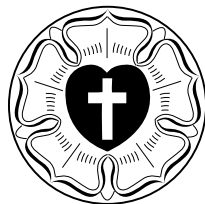


OUR INTERNATIONAL



Call to be Family



Summer/Fall 2000

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Loving one another as Christ first loved us and
celebrating the gift of marriage for a quarter of a century

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How about a ring of circles, like couples in a group hug?

Dear Lovers,

It was January of 1977. We were still high from our December Encounter experience. Our weekend had dramatically reignited our love for each other and for the Lord. We were ready to do just about anything for Marriage Encounter in response to the wondrous blessing we had received from our weekend

When we saw a plea to help with the planned Lutheran Marriage Encounter Convention to be held in Long Beach, California, we eagerly volunteered to assist with the graphics for the convention. This was a major step for us. We had been home-bodies for most of our marriage, saying that we didn't need to socialize. We believed that our family was enough. That's still true, the only difference is that our family has expanded greatly – around the world, in fact!

One of the first projects for that first convention (we now call them

family reunions) was to design a logo for the convention. I (Hal) began exploring various concepts, without much success, when Marilyn suggested, "How about a ring of circles, like couples in a group hug." It was truly God's inspiration and with His guiding hand, the design was completed and incorporated into all convention graphics.

As the convention grew closer, we felt more excited each day. Trying to imagine a parking lot filled with hundreds of cars all with M.E. decals gave us goose-bumps. We felt eager as we anticipated meeting encountered couples coming from all over the nation.

One of those couples was Don & Karen Kurtz, the couple who first had the dream of bringing Marriage Encounter to the Lutheran Church. Upon seeing our convention graphics they suggested that the design be used as the logo for Lutheran Marriage Encounter, which in May of 1977 had

been incorporated as "Call to be Family." We felt deeply moved and blessed to have been used by God.

The convention theme banner measured a generous (we thought) 3x5 feet. Banners from many communities were hung from the ceiling of the gymnasium at Cal State at Long Beach. We were in for a disappointment. When we entered the gymnasium, our banner looked no larger than a postage stamp and was practically lost among all the other banners! We learned our lesson. For the next reunion we made a new banner that was much, much larger.

Preparing this issue of "Call to be Family" has made us realize how much Marriage Encounter has enriched our lives. We feel so thankful for the privilege of being a small part of His ministry to marriages.

We Love you,
Hal & Marilyn



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NAR Executives Report



Dan & Judy Teuscher, NAR Clergy Executive Couple Pam & Jim Bush, NAR Lay Executive Couple

“Celebrating Marriage” in St. Paul.

An Awesome Reunion

Greetings in the name of our AWESOME God!

Wow! What a celebration! Pam & I, and Dan & Judy are still glowing from the 25th Anniversary Celebration of Lutheran Marriage Encounter in St. Paul, Minn. We joined with 140+ other couples who celebrated with us “The Gifts of Love.” It was a wonderful experience. Thanks District III.

We also have some news for you.

1.) Dan & Judy and Pam & I are now holding two roles, North American Region Lay and Clergy Contact Couple, plus we are also for the next two years the Lay and Clergy Contact Couples for the International Council of Lutheran Marriage Encounter. We need your prayers as we assume this new role.

2.) We have placed in our Lutheran publications (*The Lutheran Witness* and *The Lutheran*) full color page ads that will run for the next three months (*The Lutheran Witness* – October and December, *The Lutheran* – November). Our goal is to create excitement about our new Weekend. Please see your pastors and church leaders during the next few weeks and alert them to this major advertising effort. Remember, couples will not attend a Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekend unless YOU invite them. The ads are only designed to lay the ground

work for your inviting efforts. That way we can maximize our weekend registrations. Praise God!

3.) We are now back to a two (2) year rotation for the International Family Reunions. That means in the year 2002, we will again join together as “A Family” to celebrate the love He has given us on the weekend and in our marriage relationships

We want to thank you for your love and support. Your words of encouragement, your hugs, and your prayers are very important to us. Thank you for being special.

We Love You!

Jim & Pam Bush Dan & Judy Teuscher
NAR Lay Contact Couple NAR Clergy Contact Couple
Psalms 47:2a “How awesome is the LORD Most high,”



By Hal & Marilyn Printup

It was a beautiful day in St. Paul/Minneapolis when we arrived on July 21 for the ILME Family Reunion. Preceding the trip we had kept a wary eye on the weather reports from Minnesota wondering whether it would be unbearably hot or pouring rain. As we flew in, the sky was brilliant blue with a scattering of popcorn clouds and the temperature was perfect. We believe that the ideal weather was the Lord's gift to begin the "Gifts of Love" ILME 25th Anniversary Celebration.

