

foundations

Our vision is for all men to become bold and daring followers of Jesus Christ.

Lifelines for Guys Like Us

Project XII Bible Study Guides Offer Roadmap For Spiritual Growth

By Vic Williams

In an uncertain world, online is a life-line. —Carey Nieuwhof



We've had just about enough, haven't we, guys?
Enough Zoom.
Enough doom and gloom.
Enough streaming.
Enough dreaming of the Way It Used to Be.
Enough keeping in touch with no touch at all, by phone or text or whatever.
Enough being in the bubble and out of loop and, all too often, out of answers for ourselves and each other.
Enough going it alone.
Just plain ... enough.

The lesson plans are "Christ-centered conversations dealing with issues critical to men ... meant to be done wherever friends meet—brew pubs, coffee shops, campfires."

We're not out of the Covid-19 woods, not even close, but things are looking up. America has passed the 200 million vaccination mark. Gathering places, both indoors and out—including churches—are reopening for groups of more than four, which means whatever small groups we might have been part of in pre-pandemic days can, God willing (and He is),

reconvene for real—perhaps virtually in the short term, but in person very soon.

Which makes the introduction of Lifelines, a new small group Bible study series rolling out on www.ProjectTwelve.net over the next six months, so timely, so needed, and so key to helping small "cell groups" of five to a dozen guys build strong and deep spiritual bonds.

The Lifelines effort marks an extensive update of lessons included in the *Master Builder Bible for Men*, the Lutheran Men in Mission version of the *Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study* (4th edition). It comprises six, 6-session study guides—36 in all—that tie timeless masculine themes to Bible passages. The first set of six, "Real Man Lifelines," went live on May 1, with the other five sets—Dependable Man, Faithful Man, Challenged Man, Working Man, and Growing Man—to follow every six weeks through the end of 2021.

Written by 13 men from five denominations involved with Project Twelve, the lesson plans are "Christ-centered conversations dealing with issues critical to men," says former LMM Executive Director Doug Haugen, himself one of the writers (as was I). "They are meant to be done wherever friends meet—brew pubs, coffee shops, campfires."

Lifelines, continued on page 3





LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION

The *foundations* 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.

Our vision for *foundations* is that it be a source of personal spiritual growth, as well as a source of information for those involved in congregational men's ministries. Please contact us to share your stories of men's ministry that we can use in future issues, or to let us know what topics and issues you're interested in seeing featured in *foundations*.

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From the Executive Director

A Look at a Challenging Year ... and the Light Ahead

For as long as I can remember, once a year, usually at Christmas but sometimes at Easter and even one year on the Fourth of July, my family has sent and received letters detailing everything we had done over the past year. It was not heavy on details. Honestly, it only hit the very high and sometimes low notes, but it was a way of letting people know what had happened over the past year.

I still enjoy reading these letters and catching up on what friends and family who we don't see often are up to. Over the years these glimpses of the past year have been the only way I have heard of births and deaths, graduations and weddings and address changes. At times they lift my spirits and at other times fill my prayers; either way, it is good to hear and sometimes see where life has taken those dear to me.

In this *Foundations* newsletter, Lutheran Men in Mission is sharing a nonprofit version of a "Christmas letter." In the middle of this edition, you will find our Annual Report. It is a big picture review of the ministry we have engaged in this past year as well as a look at the past year's financials. Our hope is that it will give you a glimpse into the unique year of a pandemic which, we hope, we are finally beginning to leave behind. It may even put a smile on your face or allow you dream about what this New Year could hold in store for LMM and the men we touch.

Taking time to reflect and look at last year is something we all should do, whether formally or informally. Doing so helps us to see where growth occurred, where growth is needed and how God has blessed us, even amid a global pandemic. Lutheran Men in Mission has been challenged and pushed as a result of stay-at-home orders and travel restriction, but we have also grown and found new creative ways of fulfilling our call to bring men closer to Christ. Seeds have been planted for future growth. New leaders have been mentored, new materials developed, and hearts have been won for Christ. Tomorrow looks brighter than ever.

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I want to encourage you to read the main article in this *Foundations* newsletter. It will give you a glimpse at some of the hard and rewarding work that has been going on behind the scenes. Take time to look at the Annual Report; you may be surprised or even inspired. Lift up those who have supported our ministry in prayer—all those donors listed have been instrumental in moving LMM forward, particularly in this dark year.

