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Journey



A PRACTICUM OF CARE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Calvinism

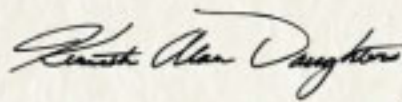
As I travel among our constituency, from time to time I'm asked, "Is Emmaus Calvinistic?" I usually try to answer in light of the concern that may have prompted the inquiry. Emmaus' teaching is nothing like the offensive theology against which they have been warned. They have no need to fear. Our teaching is moderate, falling in the spectrum between consistent Calvinism and Arminianism. Our faculty is not loyal to either doctrinal system. We seek to be biblical in our explanation of the relevant texts, balancing all that God's Word says on the subject. We do not indoctrinate our students in a negative manner. We teach them to think critically, and equip them with the tools to exegete the biblical passages for themselves. Our professors teach from their own perspectives and are respectful of the views of our students as we seek to understand the Scripture together. As a faculty we represent the range of beliefs found in North American assemblies.

Though the brethren assemblies are united on the doctrines of the church and of end times, we have never considered it necessary to unite on the question of Calvinism vs. Arminianism. Throughout the last two centuries, our leaders and teachers have expressed a variety of viewpoints on this subject and we have tolerated a range of views among us. There is no need for us to divide over this issue today. The type of Calvinism I hear warnings about is a supralapsarian, double-predestination form (sometimes called hyper-Calvinism) that is extremely rare even among consistent Calvinists. None of us believe in limited atonement or particular redemption. All of us preach the gospel widely calling on all everywhere to repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. We require our course in Personal Evangelism for all of our degree programs. Our missions major has prepared a large portion of the missionaries now serving on the field through CMML.

Emmaus' doctrinal statement is easily available on-line at www.emmaus.edu. It has one statement that relates to this question. It reads, "Every child of God possesses eternal life; and being justified, sanctified, and sealed with the Holy Spirit, is safe and secure for all eternity." Our entire faculty annually subscribes to our doctrinal statement and thus, all of us hold to the doctrine of the security of the believer.

A friend of the college encouraged his children to come study with us. His personal views were nearer to Arminianism than Calvinism and he had some trepidation that his children would encounter professors who were more Calvinistic than he would like. He had a friend on the faculty with whom he discussed his concern. Though their interpretations of key passages on the subject differed, they trusted each other enough that his children came, thrived, and enjoyed their Emmaus experience immensely. In the end, his children and he are completely satisfied with the education they received.

An Emmaus education is one you can trust.



Kenneth Alan Daughters
President,
Emmaus Bible College



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Travel Guides

Goodness, for God's Sake

Christine Schneider
ECS Ministries, 2004

The apostle Paul filled his letter to his young co-worker, Titus, with practical teaching and convincing motivation on being good. Join Christine Schneider at her kitchen table in this inspiring study especially for women. Discover how Paul's instructions to believers on a Mediterranean island in the 1st century relate to you and me today. In addition, you will examine the excellent woman in Proverbs 31 for down-to-earth applications that will bring the teachings of the book of Titus into your home and church.

Lessons in Trust from Women in Messiah's Family Tree

Christine Schneider
ECS Ministries, 2004

Lessons in Trust removes the veil of mystique from the lives of Eve, Sarah, and Mary to demonstrate how their lives relate to ours. Now, in the 21st century. With no examples to imitate, these women followed God through the uncharted wilderness of their experiences, to emerge as patterns for us. Their stories include some of the same struggles we deal with every day: temptations, grief, weariness, confusion, and fear. Their lives were defined by the degree to which they trusted God. And they learned—sometimes too late—that God's way really does work best. In spite of their weaknesses and sins, they showed glorious moments of trust. God blessed them by including them in the Messiah's family tree. If we learn to trust God more fully, what blessings might He have in store for each of us?

101 Ways to Help People in Need

Steve and Janie Sjogren
Navpress, 2002

The Sjogrens present practical and creative ways for readers and their churches to reach out to people with physical, emotional and relational needs in their neighborhoods, communities, country and world.

How Do I Help a Hurting Friend?

Rod Wilson
Baker, 2006

This kindhearted, comprehensive, and practical guide to ministry through friendship shows readers how to help their friends and family overcome a wide array of problems, including self-image, grief, and depression.

Face to Face: Meditations on Friendships and Hospitality

Steve Wilkins
Canon, 2002

Beyond the First Visit: The Complete Guide to Connecting Guests to Your Church

Gary McIntosh
Baker, 2006

This practical book offers sound advice on assessing and improving the ways in which churches attract people, welcome them, do follow-up, and bring them into the church family.

The Gentle Art of Hospitality: Warm Touches of Welcome and Grace

Alda Ellis
Harvest House, 2007

The Hospitality Commands

Alex Strauch
Lewis & Roth, 1993

Hospitality plays crucial roles in encouraging unity, evangelism, and many spiritual gifts in the local church. Strauch shows the Scripture's teaching along with practical hints that he and his wife have learned over the years.

A Life That Says Welcome: Simple Ways to Open Your Heart and Home to Others

Karen Ehman
Revell, 2006

The author of "Homespun Gifts from the Heart" now offers a practical, no-pain, no craft, queenship-required course on practicing hospitality—the kind that helps women open their hearts and homes.

The 21 Most Powerful Minutes in a Leader's Day: Revitalize Your Spirit and Empower Your Leadership

John C. Maxwell
Thomas Nelson, 2000

A bestselling author and leadership expert shows how setting aside 21 minutes every day to consider critical issues can make any leader more effective. Twenty-one powerful statements help leaders maximize their assets and overcome their weaknesses.

To order contact John Rush at the Emmaus Bible College Library
(jrush@emmaus.edu or 563-588-8000 ext. 1003)



To the Praise of His Glory #4

Principles of Music Ministry from 1 Corinthians 14

Lisa Beatty

The Old Testament is full of rich detail about the use of music in worship and praise. In particular, 1 and 2 Chronicles and the book of Psalms provide information about the organization of musicians, their training and responsibilities, the instruments employed, the songs sung, and the role of music in events such as the dedication of the Temple and the feasts of Israel. In contrast, the New Testament, while affirming the place of music in the New Testament church, provides little detail about its use. Most of what is known about the role of music in the early church is gleaned

from brief passages like Ephesians 5:18b-19 and its parallel passage in Colossians 3:16-17. While these sections of Scripture provide significant clues to the role of musical expression in the church, it would be difficult to build a comprehensive philosophy for the use of music in the church based only on these short passages. One must supplement this direct teaching about music with more general biblical principles that can be applied to music ministry.

1 Corinthians 14 provides both direct teaching and more general principles about the use of music in the church. Verse 26 provides evidence of musical expression

in the early assembling of believers: *“What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.”* Clearly, psalm singing had a place in these early meetings of the church. Verse 26 is the centerpiece of a more extended passage dealing with the exercise of spiritual gifts. The entire chapter is rich with principles that can be appropriately applied to music ministry.

In this section of Corinthians, Paul is in the midst of an extended discussion related to spiritual gifts. In chapter 14, Paul argues that the gift of prophecy is to be more earnestly desired than the gift of

tongues. His extended line of reasoning is provided in verses 1-25. The main elements of his argument are summarized below:

- One who speaks in tongues does not speak to men, only to God. One who prophesies speaks to men for edification, exhortation, and consolation (vv. 2-3).
- One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself. One who prophesies edifies the church (v. 4).
- Edifying the church is of much greater value than edifying of self (v. 5).
- Unless true communication takes place, there is no benefit (vv. 6-9).
- It is not sufficient to speak a known language if the hearers do not understand it (vv. 10-11).
- Seek the gifts that best edify the church (v. 12).
- In order to edify, both the intellect and the spirit must be engaged (vv. 13-17).
- Paul reaffirms his desire for gifts that edify others (vv. 18-19).

- Tongues are a sign for unbelievers, but prophecy is for those who believe (vv. 22-23).
- Prophecy can bring conviction to unbelievers (v. 24).
- Prophecy can lead to true worship (v. 25).

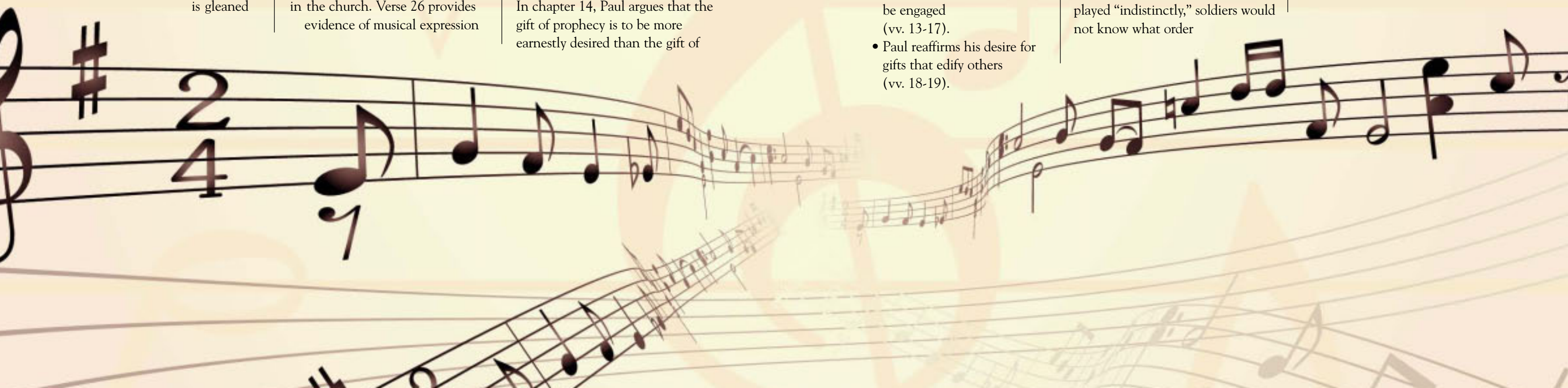
Paul references musical expression twice in this section of the chapter. In verses 7-8, he uses musical examples to illustrate his point about the need for intelligibility: *“Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?”* This second reference is a compelling example. Even as recently as the last century, the military used series of tones played on the bugle to communicate commands to soldiers on the battlefield. If these tones were played “indistinctly,” soldiers would not know what order

was being communicated. Intelligibility is important!

Paul’s second reference to musical expression comes in verse 15 as he argues that for edification to occur, both the intellect and spirit must be involved: *“What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also.”* In this section, Paul appears to apply his statements about verbal expression to musical expression as well.

The balance of chapter 14 is Paul’s instructions to the church based on his prior argument. Again, these instructions are summarized below:

- The church meeting should be participatory (v. 26).
- The content should be varied (v. 26).
- All should be done for edification (v. 26).
- One who speaks in tongues should be silent if there is



no interpreter (vv. 27-28).

- Participation should be accomplished in an orderly manner (vv. 29-33).
- Women should not participate audibly (vv. 34-36).

In verses 37-38, Paul states that these instructions are not given under his own authority; they are the Lord's commands. Those who do not comply will not be recognized to participate.

The final verses of the chapter restate Paul's main themes: "Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But let all things be done properly and in an orderly manner" (vv. 39-40).

Which of these lessons, then, can appropriately be applied to the practice of music ministry in the church?

Verses 4-5 teach that edifying others is of greater value than edifying oneself. This is true of music ministry as well as the spoken word. It is sometimes tempting to choose musical selections based on our own preferences. Those with responsibility for music ministry must make choices for the edification of the whole body, not the preferences of a few.

Verses 6-11 focus on the importance of intelligibility in communication. This, too, is important in musical expression. If words cannot be understood, true communication does not take place. Without true communication, edification does not take place. Reflecting on this idea may cause one to ask:

"What about instrumental music? Does it have a place in music ministry?" Yes. Instrumental music can be very effective in ministry, but this is most often the case when the melody is easily recognized by the listeners, allowing them to reflect on the text as the selection is played. Instrumental music that does not have a recognizable melody tied to a familiar text should be used sparingly in my opinion.

Verses 13-17 emphasize the importance of intellectual and spiritual engagement in both prayer and singing. Without this engagement, there is no edification. It is so easy to sing familiar hymns or spiritual songs without focusing on the words. Such inattention does not produce edification. To accomplish God's purposes, our minds must be focused on the text as we sing. This, however, is not sufficient. Our spirits must be engaged as well. One is reminded of Christ's words in John 4:24: "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." Prayer and singing are not simply intellectual exercises; these activities, through which we communicate with God, should involve our whole selves, mind and spirit.

Verses 29-33 teach that participation in church meetings should be done in an orderly manner. This is, of course, true of music ministry. Effective ministry is well planned, well rehearsed, and well organized. Our sacrifices of praise should be the best we can bring.

Paul's main emphasis through-

out the chapter is that all things should be done for edification. This should be a foundational criterion for music ministry. Any preparation for ministry should involve asking some important questions:

- Does this musical choice further the purposes of God for the church?
- Does this musical choice reflect only my personal preferences or does it meet the requirement of edification of others?
- Is the text intelligible? Remember, intelligibility leads to true communication, and true communication leads to edification.
- Does this musical choice engage both the mind and the spirit? Both are needed for edification.

Careful consideration of these issues will go a long way in helping us provide music ministry that honors God and builds up His people. †



Lisa Beatty is the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Emmaus Bible College and has been a faculty member in the Music Ministry department since 1992. Lisa and her husband, Kevin have two teenage daughters.

Life is a Practicum

Dave Glock, Editor

The purposes for the meeting of the church in New Testament times are abundantly clear in the text of Scriptures:

Acts 2:42
And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1 Corinthians 11:18
For first of all, when you come together as a church . . .

11:20
Therefore when you come together in one place . . .

14:23
Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place . . .

14:26
How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together . . .

14:37
If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

The regular practice of gathering is stated in Acts 2:42, illustrated

whenever you see the church meeting as a local body, and raised to the level of commandments of the Lord as the apostle Paul concludes his correction of church life at Corinth.

But, the spiritual life of the Christian is not limited to simply "when you come together as a church." As in the early church, so now, the whole church gathers for only a few hours throughout an entire week – three or four hours on a Sunday, perhaps an hour or two during the work week, and the additional service of choice for particular groups. It looks like ten hours of gathering as a body would be the maximum for most of us. Ten hours a week out of 168 hours! I would think perfect attendance would be easily reached, but that's another story.

The spiritual life of a Christian, however, is 24/7! It is not to observe others doing church and the ministry of the church. It is to be continuously involved in the work of the ministry — when the whole church gathers, and when we minister individually to others in the normal routines of life — at work, at home, and in the neighborhood.

The functioning purpose of the church is to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry.

Ephesians 4:11-13
And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

It should be noted that the gifts listed in this section relate to the teaching and care of the church as well as the outreach to the unsaved world in evangelism.

A properly functioning church equips the saints for service to the church and to the world. If we have been equipped to do the work of the ministry, we should be involved — if we care!

This issue of *Journey* extends our discussion of the *Caring Church*. Please interact with areas of personal caring.

- Caring for the Family
- Caring for the Unsaved
- Caring in Crisis
- Caring through Theological Teaching

WHO CARES?
The Christian cares 24/7!

Caring for the Family of God

Dr. William J. McRae
 Edited by Mark R. Stevenson



Editor's Note: This article is an edited transcript of a message delivered by Bill McRae at the 2007 "Iron Sharpens Iron" conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.

My all-time favorite sports story is of Derek Redmond. Derek represented Britain in the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona, Spain. As he was running the 400-meter semi-final race he pulled a hamstring muscle. The story that unfolds was vividly told on the front page of a Toronto newspaper as follows:

He limped and hobbled around the final half of the 400-meter semi final, his face contorted with pain and tears, but determined to finish, though the race was over and his Olympic dream was shattered by the pop of a muscle. The sight was too much for his father Jim Redmond sitting near the top of the stands. He rushed down flights of stairs, blew past the security people, and out onto the track. "I wasn't interested in what they were saying," Jim Redmond said, "I don't speak any Spanish, and you don't need a credential in emergencies." Jim Redmond, 49 years of age, caught up with his son at the top of the final curve, putting one arm around Derek's waist, another around his left wrist. They moved in tandem for a few meters. Then Derek Redmond stopped, threw his arms around his father's shoulders and sobbed. Then they started again with their three-

legged wobble. A few steps from the finish line Jim Redmond let his son go so he could cross the line alone, and then embraced him again. "This is his last Olympics," Jim Redmond said. He worked eight years for this, and I wasn't going to let him not finish."

When I first read the story I found myself saying, "Wow. What a Dad!" Today my response is, "That's exactly what it means to care." In this article we want to ask: what does caring look like in like your assembly? How important is it? What does it take to be that kind of person?

I. The Mandate for Care-Giving

The mandate for this ministry comes from Hebrews 10:24-25:

And let us consider how to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as is the habit of some. But let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching.

"Come Alongside" To...

We sometimes use these verses as a bit of a club to force people to come to church. But that is not the point. Did you see the instruction nestled in the midst of verse 25? "Let us encourage one another." The verb translated "let us encourage" literally means "to come alongside." That is what caring for the family of God involves — coming alongside. That is what it means to care. Jim Redmond had lots of options.

He could have ignored his son; he could have been embarrassed by his son; he could have yelled at his son. But he came alongside to help him toward the finish line.

a) Compliment

If you look at the way the verb (*parakaleō*) is used in the New Testament, you will discover that there are four aspects to "coming alongside." In Hebrews 10, the idea is to come alongside people who are being faithful to God and compliment them. They are persevering under some persecution. But they are being faithful to God in spite of the defections around them. So the author comes along here and he commends and compliments them in their faithfulness.

b) Comfort

In 2 Corinthians 1:4-6, you discover that the verb used in a very different way. There it is translated "to comfort." Yet it is exactly the same word. It is coming alongside the people who are hurting. When you come alongside people who are hurting, you are not coming alongside to compliment them but to comfort them. Yet you are doing it for the same purpose: to assist them to the finish line.

c) Challenge

In Romans 12:1, the verb is translated, "beseech" or "urge." You remember the verse: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren..." This is not confirming faithful people or comforting hurting people. This is challenging complacent people. It is getting behind them and giving them a little nudge. It is challenging people who need to be moved

out of their comfort zone to do what the truth of God has called them to do.

d) Confront

Finally, in 1 Thessalonians 5:14, you discover the verb is used in a very different context. Here the context is coming alongside people who are a little out of step (unruly, disobedient to the word), in order to confront them.

A Four-Dimensional Ministry

So this verb gives us four perspectives on caring for the family of God. It involves encouraging, comforting, exhorting, and admonishing. It is interesting to note that the noun form of this verb is used to describe the Holy Spirit — the paraclete. In the New Testament it is translated as “the comforter” or “the helper.” He is the one who comes alongside us to help us reach the finish line and end the race well.

II. The Ministry of Encouragement

A caring church needs to be involved in all four dimensions, but for the purposes of this article, we will only consider the first dimension: the ministry of encouragement. The gift of encouragement is one of the most needed gifts in the church today. If your assembly has a band of people who have the gift then you are a fortunate assembly! Thank God for people who have that gift. But that does not let the rest of us off because Hebrews 10 says that we are all to be encouragers.

How Important Is It?

There is a very significant connection between verses 24 and 25 of Hebrews 10. Verse 24 talks about the effect:

“And let us consider how to spur one another toward love and good deeds.”

Love speaks of character, and deeds describe conduct. These effects are the result of the cause of verse 25:

“Let us not give up meeting together as is the habit of some, but let us encourage one another, all the more as you see the day approaching.”

So verse 25 is the cause, and verse 24 is the effect. The effect is the development of Christian character and service. If you are a Christian parent or a Sunday school teacher, that is one of the biggest challenges in your life. How do you motivate your children or students to grow in Christian character and service?

Ask yourself, “Who have been the major motivators and influencers in my spiritual life and ministry?” How did they do it? That is the question. How do you motivate your children? How do you motivate your spouse? How do you spur on the elders, the Sunday school teachers, the youth leaders? Is it by criticizing them or belittling them? Is it by ignoring them or gossiping about them? Hebrews 10:25 says it is by *encouraging* them.

How to Break a Heart

A number of years ago Brad Sham, a sportswriter in the US went to see his young son play basketball. He sat in the bleachers behind the father of one of the other boys. All through the game that father yelled at his boy. After the game was over the two men were standing in the runway waiting for their sons. The son of the other man came out first. He ran up to his father and said, “Dad, guess what? We won!” The father looked down at his boy and said, “Huh. No thanks to you,” and walked away. If you want to break the heart of a boy, that’s the way to do it.