After the 1997 ILME Reunion in St. Louis, District III had committed to host the first ILME Reunion of the new millennium. It would be held at Concordia University in St. Paul, MN on July 21-23, 2000. A committee of energized couples, led by Reunion

Coordinators Larry & Coke Guilfoile, Pete & Phyllis McMahon and Orval & Bernell Moren, began making plans, writing poems and songs, searching for speaker couples, and accomplishing the myriad of tasks that reunion organizers face. Now, after months of preparation, the Minneapolis/St. Paul Lutheran Marriage Encounter community began greeting couples arriving from all over the world.

The excitement built as we made our way to the registration desk at Concordia University. We looked forward to seeing old friends



as well as couples who we know only by name or voice, hoping to be able to give them a real live hug. We also appreciate the "gift of family" that we discovered in 1976 when we first experienced the special love of Christ shared between Marriage Encounter couples. Because of that love, we felt confident that even couples whom we had never met previously would be open to us because of our shared weekend experience.

The Reunion began with substance. First, with a hearty outdoor barbecue on the beautiful green campus of Concordia University, then with the Friday evening opening session of the reunion in the Buetow Music Center. We learned the specially written reunion song "Gift of Love." We received a warm District III welcome; the North American



Region Board and the European Region Executives were introduced and, without missing a beat, Michael & Harriet McManus got right down to business with the first of their two keynote presentations. It was entitled “The Gift of Commitment.” Michael & Harriet are an encountered couple and are deeply committed to marriages. They see Marriage Encounter as vitally important to renewing and strengthening married couple relationships. They also believe that encountered couples can and should take an active part in being positive role models for engaged and young married couples. Michael is author



of the book "Marriage Savers" and he leads a movement designed to reduce the divorce rate by establishing community marriage policies. In communities where this has been effectively enacted, the divorce rate has significantly declined. You can get more details at www.marriagesavers.com

In addition to being keynote speakers, Mike and Harriet participated fully in the reunion activities.

We were puzzled by the unique colorful visual symbols on our nametags that we received when we registered for the Reunion. After the keynote presentation, our curiosity was satisfied when we were asked to gather in groups according to our symbols. We stayed with our group for the entire weekend, and as each presentation was concluded, we went to our assigned meeting place. In our small group sharing we grew closer to the other couples as we risked vulnerability and built trust as the weekend progressed.

Friday concluded with some informal socializing. Then couples headed for their rooms, some to the university dorms, some to their RVs and some to the hotel across the street.

Early Saturday morning, through sleepy eyes, we followed the directional signs to the cafeteria for breakfast. After an uplifting morning devotional service led by Bruce & Ila Zellmer and Russ & Anne Hillman, we attended our first





Panel Presentation. The Panel of Couples shared on “The Gift of Kindness,” then a discussion was facilitated by the moderator couple, David & Jean Fell.

Following the panel discussion, we had the opportunity to hear and reflect on one of the new songs now being used on the new weekends, “The Rose.” We wrote our love letter and dialogued, then we gathered with our small group for sharing. This would be the format for each panel presentation.



Throughout the weekend, there were other panel presentations on the gifts of Humility, Forgiveness and Caring. We also listened to the two other new weekend songs , “Because You Loved Me” and “If Tomorrow Never Comes.”

Saturday night brought more singing, entertainment and the second keynote address by Mike and Harriet McManus on “The Gift of Hope.” Following the late evening dialoguing and sharing time



we were treated to a fabulous Ice Cream and Cake Social. Couples relaxed and enjoyed fun and fellowship over generous helpings of delicious ice cream and cake.

We awoke on Sunday morning, sadly realizing that this would be the last day of the Reunion. After breakfast, if they hadn't done so before, many couples made sure they visited the bookstore which featured books by Mike McManus, Otto Tollefson and Warren Hanson. Some made a bid at the silent auction on the many unique items donated by reunion couples or ordered their memory book.

Throughout the reunion, child care and activities were provided for families with children.

The theme for the service on Sunday was "The Gift of Spirit." Participants in the service were Orval & Bernell Moren, Dan & Judy Teuscher, Fred & Marilyn Illick, Jerry & Lyn Brownlee. LeRoy & Fran Ettling provided stirring accompaniment on the University's magnificent pipe organ. LeRoy turned the pages.

Following warnings of dire consequences for not turning in room keys, we gathered outdoors on the grass for a final circle and sang our "...New World..." song. Picnicking on the grass was interspersed with visiting and goodbye hugs as we tried



to prolong the last special moments of the 25th Anniversary ILME Reunion. Pete & Phyllis McMahon were seen late into the evening and the next morning tirelessly shuttling couples to the airport.