Finally, I encourage you to be in prayer for all the men who will be touched by the ministry of LMM this year, for their families, friends and congregations. Maybe more than ever, the ministry of LMM is needed. Together we are bringing men closer to Jesus.

In the power of the Spirit,

God bless!

John Sundquist, Executive Director, Lutheran Men in Mission

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Lifelines, continued from page 1

The Lifelines project germinated in Haugen's mind for years. He worked with original Serendipity Bible editor Lyman Coleman to publish the *Master Builder's Bible*, and knew that the lessons included in that printed product needed a spruce-up for today's digital environment. "Since the advent of personal media, it has been my dream to put Serendipity-style conversation starters/Bible studies into the hands of men. I wanted to see something that men could use with their phones so that it was literally at their fingertips wherever they may be."

The Lifelines conversation began in September 2019, when Wisconsin-based pastor Dietrich Gruen, who had also been Coleman's executive editor at Serendipity House and was among the *Serendipity Bible's* first-edition editors, phoned LMM Executive Director John Sundquist about various subjects. The idea of producing a new Bible study project came up, and in subsequent e-mails, Gruen offered his services. Months passed as the coronavirus pandemic took root around the world, but by the fall of 2020, Sundquist reconnected Gruen with Haugen, while another editor, Daryl Smith, came on board at Coleman's recommendation. The partnership that became Lifelines was finally in place.

"We thought it might be easiest to touch up the 'Beginner' sections of the 36 Men's 'For Lite Study' Courses in the original Bible," Haugen said. "We ended up doing a complete rewrite."

To streamline the writing process, the team recruited contributors who had been involved with the

"I wanted to see something that men could use with their phones so that it was literally at their fingertips wherever they may be."

development of the Project XII website in some way, and likely had experience with small group ministry. As one of those writers, I worked with Gruen, in particular, to hone my five study session entries into form—tweaking the questions' focus, tone and word choices to be as approachable and casual as possible, in keeping with Haugen's goal of not getting to "churchy." I learned a lot along the way. I'm sure other guys did, too.

Each study guide's questionnaires follow a set plan based on the Bible passage at hand—for instance, Matthew 20:1-17, Jesus' parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, which was one of my subjects. After a gathering/icebreaker question—sometimes multiple choice, sometimes a more open-ended inquiry—is a Backstory to set the scene and put the passage into contemporary context, a big help for unchurched guys or those less familiar with the Bible. Then the passage is read aloud by one member of the group ("God's Story"), and discussion follows with two to four questions under two main headings—"Finding My Story in God's Story" (putting one's self

right into the narrative) and "Our Story" (applying the lesson to real life, answering a call to action, and a call for prayer for each other). This God-to-man-to-community arc is consistent through each lesson, which should take no more than 75 minutes.

A detailed guide for group leaders is available on the Project Twelve site, as well.

The Lifelines project brings Scripture alive for today's searching, yearning, sometimes troubled, sometimes joyous man, of any generation. It employs the Word as conversational spark and spiritual challenge. And, as the world finally sees the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, it gives guys the nod to put God, and Jesus, at the center of every group encounter, online or in person. Let's pray it's the latter, very soon.

Follow www.ProjectTwelve.net as the study guide sessions roll out. And be sure to invite other men to join along.

The Lifelines project brings Scripture alive... it gives guys the nod to put God, and Jesus, at the center of every group encounter, online or in person.

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LUTHERAN MEN IN MISSION®

For Every Man to Be a Bold,
Daring Follower of Jesus Christ

2020 Annual Report

Welcome to our 2020 Annual Report. This report is different from our past annual reports, in part because we are different, the world is different, and the ways in which we think about men's ministry are different. As 2020 began, Lutheran Men in Mission planned how to disciple more men for Christ than ever before. Then, in March, LMM showed a remarkable ability to be agile and creative in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Continuing to provide opportunities and resources to men across the country, 2020 has been a true test of our commitment to our mission. With the prayers and support of friends like you we have met that challenge. Together we have lived our mission and vision to the fullest.

— John Sundquist, Executive Director

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

The outbreak of the pandemic forced the cancellation of all One Year to Live Retreats and in-person Bold Gatherings. However, the explosive use of Zoom for virtual meetings provided an opportunity for LMM to reach out in new ways. First, two virtual Bold Gatherings were held. Second, a weekly Bible Study focused on the upcoming Gospel and led by John Sundquist, our Executive Director, was started on Thursday nights with 25-30 men routinely participating from across the country. Third, a Tuesday night book study led by Kevin Burke, our Discipleship Consultant, was begun with 10-15 men enjoying it. Lastly, a first ever on-line Epiphany worship service focused on men was conducted.

