

CrossReference

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Pressing Forward

by David Lemming

Mary and I are beginning our 30th year at LMBC in 2012 and we are more excited about the future than at any other time in our ministry. We believe that God has uniquely positioned our congregation to make a significant impact for His Kingdom in the coming years.

Rarely does a pastor stay at his first church for his entire ministry. It's not uncommon for pastors to move several times before settling into the place where they ultimately serve out their calling. However, when we came to LMBC, Mary and I had full intentions of spending the remaining portion of our lives in this place if God so willed. We would have followed Him anywhere, but it has been His sovereign plan to leave us here ... and we're glad about it!

I'm looking now at plans for the next 15 years of our ministry that will continue to help our church reach new people, as well as care for the community of faith He has given us. I want to finish well in the place I have invested the majority of my life, should God be pleased to allow me to live that long. One of the great challenges I see before me is how to prepare our church so that LMBC will be ready to call the next generation pastor when my ministry ends. And, I want to do my part in training that generation so they can take this ministry into the middle/late part of the 21st century with the blessing of God on their lives.

But, if you really want to know about some of my dreams for the immediate future, here are just a few. I want to make a lasting spiritual difference in people's lives and in the community where I serve. I want to see the message, "Jesus saves," taken to those who have never heard His name. I want to see believers find that following Jesus is the only way to real meaning and purpose in life. I want to see married couples find the

fullness God intended for their relationships. I want to see children and young people excited about turning the world upside down for Christ. I want to see our "prodigals" return to the Father that loves them. I want to see people far from God's Kingdom brought into the family of God. I want to see people excitedly being baptized as they profess their faith in the Savior. I want to see men and women answer His call to vocational ministry from our fellowship. I want to be on the cutting edge of the things God is doing in this world and not wait 10-20 years for it to reach us in the smaller cities. I want our church to bless our community and be missed by them, if we were suddenly gone. I want to take people deeper in their knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and farther than they've ever been in their relationship with Jesus Christ. And, I can go on like this ...

When you add to these things some of the projects I believe should be in our future you can see that God has a great work yet to be done here. I pray we will make significant progress toward some of these areas that I've long felt are important to our future:

1. A children's auditorium/activity area (first floor) & choir room (second floor) to be added to the rear of our existing Worship Center.
2. The construction of a multi-level adult/children facility that includes a full-fledged coffee shop, banquet room and children's play area. (I'd love to see this coffee shop and play area open to our community during the week.)
3. Upgrade to HD quality TV equipment so we can stay relevant and continue reaching others through the Daily Walk outreach. There is probably no other single ministry of our church that has a more far-reaching impact on our local community than our Daily Walk TV program.
4. Purchase adjacent property when it becomes available so we can have the needed space to continue growing.
5. Grow our international missions program not just in quantity of missionaries, but in quality of support.

“ ... I am committed to letting the Scripture take us wherever it leads us and not try to impose on it our own preconceived agenda or traditions. ”

Well, you get the idea... I have lots of things rambling around in my head about the future and I'm regularly placing them before the Lord in prayer. Not everything I envision for our church comes to pass. Sometimes God shows us a better way to accomplish His work than what I initially envisioned myself. That's OK with me! But, I'm not going to sit back and just revel in His past blessings. I want to see Him do even greater things than I ever imagined in my own heart and mind.

Of one thing I'm certain: no matter what else we may do in 2012 and the coming years, we must continue to stay focused on JESUS. This ministry -- as well as our individual lives -- must become increasingly more Christocentric. The writer of Hebrews put it this way, "... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith ..." (Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB). Nothing good or of lasting value can ever be accomplished if we lose our focus on Him.

In many ways our church has evolved over the years as we've grown together in ministry. But, the changes have been mostly about style or methods, not substance. And, what has driven these changes has been my desire to bring our church more closely into alignment with Scriptural teachings. Some of the things I thought I understood when I began my ministry have become clearer as my study of His Word has grown fuller and deeper. With experience and maturity comes adjustments, if you intend on calling yourself a follower of Jesus. To stubbornly say, "I haven't changed in the last 30 years" is basically to acknowledge your own failure to grow in your relationship with Christ and your understanding of His Word. No one denies that change for change's sake is not good, but change driven by the Scripture is always good and right!

A few years ago as the New Year dawned I brought a message entitled, "We Haven't Changed!" In that message I outlined the core doctrines of the faith I believed when I came to the church at the end of 1982 and affirmed in that sermon that I still hold fast to these same truths. Nothing has changed on that front and I strongly affirm the same fundamentals today. However, I'm not afraid to admit that in other areas of my ministry I have changed and it's brought me closer to Jesus and our church closer to the New Testament pattern of ministry. Is there more of that kind of change in our future? Probably! And, the reason I say that is because I am committed to letting the Scripture take us wherever it leads us and not try to impose on it our own preconceived agenda or traditions. To me, that's part of what it means to stay focused on Jesus.

