



Share the Gospel E-ffectively

by Rodney Rathmann

Communication is a vital part of daily living.

- Mary fastens her seatbelt and heads out into the traffic after a long day at work. On the way home she listens to a podcast about the Bible story she will teach her 5th grade Sunday school class that week.
- Devin clicks “like” after viewing the video clip Shawna posted on Facebook about what it means to celebrate Christmas every day of the year.
- Andy corresponds in a friendly back and forth manner with Chris, a man he met while trekking up Mount Kilimanjaro, through email and even through video phone calls on Skype. Andy looks for opportunities to share the Gospel with Chris, knowing that Chris does not profess Jesus as his Savior.
- Laura carries on a lively online dialogue with Sam on the Lutherans for Life blog about the value of each human life as precious because Jesus paid the ultimate price to redeem it.
- Electronic video-sharing capabilities enable Juan to bring the Gospel to his family back home in a way that does not rely on print.
- Sid checks the Caringbridge website to learn the condition of his uncle who is battling cancer. Sid uses this site to send words of encouragement to his uncle, but Sid leaves the site uplifted himself by the faith and hope in Jesus his uncle confidently professes.

These are but a few examples of ways God’s people use modern technologies to build up one another in the faith or to reach out with the Gospel to those who still haven’t heard or do not yet believe.

see page 3

**New LHM Executive
Director is Named**

page 6

**LHM at LCMS
Convention**

pages 12-13

**‘Reaching Rahab’
in Kenya**

page 8



Gospel Bridges

by Rev. Gregory Seltz
Speaker of The Lutheran Hour



It's vitally important to build bridges to share the Gospel—and to know the fires that burn in all of us!

One of the best ways to build a bridge for effective witnessing is to learn to share what faith in Jesus means in the basic things, the common things of your life—because they are often the kinds of things that animate all people's lives. These are things like relationships, family, work, leisure, etc. There are fires that burn in our hearts as “human beings” who are all created by and for God. To witness to others of the “Good News of Jesus” FOR their lives, is to also know what animates the lives of our friends and neighbors. What are the things that they “re-joyce in”? What are the things that “keep them up at night”? What are they “proud of” or “not so proud of” and why? How are they trying to “hold it all together”? It is there, at those moments of our common human experience, that the incredible news of God's grace and mercy can change everything.

The Apostle Paul employed this strategy in Acts 17, introducing the Gospel to non-believers in Athens, Greece. You know the story. Athens was a city of many idols and gods. But, it also was the center of philosophy in the ancient world. Paul brought the Gospel to them, not like some street preacher harshly condemning his listeners, but as one who respects what they know—so that he can share what they do not yet know, the incredible Good News of Jesus for them!

He says in Acts 17:24-28; ***“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth....From one man he made every nation of men...For in Him we live, we move, and have our being.”***

Did you get it? He started talking with them

as people for whom God already cared, the God who created them, who was involved in human life (see also Acts 14:15-17). In fact, Paul points out that only in HIM can we all “live, move, and have our being.” He started with what they had in common. It's the same for us today, too. There are “common fires that burn in every human heart.” People want to know that their lives mean something, that their relationships have value, that their work is purposeful, that their families can be safe, that they can have opportunities and can know joy and peace. People are people—and Paul starts there, honoring their search for “what ultimately matters” to demonstrate even more clearly that “Christ alone” is the key to it all for them too!

Do you know the fires that burn in your neighbors' lives, your friends' lives? Find out. Share those common experiences in work, in leisure, in camaraderie, and you may find that the Holy Spirit opens up an opportunity for you to share why “knowing and trusting in Christ” right in the middle of all those “common fires,” that is, the fire of faith that burns to empower, to sustain and to encourage, not the fire that burns to destroy.

The very Apostle Paul himself at one time destructively “burned passionately” for religious things, not Christ's things. It was only when He met Jesus that all things found their proper balance, their proper place in his life. That was his testimony. Ours is similar: Christ is the key to it all FOR US, and you never know how being ready to share that “in the common experiences of life” might help someone seeking for balance that only faith in Jesus can provide. Enjoy your friendships, enjoy your neighbors—and be ready! ■

Seltz Will Appear on Television Nationwide

by Kenneth Schilf

The Rev. Gregory Seltz, Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour**, will be on television throughout the United States and around the world on the only weekly worldwide Lutheran worship program called “Worship for Shut-Ins.” He will be seen on Sunday, October 27.

Pastor Seltz states, “The crucified and resurrected Lord has the power to speak words of joy in our sadness and salvation in our struggles. And we can count on Him daily. In the ups and downs of daily life, the loneliness of the days in being homebound or at the nursing home, one can find joy to know that our Lord is with us each moment of our lives.”

This traditional worship service can be seen every Sunday at 11:30 a.m. (Eastern), 10:30 a.m. (Central), 9:30 a.m. (Mountain), and 8:30 a.m. (Pacific) on DIRECTV Channel 377. That is the



Total Christian Television (TCT) Network and is carried across the United States. Throughout the world it is on four satellites into more than 170 countries.

Also, the program is carried weekly on almost 100 local TV stations in the United States. The program can be found online by going to www.worshipforshutins.org (click on “Programs”) or call 1-888-286-8002.

Now located on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Ind., “Worship for Shut-Ins” broadcasts 52 programs a year with no reruns and no commercials. Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod pastors share the true Gospel message each week. ■

The Lutheran
LAYMAN

Vol. 84, No. 5 September-October 2013

Gerald Perschbacher (LL.D.), Editor • Denis Kloppenburg, Layout

Subscription: \$5. Printed bi-monthly. Send color photos for use. Photos sent to the paper may not be returned. Lutheran Hour Ministries, The Lutheran Hour, Bringing Christ to the Nations, BCTN, By Kids...For Kids, JCPlayZone, Life...revised, Living for Tomorrow, This is the Life, On Main Street, Ayer, Hoy y Siempre, Cristo Para Todas Las Naciones, Esta Es La Vida, Para el Camino, Woman to Woman, Family Time, Teacher to Teacher, Reaching Out and The Hoffmann Society are registered marks, or SM service marks. The Puzzle Club is a service mark and trademark of Int'l LLL. Copyright 2013, Int'l LLL

Bringing Christ to the Nations — and the Nations to the Church

E-ffectively, *from page 1*

Most or all of these would not have been likely or even possible a generation ago.

Taking advantage of the many opportunities modern-day life affords to share the Good News reminds us of the words the apostle Paul penned so long ago, “I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings” (1 Corinthians 9:22-23).

Paul used whatever means and approaches God provided so that he might take the Good News of Jesus into the world of his day. He traveled, preached and taught, and wrote letters that others carried by hand from place to place. Then he traveled, preached and taught, and wrote some more. We cannot but wonder what Paul would have thought of the opportunities available today to reach people with the truth of God’s Word.

Creativity in communication has progressed mightily over the years. Reaching people with the truth and influencing them to consider and believe the truth is a time-honored Lutheran value. It has been said that Martin Luther’s ideas reached the public in a way that we today would call “viral” through the media forms available in his day—pamphlets, woodcuts, and music. Through these means, the masses received new information in new ways and were directed back to the teachings of God’s Word—salvation can be found only in Christ Jesus, by grace through faith. Though originally written in Latin and intended for the educated elite, Luther’s 95 Theses spread so rapidly that Friedrich Myconius, a friend of Luther, commented, “Hardly 14 days had passed when these propositions were known throughout Germany and within four weeks almost all of Christendom was familiar with them.”

Dr. Walter A. Maier advanced the Gospel through radio messages of *The Lutheran Hour* from 1930-1950.



The new Gutenberg’s printing press made economical printing and quick distribution of the 95 Theses in pamphlet form possible. Luther’s “Sermon on Indulgences and Grace,” his first pamphlet in the German language, was reprinted 14 times in the year 1518 alone. But it wasn’t only through print media that Luther’s ideas spread. Through woodcuts and also through ballads that were sung and taught to others, Luther’s teachings were communicated far and wide, extending to those who were not able to read.

But the Reformation took place almost 500 years ago. What would Luther have thought if he could have foreseen the communication opportunities of modern times?

As some might tell the story, the origin of modern communication technologies can be traced to 1844, nearly 300 years after Luther’s death, when

Samuel F. B. Morse, the son of clergyman Jedidiah Morse, used electromagnetism to send a telegraph mes-



Today, people communicate within a “global village.”

sage through wire lines strung between Baltimore and Washington. That message, the first sent electronically, was—appropriately enough—a portion of Numbers 23:23—“What has God wrought!”

Morse sent that simple four word message 168 years ago and the first form of electronic communication was born. Today God has provided His people with a startling array of ways to communicate with one another, shrinking our world and providing the potential to reach ever more people with the Good News.

Lutherans always seem to catch the vision for new technologies as they become available, recognizing their potential in sharing Christ and Him crucified. Airwaves carried clear and powerful Law/Gospel sermons even in the early days of radio with the advent of **The Lutheran Hour**. At the time when televisions became a regular feature in American homes, **This Is The Life** provided dramatizations of lives touched, fortified, or changed with the message of Christ’s love and forgiveness.

Today people live, work, and communicate within what many refer to as a global village. Cell phone communication is common even among those living in developing countries. Through the internet and other electronic devices, complete versions of the Bible can now be listened to in parts of the world where many are unable to read, which according to the United Nations represents as much as one-fifth of the world’s population.

Electronic translating capabilities of SmartPhones allow people to leap over language barriers with relative ease. Solar powered audio players and a device resembling an iPod called a Bible Stick enable Christians to share God’s Word to every corner of the world. Blogs, podcasts, email, and social media allow Christians in countries where they may be a significant minority to communicate continuously with brothers and sisters in Christ in other locations. From The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod web streaming and on-demand listening relating to God’s Word are available. This includes Bible studies and theological teachings broadcast locally in St. Louis, Mo., through KFUD-AM and reaching far beyond the confines of normal broadcasting range. The same can be said for **The Lutheran Hour** and other outreach efforts of Lutheran Hour Ministries. Thus, many who are hungry for the truth of God’s Word can receive it on every continent!

