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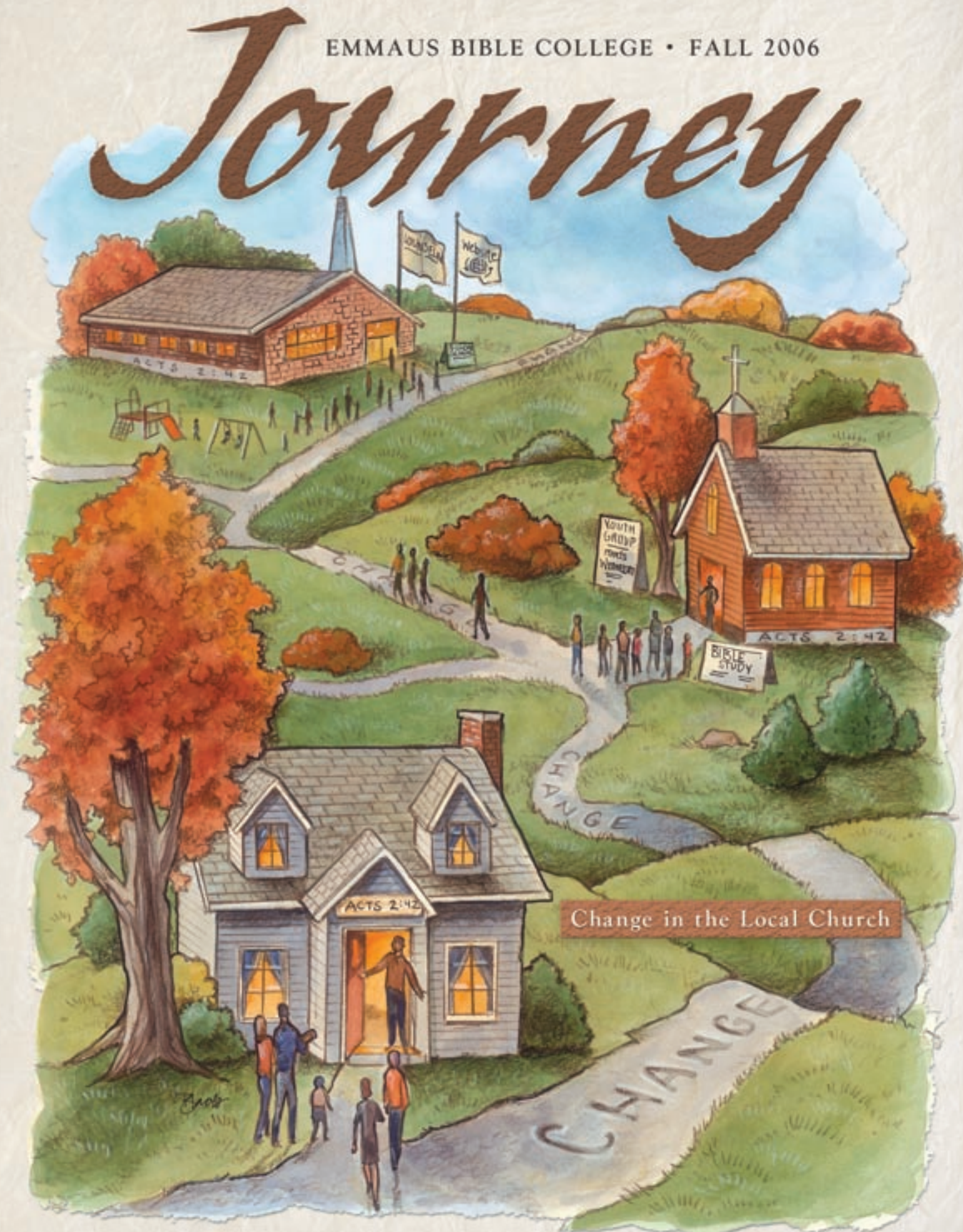
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## Why Don't We Wash Feet Today?

Few commands of Jesus to His disciples are as clear as His command to wash each other's feet. He said, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you" (John 13:12 – 15). Why don't we wash feet today? I know there are a few groups that practice pedilavium, but it is not common. Is it because we don't struggle with dusty feet? No, it's because we are following the example of the disciples as they founded the early church. They seem to have understood Jesus as teaching the need for spiritual humility in service and for spiritual cleansing. They applied it to all forms of service. They did not regularly practice physical foot washing as an ordinance of the church. Some see the practice mentioned in the early church in 1 Timothy 5:10. Yes, the qualifications to be put on the widow's role includes, "If she has washed the saints' feet," but contextually it is explained in the summary, "If she has devoted herself to every good work," such as helping people in distress.

If we don't wash feet today, do we obey Jesus' spiritual command? Are we serving each other in spiritual humility? Are we confessing our sins and seeking spiritual cleansing? The literal practice of foot washing has fallen

away as a church ritual, except in rare cases. Have we lost the spiritual meaning as well?

While Jesus was seeking to celebrate the Passover one last time before suffering on the cross, He explained to the disciples that one of them was about to betray Him. Rather than focusing on the problem and sympathizing with Jesus, they began to argue among themselves about which was the greatest. They sought to secure special places in His kingdom. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them...but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves" (Luke 22:24 – 27).

We don't need to establish a program of physical foot washing today. We don't even have dusty feet. But that is not the point. Do I put the needs of others above my own (Phil 2:3 – 4)? Have I developed spiritual humility? Do I humbly serve others? Am I quick to confess my sins to receive familial forgiveness (1 John 1:7 – 2:2)? Let's not let the absence of the physical symbol keep us from practicing Jesus' spiritual lesson.



*Kenneth Alan Daughters*

Kenneth Alan Daughters  
President, Emmaus Bible College

<sup>1</sup>Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches practice it on Maundy Thursday as ceremonial recognition of servanthood among the higher clergy. It has been particularly associated with German pietistic and Anabaptist congregations such as the Church of the Brethren, and the Amish.

## Features/Departments

### Page 9: A Theology of Change

*The Bible teaches us that change is necessary. Yet we too often keep the things we should change, and change the things we should keep. President Ken Daughters develops a Biblical theology of change in light of our changing culture and needs.*

### Page 22: Change in Our Local Church

*Dave Brown traces the growth and expansion of a local church through new converts and merged churches bringing additional gift and new opportunities for service and worship. Change can be very good!*

### Page 26: The Challenge of a Changing Culture

*Some "evangelicals" read the times and cater to the changing culture with a changed message. Dr. Dixon points out this dangerous trend and shows how we can be on guard to defend the once delivered faith.*

### Page 36: Bidding the DaVinci Code Adieu

*The much heralded movie created little stir in the religious world, a novel end to a fictional novel. A final refutation to the fiction is presented by Mark Stevenson that will help you in your evangelistic conversations.*

### Page 39: Love or Die

*Change in the Church is best accomplished in an atmosphere of biblical love. Alex Strauch challenges us to a renewal of first love in this excerpt from his book "Leading with Love."*

Fellow Travelers . . . . .	2
Travel Guides . . . . .	4
To the Praise of His Glory . . . . .	6
A Word along the Way . . . . .	34
Dr. MacLeod Asks . . . . .	44
News From Emmaus . . . . .	48
On The Road . . . . .	51

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# Fellow Travelers

Dear Journey Magazine,

I have just received the spring edition of Journey magazine, 2006, and have eagerly read through its pages. I was especially interested in Lisa Beatty's article on singing out our praises to the Lord.

Recently I have become concerned about the lack of joy I see in many Brethren churches. We are very strong, generally, on Bible teaching, hold strong convictions on women's place in church, we strongly emphasize raising up men to preach and lead, but we are quite weak at simply expressing the joy of the Lord in our corporate worship. The Bible is so clear, as Lisa has clearly laid out, to lift up holy hands, clap, sing, shout, use all sorts of instruments, making a joyful noise unto the lord! Hallelujah brothers and sisters, may we not become the 'dirge' of the worldwide church, rather may we join our brothers and sisters around the world in their joy, love, thanksgiving, passionate praise and song to our glorious, almighty Father God.

I was also interested in the further emphasis on the 'art of discipleship' throughout the magazine. Discipleship is crucial to growing churches in any culture, but especially among people from Muslim cultures, as in the Turks and Kurds, who I work with here in England. So many people head out on short term mission trips, including many from Brethren churches, to preach and teach, but rarely to commit to long term discipleship. Now, short term missions is needed, and we thank God for those who embark on them, however, the lack of commitment to long term missions, to discipling for years on end, in order to see a church, and in the case of Islam,

probably only one church, be planted and grown to spiritual maturity, is a rare thing to see.

One of the most needy and indeed most open opportunities for discipleship among teens and young adults are among our minorities, often from a middle-Eastern background; and they are in our cities - London, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, New York, Seattle, Atlanta, the list goes on - and yet we have largely forgotten them. London is teeming with Kurdish youngsters who need direction, love, acceptance, freedom from boredom, cultural pressures, or political activism, who respond to people reaching out a hand of friendship. Such youngsters have made commitments of faith, when contacted by Christians, but never grew... Why? No one to disciple them. How is it, with the plethora of Bible schools, especially in the States, but indeed around the world, that we still do not have enough workers to disciple, evangelize and raise up mature workers and leaders among the nations?

But there is light - this issue of *Journey Magazine* may be an answer to help turn the tide, in order to answer such needs and calls for help coming from those working with the youth, both indigenous, and of the minorities, in our cities.

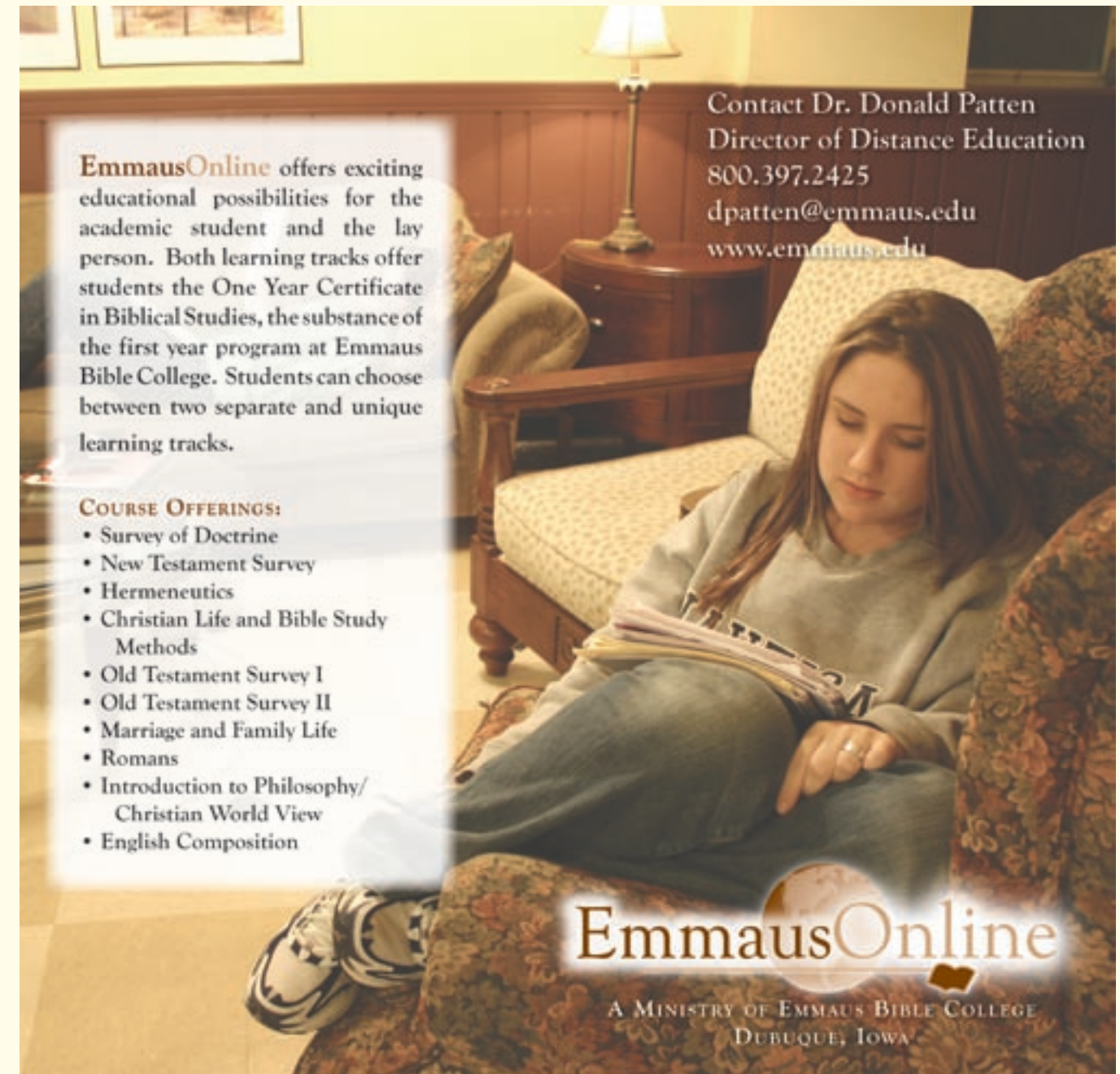
'Go out and make disciples out of all nations...'

With Christian love,

Beth Grove, [Elizabeth Helen Grove]  
Graduated from EBC in 1997,  
London, England.  
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## CONTACT THE EDITOR

Journey Magazine welcomes your letters and e-mails. Please send letters to: *Journey Magazine*, Emmaus Bible College, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001. Send e-mails to: [journey@emmaus.edu](mailto:journey@emmaus.edu). Please include your full name, town, state, Emmaus class year (if applicable) and daytime phone number. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and suitability. Opinions expressed in letters do not necessarily reflect those of Emmaus Bible College.



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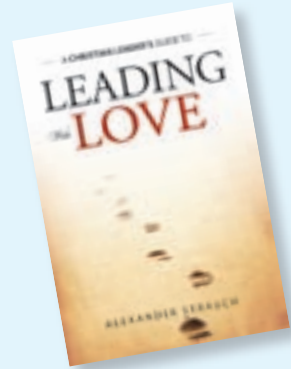
## JOURNAL TOPICS

### In the Current Issue of the *Emmaus Journal* (volume 14, number 2)

David J. MacLeod, *The Broken Wall: or From Alienation to Reconciliation: An Exposition of Ephesians 2:11-22*  
S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "My Little Children," *Persevere in Grace!: An Exposition of Galatians 4:8-20*  
Theron R. Young, "Where Can I Get Wisdom and How Much Is It Worth?": *An Exposition of Job 28*  
Roger R. Nicole, *Polemic Theology: How to Deal with Those Who Differ from Us*  
Larry Dixon, *Five By McLaren: A Narrative Review Article of Five Books by Brian McLaren*

The *Emmaus Journal* is available for only \$7 a year (\$10 Canada and overseas), and each issue contains thoughtful and scholarly articles on issues facing the church today. For subscription information, please write to **The Emmaus Journal**, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001, e-mail [info@emmaus.edu](mailto:info@emmaus.edu), or call (800) 397-2425.

