

2017 Lutheran Men in Mission Assembly President's Report

For every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ

"This is not your father's Oldsmobile" is a classic tagline that many of us remember from the old GM commercials. It can be modified to define what is currently going on with LMM. The past 3 years have shown us that the old paradigm of a bunch of guys meeting once a month on a Saturday morning for pancakes (and pork products) does not work anymore. It tells us that LMM must change its approach if it is to continue as a viable organization and ministry. With the changes that we envision, going forward we will be saying "This is not your father's (and grandfather's) LMM".

With that preface let me summarize where we have been during the last 3 years. We continued our evolution from an advisory board to a church organization to a separately incorporated, 501(c)3 non-profit. In doing this we remained true to our vision statement and took many bold and daring steps:

- Created the "A Team" to bring together a bunch of diverse guys to help define and lead us down a new path of ministry
- Increased staff and the use of "contracted resources" to further the reach of the ministry
- Purchased 7,500 MasterBuilder Bibles as a last time buy
- Enhanced the capability for on-line giving on both a regular and on-demand basis
- Reached out to more individuals thru social media and on-line capabilities
- Reduced our quarterly newsletter mailing list substantially and changed 2 issues per year from print to electronic delivery only
- Expanded our backroom operations to take advantage of cloud technology and position us for moving forward

Has it all worked as planned? Yes and no. The One Year to Live retreats continue to be life changing events for those who attend but we have not been able to expand the locations where they are held as much as we wanted. Our Lenten devotional created by the A Team was very well received and touched many, many people new to LMM but we need to continue to create similar resources on an on-going basis. We also began a new initiative focusing on discipleship which we will begin deploying starting later this year. We really want to help change men's lives!

Unfortunately our development efforts have not reaped the paybacks that we expected and we ended up with an almost \$500,000 short fall in contributions versus plan for the past 3 years. As contributions are our major source of income, this created a significant issue. The bottom line was that we had to reduce staff and make several other changes. Even with these reductions in spending, we now have a significant debt to the ELCA but the Board has developed an operating plan to eliminate it by 2021.

Does this mean that it is all doom and gloom? That LMM is dying? **Absolutely not!** What it means is that we need to move in a new direction; we cannot continue to do business as we have been doing. We need to change our approach if we are to move forward and be a life changing ministry for men. As mother told me many, many times: "it is always darkest before the dawn" and she was right.

During the last 18 months the Board has spent considerable time and energy in developing a proposed revamp of its structure. The revised Bylaws and Articles that the Assembly delegates are being asked to approve is the result of those efforts. Our new structure emphasizes Ministry Teams like the A Team to focus our ministry efforts, and gives each team direct representation on the Board. This model also more clearly delineates between the ministry side and business side of LMM which is something our Board Consultant has strongly encouraged us to do.

Assuming the new Bylaws are approved and I pray that they will, it will be incumbent on the new Officers and Ministry Team leaders to flesh out the details and put this design into action. I am confident that they will and I believe that LMM 2.0 as I have been calling it will become the go to organization for ministry for all men.

Let me complete my report by thanking those individuals completing their current service on the Board. Your dedication and service is very much appreciated by all members of LMM Nation but especially by me:

- Vice President Tim Crout
- Secretary Mike Maulick
- Regional Board Members Tom Lucas, Bruce Kaufman, Jay Wenger, Mark Vaughan, Bernie Bresson, Dave Wirth, and Terry Edwards
- At Large Board Members Hal Derrick, Rev. Dr. Larry Clark and Louis Tillman
- Advisory Members Bishop Tom Skrenes and WELCA representative Nancy Giddings

I also want to thank the LMM Staff for their commitment and dedication to the ministry specifically Doug Haugen for his service as Executive Director for the past 25 years. His passion for the ministry is exemplary and the sacrifices he has made are extraordinary. My thanks to Kevin Burke for his leadership in connecting with men everywhere as our Discipleship Consultant. He has really developed as a men's ministry guru in his 4 years with us. Thanks also to Kyle Pederson for his leadership as our Emerging Ministries Consultant and for his help with our social media presence, our multiple web sites, and my incompetence with Google Apps for Non-Profits.

Let me also thank the Executive Committee (Tim, Mike, Jeff, and Doug) for their dedicated service. I believe that our monthly conference calls and semi-annual face-to-face meetings were crucial to our working effectively as a team. Thanks for "having my back" and being a real friend and brother.

Lastly I want to thank the spouses of all our Board members for their support. I especially want to thank my wife Chris for putting up with me seemingly always being on the phone, banging on the keyboard, or away from home on LMM business. I also want to thank Doris Haugen, Amanda Burke, Blenda Crout, and Judy Mason for their support while their husbands were hanging around with me and doing LMM business.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to have served as the President of Lutheran Men in Mission for the past 6 years and the experience will remain as a gift forever to me. I thank all of you for your dedication, commitment, and support to this ministry.

Rich White
President – Lutheran Men in Mission
July 2017