

Outreach Summit Effects Ripple Throughout District



MISSION IN ACTION

by Rev. Doug Kallesen
Executive Director
of Outreach

training with outreach emphasis) is being scheduled in Orlando and will later occur regionally. *Ablaze* is a grassroots movement of God's people stirred by the Holy Spirit!

Pastor Pat O'Brien has started contacting congregations that submitted an initial Outreach Strategy at the *Ablaze* Outreach Summits. He and I are working in tandem to deliver resources and training to congregations, circuits and individuals.

One of the most exciting things to report is that many of our presenters from the Outreach Summits are willing to present in our congregations and circuits. This includes Lutheran Hour Ministry, which presented the Equipping to Share; LCEF's Thousand Fold Workshop; and Stephan's Ministry's Break Through Leadership. Congregations may contact these ministries directly or work through the District Office.

I really am looking forward to hearing back a report at the District Convention about what all is going on across the District.

I am also scheduling times to speak with circuits at the monthly pastor's meetings or with Circuit Outreach Councils in an effort to develop a blueprint for outreach in each of our 22 District Circuits. Plans

are under way for each circuit to identify new mission starts and prioritize them; identify congregational and circuit outreach needs, strategies and needed training and resources; provide outreach training and resources to individuals and congregations through circuit gatherings.

- Our *Ablaze* goals include;
- Florida-Georgia members sharing their faith with 2 million or more people by the year 2017;
 - Starting 200 or more missions (2000-2017);
 - Revitalizing 22 or more congregations in their mission and outreach (goal of one or more congregations in each circuit);
 - Doubling the number of our Campus Ministries by the year 2010;
 - Continued commitment to Multi Cultural Outreach and Urban Ministry;
 - Doubling the number of baptized members in the District by 2017 to 150,000 by God's grace.

I believe God is doing some very exciting things in the Florida-Georgia District. I solicit your outreach news and what your *Ablaze* plans are. I would like to restart our *Ablaze* Idea Bank where congregations can list outreach activities and their impact. Your ideas will be shared with other congregations via

Lutheran LIFE, hopefully stirring all of our congregations to focus anew on how they will reach their communities for Christ. I will also create a place on our website to list these ideas. Finally, I welcome your comments and questions on outreach and how best we can work together to proclaim the name and cause of Christ!

Seniors Ablaze

Did you know that in fewer than two decades residents in 59 out of 67 Florida counties will have an average age over 60?

A tsunami of non-churched baby boomers is perhaps the greatest outreach frontier we have in the United States today. Furthermore, Cliff Peterson of Church Resources, Inc., claims that non-churched seniors are more resistant to the gospel than the Muslim population. He surmised that unchurched seniors have spent an entire lifetime dodging the church. They know how to turn us down and still be neighborly.

Peterson's research lead him to observe that many in the senior population hold very pluralistic views on religion. Simply put, all religions lead us to heaven; none is wrong, you simply have to choose one that works for you. He surmised that many of those in this age bracket have fewer than 50% of their children attending church and fewer than 25% of their grandchildren.

It is just too painful to think about these beloved people facing an eternity in hell without faith in Christ.

The effects on mass aging are very relevant to the church because by the year 2030 we will have more people over the age of 85 than we do who are 18 and younger. (Could this be one of the consequences of a society that allows abortion?) The church will be faced with the need for many people to help meet both the physical and spiritual needs of our senior population. Financially it could be devastating to the church. It currently takes 13 new giving units to replace every senior who either dies or moves away, said Peterson.

Work has begun in the District through Dave Weidner's and my offices to address the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of mass aging in our society and church. This is a huge opportunity for Christ's gospel to be proclaimed. I believe we should also ask what God has in store for us as LCMS Lutherans. Could it not be a blessing that many of our congregations are filled with gray haired Christians that are healthy, active and living longer and more productive lives! Could this be our season to "bear fruit-fruit that will last unto eternity!" Perhaps God Almighty has raised us up for such a time to be *Ablaze* as Seniors reaching Seniors! □

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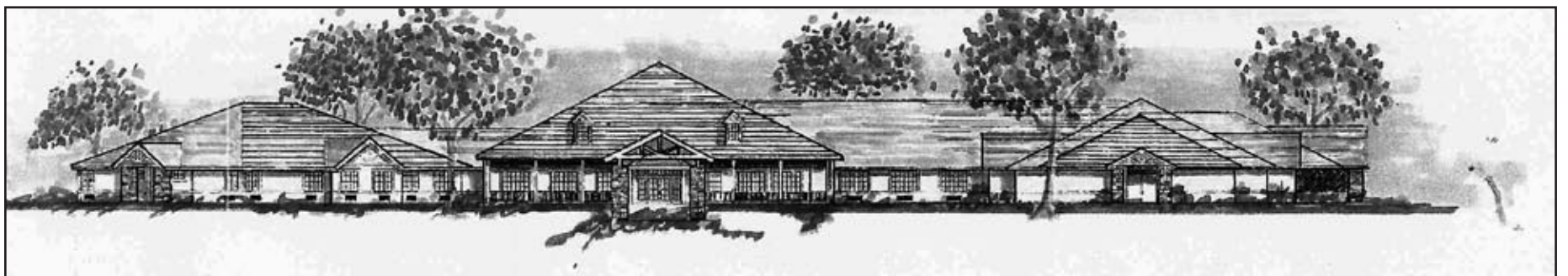
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