# Travel Guides



## Leading with Love

Alex Strauch  
Lewis & Roth, 2006

*Leading with Love* is written for leaders and teachers at every level of leadership within the local church. Whether you are a Sunday school teacher, youthworker, women's or men's ministry leader, Bible study teacher, small group leader, administrator, music director, elder, deacon, pastor, or missionary, love is essential to you and your ministry. *Leading with Love* will:

- Significantly improve your relational skills
- Enhance your effectiveness in ministry
- Diminish senseless conflict and divisions
- Build a healthier church
- Promote evangelism



## Meetings That Work: A Guide to Effective Elders' Meetings

Alex Strauch  
Lewis & Roth, 2001

Many elders are tired of tedious, aimless, unproductive meetings. This guide is written first to explain the great importance of the meeting of the leadership to address prayerfully the needs of the fellowship. Secondly, there are valuable suggestions to help elders, deacons or others in committees to achieve effective, quality meetings.



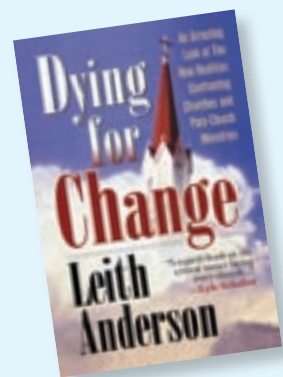
## Can We Do That?: 24 Innovative Practices That Will Change the Way You Do Church

Andy Stanley  
Howard, 2005

## Dying for Change

Leith Anderson  
Bethany House, 1998

Pastor Leith Anderson provides an arresting look at the new realities confronting churches and para-church ministries today. His challenge is for churches to come to understand the world we live in and to implement change accordingly.



## Evangelicalism Divided: A Record of Crucial Change in the Years 1950 to 2000

Iain H. Murray  
Banner of Truth, 2000

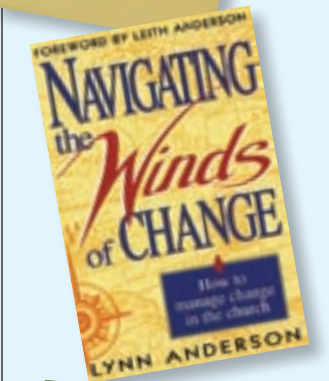
A penetrating review of fifty years of crucial change in evangelical attitudes and alignments, 1950-2000. Murray leads the reader back to the most basic question of all, "What is a Christian?"



## Navigating the Winds of Change

Lynn Anderson  
Howard, 1994

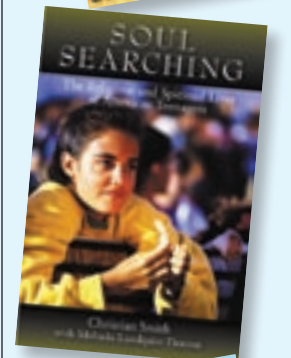
In this book, Anderson—a well-known author, minister and leader—presents a wealth of practical, effective strategies for managing change in the church. He is the creative force behind the annual "Church That Connects" seminar that has helped hundreds of church leaders manage positive change in their congregations; and now he gives these vital strategies directly to you.



## Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers

Christian Smith  
Oxford, 2005

In most discussions and analyses of American teenage life, one major topic is curiously overlooked—religion. Yet most American teens say that religious faith is important in their lives. What is going on in the religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers? What do they actually believe? What religious practices do they engage in? Do they expect to remain loyal to the faith of their parents? Or are they abandoning traditional religious institutions in search of a new, more "authentic" spirituality? Answering these and many other questions, *Soul Searching* tells the definitive story of the religious and spiritual lives of contemporary American teenagers.



## Postmodernism 101: A First Course for the Curious Christian

Heath White  
Brazos, 2006

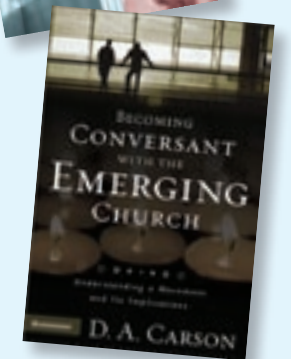
An accessible introduction to the ideas of postmodernism and postmodernism's relationship to Christianity.



## Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications

D.A. Carson  
Zondervan, 2005

A perceptive evaluation of the new "emerging church" movement showing how we must not only interact with a fast-changing culture but also have our vision and practice of ministry shaped by biblical theology with Scripture as the norm.



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([jrush@emmaus.edu](mailto:jrush@emmaus.edu) or 563-588-8000 ext. 1003)

To the Praise of His Glory

# We don't have a music program in our church

David Naylor

This wasn't exactly what I was expecting to hear as I sat reading responses from assemblies that have participated in the online church music survey by Emmaus Ministry Resources ([www.assemblymusic.org](http://www.assemblymusic.org)). When I read this response, I mistakenly assumed the assembly in question was very small, with no one to lead music or play an instrument. But as I read on, the respondent listed various instrumentalists in the congregation and indicated that the Sunday morning music in his assembly was satisfactory.

Why would an assembly say it doesn't have a music program/ministry (the terms are interchangeable for this article) when, in fact, it does? Sometimes things are what we don't think they are.

For example, the last time I sat down to pay bills at my dining room table, I realized that I was doing more than writing checks—I was managing an economy (albeit a small one). Our family generates income, allocates resources, pays for infrastructure, and even provides aid to small, developing nations (my kids' allowances!). So there it is—an actual, genuine economy,

functioning out of my dining room. So why do I still call it *bill-paying*? Wouldn't admitting that I was *managing the Naylor family economy* cause me to take it more seriously?

In much the same way, most of our local assemblies likely don't realize they have actual, genuine music ministries in place. If people gather together and sing and/or incorporate instruments into their corporate worship, that's a music ministry.

Such a ministry may be weak, with no one giving thought to the music until a few minutes before it's time to sing. It may be simple, with

a pianist in one service and a guitarist in another. It may be complicated and creative, with multimedia and multi-musicians. It may be strong, with a gifted planner researching themes and instrumentation. It may be tired—the same songs with the same accompaniment at the same tempo for fifty years. Strong or weak, inviting or off putting—it's a music ministry nonetheless!

Just like preaching and teaching and other ministries, music programs in the local church have a **r.a.r.e.** opportunity—to unify believers in worship, to encourage, to teach, and to evangelize. But because it is a ministry that comparatively few people feel comfortable leading or organizing, a church's music program often is overlooked and underdeveloped. Music in assemblies can be powerful and intentional, but it's a **r.a.r.e.** local church that takes the necessary steps to use God's gift of music fully.

## R.A.R.E.

is an acronym for four elements that a church music ministry needs:

### Respect for the power of music.

Music in a local church is more than four-hymns-before-the-message, even in its simplest forms. Try speaking the words to a hymn

aloud, without the music. The text remains true and understandable, but it is enriched by musical accompaniment. We comprehend words and phrases differently when we sing them. The rise and fall of a melody, the drive and tempo of a song reaches people deep inside. Music isn't mentioned in Acts 2:42, but it supports and enhances each practice that is. Satan hates the godly use of music—giving believers a preview of heaven as they sing of and to their Lord together.

### Attention and strategy.

While elders and teachers likely give much thought to what a congregation needs to hear from the pulpit, most church leaders don't discuss music as a tool. How can music be used to "grow" a congregation spiritually? How could a guitar or brass instrument enhance the Lord's Supper service? What songs are being overused? What new songs could underscore the messages planned for coming weeks, and how could we creatively teach them? What does an assembly need to revitalize its music? Just like any other ministry, a music program benefits from analysis and planning.

### Resources.

Imagine a Sunday School room without tables and chairs or an AWANA program with no money! Microphones, new hymnals, a subscription to a worship magazine, tools for finding music online, sending a musician to a conference, a set of drums, a part-time worship leader—all these things cost money, but they are worthy investments in people and the life of the local

church. Give your music ministry some money, and see what your musicians and techies can do with it.

### Evaluation.

Are people offended by changes in music...or are they simply not used to being stretched? How has the music improved since last year? With any other ministry or program, there will be adventures and missteps. The same is true with music. Don't worry; you can always adjust, drop the song that didn't work, bring back the song that did, and decide on the next step. Leaders should be able to talk honestly with the music team about what works and what doesn't, and the music ministry should have the freedom to make mistakes.

These are not new concepts for improving church ministries. So, just because music is personal, deep and mysterious, varied and intuitive, let's not miss opportunities to improve a "right-brained" ministry with some "left-brained" planning and decision-making.

Whether we want to admit it or not, our churches have music programs/ministries. They're ours to use, abuse, or ignore. How's yours doing? †



David Naylor is the Director of Music Ministry/Church Administration at College Heights Chapel in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

You'll find the online music survey at [www.assemblymusic.org](http://www.assemblymusic.org). Responses will be used to create resources for strengthening assembly music ministries.

# Change in the Local Church

Dave Glock  
Editor

Is the word *change* a friendly or unfriendly word, or is it neutral? If we would submit that God changes or that the truths of God's revelation change, we would view that as an unorthodox theological position. Equally, if we do not agree that we are changed from "glory unto glory," we would again deny the revelation of God. Change is welcome in the development of an individual through infancy, childhood, and adolescence as he or she moves toward adult maturity. Science, medicine, architecture, manufacturing, clothing styles, transportation, communication—yes, all spheres of life—are changing at a breathtaking rate. Most of this change we welcome and accept in daily activity. Change is good!

But change can be very bad! Change in society's morals as the Judeo/Christian ethic is rejected is bad. That change, transmitted to the Christian community, is having a devastating effect on the pursuit of holiness. Politics, business, entertainment, the sports world, lifestyles, family, and values in general are all changing. And that spiral of downward change seems to be out of control! "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come" (II Timothy 3:1).

The nature of change, whether good or bad, is determined by conformity to the revelation and purposes of God.

Change in church life is inevitable and always needed. But here the word change can become a threat. Practice, methods, and form change, but the principles and doctrines upon which these principles are based don't change!

This issue of *Journey* and the next will deal with the subject of change:

- A Biblical Theology of Change
- The Challenge of a Changing Culture
- The Challenge of Changing Leadership
- The Challenge of the Emergent Church

Please interact with the articles and opinions expressed in *Journey* as change takes place in our personal lives and collective church life.

## A Theology of Change



Ken Daughters  
President,  
Emmaus Bible College

*This article is an edited transcription of a message delivered at the 2006 "Iron Sharpens Iron" Conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.*

### Why Is Change So Problematic?

As it can for many of us, change makes me uncomfortable. I would prefer the comfort of a stable environment. Even small changes can make me nervous. For example, I'm a territorial kind of person and I don't want anyone else taking over my space. I enjoy sitting in the same spot around a table, or in

a meeting. Perhaps you're that way as well. Have you ever tried to sit in someone else's seat at the dinner table? It doesn't work. My kids are quick to point out if someone else sits in a seat that belongs to one of them. Have you tried sitting in someone else's customary seat at the Breaking of Bread? We are creatures of habit and change can make us nervous.

Churches are a lot like horses: they don't like to be startled and they don't like to be surprised. Neither do colleges. The president of my alma mater gave me some great advice when I was newly a college president. He had received the same advice from his predecessor. He said, "Being the president of a college is a lot like being thrown into a pit of snakes.

Don't make any sudden moves, but keep moving." The more I've thought about it, the more I realize the wisdom of that story. It applies to churches as well. In order to stay healthy, a church has to keep moving, but the change cannot take place too quickly because it will make people nervous. Change ought to be well thought out and carefully implemented.

### Why Is Change Necessary?

Unfortunately, even though it makes us nervous, change is actually necessary. As circumstances change, so must we. In fact, God has implemented a number of significant changes in His dealings with mankind. You might react in rebuttal remembering God doesn't change, suggesting we shouldn't either. Yes, it's true that God does not change. In His perfection He's the same yesterday, today and forever, but that is not the case with you and me. God has to change His dealings with man to accomplish His program. Take, for example, those people living on earth in the time of Noah. They had become so evil that God was sorry that He had made them. He announced He would destroy them all by a flood unless they repented. That's certainly a significant change!

The same principle may be true with the church, though to a lesser degree. The glory of Christ's church has not always been reflected accurately by us. If we are not careful, we could allow the church

to atrophy into a state of being irrelevant, antiquated, or stale. Our practices may seem comfortably entrenched, but that does not guarantee life and meaning.

My wife and I were in a new city and were looking for an assembly. We found one listed in the book and visited it. We weren't in the Breaking of Bread but a few minutes when she turned to me and said, "This isn't an assembly." I asked, "Why?" Well, it didn't have the look and feel of an assembly and she immediately sensed a level of discomfort. For example, the meeting didn't start in the manner to which we had become accustomed. When we walked into the room on time, they were already singing. There was a praise band up front and they had us singing worship music when we arrived and the prepared music continued for about fifteen minutes. Then the meeting became more recognizable again as open participation began. It was centered on the person of Christ, His work, His death, His resurrection, and the life that we have in Him, remembering Him through the bread and the cup. After we passed the elements the little kids were dismissed and the meeting continued with prayer. One by one, individuals would stand up and explain their requests, then sit down, and a brother would stand and pray on their behalf. Everything they were doing was biblical, but it made us uncomfortable. They had changed some of the expected elements of one of

the most important meetings of the church. Can they do that? Should it be allowed? They hadn't denied the virgin birth or adopted anything close to theological liberalism, but we still felt a sense of discomfort with the change. After a few weeks, however, we began to appreciate the changes and even look forward to their advantages. It made us realize how traditional we had become.

