



PME CONNECTIONS

Volume 2

Issue 5

September/October 2008

A Message from Your National Executive Lay Couple



Dear Ones,

Summer has ended, but for some of us, the hot weather continues, punctuated by threats of storms and hurricanes. As we write this, Hurricane Ike seems to be barreling down on the Houston

area. And for much of Marriage Encounter, not only Presbyterian Marriage Encounter, other storms are looming. Communities are finding it increasingly more difficult to bring couples into a Weekend experience. Is Marriage Encounter relevant in today's world? Is marriage? We strongly believe they both are. And needed!

So what are we to do in the current environment faced with economic woes for many, uncertainty in our social and moral compass, and preoccupation with a political race that is definitely unique?

We have some advice (as usual): Pray – pray for our country, pray for our leaders, and pray that we can discern what God desires each of us to do with all the riches He has given us. When we need advice, we have invariably turned to scripture and in Romans 12 in Eugene Peterson's The Message, it says, "10 Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. 11 Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, 12 cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. 13 Help needy Christians; be inventive in hospitality."

What a great idea! Be good friends, keep yourselves fed, be cheerful, don't give up, and pray. And help those who need us. We couldn't say it any better. Thanks be to God!

Consider Yourself Hugged,

Gary and Ann

Mission Statement

"Presbyterian Expression of Worldwide Marriage Encounter's mission of renewal in the church and change in the world is to assist couples to live fully intimate and responsible relationships by providing them with a Christian experience and ongoing community support for such a lifestyle."

UPDATE: Hurricane Ike has moved on, leaving considerable damage in it's huge path. Keep praying. The following are two e-mails of interest.



September 13: "We just heard from Gary Long in Houston and they have fared very well. The eye apparently passed right over them early this a.m. Their electricity is out but they do have a generator which will keep them going. They think power will possibly be down for several weeks. Many folk, like them, have generators. Yards, landscapes are a mess. They had no trees down at their place, but some did and you can imagine that as you head south it just gets worse. Long's food supply is ok for now and they will cook on grill some. Downtown they know is a real mess. They have not heard from Eddys; their phone is down for now.

My twin brother is stuck in Longview in E. Texas, which got swiped by the storm going north, but his problem is that he is traveling by train and they are all down for right now. So that is all the news we have. Hug your kids.

God bless, Walt & Marlene"

September 15: Hi Y'all, This is the Longs from Houston. We're down but not out. Still no power at home, nor for the Eddys. Haven't been able to reach the Boyds. The Walkers were a ways away, so they are probably o.k., but that is a guess. A lot of cell phones still aren't working, the towers have no power or have run out, and FEMA took over a lot of the frequencies so they can do their thing. So even if you have strong bars, still no calls.

We really appreciate the prayers, it was pretty scary, and then very tedious and frustrating. Guess what Ann & I dialoged on last night.

Hugs to All, Gary & Ann

Dialogue Questions

1. Is Marriage Encounter relevant in today's world? HDIFAMA?
2. Am I a good friend to my spouse? My neighbors? My community? HDIFAMA?
3. HDIF when I read Romans 12:12 (NIV) "Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer"? HDIFAMA?



Prayer Needs

Many of you will remember Steve and Lolly Wigall. They were an active presenting team couple several years ago. The Wigalls stay in touch with the PME community mostly via emails.

On August 29 Lolly wrote that Steve's B-cell lymphoma has returned in his shoulder and he is having quite a lot of pain. She wrote, "It is a mid-grade, low-grade aggressive type. It is better to be aggressive instead of indolent. Aggressive is better because it is more treatable and responds to treatment. It is better to be mid-grade instead of high grade level. The low-grade aggressive means it is not too bad, yet." They specifically asked for prayers for Steve's pain to diminish.

Those of you who remember their son Martin as a pre-schooler may be surprised to learn that he is a college student.

