

Media • Communications • Publicity
Craig & Connie Leinicke
February 1 - 3, 2013

The team spirit and support of the NARLME Board – as a whole, as couples, and as individuals – continued throughout the second half of 2012. We are so grateful to God that He has such a wonderful group of disciples working for Him!

JOYS

GodLovesMarriage.org

Now fully functional for almost 11 months, GodLovesMarriage.org is being tweaked continuously to add user interactivity and information.

- Traffic analytics concerning unique visitors and Weekend registrations as of Feb. 1, 2013 will be distributed at the meeting.
- Continuous site maintenance is accomplished as Weekends are scheduled and filled, as are blog entries to positively influence site visibility in natural online searches by couples.
- Google location functionality has been added for every Weekend that supplies us the hotel location address.
- Photos of Weekend hotels are used as hotel names/locations are provided. This is being done due to the fact that the #1 question coming into info@godlovesmarriage.org is “What hotel is this being held at?” About half of the 2013 Weekends now include a hotel photo on the site.

GodLovesMarriage.org Facebook Page

- Facebook page analytics as of Feb. 1, 2013 will be distributed at the meeting.
- Posts are made several times per week using a “today’s world” voice and include Scripture, positive general messages, and positive couple relationship/marriage observations.
- On Sunday, October 8, 2012 we (Craig & Connie) conducted an experiment regarding LME’s Facebook interest using \$20 of our own donated money. We placed a Facebook “ad” targeted to Christian married couples, and 24 hours later GLM had gained 423 new “likes”
- NARLME’s 2013 Schedule of Weekends has been added to the GodLovesMarriage.org Facebook Page “Events” section. *We recommend that all Team Couples assigned to a Weekend “Join” these Events on the GLM Facebook page to show support.*

GodLovesMarriage.org Church Eblasts

- Eblasts have been sent for LME areas having Weekends since April 2012. As expected, eblast open rates have met with both successes and disappointments in this first year of effort. Analytics reports for each eblast sent to date will be distributed at the Feb. 1-3 Board meeting.
- In 2013, we have implemented a strategy/tactic in which each eblast carries the “signature” of a Board Clergy couple specific to that Weekend, District, or Area. This pastor-to-pastor emphasis in communication is being made to increase LME’s transparency with churches we are emailing to verify LME’s credibility, communications with churches across North America, and eblast open rates.

- Databases of LCMS, ELCA, and NALC church email addresses in all 50 US states as well as all of Canada were built electronically by Leinicke Group staff members and are stored digitally for future use. (NALC churches are being harvested from its internet mapping function and are not yet complete.)
- Because of the intensive nature of the database build during 2012, we have just begun the next step of database maintenance – notifying districts/areas of invalid church email addresses in our database. This is a time-consuming task, and we are distributing to District Execs the invalid addresses we have harvested from Constant Contact so that districts/areas can match these “old” addresses to churches in their master database and either make phone calls to those churches and/or check “Find a Church” online within the ELCA and LCMS websites to harvest new addresses (preferably for both the head pastor and the church secretary). We are grateful that several areas (Seattle, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Central Illinois, Ohio) are already proactively working with us to update their databases.

ACTION ITEM: Areas desiring our help for eblasts should contact us at: conniel@leinickegroup.com approximately 4 months prior to a Weekend and provide Weekend specific information (Weekend date, venue name, location address, and application/registration couple and Clergy couple names/address/email/phone). Areas that do not want ongoing support from us should let us know at the above email address as well.

LME Trifolds

- A total of 30,000 new trifolds were printed and distributed to LME Reunion attendees in lots of 100 at registration and in boxes of 1,200 to District/Area leadership couples for distribution. Only 4 boxes were delivered to the Sennes in July 2012, which they now are very close to exhausting. At the Sennes’ request, an additional 10,000 brochures have been printed and will be available for distribution to Areas/Districts at the Feb. 1-3 Board meeting. The remainder will be sent to the Sennes for distribution.
- Area eblasts now offer delivery of 100 free brochures to church requests. Any church responding to this offer via email to info@godlovesmarriage.org is forwarded to that area’s Application Couple for follow-up with a warm Thank You for their interest in LME, verification of whose attention to send the brochures to, and mailing of the brochures *stickered with their contact information*. This new procedure appears to be met with enthusiasm by application/registration couples so far.