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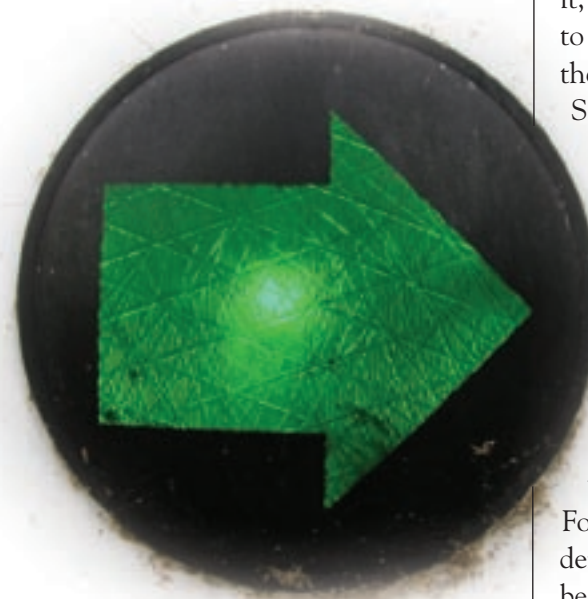
*We actually believe that every aspect of the way we do things now is a biblical norm, but that is not necessarily the case.*

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Must all of our meetings remain rigid, without any change? It seems like if we were to tamper with any one of our meetings—if we were to drop the Sunday evening gospel meeting, or if we were to move the Wednesday night prayer meeting to a different night or location—we would be dabbling in heresy. You see, we've allowed non-essentials to become essentials. We've permitted our manner of doing things to become normative. We've become locked into a method. Purely human patterns and forms have become absolute. We actually believe that every aspect of the way we do things now is a biblical norm, but that is not necessarily the case.

Though our church practices may be entrenched, the world

around us is not. The world and its needs are changing rapidly, and the church must be able to adapt to these changes. Have you noticed how differently people think now? I work with young people constantly. I used to understand them better than I do today. They think so differently from me. It seems as though a whole new



generation arises every five years. The church cannot close its eyes to contemporary culture. We must understand it, penetrate it, and, by God's grace, use contemporary culture as a bridge to reach people for Jesus Christ. Holding fast to New Testament principles, we must formulate a contemporary strategy based on current needs.

We must learn to move past our fear of change in the church. God Himself changes programs. He shuts programs down and He starts new ones. Take, for example,

what God did with the Sabbath. The Pharisees completely misunderstood its purpose, and over emphasized its importance in daily life. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. It was meant to teach them about relationship and intimacy with God, but they had abused it and written so many rules concerning it, that they allowed the Sabbath to inhibit devotional walk with the Lord. Jesus came to fulfill the Sabbath, and the rest that the Sabbath described is now found in Him. Do you remember in Matthew 11:28 - 30 when Jesus said, "Come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I'll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble at heart, and you'll find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light"? All that they had been looking for in the Sabbath was to be found in relationship with Jesus. The Sabbath as they knew it was superseded.

Another example of God shutting down one program to begin another is the New Covenant. Using the illustration of new wineskins, Jesus spoke of how relationship with Him cannot fit into the Pharisaical idea of the law. "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into

old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins" (Luke 5:36 - 38). Essentially, the lesson is that the old covenant is going to be shut down and the new covenant is so different that it requires entirely new wineskins.

Still another example of God shutting down a significant program to start another is found in the story of Peter's preparation for Gentile evangelism. God called on Peter to bring the gospel to Cornelius. While Peter was waiting hungrily for lunch, he fell into a trance and God opened up the sky to let down a great sheet with all kinds forbidden creatures. Though God commanded Peter to kill and eat, he couldn't. It was unholy and unclean to him. The Lord told Peter, "What God has cleansed no longer consider unholy" (Acts 10:15). God had to repeat it three times until it sunk in. God was preparing Peter to go into a Gentile home to say to Cornelius, "You know, God's not going to show partiality to Gentiles. You can receive salvation through Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit in the same manner as I have."

So if God shuts down programs and starts new ones, can we? We are not God and we don't design His programs. Yet God has established biblical models by which we can formulate patterns that we should follow in making

necessary changes within the freedom that He has allowed.

### Biblical Models For Change

An excellent beginning is the example of the leadership in Acts 6, where the elders felt

church was young and fragile and susceptible to a split. It was a practical problem that required spiritual sensitivity to solve. The twelve summoned the congregation of disciples and explained that they shouldn't handle this dispute personally or it would distract them from their more important tasks of focusing on the Word of God and prayer. They asked the congregation to select from among themselves seven men of good reputation who were full of the spirit of wisdom that could be put in charge of waiting on tables.

The key choice here was to delegate responsibility. This is something we too often fail to do because we view ourselves as more capable and retain too much responsibility. Why was the solution so easily accepted by all?

Because all of them were involved in the implementation of the solution. The twelve set down the criteria by which the seven would be chosen: spiritual, wise, and reputable. Those chosen all had Greek names. Since it was the Greek widows who were discriminated against, choosing spiritually sensitive Greeks to administrate the distribution solved the problem. The suggestion found favor, the Word of God kept spreading, the number of disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.

What can we learn from this? The most important lesson is that of shared responsibility. It involved both the leadership and the congregation. They spread out responsibility by delegating authority, yet they chose people who were highly qualified and well trusted and the problem was solved. We must learn the principles of biblical change from this example.

Another interesting biblical model for change is the dispute between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15. It is shocking to us that people as spiritual as Paul and Barnabas would have such a sharp disagreement. As plans began to develop for the second missionary journey, Paul suggested to Barnabas that they return to visit the churches they had planted on their first journey. Barnabas wanted to include John Mark again, even though he had only accompanied them for a portion of the first journey. He had decided to give up and go home when they came to a particularly dangerous section. Paul, on the other hand, considered his departure to be a desertion, and would not agree to include him a second time on such a difficult trip. Who was right? For our purposes it does not really matter. There are pros and cons on both sides. Was Paul right that John Mark wouldn't be able to handle it? Yes, it was the same journey over again, and history showed what he had been like on the previous one. Was Barnabas right to believe in John Mark? Yes, as time progressed we find that he

showed great promise and was worthy of investment. Well, there arose such a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas that they ended up separating from one another. At first glance the situation seems to be a failure to understand each other's views and acquiesce. However, from a decision-making point of view, we learn a lot about God's mercy. Rather than God's reputation being tarnished by continued fighting and the destruction of missionary endeavors, the result was that God raised up two missionary teams instead of one. Paul continued his plan to build a more pioneer-oriented team that included danger, and Barnabas set up a trip better suited to John Mark's abilities.

*Even when we disagree, there can be a creative alternative that works out for the best as long as we remain biblical and spiritual and follow the leading of God as He works with us. God can work through immature, imperfect people.*

The major lesson to learn is that God in His grace can work a creative alternative that continues His plan in spite of our human frailties. There was a real possibility here that Paul could have hated

Barnabas and black-balled John Mark. But such was not the case, in God's grace. Paul continues to speak well of the two, and later actually requests that John Mark be sent to him because of his usefulness. To the best of our knowledge, John Mark became an apprentice to the apostle Peter, and the author of the gospel account that bears his name. What do we learn from this? Even when we disagree, there can be a creative alternative that works out for the best as long as we remain biblical and spiritual and follow the leading of God as He works with us. God can work through immature, imperfect people.

A third model of biblical change is the Love Feast described in I Corinthians 11. In the same passage in which Paul gives instructions regarding the Lord's Supper, he chastised the Corinthians for their abuse of the so-called Love Feast. It was anything but a Love Feast. The wealthy arrived early with fine food, gorged themselves, and became drunk. The poor arrived later, probably because they couldn't get off work, and went hungry without food to eat. The selfishness of the rich was ruining their unity at the Lord's Supper. Divisions and factions were arising. Their manner of meeting was doing more harm than good. Surprisingly, Paul suggested shutting down the Love Feast. He told them it would be better for them to eat at home than to hurt each other in the way in which they were eating. Why

don't we practice the Love Feast today? It is likely because the church at Corinth handled it so poorly. This would teach us that some good activities improperly executed aren't worth doing at all. Sometimes a perfectly good ministry might need to be shut down because of the circumstances. On the other hand, most of us have completely separated eating from worship, which may be quite unfortunate. It might even be a spiritual act of worship if we were able to handle the Love Feast in true love.

*Some things we ought never to change. We should be willing to fight for them. We should be willing to go to the wall for them.*

### Biblical Models For Stability

There are examples in Scripture of programs being started, and others being shut down. There are even principles by which we can decide between the two. Just as there are examples of change, there are also examples of stability. Some things we ought never to change. We should be willing to fight for them. We should be willing to go to the wall for them. Take, for example, the other gospel that was taught to the Galatians. Paul wrote in Galatians 1 that the other gospel was no gospel at all,



and to adopt that view was to desert Christ Himself who had called them by grace. He told them that if anyone, be it an angel or an apostle, preached a gospel contrary to that which they had received, he should be accursed. What we learn from this is that the truth of the gospel is worth fighting for. A diluted gospel keeps people from trusting in Christ alone apart from any mixture of human works. An example of Paul practicing what he preached is found in the next chapter. The Apostle Paul publicly confronted the Apostle Peter for hypocrisy. It seems out of line to see one apostle chastise another publicly, but it shows how important it is to fight for the truth of the gospel. Peter knew he had the freedom to eat with the Gentiles and actually did so, until the Judaizers came. He then pretended to agree with the party of the circumcision, and led others to act hypocritically in rejecting the Gentiles, including Barnabas. Paul believed the truth of the gospel was at stake, and, because the nature of the offense had been public, Paul's confrontation was also public. When the issue is trivial, we can be charitable, but when the gospel is at stake, it's worth a fight.

Another example of stability is the decision of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. Some men came from Judea teaching that unless one was circumcised according to the custom of Moses, he couldn't be saved. The Church as a whole needed to make a unified

decision so as not to split. The steps they took form an excellent example for us. The church at Antioch sent qualified representatives to Jerusalem. Though the churches were independent and autonomous, they were also cooperative and interdependent, and they wanted a unified decision that would stand once and for all. The discussion that ensued developed into a controversy and debate that Peter allowed to grow to quite a furor before he made a proposal. Paul and Barnabas joined in with corroborating evidence. The people listened and then James made a judgment that served as a solution. The whole church watched and listened. Since the whole church agreed, they produced a letter to distribute among all the churches announcing their unified decision. They even described that their decision seemed good both to them and to the Holy Spirit, evidencing their guidance by God. This council forms an excellent example of how to solve disputes, especially in terms of including input from so many groups with great balance.

### What Should We Never Change?

These biblical examples lead us to make a list of things we would never change. H. Dale Burke in his book, *Less is More Leadership*, wrote, "The best change happens when you first decide what will never change. The majority of our churches in America has either plateaued or is dying for one of

two reasons. One, because they change what they should never change or two, because they refuse to change what they're free to change. The message and mission should never change yet our methods must flex in order to remain effective."<sup>1</sup> Observing change in the early church Gene Getz noticed, "What they said is consistent; the way they said it and how they went about evangelizing varies from situation to situation. They considered the directives as absolute, but their methods were *relative*—they merely served as means to accomplishing divine ends."<sup>2</sup>

So here's my proposed list of things that should never change. First, I propose that since the church doesn't belong to us, we have no right to change its mission. Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overpower it" (Matt. 16:18). The Church belongs to Christ. He is its Chief Shepherd. It's His mission. We need follow His mission. We need to fulfill His purpose for the Church.

The second thing I suggest we never change is the Great Commission. Matthew 28:18 - 20 is the commandment of what we are to do in this age. It is why He has left us as disciples on this earth. He said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth, go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Teaching them to observe

all that I've commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Out of this commission we have twin responsibilities: to make disciples, and to teach them to observe all that He commanded. Acts 1:8 continues the command by telling us to start where we are, spread out into the surrounding areas, and eventually reach the remote parts of the earth.

*One reason the first century church grew so rapidly across cultural lines was that Jesus did not give the disciples a formula for doing church. The mission, the message, and the values of the kingdom were crystal clear. The methods and the forms for doing church were left vague for good reason. A global movement with staying power through the generations would have to continuously adapt.*

I also suggest that we're not allowed to change the message, which is the gospel itself. It's taught to us in I Corinthians 15:3 - 5 that "Christ died for us according to the scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day and that He appeared." It continues in

passages such as Acts 17:30 - 31 where "God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent because He's fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness." Our response is summarized in Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household." This is the good news that we proclaim. We cannot change the message.

I suggest that we can't change our purpose. Why does the church exist in the world? One reason is evangelism. We saw in the Great Commission that we are to make disciples. Why does the church exist as a gathered community? It is for worship and for edification. First Corinthians 11:23 - 26 speaks to the centrality of worship, calling on us to "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." John 13:34 tells us that we are to love one another. Colossians 1:28 tells us that we're to "admonish every man, and teach every man with all wisdom so that we may present every man complete in Christ." Ephesians 4 tells us that the leadership was given to "equip the saints for the work of the service to the building up of the body of Christ." This is our purpose. We look outside for evangelism and look inside for worship and edification.

I suggest that we never change our New Testament principles of gathering. I would list under this category our church government structure. The scripture teaches us the autonomy of the local church, though with mutual interdepend-

ence and fellowship. I place in this category the plurality of elders and deacons and the priesthood of all believers. That's why we have participative worship. That's why we have no ordained clergy. I place in this category the multiplicity of gift. That's why we have body life and participative ministry. These things we do not change.

I also suggest we do not change our values. We see some practices in the New Testament that we value and would like to emphasize. We emphasize the unity of the church; hence we're independent, non-denominational, and gathered in the name of Christ alone. We stand for fellowship, not membership. We stand for the centrality of worship, the simplicity of gathering, no salaries, and no solicitation of funds. We understand that women in the church are to be silent and in submission. These are things we could place under the category of values that we need not change.

### What Ought We To Change?

At this point our choices become more difficult. What ought we to change? Dale Burke writes, "Scripture gives us function but not forms." One reason the first century church grew so rapidly across cultural lines was that Jesus did not give the disciples a formula for doing church. The mission, the message, and the values of the kingdom were crystal clear. The methods and the forms for doing church were left vague for good reason. A global movement with staying power through

the generations would have to continuously adapt. Today's culture is changing much faster than most of us are willing to change in order to keep up. But if we are to remain relevant, meeting the needs of people around us, the church has to have a change-friendly environment that welcomes innovation and creativity. Now you don't have to dismantle or discard everything. Yet, even our oldest and our best ministries need honest assessment, fresh vision, and creative thinking. We need to keep it flexible rather than fixed, always looking for ways to improve. The beloved prof, Howard Hendricks, said, "God never called us to teach the Bible, He called us to teach *people* the Bible, so study your Bible before you teach it, and make sure you study your *people*." In college, when I first met Carol (who is now my wife), we used to have lively discussions based on the differences in our majors. She was an inter-cultural studies major and I was a Bible major. I was learning how to express my theology with precision. I was concerned with the looseness of expression missionaries would use. I would argue that there was a more accurate way to express a concept and she would argue that, unless people could understand what was being said, no communication took place. Trying to contextualize theology is a constant challenge. I teach Bible stories to little kids at AWANA. One might

think I wouldn't be interested in trying to "put the cookies on the lower shelf," but I actually relish the challenge. It is stimulating to try to explain to little kids the truths of theology. I can't say to a child that sin has separated him from God without seeing a blank look on his face. I have to think of how to contextualize this expression and so I say to him, "The wrong things you've done make it impossible for God to be your friend." Now, I don't word it like that when I have the chance to express the concept more precisely to my college students. We need to consider how the ministries of the church should change to meet the changing needs of our people.

