

Fall 2000
Volume 3, Number 4



UM **MEN**

Uniting Men and Meaning

The magazine of United Methodist Men

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From the Editor's Desk



BY LARRY MALONE

Greetings readers! By the time you get this, it will be time to be thinking about the holiday season – and specifically about the gift given to all persons by God in the form of His only son Jesus. We hope that you enjoy the TackleBox catalog included in this issue.

It is our goal to provide reading materials that deepen your faith, and challenge you to grow more like our Savior every day. You will find articles that help you balance your work and family life, help deal with temptation, and learn how some men use one another as “iron sharpening iron.”

The T-Quest series will resume in our next issue as a practical way to seek personal growth and transformation. May God continue to bless United Methodist Men, the United Methodist Church, and each of you!

Larry Malone

FEEDBACK

Dear Office of Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting:

Thank you for the recent mailing of suggestions for Scout Sunday. Keep it up! Looks good. We need new, fresh ideas for this day. This is a big help.

*Sincerely,
James C. Elder*

If you are in need of fresh ideas for your Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Group, or CampFire Girls and Boys, please contact the GCUMM's Office of Civic-Youth Serving Agencies (615) 340-7129.

Dear Sirs:

Enclosed you will find a contribution from the St. Marks' United Methodist Men in Overland Park, Kansas. This contribution is to be used for whatever purpose the General Commission on United Methodist Men would like. There are no restrictions on its use.

St. Mark's UMM appreciate all the good work the Commission does for men.

*Very truly yours,
John Beach
President, St. Mark's UMM*

The staff of the GCUMM wish to thank the mighty men of St. Mark's UMM for their commitment to the GCUMM and the men of the United Methodist Church.

Dear Larry:

God was there, you were there, we were there! It was an awesome combination!

There is no way we can adequately thank you for bringing such spiritual enrichment to our “UMM Expedition.” There have been only glowing comments. We are ever so grateful. However, there is a problem! Do you realize the predicament you have created for me? Who or what can I possibly line up for next year's event to come close to equaling what you did for us! Please keep me in mind for ideas.

*Monty Du Puy, President
Greenville, SC District UMMen*

Hi Larry:

I hope all is well. This is just a brief note to let you know that we are still excited about our “Expedition” that you led at Mt. Misery, NJ. With Conference President Sam Welch's leadership, we are visiting men's groups to share the models and resources that have been developed by the GCUMM. Thanks again to you and the entire staff for the outstanding leadership that is being provided.

*Keep Smiling,
Porter T. Adcock
NJUMM*

Dear Mr. Larry Coppock:

We greet you from the United Methodist Men's organization of East Mindanao Philippines Annual Conference.

I'm glad to inform you that after presenting the results of General Conference 2000 to our UMMen Organization, our men felt eagerness to continue and sustain the spirit of revival.

We express our support of the Commission's various ministries for the next quadrennium. How we wish to be near you so that we can participate and experience the fellowship! We desire to learn more about leader development and member growth. Unfortunately, we are unable to pursue some of our programs because of financial deficiency. We have begun a prayer campaign for the upcoming UMMen International Congress 2001 in lieu of our attendance. We pray for a successful and fruitful Congress.

Allow us to be closer to you and with other Methodist Men via e-mail: raguzmanads@hotmail.com

*Yours in Christ,
Ruben Guzman
General Conference 2000 Lay Delegate*

It is the GCUMM's desire to be able to provide scholarships to as many men as possible. If you are interested in contributing to these sponsorship efforts, please contact the GCUMM office.

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The Mission of the General Commission on United Methodist Men is to assist men to know Jesus Christ, to serve Him, to grow spiritually and seek daily to do His will.

HOW DO I GET PEOPLE TO SIGN UP FOR CONGRESS?

12 Steps to Successful Congress Recruiting

1 **Congress 2001 District Coordinator**

Appoint a District Coordinator whose only responsibility is to get men to attend Congress 2001.

2 **Visibility**

Plan a "District Kick-Off" to take advantage of the early bird registration. The District Coordinator should place a poster in each church.

3 **Bulletins**

Announce the "District Kick-Off" in church bulletins - have 2001 information listed regularly.

4 **Newsletters**

Have all the churches in your district announce information about Congress 2001 in their church newsletters.

5 **Pastor Support**

The pastors of the district can promote Congress 2001 from the pulpit! Have a meeting with each pastor to explain the benefits of Congress. Make sure each pastor (male and female) is invited to attend Congress.

6 **Men's Team Support**

Recruit UMM charter units and men's teams from your district to attend. Encourage them to invite other men and to pray for their pastor to attend.

7 **Pulpit Announcement**

Ask the pastors of your district for an opportunity to make an announcement from their pulpit about Congress 2001.

8 **Be Confident**

If you had none before, bring 12 this year... if 12 last year, 20 this year.

9 **Call For Help**

Call your UMM Conference President or GCUMM if you need assistance.

