

The necessary revolution: why you need to connect with your men
by Kenny Luck

The need for backbone

When the Barna Research Group released its study entitled "Women are the Backbone of the Christian Congregations in America," (March 2000) it confirmed what every pastor in America already knew. Men are a weak and fragmented community in the local church.

Flying in the face of the Promise Keepers movement and surging growth in couples groups is the raw data that shows women out-distance men in every category of spiritual discipline and service in the local church. The church has become a place where women and children make up the bulk of the leadership and activity - whereas the men are barely noticeable as a group.

The outcomes of this have been disastrous for men, their families, and their personal mission for Jesus Christ. Spiritual life, in the eyes of most men, is "her" thing.

In a recent survey of over 500 Christian men at a men's retreat, over 90% admitted that they were feeling disconnected from God because lust, porn, or fantasy had gained a foothold in their lives.

What does that say? Practically, it says that men are isolated within the church and that this condition is creating secrecy and bringing sickness to their character, marriages, families, and relationships.

Unchecked and unconnected to other men in the Body of Christ, emotional and spiritual conflicts are multiplying the numbers of spiritually divided men unable to withstand the assaults of the world, the flesh and the Devil. The sicknesses produced by secrecy drive them further from God and people they love – most immediately their wives and kids.

Isolation and secrecy creates distance and deceit between husbands and wives, which eventually rips apart marriages and destroys families.

Thus, the biggest problem confronting those trying to help men is creating a context for producing meaningful relationships among men that bridge these gaps.

"Men want meaningful men's ministry but churches fail to provide it."

Stephen Strang, New Man Magazine

The solution: moving men from isolation to connection

The creation and cultivation of Christ-centered relationships among men in the local church will foster the transformation of men's ministry in America and abroad. Any model for effective men's ministry must have relationships as its foundation.

When a man is connected and able to practice biblical openness within a men's community on a consistent basis, this man moves from:

Secrecy to Openness

Isolation to Connection

Deceit to Honesty

Independence to Interdependence

Irresponsibility to Responsibility/Accountability

Pretending to Authenticity

Relational Failure to Relational Growth/Success

Spiritual Stagnation to Spiritual Growth/Maturity

Insecurity to Secure identity in Christ

Consequently, the solution lies in fashioning an effective strategy for equipping and supporting the local church in producing Christ-centered connections among their men.

In a recent survey conducted by Every Man Ministries of over 100 pastors responsible for men's ministry in their churches, there was 100% agreement that strong men's communities are the most powerful change agents in the local church.

"The Lord is witness between you and me." Jonathan to David (I Chronicles 20:42)

Transformed men transform churches

Dynamic content is good, but it does not change men's lives. However, when you combine dynamic content that addresses the highest felt needs of men with deep connections between men, then lives are radically transformed.

This is the Every Man proposition that is already powering the next wave of men's ministry for the local church and blowing pastors away. After a recent Every Man Conference at one church in Orlando, the men's pastor wrote us to express his amazement over what happened in a single day with his men.

"Words are not adequate to thank you for your willingness to lead our men's conference last weekend. The spirit of the conference was amazing, and I am already hearing reports from the small groups that were formed. We have gone from a Men's Ministry that was non-existent to having over one hundred and thirty men actively involved in men's small groups. These statistics speak volumes, but it's the personal accounts of Jesus changing lives that confirms your ministry's effectiveness. The investment you've made in our ministry will have an eternal impact and our church will be a healthier community with men striving toward spiritual integrity with each other. Thank you for being obedient to God's call on your life."

This pastor came out of a one-day conference with twenty-five new men's small groups, a new partner and a new platform through Every Man to help guide and equip his men's ministry toward the next level.

This is the Every Man revolution and it's only the beginning of the impact. More importantly, this pastor knows his congregation is going to be permanently altered as a result.

Hitting the sweet-spot

Every Man Ministries is hitting the ball on the sweet-spot – there's no resistance or vibration because a true connection has been made with the need, the church, and in the hearts of men. Consider these outcomes:

- * Over 25% of the men who attend an Every Man Conference will give their lives to Christ.
- * Over 50% will join an Every Man Small Group launched through the conference.
- * Over 95% will make a life-changing decision on how they will live their life morally, relationally, or spiritually.

There is no other explanation for these kinds of results other than a mighty movement of God's Holy Spirit and His strategic hand on this ministry. Men simply do not move this quickly to these kinds of life-altering decisions in one day!

Consider the following outcomes of the most recent Winter 2003 conferences during an eight-week ministry window.

Eight cities

- * Over 300 first-time decisions for Christ.
- * 125 Every Man Groups formed in over 50 churches nationwide
- * 15 brand new men's ministries launched in local churches

Every Man will hold conferences and launch men's groups for local churches in 31 cities in 2004. Every Man is exceeding targeted-spiritual outcomes in every aspect of its outreach ministry: connecting men to God, connecting them to His Word, and connecting men to each other in Every Man Groups with a trained leader who is under the leadership of a pastor in his local church.

"Men need to be disciplined where they live." J.P. Moreland, Professor, Author, Men's Speaker

Tapping the next revolution

"Pastors seeking to grow health in their churches are on the heartbeat of a very big ministry opportunity. It is no mystery that guys packed out our men's conferences and began opening up at the Every Man Conference seminar. For some reason, men are opening up like never before. I see guys just itching to get together, have meaningful conversations, and teaching. It sounds simple, but there is just not much out there. When

we read 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few' – men's ministry is likely the next harvest field in the local church like youth ministry was 20-30 years ago."

Danny Wallen
Director of Men's Ministry,
Mission Springs Conference

Those on the leading edge of transformational ministries see the harvest before us. As I talk with leaders across the country, all see the importance of moving now to reach and connect men in the local church.

The responsibility for connecting and training men is going back to where it belongs – the church. Pastors increasingly realize that church growth does not translate into church health – especially when it comes to the men. The gap there is titanic.

Pastors worldwide are searching for help in creating vital and strong men's communities but don't know where to turn. That is why I left a CEO position (actually, walked into the chairman's office and fired myself) to launch Every Man Ministries four years ago.

By God's grace we have managed to position Every Man to reach and connect men for churches with conferences, services, partnerships which do, in a day, what might take a pastor years to do – dramatically grow (or even initially form) their men's ministry in a meaningful way.

We get to participate in a bona-fide spiritual revolution – a movement of God's Spirit in the lives of men that changes the course of so many things so quickly for the Kingdom.

The next revolution for the local church - and for the cause Christ - has been birthed and, they are the Joes, Rons, Kens, Jerrys, and Mikes of our congregations.

"And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. And for this purpose also I labor, striving according to the power which mightily works within me." The Apostle Paul