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*I suggest we are free to change our methods, our means, our strategies, our approach, our forms, and our patterns. Scary, isn't it?!*

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We shouldn't allow ourselves to become locked into forms and patterns. We shouldn't allow the means to the end to become the end itself.

So what ought we to change? My favorite passage on this subject is I Corinthians 9:20 - 23, in which Paul describes how he was willing to give up so much to work with different kinds of people. He

knew he was no longer obligated to the law, but when he was among Jews, he dressed, ate, and behaved like they did, removing barriers and seeking to win them for Christ. He wrote, "I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel." Another of my favorite passages is Acts 17 where Paul was at the Aeropagus in Athens and used a very creative approach such as, "I'd like to tell you about the God you are trying to worship whom you don't even know." It's one of the best examples of the contextualization of theology and evangelism. His methods adjusted to meet the demands of the situation. So what can we change? I suggest we are free to change our methods, our means, our strategies, our approach, our forms, and our patterns. Scary, isn't it?!

Take for example the common meetings of our assembly. How many of us still have a Sunday evening gospel meeting? What happened to it? At one time it worked well, but for many of us it doesn't work any more. Our culture has changed. We don't necessarily need to fret that. Yes, we need to evangelize. We each have a personal responsibility to be a witness. The church needs to provide training and a support structure to enhance personal evangelism. The church needs to corporately evangelize, but it is not locked into a Sunday evening

gospel service to do so. The goal is evangelism, but the means to that end are open. We are free to choose many different means to evangelize, and we would be wise to adjust our methods to fit the needs of the people we are trying to reach, just as we saw Paul do. We can be creative. Friendship evangelism seems to work very well within our culture. We could have our neighbors over for dinner. We are more likely to be successful around our dinner table in this culture than we are in many forms of gospel meetings. Another idea is to have an evangelistic Sunday. Most weeks our Sunday morning preaching might focus on the edification of believers, but there would be nothing wrong with planning a specific Sunday oriented toward inviting our neighbors to church. We may have had them to dinner a number of times and built up a fine friendship. We may have built a number of bridges with pre-evangelism. Now we need help. If we knew there was a specific meeting designed just for our neighbors, it would be much easier to invite them. The gospel could be presented in a winsome manner.

Many of our assemblies still have Wednesday night prayer meetings. We must be about prayer. Acts 2:42 tells us it's one of the major things we do corporately as a church. Other assemblies struggle with their midweek meeting. Does it have to take place

Wednesday night? Does it have to be at the chapel? At my assembly we are every bit as successful on Wednesday night as we are on Sunday morning in carrying out the ministries of the church. It could be because we're available. Since we live in a small town, commuting is not difficult. It's quite easy to gather the whole church together on Wednesday night. In other places it's not nearly as easy. The church must pray corporately, but it doesn't necessarily have to be on Wednesday evening. It could be on Sunday morning if we would like. We are free to be creative.

My favorite meeting is the Breaking of Bread. Do we have freedom here? I have read in some books intricate, detailed instructions trying to preserve a particular form for this meeting. I've read discussions regarding whether the same man is allowed to pray for both the bread and the cup. These kinds of discussion are meant to preserve a particular form, which is largely based on tradition. If we return to Scripture we realize that it's the Passover celebration that was transformed into the Lord's Supper. We aren't very careful to keep our form of meeting like a Passover Seder. What we ought to do is return to the central reason why Jesus insti-

tuted the remembrance. Purpose ought to determine form. What should we emphasize? We champion the priesthood of believers in the Breaking of Bread and we emphasize multiplicity of gift and participation. We

want to center the worship on Jesus Christ. He told us to remember Him until He comes, and to remember Him through the elements of the bread and of the cup. We actually have more freedom than we think in constructing

meeting.

We also have more freedom than we might realize regarding music. We learn from Colossians 3:16 that we are to teach and admonish one another. We are to sing with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. This implies a variety of music. Often people all around us are much more interested in music than we are. If we are to minister to them, we need to be creative and relevant in the kinds of music that we use. We have amazing freedom here.

As we continue to assess our various ministries, we may find areas where we excel and don't need to change. That's fine. Perhaps we do children's work well. What about our youth ministries? This area is often neglected. I've seen assemblies double in size because they emphasized youth

ministries. It is very important.

I am concerned that we do not emphasize adult evangelism enough. The early church targeted adults and won whole households. I grieve when I help lead a child to Christ and watch him return to a home that is cold toward the gospel. Perhaps we can adjust our evangelistic emphasis to include adults.

We used to conduct very successful Bible conferences, but they are not nearly as popular as they once were. Should we keep the old method, or adjust to our culture? I have participated in conferences that are built on the business seminar model. Participants register in advance and pay a fee to defray the costs. They receive handouts and even textbooks. The teaching is focused and in-depth. The material covered is not normally available in a local church setting.

These seminars have succeeded where the old fashioned Bible conferences could not. I suggest that we assess everything we do and ask ourselves whether we can do it better. We are free to adjust our methods, means, strategies, approaches, forms, and patterns. The reason the Lord left us so much freedom in method was to allow us to adjust to meet the needs of different people in different situations. We need to be students of culture in order to reach people who live in it.

We live in a society where everything is possible but nothing is certain, where truth is created by the individual, where opinion is preferred over truth, where experience is preferred over reason, where authority is not respected, where freedom of personal choice is paramount. People have a consumer orientation focused on instant gratification. They seek

the best deal by negotiation. They have a sense of entitlement. They seek entertainment, ease, and fun. They're self interested. They are adaptable and pragmatic. They are skeptical, cynical, and stressed out.<sup>3</sup> Yet, they can be reached! We need to explain God's expectations clearly and often. We need to live what we teach. We need to offer them a variety of learning options. They don't want to hear us lecture them. They are willing to discuss relevant topics with us. They want to learn through self discovery. Can we adjust? Can we adapt to meet them where they are? Would Paul have adapted? We shouldn't arrange the chairs of a classroom in rows and lecture people. We should teach them how to study the Bible for themselves, and help them discover truth for themselves. We need to show them real life application and meaning for the truths we seek to convey. We need to be active and creative in our methods. They want interpersonal involvement.

### How Should We Implement Change?

Since change is necessary but difficult, we must learn to work with people to help them adjust to new ideas. John Maxwell was right when he said, "People change when they hurt enough that they have to, when they learn enough that they want to, and when they receive enough that they are able to."<sup>4</sup> The more information and input we give them, the easier it will be to adjust.

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*"People change when they hurt enough that they have to, when they learn enough that they want to, and when they receive enough that they are able to." The more information and input we give them, the easier it will be to adjust.*

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If we are going to implement change in the church, we need to do it wisely. Larry Osborne has collected a number of good ideas he calls *Change Diplomacy*.<sup>5</sup> First, we must test the waters. Probably the worst thing we can do is make a plan and just announce it cold, in front of the whole church. Do what the government does, leak your idea. Send out a trial balloon. Say it's just an idea. Use a social setting in a non-threatening way to say, "What about this? What do you think?" See what people say. Listen and respond to people who are resisting the idea. You can actually change your idea and make it better as you let people tell you what's wrong with it. They'll certainly find flaws and weaknesses and defects, but you can improve your idea if you listen to them. It's also better to convince individuals before groups. If you force people to say "No" in a public meeting, and, "No," is our normal default response to any change,

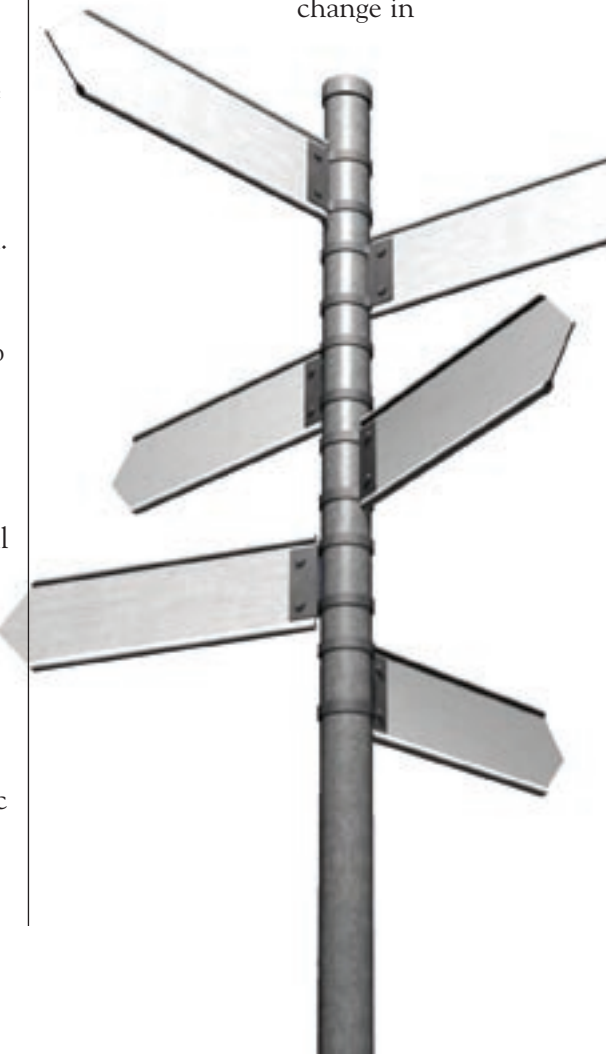
then that usually becomes the permanent decision. So, talk to people individually and work to help them understand the new idea. Some people won't adopt a new idea until they find out that other people have bought into it. When you reach a state where people are beginning to see the wisdom of your idea, lead boldly. You need a champion who will push the cause through. To be fair you must make the alternative views known, but you are also allowed to persuade those who still have some misunderstandings.

To summarize, we need not be as afraid of change as we are.

Even God implements change in



*The reason the Lord left us so much freedom in method was to allow us to adjust to meet the needs of different people in different situations. We need to be students of culture in order to reach people who live in it.*



persuade those who still have some misunderstandings.

To summarize, we need not be as afraid of change as we are. Even God implements change in programs. He shuts down some programs and begins new ones. If we follow the biblical examples of change, we can discover guidelines to help us adapt to new cultural and situational demands. We need to first decide what we will never change, and then decide what we are free to change. We need to implement change carefully, so as not to drive people away and cause dissension. We need to return to the central truths and not allow ourselves to get off track.

Howard Hendricks, that beloved prof, said, "When your memories are more exciting than

your dreams, you've begun to die."



If we're to fulfill the design of the church as it has been

entrusted to us, we need to look to the future and dream. †

*Ken Daughters is President of Emmaus Bible College, where he has taught for the last seventeen years. He travels often, speaking at assemblies, camps, and conferences. The father of five children, he is married to Carol, the daughter of Eugene and Loraine Train, missionaries to Bolivia for 54 years. Ken is originally from California, and is an avid water skier.*

<sup>1</sup><http://www.ctlibrary.com/33306>

<sup>2</sup>Gene A. Getz, *Sharpening the Focus of the Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1974, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup>Adapted from Mark L. Taylor, "Generation Next: Today's Postmodern Student-Meeting, Teaching, and Serving," A Collection of Papers on Self-Study and Institutional Improvement prepared for the Higher Learning Commission of NCA, April 8-12, 2005.

<sup>4</sup><http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2005/001/20.9.html>

<sup>5</sup><http://ctlibrary.com/13351>

*"When your memories are more exciting than your dreams, you've begun to die."*



# Emmaus Receives Matching Gift

Emmaus is grateful for the addition of Daniel H. Smith Hall in 2000. This building provided the dorm space we needed, as well as allowed us to expand into the Computer Information Systems program. Smith Hall is home to the Maintenance department, and houses our sister organizations, Believers Stewardship Services and ECS Ministries.

Smith Hall was constructed at a cost of \$4,000,000 in 2000. Today, the college carries a mortgage of \$1,800,000 for the building. We continue to rely on the Lord's provision to eliminate this debt.

Some very dear friends of the college have graciously decided to support Emmaus in a very practical way. We have received a matching gift offer of \$50,000. For every dollar we receive designated for Smith Hall, they will match with a dollar of their own, up to \$50,000. Will you help us receive full benefit of their generosity and the Lord's supply? Your gift for Smith Hall, received prior to May 1, 2007 will be doubled...up to the match amount.

Designated gifts to the *Daniel H. Smith Hall Fund* can be made online by credit card at [www.emmaus.edu](http://www.emmaus.edu) or mailed to: Emmaus Bible College, c/o Steve Witter, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA, 52001.





# Change in Our Local Church

David C. Brown

*While God does not change, we must change. We are, in fact, being changed into the Lord's image.*



God is an unchanging God (Malachi 3:6). Yet, we learn from those like the Sons of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32) who understood the times. We also learn from those like the apostle Paul who became all things to all men, that by all means he might win some (1 Corinthians 9:19–23). While God does not change, we must change. We are, in fact, being changed into the Lord's image (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Change is inevitable. It is not a question of whether we will change. Rather, it is a question of what kind of change, when we should change, and the benefits (or lack thereof) of any particular change.

In a local church, we become comfortable with the ways we have always done things. We enjoy the same people with whom we have always fellowshiped. We do the same things that we have always done. Some of that is good. Some of it, however, needs to be changed.

At Lombard Gospel Chapel, we have seen a variety of changes through the years. Whenever new people join a congregation, whether through conversion, birth, or transfer from another place, change will happen. There is a new dynamic to the group. New friendships form. New ideas are shared. We have seen a greater diversity of people within our con-

gregation. This includes those in different ethnic groups, those with different economic status, and those in different family situations (i.e. single-parent families). This has caused us to evaluate our programs to make sure that we are meeting the needs of those that God has entrusted to our care. Two years ago, we had most members of another fellowship merge with us. This resulted in great joy and excitement. It also saw all of us examining how we did things. Sharing how each fellowship followed specific practices showed that some ways were clearly better, some ways were clearly worse, and some ways were just different (but not necessarily better or worse).

We have gone from a time of using no musical instruments (although we still do that at times) to using a variety of musical instruments to help enhance our music in praise and worship to the Lord. We have gone from only traditional hymns to a combination of traditional and contemporary songs. We meet in a building constructed more than fifty years ago with no concern for issues of handicap-accessibility. We have had very small classrooms with no room for any kind of movement or active learning in Sunday School. Today we are pursuing a building project that will alleviate these problems and also expand and enhance our facilities. I might add that fifty

years ago, the leaders of our assembly built a gym that has continued to serve us well in many evangelistic efforts such as AWANA and a community basketball outreach. For many years, we functioned well with no full-time workers. Today, because of increased numbers and many needs in the lives of individuals, we have two full-time workers.