Margaret is a lady who in her childhood days was a friend of my wife. One day we were visiting with her. She told us of a tension that had existed between her and her mother throughout her life. We asked her, “How did it start?” She replied, “I believe it stems back to the day I brought home a report card in grade 5 or 6. I had done well in all of my subjects except arithmetic, and the only comment my mother made when she looked at the report card with A’s in everything else, but a C in arithmetic, was ‘why couldn’t you have gotten an A in arithmetic?’” Margaret then filled up with tears and said, “You know, I’ve hated arithmetic ever since that day.” If you want to break the heart of a young lady, that’s the way to do it.

Try Encouragement

When Jim Sudbury’s dad came home from work they would often take out the baseball gloves and play catch in the backyard. Dad pitched the ball, and Jim caught it.

When mom called them for supper, they would go in and put away the gloves and every time his dad would ruffle his hair and say, “Jim, some day you’re going to become a big league catcher.” And one day Jim Sudbury became a big league catcher! You want to make a difference in people’s lives? Try encouragement.

On one occasion the evangelist Bill Glass was speaking to a thousand men in prison. He said, “How many of you men had parents that told you one day you were going to end up in jail?” He said he looked out over the audience and could hardly find a man who did not raise his hand. You see, you tell a boy often enough that he is going to end up in jail, and the chances are he will end up in jail.

Larry Crabb, the well-known Christian counselor, grew up in the assemblies in Stratford, Illinois. In his fine book *Encouragement: The Key to Caring*, he tells the story of his problem with a speech impediment in his youth. He was the president of his senior class in high school. One day they had an assembly and the principal, without warning, called Larry to come up and make a little announcement to the whole student body. When Larry came up, his speech impediment clicked in and his stuttering was such that he could not get the words out. He was humiliated. He went down, sat in his chair and said, “I will never speak in public again.”

A couple of years later he was at the Lord’s Supper in his assembly and without thinking, he stood up to pray, and the speech impediment clicked in and he couldn’t get

through it. Humiliated and embarrassed he sat down. He renewed his vow: “I’ll never speak in public again.” When the service was being closed in prayer, Larry got up from his seat and started down the aisle. He wanted to get out the door before the service was over because he did not want to face anyone. An elder heard the ruffle, opened his eyes and saw Larry making it for the door. The elder got up and met Larry at the door. He put his arm around his shoulder and he said, “Larry, I want you to know, whenever you do anything for the glory of God you’ve got my 100% support!” Larry traces his worldwide ministry in Christian counseling today back to that man who had a word of life for him. You want to make a difference in people’s lives? Try encouragement.

Bible teacher John Stott says this: “I thank God for the man who led me to Christ, and for the extraordinary devotion with which he nurtured me in the early years of my Christian life. He wrote me every day for, I think, seven years. He also prayed for me every day. I can only begin to guess what I owe under God to such a faithful friend and pastor.” That’s the influence of this ministry of encouragement. If you want to make a difference in people’s lives, stop criticizing, stop complaining, stop ignoring, and stop gossiping. Instead, try encouraging them!

III. The Techniques for Encouragement

The Scriptures give us some techniques for carrying out this wonderful work of encouragement.

1. A Spoken Word

Proverbs 12:25 says, “Anxiety weighs a heart down, but a good word makes it glad.” The Japanese have a proverb that says, “One kind word warms three winter months.” On one occasion Mark Twain said, “I can live a whole week on one good compliment.” That is the power of encouragement. It is coming along with a spoken word.

We can do that, for example, with our Sunday school teachers. Crabb tells of coming to a church one Sunday to speak. He arrived early and attended the adult Bible class. The regular teacher was not there, and so they had a young fellow teaching for the first time. After the class, Larry wanted to make his way up to the front to encourage him. But there was a man in front of him who got to the young man first. Now, just get the picture. Here is a young fellow teaching the Bible class for the first time, and afterward a man approaches him. What do you think that man said to him? He said, “Will our regular teacher be back next week?” You want to tear the heart out of a potential Sunday school teacher, that’s the way to do it. But if you want to make a difference in his life, then try a word of encouragement. It makes all the difference in the world.

Generally it does not mean a lot to a preacher or teacher to say, “That was good.” If you want to encourage him, tell him what it meant to you. Tell him what you learned or how it has helped you. Tell him next Sunday how it changed what happened in your life through the week — because he wants to make a difference.

They have studied all week for that class. They don't want somebody to tell them they did good! They want someone say, "You've really helped me understand that text." "I had a problem and what you said this morning will help me deal with it." That's the way to encourage a young Bible teacher. Next week he is going to study like he has never studied before because now he knows there are some people who are looking for a word from God.

It is often said that great preachers make great churches. But the reverse is also true: great churches make great preachers. They make great youth leaders and Bible study teachers. The way they do it is by coming alongside with a word of encouragement. The amazing thing is, any of us can do it! All it takes is a spoken word.

2. A Written Word

If there is anything more effective than a spoken word, it is a written word. A note or letter is not just an off-the-cuff comment you have made on Sunday. It is something that you have taken time to give some thought to.

The nice thing about a written word is that you can keep it! You can read it again and again. I received one of those letters from my daughter a year or two ago and I kept it in my bedside table for six weeks!

I practiced this while in pastoral ministry, but I never realized how important it was until one day I went to Ted's home for a social engagement. As I was walking

down the hall from the living room into the kitchen, I looked on the wall and there was a letter I had written to Ted. He had it framed and hung it on his wall. In the letter I simply commented on his leading of the service one Sunday morning. Ted was a mature businessman, but it meant so much to him he framed the thing! You want to make a difference in people's lives? Then a note of encouragement can make all the difference in the world.

3. A Gentle Touch

A gentle touch is a significant thing. Have you ever wondered why Jesus touched that leper in Mark 1:41? He did not have to touch him to heal him. What do you think that touch meant to that leper? Here is a man with leprosy. His wife has not touched him for years. He has a couple of grown daughters. He was not able to be at their weddings or get a hug and a kiss from them on that wedding day. Now those girls have daughters. He can see them from a distance, but he could never touch them. They could never sit on his knee and put their arms around his neck. When he walked in public he declared himself to be "unclean" so no one would touch him by accident. He had not been touched for years, and Jesus came along and touched him!

When I visit people in the hospital to pray with them, especially elderly people, I like to take their hand and pray for them. I have discovered something about older

women especially. As I hold their hand and pray for them they squeeze my hand tighter and tighter. Now, it may be the signal to keep the prayer a little shorter, but I don't think that is it. I do not know all it means to them but I do know it means a lot. It is true we need to be careful about touching today. We need to be very discreet, and very wise, and very careful about it. But sometimes a gentle touch says a whole lot more than a pile of words. It is a technique for encouraging people. You are coming alongside people and letting them know you are with them.

4. A Listening Ear

Among the characters of the Bible, Job's friends are generally not highly regarded. But if they had just kept their mouths shut they would have changed their reputation entirely. They would have been among the heroes of the Bible! For the first seven days, they never spoke a word to Job. They just listened. But these three friends made a serious mistake. They opened their mouths and wrecked their reputation!

A survey was taken among Lutherans in the Midwest United States. The survey listed 115 verbs and asked people to list them in order of priority as to what they expected from their pastors and Christian leaders. The results are a little surprising. Preaching was number twenty-two on the list. Number five was to pray; number four was to love; number three was to inspire and number two was to

encourage. Number one on the list was to listen. There are probably few things that can be more encouraging for a person than to have some else listen to him or her. I know you want to preach at your teenagers. But maybe what you need to do is to listen to them. They need to be able to talk to Dad and let Dad listen. It is an enormously influential thing, that listening ear.

5. Hospitality

Paul comes to the city of Corinth in Acts 18 and Priscilla and Aquila take him home. They exercise hospitality. What a wonderful way to encourage people — opening up your home to them, sharing a meal with them. Hospitality is a mark of a caring church.

6. Gifts

Then there were the Philippians. They sent Paul a gift and he had not received a gift for a long time. There he was in prison, and they sent a gift. You read Philippians 4 and you find yourself saying, "That gift really meant a lot to Paul. Look at the way he describes it, and how he talks about it. That gift was such an encouragement to him."

7. Acts of Service

Consider Onesiphorus (2 Tim. 1:16-18). Paul writes to Timothy and

says, "I want to tell you about Onesiphorus — what a guy he is. He came along and he served me, and he helped me, and he did this for me. What an encouragement!" A wonderful way to encourage people is simply to serve them.

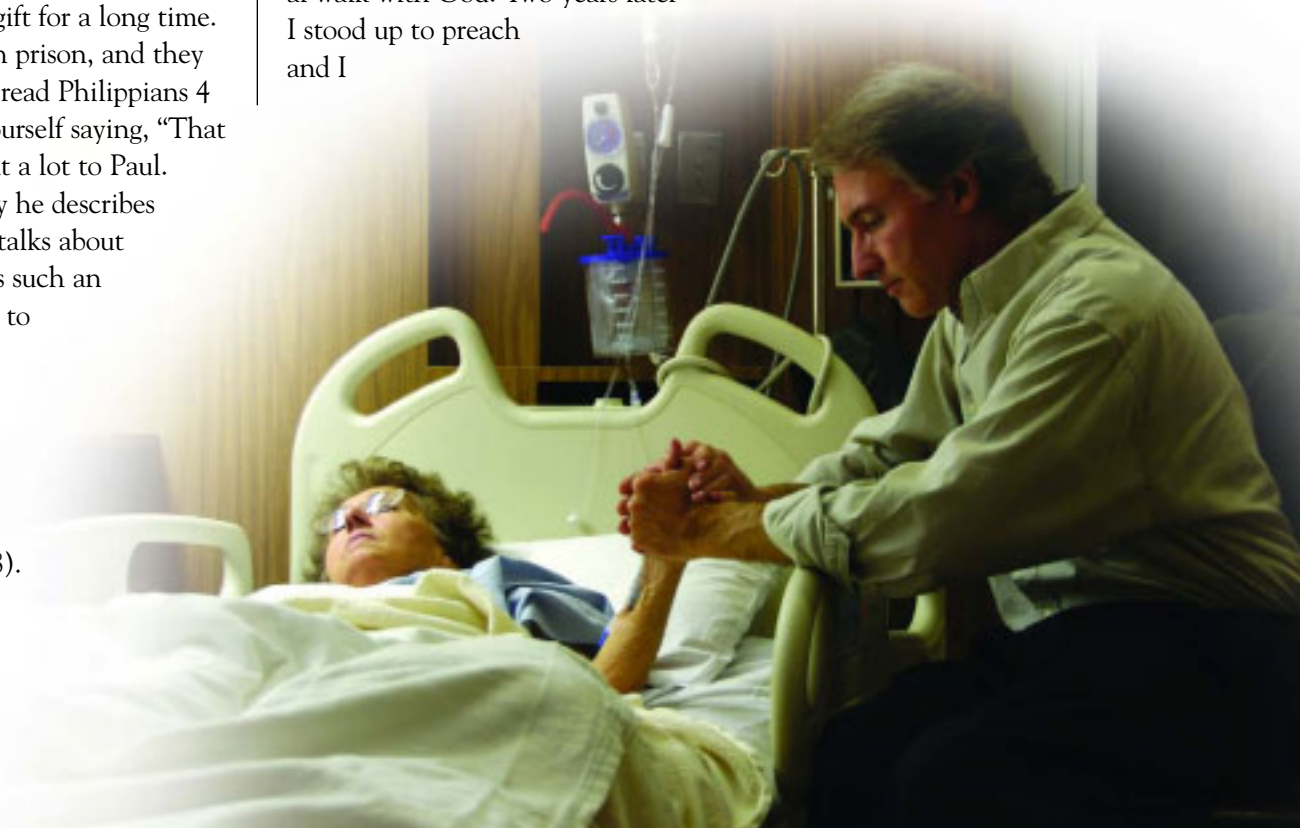
8. Prayer

Barbara was one of my great encouragers. She was a Navigator who attended our church. One day she came up after the Sunday morning service and said, "Bill, I've been sent to Europe. I'm going to be away for two years and I'd like to pray for you while I'm in Europe. Give me a prayer request." Well, I thought to myself, "Now this is a gal who is serious." So I said, "Barb, give me a week to think about it." So, I thought about it all week. Next Sunday morning I gave her my prayer request. It was something about my character and my spiritual walk with God. Two years later I stood up to preach and I

looked out and there was Barbara. After the service her first question to me was: "How is...?" Well, I gave her a little hug. I said, "Thanks. You have no idea what that means to me to have a person who cares enough to really pray." You want to encourage somebody? Then try praying for them, specifically, faithfully, diligently.

IV. The Profile of an Encourager

What kind of a person does it take to be an encourager? Let me introduce you to Joseph, because he is the model for what we have been talking about. Of course you don't know him as Joseph. He was such a model that the disciples gave him the nickname, "Son of Encouragement," which in the language of the New Testament, is Barnabas. He is the epitome of encouragement.



He Sacrifices His Rights and Privileges

We first see Barnabas selling his property to give to the poor. Of course he had a right to that property. But he sacrificed his personal rights and privileges. That is the heartbeat of encouragers. They are not always demanding their rights. They are willing to sacrifice their rights for the good of others.

He Takes Risks

The next time we see Barnabas he is introducing Saul, the new Christian, to the church. Of course, they are suspicious that he is an undercover agent who is coming in to arrest them and persecute them. But Barnabas comes in and he puts his reputation behind Saul. He supports him, and speaks for him. What is he doing? He is taking a risk; and that's what encouragers do. The people who have made a significant difference in my life are the people who were willing to take a risk with me. And I'm glad they did.

He Is Committed to the Success of Others

When Barnabas comes to Antioch, he discovers a need in the church that he is not able to meet. He remembers that Saul is in Tarsus, so he goes over and gets Saul and involves him in the ministry. Barnabas was not concerned about his own success. He was concerned about the health of the church at Antioch. He was concerned about the success of Saul and his development in his service for God. People who are encouragers are committed to the success of others.

He Is Content to Turn Over the Leadership

Before long they were out on the first missionary journey and for a while it says "Barnabas and Saul," "Barnabas and Saul." But suddenly it changes to "Paul and Barnabas," "Paul and Barnabas." There was the transition in leadership. Barnabas starts off as the leader, but he steps back and passes over the leadership to Paul. It is a very subtle thing. But that is what good encouragers do. They are committed to the success of others, and they are content to pass on leadership. That is what elders need to do as they reach those later years. Elders who are encouragers are content to pass the leadership on to others.

He Is Concerned about the Failure of Others

It is not long before there is a little problem between Paul and Barnabas and John Mark. But Barnabas stands up with John Mark. He is concerned about Mark; he is concerned about his stumbling; he is concerned about his failure. Paul wanted to discard him. But Barnabas comes alongside him.

He Is Committed to the Restoration of Others

The last picture we have of Barnabas is that he takes John Mark out on his missionary journey. He is committed to the restoration of Mark. He is not going to leave him out in limbo. He is not going to leave him on the sidelines. He made a bit of a bungle on the first step, but let's try it again!

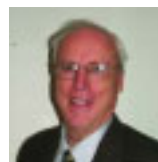
In these six characteristics of Barnabas you see a character profile

of men and women who are good encouragers. I want to urge you to commit yourself to the methodology laid out in Scripture for motivating people toward the development of godly character and Christian service. The strategy is to stop complaining, and criticizing, and ignoring them. Instead, encourage them!

Clap and Cheer

Jamie, a second grader, was going off to school one morning. His mother was really nervous because that day they were giving out parts for the school play. Jamie really wanted to be in it, but what if he didn't get a part? As the school day came to an end Jamie's mother drove to school and parked in the front. The school bell rang, the doors opened, and the kids came running out. Jamie looked over and saw mom sitting in the family car. He jumped in the front seat and exclaimed, "Mom, I've been chosen to clap and to cheer!"

And so have you! †



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Loving the Lost

Dr. Larry Dixon
Edited by Mark R. Stevenson

Editor's Note: This article is an edited transcript of a message delivered by Larry Dixon at the 2007 "Iron Sharpens Iron" Conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.

In this article we want to focus on caring for those not yet in the family of God. Along the way, we need to tackle some important questions. Why should we love the lost? If

God so loved the world, what's wrong with us? What does it mean to love the lost? How did Jesus Christ model for us a life of love for those who needed Him?

I. Our Basis for Loving the Lost

John 3:16 & 1 John 2:15
We read in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world...." But what about

1 John 2:15? The very same writer says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The same writer appears to say opposite things. The solution, however, lies in the two meanings for the word "world." In John 3:16, John is referring to the world of people. Whereas in 1 John 2:15, he is referring to the pagan system of



Jesus eats with publicans and sinners.
Illustrations by Alexandre Bida, from Christ in Art; or, The Gospel Life of Jesus: With the Bida Illustrations. by Edward Eggleston. New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1874.

the world. We are not to love the pagan system that opposes God and hates the things of God. But we are to be like the Lord and love the people of this world.

Matthew 11:19

“The Son of Man came eating and drinking and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her actions.” That is Jesus speaking. In other words, I must love what God loved. I must be a friend to those to whom Jesus was a friend. It’s that simple. An evangelist once said, “No one accepts Christ in one of my meetings who isn’t already half converted before he or she gets there.” I believe he is talking about befriending and loving unbelievers. Do you have some half-converted friends?

Acts 10:38

Peter speaks of how “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power,” and how “he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” I fear sometimes we make our faith exclusively verbal. Jesus went around doing good. Have you done good for any of your neighbors recently? We are to do good to the household of faith, but we are also to do good to all men. Could it be that because we do not have the gift of healing like Jesus we do not do any good at all? I hope not.

John Wesley said this: “Do all

the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, in all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.” We are to be looking for opportunities to do good in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ went around doing good! My fear is that many of us go around merely saying words. Now, certainly our witness has to be verbal. We need to articulate the gospel. But as St. Francis of Assisi said, “Preach always; if necessary use words.”

II. Our Barriers to Loving the Lost

Following are some of the barriers we often erect that keep us from reaching out to lost people:

Poor Memories

We forget that someone loved us. Think about it for a moment: Who loved you into the kingdom? Thank God for them, and now you go love someone! Sometimes we suffer from poor memories.

Watching the Clock

This is the problem of not spending time with the lost. How many hours in a hundred-and-sixty-eight-hour week do you spend with those who need Christ?

“What about Jesus, beloved?”

Sometimes we fall into the spiritual trap of inviting the unsaved only to our churches and not to our homes. We engage them in spiritual activities; we talk with them only about spiritual matters. For years this was the way I thought about witnessing.

I thought that if I was going to talk to the unsaved, the only subject could be the gospel. Why do we think we can talk to people about eternity, but we don’t talk to them about their everyday lives? We don’t find out about their children, or their jobs, or their vacations, or their pets. We just jump right into eternity. And we wonder why they run when they see us coming.

Believer’s Blackmail

Here we redefine love and make it conditional upon a positive response to the gospel. It is as if the Christian says, “Look, you got six months, o.k.? I give you six months. But beyond that — I’m going to move to somebody else.” It’s the “pearls before swine” kind of thing. My fear is we call a lot of people swine while Jesus is saying, “Hey, you just started this friendship!”

I have a bunch of unsaved guys I play tennis with. They know I’m a believer. I don’t assault them with the gospel; but in different ways I try to communicate to them not only my love for them, and their need for Christ, but the fact that I will be their friend to the day they die! If I am alive and they are on their deathbed, I want to be there and share the gospel one more time.

Desperados

Perhaps we forget the desperate need for Christ that our unbelieving friends really have. Don’t you wish you could sit down with some of your lost friends and say to them,

“You know, according to the Bible, the truth is that you’re under the wrath of God. And the only way to get out from under the wrath of God is by trusting the Lord Jesus Christ.” Now, I am not saying you should go do that with all of your lost friends. But don’t you wish you could? There may be a few relationships where you can actually be that bold. But we need to regain a sense of desperation about sharing the gospel.

One Way Street

We often fail to understand the benefits to us of friendships with the unsaved. You may have unsaved friends, and you thank God for them, and you realize how much you are learning just by being around them. It may be by way of contrast: you may see things in their lives that remind you of what they presently do not have-but you do as a Christian! There are benefits to us in being the friend of sinners as Jesus was.

Outreach — Beta Version

This is all about having programs rather than getting personal. There is no question that some of our churches could use better programs. I am not against that. But good programs, when people don’t feel they are loved, do not amount to much.

24/7 Religiosity

Sometimes we think that we must have the church lights on every night of the week. But when are we ever supposed to spend time

with the lost? It’s the undeclared expectation in many of our churches that we will have meeting after meeting after meeting, and that spiritual people will be there every time the lights are on. But if that’s the case, when are we ever going to spend time with lost people? The local church is the place for us to get energized, taught, and disciplined, so we can go out and share with others.