Featured Ministries

One Year to Live (OYTL)

The planned six weekend retreats had to be cancelled due to COVID. However, in October the South Carolina men successfully tested an in-person OYTL retreat that met COVID guidelines. This protocol has been formalized and will be used with five retreats planned for 2021 in South Carolina, Tennessee, and Florida. The OYTL leadership team also began a quarterly reunion for all previous OYTL attendees using Zoom. The reunion has been very well received.



Bold Gatherings (BG)

The National In-Person Bold Gathering originally planned for September 2020 in Nebraska was rescheduled to October 2021 and now has been rescheduled to October 2022. Two virtual BGs were held using Zoom where presenters spoke for 15-18 minutes in a TED talk-like format. The first was in May and had a theme of unity and reconciliation. The second one in December was entitled "Stories from the Heart" with all presenters being from the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous People of Color) community. All presentations are available at www.boldgathering.com.



Project XII (www.projecttwelve.net)

Resources: Project Twelve is a place for guys to find resources that will help them become better men, fathers, husbands, and leaders. Recommended books, articles, and links to videos are organized to "Grow Yourself", "Grow Others", and "Grow Orgs." During the year recommendations are periodically added to the website in all three areas. Especially noteworthy is the recently added "Fathering in 15" program.



Men's Health Initiative: This is a topic of importance but quite often neglected. Project XII began an effort

to focus on it with the creation of an online support group called Ride/Run With Us, which provides a forum for guys to track their cycling and/or running progress while connecting with other guys around the country. Work is under-way to provide additional health information for men of all ages.

Other Denominations: Project XII is partnering with other denominations such as United Methodist Men and the Society of St. Andrew, along with noted professionals John Roberto, John Armstrong, and Wes Yoder.

Additional Ministries

Ambassadors: LMM Ambassadors are men around the country who are committed to men's ministry and willing to share event and resource information with others in their network. Quarterly Ambassador Zoom meetings are held not only to keep them apprised of LMM happenings, but also to build network camaraderie. A quarterly Ambassador-gram (A-G) newsletter is distributed to all Ambassadors as well as some ELCA Synod Office contacts. Ambassador's contact info and A-Gs have been added to the LMM website.

Disaster Relief: Two teams of LMM volunteers traveled to St. Croix, USVI. Each team spent two weeks helping residents recover from the devastation caused by the 2017 hurricanes.



Communications: Short daily devotions were distributed via email during the Lenten and Advent seasons to approximately 4600 subscribers. The quarterly *Foundations* newsletter was emailed as well as being sent via USPS to donors of record.

Website Upgrade: The LMM web site (www.lutheranmeninmission.org) was in need of serious revision. A task force was created to identify and implement much-needed changes. Work was begun and will continue throughout 2021.

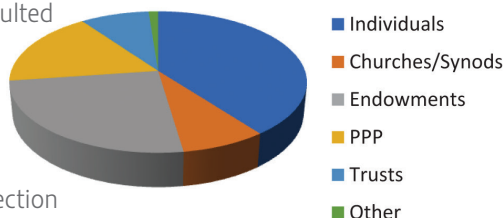
Finances

The financial condition of Lutheran Men in Mission is sound. The COVID health crisis has prevented us from in-person gatherings and retreats; however, we have greatly expanded our virtual outreach and many new and exciting ministries have been initiated. This crisis also impacted our financial donations and many of our donors have experienced significant income shortfalls. While this has resulted in a major reduction of individual donations to LMM, our ministry has benefited from significant increases in our investment income and from our participation in the Payroll Protection Program. These sources of income allowed LMM to have positive net income for the fiscal year ending on January 31, 2021. We thank each of you for supporting our shared ministry to men and their congregations across the US and look forward to a stronger future working together with you to achieve our vision for every man to become a bold, daring follower of Jesus Christ.

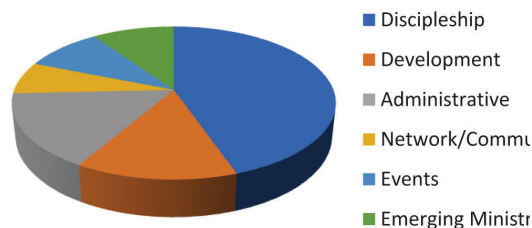
— Hal Derrick, LMM President

Cash income for the fiscal year was \$201,379 including \$34,707 from the Federal PPP grant program while cash expenses totaled \$299,298 resulting in a net cash deficit of \$-97,919. The value of the Endowment Fund grew by \$131,192 so that at the end of the fiscal year the balance was \$1,473,812 (Unrestricted: \$313,401; Restricted: \$1,160,411). The value of our beneficial interest of the Carlson Trust increased \$28,255 to a balance of \$307,268.