As we reflect on that wonderful weekend, ILME owes thanks to the "Gifts of Love" Reunion Committee for their exceptional gifts of dedication and hard work that made it all possible. They are:

Coordinators – Larry & Coke Guilfoile, Pete & Phyllis McMahon, and Orval & Bernell Moren; Registration – Tom & Sheila Cochran; Technology – Greg & Beth Johnson; Banners – Richard & Mavis Johnson; Airport Host – Gerald & Freda Mindrum; Table Center Pieces – Mike & Marcia Harrington; Shirts – Bernie & Ramona Hjulberg; Silent Auction – Bob & Cindy Heidelberger, Dean &

Marcia Redman and Steve & Carol Spieker; Gift Store – Jeffa & Gloria Wilcox; Child Care – Bonnie Houger and youth. Memory Book – Roger & Fern Lindemeier and Richard & Mavis Johnson.

Photographs for this article were provided by Greg & Beth Johnson and Fred & Julie Schamber. There are additional reunion photos taken by Fred & Julie that can be viewed on the Internet at <http://ir.clubphoto.com/frederick249692/>







The Gift of Spirit

This article is taken from Dan & Judy Teuscher's message in the closing service of the International Family Reunion held at St. Paul, Minnesota, in July, 2000.

THE GIFT OF SPIRIT. It is the greatest gift because the Holy Spirit is the One who makes possible all the other gifts. He makes possible all "The Gifts of Love" we have been hearing about and experiencing these past few days and throughout our marriage. THE GIFT OF SPIRIT. It is our relationship lived out. It is where the love of Jesus Christ gets out of ourselves and into our love relationship with our spouse. It is the spirit of our marriage which shows up with that spontaneous hug or kiss; those meaningful touches; those playful times; that pat on the butt; the flirting with each other. It is when we affirm and support and cheer our partner on.

THE GIFT OF SPIRIT takes the Spirit. And the good news is that God has no desire to isolate or keep Himself away from our marriages and us. He finds no joy in being a 'married single.' Rather He longs to come to us and be in our home and lives. Jesus once said, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" Boy! Keep asking! Flood

Heaven with requests for the Holy Spirit. But then give God a chance to answer you. As a couple, use the very means through which He works in your heart. Saturate yourself with God's Word every day and partake of ... Holy Communion frequently.

What a joy and comfort it is for Judy and me to know that when we sit down and have our devotions together, the Holy Spirit is there giving us Himself and everything He is—"The Gifts of Love." He nourishes our faith and strengthens our relationship with Jesus Christ and with each other. And we experience a whole new spirit and atmosphere in our coupleness....

The Early Church discovered all

of this in a hurry. The Bible tells us, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers." The Early Christians gathered together as the family of God. They studied and worshipped. They prayed together and celebrated Holy Communion. They praised God and enjoyed one another. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." The Spirit of God was there imparting Himself and His gifts to the people. He empowered them for living.

Not too long ago, a psychologist did a study on energy levels in children. His findings are



Orval & Bernell Moren, Lyn & Jerry Brownlee, Marilyn & Fred Illick and Judy & Dan Teuscher

fascinating. He found that when tired children are given a word of praise or commendation, there is an immediate upward surge of new energy. When the children were criticized and discouraged, the study showed that the children's physical energy took a sudden nose-dive. I suspect that these results could also be applied to us as married couples. When Judy praises me, my energy levels go up and I am energized to go forward that day. When I criticize Judy, her energy levels go down and I push her into a sullen mood. What then is one of the most helpful roles that we can play in one another's lives as Christ's 'little Church' or in the larger Body? It is to praise one another, encourage one another, and pray for one another. The Holy Spirit is in the delivery business. He uses us to deliver the goods, to deliver "The Gifts of Love," first to our spouse, then to our children and others. That includes delivering forgiveness when we have been hurt by our spouse, or confessing our wrongs and asking for their forgiveness....

Professional speaker, Joe Larson, once said, "My friends didn't believe that I could become a successful speaker. So I did something about it. I went out and found me some new friends!" Now, I am not suggesting going out and finding a new spouse. But there is some wisdom in Joe Larson's comment. Many of us can think of times when encouragement from a Christian friend made all the difference in the world. Especially when that friend was a person of deep commitment to Christ. They brought to us THE GIFT OF SPIRIT and we were energized and empowered.

A Harvard University professor

was greatly troubled with some problem. He wanted desperately to meet Phillip Brooks, the hymn writer and beloved preacher of another generation. He was able to get that appointment, and after spending about an hour with Phillip Brooks, he came away from that session a changed man. Later, it dawned on him that he had forgotten to ask Brooks about his problem.

**...we tend to forget
the source of our
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God-pleasing life and
marriage. We try to
go it alone.**

He told a friend, "It didn't make any difference, because I had found out that what I needed was not the solution to my problem, but the contagion of triumphant spirit." I like that phrase, "the contagion of triumphant spirit." That's the kind of spirit Peter and all the other disciples had on Pentecost and the months and years following. That's the kind of spirit that we need in our marriages. That's the kind of spirit I pray that we all have for this ministry of Lutheran Marriage Encounter....