10 **Sunday School Classes**

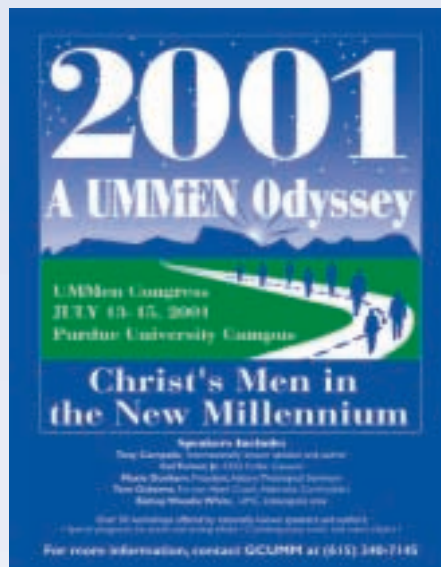
Visit Sunday school classes, church functions, (prayer breakfasts, church dinners, Bible studies, etc.) and make your pitch.

11 **Start at the Top**

Encourage your Conference President to pay the registration for your area's Bishop. This will inspire other clergy.

12 **Extend the Invitation**


Invite men from the communities of your district who are not United Methodist. Any man can attend Congress!



General Commission on United Methodist Men
(615) 340-7145

The Next Step...

GCUMM STAFF



Discipleship could very well mean, “taking the next step.” Imagine a bride and groom, at the conclusion of the wedding ceremony, shaking hands and going their separate ways. Inconceivable!

The wedding symbolizes the beginning of a marriage, not its conclusion. And yet some people treat Jesus that way. They appear to “marry” Jesus by professing faith in Him, but refuse to follow Him.

Perhaps that’s why Paul was so insistent with the Colossian’s commitment to discipleship: “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him...” (Colossians 2:6). The next verse reads, “...rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing

with thankfulness.”

For Paul, the “next step” was a threefold process:

- 1) **Being rooted and built up in Him** - Establishing a firm foundation through consistent prayer, Bible study, fellowship, worship, and stewardship.
- 2) **Being strengthened in the faith** - Allowing life’s varied circumstances to deepen one’s belief in God’s goodness and eternal plan, and
- 3) **Overflowing with thankfulness** - The end result of a healthy, whole disciple of Christ.

This short article was inspired by a daily devotional found in “Stand Firm: God’s Challenge For Today’s Man”, a Christian men’s devotional magazine published by LifeWay Press.

Labor and Love

BY ROBERT WOLGEMUTH

It had been a busy day. I was tired and, frankly, didn't care if my staff could tell. My 23-year-old daughter, Julie, and I were together in our office's workroom. I was rinsing out my coffee cup, and she was sending a fax. Having been a wizard with numbers from the time she was a little girl and with a degree in business management, Julie watched over our company's finances.

"Julie," I said without looking up, "Could you run a copy of last month's financials before you go home?"

I could hear her sigh. And, glancing in her direction, I saw a facial expression that matched. Could it wait until tomorrow? She was saying without words. I've had a busy day myself.

Now it was my turn to sigh. I was not happy with her rejecting my request, and she knew it.

For a moment we stood there, looking at each other. And then, without warning, a thin smile began forming on Julie's face. Her eyes twinkled with the winsome look I had seen thousands of times over the years, all the way back to when she'd drag her blanket around the house, chewing on its ever-moist satin corner.

"What?" I asked, breaking into a half smile myself.

"I have a question for you," she replied. "Was that insubordination or disobedience?"

I leaned back and laughed. Julie raised her hand. I dried mine off and slapped it with a happy high-five.

By the time I was back in my office, I had forgotten how tired I had been. What an interesting situation, I thought to myself ... being a dad and a boss at the same time and feeling completely satisfied with the blend.

TWO WORLDS

So how does a dad tie his two worlds together? I thought back to my grandfathers, farmers in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. They never had to choose between worker and father. Their place of work was their home. They did not sit in freeway traffic between the two. And their children were, in every sense, their employees as well as their offspring.

But for most of the dads I know, work and home are two very different worlds; many physical and emotional miles usually separate the two. At work dads have employees, superiors and col-

leagues. At home they have a family to supervise, a clan to corral. As I look back over the past 30 years in my own career as a businessman and father, I realize how well fathering has trained me for business and, as I built my career, how the business world had helped me be a more effective dad.

MEASURABILITY

Most men love numbers. That's not to say they're natural accountants. What I mean is that men like numbers because they're tangible and measurable.

Picture John's boss striding into his office on the 15th of the month. "John," the boss says, "I just looked at the sales numbers. It looks like you are only 35 percent of your way to this month's goal, and you have only two weeks to make it. It's going to be a real challenge, given the condition of the market but I know you can do it.

Is John motivated by this conversation? Does he pick up his phone and dig in? No doubt about it.

But what if John's boss had walked into his office and whined, "What's wrong with you, John? Here we are at the middle of the month, and you're not doing very well. Sales are down. What are you going to do?"

Can you hear John grumbling as his boss walks out the door? What does he want me to do, perform a miracle? I don't see him selling anything.