Let us be good friends to this ME family and lift them up in prayer. If you would like to contact them personally, e-mail to lwigall@fastmail.fm or mail to 296 Lowell Street, Lawrence, MA 01841. Steve's cell phone is 617-771-0407; Lolly's is 617-771-5548.

Remember also to pray for the families affected by Hurricane Ike and for the families of the 25 people (at latest count) killed in the train wreck in S. California this week. Pray for ME communities of all faiths and pray for each other by yourself, as a couple and/or as a family.

If you have a prayer request you want printed in the next newsletter, send it to us at "geneandnancy@presby-me.org". The deadline for each bi-monthly issue is the last day of the month before it is published (i.e., the next deadline is October 31).

If you or some other encountered couple you know is celebrating a special wedding anniversary, send us an article and a photo. We'd like to honor every encountered couple that has been married 25 years or more (GeneandNancy@presby-me.org).

You are invited to tell our readers how Marriage Encounter has been valuable in your marriage. Send an email to "geneandnancy@presby-me.org" including your names, date you were married, when and where you went on a Weekend and where you live. Please attach a photo if you can.

2008 PME Weekends

October 10 – 12
Spokane, WA

October 24 – 26
Delaware Valley, DE

October 31 – Nov. 2
Houston, TX

November 14 – 16
Spokane, WA

Invite your friends and family to attend a Marriage Encounter Weekend. Aren't you glad someone invited you? Pass it on.



If PME dates and locations do not work, go to WWME.org. Most Weekends for other faith expressions are listed on that website, along with many other useful links.

MARRIAGE TAKES THREE

Marriage takes three
to be complete:
It is not enough
for two to meet.
They must be
united in love
by Love's Creator,
God above.
A marriage
that follows God's plan
takes more
than a woman and a man.
It needs a oneness
that can be
Only from Christ
Marriage Takes Three.



PME National Board, USA

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| National Lay Exec. Couple | Gary & Ann Long Houston, TX |
| National Clergy Exec. Couple | Michael & Kim Moreland Indio, CA |
| National Secretary Couple | Jack & Penny Runyan Port St. Lucie, FL |
| National Finance Couple | Herb & Jean Ward Mt. Prospect, IL |
| Northeast Lay Exec. Couple | Al & Dottie Lund Wilmington, DE |
| Southwest Lay Exec. Couple | Don & Joanne Hathaway Rancho Cucamonga, CA |
| Southeast Lay Exec. Couple | Roger & Peggy Eddy Kingwood, TX |
| Northwest Clergy Exec. Couple | Walt & Marlene Estelle Spokane, WA |
| Weekend Outline Couple | Lee & Ruth Saegesser Williamsburg, VA |
| National Supply Couple | Jim & Susie Marshall Lafayette, IN |
| Webmaster | Joe Paquette Renton, WA |
| National Newsletter Couple | Gene & Nancy Robinson Apple Valley, CA |
| Resource & Awareness Couple | Bill & Carolyn McQuiston North East, MD |
| National Outreach Couple | Mike & Martha Bodlovich San Pedro, CA |
| National Renew Representative | Nora Goetz Turtle Creek, PA |

Can Marriage Be Good For The Nerves?

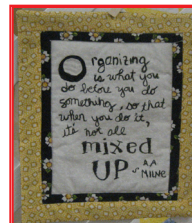
Good husbands don't get on their wives' nerves, they calm them, a study published in Psychological Science shows.



Women under stress who held their husband's hands showed immediate signs of relief, according to a University of Virginia study. When researchers exposed 16 women to the threat of a mild electric shock, women who held their husband's hand, rather than a stranger's hand and no hand at all, registered a sense of immediate relief, according to magnetic resonance imaging scans.

"Moreover," according to the study, "spouse handholding effect varied as a function of marital quality, with women in the very highest quality marriages benefiting from a very powerful decrease in threat-related brain activity, including a strong decrease in the emotional component of the brain's pain processing circuits."