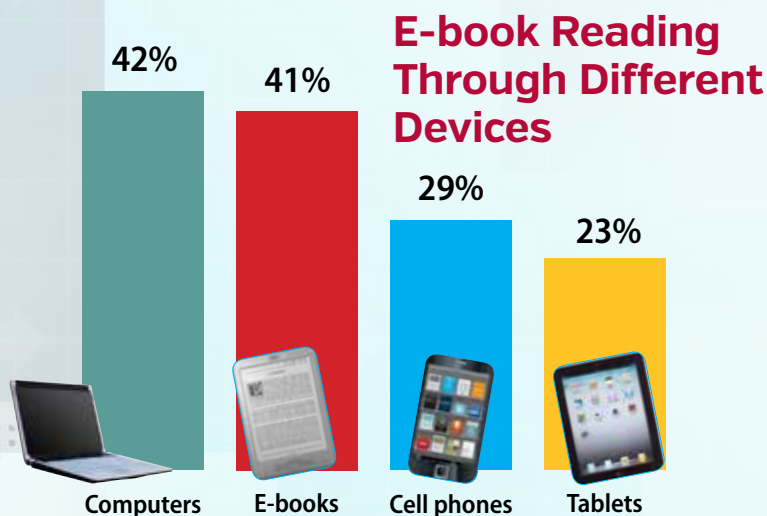
In years past immigrants said goodbye to family and friends at home before venturing overseas to build a new life in places such as America, knowing they would never see their loved ones again this side of heaven. Letters might come, but they would be few and far between. Today, communication with those around the globe is instantaneous with international cell phone capabilities and internet video phone call services like Skype. Those whose lives God has changed with the Gospel can instantly also tell

see next page

E-ffectively, from page 3

family and friends living far away what they have come to know and believe. They can share with them the joy felt by the jailer at Philippi when “he rejoiced along with his entire household that he believed in God” (Acts 16:34).

And even as technology has helped followers of Jesus to reach out to the unbelieving world, it has also helped believers to reach within the church for the purpose of equipping and encouraging the body of Christ with God’s Word. Both LCMS seminaries, for example, use forms of distance learning to train, or extend the training of, pastors. The opportunity for online



learning is especially helpful in situations where workers are unable to leave their homes to come to the seminary for extended periods of study. As another benefit, online communication vehicles such as discussion boards or list serves provide ways for pastors and other leaders to stay connected with one another, to brainstorm possible approaches to challenges, and to inform and encourage one another.

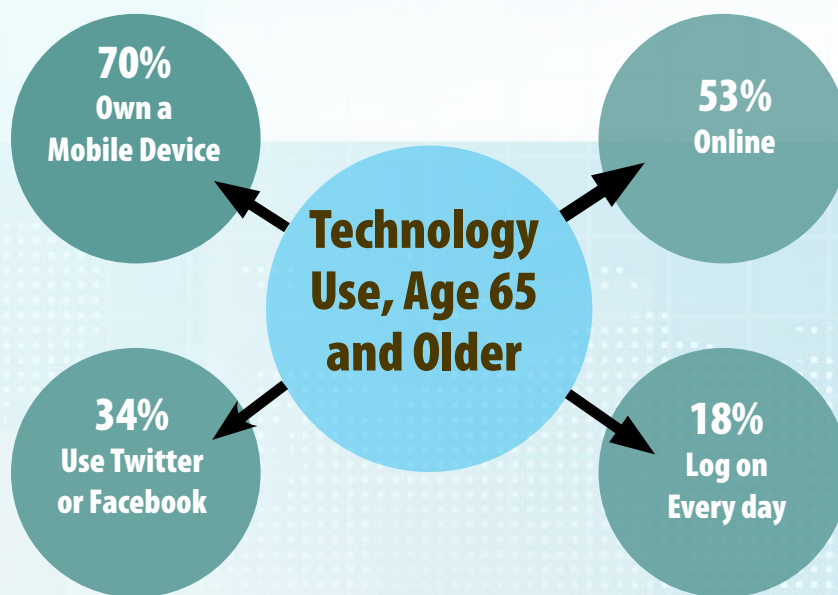
Lutheran educators share daily the information and resources that help them teach children the Good News on such forums. What has God wrought—indeed! And what about the process of applying ink to paper and distributing it—what might the future hold for that time-honored means of sharing the Good News? In the spirit of those Lutherans who looked for opportunity in the advent of radio and television, the leaders at Concordia Publishing House (CPH), the publishing arm of the LCMS, remind those serving there that the word “publish” does not mean *to print*. Instead it means *to make public*. Therefore, like Luther and St. Paul before him, those who have taken up the task of proclaiming the truth of God’s unchangeable Word use the various means available to connect with the changing world around us.

CPH operates under the vision: We strive to be the premier publisher and provider of choice for products and services that are faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Part of living out this vision includes maintaining a continual awareness of the needs of customers and striving to meet these needs through print and electronic media. Long ago Mordecai said to Queen Esther in the face of uncertain times, “And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Recognizing the transitory nature of so much in our cur-

rent day, those responsible for publishing God’s Word set as a priority the process of continuing to learn how best to do this all-important work in “such a time as this.”

One aspect of Gospel proclamation includes the publishing of books in electronic format, or eBooks. A 2012 study released by the Pew Research Center provides the following insights into book publishing in today’s world.

- One-fifth of Americans have read an eBook in the past year and the number of eBook readers grew significantly after a major increase in ownership of eBook reading devices such as Kindle, Nook, and tablet computers during the holiday gift-giving season.
- The average reader of eBooks has read 24 books in the past year compared with an average of 15 books by a printed book consumer.
- The eBook market is growing rapidly but printed books still dominate the world of book reading.
- eBook reading occurs through the use of a number of devices including owners of computers (42%), holders of e-book readers (41%), cell phone users (29%), and tablet owners (23%).
- People prefer eBooks over printed books when considering speedy access and portability; they prefer printed books over eBooks for reading to children or when sharing books with others.
- Technology use is not limited to those who are young. Survey results show that 53% of those aged 65 and older report being online and 70% own a mobile device. In addition, 34% of those 65 or over use Twitter or Facebook; 18% report logging on every day.



Responding to these customer needs and preferences, marketing research indicates that 4 out of 5 publishers now produce eBooks, an increase of 30% from just three years ago. Perhaps eBooks may even begin to drive the print book market. Amazon’s 2012 best seller, a trilogy, sold 250,000 digital copies before it even appeared in printed version.

To bring God’s Word to people today in the manner and with the means they most prefer, CPH now offers over 300 book titles in eBook format or as electronic apps. Most popular among these are eBook versions of The Lutheran Study Bible, Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation (ESV), Lutheran Book of Prayer, Lutheranism 101, and Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions. A number of CPH resources including CPH’s classic Arch Book series are also available as apps (www.cph.org). Children can view the Arch Books on an iPad and either read the Bible story themselves or select an option for the Arch Book to be read to them, a popular choice for children not yet able to read. The Arch Book app also includes a function whereby a person can record his or her voice reading the book for the child

to listen to. This feature helps grandparents, especially those living far away, to “read” to their grandchildren whenever the child accesses the app.

JCPlayZone online (www.jcplayzone.com), courtesy of LHM, offers young children the opportunity to be introduced to God’s Word through playful, wholesome, Bible-based activities. Seasonal devotional booklets from LHM are downloadable, which allows congregations and individuals to print copies for distribution, thus spreading the Word of God.

Technologies offer God’s people not only handy resources but also time-saving management tools designed to assist congregations in data management. CPH’s Concordia Technology Solutions helps congregations serve their members through three distinct products—MemberConnect, Shepherd’s Staff, and MemberCaller. MemberConnect assists congregations in establishing and maintaining their ongoing web presence. Shepherd’s Staff assists congregations with membership data including attendance and contribution, and also with church financial records management and facility scheduling. MemberCaller is a web-based service that allows congregations to send voice messages to multiple phone numbers simultaneously to alert members about meetings, schedule changes, or other important information.

Those designing, developing, and producing materials for today’s Gospel-needy world look for ways to maximize the means and resources at their disposal to do the best job they can to present the Gospel. But how about Christians who have the blessings of modern technology at their disposal? How can we as individuals best use these gifts from God to shine God’s light into the world of darkness around us? Here are a few ideas.

- **Use technology to make God’s Word a more integral, access-ready part of your daily life.** Apps such as those Daily Devotions from Lutheran Hour Ministries (www.lhm.org/dailydevotions) or CPH’s Pray Now (www.cph.org/p-18058-pray-now-app.aspx) provide daily prayers appropriate for the season of the year. While waiting in the car to pick up your children after practice you can not only check the latest news, weather, and sports, you can talk to God in prayer about the events of the day or read a portion of God’s Word on your mobile phone or tablet.

- **Receive training on any number of faith-focused, faith-related issues in the comfort of your home.** Check the Lutheran Hour Ministries website for information about monthly webinars.

- **At JCPlayZone, parents and teachers are offered the opportunity to take children on an online mission trip!**

- Luther’s pamphlets carried a good deal of meaningful content while using relatively few words. **Use Facebook, Twitter, Caringbridge, or funeral home electronic guest book options to share the comfort and encouragement of the Gospel with those you know who may be in special need of it.** Sharing God’s Word in this way does not require a stamp or the need to wait one or two days for it to arrive. It may mean a good deal to the person receiving it.

- **Keep current electronically on what is happening in the work of the Kingdom.** Subscribe to periodicals such as Lutheran Witness online. Check out what is happening with ministries such as Lutheran Hour Ministries by accessing their website or by “friending” them on Facebook. Internet technology makes it possible to keep current on happenings in ministries of interest to you that operate on the other side of the globe.

- Luther drew the attention of the masses to the Bible’s teaching of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus using not only words but also visual media such as ballads and artwork. **Celebrate the joy of knowing Jesus as your Savior by accessing and electronically sharing photos or images or videos from sources such as GodTube or YouTube.**

- **Direct others to your church’s website as part of your invitation for them to join you in worship.** Without having to write down worship times or even provide directions, website information provides an easy, non-threatening way for those new to the faith to learn a little about your church before

see page 6

Music and More, too!

Reminiscent of Luther and his use of pamphlets, ballads, and artwork to share God’s Word, CPH also continues its tradition of providing quality music resources but with an electronic twist. Lutheran Service Builder makes possible the planning and customization of worship services through a subscription to this resource. In a somewhat similar way, Confirmation Builder, an online subscription resource, allows teachers of confirmation class to design individual lessons from PowerPoint, video, discussion questions, and Bible story presentation options. Bible study leaders find CPH’s Bible Study Builder a helpful online tool for designing Bible studies out of a library of Bible study resources.

Print outreach truly has traveled a far distance over the years to the creative era in which we live. By God’s grace CPH has been able to use technologies to maintain quality systems in areas such as order fulfillment, inventory management, and process improvement to help keep customer satisfaction high.

These achievements were recognized regionally in 2009 when CPH received the Missouri Quality Award and nationally in 2011 when CPH received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

During these same years, CPH broke new ground with the development of One in Christ, a new curriculum for use in Lutheran schools, the first of Concordia’s school curriculums to include an online portal containing a host of technology resources including maps and images, interactive activities, animated role-plays and video clips. Resources such as animated role-plays and video clips allow students to view children their own age speaking the language of the faith in natural, realistic ways. Features of the portal include opportunities for students to access information or a lesson activity from home as well as from school, thereby enabling them to bring elements of the day’s religion lesson into the home. ■

WITH ONE CLICK, LEARN ABOUT WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR YOU!

