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## Men's NetWork

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who through His Word commands us to bring the Gospel to all people which includes MEN.

According to research by the Evangelical Free Church of America, only 6% of children stay in the church long term when neither parent attends church. If a mother brings her children to church alone, 15% of the children stay in the church for the long term. If the father brings the children to church, 55% of the children stay in the church for the long term. When both parents bring their children to church, 75% of the children will stay in the church for the long term. So when men do not go to church, it negatively affects their spiritual life, but also the spiritual life of their children and Christ's Church. Would it be fair to say this is one of the reasons the church loses thousands of members each year? Pastor Ken Klaus suggests, for more than a century the world has encouraged the church to emphasize a more gentle Christ (e.g., His kindness and caring) and down play characteristics men would emulate (e.g., His power and commitment). Men wish to be active when their work makes a difference. So men like building projects and are eager to respond to emergency situations, but fade away when things get back to normal. Pastor Klaus also suggests men are willing to fight the battles against Satan but not without education and organization.

Lutheran Hour Ministries has developed a program called MEN'S NETWORK. This program will offer ideas and helps to start a men's group in a congregation. It will use the internet as the source of communication to be of service to the local men's group for Bible studies which will explore timely topics to help men grow in their faith walk. These studies will explore how God's Word is relevant for us today. The program will provide help in organizing work projects in the church as well as in the community. There will be helpful information in organizing social events, fellowship activities such as one day outings, cook outs, float trips, golf, father-son outings or any other excuse men need to get together. Men's NetWork will also provide help in spending down time by reviewing movies if a group wanted to spend an afternoon or evening going to a movie.

Men's NetWork has been in testing this past fall and is now in operation beginning in January. I received an e-mail from a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Manilla saying they are beginning the process of organizing a men's group in their congregation.

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serve: 1. To create an official organization for men to gather in Christian fellowship and fun. 2. To gather a group of men to serve our community elderly by performing home repairs, snow removal etc. 3. To establish an emergency preparedness team for Trinity and Manilla. 4. To organize outings such as bus trips to races and games. 5. To build support for LLL. 6. To offer Christian training to the men of the congregation and the community at large through the use of materials provided by LLL, The Men's NetWork and others." May God bless their efforts. For more information about Men's NetWork log on to [www.lhm-mensnetwork.org](http://www.lhm-mensnetwork.org).

## LHM's Men's NetWork Connects Men to the Church

What takes creativity, initiative, and out-of-the-box ideas and puts them into one men's ministry resource? If you said, "the Men's NetWork," you're right! Be among the first to check out this brand-new go-to Web site from Lutheran Hour Ministries. It's located at [www.lhmmen.com](http://www.lhmmen.com).

The Men's NetWork is a Christ-centered, Scripture-guided, service-oriented resource center designed to draw men to the Church and motivate them to greater levels of discipleship. By offering practical tools, the Web site gives individuals useful resources to strengthen their faith lives and deepen their relationship with their Savior. For men's groups, the Web site offers numerous opportunities to expand ministry impact within their congregations or outside their church's doors.

Feedback from early users of the Men's NetWork (launched Jan. 1) has been strong and positive. "Well thought out. Great potential!" wrote one visitor. "Excellent! Well-designed for men and centered in Christ," noted another. "Very positive, especially the Bible studies," adds a guest who reviewed the Web site's original Bible studies. "Eye-catching and definitely targeted to guys," wrote another.

The objective behind the Men's NetWork is to provide a toolbox of ministry goodies that work. Say your church already has a thriving men's group, but it's looking for hands-on projects to do. Under "Impact Events," the Men's NetWork lists a host of options a group can participate in—both domestic and international. They range from swinging a hammer on an LHM Global Work & Witness trip to volunteering with a Lutheran Church Charities K-9 Parish Comfort Dog Ministry team that visits people impacted by an accident or disaster.

Or say there's an opportunity to begin a

men's group at your church, but the know-how to get one started is lacking. This task is made easier with the Men's NetWork "How-To" sheet called, "Start a Men's Ministry in Your Church." From planning and publicity to preparation and follow-up, we give you the steps to get your group off the ground. And then, when your group has its first Bible study, fish fry, golf tournament, or men's retreat, you can take pictures, send them to us, and we'll post your story on "Braggin' Rights."

Men's NetWork's ministry tools are of direct interest to guys. Video-based Bible studies explore topics such as man's role in the universe, being a hit with the wife and kids, and putting our stuff into perspective. Upcoming studies will explore questions about God's creation, the development and canonization of the Scriptures, and the teachings of Islam. There's a "Local/Regional Calendar" with dates and locations of men's group activities going on around the country. Pastor Klaus, Speaker of The Lutheran Hour®, holds court in "The Baloney Shop." There you'll find a brief video where Pastor Klaus cuts through the nonsense, waylaying a current or past piece of gibberish bearing on Christianity. Beyond these items, there's a blog under "Man Stuff," an archive of funny and/or insightful gems under our "Something to Think About" archives, and another pile of worthwhile links under "Resources."

