI - April 27

Salem Lutheran Church
West Alexandria, OH - April 27

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Sidney, NE - June 22

Family of Christ Lutheran Church
Kearney, NC - August 24

Messiah Lutheran Church
Grand Island, NE - October 19

ONE YEAR TO LIVE RETREATS:

Camp Rivercrest
Fremont, NE - April 26-28

SciCon Conference & Retreat Center
Springville, CA - July 19-21

Camp Fredrick
Rogers, OH - August 23-25

Lutherhill
La Grange, TX - September 20-22

2014 LMM EVENTS:

11th National Gathering of Methodist Men

INSIDE OUT: For the Glory of God
Belmont University
Nashville, TN - July 12-14, 2014

2014 Triennial Lutheran Men's Gathering
Loew's Vanderbilt Hotel
Nashville, TN
Assembly July 17-18, 2014
Gathering July 18-20, 2014

Go to lutheranmeninmission.org
for updated events, program information,
and registration details.

LET THE MEAL BEGIN AND THE SILENCE BROKEN

By Larry Moeller

You never know when those ManTalk cards are going to come in handy!

This past Christmas I ended up with no plans and nowhere to go.

In addition to my fulltime job, I've been serving part-time in a "guinea pig" role as lay minister and mission developer for Bethel Lutheran Church, a 92-year-old church in a changing neighborhood in Sacramento, CA.

During my work with Bethel, I've sometimes asked a few people who are down and out or alone to gather at my house on Thanksgivings or holidays. So I asked some folks if they had any plans for Christmas day. They didn't, and we ended up getting together. It was a mix of guests who were Spanish speaking immigrants; Spanish was their first language, and some spoke no English at all.

Our meal began, and there we were sitting around the table, and it's very silent, so I said, "Folks, in my home, as I grew up, we couldn't possibly have a holiday meal and be silent. We have to have chatter, and I know I don't speak Spanish and we may have some translation problems, but we're going to find our way through this." Everyone chuckled and the translating began.



I stood up and got my deck of ManTalk Playing Cards. I pulled out a card and simply said, "We'll each read a question and

we'll all answer it." The first question asked was about how we remembered our fathers, and that's how the conversation began. They translated the questions and responses into Spanish for each other and into English for me. As we went on, the ice was broken and the questions and responses became more in-depth.

This went on for two hours!

We got to a question about the most difficult life decision that we had ever made—oh, my gosh! There were stories of deciding to leave families behind and coming to the United States to find a better life; stories of leaving familiar communities to flee violence. This led to deeper conversations and questions about each other's life stories, families, hopes, struggles, and the presence of God.

What an incredible conversation and meal! If it weren't for the ManTalk cards, I don't know if that conversation would have ever gotten started.

Larry Moeller lives in Sacramento, CA, where he runs an executive search firm and is a member of The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. In addition to being active in men's ministry, he recently concluded service as part-time licensed lay minister and mission developer for Bethel Lutheran Church. Larry is currently an at-large board member for Lutheran Men in Mission, and chair of its Development Council.

Tell us your story!

Do you have an inspiring or creative ManTalk card story to share? Tell your story in an email to Doug Haugen at doug.haugen@elca.org or Rod Boriack at rboriack@aol.com. We can always use good, high resolution photos, too.

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Retreat!

When I hear the word “retreat”, I have an image of beaten and weary soldiers losing a battle who are ordered by their commanding officer to withdraw from the front lines to retrench and re-evaluate their position and strategy. In fact, that is the first definition for the word retreat in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary:

- 1a. an act or process of withdrawing especially from what is difficult, dangerous, or disagreeable
- b. the usually forced withdrawal of troops from an enemy or from an advanced position

However, the dictionary also offers two other definitions for that word:

2. a place of privacy or safety
3. a period of group withdrawal for prayer, meditation, study, or instruction under a director

It is these last two definitions that hold a special meaning for me. I recently spent two days with twelve other guys and two pastors at a weekend men’s retreat. We escaped the Friday chaos and traffic endemic to the cities and suburbs, and arrived late afternoon at the retreat center located on a working dairy farm about 80 miles west of the metropolitan Washington DC area. It was a “technology sabbatical” as well—no cell phones, no tablets, no laptop PCs, no cable TVs, no DVRs—just the peaceful sound of the mooing cows and the nearby river babbling over the rocks behind the retreat center. It was a place of privacy and safety!