Successful businesses are run by the first kind of boss. Give John measurable goals and track his performance.

But then John goes home.

Because too many Dads forget the lessons they learn at work, they are constantly frustrated with unmotivated children and a general sense of chaos at home.

When our girls were quite young, my wife, Bobbie, gave me an idea. (Most of my great fathering ideas came straight from my wife. Go figure.) "For the next few months," she said, "let's sit down with the girls and set some goals for all of us. Then, let's put a chart on the refrigerator door."

The first column had our names: Dad, Mom, Missy, Julie. The second column listed daily or weekly activities: take vitamins, clean room, finish homework, sweep out garage. At the end of each day we checked our progress, and at the end of each week we rewarded

those who had successfully completed their assignments. Amazingly, just because there was a piece of paper, stuck to the refrigerator with one of those cute little magnets, chores were a game to be played. There was less whining, more results and a happier family.

This idea of measurability worked at home just as it worked at the office.

LISTENING

From the time she could walk until she was old enough to go to school, Missy was almost always the first to greet me at the end of the day. After a hug, Missy would take my hand and lead me into the living room.

One afternoon, as I shuffled into the house from a tough day, Missy assumed that it was a good time for another talk with her daddy. At 3, she had a lot of things to tell me.

We walked to the big overstuffed chair. With Missy on my lap facing me, she began reciting the day's happenings. At first, I was interested. But, frankly, as the monologue continued I got distracted and started looking around the room. A blow-by-blow account of today's thrilling activities from a 3-year-old wasn't exactly a spell-binding experience.

Missy stopped talking. She knew I wasn't listening, and she wasn't pleased. She reached up with both hands, gripping my cheeks, and turned my face toward hers. "Daddy," she said in a no-nonsense voice, "look at me when I'm talking to you."

Over the years in business, this directive I first heard as a dad has served me well. Listening, as I learned from my daughter, is something a man does with his eyes as well as his ears. This idea has been a wonderful asset in business. People who have complimented me on my listening skills would never have guessed at which professional seminar I picked this one up. Thanks, Missy.

So now I'm working on being a good dad when I'm at the office, and I'm honing my professional skills when I'm home, using lessons from my wife, my children and my grandfathers. **UMM**

Robert Wolgemuth resides in Orlando, Florida. His book, Daddy @ Work, can be purchased at most bookstores nationwide.



FROGGY FABLE

A congregation of frogs were traveling through the woods en route to the local swimming hole when two of them fell into a deep pit. The assembly of frogs quickly gathered around the pit to investigate. When they saw how deep the pit was, they immediately told the unfortunate frogs that they would never get out.

The two frogs ignored the dismal dialogue and tried to jump out of the pit. The other frogs kept telling the comrades to stop, "You two are as good as dead!" Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and simply gave up. He collapsed and croaked (died). Meanwhile, the other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and suffering and just give up but he jumped even harder and to everyone's surprise, finally made it out of the pit!

After the frog caught his breath, the assembly of amphibians inquired, "Why did you continue jumping? Didn't you hear us?" The frog motioned with his webbed feet that he was deaf and then politely thanked them for their acts of encouragement.

- 1.** There is power of life and death in the tongue. An encouraging word to someone who is down can lift them up and help them make it through the day.
- 2.** A destructive word to someone who is down can be what it takes to kill them. Be careful of what you say. Speak life to those who cross your path. [UMM](#)



In a time when medicine is the first and last resort taken to avoid unwanted pain or discomfort. We can rejoice that we have a Savior who endured tremendous pain on our behalf.

Raw Nerves

No defense mechanisms to drown out the pain...

Stark sobriety in that day of darkness...

Every stabbing pain from every ugly sin felt...

Really felt...

He did not back out...

He did not run...

He counted each of us worth it...

Worth the pain of which there was no escape...

He chose the nails...

He chose to lay everything down for the joy set before Him...

Our wholeness.

*This poem was written by the GCUMM Charter Administrator -
Connie Jo Heidemann.*

Triumph Over Temptation

BY DOUG SALSER

“99% of men are tempted by pornography...and the other 1% are lying!” That’s the way one savvy pastor put it. And it’s so true...for most men pornography is one of the toughest temptations they face. It’s a temptation that crosses racial, social, and economic lines, and its seduction comes in all forms—TV, cable, movies, phone, magazines, the Internet, and even women’s fashions.

Pornography damages and eventually destroys individuals, marriages, and families. But you don’t have to be crushed by giving in to lust. The battle can be won, but you must be prepared...and be willing to fight!

**SURROUNDED? YES.
HOPELESS? NO!**

While he may be surrounded, no man is without hope. The Bible says that “No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

In other words, when it comes to temptation you’re not alone. And being tempted in itself is not a sin; it’s giving in that’s sinful. Along with any temptation, God promises to provide a built-in escape route! It’s critical that you memorize that verse and keep it in mind

when the battle lines are drawn, because your mind is where the battle begins!

NINE STEPS TO FREEDOM

Here are nine steps that God has used in lives of many men to make the difference when pornography tempts them.