From the beginning, the Men's NetWork has been shaped by those who will be using it. As we regularly add new Bible studies, tweak and sharpen our content and, in general, make this Web site the best it can be, it's always done with the end user in mind. Visit the Web site and test-drive it for yourself. Drop us a line at [mensnetwork@lhm.org](mailto:mensnetwork@lhm.org) and tell us what you think. We look forward to hearing from you.

### Orphan Grain Train News

A 40 foot container was loaded in December 2008 at the Ida Grove warehouse. It contained over 730 boxes of clothing and was bound for Azerbaijan. The next container from Ida Grove will go Latvia where many other containers from Iowa West have been sent. It costs about \$6500 to ship a container to Latvia. Your financial donations are needed. The container sent to Nigeria last spring has finally arrived. It contained tools, hospital beds, medicine, and two brand new ATV's with trailers for use by Missionary Brent Friedrichs who, by the way, has a new born son. Praise the Lord! Sixty-six container loads of goods have been sent from the Iowa West Region warehouse in Ida Grove since 1993. Only 2.7 cents out of every dollar donated to OGT

is spent on administration. If you would like more information please contact Elroy Koch at 712-675-4818.

### International Efforts - Latvia

Orphan Grain Train began regular humanitarian aid shipments to Latvia in the spring of 1993. In many of the years since then, volunteers have returned with photos of orphanages, hospitals, and women's prisons that have been provisioned by Orphan Grain Train. The warmest colors in these photos are those of handmade quilts neatly folded on each bed. Volunteers from across America make these quilts, which brighten the only private space these women and children have.



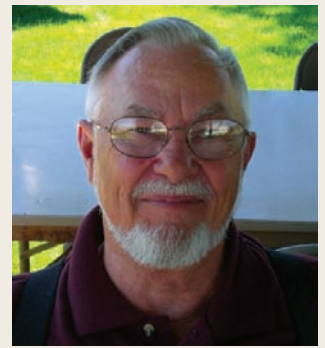
Imagine the joy of our partners in Latvia when they open boxes containing hard-to-buy items like soap, toothpaste and washcloths. Quilts, personal hygiene kits, first-aid supplies, medicine-chest kits, and, underwear are all gratefully received.



*Rev. John Reehl with some of the prisoners in the Riga, Latvia women's prison, one of the many destinations for Orphan Grain Train relief.*

When people ask if we still need quilts we always say, "Yes!" (And we also can use hygiene kits, new underwear, and men's work clothes.) Orphan Grain Train will never meet all the humanitarian needs of countries like Latvia. But it is a Christian witness to many who think they have no hope.

Thank you to the quilters of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League and the many quilt-making groups across America who share their quilts and comforters of all sizes with Orphan Grain Train. Thank you also to the children who have donated backpacks full



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# Lutheran Laymen's League



*Boxes of Orphan Grain Train humanitarian aid at the Red Cross warehouse in Riga.*

of school supplies. Thanks to your gifts, many children now have warmth and hope.

## Greetings from the Rose Parade

A team of 37 led by Ellie Menz of Jefferson, recently returned from a one week mission trip to Pasadena, CA and Tijuana, Mexico.

Ellie is the director of IOWAY (Individual Outreach with Adults And Youth) with Iowa District West. Iowa District West consists of 176 Lutheran churches in the western half of Iowa. She organizes and leads mission trips to various locations including inner city Los Angeles, Mexico, Germany, Cedar Rapids and Louisiana.

This is her eighth year of leading teams of volunteers to Pasadena, CA to serve as Petal Pushers. Petal Pushers is a group of 4,000 volunteers from across the U.S. who decorate the Lutheran Hour and other floats for the famous Rose Parade. This recent trip was especially exciting and memorable because she was honored to be one of the riders on the Lutheran Hour float.

Along with the Lutheran Hour float, the Iowa group worked on the McDonald's, Farmer's Insurance, city of Long Beach, city of Los Angeles and city of Glendale floats. The time donated in decorating these floats provided the funding for the cost of the Lutheran Hour float.

As a rider on the Lutheran Hour float, Ellie had the opportunity to see and experience behind-the-scenes excitement as the floats, horses and bands lined up to head down Colorado Boulevard.

The theme for the 120th Rose Parade was "Hats off to Entertainment." The Lutheran Hour float featured an organ, organ pipes,

gorgeous flowers and a choir of 17 on church benches covered in ground walnut hulls.

Ellie said, "It was truly a once in a lifetime experience for me and I find it hard to describe the emotions of riding past half a million people who lined the route. The five and half mile ride seemed like ten minutes! The people saw the only Christian float in the parade proclaim the majesty of God with a stirring rendition of the Hallelujah chorus from a loud speaker system and from the choir members."