I grew up from childhood at Lombard Gospel Chapel. I can personally attest that many things have indeed changed. Some of our methods and means have changed. Some of our music has changed. Our message, though, has never changed. Trusting God—that message of salvation in Jesus Christ,

the one who loved us and gave himself for us—will never change!

Growth involves change. As we grow spiritually as individuals, we change. As we grow as a congregation—both spiritually and numerically—we change. I pity the church that never changes. Please remember the seven last words of the church, “We never tried it that way before”! †



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HYMN BOOKS  
BELIEVER'S  
LITTLE FLOCK  
HYMNS OF WORSHIP  
& REMEMBRANCE  
HYMNS OF TRUTH  
& PRAISE

FINANCIAL AGENCIES  
STEWARDS MINISTRIES  
STEWARDS FOUNDATION  
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP  
EMMAUS TRUST SERVICES/  
BELIEVERS STEWARDSHIP SERVICES  
CHRISTIAN WORKERS FELLOWSHIP

NAME  
HALL  
CHAPEL  
CHURCH  
FELLOWSHIP

SCHEDULES  
SUNDAY SCHOOL  
BREAKING OF BREAD  
GOSPEL MEETING  
MID-WEEK PRAYER

BREAKING OF BREAD  
FAMILY BIBLE HOUR  
GOSPEL/MINISTRY  
MID-WEEK PRAYER

BREAKING OF BREAD  
FAMILY BIBLE HOUR  
MID-WEEK CARE GROUPS

DRESS  
SUNDAY GO-TO-MEETING  
BUSINESS  
CASUAL  
SPORT  
GRUNGE

CONFERENCES  
REGIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCES  
LABOR DAY CONFERENCES  
MISSIONARY CONFERENCES  
THANKSGIVING CONFERENCES  
DECADE OF PROMISE  
RISE UP AND BUILD  
SKYLAND BIBLE CONFERENCE  
IRON SHARPENS IRON  
ETC.

# The Path of Change in the Local Church

BREAKING OF BREAD  
FAMILY BIBLE HOUR  
MID-WEEK PRAYER

BREAKING OF  
BREAD  
MINISTRY  
PRAYER

WORKERS  
ITINERANT PREACHERS  
RESIDENT WORKERS  
"ON FAITH"/SALARIED  
FULL-TIME WORKERS  
FULL-TIME STAFF

SCHOOLS  
EMMAUS BIBLE SCHOOL/COLLEGE  
CULVER CITY BIBLE SCHOOL  
DISCIPLESHIP INTERN TRAINING PROGRAM  
REGENT COLLEGE  
MOUNT CARMEL  
KAWARTHA LAKES BIBLE SCHOOL/COLLEGE  
EMMAUS CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL/  
ECS MINISTRIES  
AUGUSTA CENTER FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES

MUSIC  
ACCAPELLA  
PIANO/ORGAN  
GUITAR  
WORSHIP TEAM  
PRAISE BAND  
AUDIO/VISUAL EFFECTS

HEAD COVERINGS  
HEAD COVERINGS EXPECTED  
HEAD COVERINGS OPTIONAL  
SELECTIVE USE  
NO HEAD COVERINGS

PUBLISHERS  
GOSPEL FOLIO PRESS  
LOIZEAUX BROTHERS PUBLISHERS  
BIBLE DEPOT  
BIBLE TRUTH PUBLISHERS  
CHRISTIAN MISSIONS PRESS  
EMMAUS COLLEGE PRESS

## What changes have you observed?

THEOLOGY  
DISPENSATIONAL  
AMILLENIAL

GOVERNMENT  
MEN'S MEETING  
UNRECOGNIZED ELDERS  
RECOGNIZED ELDERS  
DEACONS  
DEACONESSES

PERIODICALS  
LETTERS OF INTEREST/  
INTEREST MAGAZINE  
LIGHT & LIBERTY  
HELP & FOOD  
COUNSEL  
ASSEMBLY ANNALS  
UPLOOK  
VOICES FROM THE VINEYARD  
FIELDS/MISSIONS  
MILK & HONEY  
JOURNEY MAGAZINE

MISSIONS AGENCIES  
CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN MANY LANDS  
LITERATURE CRUSADES/  
INTERNATIONAL TEAMS  
MISSIONARY SERVICE COMMITTEE  
MISSIONARY STUDY CLASS

Dr. Larry Dixon  
edited by Dr. David J. MacLeod

# The Challenge of a Changing Culture

(ACTS 17:16–34)

Editor's Note: This article is an edited transcription of a message delivered by Larry Dixon at the 2006 "Iron Sharpens Iron" Conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.

## Defining Our Terms

"I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed" (Malachi 3:6).

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

God doesn't change because He's God and He's perfect. We must change because we are neither!

God has no needs. God has no imperfections. We have plenty of both. The Apostle John says, "This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5). We, on the other hand, have an abundant supply of darkness. As we think about this subject, we first need to define change.

## A Definition of Change

When defining change, the dictionary offers a variety of nuances in its definition: (1) to become different, (2) to pass from one state to another, (3) to alter, vary, modify, (4) a welcome variance from a routine or pattern. People, as part of the created order, change. God does not: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17).

**People, as part of the created order, change. God does not: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17).**

## A Definition of Culture

Again the dictionary supplies us with a variety of nuances for the word *culture*. For example, culture may be defined as the arts collectively (art, music, literature, and related intellectual activities). In this sense one might say, "Culture is necessary for a healthy society." Second, culture may be defined as knowledge and sophistication (enlightenment and sophistication acquired through education and exposure to the arts). In this sense we may say, "They are people of culture." Third, culture may be understood as shared beliefs and values of a group (the beliefs, customs, practices, and social behavior of a particular nation or people). We speak, for example, of "Southeast Asian culture." Finally, culture may be defined as shared attitudes (a particular set of attitudes that characterizes a group of people). A corporate executive might say, "This company tries hard to avoid a blame culture."

## An Outline of My Concerns

### How Should the Believer Relate to Culture?

H. Richard Niebuhr called the subject of his book *Christ and Culture*, "the double wrestle of the church with its Lord and with the cultural society with which it lives in symbiosis." In this work, Niebuhr describes various understandings of Christ "against," "of," and "above" culture, as well as Christ "transforming" culture, and Christ in "paradoxical" relation to it.

### Christ Against Culture

Niebuhr's first model, "Christ against culture," focuses on the opposition of the sacred to the profane. Ultimately, this approach leads to an other-worldly Christianity which can have minimal-if-any-impact on the world.

### The Christ of Culture

According to Niebuhr's second model, the sacred is discovered in culture in the spiritual teachings which bring man into community. The danger of this viewpoint, of course, is that belief will merge with society, and the sacred will be, eventually, completely lost.

### Christ Above Culture

This third approach compartmentalizes the sacred and the profane. Christ is for church and bed-time prayers; culture is the realm of business. Spiritually informed morals guide cultural behavior. The danger here is that this approach de-vitalizes the profane and disempowers the sacred.

**Christ in Paradox with Culture**

A fourth perspective says that man is sinful and grounded in culture. He cannot escape the profane—this is part of his nature. Christ, however, calls man into the sacred. This is the paradox—called to the sacred, yet part of the profane. The only resolution to the paradox is seen in God’s redeeming grace.

**Christ the Transformer of Culture**

Niebuhr’s final approach presents the permeation of all life by the immanent presence of divinity. The believer, then, is to manifest the Divine within culture, leading to spiritual and practical, political and social action. Niebuhr concluded that there is no one true Christian approach.

**We have become culturally illiterate by condemning all art and literature and media which is not directly “Christian.”**

**How Have We Christians Reacted to Culture?**

What might be said about how we Christians have reacted to culture? We have sometimes taken the “against” model and seen Christ as opposed to culture. Postmodernism seems to emphasize the “of” model, merging the sacred and the profane. If we hold to the “above”

model, we may approve only of “spiritual” activities, looking down on the world God has given us. While there are many “paradoxes,” we should all want Christ to “transform” our culture, our lives, and our churches.

**We Have Often Failed**

We Christians are often guilty of a number of charges when it comes to our relationship to culture. We have not engaged culture. We have isolated ourselves. We have not sought to infiltrate our culture; we’ve sought to dominate it. We’ve not tried to understand other worldviews; we’ve simply preached against them. We have not looked for contact points with other philosophies; we’ve simply proclaimed the Gospel. We have become culturally illiterate by condemning all art and literature and media which is not directly “Christian.”

**The Church as Salt and Light**

But doesn’t the Lord Jesus say something about the Church being salt and light in the world? “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden” (Matthew 5:13-14).

Salt was such an important symbol in the early church that when someone was baptized, a pinch of salt was placed on the new believer’s tongue. Purified in

Christ, we are called to be a purifying agent in the world. If there’s rottenness in the world, the blame should be placed where it belongs; not on the world that’s rotting, but on the church which isn’t salting it enough to stop it from going bad. Light illumines the darkness. If there’s darkness, the blame should be attached where it belongs: not to the world that is dark, but to the church which is failing to provide the light.

Robert Louis Stevenson, who was very ill as a child, recorded a childhood incident in his diary. He was seated by a window at nightfall, watching a lamplighter light the street lights below. His nurse came into the room and asked him what he was doing. Young Robert answered, “I’m watching a man make holes in the darkness.”

**Light illumines the darkness. If there’s darkness, the blame should be attached where it belongs: not to the world that is dark, but to the church which is failing to provide the light.**

**We need to be voracious readers of all kinds of stuff because we never know how God might use what we’ve been reading to establish a contact point with a contemporary intellectual loiterer.**

**Guidance from Acts 17:16-34 On Engaging Our Present Culture**

In Acts 17:16-34, Luke narrates an incident that offers practical guidance to those who wish to engage our present culture with the claims of Christ.

**An Objection to the Use of Acts 17**

There are those who deny that this passage has anything practical to offer to those seeking to evangelize their culture. They object, “Paul was unsuccessful in his use of reason and discarded the approach.” They argue that Paul was unsuccessful in his attempt to reach the thinkers on Mars Hill, discarding the method and later telling the Corinthians that he wanted to “know Jesus and Him only” (1 Cor. 2:2).

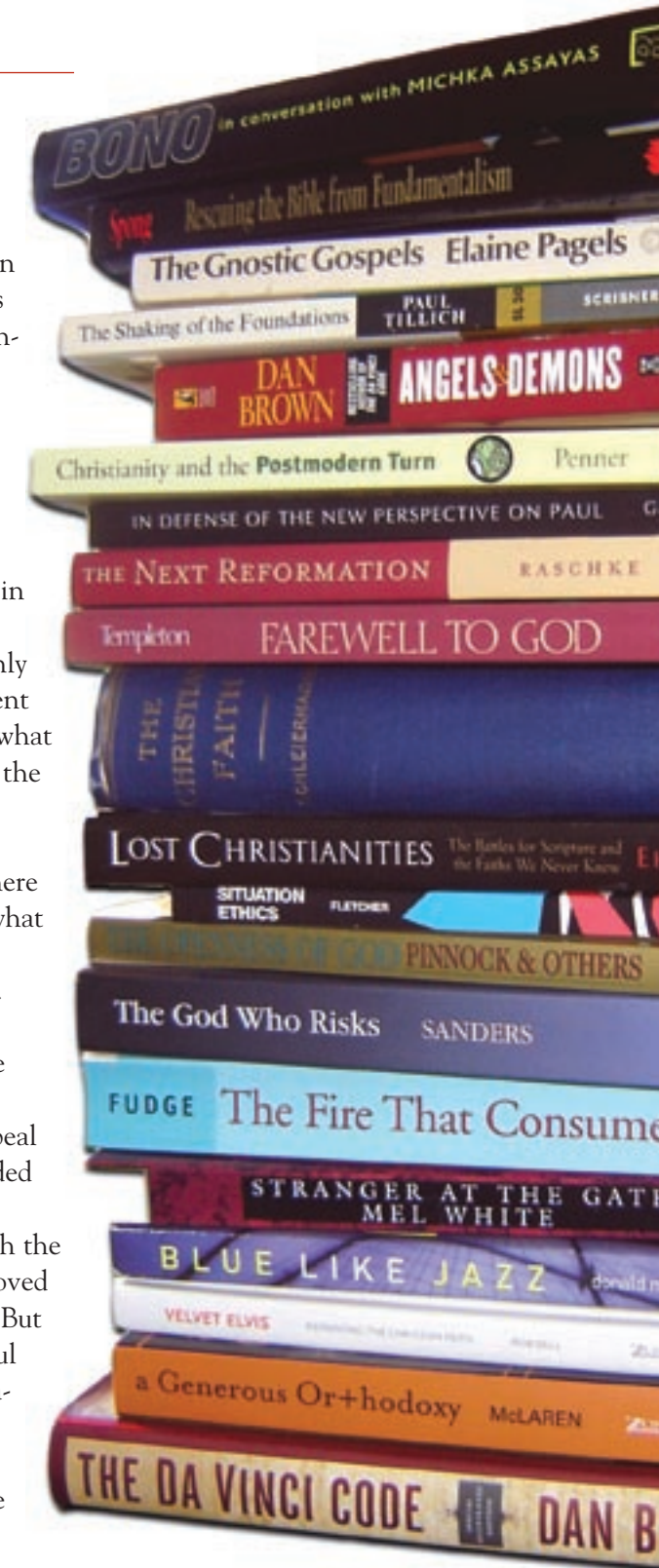
**The Weaknesses of the Objection**

As Dr. Norman Geisler notes, however, this interpretation is based on a serious misunderstanding of the text “The Need for Defending the Faith.” For one thing, Paul did have results on Mars Hill. Some people were saved, including a philosopher. The text says clearly, “A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of Areopagus,

also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others” (Acts 17:34).

Furthermore, nowhere in either Acts or I Corinthians does Paul indicate any repentance or even regret over what he did on Mars Hill. The suggestion that he had second thoughts is reading into the text what simply is not there.

Third, Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 2:2 about preaching Jesus and Jesus only is not a change in the content of Paul’s preaching. This is what he did everywhere. Even to the philosophers “he preached Jesus and the resurrection” (Acts 17:18 cf. v. 31). So there was nothing unique about what he preached; the difference was simply in how he did it. Paul tailored his starting point to where the audience was. With the heathen at Lystra he began with an appeal to nature (Acts 14) and ended by preaching Jesus to them. With the Jews he began with the Old Testament and then moved on to Christ (Acts 17:2-3). But with the Greek thinkers Paul began with creation and reasoned to a Creator. From there he moved on to His Son Jesus who died and rose again (Acts 17:24-31).