Fear Factor

We think, “Having unsaved friends will bring me down spiritually.” Well, get spiritually strong; stay in the Word! Don’t let that keep you from developing relationships.

Family Fear Factor

Or perhaps the concern is: “Having unsaved friends will be a bad example for my family.” No, just the opposite. I have had young parents come to me when I have talked about friendship evangelism and say, “You talk about being friends with unsaved. You don’t mean our children should do that, do you?” I say, “Of course! Your children should be sharing the gospel with their friends.” “But they’re going to wind up doing things they shouldn’t do.” My suggestion is, “Then make your house the central place of fun. You control the activities.” You cannot shelter your children from having contact with unsaved people.

Separation NON-Anxiety

2 Corinthians 6:17 says, “‘Come out and be separate,’ says the Lord.” We misunderstand that to mean that

we are not to have any unsaved friends — and we are not even anxious about it! We think we are more holy the fewer non-Christian friends we have. Well, I’m sorry. That does not correlate at all with Matthew 11:19, which says, “The Son of Man comes eating and drinking and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, and a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’” I need to be a friend of sinners, and you do as well.

Are We Reaching the Lost?

George Barna says this: “After nearly two decades of studying Christian churches in America, I’m convinced that the typical church, as we know it today, has a rapidly expiring shelf life!” What an indictment! Are we reaching lost people?

Have you ever noticed how our prayer meetings become “organ recitals?” We talk about so-and-so’s gallbladder that needs to come out, and so-and-so has a bunion and needs surgery. I sometimes feel like a medical intern at the foot of a hospital bed reading a chart. Years ago when I was in graduate school, I was at a prayer meeting and after they went through the organ recital I said, “Could we also pray for my friends Mike and Tom because they need Christ? I work with them at UPS and they need the Lord.” What really hurt was that gossip got back to me that they thought I was bragging that I had unsaved friends. We need to consistently be praying for those who need the Lord Jesus Christ and stop being so critical about the church.

III. Our Example in Loving the Lost

Our example, of course, is the Lord Jesus. How did He love the lost? Let's look at three categories.

A. Loving the Religious — John 3

In John 3 we have what I call, "Nick at Night"—Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night. There are at least four basic principles that Christ models for us with Nicodemus.

1. *The Lord Jesus loved him enough to be available to him.* Nicodemus could come and have a private audience with the Lord Jesus. Whatever Nicodemus' reasons were for coming at night, Jesus was available to him. Someone has said that our greatest ability is our availability. Be available. The Lord was.
2. *Jesus loved him enough to be open to his questions.* Jesus gets right to the heart of the issue with Nicodemus and says,

"no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." Poor Nicodemus is thinking Biology 101. He's confused. So he asks a question, "How can a man be born when he is old? Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born." What Jesus said provoked a question from Nicodemus.

I am a firm believer in propositional revelation. It is one of the battle fronts today as many post-moderns are saying that we cannot affirm propositional revelation.

Propositional revelation is statements about reality that we can take to the bank! Our problem as evangelicals is that sometimes we tend to only make statements. We declare things, and we expect people to automatically buy what we are telling them. Jesus was brilliant in stating things that got people thinking and asking questions. He loved him enough to be open to his questions.

3. He loved him enough to tell him the truth.

Nicodemus is still confused. By the way, that happens over and over again in the Gospel of John. Jesus uses a word or phrase on the spiritual level and people think only on the physical level. It happens in John 4 with water, John 6 with bread, and John 9 with blindness. But God's Word lets us see inside the conversation. Here, Jesus loved Nicodemus enough to tell the truth, and when he did not understand about being born again, Jesus rebukes him: "You are Israel's teacher, and you don't understand these things?"

I live in South Carolina where we have a lot of religious people like Nicodemus. The difficulty in trying to share the gospel with religious people is they already think they know it. They already think they are right with God. How do we reach them? Sometimes it may involve rather direct language: "Have you been born again?"

4. He loved him enough to not water down God's judgment.

Jesus goes on to say that God does

not want people to perish (3:16). But the passage also says that those who do not believe will be condemned (3:17). In fact, verse 18 says: "Whoever does not believe stands condemned already." Jesus does not water down the truth about God's judgment, and neither must we.

B. Loving the Immoral — John 4

In John 4 a marvelous conversation takes place as Jesus meets with the Samaritan woman. Again, there are four principles that leap out here.

1. Jesus loved her enough to make her His priority.

Jesus intentionally goes through Samaria even though the Jews typically refused to go through Samaria due to their disdain for Samaritans. But I believe the Lord had an appointment with this woman, and He had to meet up with her. He made her his priority.

2. He loved her enough to express His own need.

Notice how Jesus initiates the conversation: "Could I have a drink of water, please?" He expresses a need. She could have as easily said, "Not on your life, buster! I'm not giving you a drink of water." But the way Jesus treated her, and the fact that He expressed a need, gave her the opportunity to talk to Him.

We men suffer from a love of power tools. We want to get up in the middle of the night and turn on the drill just to listen to it. You buy a rotary saw and you just want to cut things! I heard a preacher say,

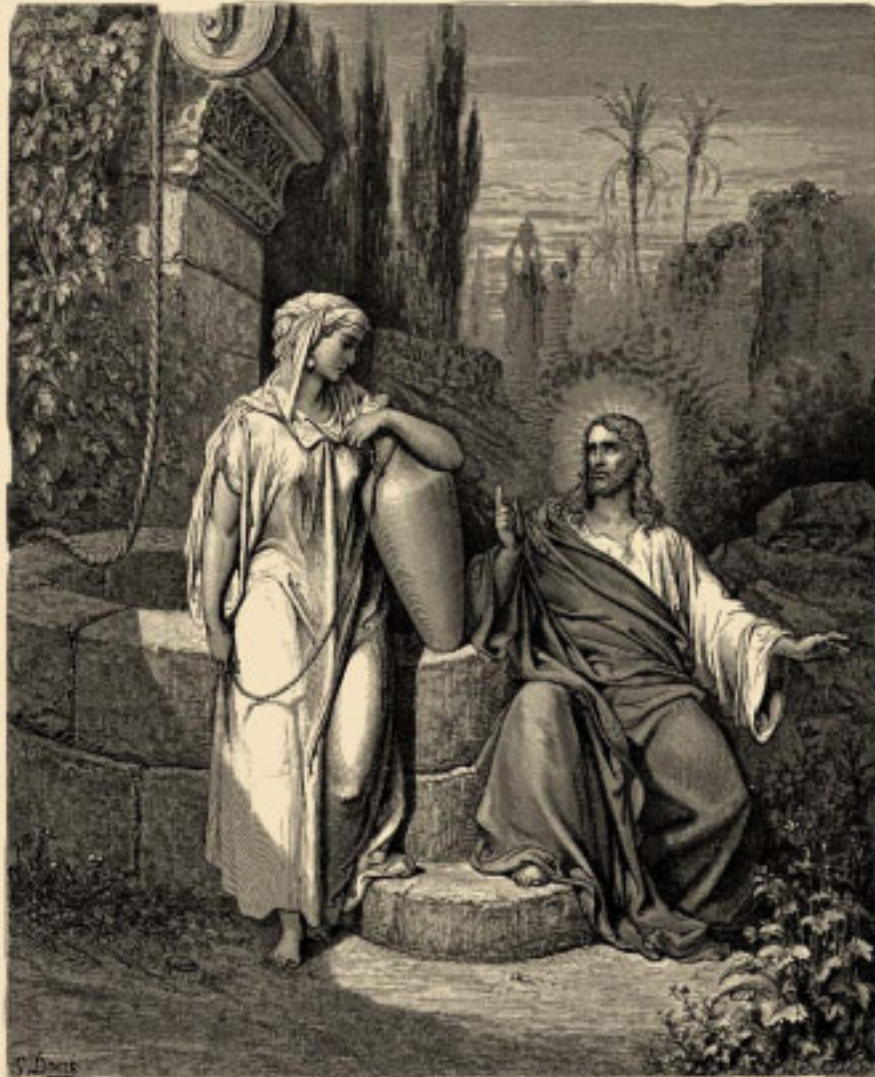
"Guys, don't go out and buy all your own power tools. Borrow them from your neighbor. Don't break them — and make sure you return them! But borrow them." When you borrow a tool from a neighbor you are saying, "I've got a need. Can you help me?"

Some time ago, my wife bought me a hammock. I stretched it between two big pine trees in our backyard. I was thinking of all the hours that I could spend meditating on the important things in life. When I lay on the hammock I looked up and saw a dead limb thirty feet above me. I thought, "Of all the different ways to die, I don't want to die taking a nap on a hammock with a dead pine tree limb sticking through my chest!" So I got out my ladder, but it was only twenty feet high. I then had to come to a very emotional time in my life. I had to ask my neighbor for a ladder! So I borrowed a ladder, and the neighbor who lent it to me, along with another neighbor, came out to watch. I think they were saying, "Let's watch the theologian kill himself!" I climbed to the top of the ladder and did a marvelous job of cutting the limb while they were holding the ladder and cracking jokes about crazy theologians.

You know, I'm not going to buy a new ladder. If I ever have to do it again, I'm going to go back to my neighbor because he met a need for me. What are the needs in your life that you could solve by a) going to Lowe's or Home Depot and doing it yourself, or, b) going to a neighbor and saying, "Is there any way you'd lend me such and such?" Now



Nicodemus seeks Jesus by night. Illustrations by Alexandre Bida, from Christ in Art; or, The Gospel Life of Jesus: With the Bida Illustrations. by Edward Eggleston. New York: Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1874.



Jesus and the Woman of Samaria
Illustration by Gustave Dore, public domain

make sure you return it, and try not to break it! But Jesus models for us the issue of expressing a need. We create isolation when we act as if we have no needs. Let's not isolate ourselves this way from our unsaved friends and neighbors.

3. *He loved her enough to be creative in His witness.*

Jesus uses language that has spiritual meaning. He asks the woman for a drink, and then says, "If you knew who asked you for the water, you'd

ask Him and He'd give you living water. You'd never, ever thirst again." The wheels start turning in her brain but she's still stuck on physical water: "Well, give me this water because I'm really tired of coming here drawing water for myself." She hasn't made the transition with Him. But it is coming. Jesus is creative in His witness.

4. *He loved her enough to deal carefully with her sin.*

Jesus surprises her by saying, "Go

call your husband and come back." She says, "I have no husband." And He responds, "You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you've had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you've just said is quite true." What do you think His facial expression was when He said that to her? I don't think it was a kind of screwed-up, Pharisaical face of condemnation. I think it was a face of love and compassion because He knew He must deal with her sin. Jesus keeps bringing her back to the main issue — a relationship with God. But in order to do that He must deal with her sin.

May I suggest that we need to get over our revulsion for the immoral? I do not mean for immorality, but for people who are sinners. Sometimes we are like the Pharisees. We pull our righteous robes around us and say, "Unclean." But our churches need to reach broken people: the divorced, the addicted, the homosexual, the criminal, and the outcast. We must get over this myth that we are no longer sinners, and they are, and we ought to stay away from them. NO! We are sinners who have found the love and forgiveness of the Lord Jesus. How dare we look down on anyone else! Donald Miller says, "Nobody will listen to you unless they sense that you like them." We can like sinners without condoning their sin. And we need to do so.

C. **Loving the Broken — John 9**

This is one of the great stories in

Scripture. There's a lot of humor in it, too. Notice how Jesus loves the man born blind.

1. *He loved him enough to provide a theology of suffering for him.*

The disciples ask a profound theological question regarding the blind man: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" The Lord responds: "Neither this man nor his parents sinned. But this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." If this was the only verse we had in all the Bible about the problem of brokenness, and suffering, and tragedy in life, it would be enough, would it not? Why do awful things happen? We don't always know. But we do know this — and you can write it over any tragedy: "This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." You and I need to provide a theology of suffering for broken people.

There are really only two kinds of people in the world: those who are broken and acknowledge it, and those who are broken and do not. We are all broken. And what a gift God gives us in providing in His Word a theology of suffering. Of course, you have to be careful. The one book most of us think of when we think of suffering is the book of Job. Eighty-seven percent of the book of Job is the lousy advice of his friends. So be careful when you use the book of Job. Most of what they said to Job was wrong. About the only thing Job's friends did right was to keep their mouths shut for the first seven days. We can be with

people in their brokenness. And when they are open we can begin to share with them some of the basic principles of a biblical theology of suffering.

2. *Jesus loved him enough to do the Father's work despite the cost.*

This is where the Lord Jesus says, "It's day. We better do the Father's work while it's day. Night is coming when we can't work." I believe He is talking about the opposition that would take place. You and I need to love people enough to do the Father's work despite the cost.

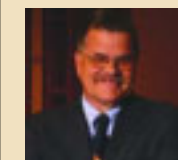
3. *He loved him enough to focus on the most important relationship in life.*

After the man is healed the religious leaders put him through trial after trial about how it happened. This poor man who had never seen anything in his life, now only sees sweaty-faced Pharisees who want to kill Jesus. And he loses it. That's where the humor comes in. They ask him about a fifth time, "How did this happen," and he says to them, "Why are you asking me again? Don't you listen? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" They get so freaked out, they say, "You were steeped in sin at birth. How dare you lecture us!" and they threw him out. Jesus then seeks out the man and leads him to saving faith. What is more important than getting one's physical vision? Getting one's spiritual sight — coming into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Don't Be a Hypocrite!

Vance Havner tells the story about someone who brought a talking horse into church. He said to the talking horse, "How many members in the Godhead?" And the horse taps out three times. People are amazed. Then he said, "How many disciples did Jesus have?" And the horse tapped out twelve. Then he asked him a third question, "How many hypocrites are in this church?" And the horse broke into a full gallop and ran away!

I don't want to be a hypocrite. I want to be like the Lord Jesus. I want to love the religious — not affirm them in their religiosity, but by God's grace, break through that religion and help them understand a relationship with the Lord Jesus. I want to love the immoral. I want to treat them with dignity. I want to love the broken so that they can see the love of God in the very way that I treat them. Let's rediscover how the Lord Jesus loved the religious, the immoral, and the broken, and by His grace, let's do the same. †



Larry Dixon
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Caring in

Crisis

Crisis can be defined as: a crucial turning point in the process of an incident or series of events.

Stan Farmer

For many parents and adults in today's world, the alarm clock going off marks the beginning of a "crisis" that lasts until, exhausted, they fall into bed. Fortunately, this is not life for most of us! While this type of stressful lifestyle may describe the reality of many in our culture, it is not the kind of crisis I am addressing here. Rather, I am concerned with the parents who find themselves confronted with a major family crisis resulting from the news that they, or a family member, are in bondage due to addictive behaviors such as pornography, eating disorders, drug and/or alcohol abuse, sexual abuse or addiction, etc.

This kind of crisis typically begins long before the problem becomes evident to the family. If we wait to formulate a plan and strategy until the so-called disaster hits us like a freight train, we will likely become a part of the problem. It is essential to understand that the actions we take — or avoid taking — in the first few hours can either spell disaster or some modicum of success.

Christian families would be wise to live by the following principles at all times. Certainly if a crisis does arise, having these practices in place will help, but, more importantly, structuring your family around such precepts may well stave off a major crisis in the first place:

1. The example of having a quiet time or devotions each day should be set by the parents.

2. Mom and Dad need to be seen praying together for their marriage and family.

3. Conversation related to church matters and personalities should be uplifting, not degrading, derisive, or gossip-driven.

4. Spiritual priorities should trump material ones.

5. All addicting chemicals should be considered dangerous and portrayed as insidious enemies of families.

6. Fellowship with other couples who have families and share your Christian views about childrearing should be considered to be imperative.

7. Periodic involvement of the entire family in an activity that is wholly altruistic and sacrificial is essential. Many teens seek out crazy friends and risky behavior because they desire to be a part of an adventure that fully engages them. They choose crises-producing alternatives because parents are seen as "looking out for number one," occupied with personal goals, and frankly — boring!

It's your job to create the atmosphere in your family. You create the buzz. Instead of spending money on a new car, summer trip, or the next facelift, try traveling

as a family to Louisiana to plant flower gardens around the new homes erected after Katrina; or to the Czech Republic to package medical kits; or to New Hampshire, where you can fight black flies while planting seed at His Mansion.

Parents also must be willing to admit that their child may truly be willfully engaging in wrong behavior. It is all too common for many parents of young children in today's culture to find their significance and worth solely in the achievements and accomplishments of their children. This being the case, there tends to be a clouding of the eyesight regarding the actions and speech of adolescent children.

Attitudes such as, "It's just a phase," or "All the kids are doing this now," or, better yet, "He/she only behaves like that when with 'those' kids," will only create more problems. Unwillingness to consider the possibility that your child is choosing to rebel, adversely influence younger siblings, steal and/or cheat, etc., can cause a blindness that may lead to the ruin of the offspring's life, and subject the parent to unimaginable pain.

It is not irresponsible, unloving, or unfair to oversee your children with an eye to the possibility that they are involved in some behavior that seems "unthinkable" to you. We must continually



remind ourselves that it is not all about “us,” and the portrayal of our image to the people surrounding us. Poor choices made by adolescents must be fully attributed to them and not diluted in an effort to spread the blame around or minimize the severity of their misbehavior. Failing to be open to the possibility that one’s child might be the culprit and initiator will often result in an event finally evolving into a major crisis, or bondage to addictive sin. Be discerningly suspicious!

When a crisis is beginning to develop and disaster looms, guard against the temptation to lump your issues with your child’s and together attack your spouse. I cannot tell you how many times the confrontation with the erring young person has quickly turned into a war between parents.

Crisis can construct a platform for venting long-festered anger and bitterness between husbands and

wives. This must be guarded against, because if it happens, the focus has then changed, and the chance to turn a crisis into an opportunity for healing and growth just got sabotaged by childish adults! In the midst of a crisis, commit to making the child the only immediate concern. Do not become divided, letting outdated and personal issues assume the stage.

Although this may seem like the height of pessimism, it is wise to prepare for hard events and crises ahead of time. Arrange with a trusted elder or pastor — incidentally, one of the best cases to be made for sticking with a local community of believers over a long period of time — to be willing to come to your aid if and when the need arises. If you have an ongoing relationship with someone who has professional training and experience, keep him or her on that list. I placed the shepherd on the list

first, because you should be able to expect him to take the matter before the Throne of Grace in a way that most practitioners might not be expected to. Shepherds, after all, love and care for their sheep.

Another important maxim to follow is to avoid succumbing to the old adage that insists upon “keeping your dirty laundry hidden from view.” When your son, daughter, husband, or wife has allowed their wills to be dominated by any addictive agent, there is nothing so antiseptic as full exposure to sunlight (“Sonlight”). Candid transparency over time allows for “trends” to be discussed before the actual crisis explodes — perhaps even precluding it. I have become a proponent of intimate small groups of twelve to fifteen. Bill Thrall and Bruce McNichol’s Leadership Catalyst’s exercise, called *TrueFaced*, has been an excellent tool for us. It takes time, and patience, and the willingness to be the first one exposed. Without the courage to take that risk, true community will never develop.

I also recommend that every couple at least be familiar with a counseling clinic in the area. When emotional/behavioral crises visit your reality, there is a better-than-even chance that the causes lie deeper than “biblical corrections” alone can assuage. Seeking professional help for inner healing is not a sign of a lack of faith, or doubt in God’s ability — He uses many kinds of tools in our lives, and counseling can be one of them.

For the record, our experience

is showing us that sexual addiction is the fastest growing addiction and is often a key ingredient in other addictions. Should your crises include this dimension, how you address it can make all the difference. Please do not allow yourself to be in denial if this is an addiction with which your loved one is struggling. Even the “best” youngster — the camper; the Awana alumnus; or the sweet, giving, loving, “don’t-you-wish-your-child-was-like-this” darling — is susceptible to this basic, flesh-driven temptation which quickly leads to a vine-entangled addiction. When sexual addiction finally manifests, it is a crisis of the greatest proportion.

When the pot boils over in your family unit and involves one or more of your sons and/or daughters, be prepared by settling certain issues ahead of time, or you’ll fall prey to enabling and denial. The following guidelines may prove helpful:

1. If the crisis has come about due to poor choices and bad behavior on the part of the son or daughter, hold him or her fully responsible for his or her actions. There will be no change as long as the blame game and “victim” mentalities persist.

2. Do not modify or “dummy-down” the standards that have been established in the home. Smoking, drinking, obsessive gaming, absorption in music, inappropriately revealing attire, excessive television marathons, and so on are not healthy, and “being reasonable” by compromising will do nothing for your charge’s recovery.

3. Take action as quickly as possible. Lies, cunning, and denial usually set in soon after the shock of being caught and exposed.