1 FEED

I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.

Psalm 119:11

We can’t fight effectively if we’re not feeding on the Word of God. When Jesus was tempted by Satan, He didn’t yield—He quoted Scripture! Treasure God’s Word. Read your Bible daily to gain insights for godly living and to know God more intimately. A well-fed man is stronger in a fight!

2 FOLLOW

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus....Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Hebrews 12:2-3

We can’t follow unless we keep our eyes on Christ and away from temptation. If we do things His way, we won’t falter.

3 FAITHFULLY PRAY

Like Jesus taught His disciples, we should always pray and not give up

Luke 18:1.

Men are often brought to their knees after a losing battle with temptation, but we need to pray daily for God’s protection and enablement before the battle begins.

One other thing...when you truly confess your sins—even involving pornography—to God, you are forgiven. Whether or not you feel forgiven, God declares that you are: **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins (1 John 1:9).** Take Him at His word and press on. Otherwise feelings of guilt will cripple your progress.

4 FALL IN LOVE

A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

Proverbs 31:10

If you’re married, your responsibility is to be absolutely committed to your wife and to treasure her. It’s the best antidote for the poison of pornography. Tell her often that you love her and show it daily by your care for her.

What you cherish about her has to be more than skin deep—“It should be that [beauty] of [her] inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God’s sight” (1 Peter 3:4). Fall in love with the qualities she has that a computer can’t enhance.

5 FELLOWSHIP

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. *Proverbs 27:17*

Find another Christian man or a small group of guys to be accountable to, guys that you feel safe with who can keep confidences (*Proverbs 11:13, 17:9*). Ask each other personal questions regu-

larly about spiritual growth and well-being, including weaknesses. Encourage each other in righteous living (*Hebrews 10:19-25*).

6 FILE

Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

Hebrews 12:1

Did you ever lose a battle buying pornography in a convenience store or renting a movie in some “mom and pop” store? Make a mental file of places where you lost or began to lose battles, then stay away from them. That mental file may also include certain movies that you never need to see again.

7 FLEE

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22

Isn't it interesting that God did not tell us to stand and fight the lusts that have dogged us from our youth? Don't gaze, don't gawk, don't give in. Get away!

8 FORESEE

Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Romans 13:14

Anticipate possible trouble spots and avoid them. Be very practical...if you think a store sells porn, don't go in. Stay out of places that sell or rent “adult” videos. And those billboards that advertise “gentlemen's clubs”... there's no better time to keep your eyes on the road!

For you men who travel, don't be surprised if your hotel offers “adult” movies. Have the channels turned off at the desk when you check in, before you ever step into the room. If that's not possible, drape a towel over the TV, then place your Bible on top of the TV along with a photo of your family. Crazy? Not if it helps you stay pure.

If cable TV tempts you at home, drop it or have your cable company block the offending channels. Have the phone company block calling to 900 numbers

(ask for blocking at hotels, too).

The point is, if pornography of any kind is accessible, you are just one weak moment away from defeat. Don't walk into mine fields!

9 FORTIFY

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Philippians 4:8

It is hard to lust when you fill your mind with wonderful things. Many men make it fine until their family is asleep. But the battle gets more intense after dark. Internet porn and phone sex lines flourish between 9 PM and 1 AM. Do wholesome things to avoid giving in to whatever tempts you—“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (*Romans 12:21*). If you're married, you may need to start a practice of praying with your wife before bedtime and then turning in when she does.

We fortify our position as we discipline our minds and rely on God's Spirit, the Helper within each Christian (*John 14:15-17*). Trust God to give you the proper motivation (*Philippians 2:13*) as you pray, study God's Word, attend church, and fellowship with other believers.

CALL 311

We train children to dial 911 in case of emergencies. Such a call is good advice when men face “sexual” emergencies, too. That's when we need to dial 311—*Job 31:1*: “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.”

Make that covenant not to look upon things that will tempt you. Memorize

Scripture to call on when tempted. And since God promises to provide an escape when temptation calls (*James 1:13-15*), be looking for it.

One day we will pass the torch to our sons and other younger men we may influence. Will it be a torch of righteousness or of lust? Men, we're in the fight of our lives. Real men don't use porn! It's time for us to claim the victory that Jesus Christ offers. **UMM**

Job 31:1
“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.”

How to obtain your copy of Triumph over Temptation

This article was excerpted from the 24-page booklet, Triumph over Temptation, published by Literature Ministries International (LMI) of Garland, Texas. The complete booklet includes more counsel for overcoming pornography, selected verses to memorize, web resources to help men and their family, and a list of consequences to consider whenever tempted. A similar 24-page booklet—Triumph over Temptation: For the Single Man—addresses this issue for guys ages 18-30.

Both editions of Triumph over Temptation can be ordered directly from LMI:

Phone: (877) 454.8646

Web: www.litmin.org

*Mail: Literature Ministries Intl
Box 495904
Garland, TX 75049*

What's On First?