Lutheran Hour Ministries shares the Gospel with more than 1 million people every year.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

BIBLE STUDIES

SPIRITUAL RESOURCES

youtube.com/user/LutheranHourMin

facebook.com/LutheranHourMinistries

pinterest.com/lutheranhourmin

twitter.com/LHMGloblamin

LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES
www.lhm.org

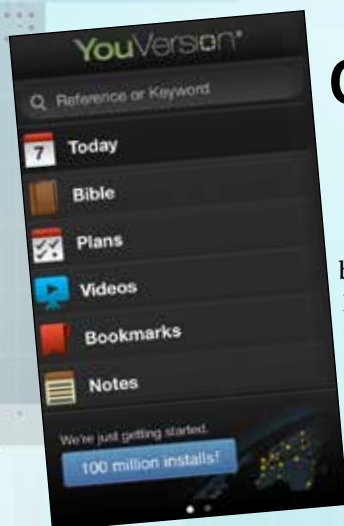
they respond to your invitation and step through the doorway.

- **Look for opportunities to support and encourage others in the faith through blogs and social media.** Some may choose to seek out unbelievers to dialogue with on social media taking care always to “make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

- **Use email or social media not only to let others know you are praying for them, but also to write a note and share psalms or prayers God had in mind for them.**

Since its beginning, “The Word of the Lord endures forever” has been the motto many of us understand. These are good words for all of us to remember as we face the challenges and blessings held in every new technology—and in each new day.

Dr. Rodney Rathmann is Senior Editor of School, Midweek, and Confirmation Materials for Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, and may be reached at rodney.rathmann@cph.org.



Opportunities All Around!

by Gerald Perschbacher

It only took five years, but YouVersion (which began as a Bible-search website) has surpassed 100 million downloads. That is remarkable but takes on added meaning when we realize it is a “Bible App” for mobile devices.

Bobby Gruenewald, originally of Decatur, Illinois, helped hatch the idea in 2006 to construct a Web version of the Bible. It was to be one more way in which the Word of God cuts across technologies with a message that is

ageless. Some say that the use of Smartphones was the reason for its success. Others of a spiritual bent credit God for the advance. Either way, no one can deny its impact.

YouVersion jumped on the Apple bandwagon with its App Store fit for third-party developers. In the first day, well over 80,000 downloads resulted. By the time you read this, there will be at least 600 versions of the Bible available through YouVersion, and in a good 400 tongues. Reportedly, the most favored verses are Isaiah 53:5, Hebrews 4:15, and Matthew 7:7.

LifeChurch.tv can take credit for the launch of this “digital mission” also used by dedicated Christians from various denominational backgrounds — or none at all. Since 1500, Gutenberg’s idea of a Bible in print has taken a giant step forward. How many more communication capabilities will grace the future? But when it involves God’s Word, it is the Holy Spirit who brings the grace only Christ can provide.

“What might the future hold for that time honored means of sharing the Good News?...the word publish does not mean to print. Instead it means to make public,” says Dr. Rodney Rathmann of the CPH staff. “Like Luther and St. Paul...those who have taken up the task of proclaiming the truth of God’s unchangeable Word continue to use the various means available to connect with the changing world around us.” ■

Buchholz Will Be LHM’s Next Executive Director

Kurt Buchholz of Glen Arm, Maryland, has joined the staff of Lutheran Hour Ministries after accepting a call from the Board of Directors of the International Lutheran Laymen’s League (Int’l LLL) to become the ministry’s next Executive Director. Buchholz came onboard Aug. 30 and is working alongside current Executive Director Bruce Wurdeman until Wurdeman’s retirement at the end of the calendar year.

“We are pleased that Kurt has accepted the call to be our next executive director, given his past successes in leading large-scale initiatives and his strong network of partnerships with leaders throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” says Wurdeman. “He brings a wealth of experience and passion in national and international missions to this position and we are excited to welcome him to Lutheran Hour Ministries.”



Kurt Buchholz

With his selection as LHM’s next executive director, Buchholz has stepped down from his role as chairman of the Int’l LLL, the governing body of Lutheran Hour Ministries. Vice Chair Philip Krauss II of Westland, Michigan, has assumed the role of chairman and a new vice chair will be appointed by the Board of Directors.

“I have worked closely with the Int’l LLL and Lutheran Hour Ministries in my previous positions, and I am excited and honored to lead this organization at a time when we are faced with many outreach challenges and yet provided with so many Spirit-led opportunities to reach an increasingly post-Christian culture,” says Buchholz.

Buchholz most recently served as the vice president for special initiatives and executive director of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative for Lutheran World Relief in Baltimore. In this role he led strategic initiatives targeted at simultaneous growth in three areas: international programs, constituent engagement and internal management systems.

From 1993 through 2011, Buchholz served LCMS World Mission in various leadership positions, including interim executive director, where he helped reverse a decade-long trend of decreasing revenue and lead the organization to financial stability. He was instrumental in leading the rollout of a complex \$100 million fundraising campaign for LCMS World Mission that ended in 2011. He also worked in Taiwan in various leadership roles, including school start-up and management. He and his wife, Jenny, were missionaries there from 1993 until 2001.

“I have seen firsthand how Lutheran Hour Ministries, under the excellent direction provided by Bruce Wurdeman and his leadership team, boldly proclaim the message of Jesus Christ to a hurting world,” says Buchholz. “I have also been blessed to know and work with many of the ministry staff over the years and I can assure you that God has brought together a very gifted group of individuals. It is truly an honor to serve in ministry alongside them!” ■

Hokana Receives Telly Award for 'Warriors'

In recognition of his excellent work on the **Men's NetWork** Bible study *Warriors of Faith—Military Men*, Steven Hokana, chaplain and Army lieutenant colonel, was handed a silver Telly Award at the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces Recognition Dinner held in conjunction with the 65th Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Presenting the statue to Hokana was Bruce Wurdeman, executive director for Lutheran Hour Ministries.

Hokana's award is no slight accomplishment. According to the Telly's corporate website, "The Telly Awards honors the very best film & video productions, groundbreaking online video content, and outstanding local, regional, & cable TV commercials and programs." Hokana's silver statue is the highest award the Telly gives.

Commenting on this achievement, Wurdeman acknowledged Hokana's high-quality contribution to this five-part Bible study, which specifically addresses issues of anger, grief, guilt, forgiveness, and love faced by servicemen and women, who have served, or are now serving, their country. Also honored was retired Army Lieutenant General Merle Freitag, who received the St. Martin of Tours silver medal—the highest award the LCMS grants for excep-



Steven Hokana is presented his special award by Bruce Wurdeman, LHM executive director.

tional, sustained meritorious service to God and country.

The subject matter of *Warriors of Faith* makes it ideal as an outreach tool for inviting veterans. Dedicated to veterans of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, this Bible study reminds these individuals they are called to their primary MOS—a child of God, redeemed under Christ, and a member of His Kingdom, according to Hokana. Also on that list should be family members and friends who support vets in their re-entry into life stateside as they, too, are integral in helping veterans acclimate,

following a deployment.

Those familiar with the **Men's NetWork** and LHM's **Project Connect** booklet series already know Hokana is no stranger to LHM. For **Project Connect** he has penned texts on forgiveness, post-traumatic stress disorder, and overcoming potentially life-shattering events. To find out more about LHM's many and varied resources, go to its homepage at www.lhm.org. ■

Outreach Grant Opportunities Available!


Do you see **mission** or **witness** opportunities in your community?

We want to help your LHM Affiliated Group share the Gospel of Jesus in your local community. Up to \$3,000 is available to be awarded among selected qualifying LHM Affiliated Groups each quarter, helping make your outreach efforts a reality.

Apply today!

Deadline for December grants is November 1st.

Not an LHM Affiliated Group? Visit our website at www.lhm.org/affiliate to find out more or to enroll!

 LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES



Sixteen women participated in a Reaching Rahab event hosted by LHM—Kenya in July. With the participants are members of the ministry center staff and Rev. Bakari Keah, bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Kenya's Central Diocese.

LHM's 'Reaching Rahab' Program Assists Young Women in Kenya

To many, Kenya is a country blessed with abundant wildlife and tourism. Kenya is economically stable, and its capital, Nairobi, is home to many international firms and agencies. As a result, Kenya attracts migrants and refugees from across East Africa. Today Nairobi's population is more than 3 million, and people keep coming: every month, several thousand new refugees arrive from Somalia, Eritrea, and elsewhere.

Beneath Kenya's image of opportunity and prosperity, however, lie struggles with poverty and disease. Due in part to the growing numbers of people in Nairobi and elsewhere, the country's unemployment rate is nearly 40 percent and is especially high among young adults. More than a million people live in urban slums without clean water or sanitation services.

Especially vulnerable in this environment are young women, many of whom resort to selling small wares without a license or to becoming prostitutes to make a living—both of which are illegal in Kenya. Often a woman arrested for one of these crimes is jailed for months as she awaits sentencing.

"It is tragic to see young lives destroyed by desperation and poverty," says John Maina, who directs Lutheran Hour Ministries' Kenya outreach center. "When you meet and talk to these people, you know immediately that they do not want to be in this situation—all of them are desperate to escape it."

Lutheran Hour Ministries—Kenya has launched the **Reaching Rahab** program to make a difference—both physical and spiritual—for these women. While in prison, a young woman begins counseling sessions and voluntary Bible studies with a ministry center volunteer. After her release, the participant continues to meet in support groups and is enrolled in vocational training to learn skills such as typing, hairdressing, sewing, or basic account-

ing. When she completes the training, she can work as a hairdresser, a basic office secretary, or an entrepreneur licensed to sell wares at a roadside kiosk.

In the program's first year, more than 80 women enrolled for in-prison counseling sessions. Fifty-two continued to attend sessions after their release, and to date 15 have completed vocational training. Today most of these young women operate their own independent small businesses legally and are able to provide for their families.

Reaching Rahab also addresses a health concern for the women the program serves. Kenya continues to struggle with a high HIV infection rate—greater than six percent—as well as with one of the world's highest total numbers of people infected. The ministry center's Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) program is available to participants.

This summer in Nairobi, 16 women participated in a **Reaching Rahab** counseling event. VCT testing revealed that Lucy, a participant, was HIV positive. Ministry center volunteers were able to educate Lucy about the risks of transmitting the virus to her nursing infant and helped her switch to formula to feed her baby without further risk of infection.

"**Reaching Rahab** is an ambitious program that truly rescues young women from the cycle and effects of poverty," says Eric Gates, LHM's regional director for Africa and the Middle East. "Not only does it help them provide for themselves and their young children; it also provides the unconditional support and love of volunteers who are motivated by the love of Christ!"

To learn about how you or your congregation can partner with Lutheran Hour Ministries—Kenya to help young women through the **Reaching Rahab** program, visit www.lhm.org/partner. ■

"Reaching Rahab is an ambitious program that truly rescues young women from the cycle and effects of poverty."