4. If there are younger siblings and the crisis involves chronic drug abuse and/or sexual addiction (particularly pornography), and your charge is old enough to be legally

put out of the house, you may have to do just that.

5. Having a relationship with some sort of residential care facility can be a lifesaver. Even if they cannot admit the individual right away or do not address the particular age, gender, or problem being faced, they will likely have a list of resources and referrals, and be able to offer hope. There are many short-term solutions that are not widely known, such as rescue missions and shelters that are willing to house people for a short time and include modified programs.

6. Under no circumstances can you allow for the perpetrator to dictate terms. They are the ones responsible and must be willing to surrender to your terms. If they resist, there must be consequences severe enough to make them reconsider. Once the consequences — having been roughed out during days before the need actually surfaces — are dictated, you must be willing to follow through with them.

Beware, as this is the moment when the disobedient, willful, or wayward one will demonstrate an amazing, and hitherto unseen, gift for acting. He or she will take your heart, twist it, stretch it, and wring it out. Only the well-prepared will be able to sustain the emotional blackmail!

7. Have a small army of trusted friends praying throughout this process. Angels are our encouragers and protectors. Believe God for the supernatural help you’ll need!

8. Often, and becoming increasingly evident to us of late,





is the dimension of spiritual warfare. The Enemy of our souls lies in wait, seeking whom he may devour. Drug abuse, sexual immorality and addiction, internet pornography, and certain types of music are powerful tools of the devil. Along with the actual damage inflicted upon the individual and others, this can create severe footholds upon which the enemy grasps in a desperate attempt to hold on to hard-won territory. Certainly this must be kept in balance, but having someone who is familiar with and experienced in spiritual warfare assist you in the intervention stage of addressing the crisis, can be a huge help in the spiritual dimension of the battle.

9. Set reasonable-but-certain

boundaries and conditions for the person's recovery, should he or she remain within your household. However, be especially ready and willing to celebrate almost any victory, small or large, during the early stages of recovery.

10. Encourage remorse and contriteness in the days following the confrontation. This may not be evident during the initial campaign, but should emerge within a day or two.

Finally, it is my experience and observation with many believing families, that if we are willing to continue to pray for our struggling family member, as well as love them and say so, the vast majority follow the prodigal's path from the slop trough to the love feast. †

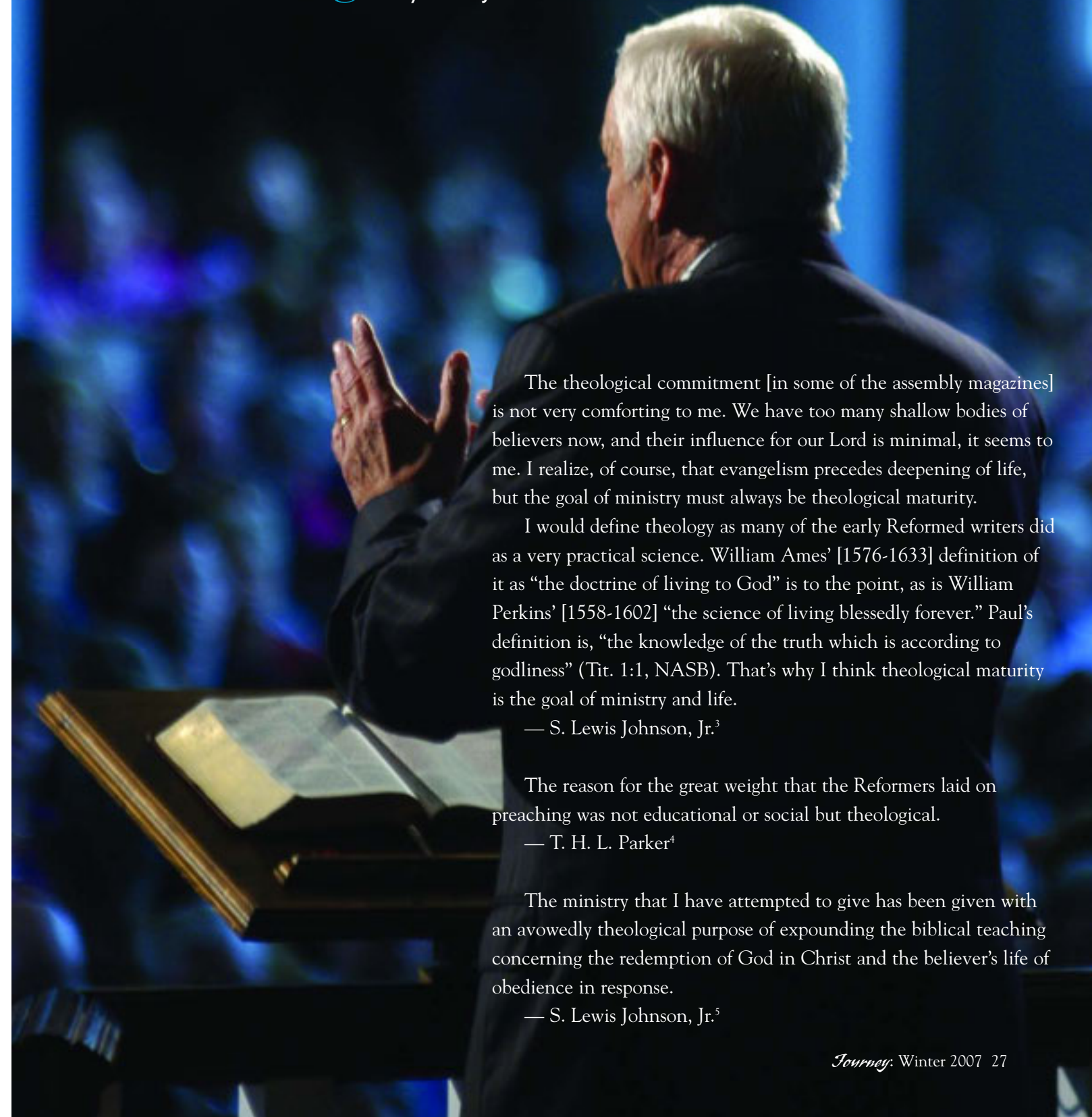


Stan Farmer was born on Peaks Island, Maine in 1941. The day after he graduated from high school he joined the US Navy's Submarine Service, serving for eight years. During this period he married Joan, his wife of 40 years. In 1971 Stan and several other men founded His Mansion Ministries. Stan and Joan live in Deering, New Hampshire where he continues to serve as President and ambassador-at-large for His Mansion Ministries.

The Enemy of our souls lies in wait, seeking whom he may devour.

Caring for the Church Theologically, Or: The Theological Foundations of Preaching¹

by David J. MacLeod²



The theological commitment [in some of the assembly magazines] is not very comforting to me. We have too many shallow bodies of believers now, and their influence for our Lord is minimal, it seems to me. I realize, of course, that evangelism precedes deepening of life, but the goal of ministry must always be theological maturity.

I would define theology as many of the early Reformed writers did as a very practical science. William Ames' [1576-1633] definition of it as "the doctrine of living to God" is to the point, as is William Perkins' [1558-1602] "the science of living blessedly forever." Paul's definition is, "the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness" (Tit. 1:1, NASB). That's why I think theological maturity is the goal of ministry and life.

— S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.³

The reason for the great weight that the Reformers laid on preaching was not educational or social but theological.

— T. H. L. Parker⁴

The ministry that I have attempted to give has been given with an avowedly theological purpose of expounding the biblical teaching concerning the redemption of God in Christ and the believer's life of obedience in response.

— S. Lewis Johnson, Jr.⁵

In a comic strip, a frock-coated parson is asked a question, “Why do preachers preach?” The minister scratches his head. “Hmmmmm,” he says. Then he opens his mouth to answer but “Duhhhh” comes out. Finally in the last panel of the comic strip, he wanders off with a giant question mark over his head. The giant question mark — “Why do preachers preach?” — hangs over all who minister the Word.⁶ “True Christian preaching (by which I mean ‘biblical’ or ‘expository’ preaching...) is extremely rare in today’s Church,” says John Stott, the now retired pastor and world-renowned Bible teacher. The major reason, he argues, must be “a lack of conviction about its importance.”⁷

In the average course on homiletics, the professor deals with the preparation and delivery of sermons; in short, he focuses on methodology. But there is something more important than methodology, and that is theology. We cannot consider methodology without a solid theological foundation. The goal of this article is to convince the reader of the theological reasons that preaching is necessary.

Stott says there are at least five

theological arguments that undergird the practice of preaching. Any one of these arguments should be enough to convince us of the necessity of preaching; “the five together leave us without excuse.”⁸ Before we examine our five theological foundation stones, I want to add a sixth more practical or pragmatic argument, and it is this: we are commanded to preach. **“Preach the word!”** (*kēryxon ton logon*) says Paul (2 Tim. 4:2). “That simple imperative frames the act of preaching as an act of obedience.”⁹

Preaching did not emerge, says Albert Mohler, well-known evangelical leader, and president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, as a result of the church’s experiments with communication techniques. We do not preach because preaching is “thought to be a good idea or an effective technique.” The sermon isn’t part of the church service or meeting because it has been found to be more useful than other approaches to worship. No, we preach because we are commanded to preach. “Preaching is a commission — a charge.”¹⁰

So our theology of preaching

begins, Mohler continues, with “the humble acknowledgment that preaching is not a human invention but a gracious creation of God and a central part of His revealed will for the church.” In fact preaching is distinctively Christian in its origin and practice. Other religions may include teaching, or public speech and calls to prayer, but the preaching act is *sui generis*, a one-of-a-kind function unique to the church established by Jesus Christ.¹¹ As the legendary John A. Broadus stated, “Preaching is characteristic of Christianity. No other religion has ever made the regular and frequent assembling of groups of people, to hear religious instruction and exhortation, an integral part of divine worship.”¹² As Mohler argued, “The church cannot but preach lest it deny its own identity and abdicate its ordained purpose.”¹³

Foundation Stone #1: A Conviction About God

Behind the act of preaching lies the doctrine of God and a conviction about His being, His action, and His purpose.¹⁴ And, as we shall see, our theology of preaching is subtly Trinitarian in form, bearing witness

to “the God who speaks, the Son who saves, and the Spirit who illuminates.”¹⁵

GOD IS LIGHT

“And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 Jn. 1:5, NASB). Although this could mean that God is perfect in holiness, in Johannine literature light more frequently stands for truth (cf. Jn. 8:12). John’s statement here means that God is open and not secretive, and that He delights to make Himself known. Just as it is the nature of light to shine, so it is the nature of God to reveal Himself. “God does not play a game of ‘hide and seek’ with us,” says Stott, “or lurk out of sight in the shadows. Darkness is the habitat of Satan; God is light.” Seated before the preacher every week are people bewildered by the mysteries of human existence and enveloped in the dark night of doubt and disbelief. We need to preach with the confidence that God wants to shine His light into their spiritual darkness (cf. 2 Cor. 4:4-6).¹⁶

GOD HAS ACTED

God has taken the initiative to reveal Himself in deeds. “To begin with, he has shown his power and deity in the created universe, so that both heaven and earth display his glory” (cf. Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:19, 20). But He has revealed more of Himself in redemption than in creation. When man rebelled against his Creator in the Garden of Eden, instead of destroying him, God devised a rescue mission, the outworking of which is the central theme of the Bible.¹⁷

The Old Testament, Stott notes, consists of three cycles of divine deliverance: (1) the call of Abraham from Ur, (2) the deliverance of the Israelite slaves from Egypt, and (3) the return of the exiles from Babylon. Each deliverance was an act of liberation marked by the making or renewal of the covenant by which Yahweh made them His people and pledged to be their God. The New Testament focuses on another redemption and covenant, which is described as **“better”** and **“eternal”** (Heb. 7:19, 22; 8:6; 9:12, 14, 15, 23; 13:20). This new covenant was secured by God’s mightiest acts,

namely the birth, death, resurrection, and exaltation of His Son, Jesus Christ.¹⁸

GOD HAS SPOKEN

God not only revealed His nature in His mighty acts, but He also communicated with His people by speech. Unlike the dead idols of the heathen nations who were dumb (Ps. 115:5), the living God spoke to His prophets. Repeatedly they claim that **“the Word of the Lord”** came to them (Jer. 1:2; Ezek. 1:3; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1). In the Old Testament alone, the phrases **“the Lord said,” “the Lord spoke,”** and **“the word of the Lord came”** appear at least 3,808 times.¹⁹

When God acted He took the trouble to explain what He was doing: (1) He spoke to Abraham about His purpose and gave him a covenant of promise. (2) He commissioned Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, to make a covenant with them, and to instruct them in His law and worship. (3) He raised up prophets to explain to the people why their God had judged them with exile, what the conditions of their restoration would be, and how He wanted them to live. (4) Finally,

¹ The material in this article is for the most part adapted from John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 92-134. The title of Stott’s work may suggest to some that his book is outdated. It is not, and it is highly recommended for all who preach God’s Word.

² This article is an edited transcript of a lecture delivered by Dave MacLeod in a seminar session at the 2007 “Iron Sharpens Iron” conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.

³ Letter from Johnson to MacLeod, Sept. 1, 1988.

⁴ T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin: A Biography* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975), 89.

⁵ S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., “Expounding Individual Books,” in *Inside the Sermon: Thirteen Preachers Discuss Their Methods of Preparing*

Messages, ed., Richard Allen Bodey (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 152. Johnson writes, “I conceive the task of the minister of the Word to be the exposition of the Scriptures, or the Word of God. Strictly speaking, the terms *exegesis* and *exposition* mean the same thing. For example, Webster defines *exegesis* as ‘exposition, explanation; esp: an explanation or critical interpretation of a text.’ In common religious usage, however, it is generally accepted that *exposition* denotes a more extended development and illustration of a passage, or text, with the use of other passages in comparison and contrast. It is in this sense that I think of the term *exposition*.”

“My task, then, as I see it, is to explain the Scriptures, believing also that illustration and application of the sense given is a proper extension of the explanation. That means that my goal is to bring my

audience to the same understanding and application of Scripture that I have, a goal that explicitly involves the conversion and progressive sanctification of those who hear. Thus, an exposition with an evangelistic and theological emphasis is implied in the goal.”

⁶ David Buttrick, *Homiletics: Moves and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 449.

⁷ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 92.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁹ R. Albert Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. Michael Duda (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, rev. Vernon L. Stanfield (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), iv.

¹³ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 14.

¹⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 93.

¹⁵ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 14.

¹⁶ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 94.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 15, quoting D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Authority* (London: IVP, 1958), 50.

He sent His Son to earth as a man to die for His people, to rise from the dead, and to pour out His Holy Spirit. His apostles saw His works, heard His words, and bore witness to what they had seen and heard.

It is a cliché of contemporary scholarship that God's self-revelation has been in deeds, not words; and personal not propositional (i.e., real, objective, factual, and rational statements of information). This is a false distinction not found in Scripture. "Scripture affirms that God has spoken both through historical deeds and through explanatory words, and that the two belong indissolubly together."²⁰

Underlying preaching, then, is this fundamental conviction about the living, redeeming, and self-revealing God. One should never enter a pulpit unless he believes in this God. When we are convinced, however, that we bear a message from this God, we must speak and must not be silent. Amos expressed it this way, **"A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"** (Amos 3:8). Quoting Psalm 116:10, the apostle Paul said, **"I believed, therefore I spoke"** (2 Cor. 4:13). We preach, therefore, because God has spoken.²¹

Foundation Stone #2: A Conviction About Scripture

Our doctrine of the living God who lives, acts and reveals Himself, leads naturally to the doctrine of Scripture. This may be broken down into three distinct beliefs:²²

SCRIPTURE IS GOD'S WORD WRITTEN (The Doctrine of Inspiration)

This excellent definition of Scripture ("Scripture is God's Word written") is from the Church of England's statement of faith known as the "Thirty-nine Articles" (Article 20, "The Authority of the Church").²³ Not only has God acted, revealing Himself in historical deeds of salvation, but also He has spoken to the prophets and apostles, interpreting those deeds. In yet a third stage He moved men to commit His revelation to writing (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21). God is the Author of Scripture, and Scripture is the Word of God (Jn. 10:35; cf. Mk. 7:13; Rom. 9:6; 2 Cor. 4:2; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:2).

That Scripture is "God's Word written" needs to be qualified by affirming the dual authorship of Scripture. God put His Word into human minds in such a way that what they wrote was expressed in their own words and in keeping with their own personalities.

Inspiration is not incompatible with the historical researches of the human authors (cf. Lk. 1:1-4) or with the free use of their minds. The Bible is "God's Word written" through men's words and through human hands.²⁴

What is the relevance of the doctrine of inspiration to our preaching? All Christians believe that God did something unique in Jesus Christ. Yet the significance of this definitive deed and Word of God through Jesus would have been "irrecoverably lost in the mists of antiquity" if God had not made provision for a reliable record to be written and preserved.²⁵ Because of the Scriptures the deeds and words of Jesus are accessible to us. We can know Him, but only through the Bible, as the Holy Spirit witnesses to Him in its pages.

Yes, there are references to Jesus in secular writers such as Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius. And the tradition of the Christian church bears eloquent testimony to the dynamic reality of its Founder. And present day believers can speak of their experience of Christ in forgiveness and consolation. But to know the full facts of His birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, as well as God's own authoritative explanation of them, we can only find them in the Bible.²⁶



Our responsibility as preachers is not to give our own subjective and speculative comments about Christ. As Stott notes, most modern preaching is "too subjective" ("What was Jesus thinking as He rose from the dead?" with detailed speculation by the preacher). Rather, our duty is to faithfully relay to twenty-first century hearers God's own witness to Christ. What does He say in the Bible about His Son's deeds and words?²⁷

If the Bible contains the very words of God (1 Cor. 2:13) we should be the most conscientious of preachers. We sometimes use the expression, "when all is said and done" to refer to the conclusion of a matter. Well, Christians believe that all has been said and done by God through Jesus Christ. Furthermore, He has done it once for all, and He has done it forever.

The preacher's task is to lift up his voice and make this known to others.²⁸

GOD STILL SPEAKS THROUGH WHAT HE HAS SPOKEN (The Doctrine of Illumination)

Our doctrine of inspiration should not be misunderstood to mean that the Bible is merely a collection of ancient documents in which the words of God are preserved. The Bible is not "a kind of museum in which God's Word is exhibited behind glass like a relic or fossil." On the contrary, it is "a living word to living people from the living God, a contemporary message for the contemporary world."²⁹

This is nicely illustrated by comparing three verses in Paul's writings. Galatians 4:22 begins, **"For it is written that Abraham had two sons."** The verb here is

formulaic, i.e., the perfect tense (**"it is written,"** *gegraptai*) suggests that what God has spoken has been written down and remains as a permanent written record. However, in verse 21 he asks, **"Do you not listen to the law?"** Then in verse 30 he asks, **"What does the Scripture say?"** These are remarkable questions. Paul uses the present tense in verses 21 and 30 (*akouete ... legei*). How can an ancient book be said to "speak" in such a way that present day people can "hear" it speaking? The answer is that God Himself speaks through the Scriptures, and we must listen to Him.³⁰

This concept of God's contemporary voice is also illustrated in Hebrews 3:7-8 where the author quotes Psalm 95:7-8, **"Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts..."** He introduces his quotation with the words, **"Just as**

²⁰ Stott, 95.

²¹ Ibid., 96.

²² Ibid.

²³ Cf. W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles*, 5th ed. (London: Church Book Room Press, 1956), 281-90.

²⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 97.

²⁵ Kent Hughes, pastor of College Church, Wheaton, Illinois, wrote, "I cannot think of any non-inerrantist who has done (or currently does) regular biblical exposition ... Biblical exposition comes only from those with a high inerrantist view of Scripture"

(The Anatomy of Exposition: *Logos, Ethos, and Pathos*," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 3 [Summer, 1999], 46).

²⁶ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 98.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 100.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 101.

³¹ Ibid., 101.

³² Ibid., 102.

