



Winter 2015

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This Winter edition includes stories at the coalface of men's work, alongside men battling drug and alcohol addiction. We've been busy building awareness and support for the Men's Rite of Passage and our men's work in general in Victoria, and invited initiated men to journey deeper in safe ways. We've established an initiator program to invite men to actively engage other men in healthy male spirituality, and we have developed a formation program for leaders of men's groups. Your support of our work makes a tangible difference in the lives of men, their wives and partners, their children and our whole society. As we approach the end of the tax year, we invite you to consider giving to our work and at the same time reduce your tax burden, as all gifts are 100% tax deductible. Details are on the last page of this newsletter.

Real Help for Addicted Men



Late last year, The Royal Brisbane Hospital's Drug and Alcohol Service invited us to speak to the men in their care, engaging them with what we offer and showing them that their crisis could also be their opportunity for change. Unlike what is often offered to men struggling with alcoholism and drug addiction, the Centre for Men is not interested in self-help programs or promises of success. As many of our men have discovered, the

way to freedom is not up and over but so often in, down and through.

Since that first encouraging visit, we have commenced visiting the Service every fortnight. Recovering alcoholics from our own community of initiated men have joined us and invited the men to participate in what we offer, as well as to engage in local AA/NA chapters. This work is vital and is the coalface of what we are about.

We invite other initiated men to join us and we invite you to help us fund this. It is so easy to get funding for children, adolescents - whose causes are very worthy. However it is a challenge to build awareness of the needs of men at the margins. The cost to our society from misuse is immense; ten years ago, it was estimated the social cost for alcohol alone was \$15 billion. This does not represent the untold wounding to children, and the destruction of lives. We are becoming aware of the alarming rise in Ice addiction and the impact it is having on Gen Y.



Men go deeper in their journey

On May 1st, A group of initiated men retreated to wilderness in South East Qld for a weekend of teaching, community and solitude. Our first night was met with ferocious weather, but as we gathered close around a pot belly stove, stories of struggle were shared with vulnerability and honesty. One man commented “I forgot how honest I could be in this space.” It is truly freeing to be known and accepted. Our shadows grow less long, and our connections grow ever deeper.

On Saturday, we sent the men out into the forest in glorious sunshine to journey alongside nature and invite God’s creation to speak to them, and to speak back their own truths.

Before departing, the men were reminded of the role to be generative in their communities. Erik Erikson, the father of developmental psychology, wrote that our 20s is a stage of learning to love, where we move into intimacy with ourselves and others, or retreat into isolation. If we have not integrated our wounds into our stories, we will hide. That isolation will render us performance addicts, false on the outside and alone on the inside. However, if we have learned to journey with our shadow and allowed God’s love into the darkest places, our intimacy will lead us to become truly generative men.

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Forming leaders

Contrary to the popular notion, leaders are not born, nor are they discovered through promotion, success and popularity. Instead, they are formed in the fires of suffering, through loss and struggle. The great Catholic educator Henri Nouwen called these people “wounded healers” for the gentle but firm way they created safe spaces with hot edges that allow people to stay with their pain and grow in the process.

Recognising the need for leaders to be formed, Centre for Men founder Rob Jones is hosting a series of retreats for leaders of our MALE (Men As Learners and Elders) groups. These weekend gatherings will equip men who lead MALE groups to demonstrate healthy manhood, mentor younger men into leadership and help build the next generation of initiated men. Rob has noticed how easy it is to slide back into ‘first half of life’ consciousness, trying to fix and prove and promote, approaches that simply do not work in the lives of broken men. In contrast, leaders who seek only to serve out of their own journeys infuse other men with hope and an inner witness of their own identity in God.



Fruit from Victoria

In March, CEO of Centre for Men Richard Fay travelled to Victoria to speak at a series of events, including the Surrender Conference. All up, almost 200 men attended the various events, including over 50 at the conference workshop, where we also held a stand promoting the Men’s Rite of Passage.

A recording of his talk at the Wellspring Centre is available at <http://www.centreformenaustralia.org.au/authentic-male-spirituality-what-does-it-look-like-by-richard-fay-at-wellspring-melbourne-mar-2015/>

Richard also discussed authentic men’s work with Melbourne Anglican. The published article is available here: <http://www.centreformenaustralia.org.au/melbourne-anglican-interview/>

It is encouraging to see the support for our work in Victoria and the strong favour we received in our visit.

The Initiator Program

One of the greatest challenges is to invite men to embark on a journey that will involve confronting their dragons, sacrificing a week of their lives, investing \$650 and journeying with men they have never met through a process of which they know nothing. It's basically the impossible sell.

And yet, this invitation is one of the greatest invitations men will ever receive. The Men's Rite of Passage (MROP) cannot survive only because the team that leads it promotes it. It is bigger than us. With this realisation, we have created the Initiator Program. We sent a letter to every man who has ever done MROP, numbering in the hundreds, with 3 brochures and a blank key. The letter invited every man to do five simple things:

Invite up to three men to do MROP, offer to pay up to half the cost of MROP for any man who commits to going; commit to praying for that man before and during MROP; drive him to the train station or airport to help get him to MROP (this is often an anxious time for men); and be a returning man on the last night of the rites, greeting the man they invite as they conclude their own rites.

It is our hope that this process will bring many more men into an awareness of what it means to live as an initiated man, with honour, courage, vulnerability and healing as gifts for their community. Planning for this year's MROP is well under way, with the event occurring on 18th - 22nd August. Centre for Men are the only organisation to host consecutive MROPs in the world for the past 8 years.



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Giving to our work

We invite you to give to our work as we shoulder alongside broken men, to bring healing in their lives and communities. All gifts are fully tax deductible.

Account: Centre for Men Public Fund

BSB: 064 178

Account number: 10446091