Moving from Office Chair to Bass Boat

On January 1, I will trade my seat in the Executive Director's office for seats in a golf cart and on a bass boat. My 42 years of service in the church have gone incredibly fast and the six most recent years (and 14 years, total) at Lutheran Hour Ministries seem just the blink of an eye. Moving from the office chair to the bass boat gives me an opportunity to reflect on the past and take a look at the future. I'll do the former in this article and look to the future in the next one. I'll do it by using bullet points.

Things I Have Valued in My Most Recent Tenure at Lutheran Hour Ministries:

- We get to figure out creative and culturally relevant ways to bring the Gospel message to people. There is no better news we could give them and no better service we could render to them. What a privilege!
- I get to work with a gifted, talented, experienced staff. You need to know that this is the best staff in Synod. We've hired folks in the two ministry divisions with vast experience in the international and domestic mission fields. People in marketing, finances, technology, production, human resources, fund raising—all facets of the operation—are similarly experienced and similarly talented.
- Our experienced staff members do a great job of mentoring people new to their careers. It is fun to watch the enthusiasm of youth get channeled into wonderful creativity.
- We have a great leadership team. With strong leaders at each position at the directors' level, there are also strong (and sometimes differing) opinions. This team has learned how to "mix it up" behind closed doors and be unified when they leave the meeting. This is an excellent leadership team, and I wouldn't trade them.
- Lutheran Hour Ministries has become the most aggressive, effective, efficient world wide outreach agency in Lutheran Christendom today.
- It is just a great deal of fun to work with creative and committed people. This ministry thrives, adapts, and grows because of the creativity of staff.
- People are coming to faith in Jesus as the Holy Spirit works through the Word proclaimed by Lutheran Hour Ministries' offices around the world. More than 43,000 people came to faith last year through the efforts of our international offices.
- We are committed to helping the church in the U.S. and Canada reach out to those who don't know Jesus. That commitment is shaping the future of our North American ministries—but more about that next issue.
- I like coming to work. Each day has its challenges. Some have frustrations. Almost all have more joyful moments than I can count.
- I am blessed to be able to work where laughter regularly rings in the halls and meeting rooms. For the second year in a row, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch named us one of the "Best Places to Work in St. Louis."
- We have evidently been doing what the Lord wants to bless because He is blessing the ministry mightily. We've been fiscally



Bruce Wurdeman

responsible. Ministry programs and efforts are highly successful. Congregations and individuals in this country are making liberal use of our resources. Congregations around the world are welcoming the new Christians that we send their way. For the most part, we seem to be working in God's "sweet spot."

• God opens more doors for us than we can afford to walk through. We've had a high commitment to doing things very well and to being fiscally responsible. But that means we've not been able to walk through every open door. I'm praying that our finances and staffing would allow us to take advantage of more of those open doors for ministry in the future.

• This is a great way to end one's full time career in church work. It has been a joy to be a part of what God is doing through Lutheran Hour Ministries. Because of that, I know that I will always want to be a part of it even though I won't be sitting in the Executive Director's chair.

• God has done some amazing things through this ministry—just read the stories. And I believe He has some even more amazing things in store for us—but that's the subject of next issue's article from me.

The list could go on for pages.

Next time, we'll try to look ahead and see what might be in store for LHM in the future. "O God, Our Help in Ages Past, Our Hope for Years to Come"—that's one of my favorite hymns. We've looked at His "help in ages past." Next time, "hope for years to come." ■

LOST BOOKS?

Were some texts intentionally excluded from the Bible? If so, why? In *Lost Books?* the Men's NetWork looks at why some ancient writings failed to make the cut, why other texts met the standard, and why others, including those "gospels" found in the last century, came up short.

SPECIAL OFFER: Receive 10 FREE copies of the Project Connect booklet *The Bible—What? When? Why?* with every DVD purchase of *Lost Books?*. Only available at www.lhmmen.com/lostbooks with promo code **LMLOST13**. Offer ends Oct. 1.

LHM
**MEN'S
NETWORK**
www.lhmmen.com

LUTHERAN
HOUR
MINISTRIES

LHM—Russia

Partners with Author in Radio Drama Outreach

In a faraway country, in the midst of chaos, “a mysterious king came from an unseen and unreachable land. He walked from one settlement to another telling people about his kingdom. He said that it doesn’t have any boundaries and has room for everyone—and if it were to run out of room, he would make more. He also said that in his kingdom no one gets sick or dies.... Multitudes of people came to listen to him.”

This narrative is excerpted from a short novel by Russian author Elena Sokolova titled *Everlasting Kingdom*. It is an allegorical work aimed at the Russian soul: without preaching, it poses moral questions and offers answers rooted in Biblically-based Christian values; without specifically naming Him, it points to the God of the Bible as the only source of hope, comfort and victory.

To Lutheran Hour Ministries—Russia’s Director Igor Savich, Sokolova’s *Everlasting Kingdom* had the sort of appeal the ministry center could use to reach out through radio drama. Savich sought out Sokolova, who welcomed the opportunity. Production began in late 2011, with character voices being provided by veteran Russian actors Arkadi Volgin and Valentina Panina.

In July of this year, *Everlasting Kingdom* was broadcast in St. Petersburg over the Radio Maria Christian media service.

“Elena’s stories are influencing people who read or listen to them,” says Director Savich. “*Everlasting Kingdom* and other tales like it are a gulp of fresh, cold water in a spiritual desert.”

The broadcast of *Everlasting Kingdom* is actually just one product of a growing relationship between Lutheran Hour Ministries—Russia and author Elena Sokolova. This year the ministry center also sponsored the dramatization and broadcast of 12 of her short stories. In

addition, Sokolova, who also writes children’s books, presented a workshop last year for local Sunday school teachers on the center’s behalf and donated 60 copies of *City of Joy*, her latest collection of children’s tales, to LHM—Russia to distribute at no cost.

“The main goal of my stories is to soften people’s hearts and minds and help them go back to that place in their hearts where they can still hear God’s voice—through His creation, through silence and dreams, and through relationships with sincere people,” says Sokolova of her literary art.

Savich believes this will be a key to the effectiveness of the radio dramas and adds, “The brief, intelligible way in which she presents divine truths is appealing to all generations. It’s something that is urgently needed in today’s age of hustle and technocracy.” ■



Author Elena Sokolova, left, presents copies of her children’s book *City of Joy* to LHM—Russia Director Igor Savich.



Voice actors Arkadi Volgin and Valentina Panina share a light moment during the recording of Elena Sokolova’s *Everlasting Kingdom* for presentation as a radio drama.

To learn more about LHM—Russia and the center’s continuing partnership with author Elena Sokolova, visit lhmruussia.wordpress.com.

Last Call for ROCs! by Chad Fix

Is it true that 80 percent of Christians never share their faith? Sharing the Gospel is one of the major themes throughout the Bible, especially in the New Testament, so why is it often downplayed by Christians today? Common excuses people give include “I don’t have time to do it,” “I don’t know how,” “I’m afraid of rejection,” and “I don’t have all the answers.”

Lutheran Hour Ministries’ **Regional Outreach Conferences (ROC)** provide participants with the training and tools to overcome many stumbling blocks.

“If 12 disciples could turn the world upside down, can you imagine what could happen today?” asks Rev. Dr. Mark Zehnder. “You should consider a small task like a run to the grocery store to be a short-term mission trip; there is no off switch to discipleship and evangelism.” Zehnder, the senior pastor and director of ministries at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Omaha, was the keynote speaker at recent **ROC**s in Richmond, Cleveland, and Nashville and will also keynote in Houston.

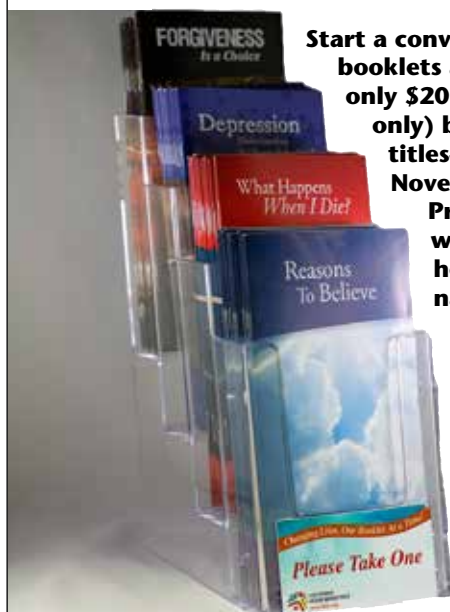
“I am the evangelism chairperson for my church so I came to the ROC because I wanted to know more about how to witness,” says Marion Bogle from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. “We have to go out into the communities more” and reach these people “but I believe we as a church have to do it altogether, not just one or two people. I plan to organize more things such as ice cream socials within my congregation to bring people from our neighborhoods together and introduce them to our church and to our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“I enjoyed hearing about different approaches for dealing with people in our neighborhoods who are not in tune with our way of life as Christians,” says Steve Treakle of Chester, Virginia. “I learned that it’s important to listen to them and try to appreciate their life spot in the world, and respect it, so that we can gently introduce Jesus if they don’t already know Him.”

The last two **ROC**s of 2013 are just around the corner, so now is the time to finalize your plans to attend! The Omaha conference takes place Oct. 18-19 at the Omaha Marriott; the Houston ROC is Nov. 15-16 at the Sugar Land Marriott Town Square Hotel. Both events offer four levels of pricing: \$89 for adults; \$49 for teenagers (grades 8-12); \$29 for children (kindergarten through 7th grade); and \$225 for all members of the family.

Visit www.lhm.org/roc today to learn more about these conferences or to register! ■

Display Racks Fit Anywhere



Start a conversation with Project Connect booklets at a special discounted price. For only \$20 (plus shipping and handling, U.S. only) buy a PC Junior packed with popular titles—a \$35 value. Offer good until November 30 or while supplies last!

Project Connect Juniors work anywhere: doctor and dentist lobbies, hospital waiting rooms, church narthexes or school offices—anyplace where people have time on their hands. With topics on stress, forgiveness, addictions, grief, cancer, finances, marriage and more, these pocket-sized, expertly-written volumes convey help and hope. Visit www.lhmgift.org/storefront or call 1-800-876-9880. ■

Men's NetWork Golf Tournament is set for February

The **Men's NetWork** will host its first ever **Men's NetWork** World Golf Championship on February 21-23 in Tampa, Florida. Men from around the globe are invited to beautiful—and warm—Tampa for three days of golf competition, hearty fellowship, and top-drawer Bible study. Leading this veritable golf fest will be Rev. Gregory Seltz, Speaker for **The Lutheran Hour**. Joining him will be Bruce Wurdeman, currently executive director of Lutheran Hour Ministries.

There will be three golf formats over this three-day event:

Friday: Team Tournament

You can bring a four-man team, or we can create a team for you. Each man will play, and the best team will be crowned “**Men's NetWork** World Champion.”

Saturday: Flamingo Shamble

Men will be assigned to teams based on their scores from the previous day.

The winning team will be the one with the best flamingo ball score.

Sunday: Standard Scramble

Again, teams will be formed based on individual scores from the previous day for a scramble competition.