What did we do during these two days? A study of The Lord’s Prayer using a DVD featuring Walter Wangerin, Jr. guided us through the two days. We also worshipped together, prayed together, shared what was going on—both good and bad—in our lives, ate meals together, watched the movie Bruce Almighty, played the card game Hearts, and just talked. All of us became much closer in this journey called life.



There was also free-time to do whatever each of us wanted to do—individually. Some guys went hiking, others went to a local antique mall, and others took a nap. Me? I continued reading the biography of our 21st President Chester A. Arthur.

No matter what each of us did individually, we shared one thing in common: we escaped our crazy, hectic lives for two days of peace and quiet, and grabbed the chance to reflect on our lives and relationships with God. I came back from the retreat rested and reinvigorated having promised God that I’d make some changes in my life. What a great weekend!

So I encourage each of you to plan a retreat with a few guys, and do it. Lutheran Men in Mission is planning ten One Year to Live retreats in 2013, should one of these work for you. The key is to get away and reflect on the life you are living; reflect on—without the normal distractions and demands—what changes God is nudging you to make right now and how you can grow closer to Jesus Christ?

Making time for an occasional retreat is never a waste of time. It may take some effort to adjust to being “unplugged and untethered” for a few days, but you won’t regret it. The time spent away with other men is invaluable for the opportunity to rest, gather support, ponder life and faith, pray, have fun, and gather new strength for jumping back into everyday life.

Make the time and take it. Enjoy the gift of being in God’s presence—alone and with other men.

Yours servant in Christ,
Rich White, President
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“COME TO THE WATER”

A 1st Annual Nationwide Fundraising Event in Support of Lutheran Outdoor Ministry

Outdoor ministry and men’s ministry are distinct, yet their paths and activities are interwoven in the ways that God provides for us to carry out our mission in Christ’s name. A summer-long, week-long, weekend or one-day camp or retreat experience has been the foundation for meaningful spiritual growth for many of us—young and old alike. This is why LMM wants to provide a new opportunity for all Lutheran men, from the “Greatest Generation” to the “Newest Generation”, to work together in a way that directly impacts outdoor ministries in a positive way.

Outdoor ministries are frequently by lakes, streams, rivers or beaches, and that’s where the concept emerged for “Come to the Water”. It also reminds us of how we came to the waters of our baptism, and

how those baptismal waters unite us across all generations—Boomers, Gen X and Y, Millennials and beyond.

“Come to the Water” is an effort of Lutheran Men in Mission to help you unleash your local creativity and enthusiasm to launch a series of local fundraising and service events that directly support the Lutheran outdoor ministry(s) of your choice. This is a lightweight, nimble, grassroots program reaching out nationwide to motivate Lutheran men across all generations to work “shoulder to shoulder” in support of the camp, retreat center or outdoor ministries that hold a special place in our hearts and minds.

The vision is a series of local fundraising events (of your choosing) that support the outdoor ministry (of your choice)

orchestrated and run during Father’s Day week (Sunday, June 16, 2013) by men’s groups in Lutheran churches and synods across the U.S. It’s simple! You provide the enthusiasm, fundraising activity and donations; LMM provides ideas, information, sample materials and a communication network to support your success. Where, when, and what you do is up to you.

So please check out www.lutheranmeninmission.org for FAQs, Leader Kits, Success Story Report Forms, and plenty of information for fathers, sons and men of all ages.



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