2020 Cash Income



2020 Cash Expenses



There are currently 32 donors who are recognized as members of the Bedrock Society for giving on a monthly (\$20 minimum) or quarterly (\$60 minimum) basis. Their gifts totaled \$2,800 per month (\$33,000/year). LMM participated in Giving Tuesday to support the Men's Health Initiative with a total of 19 donors contributing \$3,960.

Please note that all financial information is preliminary as it has not yet been reviewed by our CPA.



Easter Blessings, Thankful Generosity and Growth in Ministry

This Easter has welcomed the Spring of 2021 with the promise of eternal life that comes from our risen Lord and the hope that the dark winter (and year) of the COVID crisis is beginning to fade away as more and more of us have received the new vaccines. It is our prayerful hope that each of you and your families remain safe and healthy during 2021 and enjoy the warming Spring sunshine that comes from our God.

At LMM we are pleased to share this blessed message as we look forward to being part of your lives in our virtual and in-person ministries during 2021.

As you can see in this edition of *Foundations*, we celebrate the generosity that our donors have shared with LMM during the previous year. Without your financial and prayerful support, we could not continue to grow our ministry to reach other men, their families and their congregations throughout the entire United States. We are thankful for your generosity that helps to make all this possible.

We have greatly expanded our virtual presence in response to the COVID crisis. These new ministries have brought us in contact with new Christian brothers from across the country who we met for the first time in these virtual ministries. We look forward each week to seeing and sharing Christ's message and His love with each other. All Bold Gatherings during this period have been in this virtual environment, and each of our speakers has shared truly inspiring stories straight from the heart. All are invited to see and use these videos in your local congregation or men's ministry group by simply going to www.boldgathering.com and link to each of these individual presentations.

Without your financial and prayerful support, we could not continue to grow our ministry to reach other men, their families and their congregations. We are thankful for your generosity.

The Annual Meeting of Lutheran Men In Mission is slated for Saturday, June 12

This meeting will again be conducted using a Zoom video conference event, and all LMM men and our supporters are invited to attend and view this meeting. In addition, all eligible LMM delegates have been given a special invitation from our secretary and are authorized to vote on any official LMM business matters. Future Constant Contact emails will provide specific video contact information about 20 days prior to the meeting; it will contain the detailed instructions on how each of you and your men's group can join the event and participate. We will not have elections for board members at the 2021 Annual Meeting and, at this time, the board will not propose any resolutions for eligible LMM delegates to consider.

I personally look forward to being with you as part our virtual ministries and our 2021 Annual Meeting. As always, we continue to ask for your prayers, your participation and your financial support as we look forward to new growth and outreach to more men, their families and congregations in 2021.

Hal Derrick

President, Lutheran Men in Mission

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Lutheran Men in Mission Online You can find us online at our website lutheranmeninmission.org, or on:



and the **Reaching Men blog** at reachingmen.blogspot.com

We Thank Our 2020 Donors!

The board and staff at Lutheran Men in Mission give our heartfelt thanks for the generous financial, prayerful time and talent support that so many of you have given to help further our ministry for men, their families and their congregations.

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Using the ELCA software system that was changed during 2020, there can be individual and organization names or proper donation amounts that were unfortunately omitted or placed in the wrong category. We are also aware that several donations received from third party institutions where an individual's name could be missing or incorrect. Please contact us at treasurer@lutheranmeninmission.org if your name is missing or it is placed in an incorrect category.

foundations

Lutheran Men in Mission

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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lutheranmeninmission.org

projecttwelve.net



UPCOMING LMM

EVENTS & programs

2021 One Year To Live Retreats

September 3-5

Delray Beach, Florida

Watch the OYTL webpage for details soon

October 8-10

Kings Mountain State Park, South Carolina

Watch the OYTL webpage for details soon

Visit www.lutheranmeninmission.org/events/one-year-to-live/ for information



Keith Smith



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Did You Miss the Spring Bold Gathering?

WATCH IT ONLINE!

6 Speakers discussing
Stories From Their Heart

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