³³ Cf. Robert L. Saucy, *Is the Bible Reliable?* (Wheaton: Victor, 1978), 105-12.

the Holy Spirit says” (*kathōs legei to pneuma to hagion*). The author implies that the Holy Spirit is “today” making the same appeal to His people to listen to Him as He made centuries before when the psalm was written. It is possible to detect here four stages in which God spoke and still speaks: (1) The time of testing in the wilderness when Israel refused to listen, (2) the exhortation in Psalm 95 to the people of the psalmist’s day not to repeat Israel’s earlier folly, (3) the application of the same truth to the Hebrew Christians of the first century to whom the epistle was addressed, and (4) the appeal to us as we read the Letter to the Hebrews today. God’s Word is contemporary, says Stott. “It moves with the times and continues to address each fresh generation.”³¹

One further example may be given to show that this principle applies to the New Testament as well as to the Old. In Revelation 2 and 3 each of the seven letters to the Asian churches ends with the identical entreaty from the ascended Lord Jesus Christ, “He, who has an ear, let him hear what the

Spirit says to the churches.” This repeated refrain shows that “what was addressed to each church in particular applied to all ‘the churches’ in general.” What John had written came from the Spirit, and what John had written weeks or months before, the Holy Spirit was still saying with a living voice to every church member who was willing to listen to His message.³²

What we are discussing here is the doctrine of illumination, which is that work of the Holy Spirit by which He causes the Scriptures to speak to us today and to be understood (1 Cor. 2:10-16; 1 Jn. 2:20).³³ This doctrine protects us from two errors: (1) The belief that though God’s voice was heard in ancient times it is silent today. This is Christian antiquarianism. (2) The claim that God does speak today, but that His Word has little or nothing to do with the Scriptures. This is Christian mysticism. We must remember that it is *through* what He spoke that He still speaks. As Stott says, we must keep the Word of God and the Spirit of God together. “For apart from the Spirit the Word is dead, while apart from

the Word the Spirit is alien.”³⁴ We may summarize what we have been saying by quoting J. I. Packer: “Having studied the doctrine for a generation, the most satisfactory model is to describe it thus: ‘The Bible is God preaching.’”³⁵

GOD’S WORD IS POWERFUL (The Doctrine of Animation)

The third understanding and conviction about Scripture the preacher needs is that it is powerful. As Bryan Chapell, widely known speaker and seminary president, notes, “preaching accomplishes its spiritual purposes not because of the skills of the preacher, but because of the power of the Scripture proclaimed.” It certainly takes the “monkey of spiritual manipulation” off the backs of preachers when they become convinced that it is the Word itself that fulfills God’s agenda of salvation and sanctification.³⁶

In the pages of the Bible we learn of the power of God’s word. His Word creates (Ps. 33:9), controls (Ps. 147:15-18), persuades (Jer. 23:28-29), performs His

purposes (Isa. 55:10-11), and overrides human motives (Phil. 1:18). God fully expresses the dynamic power in His word when He identifies His Son as the divine *Logos*, i.e., “the Word.” “By identifying His Son as His Word, God reveals that His message and His person are inseparable.” Then Jesus speaks of the Scriptures as “the word of God” (*ho logos tou theou*, cf. Mk. 7:13). The incarnation of God, the *Logos*, and the message about God, the *logos*, form a conceptual identity. This does not mean that the letters on the pages of the Bible are divine, “but that the truths Scripture holds are God’s vehicle of His own spiritual activity.” In some passages the word about Christ and Christ himself unify. Note the puns “word of truth” in James 1:18 and “word of God” in 1 Peter 1:23; in both texts the term “word” unifies both “the message about Jesus and Christ himself.”³⁷

Is the word powerful? James Stalker wrote, “It seems the frailest of all weapons; for what is a word? It is only a puff of air, a vibration trembling in the atmosphere for a moment and then disappearing... (Yet) though it be only a weapon of air, the word is stronger than the sword of the warrior.”³⁸ In Luther’s

hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God,” the great reformer alludes to the devil’s might and then adds, “One little word will fell him,” or as the line has more recently been translated, “A word shall quickly slay him.” The Word of God, says the author of Hebrews, is “living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:12).

“The Bible is God preaching.”

Charles Colson illustrates the power of the Word this way. A 16-year-old girl named Cathleen Crowell Webb accused a man named Gary Dotson of raping her. He was arrested, tried, convicted, and sentenced to 20 to 25 years in prison. Six years later she recanted her story, and her story was widely reported in the media. Why had she recanted? Since Dotson’s conviction Cathleen had been converted. She explained, “Since I made my decision to become a Christian, the Lord kept convicting me of my need to make restitution, and he would not let me alone.”³⁹

The gospel of Christ is God’s power for salvation to every believer, for it pleases God through a proclaimed message to save those who believe (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21). As the angel told the Gentiles, the apostle Peter would speak “words to you by which you will be saved” (Acts 11:14). One preacher who knew the Word’s power was John Wesley. In his journal for Oct. 18, 1749 he wrote of bitter opposition in Bolton, Lancashire. A mob surrounded the house, threw stones through the window, and then broke in through the door. Wesley wrote, “Believing the time was now come, I walked down into the thickest of them. They had now filled all the rooms below. I called for a chair. The winds were hushed, and all was calm and still. My heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments; they were melted down; they devoured every word. What a turn was this!”⁴⁰

The same thing has happened throughout history. In our own time Billy Graham has said, “I have had the privilege of preaching the gospel on every continent and in most countries of the world, and when I present the message of the simple gospel of Jesus Christ with

³⁴ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 102.

³⁵ Quoted by Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 103.

³⁶ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 26.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

³⁸ James Stalker, *The Preacher and His Models*, Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching, Yale University, 1891 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891), 93. Quoted by Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 104.

³⁹ Charles Colson, “Stabbing the Conscience of a Sleeping Church,” *Moody Magazine* (Sept., 1985), 14.

⁴⁰ *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*, 4 vols. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1906), 2:128-29, cited by Stott, *Between Two Worlds*,

106. Cf. L. Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, M.A. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890), 2:57.

⁴¹ Message delivered at the Pan African Christian Leadership Assembly at Nairobi, December, 1976, quoted by Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 106-7.

⁴² P. T. Forsyth, *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*, Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching, Yale University, 1907 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1907), 6, 22, 83, quoted by Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 107.

⁴³ Gustaf Wingren, *The Living Word* (1949; ET, London: SCM, 1960), 45. For these references in Wingren I am indebted to Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 108.



authority, he takes the message and drives it supernaturally into human hearts.”⁴¹

“It seems the frailest of all weapons; for what is a word? It is only a puff of air, a vibration trembling in the atmosphere for a moment and then disappearing... (Yet) though it be only a weapon of air, the word is stronger than the sword of the warrior.”

Some may object that it is unfair to quote a Wesley or a Graham; after all, they and others like them are exceptional people. Three answers can be given to this objection: (1) Yes, of course, in every generation God raises up special people. (2) But not even a Wesley or a Graham (or, I say most reverently, our Lord Jesus Christ)

reaches everyone — witness the thousands at the Graham meetings who remain seated when he extends his invitation to receive Christ. The Parable of the Sower (Lk. 8:4-15) makes it very clear that not all who hear will come or respond. So, we should not be discouraged. (3) We have the testimony of God’s Word that Scripture has the quality of animation. It is powerful, and can change lives (Heb. 4:12).

And preaching is that act of proclaiming the message of this living book. As P. T. Forsyth said, the gospel is not just a statement or a doctrine or a promise. It is more. “It is an act and a power: it is God’s *act* of redemption...A true sermon is a real deed...the preacher’s word, when he preaches the gospel and not only delivers a sermon, is an effective deed, charged with blessing or with judgment.”⁴²

One of the most eloquent declarations of the power of preaching came from Gustaf Wingren, the Swedish Lutheran Professor of Theology at the University of Lund. The theme of the Bible, he argues, is conflict or duel between God and Satan in which the gospel sets men free. Between Christ’s victory at the cross and the consummation at His Second Coming

“lies an empty space of waiting. It is in this gap, this empty space, that *preaching* sends forth its voice.”⁴³ He adds, “The time between Easter and the Parousia is the time for preaching.”⁴⁴ Preaching, he says, provides the living Christ with both feet and a mouth. “It is the Word that provides the feet on which Christ walks when he makes his approach to us and reaches us...Preaching has but one aim, that Christ may come to those who have assembled to listen.”⁴⁵ He goes on, “Preaching is not just talk about a Christ of the past, but is a mouth through which the Christ of the present offers us life today.”⁴⁶ Wingren views human beings as defeated, conquered, in bondage to sin, guilt and death, and he sees preaching as the means of their liberation. “It belongs to the nature of the office of preaching that it has its place in the battle between God and the Devil.”⁴⁷ “The word of the preacher is an attack on the prison in which man is held.”⁴⁸

Stott tells the story of a preacher who was passing through the security check at an airport. It was in the days before electronic scanning and terrorist bomb threats when all joking with officials is forbidden. A guard was rummaging about in his briefcase, and came

across a black cardboard box. “What’s in that box?” he asked suspiciously, and the preacher offered the startling reply, “Dynamite.” The official cautiously opened the box and found that it contained the preacher’s Bible!⁴⁹ Yes, the Bible is powerful, not because it is like a magic spell but because the God who spoke it speaks it still.

Foundation Stone #3: A Conviction About the Church

GOD CREATED THE CHURCH BY HIS WORD

We have many convictions about the church, but I have two in mind here. First, the church is the creation of God by His Word.⁵⁰ This dependence of the church on the Word of God for its creation is not accepted by all. The older Roman Catholic theologians would insist, “The Church wrote the Bible.” It is true that believers within the community of the people of God wrote the Bible (both Testaments). And it is true that what was written was often determined by the needs of the local churches. Yet it is misleading to say, “the Church wrote the Bible.” It is more accurate to say that God’s Word created the church.

This truth holds for the Old Testament people of God as well. The nation of Israel traces its beginnings to the call of Abraham in Ur (Gen. 12:1-3). The New Covenant people of God began on the Day of Pentecost in the context of the preaching of the apostle Peter (Acts 2). The apostles claimed to be the bearers of God’s

Word (e.g., 1 Th. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:25), and the early meetings were centered in their teaching (Acts 2:42). It is the Word incarnate who creates and builds His church through the Word preached by His apostles (cf. Mt. 16:18; Col. 1:18).

GOD MAINTAINS THE CHURCH BY HIS WORD

Not only is the church the creation of God by His Word, but it is maintained by His Word. “He maintains and sustains it, directs and sanctifies it, reforms and renews it through the same Word.”⁵¹ Again the same principle was true in Old Testament times. God consistently “hinged the welfare of his people on their listening to his voice, believing his promises and obeying his commands” (cf. Ex. 2:24; 19:3-6; Pss. 81:13; 106:13, 25; Prov. 8:1-36; Jer. 7:23-26).⁵² In New Testament times the Lord Jesus appointed His apostles and invested them with His authority to provide instruction to the churches (1 Cor. 2:10; Gal. 1:11-12). Today’s preachers are not prophets or apostles. “The Word of the Lord does not come to us as it came to them; rather we have to come to it.”⁵³ Yet the preacher does proclaim the Word of God and with it he cares for the church (1 Tim. 3:2; 4:13).

Is this important? Church history reveals that it is. Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones asked, “Is it not clear as you take a bird’s-eye view of Church history, that the decadent periods and eras in the history of the Church have always been those periods when preaching had declined? What is it,” he continues,

“That always heralds the dawn of a Reformation or of a Revival? It is renewed preaching.”⁵⁴ Forsyth wrote, “With its preaching Christianity stands or falls.”⁵⁵

Commenting on the decline of Christianity in some areas and its immaturity and stunted growth in others, Stott remarked, “The major reason...is what Amos called a ‘famine of hearing the words of the Lord.’ (Amos 8:11). The low level of Christian living is due, more than anything else, to the low level of Christian preaching...If the Church is to flourish again, there is no greater need than a recovery of faithful, powerful, biblical preaching. God still says to His people, ‘O that today you would listen to my Word’ (cf. Ps. 95:7) and to preachers ‘O that you would proclaim it.’”⁵⁶

Foundation Stone #4: A Conviction About Pastoral Ministry

JESUS CHRIST (THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT) GIVES OVERSEERS TO HIS CHURCH

In most parts of the church professional clergymen have carried on much of the church’s work. For at least two reasons many are now questioning the nature and functions of the professional ministry:⁵⁷ First, the governments of Western countries have taken over much of the philanthropic work pioneered by the church (e.g., medicine, education, and social welfare). Some who would have gone into the ministry are now serving their fellow man in secular employment.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 146.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 207-8.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 108.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 95.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 124.

⁴⁹ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 109.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 109.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 113.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 24. Cited by Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 114.

⁵⁵ Forsyth, *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*, 3.

⁵⁶ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 115-16.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 116-17.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 117-18.

⁵⁹ Thomas, *The Principles of Theology*, 316.

⁶⁰ This has long been recognized by some in the Brethren assemblies. Cf. R. F. Bayles, *A Plea for Pastoral Ministry* (New York: Loizeaux, n.d.), 1-12. This booklet is a reprint of an article first

Second, as a result of the Brethren and, more recently, the Charismatic movement, the doctrine of the Body of Christ has been recovered, with its corollary that every member of the church has a spiritual gift and therefore a ministry.

As a result, many have been asking whether or not a professional ministry is necessary. While this question needs to be answered, we must emphatically assert the New Testament teaching that Jesus Christ gives leaders to the church and intends them to be a permanent feature of the church's structure. **"It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do"** (1 Tim. 3:1).

OVERSEERS/ELDERS GIVE PASTORAL CARE TO CHRIST'S CHURCH

Those who lead the New Testament church are called **"overseers," "elders,"** or **"pastors"** (i.e., "shepherds"; cf. Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). It is these terms that we should use when describing those who lead the church.

Others can be misleading: The term "minister" is misleading

for a couple of reasons. First, it is not specific enough and one always has to add a qualifying adjective to indicate what kind of ministry is in mind. Furthermore, the apostle Paul suggests in Ephesians 4:12 that all believers have a ministry (i.e., service). The term "priest" is also ambiguous for two reasons: (1) The etymology of the word is that the English word "priest" is a contraction of "presbyter," meaning "elder." (2) The English word is also used to translate the Greek word *hiereus*, a sacrificing priest, which is never used of Christian church leaders in the New Testament.

To call the elders of the church "priests" gives "the false impression that their ministry is primarily directed towards God, whereas the New Testament portrays it as primarily directed towards the Church." The essence of oversight in the local church is not priestly, but pastoral.⁵⁸ The eldership of the church is essentially pastoral, never mediatorial, and the words *priest*, *sacrifice*, and *altar* as terms of clerical status and privilege are not characteristic of apostolic teaching. When the term *priest* is used of the church it is always in the plural,

"priests" (Rev. 1:6), or else it is used collectively, i.e., "priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:5). "The truth, therefore, is that Christianity is, not *has*, a priesthood."⁵⁹

"With it's preaching Christianity stands or falls."

It is helpful to remember that elders are also called pastors or shepherds in the New Testament.⁶⁰

The Lord Jesus called Himself **"the good shepherd"** (Jn. 10:14) and told Peter, **"Shepherd my sheep"** (Jn. 21:16). Paul tells the Ephesian elders that the Holy Spirit has made them overseers **"to shepherd the church of God"** (Acts 20:28), and he later tells the Ephesian church that the risen Christ gave **"pastors and teachers"** to the church to equip the saints for service (Eph. 4:11-12).

Several years ago (May, 1997) a number of us were invited by Grace Bible Chapel in St. Louis to participate in a colloquium and each give a lecture on the New Testament

teaching on the church. The lectures were subsequently published in *The Emmaus Journal* and later in a book.⁶¹ The emphasis of the lectures was primarily theological, although there was some practical application. I spoke with a man at the conference and asked him how he was enjoying the weekend. He replied that he enjoyed the lectures and fellowship very much, but he felt something was lacking. He said that he had come hoping that the lectures would be more of a "how to" variety. He explained that he had recently been appointed an elder in his local assembly, but had no idea what it was that elders were supposed to do! This indicated to me that we need serious hands-on training and mentoring of new elders to help them learn the duties and skills of pastoral (i.e., shepherding) work.

A number of years ago I was appointed an elder at my assembly (Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel, Dubuque, Iowa). This was announced at the annual business meeting of the church. Afterwards, one of the members of the church came up, shook my hand, and said,

"Congratulations." It was as if I had been honored for years of faithful attendance and for living so long! The eldership of a church is not an honorary board of men who meet once in a while to approve the decisions of the pastor. No, the elders are the pastors of the church, and they are called to shepherd the flock, i.e., they are to feed them, guide them, guard them, and heal them.

I know of at least one Brethren assembly that calls its elders, "Pastor-Elders." This was done to remind the congregation (and the elders) that the work of elders was a pastoral work. Believers should be taught that the elders of the local church are its "pastors." While visiting a Brethren assembly in Chicago many years ago, I sat in on an adult Bible class. The subject was "New Testament Church Government," and the class leader asked those in the class to list some of the distinctives of the assemblies. One woman offered, "Well, we don't have a pastor." I thought to myself, "How awful!" How much healthier the local church that can say, "We have many pastors."

According to the grammatical structure of the phrase **"pastors and teachers"** (Eph. 4:11), pastors or shepherds are included in the category of teachers, but not all teachers are included in the category of shepherds. The shepherd gift uniquely combines teaching and governance.⁶² But there are teachers who are not elders, i.e., who do not govern. We might translate the construction in Ephesians 4:11, **"the pastors and other teachers."**⁶³

When Jesus told Peter to tend or feed the flock He was using a metaphorical expression for teaching the church. The pastors are essentially teachers of the church. A good shepherd's care for the sheep is fourfold: feeding, guiding (because sheep go astray), guarding (against predatory wolves), and healing (binding up the wounds of the injured). All four of these activities are aspects of the ministry of the Word.

In the New Testament, we must emphasize, the pastoral oversight of the church is carried on by a team — the word "elders" almost always occurs in the plural (Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Tim. 4:14; Titus 1:5).

published in *Help and Food* 62 (July, 1944): 287-98. For more recent expressions of this point, see James Martin, "Dare to be a Pastor!" *Uplook* (Nov., 2005): 15; idem., "New Testament Pastoral Care," *Uplook* (May, 2006): 24; idem., "Where is Your Pastor?" *Uplook* (Nov., 2006): 2. In the November, 2006 issue of *Uplook* Martin wrote, "In our day, the word 'pastor' has taken on a formal, ecclesiastical meaning. But the Greek word for 'pastor' (*poimēn*) is simply the word for 'shepherd,' which is how it is translated 17 out of the 18 times it occurs in the New Testament ... Therefore, saying that we don't have a pastor is misleading. It's true that we don't have a pastor in the officious, religious sense that the word has acquired in the years since the New Testament was written. But, hopefully, in the biblical sense of the word, we have several pastors."

⁶¹ Joseph M. Vogl and John H. Fish III, eds., *Understanding the Church* (Neptune: Loizeaux, 1999).

⁶² Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 3d ed. (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 210.

⁶³ Scholars have debated whether Paul intended to speak of one gift ("pastor-teachers") or two ("pastors and teachers") in Ephesians 4:11. Most commentators have argued for one gift, assuming that the construction *tous de poimēnas kai didaskalous* is an example of Granville Sharp's Rule. This rule states that in a TSKS construction (article-substantive-kai-substantive) the second noun refers to the same person mentioned with the first noun when: (1) neither is impersonal; (2) neither is plural; (3) neither is a proper name. The majority view is wrong for two reasons: (1) The Granville Sharp Rule does not apply to plural

constructions, and (2) there are no clear examples of nouns being used in a plural TSKS construction to specify one group. However, it goes too far to assert that there are two entirely distinct groups (pastors and teachers) in Eph. 4:11. The following observations lead to the translation given above: (1) The two groups are united by one article which sets them apart from the other gifted leaders. The one article suggests that absolute distinction is not in view. (2) In light of the fact that the terms "elders" and "pastors" describe the same body of men [Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2], and since elders were to be teachers [1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:9], it is evident that those who were pastors were to teach. (3) Presumably not all teachers were elders/pastors. Only in Eph. 4:11 are pastors and teachers mentioned together. Other texts mention teachers without any hint that they must also be pastors [Rom. 12:7; 1 Cor. 12:28-29; 2 Tim 2:2;

Heb. 5:12; James 3:1]. This evidence seems to suggest that the pastors were part of the teachers in Eph. 4:11. This view is in keeping with the semantics of the plural noun construction. Wallace describes this as "the first-subset-of-second category," i.e., the first group [pastors] is a subset of the second [teachers]. Cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 1996), 270-84 [esp. 280, 284].

⁶⁴ Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 45-48.

⁶⁵ C. H. Dodd, "The Primitive Preaching," in *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1937), 1-2.

⁶⁶ G. P. Hugenberger, "Preach," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 3:941-42.