I need your prayers and your help to move in the direction God is calling us. Everything we need He will provide as we trust and obey. I don't have 30 more years left for "day to day" pastoral ministry, but of the years I do have left, I am going to serve them out pressing forward.

There is much work to be accomplished and God wants each of us to be His vessel through which He can accomplish His work! What part will you play in the future of LMBC?



LIVE FROM LMBC

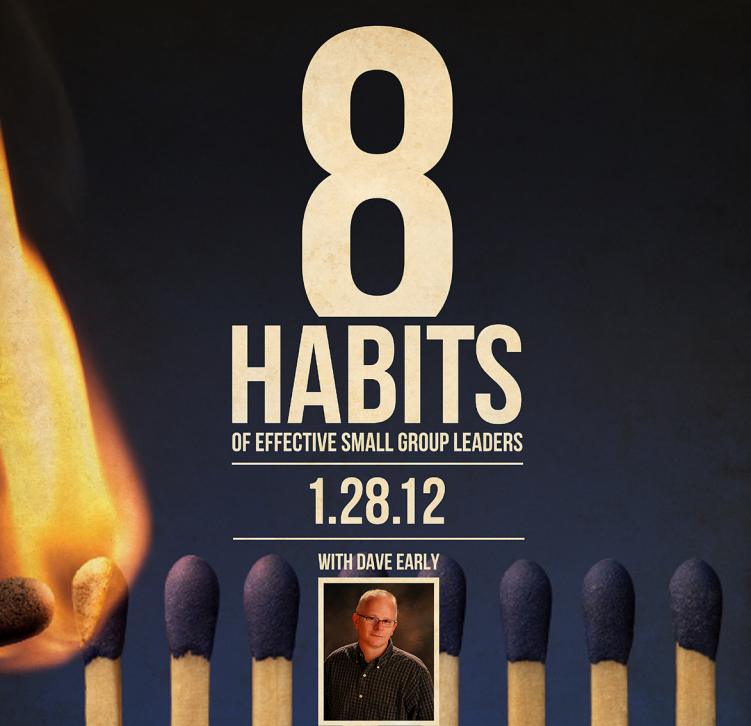
Know Someone Who Wants to Know More About Christ?
They can join us live on the web by visiting lmbc.tv
We stream each of our main worship services. (9, 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.)

January '12

For all Small Group times and locations, please refer to www.lmbc.org/groups or pick up a brochure in one of the lobbies.

- 2 Men's Basketball Fellowship (Gym) ~ 7 p.m.*
- 3 Seniorwise Exercise (FLC) ~ 9:30 a.m.*
Community Outreach ~ 6:30 p.m.*
- 4 Small Groups ~ 6:30 & 7 p.m.
Small Group Training w/ Pastor ~ 6:30 p.m.
Cubbies (FLC) ~ 6:45 p.m.*
AWANA (FLC) ~ 6:45 p.m.*
Youth Stuff (SMB) ~ 6:45 p.m.*
Illumin8 [College & Career] (S101) ~ 6:45 p.m.*
Bible Study/Prayer Mtg. (Main Aud.) ~ 7 p.m.*
- 5 Seniorwise Exercise (FLC) ~ 9:30 a.m.*
Hearts & Hands Quilters (L108) ~ 9:30 a.m.*
- 6 Teen trip to Winter Jam ~ 5 p.m.
Scrapbooking Weekend ~ 6 - 10 p.m.
- 7 Scrapbooking Weekend ~ 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.
- 8 Finance Committee Meeting (L114) ~ 5:30 p.m.
- 9 Deacon's Meeting (Cafe) ~ 7 p.m.
- 11 Quarterly Business Meeting (Main Aud.) ~ 8:15 p.m.
- 12 Homeschool Lunch Bunch (Gym) ~ 11 a.m.
- 13 Baby Shower for Maggie Tardy (Cafe) ~ 6:30 p.m.
Teens Drop-In Night (SMB) ~ 8 p.m.
- 15 Starting Point (Cafe) ~ 5 p.m.
- 27 Teen Activity Night ~ 6 p.m.
Baby Shower for Kristi Malcolm (Cafe) ~ 6:30 p.m.
- 28 Small Group Conference w/ Dave Earley (SMB) ~ 9 a.m.
- 29 Guest Speaker: Dave Earley ~ 9 & 10:30 a.m.

*Each week at this time unless otherwise indicated.



8 HABITS
OF EFFECTIVE SMALL GROUP LEADERS

1.28.12

WITH DAVE EARLY