**Guidelines from Acts 17 on Relating to Our Culture**

**We start with the heart (v. 16)**

Paul was “greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.” I often tell my

daughter that a broken heart is a healthy heart—that is, a heart broken by the things that break God’s heart. Like Paul, we should be greatly distressed about the contemporary idolatry that we see. Are we cold to the fate of the lost? Biblical commentator William Barclay says, “We must remember that indifference...is a sin, and the worst of all sins, for indifference kills. Indifference does not burn a religion to death; it freezes it to death. It does not behead it; it slowly suffocates the

life out of it” (*The Gospel of Matthew*). Do lost people even matter to me? If not, my heart needs to be changed! There’s always room for repentance. Lord, make my heart like your heart.

**We let it get to the head (vv. 17-18)**

“So he reasoned in the synagogue and in the marketplace....” Do I care enough to engage my mind? Chuck Colson writes, “The battle is raging today all around, but many are perishing because we Christians have failed to engage the enemy at the point of attack. We not only flinch; for the most part we are not even looking in the right direction.” (*Who Speaks for God?*). Paul could preach, lecture, and debate in any setting. He was comfortable on any turf; he didn’t need a “home-court advantage.”

And he could speak to various kinds of people. In our passage he spoke of spiritual things to five different groups! First, we are told he would engage with the Jews, those with whom he was most familiar and with whom he shared his respect for the Old Testament Scriptures. He also engaged with the God-fearing Greeks, the Jewish proselytes who had adopted Judaism. We’re told, furthermore, that he engaged with the intellectual loiterers, the people who hung around to talk about the latest ideas.

I understand that the “7-Eleven” convenience stores had a real problem a few years ago. Teenagers were hanging around the stores, not buying anything,

just hanging out. The 7-Eleven executives decided to do something about it, so they installed loudspeakers inside and especially outside their stores and piped in classical music! The teens dispersed. But their solution produced another problem. Now middle-aged adults were hanging out at the stores to listen to the classical music! But at least they had money! Today, as in ancient Athens, there are people who just like to hang out. Can you engage the intellectual loiterers of the day? It’s one of the reasons I believe Christians need to be widely read. We need to be voracious readers of all kinds of stuff because we never know how God might use what we’ve been reading to establish a contact point with a contemporary intellectual loiterer.

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**Do lost people even matter to me? If not, my heart needs to be changed!**

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We are also told that Paul was able to engage with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. The Epicureans were named after their founder, Epicurus, who lived around 300 BC. They believed that the main reason for studying philosophy was to make a happy life for oneself. Sadness, they believed, was caused by not getting what you want. They said the best way to be happy was to not

want anything. Don’t make close friends or fall in love. The less you want, the happier you will be. The Epicureans also taught people that when they died, their souls would die with their bodies because both were made of atoms that would be broken up and made into other things when they died. Therefore people should not be afraid of dying or worry about what might happen to them after they died, because the gods did not interfere with people’s lives. Things happened because of natural scientific causes and had nothing to do with the gods. For many today, an Epicurean is someone who is devoted to pleasures and luxury, especially food.

Paul could talk to the Epicurean philosophers. He could also talk to the Stoics. The Stoics were a group of philosophers who taught their ideas in the Hellenistic period. Stoicism was founded by Zeno, who lived from 335-263 B.C.. Zeno lived in Athens, which was a great center of learning. He lectured outside on the porch of a public building. The Greek word for porch is stoa, so people called his students Stoics. We need to rediscover the porch, don’t you think? In American culture today we Christians need to become good Stoics—that is, Stoics in the sense that we are those who invite neighbors over to sit on our porches—“people who hang out on the porch.” Zeno thought inner peace and happiness could only be achieved by accepting the ups and downs of life as unalterable destiny. They emphasized emotional indifference, especially patience

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**‘For me personally, from my limited perspective, I think it would appear to me, if I’m not mistaken about this, that there’s one primary Savior in the Bible, at least according to my faith tradition, within my circle of meaning, assuming a pre-modern metanarrative in a faith-based discourse, as we tend to do, I think.’**

and endurance in the face of adversity. Today, a Stoic is someone who is marked by a calm, passionless mastery of all emotions, independent of all circumstances. Paul could talk to the Stoic philosophers of the day. If we want to engage our changing culture, we will need to be prepared to speak to a wide variety of individuals and philosophies.

**We need to toughen our skins (v. 18)**

Overhearing Paul, some of the philosophers remarked, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" The word translated babbler literally means, "seed-picker." What they meant by this was that they thought Paul was grabbing philosophies from all over the place. When evangelizing, we must not be surprised by criticism!

**We must change our attitudes (vv. 19-34)**

We must not be afraid to be thought of as "weird" (v. 20). The philosophers thought Paul was weird. They accused him of having "strange ideas." To discuss things further they took Paul to the Areopagus. The Areopagus was the council of elders of the city, like the Roman Senate. Like the Senate, its membership was derived from those who had held high public office. It was at that location that the Apostle Paul delivered his famous "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" speech, after seeing an altar "to the Unknown God" (v. 23). In any case, Paul was brought before the Aeropagus by the people to whom he was witnessing, and he

was unconcerned that they thought he was weird.

**We should not hesitate to compliment (v.22)**

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious." I wouldn't have started that way, would you? Paul began his speech with a compliment! Writing in *Reader's Digest*, Phyllis Theroux said, "One of the commodities in life that most people can't get enough of is compliments. The ego is never so intact that one can't find a hole in which to plug a little praise. But compliments, by their nature, are highly biodegradable and tend to dissolve hours or days after we first receive them—which is why we can always use another."

Why do we feel that we always have to start our conversations with lost people with judgment? Do we feel that complimenting them—on anything—would compromise the Gospel? What if you began with a compliment? "John, I just really appreciate what a good neighbor you are!" "Betty, your kids are so polite! What's your secret?" "Tom, you really take your church involvement seriously, don't you?" What if we Christians moved from our modern "culture of arrogance" to a "culture of compliment"? Unfortunately, we Christians aren't known for our compliments. We are known for our religiosity!

I'm reminded of the story of the new pastor who said, "As a new minister, I was asked by a funeral director to hold a grave-

side service for a homeless man, with no family or friends, who had died while traveling through the area. The funeral was to be held at a cemetery way back in the country, and this man would be the first to be laid to rest there. As I was not familiar with the backwoods area, I became lost; and being a typical man did not stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late. I saw the backhoe and the crew, who was eating lunch, but the hearse was nowhere in sight. I apologized to the workers for my tardiness, and stepped to the side of the open grave, where I saw the vault lid already in place. I assured the workers I would not hold them up for long, but this was the proper thing to do. The workers gathered around, still eating their lunch. I poured out my heart and soul. As I preached the workers began to say 'Amen,' 'Praise the Lord,' and 'Glory!' I preached, and I preached, like I'd never preached before: from Genesis all the way to Revelation. I closed the lengthy service with a prayer and walked to my car. I felt I had done my duty for the homeless man and that the crew would leave with a renewed sense of purpose and dedication. As I was opening the door and taking off my coat, I overheard one of the workers saying to another, 'I ain't never seen anything like that before and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years.'"

**We must take the time to become culturally educated (v. 23)**

Paul was not a tourist; he was a student. He took time to look around at all the idols. I'm afraid

that if we'd been in Paul's situation we would have said, "I'm getting out of here." We wouldn't have gotten close to the idols—or the idolaters. Paul, on the other hand, educated himself culturally to find contact points.

**We must have courage because we share the truth (vv. 24-26)**

We share the truth about about the true God. In *The World According to God*, Greg Johnson writes: "Today it's not unthinkable that an Evangelical scholar might say something like this: 'For me personally, from my limited perspective, I think it would appear to me, if I'm not mistaken about this, that there's one primary Savior in the Bible, at least according to my faith tradition, within my circle of meaning, assuming a pre-modern metanarrative in a faith-based discourse, as we tend to do, I think.'" Johnson responds: "Weasel! There's a difference between being aware of your limitations and being a coward. We used to say, 'Jesus is the only Savior.' It's a clear, concise statement, powerful in its simplicity. Besides, God says so [Acts 4:12]!"

**We use truth wherever we find it (vv. 27-29)**

In verse 28 Paul cites the Greek poet Epimenides to bolster his point, "For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'" Epimenides of Knossos (Crete) was a semi-mythical, 6th-century BC Greek seer and philosopher-poet, who is said to have fallen asleep for fifty-seven years in a Cretan cave sacred

to Zeus, after which he reportedly awoke with the gift of prophecy. Paul used pagan literature to connect with his audience and advance the cause of the Gospel! The Old Testament Scriptures were Paul's foundation, yet he knew more than just the Old Testament. He was familiar with the kinds of books his listeners were reading.

Paul Hazleton, in his book, *On Proving God*, writes, "A faith in God that does not want to be questioned and shrinks from being examined by outsiders is a faith that does not wish to be shared. It draws a circle close and tight around itself. Its creeds, rituals and teachings become protective devices against the world's intruding curiosity. Thus it proves that it is something less than faith—it is pride, defensiveness, fear of being found out by the truth."

**We issue the challenge to repent (vv. 30-31)**

Paul did not hesitate to command his audience to repent. "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent."

**We leave the results up to the Lord (vv. 32-34)**

Luke records the outcome, "So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them."

In our changing culture, we Christians should have the heart of God in reaching out to the lost.

Paul's example reminds us that such will not be easy, but our efforts deserve our best commitment, for we long to hear from our Savior, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

**SUMMARY**

How, then, are we to relate to our present culture?

1. We start with the heart (v.16).
2. We let it get to the head (vv. 17-18).
3. We toughen our skin (v.18).
4. We change our attitude (vv. 19-34).
5. We're not afraid to be thought weird (v. 20).
6. We don't hesitate to compliment (v. 22).
7. We take the time to become culturally educated (v. 23).
8. We share the truth about the true God (vv. 24-26).
9. We use the truth wherever we find it (vv. 27-29).
10. We issue the challenge to repent (vv. 30-31).
11. We leave the results up to the Lord (vv. 32-34). †



Larry Dixon, professor of theology and church history at Columbia Biblical Seminary and school of Missions, is a 1971 graduate of Emmaus. Larry has

written five books: *The Other Side of the Good News* (2003), *DocDEVOS* (2002), *Heaven: Thinking Now About Forever* (2002), *DocTALK* (2002), and *DocWALK* (2005). He and his wife Linda served with International Teams in Germany. He enjoys playing tennis and table tennis.

# Loving Care for Our Aging Parents

Chris Lange

On June 25, 2006, Edith Andrews went to be with her Savior. At 85, Edith had lived a long and loved-filled life with her Lord and her family. My bride's mother was a wonderful mentor to her children as well as to her friends, all of whom respected her and remembered her as a humble and giving person who cared deeply about serving others and living a Christ-centered life. She is now very much missed by all.

The death of a loved one, especially a parent, brings about much change in the life of a believer. Both of us now have lost both parents, and the reality of the loss can be disorienting and tragic for adults as well as children. The Bible tells us "we do not grieve as do the rest who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4: 13). This is sure comfort for the future, but it does not always equip us for the reality of the impact in our families and in ourselves. Death can bring change that one can't prepare for and can't escape when the Lord calls one of His own home.

Our family had the privilege of caring for Mom for several years while she labored under the influence of a long-term illness. Her assisted living home was a special place of care for her throughout that time; to be sure, we were all very thankful that she was able to live in such warm and caring sur-

roundings. But assisted living doesn't mean that families are not involved. Mom's illness required much attention to her medications which had to be administered promptly and regularly, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The staff at her home was very professional in assisting her, and we rested in that knowledge. And, when we brought her to our home for weekends, we were required to stay on schedule as well. It was not until about a month and a half before she died that, after an emergency surgery, she would come to stay with us in our home. Then the family had to be attentive to all her needs all around the clock.

## Family Commitment Requires Change

Such care for the elderly is often difficult, more than challenging, and more often than not emotionally exhausting. I would suggest that there are several perspectives to consider when going through times like these with family members.

## Adjusted Attitudes

The first is that our attitudes need to be right. Caring for the sick and aged is perhaps one of the most demanding of responsibilities. People often tend to react negatively when confronted with the reality of intense home care for parents or other relatives. Older folks may

think randomly and deal with memories and past events in unusual ways. They may become irritable and disconnected. They may also want to resume in ludicrous ways the remembered patterns of their lives and insist that they are able to do so. Some lose memory of who we are and don't understand what we are doing to help. Caregivers may feel that they have don't have the strength or the know-how to help, and may feel overburdened, overwhelmed, and incapable of being primary caregivers. What we learned as a family is that God had given us the privilege of caring for Mom—the tender and watchful responsibility of meeting her needs as we trusted Him. This is as it should be. Families are intended to be there for such times. Certainly, there are occasions when nursing home care is both necessary and wise, especially when life circumstances forbid the intense care that the elderly need. Hospice is a service provided by loving people who greatly help manage a person's critical needs. Nevertheless, families are meant to be places of hope, trust, and self-sacrificial love where ill parents feel respected, loved, included, and definitely not burdensome. Our attitudes toward this kind of care, when rightly held, can make very difficult and emotionally trying circumstances like these become much more bearable and,

indeed, blessings from God's hand as He provides for our needs as well.

## Adjusted Schedules

In addition to this, our schedules must adjust for such care to take place. The truth is, as much as we don't want to admit it, our schedules are more ingrown and harried than we want to admit. For some of us, the slightest deviation from a "normal" schedule is catastrophic and sends us into a tailspin of anger and frustration. The terminally ill and aged don't fit into these schedules. Our jobs and our lifestyles so often dictate how life is for us; and when we must stop in our tracks and cater to someone's deep needs, we can be irked because "we can't get done what we need to get done." Well, when such family responsibilities do arise, that does happen. Jobs have to be altered as much as possible; vacations come to an end; "our plans" must change, regardless of how long we have planned them. The tendency is to think that we are the only ones on the end of the diving board, that no one else fully understands the stress and tension we are experiencing. Not true. The Lord has His own way of bringing the right help at the right time: caregivers with whom our sick loved ones feel most comfortable when personal needs are involved; true empathy from those who have been there before; and the commitment of the local church body which responds lovingly with so many helps that enable us to concentrate on more pressing matters. Our schedules often do change radically when long-term care is inevitable, but the changes help us to focus on what is most important, what must be done right, and what matters most to the Lord.