After the parade, the mission group loaded into six vans and headed to the Mexican border. Twice a year, Ellie leads a group of youth and adults into a very poor part of Tijuana, Mexico. She works with Melissa Salomon who is the Director of Lutheran Hour Ministries in Mexico.

Each time they go across the border, they carry backpacks loaded with donated health and school supplies. This time the team took 75 backpacks of much needed items to three Lutheran churches in Tijuana.

They rent a "transport," better known as an old school bus, to take the group from the border to the church where they will work. Just after crossing the border on foot and starting to board the transport, two people with large cameras asked what they were doing in Mexico and if they could follow them for the day and film their activity.

Melissa Salomon agreed to that and they were on their way. They went two blocks and were stopped by the police. After an hour of



talking between the translator, 12 police officers, the yellow cab drivers and the bus driver, it was explained to the Iowans that the yellow cab drivers are a union and they called the police because they saw the

large group of people board a bus and not use the cabs.

Melissa Salomon told the group that she faces this all the time. She said the government is all about bribes and that she has never paid a bribe. She just says no and waits until they get tired and tell her to go on her way. This time it took about an hour.

The Iowan's eyes were opened to the extreme poverty in this area. Many people live in cardboard boxes or put together a house with old garage doors.

At the church, they brought Vacation Bible School type crafts and were welcomed by

40 smiling children. Part of the group painted the church. A group of ladies took supplies and patterns and spent a great afternoon making two large banners for the church.

A fourth group consisted of three pastors who got together with a group of 20 Mexican church leaders and through a translator spent the afternoon discussing theology.

From there, the group traveled into an even poorer part of the city to the first Lutheran Day Care Center in Tijuana. The walls and floors were finished but the project was stopped for over a year for lack of \$3,300 for the roof.

When Lynn and Ellie learned about the roof, they shared the need with people who have been on previous mission trips and in two months had received the money needed. They shared, "It was an emotional time to present the check at the day care to Melissa knowing that now the building can be completed and the children would be safe within its walls."

The day care was built because of the death of two little girls. Because the moms need to work, the only option open to many of them is to leave their children at home. Miriam and Mareli's house caught on fire caused by a hot plate and they were not able to get out of their house. This Day Care will provide 24/7 care for kids in the neighborhood.

After a two hour wait to walk across the border and after returning to the hotel, some of the group saw themselves on the evening news. They were told that it would be on again at 10:00. Ellie said, "It was really weird watching a news channel from Mexico and seeing pictures of your group but have no idea why we were on the news or why they taped us. Later we found out that it was a story stating surprise that Americans were coming into Mexico in spite of the unrest and political problems they are having."

Ellie said, "Mission trips are always an eye opener as to the many blessings we enjoy and take for granted in the U.S."

To learn more about the adventures of the group, check out [www.idwlcms.org](http://www.idwlcms.org) for three "Pasadena Updates." The updates share insights, activities, photos and reflections by some of the team members.

### Woman to Woman News

Woman to Woman can now be heard on two new radio stations. One in west-central Iowa KDSN – Denison on 1530 AM or 107.1 FM at 5:30 PM every Sunday. The program is sponsored by the Denison, Carroll, and Mapleton LLL Zones. It can also be heard on KSUM 1370 AM Fairmont Minnesota on Sunday at 8 AM.

### Spring Baloney Shop

Folks, Have you poked around in the new website for the Men's Network? [www.lhmmen.org](http://www.lhmmen.org)

Make sure you check out the Baloney Shop. You'll find Baloney Shop among the menu of items listed down the left side of your initial screen. Take a minute - 7 minutes actually - to view one of the productions. Maybe just start at the top - a brief segment about Bill Maher - a guy who takes great delight in **trying** to make Christians look stupid. Pastor Klaus responds. Enjoy!!

### Mission Ignition Sunday



*Steve Segebart visits about the LLL at his booth at the IDW Mission Ignition Sunday at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Sioux City*

### Upcoming LLL Events

- March 21, 2009 – LLL District Board Meeting, 9 AM at Glidden
- March 28, 2009 – IDW Men's Breakfast – "God in the Work Place" – Bouton Iowa
- April 14, 2009 – Fort Dodge/Humbolt LLL Spring Rally 6:30 PM @ Good Shepherd – Fort Dodge
- April 29, 2009 – Harvest Deadline for LLL articles to LLL Editor
- June 13th, 2009 - IDW LLL Convention – Sioux City-Speaker-Bruce Wurdeman-US Ministries
- July 16-19, 2009 – Int. LLL Convention – Greensboro NC
- August 1, 2009 – Harvest Deadline for LLL articles to LLL Editor
- August 13-23, 2009 – IDW LLL Fair Booth at Iowa State Fair
- October 31, 2009 – Harvest Deadline for LLL articles to LLL Editor



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