The teaching such elders do will include preaching to the congregation, counseling individuals, and training groups.⁶⁴

TEACHING AND PREACHING ARE OVERLAPPING RESPONSIBILITIES

When discussing the question of preaching it is sometimes asked if there is any difference between preaching and teaching. Then University of Manchester (later Cambridge) professor C. H. Dodd popularized the thesis that there was. Preaching (*kērygma*), he argued, was the proclamation of the death and resurrection of Jesus in the age of fulfillment with a summons to believe and repent. Teaching (*didachē*), on the other hand, was ethical instruction given to believers.⁶⁵ In short, Dodd distinguished preaching and teaching both by their content and their audience. The distinction is not unimportant, and in most cases preaching in the New Testament is directed toward unbelievers.⁶⁶

However, the distinction must not be over-pressed. In a number of passages in the synoptic Gospels one Gospel will call “preaching”

what another Gospel will call “teaching” (cf. Mt. 4:23 [“teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel...”] with Mk.1:39; Lk. 4:44 [“preaching”). In the public ministry of the Lord the two don’t seem to be sharply distinguished, although the one (“preaching”) may differ in having more of an element of proclamation than the other. In the same Gospel the same activity can be referred to as both “teaching” (Mk. 1:21) and “preaching” (Mk. 1:38-39). Likewise at the end of the Book of Acts we find Paul “preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:31).

Some have pressed the distinction and have argued that in the New Testament preaching is only evangelistic and never takes place in a congregation of Christians, i.e., our modern brand of preaching to a meeting of believers is not to be found in the New Testament. This is not true. In Old Testament times the people of God were instructed in the Word (Deut. 31:9-13; Neh. 8:1-8; Mal. 2:7-9). In the New Testament we find the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul reading from the Law and preaching (Lk. 4:16-

It would do every elder good to reflect on the nature of his work and the priority of preaching and teaching. Too many view themselves as “essentially administrators, whose symbols of ministry are the office rather than the study, and the telephone rather than the Bible.”

22; Acts 13:14-43). In Acts 20:7 we get a glimpse of an early meeting of the church in which they broke bread and listened to a sermon from Paul. In 1 Timothy 2:1-8, Paul instructs Timothy about public prayer in church meetings, and in 4:13 says, “Till I come, attend to the public reading of

Scripture, to preaching, to teaching” (RSV). The word for “preaching” in 1 Timothy 4:13 is not “proclamation” (*kērygma*) but “exhortation” (*paraklēsis*). Inherent in the word’s meaning are the ideas “to summon, to ask, to exhort, to comfort.” Preaching, in short, demands a response. The word “teaching” (*didaskalia*) stresses the intellectual element of teaching. The Word is to be expounded or explained.⁶⁷ It is easy to see the overlap in the two activities.

In any case, it is a qualification of elders/pastors that they know the faith and are able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9). In Acts 6 the apostles encouraged the selection of “the Seven,” who were the prototypes of the later deacons. The apostles gave themselves to the work that would later be assumed by elders, viz., “the ministry of the Word and prayer.” It would do every elder good to reflect on the nature of his work and the priority of preaching and teaching. Too many view themselves as “essentially administrators, whose symbols of ministry are the office rather than

the study, and the telephone rather than the Bible.”⁶⁸

In August 1977 during the Centennial Thanksgiving Service of Wycliffe College, Toronto, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Donald Coggan, an evangelical, reminded his audience that in his church the bishop gives each candidate a Bible at his ordination. He said, “He does not go forth...primarily as an organizer or a financier or an entertainer; he goes as a man authorized by the Lord of the Church, entrusted with the deposit of the Christian revelation, recorded in majestic outline in the Book in his hand, and incarnate in the Word made flesh.”⁶⁹

Foundation Stone #5: A Conviction About Preaching

IT IS CHRISTOCENTRIC

One well known preacher writes, “All Christian preaching is unabashedly Christological.” He adds, “Christian preaching points to the incarnation of God in Christ as the [flagpole] of truth and the core of the Christian confession. ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself’ (2 Cor.

5:19).”⁷⁰ Another writes, “True Christian preaching must center on the cross of Jesus Christ. The cross is the central doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.”⁷¹ This certainly reflects the attitude of the apostle Paul who wrote to the Corinthians, “Proclaiming to you the testimony of God...I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:1-2).

One of these writers says that Christian preaching should point to the incarnation, and the other to the cross. I shall not seek to solve this debate but shall be content to side with those who see the cross of Christ and not His incarnation as occupying the center of gravity in New Testament thought.⁷²

One might argue that Paul is engaging in hyperbole when he says his preaching/teaching will focus on “nothing...except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” After all, in his epistles he addresses a broad range of subjects including church government and discipline, stewardship, family relationships, sexual purity, responsibilities to the gov-

⁶⁷ George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1992), 207-8.

⁶⁸ Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 124.

⁶⁹ Quoted by Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, 124.

⁷⁰ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 16.

⁷¹ Thomas F. Jones, “Preaching the Cross of Christ,” unpublished essay presented in 1976-77 homiletics lectures at Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO. Cited in Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 277, n. 10.

⁷² Cf. the remarks of E. A. Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, ed. Philip E. Hughes (1892; reprint ed., London: James

Clarke, 1960), xiv. He wrote, “Romanism (including its mutilated counterpart, Anglo-Catholicism) is a religion of the incarnation, the virtue of which is communicated by sacraments; Protestantism is a religion of the atonement, the virtue of which is appropriated by direct faith in Christ.”

⁷³ Chapell adds, “In Paul’s mind, every subject, every address, and every epistle had a focus. Everything he did centered on making the cross and its implications evident. In this sense, the ‘cross’ reference functions as synecdoche, representing the entire matrix of God’s redemptive work past, present, and future, including the resurrection, advocacy, and reign his victory through the cross provides” (*Christ-Centered Preaching*, 278).

⁷⁴ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 279.

⁷⁵ He adds, “The law and the prophets that precede and the apostolic ministry that follows the work of the cross make Jesus their center. Prophets, apostles, and the Savior all testify that all the Scriptures ultimately focus on the Redeemer. How then can we rightly expound them and not speak of him? Expository preaching is Christ-centered preaching” (Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 279-80).

⁷⁶ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 275-76.



ernment, the history of Israel, etc. This proves, does it not, that Paul did more than talk and write about Jesus and His crucifixion. Apparently Paul did not see it that way.

In his mind, says Chapell, “every subject, every address, and every epistle had a focus. Everything he did centered on making the cross and its implications evident.”⁷³ As Chapell points out, Paul was only following the example of His Lord who stated the Christological focus of all Scripture when He walked with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He drew their attention to the Old Testament prophets and their message about the

sufferings of Messiah. **“And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures”** (Lk. 24:25-27).⁷⁴ “Thus,” Chapell writes, “the testimony of Scripture encircles Jesus.”⁷⁵

As we read Scripture, however, we find that much of it makes no explicit reference to Christ and His work. There are many passages in the New Testament, let alone the Old Testament that make no mention of the cross, the Holy Spirit or the grace of God. How can Christ-centered messages be preached on such passages? At this point Chapell makes an important contribution to our thinking. As he

notes, each text is a part of a context. We must not only use our “exegetical magnifying glasses” to examine the details of the particular passage we are going to expound. We must also examine the text with a “theological fish-eye lens” to see how the passage relates to the larger context of chapter and book. The Bible has an overarching story line that begins in Genesis 3:15 with the promise of the seed of the woman who would ultimately defeat the Serpent and his progeny and ends with the complete victory of Christ and His people and their blissful home on the new earth. Every passage of the Bible, whether Old Testament story, psalm, proverb, prophecy or New Testament Gospel, history, or epistle, is part of the overarching biblical story line of the redemption of fallen creatures through the promised Christ. God’s revelation of this story of Christ was progressive; it began in seed form and only gradually came to full growth in the New Testament. A Christ-centered message from any passage of Scripture is simply a message that is related to the redemptive work of God. The Christological features of a passage may only be there in seed form, yet they should be noted. “You do not explain what an acorn is...if you do not in some way relate it to an oak tree.”⁷⁶

How can we have a Christ-

centered focus without imposing something on the text that isn’t there? Chapell groups texts under the following headings:⁷⁷

Text Disclosure

In some passages there is a direct reference to Christ or to some aspect of His Messianic work. Specific mention of Jesus or His saving activity may occur in a Gospel account, the Book of Acts, an epistle, or the Book of Revelation.

Type Disclosure

The person or work of Christ is also evident in Old Testament types. A type is an Old Testament person, event, or thing, which prefigures NT salvation truths.

Context Disclosure

Here Chapell turns to the thousands of verses in which there is no reference to Christ. Every passage, he says, contains one of four redemptive foci.⁷⁸

1.) *Predictive*. Some passages predict the redemptive work of God by making mention of the Person or work of Christ. Messianic psalms and Old Testament prophecies have this focus. A sermon on Isaiah 40 that offers comfort to God’s people without mentioning Christ as the future source of God’s comfort is not being Christ-centered. The Old Testament must be read from the vantage point of the NT.

2.) *Preparatory*. The inspired intention of other texts is to prepare God’s people to understand

aspects of the person and/or work of Christ. The moral commands of the Law of the Old Testament exposed man’s sin (cf. Rom. 3:19, 20; 5:20; 7:8-13), and the ceremonies demonstrated the need for sacrifice. The alert Old Testament believer would learn of his own inability to keep the divine commandments and would understand how his need of forgiveness would be satisfied (Gal. 3:11-13). Paul, for example, says that in the story of Abraham’s justification is imbedded a theology of grace that prepared the way for the coming Redeemer (Rom. 4:23-25). Incidentally, an exposition of the Ten Commandments that fails to tell people of their own inability to keep those commandments is not Christ-centered.

3.) *Reflective*. Where a passage neither predicts nor prepares for the Redeemer’s work the preacher should explain how the text reflects key facets of the redemptive message. What does this passage tell us of: (1) God’s nature that provides the ministry of Christ, or (2) of human nature that requires the ministry of Christ? What in this passage reflects an aspect of God’s nature that prompts the work of Christ? The passage may reveal certain attributes of God’s nature (justice, holiness, goodness, loving-kindness faithfulness, provision, deliverance) that make no mention of Christ. Yet it makes sense of Paul’s comment that **“Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction”** (Rom. 15:4). These redemptive lessons may also be seen in the human

flaws evident in the biographies of even the greatest saints of the Old Testament.

4.) *Resultant*. We must be very careful in expounding passages that demand obedience to God’s will. There is a danger that the preacher will imply that God’s favor depends on our obedience. “Divine love made conditional upon human obedience is mere legalism.”⁷⁹ We must always preach from the perspective of the New Covenant. Anything good that we do is the result of the grace of God (Eph. 2:10). All of my faith and practice is the fruit of what God would do, has done, or will do through the ministry of Christ.

One important warning needs to be made at this point. We must avoid the attempt to make Jesus appear in every biblical account. That is not what we mean by Christ-centered preaching.⁸⁰ Remember that the overarching story line of the Bible is redemptive and Christocentric. “Redemptive history is the history of Christ.”

Some preachers, however, are determined to find some aspect of Christ or His work under every rock or behind every bush of the Old Testament. To make Him somehow magically appear in every passage they are forced to resort to figurative, bizarre, and allegorical exegesis. There is an old story about a Christian fundamentalist who, when asked what was gray, furry, and lived in a tree, responded, “It sure sounds like a squirrel, but I know the answer to every question is, ‘Jesus.’”⁸¹

This story humorously illus-

⁷⁷ Ibid., 281-88.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 282.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 287.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 300-303.

⁸¹ Carl Trueman, “A Revolutionary Balancing Act,” *Themelios* 27 (Spring, 2002): 1-4 (esp. 2).

trates how a central and inescapable truth can be distorted. The central truth is illustrated by Paul who could describe his ministry as knowing nothing **“among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified”** (1 Cor. 2:2). He proclaimed that in Christ **“are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”** (Col. 2:3). It is one thing to recognize that Christ is at the center of the Bible’s story. It is another to use mediocre and allegorical hermeneutics to import Him into every single text of Scripture.⁸²

Years ago one of my Dallas Seminary professors, Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost, told me of preaching on Daniel 4 at a Brethren assembly in New Zealand. One of the congregation was quite surprised that he did not view the high tree of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream as a type of the cross of Christ. Similar attempts have been made to see Rahab’s red cord⁸³ or the saddle on Rachel’s camel as pictures of some element of Christ’s work.

Christ must not be artificially wedged into every passage. Yet we retain a Christ-centered focus when we remember that this passage takes place as part of the story line of the Bible, which deals with the tremendous battle between the

coming Christ and Satan, the god of this world. Every biblical text serves a function in the great drama of the Son’s crusade against the Serpent.⁸⁴

IT IS REDEMPTIVE

“The cross looms as the paramount symbol and event of Christian proclamation. [It is] simultaneously the most divisive and the most unifying event in human history.” It is embraced or is rejected as the most audacious and foolish of messages.⁸⁵ It is utter foolishness to those who reject Christ and, humanly speaking, there is nothing we can do to erase the offense of the cross (1 Cor. 1:21-25). We must avoid the allure of clever “techniques”—methods that will appeal to fallen man’s love of entertainment (“signs”) or intellectualism (“wisdom of the world”)—in preaching the Word (cf. 1 Cor. 2:4-5). As James Denney plainly said, “No man can give at once the impression that he himself is clever and that Jesus Christ is mighty to save.”⁸⁶

“Only the redeemed,” says Mohler, “those who know the cross as the power and wisdom of God, understand the glory and the burden of preaching.”⁸⁷ Mr. James Catron taught the course in homiletics at Emmaus Bible

College for many years. One of his requirements was that each student write a “Philosophy of Preaching.” Jim would then share his own philosophy with the class, and his first point was, “Preaching must be done by saved and devoted believers.” In short, those who have understood the breathless wonder of having been forgiven must do it. “All Christian preaching is resurrection preaching. The cross brings the eclipse of all human pretensions and enlightenment.”⁸⁸

One of the significant contributions of Bryan Chapell’s book, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, is his emphasis on the fallenness of man. Every sermon, he says, must have a clearly articulated “Fallen Condition Focus” or “FCF.”⁸⁹ As he writes his sermon, says Chapell, the preacher must ask the mutual human condition that his contemporary hearers share with those to or for whom the text was written that requires the grace of God.⁹⁰

In 2 Timothy 3:16 Paul wrote, **“All Scripture is inspired by God ...that the man of God might be adequate.”** This would suggest that even the most gifted of believers remains spiritually incomplete apart from God’s revelation. “Scripture continually aims to restore some

aspect of our brokenness to spiritual wholeness.”⁹¹ Chapell argues that much preaching today is “sub-Christian.” Many messages advocate morality and compassion, yet they are sub-Christian because they ignore the sinfulness of man, and they neglect the grace of God. Such sermons would be perfectly acceptable to the congregations of a Jewish synagogue or a Unitarian Church.⁹² These messages send the sub-Christian message that godliness is a product of human endeavor. God’s blessing is actuated or motivated by human works.

Such legalistic attitudes are very subtle. Do we Christians (preachers as well as non-preachers) not feel more holy when our devotions are a bit longer, when we’ve read a couple more chapters, when we parent well and our children go on for God, when we offer wise advice, when tears come as we speak of some Scriptural truth? There is nothing wrong with any of these actions—unless we believe that our actions, apart from God’s redemptive work in our lives, have merit in themselves.⁹³

Chapell warns against “The Deadly ‘Be’ Sermons.”⁹⁴ There is the “Be Like” sermon that focuses on a notable biblical character

without drawing attention to the stunning fact that the Bible takes pains to tarnish the reputation of almost every saint and patriarch in its pages. When we speak on such characters we must be like the author of Hebrews who points to their reliance upon the grace of God as the source of holy traits (chapter 11).

There is the “Be Good” or moralistic message that leaves the impression that certain behaviors will secure a person’s relationship with God. Such preaching implies that if we obey God He will love us. No, God loves us and saves us apart from our obedience, and He sanctifies us as an act of grace as well.

There is the “Be Disciplined” message that exhorts the believer to improve his/her relationship with the Lord by more diligent use of the disciplines of the Christian life (Bible study, prayer, attendance at church meetings). God becomes an ogre in the sky who must be bribed by our disciplines. There are real benefits to these disciplines, as we know, but they do not make God love me more, nor do they ward off His irritation with us or warrant His favor.

The bottom line, says Chapell,

is that our sermons must be redemptive and not sub-Christian.⁹⁵ They must be gospel lessons and not morality lessons. They must be delivered to people whose best works always remain tainted by their sins. When we have done everything that God has commanded we are still **“unworthy slaves”** (Luke 17:10).

There are many “Be” messages in the Bible, Chapell admits. They are “not wrong in themselves; they are wrong by themselves. People cannot do or be what God requires without the work of Christ in, for, and through them.... Christ-centered preaching does not fail to present the moral imperatives His lordship demands, but neither does it deny Him the position of honor in all that His Word says or in all that His creatures do.”⁹⁶

“You might as well expect to raise the dead by whispering in their ears, as hope to save souls by preaching to them, if it were not for the agency of the Holy Spirit.”

⁸² Graeme Goldsworthy, “Ontology and Biblical Theology: A Response to Carl Trueman’s Editorial: ‘A Revolutionary Balancing Act,’” *Themelios* 28 (Autumn, 2002): 37-45 (esp. 49).

⁸³ Some preachers have seen in Rahab’s red cord a figure of the blood of Christ, while others conclude that the scarlet represents sin. These truths (the blood of Christ and the sinfulness of man) are found elsewhere in Scripture, but neither subject is dealt with in this text (Josh. 2:18-21). Cf. Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 302.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 301.

⁸⁵ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 17.

⁸⁶ James Denney, *Studies in Theology* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1895; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 161.

⁸⁷ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 18.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 48-52, 269-72, 299-300.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 49-51. “The Fallen Condition Focus (FCF),” says Chapell, “reveals a text’s and a sermon’s purpose” (48).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 269-70.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 274.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 288-89.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 289-93.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 293-94.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 294-95.

⁹⁷ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 15.

⁹⁸ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 18.

⁹⁹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *New Park Street Pulpit*, 5:211, quoted by Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 18.

¹⁰⁰ Mohler, “A Theology of Preaching,” 20.

Conclusion

R. Albert Mohler, Jr. has written, "A theology of preaching should take Trinitarian form, reflecting the very nature of the self-revealing God." Mohler presents his own theology of preaching which rests on the following elements:

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

We preach because God has spoken, and He has called the church to speak of Him. Such an endeavor would "smack of unmitigated arrogance and over-reaching were it not for the fact that God Himself has set us to the task. In this light, preaching is not an act of arrogance, but of humility."⁹⁷

THE SON WHO SAVES

Mohler notes that "Jesus serves as our model, as well as the content of our preaching." As Mark recorded in his Gospel, "**Jesus came preaching**" (Mk. 1:14). He served as the ultimate standard of what human preaching is to be, wonderfully modeling the "unflinching forth-telling of God's gracious salvation." He not only preached but He

gave His charge to His church to "**preach the good news to all creation**" (Mk. 16:15). Through His cross He has provided atonement for His people.

THE SPIRIT WHO ILLUMINATES

"The preacher stands before the congregation as the external minister of the Word, but the Holy Spirit works as the internal minister."⁹⁸ Spurgeon warned, "You might as well expect to raise the dead by whispering in their ears, as hope to save souls by preaching to them, if it were not for the agency of the Holy Spirit."⁹⁹

The Reformation saw a new acknowledgement of the union of Word and Spirit and expressed it as "the internal witness of the Spirit." The Spirit convicts "**the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment**" (Jn. 16:8), and the Spirit illumines the Word so that men might understand (1 Cor. 2:12-14). It is the Spirit who cleanses sinners' hearts and gives them new life (Jn. 3:3-5). The preacher and His hearers are dependent upon the illuminating

work of the Spirit as the Word is studied and proclaimed.

Mohler concludes, "a theology of preaching is essentially doxology. The ultimate purpose of the sermon is to glorify God and to reveal a glimpse of His glory to His creation. The ground of preaching is none other than the revelation which God has addressed to us in Scripture. The goal of preaching is no more and no less than faithfulness to this calling. The glory of preaching is that God has promised to use preachers and preaching to accomplish His purpose and bring glory to himself."¹⁰⁰ †



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The Journey of Life

C. William Pollard

"Is there some form of hierarchy in God's calling with a special place for what people often refer to as "full-time Christian service?"

This article is a written transcript of an address given to students at Convocation on August 27, 2007 at Emmaus Bible College.

It is a privilege to share some thoughts about the Author of our beginnings and the One who knows what is our future. We often think of college as a time of preparation. For many, it is also a time of transition from teenage to adulthood. Now if this is a time of preparation, what is God preparing you to do?

All of us are on a journey of life. A journey that has a purpose and meaning unique to each one of us, with a calling from God both to do and to be.

As I look back on my life and share some thoughts about my journey and how God has called and worked in my life, I realize that you may be looking forward, and may have some uncertainties about God's purpose and call for your life. These uncertainties are all part of

the reality that life is always lived looking forward but more often than not better understood when we have the opportunity to look back.