Be sure to check out the **Men's NetWork's** homepage at www.lhmmen.com for additional information coming soon! ■

Advent Devotions Focus on God's Gift

Written by Pastor Wayne Palmer, “*The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt among Us*” will be available at www.adventdevotions.net. New this year too are kids devotions! *Advent People: Waiting for the Coming Savior*, written by Pastor Lonie Eatherton, will be available at www.jcplayzone.com. Check these websites in October for both devotions and set the tone for a contemplative Christmas. ■

LHM PRESENCE WAS NOTABLE

President Matthew Harrison welcomed the Christ-centered association of the LCMS with the new Evangelical Lutheran Church of Liberia. There was extreme interest on this plus other international and national subjects among attendees.



Thousands of delegates, officials, and interested members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod gathered for the 65th convention of the church body as it met in St. Louis, Mo., July 2013. Rev. Matthew Harrison, presided.



Rev. Gregory Seltz, Speaker of The Lutheran Hour, offered devotional comments as the convention reconvened after a lunch break. He spoke to the convention theme that because of Christ "we have been washed (in Baptism) for a purpose—to make Him known."



Among overseas visitors was Victor Verruck (at right), director of LHM—Paraguay. He spent time conversing with people at the LHM exhibit. Various LCMS entities had special exhibits. The Int'l LLL (with its Lutheran Hour Ministries) is one of two LCMS auxiliaries.



Christine Myers of LHM—Paraguay welcomed visitors to overseas volunteer opportunities. For more information on all aspects of the ministries of the Lutheran Hour Ministries, visit www.lcms.org/convention.

LE AS THE LCMS CONVENED



in Church—Missouri Synod attended
20-24. Newly re-elected president,



s International Division pointed LCMS
nter options and other motivational
s in more than 30 countries. A video
and achievements can be viewed at
on/.



Kay Kreklau, president
of the Lutheran Women's
Missionary League
(the other LCMS
auxiliary organization),
highlighted mission
goals that were met,
including financial
support of the LHM ef-
fort of Project JOEL
in Latin America.

Bruce Wurdeman,
LHM executive
director, offered
updates on the
number of people
whose lives have
been impacted
by Lutheran Hour
Ministries through
its multi-faceted
efforts in *Bringing
Christ to the
Nations—and the
Nations to the
Church.*





Missing the target: When men gather, they tend not to “talk religion.” But they need the Good News of Christ. The question is, how will they get it?

Reaching Men

by Richard Cohrs

If you happened upon a group of men sitting around an evening campfire high in the Santa Cruz Mountains, chances are you'd hear talk of muscle cars, hunting techniques, or how the Giants are the best baseball team ever. The discussion might get heated at times as individuals debate their position.

Before a waning campfire, talk may turn to subjects more personal like career regrets, the one that got away, or how life might have been different if the other road was taken. Perhaps one man might even relate how he lost his job and feels less of a man, now being forced to ask others for help to provide for his family. Others might offer some advice since they, too, faced similar experiences. Others might sit quietly, as they wrestle with themselves over whether or not they can share their feelings of depression, shame, and self-doubt.

One topic most guys consistently

avoid in a group setting is religion. It's always a tough topic—or so it seems—as guys frequently tend to think of religion as either a minefield or more the terrain for women and children. Sure, older guys and faith seem to make sense. But today's man is a man of his own resources, his own strength.

So using religion to connect with guys is a challenge. In 2011 the Barna Group reported only 36 percent of men attend a weekly church service and 39 percent claim to be unchurched. The same report found only 22 percent of those surveyed feel a personal responsibility to share their religious views with others.

The Power of a Men's Gathering

It was a quiet evening that night up in the Santa Cruz Mountains. I sat alongside 75 other men, and we

Only 36 percent of men attend a weekly church service and 39 percent claim to be unchurched.

were concluding two days of instruction, reflection, inspiration, and worship. Men from around the state gave their time and money in order to learn more about sharing the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ with their peers. Most of the men already knew Christ as Savior. For a few, however, the words “Jesus Christ” were more an exclamatory expression than the revered Son of God.

The leader stepped into the light from the fire and asked each man to reflect on how he had grown over the past two days. A few spoke to the impact of the worship songs—how their words of peace could comfort a troubled mind. Some men appreciated the tips and techniques for sharing a Gospel witness. When the men were silent once more, the leader asked one man to step forward and tell the group what he shared privately earlier in the evening.

The man walked slowly into the light, lowered his head, and began. “I was raised not knowing Jesus. No one spoke the name of Jesus to me until a few years ago. Last year I came to this get-together and heard more about Jesus as my Savior. This weekend I knew I wanted what you have, so ...”

He hesitated, unsure of what to say next; then he found the words: “I want to be baptized.”

With this request, there was a swell of enthusiasm. Some clapped. Others shouted an encouragement. All were impressed as they witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit at work in this brother's life. Each one of us left that campsite knowing it's possible to not only share a Gospel message but to witness the power of the Spirit at work, transforming men's lives.

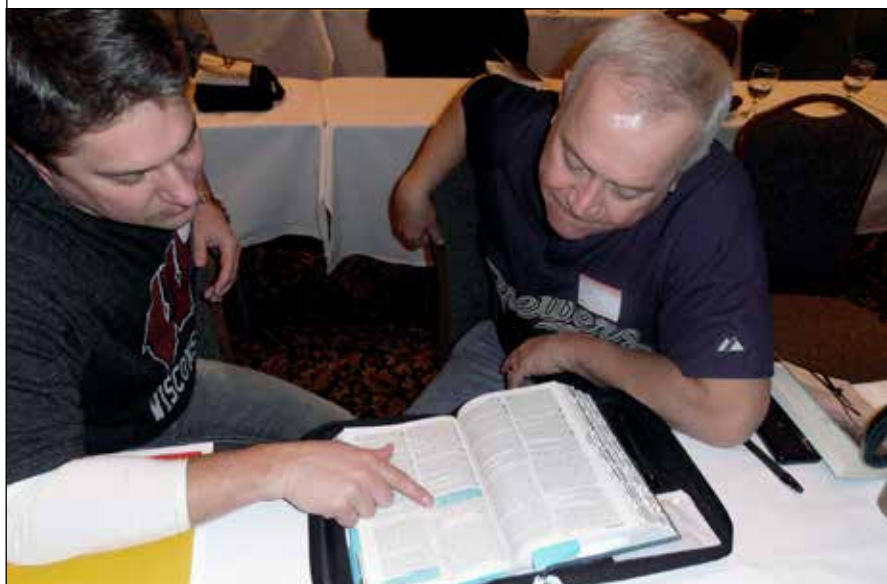
Conversations that Matter

Many men are open to the concept of sharing a Gospel message; however, they are unsure how to start such a conversation.

For instance, two men standing in line at a concession stand can strike up a conversation about their favorite sports team, the weather, the cost of gasoline, or any number of other mundane topics. Guys are good at surface conversations like these. This kind of banter tests the waters, giving an indication of what the person is like. They're also safe. Generally, they don't lead to angry words, fist fights, or other unpleasant-ries. As may be obvious, sharing the Gospel in such a first-time interaction will most likely not happen.

Two neighbors, on the other hand, will have more and different dialogue opportunities. They may start on topics like sports, weather, job, fam-

ily and the like, but there are greater chances to expand the conversation. There may even be occasions to broach the subject of faith or religion, tying it into family matters or one's personal philosophy. Even when the conversation may naturally veer toward faith and God, there are often hindrances that derail the delivery of the Gospel.



One on one with the Bible can open marvelous opportunities as God's Spirit moves to change lives for the better.

Roadblocks to Dialogue

When it comes to sharing the Gospel, I've observed men dodge this for three main reasons.

First, many guys possess a genuine lack of knowledge about the Bible and faith issues. Guys usually won't venture an argument with another man who's an expert (e.g. most men won't tell a certified mechanic how to fix a car). Since the average man sees himself as ill-equipped to argue faith matters, he'll typically abstain rather than appear ignorant. In this respect, many men follow the advice of Maurice Switzer: "It is better to remain silent at the risk of being thought a fool, than to talk and remove all doubt of it."

A second reason I've seen play out is a guy's natural fear of looking less than manly. Starting a dialogue about faith is risky business, as these conversations can run into the unsure waters of emotion and spiritual needs. Not wanting to appear "touchy-feely" in any way, it's easier to keep the talk going with cold, hard facts like baseball rankings, bemoaning Social Security, or that ever-popular subject: the weather.

A third reason men hesitate to share their faith with somebody else is fear of a hostile reaction. Here, it seems the old adage about avoiding conversations on religion or politics may be a prudent one. Such discussions can easily lead to heated discussions. Hence, when it comes to religion and faith, it's easy to skirt these topics altogether rather than risk an argument. After all, to each his own, right?



Man Cards to the Rescue

On the other hand, putting the above fears aside, a pretty good way to kick-start a conversation is to use the Man Card from Lutheran Hour Ministries' **Men's NetWork**. The Man Card pictures a guy in a recliner, point-

ing his remote at the TV. The reverse side lists the "rules" for hanging on to the Man Card. For instance, pulling into a gas station and asking for directions will get it yanked every time.

Giving them away is easy. I was once walking through a hotel lobby and paused to watch a man setting decorative tile in place on the floor. After commenting on his technique, he stood for a quick break and thanked me for the compliment. It was then I offered him a Man Card. He smiled as he read the rules and asked me about the **Men's NetWork**.

I told him about the Bible studies on the site, and he asked me, "Anything there to help me be a better dad? I am raising two sons."

With that, what had started as a simple exchange developed into a meaningful conversation about the relationship between a father and his sons—courtesy of the ice-breaking nature of the Man Card. This little "business card" removes many a conversational obstacle. It's easy to use; no knowledge is required; it's manly, and it will not lead to a fisticuff.

Shared Experiences

My dad was a fisherman—to the core. Any weekend it was feasibly possible he could be found on a lake, a river, a pond, or a stream. It was my privilege to spend the lion's share of those weekends in his company, sitting alongside him on a bank, on a pier, or in a boat. Those days were golden, as we had time to talk about life's many challenges.

It was during those times I learned how to treat a woman, how to be a good worker, how to be an informed citizen, how to pray, and why church attendance is important. Sure, we *see next page*

Many guys possess a genuine lack of knowledge about the Bible and faith issues.

RUN WITH THE REV.

SUNDAY, OCT. 6 • ST. CHARLES, MO

Rev. Gregory Seltz, Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour®**, invites you to join his team and train for the MO' Cowbell Half-Marathon (13.1 miles). Join fellow Christians in a 12-week training program that will get you physically, emotionally and spiritually ready for the day of the race.