LME Business Cards

A new business card design matching the new GodLovesMarriage.org graphics was provided as an editable PDF for district/area personalization of contact information. Jake Rabatin has added this electronic file to the ilme.org website.

LME Membership Cards

Per Fred & Julie Schamber’s request at the July 2012 NARLME Board meeting, we created a membership card design matching the new GodLovesMarriage.org graphics and provided it as an editable PDF for personalization. This card can be included as part of each Weekend packet for couples who complete a Weekend. Jake Rabatin has added this to the ilme.org website.

LME Letterhead

An LME letterhead template was created as an editable Word document and sent to NARLME Board members for distribution to all areas via email. Jake Rabatin has also posted this electronic file to the ilme.org website for use.

LME Poster Template

We have created an 8.5" x 11" poster template at the request of several areas as an editable Word document for use on church bulletin boards. Jake Rabatin has posted this template to the ilme.org website for use.

CHALLENGES

Personal Inviting

As we emphasized in our presentation at the 2012 ILME Reunion in Dallas, TX, it is important for all NARLME encountered couples to understand that the new national GLM website, eblasts, Facebook page, and Twitter account are **not** meant to *replace* personal inviting, but to establish credibility for LME as an international, trustworthy marriage/family ministry resource for churches and married couples. *We appreciate each District leadership's help in successfully communicating this message to NARLME encountered couples in an ongoing manner.*

Local Area Publicity

Local LME areas appear somewhat confused at this point regarding how they can/should proceed given the national branding program and eblast publicity program to churches. It is important that every area be made aware of and understand how/what the national campaign can and cannot do for them. *We recommend that all areas having success with local efforts to please continue those efforts within the churches they can reach using the new branding message. In addition, all TV and Radio publicity efforts remain the responsibility of local areas until further notice. We will be happy to provide advice, branding graphics for TV, and written Public Service Announcements for local areas to send to their local media outlets based on their specific needs. Areas should contact us at info@godlovesmarriage.org for our help with these efforts. We ask District leadership couples to make area publicity support teams aware of these parameters.*

Lodging Cutoff Dates

One marketing challenge for LME is when Weekend dates must be pulled from the website due to Weekend lodging venue required cutoff dates. Data collected since the March 2, 2012 re-launch of GLM shows that a number of today's couples wait to apply/register until 2 weeks or less before a Weekend due to work, child care, and health issues. Communicating lodging cutoff dates to us at the time we are first contacted about eblasts is important so we can incorporate these cutoff dates into the prepared bulletin announcements using the words "Apply by ____." This will allow us to establish a published "deadline" that will force more couples to make earlier decisions regarding attending a Weekend. *We strongly recommend adding the "Apply by ____" information to each Weekend's website page as further encouragement to couples to make an early decision. We are already asking areas for venue guarantee dates to make more Weekends a "GO." (Discussion Question: Can LME establish a procedure to negotiate with various hotel chains for guarantee dates closer to a Weekend date?)*

Clergy Engagement with LME

Ongoing brainstorming and discovery is necessary by the NARLME Board regarding strategies and tactics to approach and gain the acceptance and support of pastors for LME. Two suggestions have already been mentioned:

- Continuing education credits through Synods (Bud & Cindy Amack's suggestion)
- Interaction with seminaries (Dan & Judy Teuscher's suggestion)

Continued Board brainstorming and discussion for additional strategies and focused execution tactics are necessary to accomplish this important goal.

Weekend Payments

Following numerous requests from Board members for the ability to pay via check at GodLovesMarriage.org, this payment option was implemented in August 2012 with resultant kinks and concerns in communications between Application Couples and District Finance Couples. Process improvements are being instituted now in which the Application Couples will receive the actual check payment, complete the couple's registration, and forward the check on to the District Finance Couple. This revised process has already eliminated much confusion for both the Application Couples and the District Finance Couples.

Trifold Brochure Distribution to Churches

It is important that the new trifold brochures "work" effectively to spread LME's message and not languish inside boxes in our closets. Strategies and tactics for district/area distribution of brochures include:

- Schedule a monthly "area blitz" mailing of 25 brochures to 1/12 of all churches in each area along with an LME cover letter that supplies churches with more info about LME. This "bulky" mailer can be mailed at the lower "media rate" via USPS and allows area leadership to get in front of churches in which they may not already have access.