## Adjusted Priorities

Finally, our priorities must change so that we may be reoriented to primary care giving concerns. Not only do we as adults want the best care for our parents and loved ones, but we also should want family unity and responsibility to continue in the process. What children see in their own parents, as their parents care for their parents, is critical to the continuity of biblical heritage in families. The priority of self-sacrificial love and commitment to older family members is taught through observation, and children and young adults must be part of the process, even if the little ones don't quite understand all of what is happening. Some of the very best quality time spent with "Miss Edie"—with students from Emmaus, friends from assisted living, folks from the local body, or with our own children and their cousins—took place in those precious few days when Grandma Edie was able to kiss, hug, and share her remaining days with her true as well as spiritual grandchildren. Clearly, we must make priorities to allow this to happen whenever possible, teaching our children not to be afraid of illness but to embrace and listen to the ones who have always been part of their lives. We may have reason to like our jobs and to enjoy our busy and full schedules, but we are called to love our families and to establish whatever priorities necessary to adapt to the extended illness of our nearest and dearest.

Change in anyone's life doesn't



*Death can bring change that one can't prepare for and can't escape when the Lord calls one of His own home.*

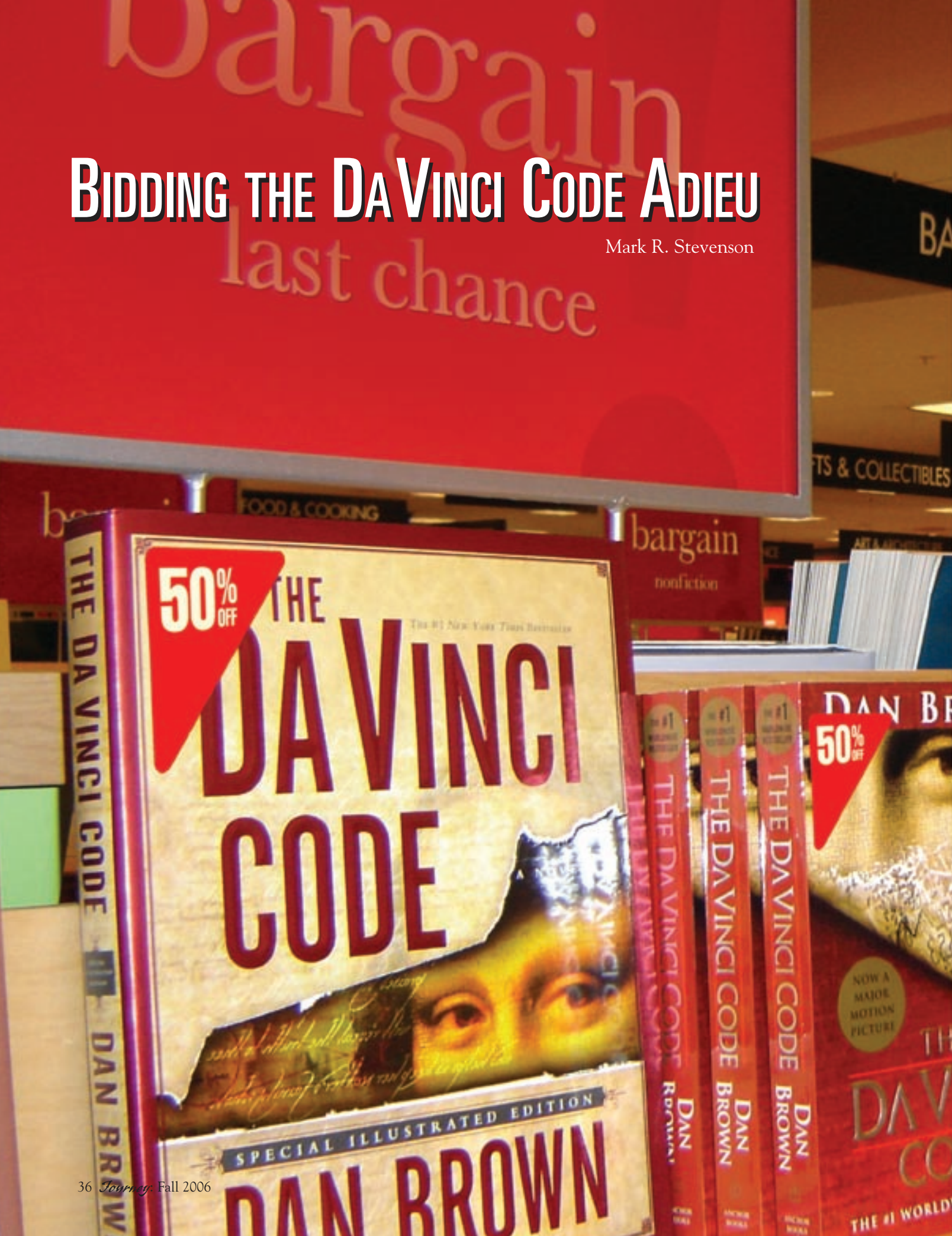
always come easily nor is it always welcomed. The care and provision for our aged loved ones is perhaps one of the most difficult times we face as we grow older ourselves. Yet it doesn't have to be as foreboding and difficult as it initially appears. Our heavenly Father knows the needs we will have, knows the hours of late-night sorrow we will face, and knows the tears we will shed in the days ahead. It is His comfort and His provision for us in times of change that preserve and support us when those we love need us the most. †



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# BIDDING THE DA VINCI CODE ADIEU

Mark R. Stevenson



**I**ronically, with the release of the movie, *Da Vinci Code* fervor seems to have run its course. Whether due to a case of media overexposure or to general disappointment over a movie not able to live up to its lofty expectations, the hubbub over Dan Brown's far-fetched tale seems to have subsided. After nearly four years of hype, it was an impressive run. Yet at the end of the day, Brown's outlandish claims masquerading as historical facts could not overturn the truth. As we lay *The Da Vinci Code* to rest, let's review a few of the central issues.

## Novel Claims about Jesus

### Was Jesus Married?

Central to the plot of *The Da Vinci Code* is the notion that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. Yet even agnostic scholar Bart Ehrman acknowledges, "Not a single one of our ancient sources indicates that Jesus was married, let alone married to Mary Magdalene. All such claims are part of modern fictional reconstructions of Jesus' life, not rooted in the surviving accounts themselves." The New Testament does not try to hide the marital status of its early leaders. Paul states that Peter and the other apostles were married, as were the brothers of Jesus (1 Cor. 9:5). Thus if Jesus had been married, we would expect the New Testament to mention it. Indeed, if Jesus was married, it is peculiar that at the crucifixion he expresses no concern for the care of his "wife" as he does for his mother—even though Mary Magdalene was standing with Jesus' mother by the cross (John 19:25). Most importantly however, the claim that Jesus was married and had a child completely misun-

derstands the purpose for Jesus' incarnation.

The Son of God did not come to earth to start a biological family; he came to "give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). From the biblical perspective, Jesus does have a bride, but it's not Mary Magdalene — it's the Church for whom he shed his blood (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).

### Is Jesus God?

According to the novel's lead historian, Leigh Teabing, the deity of Christ was an invention the emperor Constantine pushed through for political reasons at the Council of Nicaea in the fourth century. The following conversation takes place between Teabing and the heroine of the story, Sophie Neveu:

"My dear," Teabing declared, "until that moment in history [Council of Nicaea, 325 AD], Jesus was viewed by His followers as a mortal prophet...a great and powerful man, but a man nonetheless. A mortal."

"Not the Son of God?"

"Right," Teabing said. "Jesus' establishment as 'the Son of God' was officially proposed and voted on by the Council of Nicaea." (DVC, p. 233)

In their book, *The Da Vinci Hoax*, authors Carl Olson and Sandra Miesel offer a fitting response: "For one thing, this seriously undermines the credibility of Teabing's character, for any historian, whether Christian or not,

knows that the early Christians most definitely believed that Jesus of Nazareth was somehow divine."

The New Testament affirms Christ's deity in a variety of ways. For example:

- He is called God (John 1:1, 20:28; Rom 9:5; Titus 2:13; Heb 1:8; 2 Pet 1:1)
- He is given divine titles (e.g. Lord—Phil. 2:11; Isa 45:23; Son of God—John 5:17f)
- He does works only God can do (e.g. creation—Col 1:16; forgiveness—Mark 2:5–12)
- He possesses the attributes of God (e.g. eternity—John 8:58; omnipresence—Matt 18:20, 28:20)
- He is worshipped as God (Matt 28:9 & 17; John 20:28; Rev. 5:8)

Early Christian writers spoke with clarity about the deity of Jesus. Clement of Rome, writing at the end of the first century, said: "Brothers, it is fitting that you should think of Jesus Christ as of God—as the Judge of the living and the dead." Likewise, the African church father, Tertullian, writing in the latter part of the second century, declared: "God alone is without sin; and the only man without sin is Christ, since



Sir Leigh Teabing

Christ is also God.” Comparable statements by Christians who pre-date Nicaea are plentiful. The Council of Nicaea simply made official what Christians had believed from the beginning.

### Novel Claims about the New Testament

#### Missing Gospels?

According to *The Da Vinci Code*, Constantine suppressed the authentic gospels and chose edited versions of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John for the official New Testament canon. In the words of Teabing:

“More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relative few were chosen for inclusion—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them...”

“...Constantine commissioned and financed a new Bible, which omitted those gospels that spoke of Christ’s human traits and embellished those gospels that made Him godlike. The earlier gospels were outlawed, gathered up, and burned.” (DVC, pp. 231, 234)

These so-called “outlawed” gospels refer to the writings of a religious movement known as Gnosticism. Dan Brown presents Gnostic literature as “the earliest Christian records” which give us accounts of authentic Christianity and the truth about Jesus. In reality, the Gnostic texts were written much later than the New Testament writings. There are a dozen or so Gnostic gospels (not over 80!), generally dating from the middle of the second century through the fourth century. The early church rejected Gnosticism, and second- and third-century fathers busily wrote against it.

Irenaeus (c. 130–c. 200), for example, authored a lengthy refutation of Gnosticism entitled *Against Heresies*. In it he makes clear there are only four true gospels—and he names them: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John (see *Against Heresies* 3:1:1; 3:11:8–9).

The fatal flaw in Teibing’s theory, however, is the suggestion that the Gnostic gospels emphasize Christ’s humanity and deny his deity. Just the opposite is the case! One of the central tenets of Gnosticism was the inherent sinfulness of the material world. Most Gnostics believed Christ was a divine being who only seemed to have a physical body (docetism), or that he inhabited the body of the man Jesus, but left him prior to the crucifixion. In either case, Gnostics, unlike the canonical gospels, strongly rejected the true humanity of Christ.

#### What about the “Sacred Feminine”?

*The Da Vinci Code* claims that part of the church’s agenda under Constantine was to demonize Mary Magdalene and the so-called “sacred feminine.” Thus the church robbed Christians of proper goddess worship. Supposedly the Gnostic writings celebrate the feminine, giving Mary Magdalene her due. But the truth is Gnosticism opposed the feminine. One of the most popular of the Gnostic writings, the *Coptic Gospel of Thomas*, concludes as follows:

Simon Peter said to them, “Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said, “I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make

herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.”

So much for the sacred feminine! The Gnostic ideal is either male or androgyny. It is Gnosticism, not true Christianity, that denigrates women.

#### Novel but not New

The *Da Vinci Code*, with its radical claims, has had a powerful impact on our culture. A Barna poll stated that 24% of readers found the novel helpful to their “personal spiritual growth or understanding.”

Others said they changed their beliefs or religious perspectives because of the book. Certainly Christians should know the issues and be prepared to respond. However, attacks on the person of Christ and the Christian faith are not new. *The Da Vinci Code*, with its neo-pagan spirituality, will come and go. But Jesus Christ—the one “in whom all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (Col. 2:9)—will stay gloriously the same. Over a century ago, Charles Spurgeon said, “Nowadays they cry ‘Eureka!, Eureka!’, as if they had found a new truth; yet they have not discovered a diamond, but a piece of broken glass!” It is a sad mark of our sinfulness that we would rather cling to broken glass than cherish the treasure that is Christ. And so, we gladly bid *The Da Vinci Code* adieu. †



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# Love or Die

Alex Strauch

My own life-changing experience with love came when a friend gave me a copy of the book *Brother Indeed*, the biography of Robert C. Chapman from Barnstaple, England.<sup>1</sup> Apart from the Bible, no one has influenced my thinking about love and leadership more than Robert Chapman.

In his day, some called him an “apostle of love,” and Charles Haddon Spurgeon referred to him as “the saintliest man I ever knew.”

Robert Chapman left his profession as a lawyer in London to become pastor of a small Particular Baptist church in Barnstaple. This contentious little congregation had gone through three different pastors in the eighteen months prior to Chapman’s arrival. The

story of how Chapman completely turned around this fighting church by his love, patience, and Bible teaching ministry is an inspiring account of loving leadership. The church eventually became a large, harmonious church. It was known throughout England for its love, missionary outreach, and compassionate ministries to the poor.

By the end of his life, at age ninety-nine, Chapman had become so well known for his loving disposition and wisdom that a letter from abroad addressed simply to “R. C. Chapman, University of Love, England,” was correctly delivered to his home.

Before Chapman arrived, the church in Barnstaple was proud of its doctrinal distinctives and church polity, but it was dying of

lovelessness. When Robert Chapman came, he breathed the life-breath of love into the church. It soon radiated with love for Christ, love for one another, love for the truth of the gospel, and love for the lost. It became a university of love.

In Revelation 2, we read of another church that was proud of its rightness and faithfulness, but was about ready to die for lack of love. Our Lord himself tells the church and its leaders to repent and allow the life-breath of love to flow back into its body. Read carefully the solemn words and warning of Jesus Christ to the church at Ephesus:

I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance,

<sup>1</sup>See the collection of statements on the divinity of Christ by ante-Nicene writers in David W. Bercot, ed., *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1998), 93–127.

and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false.... But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. (Rev. 2:1-2, 4-5)

### Commendation and Condemnation

Our Lord begins by commending the church of Ephesus for its good deeds, hard work, steadfastness in the faith, intolerance of heresy, zeal for doctrinal purity, and patient endurance under persecution. There is much to commend in this church, and we should prize its exemplary qualities. It would seem that all was well. The Ephesians could have written a book on successful church ministry. However, all was not well. Something was fundamentally wrong. With divine, penetrating insight into the true spiritual state of this outwardly successful church, Jesus Christ turned from commendation to condemnation. He says, "But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first."

In light of all the commendable qualities of this church,

Christ's criticism might seem trivial. But in his eyes, the very heartbeat of the church's life was lost.

### Loss of First Love

At one time the church thrived with genuine love. But this had changed. There was still some measure of love left because they fought for the truth of the gospel and did good works (Rev. 2:2-3, 6). But their love was not what it once was. Indeed, instead of growing stronger and deeper as it should, their love had waned. They had works, but the joy, creativity, responsiveness, and energy that love produces had disappeared. The quality of their love had changed, and this became apparent even in their works. Jesus rebukes them and calls them to "do the works you did at first." He admonishes them to remember from where they "have fallen" (Rev. 2:5).