\$90 registration includes:

- Run with the Rev. T-shirt
- Training journal
- Finisher's Medal
- Clip-on running light
- Group training
- Pre-Race pasta dinner and devotion
- Post-Race recovery/meeting station
- MO' Cowbell race amenities



Join the team today! WWW.LHM.ORG/RUN
Contact LHM at **800.944.3450 ext. 4171**



A caravan of pick-up trucks rolled to a stop in front of the woman's house, and the men piled out. They were armed with rakes, chainsaws and trimmers.

Reaching Men, *from page 15*

fished together, but more importantly, with dad I had the chance to test drive my ideas, forge my debating skills and, in a very real way, learn about Jesus from a man who was close to Him.

Grassroots Witnessing

A caravan of pick-up trucks rolled to a stop in front of the woman's house, and the men piled out. They were armed with rakes, chainsaws and trimmers. Their beneficiary—a woman, a single mother—was raising her children on a fixed income. A tree had fallen in her front yard, and the city threatened her with a large fine unless the tree was removed.

The men were from a local church, and they offered their services for free. When they finished the tree, they trimmed the bushes. When the bushes were cut back, they mowed the lawn. After they pulled some weeds and bagged the clippings, they raked the flower beds. At the end of their unpaid labors, the woman brought out a pitcher of cold water. Cooling down, the men sat in the shade of an oak tree, talking and laughing.

The woman asked why the men would work so hard for nothing.

A thoughtful conversation ensued whereby the men shared their stories of God's good grace and His gift of salvation with her. By this time, the discussion came easily as the men had already talked about this topic during their work. Maybe part of the lesson here is how getting out and helping others in practical matters gives weight to our conversations about faith and God and loving one another.

After all, she witnessed love in action, which makes her more receptive to hearing about what motivates these guys to do what they do.

The Men's NetWork

The **Men's NetWork** (www.lhmmen.org) from Lutheran Hour Ministries is loaded with resources that facilitate conversations and interactions where the Gospel can be shared. The cornerstone of the **Men's NetWork** is its Bible studies with guys' interests in mind. Topics range from fatherhood and sports to disasters, stewardship, the Bible, and peace. Several of its titles have been chosen from suggestions sent in by **Men's NetWork** users.

Men (often as part of a church men's group) meet together, using these studies to explore a subject of interest, engage in discussion, and, hopefully, take away insights that strengthen their own faith walks. Each Bible study

presents a topic in a short video format designed to spark further conversation. This exchange is aided by open-ended questions and select Bible passages found in the discussion guide. The user-friendly format encourages participation and reduces the pressure or embarrassment that group settings sometimes produce, thus freeing men up to delve deeper into their faith.

Also—and this is important—the design of these studies allows men to invite their unchurched friends along, so they too can explore faith topics in a relaxed context, without worrying about whether or not they know the “right” answers.

The benefits of bringing unchurched guys was plainly demonstrated by one men's group, as it welcomed a man who knew nothing about Christianity but was eager to know more about the topic they were studying. Week after week the man attended the study, listened to the discussion, took it all in. In time he began asking searching questions about salvation and eternity. As his wife was battling cancer and it looked like she would soon lose the fight, he was eager to know more.

After some discussion, the man agreed to meet with the church's pastor for further instruction. Soon he and his wife were seeing the pastor regularly. Then the day came when they asked if they could be baptized. The men in the Bible study group rejoiced for these new believers—and for the chance to see God's work first hand in the lives of this couple.

In addition to learning about God's Word through Bible studies, the **Men's NetWork** is big on getting guys together for service events and activities. These events give men a chance to express their faith in a natural context, without the anxiety of a strained or forced conversation, or the risk of a confrontation.

Although designed for use by men in a group, the resources of the **Men's NetWork** are also designed to be used individually. For instance,





LHM's Rich Cohrs, at left, meets with men at special events. He offers ideas and listens to their suggestions.

Reaching men with the Gospel is not as hard as our culture would make it appear.

after his fiancée broke off their engagement, one guy was searching the Internet for something that might help him in his faith crisis. Struggling, he came across the **Men's NetWork** and checked out what it had to offer. He started to work through a couple of the Bible studies. The Gospel message found in these studies touched him, gave him comfort during this difficult period, and allowed him to find peace in his circumstances.

The Volume of One Voice

On the surface, one may buy into the viewpoint that men are essentially disinterested in religious

issues and therefore unwilling to engage in a conversation about God or faith or Jesus. This, however, has not been my experience over the years. Using the resources of the **Men's NetWork** as a starting point, I have been able to offer hundreds of Gospel witnesses.

Reaching men with the Gospel is not as hard as our culture would make it appear. Using the **Men's NetWork** makes it even easier. ■

Richard "Rich" Cohrs is the manager of District and Congregational Relations for Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM), a position he has held since July 2008. He travels widely promoting the extensive ministry resources and programs of the U.S. Ministries Division of LHM to district offices, men's retreats, individual men's groups and others. He may be reached at rich.cohrs@lhm.org.

Harvest Gifts: A Growing Support for God's Mission

If you make your livelihood from farming, you have a unique opportunity to support God's mission at Lutheran Hour Ministries. When you sell your harvest, you can designate a certain portion of the proceeds to be directed to organizations like Lutheran Hour Ministries.

- You can realize tax savings on the product set aside for ministry support, and,
- Lutheran Hour Ministries will use your gift to help share the Gospel around the world.

This type of giving is growing for Lutheran Hour Ministries as more and more people learn about this smart way to make an impact for the Lord's work. In the past two years, Lutheran Hour Ministries has received over \$60,000 in gifts made from crop sales!

For more information on the First Fruits Giving program, please contact the Gift Planning Department at 1-877-333-1963 or lhm-gift@lhm.org. ■



WEAR in the World is the Men's NetWork?

The **Men's NetWork** wants to see where in the world you've been. More to the point: we want to see where you've been with something bearing the image of the **Men's NetWork**. Hats and shirts work perfectly for this venture.

For instance, is a pilgrimage to Stonehenge in your near future? Send us a picture of you donning a **Men's NetWork** cap in front of this prehistoric monument. Dreaming of landing a blue marlin off Cabo San Lucas sporting a

Men's NetWork fishing tournament shirt? Take a pic and send it in. We already know **Men's NetWork** gear travels well. We've got shots of our stuff by the leaning Tower of Pisa, along the Great Wall of China, floating the Yangtze River, in front of the Roman Colosseum, and high atop the Tibetan Plateau. The question is, where will it turn up next?



This upcoming feature on the **Men's NetWork** website wants to see you—and some item from the **Men's NetWork**—in cool places around the globe. Locations can be international or domestic. For instance, the Parthenon, Mount Kilimanjaro, the Grand Canyon, the Eiffel Tower, Wrigley Field—all pretty much familiar. Your local VFW hall or a buddy's pontoon (unless you're going over Niagara Falls), not as recognizable.

So, the long and the short of it is this: we're looking for pics from all over the world. When you travel—or if you live near a landmark of some sort—put on your **Men's NetWork** cap or shirt, grab your camera or cell phone, and snap a shot, and then tell us where in the world you are.

It's all in good fun and it's for a good cause—promoting the **Men's NetWork** of Lutheran Hour Ministries. Please submit your pictures, along with your name and the name of the location, to www.lhmmen.com. ■

An Excellent Find from the Men's NetWork—Lost Books?

by Paul Schreiber

Lost Books?—the next **Men's NetWork** Bible study—is now available. This four-part study is hosted by Rev. Gregory Seltz, the Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour**. Expert commentary by Drs. Paul Maier, Jeffrey Kloha, and Randall Price along with manuscript specialist Joel Lampe will address issues of *why* some books made it into the Bible and others didn't. *Who* decided what should be included as Scripture? *What* factors determined which texts were thought to be God-inspired and which were deemed not so? *How* did this whole process take place and *where* and *when* did it occur?

Are these questions important? *Absolutely!* With worldwide hits like *The Da Vinci Code* trumpeting misinformation and commercial and cable networks cranking out programs on cracking enigmatic codes and unburying ancient secrets, the interest in knowing what the past has to say is running high. As a result, the popular upsurge in topics like Biblical inerrancy, Gnosticism, alternative Gospels, divine inspiration, and the supposedly lesser-known sayings of Jesus have people asking questions—and lots of them.

Often, these questions are directed to believers, putting them at a loss to answer those who wonder why the Bible should be believed over other ancient writings. In fact, many Christians have the same questions themselves. In *Lost Books?* the **Men's NetWork** will explore the fascinating and cryptic world of the apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, and the Nag Hammadi codices. It will take a look at texts with names like *Pseudo-Matthew*, the *Protoevangelium of James*, the *Gospel of Judas*, and the ever-popular *Gospel of Thomas*. It will show why the 66 books of the Bible are considered the inerrant Word of God—a trustworthy cover-to-cover revelation from God to man.



Dr. Paul Maier, lecturer and author, is featured in *Lost Books?*

As with other **Men's NetWork** Bible studies, be sure to check many resources available at www.lhmmen.com to promote this study at your church, for your men's group, or to your Sunday Bible study. Once you're there, go to the selected Bible study, and open the "other options" button. Then open the "download videos & materials" button and decide whether a theatrical poster, movie flyer, bulletin insert, PowerPoint slide, or customizable poster works best for your situation.

Those who have viewed *How We Got the Bible*, another **Men's NetWork** Bible study, will find *Lost Books?* an excellent companion study. With *Lost Books?* comes a discussion guide to expand the onscreen presentation. It will include pertinent Scriptures, additional information on ancient writings, numerous "Digging Deeper" links to delve into the subject online, and questions for group discussion or individual contemplation. For more information on the **Men's NetWork** and its varied resources, please go to www.lhmmen.com. ■



Victor Verruck at the Grand Canyon

LHM—Paraguay Director Victor Verruck was among four international ministry center directors who traveled to the United States to represent LHM at conventions this summer. After The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod met, Victor visited seven Arizona churches that support the Paraguay ministry center's vital Gospel outreach through LHM's Inter-

national Ministry Partnerships. On July 31, Daryl and Denise Seaman treated Victor to a day at the Grand Canyon. He was so struck by the beauty of creation that he stopped to offer a special prayer during their hike along the Canyon's South Rim. For more about International Ministry Partnerships, visit www.lhm.org/partner. ■

Coloring Contest for Float

Students preschool through 8th grade may enter the Petal Pushers® 2014 Rose Parade float coloring contest (www.petalpushers.org/contest/FloatColoringPageContest.pdf). Submissions must be postmarked by Nov. 1, 2013. Four winners (preschool-kindergarten, 1st-2nd grades, 3rd-5th grades, and 6th-8th grades) will receive a Family Pass to the Behind the Scenes Party, a float t-shirt, and a float magnet. The teacher of winning students will receive a Family Pass to the Behind the Scenes Party. Submit entries to: Lutheran Hour Ministries Float Committee, P.O. Box 20044, Riverside, CA 92516-0044. ■

Seltz will be Featured in Central Illinois, Dec. 8

Rev. Gregory Seltz, Speaker of **The Lutheran Hour**, will speak and sing at a tri-circuit Lutheran Hour Rally at Immanuel Lutheran in Altamont, Ill., Sunday, Dec. 8 (2-4 p.m.) under the theme, "Share the Light of Christmas." Local singers and musicians of various ages will be involved. A reception follows. Immanuel is in the heart of Altamont (I-70, exit 82 approximately 80 miles east of St. Louis). Churches and LLL members from the Effingham, Shelby, and Altamont circuits are sponsors of this Advent Rally. Contact: Norbert Soltwedel (217-868-2833), Pastor Jason Rensner (217-343-2246), or Pastor Jim Wright (618-483-6395) for details. ■



Mystery Solved

When Beth Fischer was asked to report on the men's group in her congregation, she realized it was an altogether different experience than what she expected. She admitted she felt there was a bit of mystery surrounding the group's meetings. But she realized it was simply a matter of de-mystifying through discovery.