The following is a letter I received from a graduate of another Christian college. It reflects what may be some common understandings or misunderstandings of God's calling:

"I am very happy to report that, by God's grace and fullness, I actually did graduate. For the first time since age five, I am not a student.

"It's been a good four years of learning. I was a Bible major and English minor. I can now read in the Greek New Testament. I know phrases like: inaugurated eschatology and hermeneutical fallacy. I am beginning to have more confidence in my interpretation of scripture.

"I have made wonderful friends here, in breakfast Bible studies, in noon prayer sessions for missions, in

afternoons in the fall playing soccer, in the spring playing baseball, and late nights in the dorm having fun. The farewells will be very difficult.

"So, what's next? I am moving to Kansas City where I will be closer to my family. I'll find a job and pay off my student loans. What kind of a job? I really don't know – construction work or some type of administrative work for a business? I also will apply to various mission agencies. I feel called to the mission field and in a year or two, I hope to be in full-time Christian service. Where, I don't know. Ethiopia? Papua New Guinea? India? I will wait for God's call to the right place.

"Please pray for me in the next couple of months. It is going to be quite a transition and, frankly, *I am not looking forward to it*. I am leaving a Christian community to live among *ordinary, working Americans*. I am expecting a considerable amount of uncertainty and

loneliness, but I hope to develop some friends at the local church I will be attending.”

So what was this student saying about his understanding of God’s calling?

Is there some form of hierarchy in God’s calling with a special place for what people often refer to as “full-time Christian service?” Will I miss out if I don’t do something that fits into this category? Should I think of God’s call in the context of a location or special place of service? Is it only about what I should do and the place where I should do it, or is it more about who I am and who I am becoming? And where does “ordinary work” with those “ordinary Americans” fit in? The ordinary people that God so loves and for whom Jesus died.

A Temporal and an Eternal purpose

As I ask these questions, I am reminded of a friend of mine who put this message on his voicemail at work and his answering machine at home: “Hello? This is not an answering device. It is a questioning device. There are only two questions in life that are relevant: ‘Who are you’ and ‘What do you want?’ Please give your answer after the tone.”

Who are we and what do we want? Every one of us is a special creation of God with a dimension of freedom to make choices about how we shall then live. And as we exercise this freedom, God is calling us to a way of life that has both a temporal and an eternal purpose. A calling that is sacred in its significance and more often than not involves the secular in its application.

What does the word of God

have to say about this subject of calling?

Eph 2: 8 - 10

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing: it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared before hand that we should walk in them.

Phil 2:3 - 8

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus who though He was in the form of God did not want equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

Eph 4: 1

I, therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

Phil 2: 12, 13

...Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Phil 3: 12 - 14

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own because Christ

Jesus has made me His own. And one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press forward the goal for the prize of the *upward call* of God in Christ.

The Biblical principles from those passages are clear. Our starting point must be with the Caller, not the call. We are being called to someone — to a relationship with God and His Son Jesus Christ. It is a call that involves who we are becoming, as we make choices about what we do.

Understanding His Calling

God’s call is all inclusive and covers every aspect of life — all of what we do. The whole of life is a response to God’s call with no room for a two-tier view of life with a higher sacred calling and a lower, more mundane calling.

As Luther put it, the works of monks and priests, however holy, do not differ in the sight of God from the works of a laborer in the field or that of a manservant or maidservant in the home.

Calling is all about serving others, not about self-gratification. It is about excelling in what we do and so bringing honor to the One Who has called us. It involves both faith and hard work — and our choice to do both — with the results dependent not only upon our own doing, but also upon God’s help.

Calling is about a journey. During our time here on earth, we never arrive. We are always, so to speak, on the road. There are way points of learning that involve accomplishment and failure, joy and sadness. Our final destination will

come only when we are at home with our Lord.

Each of us are at various stages on this journey, and there may be more than we realize who are traveling on this road. Let us not forget that there is room in God’s call for such different travelers as the wise men from the east, Zaccheus in the sycamore tree, and the woman at the well.

There is a priority and focus to our calling, with a race to be won. We have been chosen. We are not our own. We have been bought with a price and our priority is to seek First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness.

As we understand more of God’s calling, we realize that our quest for life is not so much about what we want but instead what God wants. He wants to be our friend. He wants us to follow in the steps of His Son, Jesus Christ, and to be ministers of reconciliation and ambassadors of His love with a message of hope and salvation.

My Personal Calling

For me, this calling and journey of life has focused on a growing relationship with God and those He has brought across my path — especially my wife of 48 years, Judy, our four children and their spouses, and our 15 grandchildren.

Yes, there have been times of doubt and despair, especially during those difficult teenage years, and the sudden death of my father when I was 18. There followed the challenges of college and law school and seeking to establish a home, support a family, and develop my profession. During this time, there were also feelings of inadequacy and concern about whether I would measure up.

This resulted in a drive for what I thought was success, which allowed my law profession to become a jealous mistress in my life, only to be stopped by God’s intervention with a serious health condition. This was followed by a dramatic change in my life, which involved leaving the practice of law and going to serve as an administrator and faculty member at Wheaton College. It was during this phase of my life that God began to teach me lessons of balance and spiritual maturity.

In 1977, my path took another turn, when I left Wheaton and joined the leadership team at what was then a small public company called ServiceMaster, and which had as its corporate objectives:

- To Honor God in All We Do
- To Help People Develop
- To Pursue Excellence
- To Grow Profitably

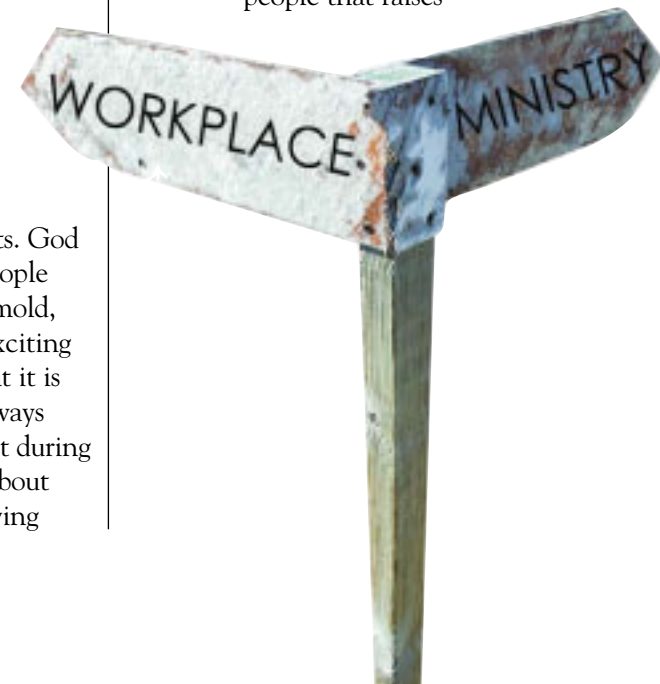
I was soon asked to serve as President and CEO, and there were many changes and choices to make as we grew the business over the next 25 years. For most of this time, we were doubling in size every 3.5 to 4 years. When I retired from the Firm in 2001, we were employing or managing over 250,000 people and our services stretched from Karachi, Pakistan to Tokyo, Japan.

So you see, my life has not been a simple, logical, or predictable sequence of events. God has chosen many different people and circumstances to break, mold, and develop me. The most exciting thing about the process is that it is continuing. There are not always answers to every question, but during this journey, I have learned about what it means to have a growing

relationship with God, to know His forgiveness for my mistakes, to understand how to spend my life for Him in the lives of others, to realize God’s ownership of who I am and what I have, and my responsibility to be a steward of all that He has given me.

I have found that the world of business need not be just a place where you make money and create wealth, but it can also be a place where you can engage those ordinary people with the reality of your faith. It was Henry Ford who was quoted as saying about his employees, “Why is it I always get the whole person when all I really wanted was a pair of hands?”

The people coming to work every day are more than a pair of hands, and cannot be understood or measured only in terms of their economic or physical needs. Nor can they be measured solely by their intellectual or educational accomplishments. There also is a spiritual dimension to the human condition. It is this spiritual dimension that influences moral behavior and the development of character and is the genesis of love, not hate; good, not evil. It is this spiritual dimension of people that raises



the question of God and His role in both the act of creation and the act of redemption.

As a business leader, I wanted to excel at generating profits and creating value for shareholders. If I didn't want to play by these rules, I didn't belong in the ballgame. But I also tried to encourage an environment where the work place could be an open community, where the question of a person's moral and spiritual development and the existence of God and how one related the claims of their faith with the demands of their work were issues of discussion, debate and — yes — even learning understanding and acceptance. I considered the people of our firm as, in fact, the soul of the firm.

For me, my work has been a ministry and the business firm has become a channel for fulfilling and living my faith; a channel that has reached from the janitor's closet in Saudi Arabia to the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China — from sweeping streets in Osaka, Japan to ringing the bell of the New York Stock Exchange. The marketplace has provided a wonderful opportunity for me to embrace and engage those who do not believe the way I do, but who God loves and who, by my words and actions, should see the reality of His love.

Closing Thoughts

As I close, I present to you another letter from a college graduate — one of our Chinese employees who had graduated from a University in Beijing and had assisted me in the development of our business in China:

*Dear Bill,
When I grew up in China, religions were forbidden and Mao's book became our bible. When I was five or six years old, I could recite Mao's quotations and even use them to judge and lecture the kids in the neighborhood.*

Mao said, "Serve the people. Leaders should be public servants." This coincides with some of ServiceMaster's moral standards. When I think deeply, I see the difference that makes one work so successfully and the other collapse fatally. It must be the starting point of ServiceMaster to honor God and that every individual has been created in His image with dignity and worth.

ServiceMaster is designed to be a big, tall tree with strong roots, which penetrate extensively to almost every corner of a person's daily life. It is beginning to grow in mine.

Shu Zhang is one of those ordinary people that we had the opportunity to meet and engage in a work-a-day world. In the workplace, she was confronted with life choices that go beyond doing a job or earning a living; choices about who she is becoming and whether she would respond to God's offer of love and forgiveness — a choice that only she could make.

As Joshua came to the closing days of his leadership, he challenged the people of Israel to fear God and serve Him with faithfulness.

It was a challenge, not a command, for God does not compel anyone to follow or worship Him. In Joshua's conclusion, he emphasized this point when he said, "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...but as for me and my house,

we will serve the Lord."

Now, the Hebrew word that is translated "serve" is Avodah, and can also mean "worship" or "work." Yes, that's right — our work, whatever or wherever it might be, can become a center of worship as we bring alive the reality that Jesus lived and died for the purpose that those He created and loved may know Him as God and Savior. This is the will of God, and our journey of life should be a response to this call.

God has called each of us to be in the world but not part of it. He has called us to be excellent in what we do, whether we call it a job, profession, or ministry. And when we excel in what we do, whatever that may be — as a lawyer, businessperson, minister or educator — we can live and share our faith in a way that cannot be ignored or contained. In so doing, we are able to respond to the Caller, not just the call, and His will for the whole of our life. May God richly bless you, and may you draw closer to Him. †



C. William Pollard

C. William Pollard is a retired CEO of ServiceMaster, an international Fortune 500 company. During his leadership, ServiceMaster was recognized by Fortune magazine as the #1 service company among the Fortune 500. Bill is a graduate of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, and he received a J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law. He currently serves as a trustee of Wheaton College and is actively involved in teaching and speaking on subjects relating to management, ethics and integrating one's faith with his or her work.

On Proven Character...

Chris Lange

Many Americans today have given up on the current state of public affairs, becoming hardened to and suspicious of so many politicians, sports heroes, or media personalities, perhaps sensing that destructive self-interest and moral compromise are beyond change and correction. Each day brings another implosion of character to the television screen.

If this is true, dare I ask if it has affected the local church? Believers are to shine forth "as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation." To be sure, Christian character is meant to reflect the loveliness of Christ as believers take on His holy character in their daily lives. Believers should be available, making their schedules

and priorities secondary to those they serve. We are to be diligent, generous, gentle, grateful, humble, joyful, and patient. We are to be responsible, reverent, selfless, sincere, and servant-minded.

In 1970, when I was saved, my previous life experience was totally different than what I was to come to know as life in Christ. Littleton Bible Chapel was the nurturing ground for my infant Christian character and life in the Spirit. I learned God's Word and learned of the amazing movement of the Holy Spirit in my life. In the amazement of it all, however, I felt after many months that my character — that is, my understanding of my new life in Christ and my new behavior, had taken on a "sameness" like that

of everyone else. I felt that I had lost all sense of my own personality, that the believers around me were all the same, sounded the same, and did the same things. This bothered me because I could not seem to estimate my own personal growth in Christ, for I felt lost in some huge "Christian conglomerate" of blended character distinction and behavior patterns.

It was not until I read C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* that I discovered God was in the business of giving me back all the unique personality that He always intended me to have — *for Him* — as I gave up all that *I* was doing to find my true self. I realized then that God was intimately acquainted with all my ways and desired that I know





Him in the same way. My transformed life was because of Him and for Him. He desired me to be with Him. I realized as well that all those around me were in the same intensely personal relationship with Him and His Word. I discovered then as I know now that the dynamics of transformation were the central issues with which I needed to be occupied. Any kind of Christian character development would follow as God would ordain.

Let me suggest that godly Christian character is more accurately based on our sincere desire, first and foremost, to please God in everything we do.

As an unbeliever I didn't know what I really wanted and needed and desired. But I was locked into a futile struggle to authenticate my personality and make it all things to all people. Any character I may have developed was a product of what I perceived would make me accepted by others. When I was saved, I knew I could never be the same and knew that it was God

who had and would continue to do the work in me. In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, we read, "And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe." And what is the significance of this? It is the performing of God's holy work of reconciliation, justification, and sanctification that is changing and renewing us into His likeness. Whatever this process initiates, and wherever it takes us, believers are continually and inevitably changed into the likeness of His character.

I believe there are important, practical issues with which a believer must contend in order to develop character. We do not grow in character by examining a list of desirable traits, choosing the ones we like the best (or think have the greatest impact on others), and then by trying to practice them. This is essentially a formula for failure, or at best, superficiality. Consider patience, for example. We often try to be a very patient person because we know we are supposed to be patient with believers — and with those folks outside the faith. In my own life, I try to live harmoniously with others and to exercise patience with everyone. And yet, I am an impatient person, sometimes demonstrably with people and things that frustrate my schedule and agenda. Hence, does my outward character reveal what is not authentic inwardly?

Let me suggest that godly Christian character is more accurately based on our sincere desire, first and foremost, to please God in everything we do.

The one character trait that should always be true of us all is authenticity.

This truth ought to help us as believers to understand that being patient is not an appliqué, some moral overlay that a Christian "puts on" at the start of the day. Being patient stems from the mandate in Scripture to regard others as more important than ourselves: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2: 3). Believers cannot have the godly character trait of patience until it is firmly embedded in our hearts and minds from God's Word.

Our practical demonstration of Christian character in the midst of the local church may very well become unrealistic and uncomfortable if our own agendas place unreasonable expectations on those with whom we live and work and fellowship. When this happens, the emotional bonds of love, respect, and devotion tend to weaken, and they strain the unity that must be maintained in the body.

How, then, is Christian charac-

ter developed and maintained in the body of Christ? For one thing, the development of character is not meant to be a means to an end for us; it is, rather, God's unique and wonderful means of shaping us so that we bring Him glory.

The one character trait that should always be true of us all is authenticity.

Walking caricatures of the faith are both dangerous spiritually and injurious to the body. In Francis Schaeffer's book *The Mark of the Christian*, he writes that the true mark of authenticity is unfeigned love for one another — tangible, real, genuine love for others — both for believers and for unbelievers. If men are to know that Jesus was sent by the Father and that Christianity is real, then there is no other alternative. And if God's Word alone is the source of our instruction and training, then the work of the Holy Spirit in us is more necessary and more awesome each day of our public lives.

I suggest that developing and maintaining godly Christian character begins and continues as we walk in the truth of what Jesus asks us to do. So what are earmarks of true character in Christ?

Believers Need to Have the Right Attitude About Reproof and Correction

This may come privately, in conscience, prompted by the Holy Spirit, or it may come from another believer whom the Spirit uses to convict us of sin. We read in 2

Timothy 3: 16-17, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." And why would I begin here? If I am not walking in the truth, I must "back up spiritually" and take the steps necessary to get matters right with God and with the body of Christ. If I ignore the truth, then I jeopardize myself and those around me and will be ill equipped for service to the body. This is difficult because it often may be embarrassing and humiliating. And yet, though the heat of embarrassment may linger on my face, the eternal consequences must take precedence. This is authentic character.

Believers Also Must Have the Right Heart Attitude About Forgiveness

The Word tells us that we must forgive others as Jesus has forgiven us — totally, completely, unreservedly, and undeservedly. This is also difficult for us, but we must learn to forgive without holding others in emotional debt for their perceived wrongs against us. In my own life I must learn not to pick up every offense, whether real or imagined, because that causes me to bear all the emotional load of the anger and frustration I may feel. I must learn to reconcile in love and then be refreshed in the Spirit, for this has ongoing spiritual consequences. God calls me to this higher standard of behavior because it is

essential Christianity: it bears the enduring fruit of transformation, it marks unmistakably the truth of God in my life, and it reveals authentic character.

In the crucible of our lives in Christ, when the fire is turned up, we know what rises to the top. The dross, the evidence of our sinful nature, reminds us of what will remain in us until He returns. The stakes are high, as Satan desires to destroy us and the work of Christ in us. Make no mistake about it: We as Christians are subject to the same pressures and life calamities as are unbelievers, and we may know suffering in our families even more intensely than others. But what must come forth in the heat of refinement is proven character that reflects our loving Savior. The order of the process that the apostle Paul gives us in Romans 5 is clear: tribulation, perseverance, proven character, hope. May we all be found authentic in this process and able to echo what we read in Job 23:10: "But He knows the way I take; when He has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." †



Chris Lange
Chris Lange is the Chair of the General Education Department at Emmaus where he has served on the faculty since 2000. Chris and his wife Nancy have four grown children and are enjoying their first grandson.

Dr. MacLeod Asks

Faculty member Dave MacLeod leads us in a public forum to discuss issues pertinent to contemporary Christian life. Last issue he asked the following question:

Some time ago a friend bemoaned the splitting of an assembly with which he was acquainted. He said, "I wonder if it is ever possible for a local church to split amicably?" That's my question for this issue. Here are some related questions you may want to consider as you write your answer: (1) Is frustration a good reason for leaving your local church? (2) Is the desire for a different leadership style or ministry style a good reason for leaving your local church? (3) What are some good reasons for starting a new assembly? (4) How large should an assembly be before the elders agree to "release" a group of innovators to start a hive-off assembly?"

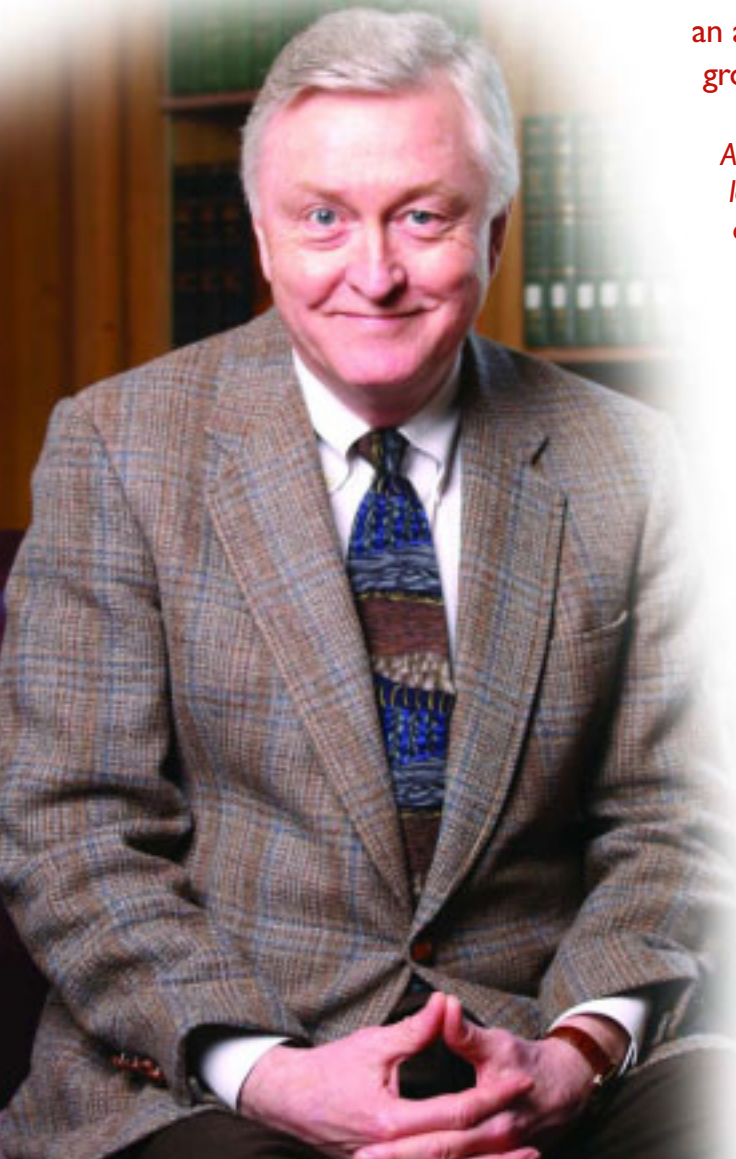
A Note from David MacLeod: The first respondent sent his letter by email. The remaining contributions were made in a conversation on the web by a group of Emmaus alumni. I was delighted to hear from them all and am sorry that I couldn't fit all their comments in.