LEWIS SHELTON

Being able to determine one's priorities has long been a critical element in an individual's ability to move toward success. Whether it is in the arena of athletics or the theater of business, the person most likely to succeed is the person who appropriately identifies and applies himself to that which is most important and most essential. The search for success in the Christian life is no exception. Recognition and application of that which is "priority" is the key.

For a believer in Jesus Christ who seriously wants to understand what his first priority should be, the process is a very simple one. Jesus himself declared it boldly to the inquisitive scribe who came to Him asking about the greatest commandment. The Lord's answer, taken from the Old Testament, left no question, either in the scribe's mind, or in the mind of anyone reading the account. *Jesus said: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30, NASB).*

Case closed. That's a wrap. Time to move on to something else. No! Wait just a minute. The secret to success is not just recognition, but application. So, how does one implement this directive from Scripture into his daily life? Are there some specific things a man can do that will help him "love the Lord"?

TIME WITH GOD

It has been suggested that love could be spelled T-I-M-E. It takes time to love, and when there is no time, love is questioned. For the little boy who never has time with his father, the token words "I love you" at bedtime do not compensate for the lack of attention he received during the day. Oh, the desire to accept those words at face value is obviously present, but before long the absence of relationship invalidates the confession. So it is in the Christian's relationship with God. A couple of choruses on a Sunday morning does not a relationship make. Nor is the first priority of the believer's life firmly established if no time has been taken to solidify the

claim of affection. How does one spend this time loving God?

COMMUNICATION WITH GOD

God does have something to say, when He finds a listening ear

One of the most essential elements in the growth and development of any relationship is communication. Prayer is nothing more than communication with God. Taking time to share needs, fears, feelings, dreams, desires, questions, and concerns. One finds a listening ear always available. In fact, the Old Testament psalmist stated that God "inclines His ear to me," creating the word picture of God cupping His hand behind His ear and turning His head in the direction of the speaker. What a beautiful example of the Father's desire to hear His child! No sense of divided attention, or interrupted communion here. Because He loves, He listens.

But that's not the full extent of the meaning of prayer. Real prayer, true conversation with God, implies time spent listening to Him. Some call it meditation. Whatever the designation, the benefits are unquestionable. The Creator of the universe is allowed to speak into one's soul His thoughts, His desires, His promises. And God does have something to say, when He finds a listening ear.

GETTING TO KNOW GOD

As knowledge grows, appreciation grows, and love deepens

Some have relegated the reading of God's Word to simply being another way of hearing Him speak. But the Word will also reveal the Author himself. Obviously, one of the aspects of a love relationship involves the time to get to know the other person. As one invests himself in the pages of Holy Writ, he becomes more and more aware of just who God is. As knowledge grows, appreciation grows, and love deepens. It is hard to truly love someone you don't know. It is hard to truly love God if He has not become well known to the heart of the lover.

WORSHIPING GOD

Worship is the heart of man adoring God

Time for worship is essential for the person desiring to fulfill his first priority as a Christian. Worship is essentially a form of communication, but it is more than lyrical phrases set in rhythmic patterns. Worship is the heart of man adoring his God. Consequently, there will be times when worship is silent. At such times, words are not capable of expressing the feelings, as a sense of awe comes to the beholder of the beauty, wonder, and majesty of the Lord. At other times worship may take the form of praise, where expressions of exaltation and thanksgiving are verbalized. The greatness, the goodness, and the faithfulness of God are things expressed in songs or prayers. Whether the worship experience is in the quietness of the prayer closet or as a part of the gathering of other believers in a sanctuary, love is being expressed in a moment of intimacy.

Time spent in worship will not only serve as a vehicle for love to be communicated toward God: it will change the mentality of the worshiper. As the character of God is realized and His capabilities become one's personal resource, fears and doubts begin to dissolve. The sense of helplessness and hopelessness that too often becomes a part of the human experience is exchanged for a sense of confidence and assurance that in Him "all things are possible." The majestic replaces the mundane, joy replaces the grind, and peace replaces panic.

TALKING ABOUT GOD

You know when someone loves someone else

There is one other aspect of loving God that must be added. You know when someone loves someone else, he seems to be unable to stop talking about the object of his love. Consider the young man who has found his sweetheart, or the middle-aged person who has discovered the wonder of

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What's On First?

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grandparenting. That person does not need a reason to talk about the one he loves, only the opportunity. So it is with the man who has his priorities in right order. Witnessing is not a requirement of his faith: it is a natural expression of his love.

Success as a Christian begins with understanding one's first priority.

Implementing that focus into one's life takes time: time in prayer, time in the Word, time in worship, and time just talking about Him to others. Is there more to this thing of being a Christian? Are there other activities and involvements that are important? Yes, but none more essential than this: to love God. **UMM**

This article first appeared in the '97/98 edition of Honorbound, a publication of the Assemblies of God - Resources for Growing and Developing Spiritual Men of God.