A man at an airport was worried about missing his plane. He didn't have a watch, and he couldn't seem to find a clock. He hurried up to a stranger and asked, "Excuse me, sir, could you tell me the time please?" The stranger smiled and said, "Sure." He set down the two large suitcases he was carrying and looked at his wristwatch. "It is 6:08; the temperature is 75; the barometric pressure is 30.19 and falling. Rain is predicted. In

Madrid, the sky is clear and the temperature is 28 degrees Celsius. In Turkey, the weather is sultry and the moon is full." "Your watch tells you all that?" the man asks. "Oh, yes...and much more. You see, I invented this watch." Said the man. "I'll give you \$2,000 for it right now!" "No; it's not for sale," said the stranger as he picked up his suitcases. "Wait! \$4,000. I'll pay you \$4,000." "No, I can't," said the stranger. "You see, it has great sentimental value for me." The man thought if only he could get hold of this watch. He could paten it and make a fortune. "OK; listen." "I'll write you a \$10,000 check right now." The stranger thought for a moment. "\$10,000? Well, OK. It's yours for \$10,000." The man was absolutely elated. He wrote out a check to the stranger, took the watch and put it on his wrist with great joy. They shook hands as he thanked the man, and then turned to leave to catch his plane. "Wait!" said the stranger. With a big smile he handed the 2 heavy suitcases to the man and added, "Don't forget the batteries."

A bizarre story! But isn't this what happens in our busy lives? We want a quick fix for our coupleness with all the trimmings; but we tend to forget the source of our power for living a God-pleasing life and marriage. We try to go it alone. We even get involved in M.E., but we still find ourselves all tied up in knots. We feel stressed out and lonely, and wonder, "Where is this abundant life the Bible speaks about?" As great as M.E. is, as great as M.E. has been for Judy and me these past 24+ years that we have been involved, it is not the essence of the spirit. It is only a tool. The essence and the power of the spirit is the Word of God. "Don't forget the

batteries.” Let God energize and empower you for an exciting marriage—a marriage with spirit.

The believers in Jesus’ day were not only Spirit-FED, they were also Spirit-SENT. The fire of the Holy Spirit set their hearts aflame. And the believers went forth and proclaimed the Good News of Jesus Christ. They shared the Scriptures which pointed to Jesus as the promised Messiah—the very One whom the people crucified; the very One who rose again from the dead and lives forever. The Scripture tells us that God invaded this world to indwell in a new way. He established a beachhead, a launching pad to carry out His battle plans for conquering the world. And that way is through those in whom He has taken up residence; through you and me.

Richard Lederer is a teacher and writer who collects such things as unintentionally funny headlines and signs... People magazine did a story on Lederer. Their photographer asked Lederer to think about setting up a humorous, posed picture that would somehow summarize his work. That proved to be no problem. On the outskirts of town stood a telephone pole with the street sign ELECTRIC AVENUE. Right below it is a yellow diamond

traffic sign announcing NO OUTLET. Let’s not let that happen with our life. Let us not experience God’s electricity in this M.E. Reunion but find no outlet. Let us not experience God’s *Gifts of Love* and then neglect to share that love and power with other unencountered couples.

Former speaker of The Lutheran Hour, Dr. Oswald Hoffmann, put it this way, *“The world needs people on fire with faith... with love...with the power of the Spirit. The world needs people who have left behind those former days of apathetic and lukewarm commitment. It needs people who are revved up for Christ, turned on for God, fiery followers of Christ, dreaming impossible dreams, bearing impossible loads, fighting unbeatable foes, and marching into hell itself with a heavenly cause.”*

On this 25th anniversary of LME, ask God sincerely for a fresh touch and release of the Holy Spirit in your life and in your marriage. Ask God sincerely to show His power through your love relationship; to move in this world in a powerful way through you. Lose yourself in the cause of our Savior who died so that we and others might live—really live now and forever.



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MISSION STATEMENT

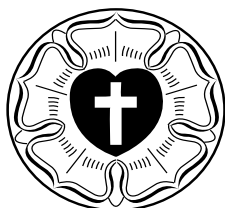
Lutheran Marriage Encounter is a ministry dedicated to assisting married couples to live fully intimate and responsible relationships by providing an Encounter Weekend experience as well as ongoing community support.

VISION STATEMENT

The Lutheran Church renewed and our world changed through strengthened couple relationships and stronger personal relationships with Christ.

YOUR GIFTS TO THE ENDOWMENT-DREAM FUND WILL HELP KEEP ILME ALIVE

There are many ways to give: Life Insurance, Real Estate, Securities, Memorial Gifts, Wills, IRAs, Personal property.



For details contact: Endowment Dream Fund
Lutheran Marriage Encounter
P.O. Box 510-335
St. Louis, MO 63151
314-846-2490