Alan Malchuk responds:

Whoever said "ignorance is bliss," wasn't trying to understand their frustration. Frustration can feel like jail, and forceful change like a jail break. Enduring it, however, seems like serving a sentence. For me, it was a two year process of coming to find the key that set me free from the frustration.

I loved the men I served with in our assembly, yet disagreed with their emphases in ministry. It felt like Dr. Doolittle's Push-Me-Pull-Me in our elders meetings, with some elders pulling one direction and the others another direction. I (and some others) had a passion and burden for certain people, but the current approach to ministry missed them. Our approach was at odd angles to the population they were concerned about. We struggled to find ways to talk it through, so the strain of the opposing purposes and approaches festered.

During those two years an elder (and dear friend) and I met for times of focused prayer and study. Then within one week I had an unexpected answer. Reading in 1 Corinthians



12:5 and Galatians 2:8, the Lord revealed **the roots of my frustration: I believed that unity meant uniformity. It was a wrong idea,** and had held me fast in frustration and guilt. Here's what I read:

1 Corinthians 12:5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

And then a few days later...

Gal 2:8 He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles

I found that the one and same Spirit worked two very different ministries. Paul's focus was born of the Spirit and focused on the Gentiles; Peter's focus was also born of the Spirit but directed toward the Jews. GOD was at work in these desires. It was this understanding that freed me from the wrong idea and directed me into the truth: We can have unity without uniformity. The SAME Spirit gave DIFFERENT ministries.

Before I understood this I blamed the leadership. After I understood this, I took responsibility. Before this I was frustrated with in myself; after this breakthrough, my frustration disappeared. I was released from the false belief. I was able to leave that assembly and their target audience without judging them for their emphases. We began a new work following this call of God on our lives with three couples who shared that vision.

It is all a process. Making changes, even to leave, can be misunderstood or hurt people. We sought to leave in peace and without recruiting people. Even so, we found several years later there were things to talk through with the assembly we left. We sought to let

the Lord lead us in love and happily He led us into even more understanding. We had a tender time of healing remaining hurts.

Here's what I learned in a phrase: **"Seek to understand."** This became the key to freedom.

Don't leave in frustration. Rather, pray and **seek to understand the roots of the frustration.** In this seeking we discovered the frustration came from the idea we must all stay in the same place and do the same thing (unity means uniformity).

Seek to understand if the root idea is biblical. Knowing the truth still sets men free. When we realized we could have unity with believers without uniformity of method, we were set free. We were able to set about doing a new work.

Finally, let love hold impatience in check. The Lord has a solution. We waited two years to discover that unity is not uniformity. (Some might say we're slow!) We also let love lead us to continue to care about the relationships we left. Through seeking to understand their hurts, the Lord brought us into freedom from hurts.

Karen Carder responds:

If a group of people leave because their assembly is becoming too large, or because they have to drive a long distance to get there, or if they want to do some things differently (and have the blessing of the elders) I would say it's a good thing. And I would call the new work an assembly plant and not a split. I've seen that happen many times and it is a great thing, and both groups fellowship with each other during the year. On the other hand, if

people can't agree with the rest of the assembly and decide to leave and start a new assembly, I would call it a "church split." Yet even this can be good (good because God may use the new assembly, too). A "church plant" is something that is planned. Our own assembly is growing, and when it gets to be a certain size — large enough for a group to leave without destabilizing the original church — we will amicably divide.

Steve Mizel responds:

I thought it was an interesting question, but I want to put a twist on it. What is the difference between a "church split" and a "church plant?" Is a split ever good, even if it is amicable? I also found it interesting that the question was framed in terms of an "amicable split" or the "release of a group." I also was struck by Dr. MacLeod's question (and Karen's comment above) tying these "amicable church splits" to size. Shouldn't we be seeking to plant new churches? Why should we wait until we reach some critical mass? If we have gifted leaders who are stirred by the Spirit, shouldn't we be actively training them and equipping them to get out there and reproduce themselves? I just read an interesting (and somewhat related) thing today: research shows that the longer a church is in existence, the more inward its focus becomes, the less effective it becomes with reaching out to and connecting with outsiders. Why are so many churches "planning" to plant churches, and so few of them actually doing it? Are they waiting instead for an "amicable split?"

Karen Carder responds:

I don't see a problem with doing a church plant if you have gifted leaders, but where do you find such people? Other churches? Bible colleges? Seminaries? I am not sure, but I think the leaders of the new church plant would need some accountability to a group of people in another church — people they can lean on in difficult times. In the case of an assembly that is stable, it would be destabilizing if half the group left leaving inadequate leadership in the original assembly. A few years ago a disgruntled group (about 16 people) left our assembly, and they soon started bickering amongst themselves, and they ended up splitting in different directions to other churches in the area. They left because they were disgruntled and unhappy, and they ended up taking the same traits with them and it divided them. So we are taking time to build up leadership in our assembly with the goal of dividing amicably. Discipleship and the development of stable leaders takes time.

Ian Denham responds:

I agree with you Karen that there is only so much a stable church can do to support a church plant both financially and in leadership. I have seen some of these church plants that are going great, and the original or parent church has continued to provide the support to keep them strong.

Suzanne Alford responds:

Our fledgling church of 40 people (5 months old) had its first meeting last Sunday for the purpose of planting its own church. That blows me away. I'm not sure if it is

the best or not — it seems a bit soon, but there is such a commitment to church planting that it is already being considered. New churches have a huge impact — not only on their own population, but also to the other churches around them. It gives them a huge boost and they kind of catch the vision as well.

Roni Squire

Our local, growing, and thriving church is a beautiful plant, from a large church, 20 miles away. Three elders and their families came with the new group. The two local churches continue to fellowship together in various ways. But, I do think there is a big difference between a plant and a split.

Laura Harrington

Yes, it is very possible to have an amicable split. Our church is a product of such a split; we prefer the term "hive off." There can be other reasons to hive off besides getting too big. Our church is currently preparing to plant a church because the new area of town is lacking outreach. A man approached the elders, received their blessing, and men are being trained to plant. It is not only good for the new church, but also good for us. We are taking this time to study the New Testament church and looking to see how we can improve our local church using biblical principles.

Amy Hickman responds:

Our elders have committed (in their Philosophy of Ministry) to "hive off" after our Body reaches around 400 people. They think that any church larger than 400

would become impersonal. It would be difficult to keep everyone accountable and using their gifts. We are slowly nearing that number already! I'm glad that they have this vision and look forward to that time of change, whenever it may be.

Michelle Bowen responds:

As far as church *plants* go, why do we need more churches? Isn't it the responsibility of the believer as an individual to reach out to unbelievers and share the gospel with them? We can bring the unbelievers to church, but isn't the church meeting itself for believers? I understand a church plant in an area lacking in churches, but a place like St. Louis? I can name 14 assemblies off the top of my head, plus many other churches that are Bible believing, preaching, teaching, and outreaching bodies. Is a church plant ever really necessary when there are so many bodies meeting in one general area? I guess a spin off question would be: Is it better to have many church meetings in an area or would it be better to have only one?

Jeff Hage responds:

I do not think Dr. MacLeod's question is in reference to plants or hive offs but to splits, where there is disagreement about some issue. Obviously new church plants are amicable, but splits? How can church splits be kept from being bitter and hateful?

Faith Haynes responds:

Semantically, the expression "church splits" has a negative connotation while the expression "church plants" have a positive

connotation. Church splits usually imply some sort of doctrinal and/or personal conflict; church plants usually imply the desire to reach more effectively in a new area — thus a more amicable endeavor. Occasionally, you will have "agree-to-disagree" situations which end up being an odd mix of split and plant. The good news is that God is above our own paradoxes and imperfections! In the end, God makes beauty from ashes.

Steve Mizel responds:

Michelle Bowen writes, "The local church meeting itself is [only] for believers." I hear that a lot on this site, but you'll have to show me from scripture that church meetings are only for believers. She also asks, "Why new churches?" First, new churches are needed because not every church can communicate effectively with every group of people. A church plant can target the context and culture of a local community much better if it is intentional about

doing so in order to communicate to that community more effectively. Second, there are 14 assemblies in St. Louis and hundreds of other churches and still we are not doing a good enough job bringing the gospel to the unchurched of our city. Eight out of 10 new church plants end up failing (in the sense that they do not have growth and long term existence), but if they are done right, even the eight that fail are likely to bring the gospel to people who wouldn't have heard it otherwise. Third, intentional church planting keeps the planting church healthy in its focus, less likely to become inward focused (which is what causes "splits") and expectant of the Spirit's active and miraculous work in and through them. I will throw this out as well — usually the difference between a split and a plant is that the first is the result of a lack of vision and leadership and the second the result of it.

Karen Carder responds:

Just a few verses about who "the church" is: Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Acts 15:22; 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:10. These are just a few texts, but it is pretty clear that the church is made up of believers. This doesn't mean that an unbeliever can't be invited to our meetings with the hope that he may be saved. Nevertheless, the purpose of "the church" is clearly for the building up of the believers, and it is a place for the believers to worship. The command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel and make disciples" implies that we are to go out into the world. I appreciated your thoughts and questions Michelle; we also have solid Bible churches on every corner here, but if we grew too big for our building and were stable with our leadership, we would plant another assembly here.

NEXT ISSUE'S QUESTION:

What is the cause of the current unrest over music in the assemblies and other evangelical churches? Are our differences of opinion simply a matter of generational tastes? Is there anything to the charge that much modern Christian music is puerile in its theology and lyrics? How is your local church handling the mega shift in musical tastes that has taken place in the past fifteen years?

Please send responses to Journey Magazine, Emmaus Bible College, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001, or e-mail to journey@emmaus.edu. Include name, city, state, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited to yield brevity and clarity.

Emmaus On the Road

Name	Location/Events	City/State	Dates
 Ken Daughters	Northgate Gospel Chapel Laurel Bible Chapel Bethany Bible Chapel	Seattle, WA San Diego, CA Toms River, NJ	Jan 13 Jan 27 Mar 1, 2
 Ken Fleming	Bayside Community Church Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel	Tampa, FL Dubuque, IA	Jan 13 Feb 4, 11, 18, 25
 Dave Glock	Northern Hills Bible Chapel Oak Lawn Bible Chapel Park of the Palms	Cincinnati, OH Oak Lawn, IL Keystone Heights, FL	Jan 25 – 27 Feb 3, 10 Feb 16 – 22
 Jon Glock	Horton Haven Christian Camp College Heights Chapel Iowa Bible Camp Countryside Bible Chapel Guelph Bible Conference Center Scottlea Youth Conference	Chapel Hill, TN Murfreesboro, TN Manson, IA Stratford, IA Guelph, ON St. Catharines, ON	Jan 4 – 6 Jan 13 Jan 18 – 20 Jan 25 – 27 Feb 1 – 3 Mar 1, 2
 John Jimo	Lake Geneva Youth Camp High Winter Weekend Warrenville Bible Chapel	Lake Geneva, WI Warrenville, IL	Feb 1 – 3 Mar 2, 9
 David MacLeod	Northwest Bible Chapel Grace Bible Sanctuary Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel	Chicago, IL Palm Bay, FL Dubuque, IA	Jan 6, 13, 27 Jan 18 – 20 Mar 2
 Dan Smith	Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel Park of the Palms Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel	Dubuque, IA Keystone Heights, FL Cedar Rapids, IA	Jan 13, 20, 27 Feb 2-8 Feb 17, 24



Steve Witter

Christian Assembly
Warrenville Bible Chapel
CSA Annual Meeting
Garfield Gospel Chapel
ABHE Annual Meeting
Grand Haven Gospel Chapel

Prairie du Chien, WI
Warrenville, IL
Albuquerque, NM
Albuquerque, NM
Orlando, FL
Grand Haven, MI

Dec 16
Jan 20, 27
Jan 30 – Feb 2
Feb 3
Feb 21 – 23
Feb 29



Mark Woodhouse

Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel

Cedar Rapids, IA Jan 6, 13, 20, 27

If you would like more information about having faculty speak at your assembly, retreat, conference or camp please call 1-800-397-BIBLE or e-mail info@emmaus.edu.

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- Youth Ministries*

*Features a double major in Biblical Studies

†Dual degree program with Biblical Studies through Northeast Iowa Community College



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News from Emmaus

Keeping You Informed

Emmaus Bible College has seen significant growth and change over the past decade. We have a new building, new programs, reaffirmed previously held accreditations, and gained regional accreditation with NCA. A growing concern is making sure that our constituency is adequately informed and engaged in the ministries of Emmaus Bible College.

In 2004, Ken Daughters, President of Emmaus, created a new department at the college. First called Constituency Relations, now known as Advancement, this department is tasked with re-energizing our relationship with current constituents, and seeking to expand our constituency as the Lord allows.

Emmaus seeks to keep the constituency informed through a variety of printed materials. Journey Magazine comes out three times a year and is designed specifically to encourage the health and growth of the assemblies. Once each year, we insert the Emmaus Today into a Journey publication, and this insert is designed as a sort of annual report, catching people up on the latest information about the college. The Emmaus Experience is published four times each year. This piece is primarily designed for our alumni, but other friends of

the college can benefit from receiving this as well. We also send out prayer cards every other month. We understand that importance of prayer, and value the prayers of the Lord's people on behalf of the college. Of course, from time to time, we send special letters or communications that we think will be beneficial to our friends and supporters.

A second way that we want to keep our friends informed is through face to face visits. Emmaus representatives travel all over North America meeting with local churches and the leadership in those local churches to bring them a current update on what God is doing. While no two visits are exactly the same, the goal is to have a face to face dialogue about Emmaus. People have the chance to have their questions or concerns answered as well as being encouraged by hearing about the Lord's blessings...and how He is using graduates of our school to impact the world for Christ. We want to come visit you! Please contact Dr. Steve Witter if you have more questions of if you would like to arrange such a visit. He can be reached by email at switter@emmaus.edu or by phone at 563-588-8000, extension 1124. We can come during the week, or over a weekend...all that we need is an invitation. We look forward to seeing you soon.



Ben Mathew's State Licensure

It is with joy we are able to announce the recent licensure of Ben Mathew (EBC alum 1998) as a licensed mental health counselor for the State of Iowa. Ben has been Director of Counseling Services for the past five years at EBC, and has been a valuable help to many students dealing with life issues as they study at the college. Ben is also the Director and faculty member in the Biblical Counseling Minor program, and directs the Spiritual Formation program for the freshmen students. Ben is thankful for completion of his state licensure, as it is a long process with thousands of clinical hours of counseling and state exams after completing his Master's degree in Biblical Counseling from Dallas Theological Seminary. Ben sees this professional status as a means of further help for students in real and practical ways, and ensuring the quality of programs and assistance within the college.

Faculty Travels – Mark Stevenson

This past September I attended the annual doctoral colloquium at the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit (ETF) in Leuven, Belgium where I am working on a Ph.D. in Historical Theology. Studying at ETF has been valuable on at least two levels. First, while the program is academically rigorous, it does not have a residency requirement. Thus I am able to continue with my responsibilities at Emmaus while doing research for the PhD. Second, through ETF I have the privilege of connecting with evangelical Christians and professors in Europe, including Brethren scholars such as Dr. Willem Ouweneel (Netherlands) and Dr. Ulrich Bister (Germany). My doctoral supervisor is Dr. Donald Tinder, who is commended from assemblies in California.

One of the highlights of my trip was to spend some time with former Emmaus professor Tom Marinello. Tom is also in the program at ETF and is currently finishing his dissertation on the history of the assemblies in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. Tom serves as a professor at Tyndale Theological Seminary in the Netherlands, teaching students who come from around the world to study the Scriptures. Tom and Patti were commended in 2000 from Garland, Texas to the work in Europe.

After spending a day with the Marinellos in their home, Tom and I set off for Belgium. On our way

to Leuven, we stopped for a brief visit with Canadian assembly missionaries Hank and Beryl Gelling. The Gellings have been planting assemblies in Flanders for over 30 years.



After a busy but fruitful week at the colloquium I returned home and stepped back into the classroom—this time as a teacher. One is reminded that teachers never cease being students and students, at some level, ought to be teachers!

— Mark R. Stevenson

New Cooperative Programs

This fall we launched two new cooperative programs with Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) in Peosta, Iowa, just 15 minutes west of Dubuque. These programs provide students with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biblical Studies from Emmaus and an associate degree in either Nursing or Business Administration from NICC.

The Biblical Studies/Nursing program takes 4 - 5 years to complete. It is approved by the State of Iowa and prepares students to take the licensure exam to become a Registered Nurse (RN). We currently have nine students pursuing



the cooperative program in nursing: (pictured above) Joy Delzer (Bolivia), Caolae Huggins (WI), Luke McMillin (MN), Tina Myers (WI), Anne Nichols (IL), Abbi Stark (CO); (not pictured) Ashley Warner (WA), Anna Nininger (KS), and Ashleigh Wilson (CA). Several of these students passed their CNA exams earlier this semester and are currently working hard to excel in their Human Physiology and Anatomy classes.



The Biblical Studies/Business Administration program takes just four years to complete. We currently have four students pursuing the cooperative program in business: (pictured above) Luke Mann (MO), Craig Raymond (IL); (not pictured) Austin Gardner (IA), and Jared Wilson (IA). Most of these young men will begin taking classes at NICC this spring.

Alumni Receptions

The Alumni Association has recently enjoyed several successful alumni receptions across the United States. Each evening included a presentation about what's new at Emmaus, refreshments, and great fellowship as we reminisced about our time at Emmaus. Representatives from the College included: Steve Witter, Justin Smith, Jack Fish, Dan and Martha Smith, and Becky (Flint) Kraus. Call or e-mail Justin Smith in the Alumni Office at Emmaus if you are interested in having a reception in your area! (800-397-2425 option 6, or alumni@emmaus.edu).



September 8, 2007 at Forge Road Bible Chapel, Perry Hall, Maryland (Baltimore)



September 15, 2007 at Hilltop Chapel, Etobicoke, Ontario (Toronto)



October 6, 2007 at Lombard Gospel Chapel, Lombard, Illinois (Chicago)



April 20, 2007 at North Lynnwood Bible Chapel, Lynnwood, Washington (Seattle)

Spiritual Emphasis Week

Dr. Dave Reid, former faculty member of Emmaus Bible College, spoke to the current Emmaus students during Spiritual Emphasis Week, November 5 – 8, 2007. His topic was "Guidelines for Making Right Decisions."



Since 1941,

thousands of choice young men and women have walked on the Emmaus road, and learned the things concerning Himself. Many of these students recall their days spent at Emmaus as the "best days of their lives"...because while studying God's Word for the first time with an adult mind, their lives were changed.

You can find Emmaus graduates anywhere in the world....doing most anything, yet with one common thread. From the several hundred foreign missionaries, to the camp directors, from those engaged in full-time ministry in the United States, to those who build houses, our graduates seek to serve the Church, using the gifts that the Lord has given them to bring honor and glory to the name of Jesus Christ.

If you want to be involved in service for the Lord that is impacting the world...make Emmaus Bible College YOUR College. There are many ways that you can be involved.

- Pray for the college on a regular basis.
- Invite an Emmaus representative to your local church to update the leadership and the Saints about what God is doing...and where He is taking Emmaus.
- If you know of a potential student....send us their contact information—OR request a recruitment packet for them.
- Consider financial support to the Annual fund, or one of several ongoing projects.

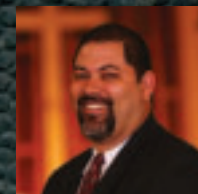
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