Men's Life Ad

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They Come For The Show But Refuse To Grow

BY KEITH DRURY

After over two years of producing UMMen Magazine, the staff of the GCUMM felt the need to begin an emphasis on personal transformation; therefore, the last two issues have included articles such as "T-Quest" in an effort to facilitate spiritual transformation in our lives and in the lives of United Methodist Men.

Coincidentally, another publication that we frequently reference has picked up on the same need for Church-wide spiritual transformation. The following article challenged our staff and we hope it challenges you as well.



Sunday evening church attendance has collapsed. Sunday school is in total meltdown. Even our latest discipleship effort, "homes groups"-is now in a tailspin. But morning worship is still doing quite well, especially in big churches, thanks to the facelift we've given it in the last 10 years. People like the lively music, neat sound equipment, cool spotlights, quality drama, need-oriented preaching, and magnificent musicals. Morale is up. Attendance is up. Excitement is up!

But is godliness up? What about Christlikeness and commitment? Or do we have bigger and bigger audiences that come to watch the performance without getting serious about real Christian commitment? This prevalent problem caused Jack Hayford to say of this growing class of churchgoers, "They come for the show but refuse to grow." One minister in a fast-growing church remarked tongue in cheek, "Our people are converted in every way except their mindset, lifestyle, and values."

Mile Wide, Inch Deep

Even after we have gotten people "converted," many still act and think about the same as they did before they were converted. These "secular Christians" claim to be saved but don't

let religion cramp their style. They are consumers, breezing through churches as they would a salad bar, picking and choosing only what appeals to them. They generally select the positive, pleasant benefits of the gospel and leave behind any painful, sacrificial, cross-carrying aspects. I'm delighted that thousands of people like our entry-level, seeker-sensitive services, but the problem is spiritual shallowness. Spiritually, we are gradually becoming a river that's a mile wide and an inch deep. This new caste of Christian is spiritually untransformed. They like church (at least an hour a week of it). A few might even like the warmth of a home support group. But when it comes to committed discipleship, they pass.

This class of Christians is growing faster than all others combined. Some argue these people aren't converted at all. Maybe they're right. Perhaps we have democratized salvation, lowering the threshold to enable just about anyone to call him or herself a Christian with no cost, no change, and no repentance. Our efforts to disciple this class of shallow Christians has largely failed. Can you disciple unconverted people? Instruct them, sure. But really disciple

them? I wonder.

When the church finally gets alarmed at spiritual shallowness, where will it turn? Will we hustle to increase the quality of our dramas and musicals? Will we try to raise the height of our living Christmas trees or purchase more expensive spotlights and higher quality sound boards? Will we launch a dozen more warm support groups? I don't think there is anything wrong with these methods to get people in the door, but the more they succeed, the more first-step Christians we'll have. Where will we turn to make deeper Christians out of the first-steppers?

Back To The Bible?

We will turn where we have always turned - to teaching the Word of God. How else to get the half-converted Christians more fully converted? All kinds of things will get people in the door, but teaching the Word is the only way to get a person's mindset, lifestyle, and values converted.

This means that Bible study classes could make a comeback. I expect in the next decade to see a great "back to the Bible" movement. Some pastors will launch top-level schooling classes with tough standards for homework, tests, and even grades. Sunday school will get back to the Bible as its authority, and the "let's share opinions and pool our ignorance" classes will gradually disappear. Pastors will be tired of limiting their primary ministry to entry-level seekers and will ratchet up the heat in their sermons. We could see a total resurgence of Bible teaching in the next 10 years - from the pulpit and in the classroom. [UMM](#)

This article originally appeared in the August 2000 issue of Current Thoughts and Trends. Keith Drury is a pastor, Christian educator, and author of 12 books, including Holiness for Ordinary People.

Prayer Posture

JIM ROY

Charles Schultz, the late creator of the world famous comic strip, "Peanuts", revealed in an interview shortly before his death, that his children through the years inspired many of his topics. Once, his 7-year-old daughter came in after Sunday School and announced that if you held your hands upside down during prayer, you would get the opposite of what you prayed for.

The United Methodist Men sponsor the toll-free prayer line (800) 251-2468 at The Upper Room where Christian volunteers pray with callers 24 hours, 7 days a week. Having been at the center of the Upper Room Living Prayer Ministry (now celebrating 23 years of prayer ministry) for the last seven years, I have been asked many questions about how to pray and about obstacles to prayer. The most unasked question, however, is about

appropriate or proper physical posture before, during, and after prayer. I say unasked question because when I converse with a person on a

one-to-one basis, then the question comes up. Is there a proper physical way to pray? What's acceptable? What's unacceptable?

There is a formula for design that states, "Form follows Function." This is an excellent phrase to describe our posture for prayer. When we surrender to God's grace and guidance, our form will follow the function. When we take ourselves off the throne and trust God, our physical inhibitions during prayer are released, and then we may be free to enter the joy of listening to the Holy Spirit. When we realize (through the Holy Spirit) that God is wooing us to come into his presence, our bodies will respond in a genuine respect for the Holy Ground we are on.