— CTW Features (printed the Daily Press, Victorville, California on June 19, 2007)



Organizers Explained
This mini-quilt was seen at a recent quilt show. It is printed for the Organizers and their spouses.

PME National Board, Kenya

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| Kenyan Lay Exec. Couple | Daniel & Florence Mwaura Nairobi, Kenya |
| Kenyan Clergy Exec. Couple | James & Hannah Kahenya Kikuyu, Kenya |

PME National Board, Cameroon

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|------------------------------|---|
| Cameroon Lay Exec. Couple | Patrick & Anna Fombe Bamenda, Cameroon |
| Cameroon Clergy Exec. Couple | Joe-Set & Helen Aje-Mvo Bamenda, Cameroon |

“How to Market to Men” Telewebclass

Summarized by Carolyn and Bill McQuiston, National Resource Couple



In our experience, rarely do we see a couple where both spouses are equally excited about coming to the weekend. It seems to us that it is not unusual for the reluctant partner to be the wife, but frequently the thought is that the husband is more likely to come under duress. Recently our local board talked about positive responses from women’s groups to coming on the weekend, but the women were unable to get their husbands to attend a M.E. weekend. So when we heard about a free telewebclass on “How to Market to Men” at the Smart Marriage conference, we decided to listen in.

First, it was good to know that research indicates that men as a whole do care about having good relationships. What catches their eye and makes them comfortable to get involved in marriage education is the issue. First, in developing flyers, do not use lavender paper. Men are attracted to blue, green or black. Hearts and flowers don’t cut it either. Be careful of the images that are chosen. The name of a program can make a difference. “Tools for Success”, “Marriage Boot Camp”, “Marriage Tune Up”, “Tackling Marriage Problems”, “Energizing Your Sex Life” were suggested as titles that would be good for attracting men. The theory is that women are more intrinsically interested in marriage education activities so they will come anyway even if the names and flyers are masculine oriented. Watch out for the word “feeling”. Men are more likely to be into thinking and acting. Men like structure—not a lot of sitting around in a circle with free floating content. Circles also go against men’s greater discomfort with eye contact which is a biologically keyed phenomenon. Relating content to the business or work world is appealing. Recently books and programs have come out using marriage mission statements, measurable goals for marriage, job descriptions for each partner, etc. Describing marriage education as another important professional assistance in life such as having a financial advisor or family attorney was suggested.

Wow, what do we do that with all that information? We can’t change the name of our program although we could change the name of our follow up programs. “Reunion” and “Love Circles” are not part of our license. Would “Tune-up” or “Marriage Tackling Groups” –use your imagination—at least create more interest in the male half of the couple? We are about to update our brochures. The above information would suggest that the beautiful rose we have on the front is not the best choice. True, if a man is looking at a row of various brochures in a rack at church, is he likely to pick up one with a rose on it? What would he pick up? Is he more likely to pick up something that says at the top “Spend a Special Weekend Together” or should it say “Tools for a Successful Marriage”? A little thought might be given to the inside of the brochure also. These probably aren’t the best alternatives, but hopefully you get the idea. At least our program is structured and we don’t sit around in circles until we are well into the weekend. Should we stay out of circles completely?

Carolyn joined the web cast discussion by asking what a woman could do to get her reluctant husband to attend a marriage education event. The first answer seemed a little flip—“tell him he’s coming”. But the point is (a) he can’t read his wife’s mind that she really wants him to come if she doesn’t say so and (b) husbands want to please their wives and the direct approach might be more successful than one thinks. That reminds me of couples we know where the wife asked to attend the weekend as an anniversary or birthday gift. It was also suggested to do a trade-off or tie-in with something the husband might want to do. The wife might agree to go to the car race or football game the husband wanted them to go to if he agrees to go on the weekend or even do something right proceeding or after the weekend that the husband might like to do.

Well, that’s what they had to say. It’s food for thought. The web cast is available to be heard at www.husbandsmatter.com.