

Mission Moments – June 29, 2007  
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From the Center for U.S. Missions  
Following Jesus into the U.S. Mission Field  
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## Men and Church by Kevin Kosberg

I am a guy, and I am about to confess to you one of my darkest secrets. If I weren't a pastor, I am not sure that I would go to church very often. There is a reality in 21<sup>st</sup> century America that our church is dealing with: most men don't like church.

In his recent book, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, David Murrow gives reasons for his somewhat shocking title.

1. Men don't like to sing in public.

Think about how much of our worship involves singing. Look around at your next worship service and notice how many men are participating but not singing.

2. Men don't really like to talk about their feelings or to talk about relationships.

Think about how your church talks about following Jesus. Most of us use the picture of a relationship with Jesus. We tell men that they grow in that relationship by sitting around and talking about how the Bible impacts their life.

3. Most men love a challenge, a chance to risk and to put their faith into action.

Consider having more opportunities for the men in your church to grow through service. I had a real learning experience when twelve men from our congregation spent a week in New Orleans after hurricane Katrina. We did not spend a ton of time in the Bible each day, but instead put faith into action, shoulder to shoulder, as we "mucked out" houses, shingled roofs and ate and played together. I bet those twelve men would say they grew more in their faith that week than at any other time in their lives.

4. Men respect and expect excellence and quality.

But excellence and quality are probably not the first two words that pop into the average man's mind when he thinks about church. Think seriously about how your church can strive for excellence and quality in all the areas of your ministry; from the music to the messages; from the way the church is decorated to the activities you offer men. God is worthy of our best efforts and so are the men (and women) who have yet to come to know His grace in Jesus.

After reading *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, our staff and men's ministry leaders began to think about the messages we are sending to men. Here are some changes we are trying to make.

1. We changed our men's ministry from monthly dinner meetings with a Bible study to what we call Men's Ministry Adventures. These adventures are quick hitting, fun, risky get-aways for men. A group hiked down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and camped there for a few days. We took a group of men white water rafting in the mountains, and we have golf weekends. We are also looking at a home remodeling ministry in some of the poorer parts of Phoenix. The goal is to get guys side by side, living out their faith.
2. We have also tried hard to become more sensitive about how we talk about following Jesus. We try to use that exact phrase – "to follow Jesus" -- as much as possible. It implies motion and movement, things that appeal to men. In messages, we talk about what it looks like to follow Jesus in marriage, at work, while using our money, and so on. We believe this picture is more helpful to men. After all, Jesus called His disciples to follow Him.

I encourage you to look closely at how your church connects with men and encourage you to read David Murrow's *Why Men Hate Going to Church*.

Rev. Kevin Kosberg is pastor at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Anthem, Arizona.

## Moment Extras

### Reflection Questions

1. In your experience, do you think men don't like church?
2. How would you rate your congregation on how well you meet the needs of men?
3. If you wanted to make some changes in how you work with the men of your community and congregation, who would you involve in that process? List 5 or so people who could help you evaluate and plan.

### Books & More

"The Religion of Masculinity: Why Men Hate Church" by David Murrow  
at <http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/ChurchAndMinistry/menhatingchurch.aspx>

In this article, David Murrow lays the foundation for his book, *Why Men Hate Church*.

*Why Men Hate Going to Church* Reviewed by Jamie Dunlop  
At [www.9marks.org/](http://www.9marks.org/), use the site search at the bottom of the page and search for Jamie Dunlop.

In this fair review of Murrow's book, Dunlop agrees in part but points out where he believes the book falls short in practical application.

Website: <http://www.churchformen.com/>

From the website: *At Church for Men, we help churches create an environment where men can thrive in every aspect of church life. Instead of creating a little outpost of masculinity called men's ministry, we help churches unleash the masculine spirit throughout the organization.*

This website provides ideas, articles, links, resources and more for those looking for ways to engage men in the church.

Research: "Women Are the Backbone of the Christian Congregations in America"  
by George Barna  
at <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=47>

George Barna's research, while supporting the vital role of women in the church, points to the involvement or lack of involvement by men in the church. What implications do you see in Barna's research for your congregation's ministry with men?

Book: *The Call* by Os Guinness

Jesus' invitation/command to "Follow Me" is the subject of Guinness's thought-provoking book. He is not writing specifically to men nor to the organized church, but to all who are seriously looking for meaning and purpose in their life. But the manner in which he holds up answering Jesus' call as a life-changing, risk-taking adventure with world-changing consequences connects with Murrow's premises, and provides food for thought within the church.

## News from the Center

How does a potential church planter clarify whether or not God has given him the specific calling and the necessary gifts, skills and character to be a lead church planter? How does he know what those needed gifts and skills are? How does a sponsoring agency verify whether or not a specific individual has these needed gifts?

The Church Planter Assessment Center (CPAC), a new offering of the Center for U.S. Missions, is a 4-day experience designed to answer those vital questions. CPAC uses research-based church planter qualifications and multiple perspectives, trained assessors, behavioral interviews, proven self-awareness inventories, self-discovery experiences, group projects, carefully gathered references, testing and interviews by a licensed Christian psychologist, all under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, to prayerfully evaluate candidates.

LCMS/World Mission endorses and encourages CPAC as a supplemental strategy for supporting the Church Planting movement (2000 new congregations in the USA by 2017), which is part of the *Ablaze!* initiative. The first of a planned series of LCMS Church Planter Assessment Centers will be held at the Ohio District Office on August 27-30, 2007.

The registration fee for candidates sponsored by LCMS districts or parent churches is \$250 for the candidate and \$250 for the candidate's spouse, if applicable. LCMS World Mission provides an additional \$1500 per person scholarship to round out the full cost of assessment. Candidates not sponsored by a LCMS agency pay \$1800. The registration fee covers pre-assessment tools, all on-site assessments and activities, lunches, supper and snacks Monday through Thursday, and concluding reports for the candidate and sponsoring agency. All applications, references and assessment tools must be completed and submitted by August 8, 2007.

For complete information and to register, see [www.centerforusmissions.org](http://www.centerforusmissions.org) > Seminars and click on this event.

**Thinking about "On the Edge: Training for Missional Leaders"?**  
**Save by registering now; late fees begin July 2nd**

Newly added to On the Edge: Training for Missional Leaders: Designing Worship to Engage the Culture, Friday, July 27, 7:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. It can be taken as a stand-alone seminar for \$95 per person (\$250 for up to 5 people from the same congregation) and is also available FREE to registrants of Advanced Mission Planter Training, Mission Coach Certification Training and Behavioral Interviewing Training. . Presenter: Rev. Michael Zehnder. For complete information, follow links at [www.centerforusmissions.org/ontheedge/](http://www.centerforusmissions.org/ontheedge/).

More info on the other On The Edge: Training for Missional Leaders seminars in Irvine, California at [www.centerforusmissions.org/ontheedge/](http://www.centerforusmissions.org/ontheedge/).

- Basic Mission Planters Training, July 23-27
- Advanced Mission Planters Training, July 23-27
- Facilitating Church Planting Movements, July 25-26
- Mission Coach Certification Training, July 23-24
- Behavioral Interviewing Training, July 23-24

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*Mission Moments*, a biweekly electronic newsletter from the Center for U.S. Missions, brings information and encouragement to all who desire to share the God's great love in Jesus Christ with others. The Center for U.S. Missions provides research and training for mission work among unevangelized people in the United States. A partnership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod World Missions, Concordia University in Irvine, California, and the North America Mission Executives of the LCMS, the Center serves all Christian denominations.

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