Wide Eyed

Some say, "Hands reverently placed together pointing up, eyes closed, head bowed, while kneeling." I was modeled that way to pray; however, in the scriptures, I cannot find that model. Jesus raised his hands, prostrated himself, and lifted his eyes in different prayer times. Yet in recent times, I have been deeply moved by the experience of praying with all present with our eyes open. You can actually see the Holy Spirit at work through the eyes of others. This is powerful prayer posture. I

recommend it, while providing the option to any that prefer to close their eyes.

Loud and Proud

Some say, "Pray silently and on your knees." Jesus prayed aloud on many occasions. My Korean friends in Christ taught me a couple of years ago at The Upper Room Prayer and Bible Conference at Lake Junaluska North Carolina, by introducing me to the joyful expression of praying aloud! Everyone was encouraged to pray aloud together. I thought, "This is going to be chaos!" Wrong-O! We all started, at first quietly, praying for our needs and the needs of others. I found myself being able to focus on God in a way I had not experienced. There was a sense that all were addressing God at once and thereby multiplying the blessing of an intimate interactive private moment in

time. It was not just the different way of praying, it was the power of prayer released by God to affirm the necessity of prayer.

Humble Hands

Prayer posture of our hands tells a lot about our attitude of God. There has been much written about body language revealing our true feelings or reactions as opposed to what we say. Due to recent surgery, I had the tables turned on me. In my normal day at the Prayer Center, I am in a care-giving mode as thousands of prayer requests come in over our toll-free prayer line. In those days before the surgery and weeks afterward, I had to receive instead of give. My hands were changed from giving to receiving.

Generally, we do not receive well. Whether it is a compliment or assistance or advice. We don't mind giving, but to receive may somehow obligate us to others. A "handout" means I'm a charity case. Yet prayer is as much about receiving as it is giving. Think about it. In John 17, Jesus prays for himself first (it's OK to pray for yourself first), prays for all disciples, and then he does (and continues to do) an amazing act of unselfish giving at a pivotal point in his life. He prays for you and me. And all we have to do is receive! I have been changed by that revelation. Now when I pray, my hands are out in front of me, open, ready to receive. You may also be changed as you pray with your hands open. Open to God's unlimited grace. Open to the Holy Spirit's wisdom, and to receiving the mind of Christ. Open to the intercession of Jesus the Christ. Open to the convicting and convincing of the Holy Spirit. Open to the fullness of God's gifts. Open to God being at the center of your life.

Any posture for prayer that puts you in the receiving mode is appropriate. Set your prayer spirit free to accept all that God has for you. Release your time with God from any self-imposed barriers or boundaries. The only limits on prayer are the ones we impose. Take the limits off. Prayer Peace. [UMM](#)



Jim Roy is the Director of the Upper Room Prayer in Nashville, Tennessee.

Men and War...

...the subject is loaded with pain and controversy. Christian men should examine their heartfelt convictions about the issues surrounding war. To begin the dialogue, we decided to run this article from a man who is a United Methodist, an Eagle Scout and a conscientious objector.

We want to hear your deep convictions about war. We want to hear from veterans and civilians who have not served in the military. It is our belief that the United Methodist Church is big enough to accommodate a wide range of vantage-points on this subject. It is also our belief that Jesus Christ calls all of His men to be Peace Builders in their lives and in their attitudes.

Larry

Reflections on a God and Country Project

JAYDEE HANSON

War stories were a major part of my childhood since both my parents worked for the military. Our family had lived for nearly five years in Japan while my father was assigned to Johnson Air Force Base outside Tokyo. The stories of uncles wounded and killed fighting the Japanese in World War II were a basic part of our family identity.

In 1967-68, I assisted the chaplain at David Grant hospital (Travis Air Force Base - Fairfield, California) visiting wounded GIs just back from Vietnam. I had already seen first hand the physical destruction of Japan still rebuilding 10-15 years after WWII. Still, those stories had not prepared me for the Vietnam war's effect on the lives of young men. The torn faces and bodies of those young men profoundly moved me. I was 15, barely younger than most of the patients. They had gone to Vietnam fresh and excited, and came back from war barely alive.

Distributing New Testaments and packets of church literature and reading to those blinded in war began to affect me more and more. How could we who claim to be followers of the Prince of Peace inflict injuries like these with napalm, bullets and bombs? Now, in my mind, I saw Asian young men and women with the wounds of these GIs. I could imagine how the Vietnamese wounded must have been suffering, with poor hospital facilities. I could see them lingering and dying.

Twenty-five years after the end of the Vietnam War, I find myself reflecting on my God and Country Award project.

My parents who worked in the military and had brothers killed in the war,

tried to assure me that it was possible to wage war to preserve the peace. Still, the more I visited wounded soldiers, the more convinced I became that war is always sinful; that "Thou shalt not kill" should be taken literally.

Neither my parents, nor the hospital chaplain intended me to become convinced that war and violence are not the way of Jesus Christ. My experience working on my God and Country Award was the first step, though in convincing me that sometimes you serve your country best by putting God first. I decided that I was a conscientious objector to war.