She approached the subject head-on by investigating recent gatherings of the Pilgrim's Men's Breakfast at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. For a moment she felt like anyone else who wondered what it was like to attend a new event. "Since I had never attended... I thought that I should ask 'what happens there?'"

She added, "Some attendees don't have e-mail, so a personal approach seemed appropriate. I heard that about 13 men regularly attend. 'Hmm - sounds like Jesus and the Twelve Disciples,' I thought."

The breakfasts are monthly on Saturday mornings "and start with chefs Ron Dagg and Don Millard cooking up an excellent meal of eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, toast & jam, and orange juice. A \$5 donation is suggested to cover costs, but more is provided to support different organizations."

Yet, it isn't food that brings the men together. It is much, much more. "Various topics are discussed and some are considered after the meal" including DVDs and recorded insights by Dr. Paul Maier. The material clearly is focused on Christ the Lord and the Gospel's application in the lives of men and their families.

Visitors other than Pilgrim members have attended, and it is a good opportunity to invite others who don't regularly attend a Bible study. This group has been meeting for more than two years. "Oh, that sounds like Psalm 133," I thought. The passage begins: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity..."

Outreach had to quickly cross her mind. With all the emphasis on Christ, here was an opportunity for men locally to join the group and spiritually benefit in the Christian witness.

She concluded: "Here's the scoop - if you want to know more details about this topic, you're going to have to go and check them out yourselves at www.lhmmen.com!" ■

New Booklet is Perfect for Kids Facing Bullies

Just in time for the new school year is *The Bully*, a new booklet from **JCPlayZone**. This pocket-size page-turner is ideal for kids who sometimes have to face off with real-life bullies. Written as a rhyming poem, *The Bully* tells the story of David and Billy, who was giving him grief. As is often the case, David, like so many other kids, is just trying to go to school to learn new stuff, make some friends, and discover day by day what this world is all about. Standing in his way, however, is an insecure child bent on making life difficult for others by intimidating and belittling them.

Creatively illustrated by Masaru Horie and written by Suzie Sallee, coordinator of witness tools for LHM, *The Bully* lets kids know there's hope when dealing with bullies—at school or anywhere else. In this case, David shows how leaning on God and His protection offers great strength when bullies make life difficult. Together the pictures and poem tell a simple story we can all relate to: God is stronger than those people who would try to insult us and bring us down.

As a classroom resource, this one is tough to beat. In *The Bully* kids see and read about bully behavior in action and how it is entirely unacceptable. They also see how keeping one's cool, praying for those who give them grief and—this is important!—telling a grown-up when a kid is getting out of line are the right things to do. Concluding with a prayer kids can use when talking to God, *The Bully* is a perfect fit for youngsters who sometimes feel like they're going it alone.

Order now and when you buy three packs, get the fourth free. That's 100 booklets for \$15—while supplies last! Go to our special ordering page at www.lhm.org/bully and enter the coupon code LMBUL13, or call us at 1-800-876-9880. You can find this and loads of other cool resources on the **JCPlayZone** website: www.jcplayzone.com. ■

NEW BOOKLET FROM JCPLAYZONE!

Bullying is more than a buzzword in today's society; for children facing this issue it has real and lasting consequences. "The Bully" from **JCPlayZone** addresses the issue of bullying from a child's perspective using language they can understand.

And right now you can take advantage of this SPECIAL OFFER: Buy three packs (25 per pack), get the fourth free. That's **100 booklets for \$15!** (while supplies last!) Go to our special ordering page at www.lhm.org/bully and enter the coupon code **LMBUL13**, or call us at **1-800-876-9880**.



JCPlayZone.com

Church Sees Great Value in Resources that Build Men's Groups

Chances are your men's group—if your church has one—does more than drink coffee, eat donuts, and talk about the “good old days.” If, on the other hand, this does sound like your men's group—or if such a group is still on the ground-floor planning stage—then the following question-and-answer featuring Pastor Ron Norris of King of Glory Lutheran Church in Gig Harbor, Washington, just might offer some useful strategies.



The Glory Guys of King of Glory Lutheran Church. Pictured from left to right are Len Darsow, Jay Miller, Bob Burger, Pastor Ron Norris, Travis Sulzer, Jack Parkhurst, Stan Falk, and Mike Lighty.

Did King of Glory have a men's group before you used any Men's NetWork resources?

“Two attempts had been made to start a men's group before the **Men's NetWork** began. Both fizzled out after a few months. We could never seem to keep the interest going. Our attempts probably became too traditional in the form of devotions and short, one-time studies.”

When did you first learn about the Men's NetWork?

“I had the privilege of learning about the **Men's NetWork** before it went online. It was presented to a group of us in St. Louis, I believe, at an event for disaster response. The preview wowed me! As soon as the **Men's NetWork** was officially released I promoted it and gathered my men together for a Saturday morning meeting (early 2009). Since that date, our men have gathered (almost) every month, and they are eager to be there! This stuff works!”

If you've used Men's NetWork Bible studies, which ones have you used?

“Studies we have finished are *Colt McCoy: A Father, A Son, and Football*; *Death...Then What?*; *Ex-*

plaining All the Scary Stuff in Revelation; *Facing Disaster Like A Man*; *Fatherhood*; *He Who Dies with the Most Toys Still Dies*; *Home Run King*; *How We Got the Bible*; *Joseph: Carpenter of Steel*; *Ned: Jarrett Never Rode Alone*; *Out of Nothing: The Word, Creation and Faith*; *Peace in His Time*; *Running the Race*; *The Real St. Nick: Leader, Legend or Lie*; *We the People: Citizens of Two Kingdoms*; and currently studying *Reel to Real—Of Fish and Men*. And, I hope I don't lose my Man Card for this, but a few of these have been used on Sunday morning for my adult Bible class with women present! I think they are jealous!”

Are there other resources on the website your group uses—“Stuff ... Sunday School,” The Baloney Shop, Operation Barnabas, the “Man Stuff” e-news letter, how-to guides, International Impact trips, etc.?

“*The Baloney Shop* and *Stuff They Didn't Teach Me* in Sunday School are two of our favorite segments. Often we start with *The Baloney Shop* before we get down to the seriousness of our Bible study. Sometimes I'll throw in a few *Something to Think About* images just for fun! On a related note, several of the pastors in my circuit were not familiar with the **Men's NetWork**. I put together a presentation for them at one of our monthly circuit meetings—overview of the website, a few *Something to Think About* images, *The Baloney Shop*, and some video from one of the Bible studies. And it worked. Some of them got hooked and now use the **Men's NetWork** materials.”

What do you feel the Men's NetWork delivers that allows it to make a real difference in the lives of men?

“**The Men's NetWork** relates to the guys' lives as well as providing them with meaty Bible study. They will come to these studies when they won't come to the class on Sunday morning. We also operate under the condition of being a ‘safe place.’ What happens in the **Men's NetWork**... you know the rest. Guys can open up to each other and their pastor on issues they would not be comfortable speaking about in mixed company. The **Men's NetWork** brings them together around God's Word. And it does it in an entertaining fashion with some fun thrown in.”

The **Men's NetWork** is a full-service, 24-hour a day, Christ-centered website, providing material resources, video Bible studies, international impact events, music, merchandise, and more. You can find it at www.lhmmen.com. ■



Sleek Design Marks five14's New Web Page

Coming with virtual awesomeness to an iPad, tablet, notebook, iPhone, smartphone or a computer near you will be the radically revitalized **five14** website. Amping up an already cool presence at www.whatsfive14.com will be a website with a clean, fresher look and vibe.

Clearly, **five14** is a cutting-edge, Christ-centered ministry directed to youth and young adults. It delivers solid tools and go-to resources and events to empower their witness and strengthen their faith walk. At **five14** you'll find engaging videos; loads of pics to see what's happening; band info and concert dates; devotions that target issues young people face; and social media options like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Vimeo.

From its inception **five14** has been enriching the lives of teens and young adults across the United States. It does this by being relevant in the world of young people, who live in an ever-changing social and cultural environment. As the new website says, “**Five14** is a community where teens (and recent survivors of teenhood) get together online and in person to make a life-changing impact on their generation with the love of Jesus Christ. If you're looking to be a part of something awesome, you've found it.”

Visit at www.whatsfive14.com and experience the difference! ■

Focusing on Opportunities

As I write this, our family is getting close to the halfway point of our 8,000 mile adventure in camping across the northern U.S. and parts of Canada. It's a bit of a timeout before our kids enter high school and fully embrace the desired independence of their teenage years. Time seems to ever be speeding up. This trip has become an occasion in our lives for stepping back and re-evaluating. It is an opportunity to prayerfully ask ourselves, "In what ways are we on the right track and in what ways do we need to do some course corrections?"

This time of critical reflection is so important for individuals, families, organizations, churches and our synod as a whole. Time to ask: What is working well and what is not? Where are we making a positive difference in our communities, culture and the world? What does God seem to be blessing? Are we seeing opportunities to bear witness to His message, or are we so focused on our hectic lives that we are deaf to those yearning to hear a message of hope and salvation?

The Bible is filled with examples of this time of prayer and reflection that resulted in great shifts in the life of the church. Moses on Mount Sinai talks with God and is given instructions for the future of the Israelites. Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane prays and communes with His Father. Paul (after his conversion but before his ministry to the Gentiles) is strengthened and prepared by God in Arabia (Galatians 1:17-18).

We can also see that the outcomes of these reflective times can be as different as going (and avoiding punishment or death) or staying to make a stand for the message of Christ—even though it may cause suffering or even death. We were not there and cannot hope to understand every detail of their prayer and critical reflection, but we can clearly see the results: Moses' communion with God ultimately led the Israelites to the Promised Land; Christ allows himself to be taken by the soldiers, knowing that the result will be His crucifixion; Paul at times chooses to stay and confront opposition and in some cases be imprisoned, while at others chooses to slip away before opposition can be organized.

In many ways I can see that our LCMS church body might also be in need of a time of reflection and re-evaluation. We see that membership continues to decline; many of our schools across the country are closing; and many congregations are struggling to make budget and pay their called workers and staff. If ever there was a time for some critical reflection I believe it is now.