Brainstorming and discussion by the NARLME Board regarding additional strategies and tactics to make the new brochures "work" hard for LME is important.

Social Media

With both a Facebook page (GodLovesMarriage.org) and a Twitter account (GodLuvsMarriage), NARLME encountered couples who are active on these social media platforms should make the effort to "Like" the Facebook page and "Follow" the Twitter account in order to grow awareness and influence of these two outreach efforts. One important challenge here is that we must keep both of these accounts' conversations/posts "today's world" based. Our goal is to attract couples to GodLovesMarriage.org through conversations that revolve around topics of interest to the marital relationship. Once the unencountered couples who visit these pages feel comfortable with the supportive "voice" of GodLovesMarriage.org on these platforms, our goal is that they will make the next step to explore the website and eventually attend a Weekend.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Support

- In November 2012 we created a “Private Group” on Facebook entitled “LME Encountered Couples” and invited all of our LME “Friends” on Facebook to join it. This is an important area for maintaining contact with today’s couples who are active in social media.
We recommend that each Weekend’s Team Couples make a point during their Weekend closing statements to invite the newly encountered couples to “Friend” them on Facebook and also join the LME Encountered Couples private group. (See our suggested Weekend Packet sheet attached.)
- We recommend that immediately following each Weekend in 2013, the newly encountered couples be contacted via email or snail mail by a warm and inviting “Welcome” letter from:
 - (1) Lay and Clergy Exec Couples to establish the national/international connection
 - (2) Area Exec Couple to establish the local connection. This letter would also include the local newsletter, love spiral/circle schedule, etc. that are so important to create future community involvement.
- We recommend that the Board consider implementation of a monthly “newsletter” for all encountered couples to receive via email (eblast format). This newsletter would make all encountered couples aware of the ongoing work of LME throughout North America, notify them of marriage strengthening activities, offer encouragement to invite friends and family members to a Weekend, provide timely information regarding Weekends around North America, and – most importantly – offer Dialogue questions *to keep them connected with each other and their relationship growing.*

Area Websites

With the implementation of the new GodLovesMarriage.org website, we recommend that all areas close their local websites to eliminate the expense and time required to maintain this extra “layer” of communication. This recommendation is based on the fact that: (1) today’s world couples view “local” websites of international organizations with a high degree of suspicion, which can potentially turn couples away; (2) today’s world couples are unwilling to click-through to a secondary website for more information or to “buy”; (3) all couples must navigate to the main site – GodLovesMarriage.org – anyway to apply; and (4) local LME sites have no visibility in online searches.

Online Donations

Although we are not “in charge” of increasing Donations to LME, we recommend that each District’s leadership consider including a “Donations” information sheet in the Weekend packet given to couples (*see our attached suggested Weekend Packet sheet*) as well as encouraging area leadership to call attention to the LME online Donations button within its regular area communication tools.

Online Videos

We recommend that the NARLME Board consider production of a series of 30-second “benefits” focused videos in the near future to use on the GodLovesMarriage.org website, in eblasts, on Facebook, in Twitter, and on a branded GodLovesMarriage.org YouTube channel. *We solicit discussion of this recommendation by the full NARLME Board.*

GodLoves
MARRIAGE
GodLovesMarriage.org



Join Us on Facebook!
“Like” GodLovesMarriage.org

“Today’s World” page for sharing
the message of God’s Love
with unencountered couples!

**“Hang Out” with
LME Encountered Couples!**

Add your Presenting Couples as a Facebook
“Friend” and we’ll invite you to the
LME Encountered Couples group!



Follow Us on Twitter!
[GodLuvsMarriage](https://twitter.com/GodLuvsMarriage)

“Today’s World” daily messaging
about God’s Love for married couples!

Donate!

There’s two easy ways to contribute to keeping
Lutheran Marriage Encounter Weekends going –

1 - Use our PayPal link at:
<http://ilme.org/Donate.html>
or scan this QR code with your
smartphone to donate now!



2 - Designate Lutheran Marriage Encounter
through Thrivent (need real instrux here
from those who know!)