Today, I direct the ministry of the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church that works for peace with Justice. The Peace with Justice offering taken by the United Methodist Churches goes in part to help United Methodists in Africa and other parts of the world develop reconciliation ministries to help heal the wounds of war and prevent new wars. Our office also serves as a place where United Methodist conscientious objectors (COs) male or female can register their opposition to war with their church. The forms young men in the US are required to fill out to register for a possible draft do not allow them to declare their conscientious objection to war, so we provide this service to buttress later government claims. [UMM](#)



Jaydee Hanson, an Eagle Scout, is the Assistant General Secretary for the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society. He is a member of Mt. Olivet UMC in Arlington, Virginia.

A Weekend with God

BY JOSEPH BOSCH

Methodist men worshipped around the fire...

Their mission: To share and each other inspire...

Songs were sung with vigor and feeling...

Testimonies were powerful and very revealing.

Each man shared the love of God...

We prayed for strength to accomplish His plan...

Each man searched his own private soul...

And talked with his partner 'til secrets were told.

Repair came to spiritual parts that were broken...

When men shared things never before spoken...

Methodist men became enthused and excited...

They departed with a mission to be truly united.

Jesus' words were expressed by Larry Malone...

"I am with you always." We're never alone...

When in life we feel lonely in our uncertain search...

Turn to God and the Men of our United Church.

This poem was inspired by a recent Men's Expedition held at the Louisiana Conference Retreat Center in Woodworth, LA. Approximately 45 United Methodist Men attended the event.

FEEDBACK

Continued from page 2

Dear Larry Malone and Staff:

Just wanted to drop a short note to let you know how much I appreciate your work and the power of your publication. It always contains a blessing for my life and contains information I look forward to sharing with other Christian men and brothers.

I enjoyed everything I read, but particularly enjoyed the "T-Quest", "The Fatherless Syndrome" and "Men's Team Training Tips." I hope to see you all at the UMMen Congress.

Have no doubt this is a much needed and very-appreciated resource for our Methodist Connection. Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,

Garth Gilliam

*Associate Council Director
California-Pacific Conference*

Dear Dr. Harris:

My first three months as Chief Scout Executive have gone fast and have been eventful. The support of you and the United Methodist Men is greatly appreciated. I also appreciate you featuring Andrew Muntz of Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania and his Eagle Project. Every Methodist church surely should have a steeple. I suspect and I am sure you will agree that the real winners of this project are the members of the church and Andrew.

*Best Wishes,
Roy L. Williams
Chief Scout Executive*



Andrew Muntz

Twelve Not-So-Angry Men

The Story of Christian Leadership Concepts - Equipping Men to Reach a City

Even before Jesus' time the number twelve has signified leadership, government, authority and decision making. Now, two thousand years later, Nashville-based Christian Leadership Concepts (CLC) has implemented a similar twelve-man discipleship model that can be used by churches and men's ministries nationwide.

God led Dr. Hal Hadden to begin CLC in 1982. Over the years, hundreds of men have participated in CLC's 2-year groups. CLC's efforts and prayers are directed toward the hope that Jesus Christ will raise up and prepare individuals in every division of labor and from every denomination for an unprecedented revival in Christ throughout the USA and world.

The purpose of CLC is to bring glory to God by equipping men to initiate and lead for Christ in their homes, churches, places of business, and community at large. The only way that people find true meaning, fulfillment and purpose is through developing intimacy with our Creator through a personal relationship with His son, Jesus Christ. CLC's two-year equipping process is

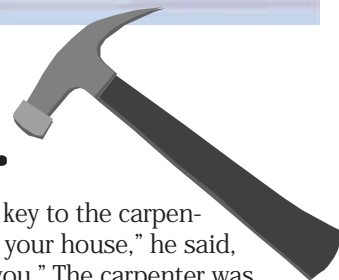
designed to model, teach and encourage practical application of biblical principles, which build a foundation for living in Christ.

CLC began out of a call to emphasize the message of Ephesians 4:11-13: "It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors, and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." This foundational scripture has provided CLC with a firm theological basis for ministry.

Men who are led to start a CLC group can be trained and certified by attending one of several co-facilitator training sessions held throughout the course of the year.

For more information about CLC and how you can equip men to reach your city, please call Ron Doyle at (615) 370-5020. [UMM](#)

If I Had A Hammer...



An elderly carpenter was finally ready to retire after many years of work. He told his employer of his plans to leave the house-building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife and grandkids. He and his wife would miss the paycheck, but they both agreed that it was time to retire.

The employer was very sorry to see one of his most dedicated workers go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter agreed, but in time it was plain to see that his heart simply was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work the employer came to inspect the house. Instead of going in, the boss

handed the key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you." The carpenter was shocked! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then with a shock we realize we have to live in the house we have built. If we could do it over, we would do it much differently. But we cannot go back.

You are the carpenter. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. "Life is a do-it-yourself project," someone has said. Your attitudes and the choices you make today, build the 'house' you live in tomorrow. Build wisely! [UMM](#)

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