Don't get me wrong--this is not a column speaking of impending doom and gloom. On the contrary, I believe there is much hope in our church body today to which we can give even more focus, effort, and support. I see 25,000 of our youth gathered to "Live Loved" at the LCMS National Youth Gathering. I see more than 3,000 LWML members gathered and focused on living out their baptism in Gospel witness. I see numerous new LCMS organizations forming to impact specific needs in their communities and around the world. I see global partner churches building their own internal capacity for local evangelism and international mission. I see individuals giving of their treasures to fund the expansion of His mission. As new technologies emerge, I see Christians wearing their faith openly and boldly within social media platforms.

All reading this issue of *The Lutheran Layman* can also praise God for the role you've played in bringing 8 **Regional Outreach Conferences** to the US



and Canada this year. These **ROC**s are a bold move to openly and honestly study the areas of decline in our church body and to respond by testing new outreach initiatives aimed at making a measurable impact in reversing these areas of decline. We should all take a moment for critical reflection and a prayer of praise, contemplating the seeds of impact that more than 43,000 people responding to the Gospel last year through our international offices and programs will have in our world.

Reality is that to fully focus our time, talents and treasures on these opportunities that God is blessing in the life of our church today, we cannot hold onto everything that has been dear to us in the past. It is through our prayerful critical reflection that we can discern which programs, church structures, traditions, and strategies must be cast off as shackles; which must be moved out of common use and celebrated for the blessings they have brought; and what must be kept and enhanced for continued Gospel impact. These are not easy issues to discern and the answers may be different tomorrow than they are today, but let us be bold in the example of those who have led the church by their example so that more might hear the beautiful message of salvation.

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8). ■

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Philippians 4:8). ■

This is Kurt's last column as Chairman. He has stepped down as Chairman to become the next Executive Director for Lutheran Hour Ministries. Philip Krauss II has assumed the role of Chairman (see page 6 for more information).

**Be inspired, energized, and equipped
to share God's love, nurture your family,
and witness to the community!**



Omaha, Nebraska

Oct. 18-19

Houston, Texas

Nov. 15-16

ROC
LUTHERAN HOUR
MINISTRIES
REGIONAL OUTREACH CONFERENCES

www.lhm.org/roc



The Barbers had their reliance in God strengthened through circumstances and trials.

Faced with Trials, They Were Not Forgotten by God

by Brad Neathery

Stan and Carole Barber have something in common with many Americans. They grew up in the church but without God in the center of their lives.

Stan and Carole married in 1958. Stan was in the Navy for 20 years of their marriage. Stan's career meant they had to deal with relocation and uncertainty that come with that life path. Their marriage was happy, but they were not regularly present in church or active in their faith. God was not the focus, but He was still present with their family.

The Barbers were blessed with two sons, Donald in 1959 and Steven in 1961. Both boys were born small and, in their first few years, had trouble catching up with other kids. Carole and Stan took them to doctors to see if there was a problem.

The difficult answer came when the boys were 4 and 2: both were mentally disabled. Suddenly Stan and Carole shifted to getting the boys enrolled

in special schools and groups for similar children. The abrupt change tested their resolve but did not bring them much closer to God. That would not occur until 1968 when, in Carol's words, "It all changed."

A repairman had been called to fix their TV. He was a Christian, a passionate reader of the Bible, and a man who shared that passion. While repairing the Barber's TV, he told fascinating stories from the Bible.

Carole felt she had to read it on her own.

As God reached Carole through His Word, another trial crossed her path. Since Stan was stationed in Vietnam during the war, Carole worried for his safety. She made a deal with God: If Stan came home safely, then their family would start attending church faithfully.

God brought Stan home. The family kept the promise. Not only did they attend, but they grew active. Stan and Carole found themselves attending and leading Bible studies, serving on church committees, and sharing their faith. As God moved to the center of their family's life, they willingly opened the door of their lives.

In the 1970s, God blessed another transformation. Until that time they were giving no more than two percent of their income to the church. Stan and Carole felt convicted to increase this to ten percent. They maintained that commitment, through good times and bad, and Carole admitted that "God blessed them at all times."

The freedom that came with trusting their finances to God led Stan and Carole to another decision: they wanted to give more. They sought causes that shared God's Good News around the world. Stan sums up their giving priority: "Spreading God's Word - everywhere and always."

They both became passionate about supporting Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Hour Ministries because, as Carole states, "By giving, we get to be a part of the Great Commission." Both Stan and Carole are concerned about the intimidation of the Gospel in today's world. They continue the Gospel advance that changes people.

Reflecting, Carole sees how God was there every step of their lives. They truly have felt the depth of His love and forgiveness—and their support helps Lutheran Hour Ministries share this love with other souls in the U.S. and around the world. ■

Charitable IRA Rollover May be a Great Option

Making the decision to support God's mission often involves deciding how to give your support. If you're of a certain age and have an IRA, then you may want to consider making a charitable IRA rollover contribution. The way it works is simple: if you are 70½ or older you can directly transfer your IRA distribution to a nonprofit like Lutheran Hour Ministries.

There are some great reasons why making a charitable IRA rollover gift makes sense:

- You can avoid tax obligations on your IRA distribution amount.
- You may be able to make a larger gift than you would otherwise.
- You will know that you're supporting God's mission to the world!

Merritt Robertson has been making charitable gifts through the IRA rollover for three years. Every year when he is eligible to receive his distribution, Merritt asks his financial advisor to transfer the money directly to Lutheran Hour Ministries and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. As long as Merritt doesn't touch the money, then he doesn't have to pay taxes and he can give to ministries in which he believes.

It can be a little intimidating to deal with these types of gifts, but Merritt shared the value of talking to others who can give you help. "You may be able to find a financial professional in your church to give you advice - I just work with my financial planner and it's

been very simple for me," Merritt stated. "I probably wouldn't be able to give as much if this weren't an option."

You may be in the same situation as Merritt Robertson: you have to take IRA distributions but don't want to be saddled with the tax burden. Lutheran Hour Ministries can give you the help and guidance you need to set up a charitable IRA rollover in 2013. You can take care of your family and be a partner in God's mission to the U.S. and the rest of the world.

For more information, please contact the LHM Gift Planning Department at 1-877-333-1963 or lhm-gift@lhm.org. ■

‘Whatever it Takes’ to Share God’s Love

by Brad Neathery



Puppet presentations in Indonesia are reaching children with the Good News of salvation.

Sharing the Gospel in different regions requires strategies designed for the people of that culture. In some parts of the world, puppet ministry is a diminishing form of outreach. However, in other areas this ministry is a powerful and effective way to share the Gospel.

One of these areas is the island nation of Indonesia, located in Southeast Asia. This nation contains the fourth largest population in the world and the largest

Muslim population. Many live in deep states of poverty.

Lutheran Hour Ministries reopened a ministry center in Indonesia and began using puppet ministry to reach out to children of Indonesia since April 2012. The director in Indonesia, Imelda Vera Arintonang, believes kids should be a special focus. “When they are still a child” it is “easier for them to learn Christian values” she says. The funny stories and songs featured in the puppet shows have helped bring in kids from Islamic backgrounds and other religions.

Reaching out to kids first in order to touch their families and their communities is a basic strategy of Christian evangelism – the same approach happens in the United States and other countries every day. The difference is that the ministry center in Indonesia uses puppet ministry to reach out to these kids while centers around the world rely on other diverse strategies to share the love of Christ.

This type of strategic ministry is what allows Lutheran Hour Ministries to be effective in reaching millions of hurting and formerly unreached souls every year. We believe in connecting with people where they are and intervening in their daily lives. When donors support this ministry, they should know that Lutheran Hour Ministries does not take the easiest road available – we take the road that God has called us to follow.

If you are a Lutheran Hour Ministries supporter, your prayers and gifts go with us on that road. That means that when we do puppet ministry in Indonesia, online ministry in Latvia, AIDS testing in Kenya, or evangelism training in America; you are an active part of God’s mission!

Find out how to become a monthly supporter: www.lhm.org/monthly

Make a gift online: www.lhm.org/give ■

New MISSION U Videos

Highlight Cultural Change, Reaching People

by Paul Schreiber

MISSION U School of Witnessing, Lutheran Hour Ministries’ evangelism training program, is beefing up its course content. Now added to each of its six courses are brand-new videos. Each features Pastor Dave Haberer, pastor at Church For All Nations, an LCMS church in midtown Manhattan, N.Y.

These brief, to-the-point video clips show Haberer offering insights on how culture has changed in recent years. He speaks to the dynamics of communicating the Gospel truth to the many viewpoints and perspectives one is likely to encounter on the streets in 21st-century America. “When we are surrounded by Christians daily, it becomes hard to acknowledge the worldviews prevalent in today’s society that separate people from Jesus. These videos help us identify what the basic beliefs are in 2013 for unchurched people. We come up against them, but we are often puzzled by them and have no idea how to respond,” said Sarah Guldalian, former manager of evangelism training at LHM.

“For example, how can we share Jesus in 2013

when the average person says, ‘There is no absolute truth. What works for you, works for you. What works for me, works for me.’ That person’s overall belief is there is no authority over him or her. How do you share Jesus with a culture that believes there is no authority over the individual?

These videos will help us be relevant to that person and share Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is the only way to the Father,” she added.

Also expanded is MU-202–The Outreach Congregation, which now includes a rural/small-town version and an urban/suburban version. In the rural/small town component, attendees will discover new ways and effective media they can use to reach outside their church and share the message of Christ with their rural and small-town neighbors. In the urban/suburban component, attendees will learn to assess their congregational environment and become

more outreach-savvy in the process.

The *soul* purpose behind **MISSION U** is to give participants tools, resources and encouragement to take the Good News of Jesus to those places where people are, effectively sharing the truth in love and joy. **MISSION U** offers course options that address topics congregations face every day. The style and format of its coursework mirrors a 21st-century university classroom, offering flexible options which provide personal training from qualified workshop presenters and additional online instruction to reinforce the learning experience.

For details on getting equipped to fulfill your mission with boldness to the diverse world around you, please go to www.whatsmissionu.com and learn more. ■



E-ffective Sharing of the Gospel *Cover Story*



LUTHERAN
HOUR
MINISTRIES
www.lhm.org

660 Mason Ridge Center Drive
St. Louis, Missouri 63141-8557

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
St. Louis, MO.
Permit No. 619

Lutheran Hour Ministries, 660 Mason Ridge Center Drive • St. Louis, Missouri 63141-8557 • (314) 317-4100 or 1-800-944-3450

Philip Krauss II, Chairman • Bruce Wurdeman, Executive Director • Kurt Buchholz, Executive Director Elect

The Int'l Lutheran Laymen's League, with its outreach through Lutheran Hour Ministries, is an auxiliary of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and Lutheran Church—Canada.



Men Need God's Word *pages 14-17*



Caution! Men at Work *page 20*