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*The kind of love required among believers is to love one another as Jesus loved us.*

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The object of this love is not specifically stated in the text. It does not say love for Christ or love for fellow believers. So it is best to understand Jesus to mean love in general (love for Christ, one another, and the lost).

The kind of love required by God of His people is total, undivided love (Deut. 6:4-6). We are to love God with *all* our heart and soul and mind (Matt. 22:37). Furthermore, according to the book of Revelation, the relationship between Jesus Christ and his church is that of a marriage relationship; Christ is the bridegroom and the church is the bride.<sup>2</sup> The response of the bride, the church, is to be joyous, undivided devotion to Christ the bridegroom. At Ephesus, the bride had lost important qualities of her love. The joy to worship, the hunger to know him better through his word, the desire to understand his love more fully, the thirst to grow spiritually, and the love of singing his praises and praying was lost. The kind of love required among believers is to love one another as Jesus loved us.

It is an earnest love (1 Peter 1:22) that makes us willing to give up our lives for one another (1 John 3:16). At Ephesus, the Lord was looking for his people to be sacrificially caring for one another's needs, opening their homes to one another, living like an extended family, joyously serving one another, praying fervently for one another, crossing racial boundaries, and enjoying life together in the church and home. But their love had withered away.

Amy Carmichael, who rescued abused children and provided a home for them through her

Dohnavur Fellowship in India, recognized the deadly potential of loss of love among her coworkers. She laid down guidelines for the Sisters of the Common Life, the women who worked together with her in the orphanage: Unlove is deadly. It is a cancer. It may kill slowly but it always kills in the end.

Let us fear it, fear to give room to it as we should fear to nurse a cobra. It is deadlier than any cobra. And just as one minute drop of the almost invisible cobra venom spreads swiftly all over the body of one into whom it has been injected, so one drop of the gall of unlove in my heart or yours, however unseen, has a terrible power of spreading all through our Family, for we are one body—we are parts of one another.

We owe it to the younger ones to teach them the truth that united prayer is impossible, unless there be loyal love. If unlove be discovered anywhere, stop everything and put it right, if possible at once.<sup>3</sup>

The kind of love required by Christ is love for all people (1 Thess. 3:12). This love seeks to meet peoples' physical and spiritual needs. It is the love displayed by the Good Samaritan to an unknown dying man (Luke 10:30-37). It is the love expressed in evangelism and reaching out to the

lost. It is the love Paul felt for Israel: "I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:2-3). This love for the lost and the needy had shriveled away to nothing at Ephesus.

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*Unlove is deadly. It is a cancer. It may kill slowly but it always kills in the end.*

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Tragically, the church at Ephesus had changed. It had abandoned its first love, and something had to be done or the Lord would judge his church. "No wonder," writes Puritan preacher Nathaniel Vincent, "that Satan, who labors to destroy churches, endeavors to kill love."<sup>4</sup>

### Christ's Remedy for Diminished Love

Jesus calls upon the church to do three things immediately or, he says, "I will come and remove your lampstand." Although the exact meaning of this judgment is debated, the seriousness of the situation is alarmingly clear. Unless there is a change, Christ will come and will act in judgment against this local church.

Loss of love is sin. In

Revelation 2:4-5 Jesus both rebukes and offers a remedy:

1. remember therefore from where you have fallen
2. repent
3. do the works you did at first

The situation was not past repairing, but the church had to take immediate action to rekindle the original flame of love. Failure to act would spell disaster for the church. The Lord ominously warns, "If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent." This warning demonstrates how seriously Jesus takes loss of love. He threatens that if they do not repent, he will come and remove their lampstand out of its place. That is, he will bring the existence of the local church to an end.

### A Wake-up Call to All Churches and Leaders

The letters to the seven churches trumpet Christ's wake-up call to all churches and Christian leaders (Revelation 2-3). Jesus warns the local church at Ephesus and its leaders that they can work hard, fight heresy, have spiritual gifts, teach sound doctrine, and yet be deficient in love and on the verge of divine discipline. Since love is absolutely essential to the survival of the local church, its leaders must guard their own heartfelt love for Christ and continually monitor and encourage the church's love.

### Guarding One's Own Love for Christ

When the leaders lose their love, it will not be very long before the people do. So leaders must first guard their own love relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ in order to protect the church from loss of love. There is no substitute for wholehearted, growing love for the Lord Jesus Christ. It is our first and most fundamental duty. The Ephesian believers thought their doctrinal orthodoxy was sufficient. But it was not. If we do not actively protect and cultivate our love for God and Christ, all other loves wane. Our love for fellow Christians, our love for the needy, our love for the lost, and our love for the truth.

*If we do not actively protect and cultivate our love for God and Christ, all other loves wane.*

The Christian apologist Francis Schaeffer, who, with his wife Edith, modeled Christian love in remarkable ways through their open home in Switzerland, understood the importance of love:

We must ask, *Do I fight merely for doctrinal faithfulness?* This is like the wife who never sleeps with anybody else but never shows love to her own husband. Is that a sufficient rela-

tionship in marriage? No, ten thousand times no. Yet if I am a Christian who speaks and acts for doctrinal faithfulness but do not show love to my divine bridegroom, I am in the same place as such a wife. What God wants from us is not only doctrinal faithfulness, but our love day by day. Not in theory, mind you, but in practice.<sup>5</sup>

C. H. Mackintosh, whose books on the Pentateuch are considered the standard for devotional commentaries, relates sound advice regarding love for Christ as the essential requirement:

If I allow my work to get between my heart and the Master, it will be little worth. We can only effectually serve Christ as we are enjoying Him. It is while the heart dwells upon His powerful attractions that the hands perform the most acceptable service to His name.... True, he may preach a sermon, deliver a lecture, utter prayers, write a book, and go through the entire routine of outward service, and yet not minister Christ. The man who will present Christ to others must be occupied with Christ for himself.<sup>6</sup>

Love for God and Christ is foundational to a proper love for everything else. Love for God is the "great and first commandment" (Matt. 22:38).

### Guarding against Externalism and Ritualism

We need to protect the church against the tendency to trust in external forms, religious rituals, traditions, and rules, while we neglect the vital elements of true love for Christ and one another.

The Ephesian believers, you can be sure, attended church, knew their doctrine, rejected false teachers, did good deeds, lived upright lives, prayed and sang, but the inner zeal and devotion of their love was dwindling to nothing. External performance had replaced true, inner, heart faith and love. The love for Christ and neighbor that they once had was gone. Thus their religion became more external than internal. It became more mechanical than heartfelt:

They still proclaim the truth, but no longer passionately love him who is the truth. They still perform good deeds, but no longer out of love, brotherhood, and compassion. They preserve the truth and witness courageously, but forget that love is the great witness to truth. It is not so much that their genuine virtues have squeezed love out, but that no amount of good works, wisdom, and discernment in matters of church discipline, patient endurance in hardship, hatred of sin, or disciplined doctrine, can ever make up for lovelessness.<sup>7</sup>

### Leading the Church in Repentance and Renewal

In a sin-saturated world, repentance and spiritual revitalization are never-ending tasks. So let the leaders and teachers of the church be prepared to lead the congregation in repentance for lovelessness and hypocritical love (Rom. 12:9). Love can be revived and grow afresh (Rev. 2:5). The fire can be rekindled. Lives can be rededicated to Christ and one another. The fresh life of love can be breathed into prayer, Bible study, evangelism, worship, and fellowship with others. To that end let us continually pray and work. As Puritan preacher Nathaniel Vincent prayed:

O love! How much want is there of you in the Church of Christ! And how much does the Church feel for this want! It groans, it languishes, it dies daily because of your absence. Return, O love, return! Repair breaches, restore paths to dwell in, edify the old ways and places, and raise up the foundations of many generations.<sup>8</sup> †



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<sup>1</sup>Frank Holmes, *Brother Indeed: The Life of Robert Cleaver Chapman* (London: Victory Press, 1956). Holmes's biography is out of print. For a new biography see, Robert L. Peterson, Robert Chapman (Littleton, Colo.: Lewis & Roth, 1995). For a short summary of Chapman's life and some of the remarkable ways he dealt with people, see Robert L. Peterson and Alexander Strauch, *Agape Leadership: Lessons in Spiritual Leadership from the Life of R.C. Chapman* (Littleton, Colo.: Lewis & Roth, 1991).

<sup>2</sup>Rev. 19:7, 9; 21:9; 22:17.

<sup>3</sup>Houghton, Amy Carmichael of Dohnavur: *The Story of a Lover and Her Beloved* (1979; reprint ed., Fort Washington, Pa., Christian Literature Crusade, 1992), 219.

<sup>4</sup>Nathaniel Vincent, *A Discourse Concerning Love* (1684; reprint ed., Morgan, Pa: Soli Deo Gloria, 1998), 94.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Schaeffer, *The Church before the Watching World* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1971), 60.

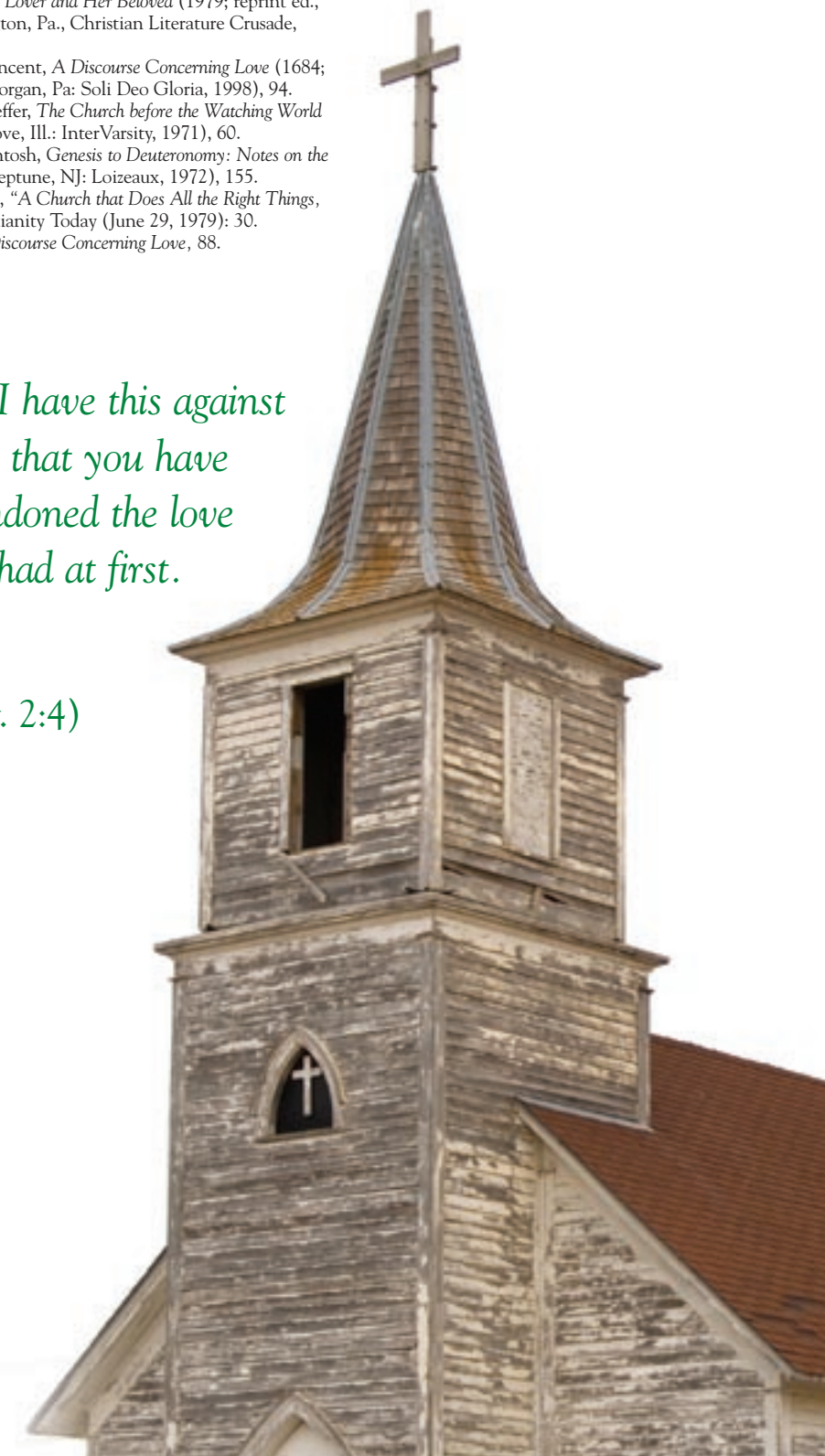
<sup>6</sup>C. H. Mackintosh, *Genesis to Deuteronomy: Notes on the Pentateuch* (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 1972), 155.

<sup>7</sup>D. A. Carson, "A Church that Does All the Right Things, but ..." *Christianity Today* (June 29, 1979): 30.

<sup>8</sup>Vincent, *A Discourse Concerning Love*, 88.

*But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.*

(Rev. 2:4)



# 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:

I hope you will all read Alex Strauch's splendid article, "Generational Succession," in [the last] issue of *Journey*. I wrote a much shorter article entitled, "The Failure to Train Leaders" several years ago in another magazine. At that time a reader wrote me and asked, "How can elders train leaders when, by their example, they need training themselves?" How would you have answered that question? As you think about your answer, put yourself in the shoes of an elder who sees the need of training his assembly's young men, but hasn't the faintest idea of where to start.

## Tami Swaim responds:

It's not about "What I am *doing*;" it's about "*Who I am becoming*." My husband and I are training young people who will one day be future leaders among God's people. It is very challenging for us because we are doing it in a foreign culture and language. Yet the basic principles remain the same. One big lesson we have learned is that it is not our calling that is most important, but rather our walk with our Lord, the One we are encouraging others to follow.

How we train future leaders is very similar to how, as parents, we ought to train our children. If my children see me doing something I have told them not to do, they will not obey. Actions really do speak louder than words. Whether we are a parent training children or a leader training disciples, we are all sinners. We will make mistakes. I don't think all our training is obsolete when we fail, but there is something very vital to be learned here. When we fail as parents or elders the attitude we have toward our sin can teach something very valuable.

The lesson of maintaining a healthy, godly attitude toward sin is the key to healthy fellowship in the church. If a leader is confronted with what others in the meeting perceive to be an inconsistency, what attitude should he have toward this confrontation? I think the answer to that question is key. If he gets offended, or rejects the allegations altogether, only frustration is cultivated. If, on the other hand, he considers the allegations and, if necessary,

apologizes and repents, then true training of others has taking place.

The sheep in the fold will look at such a humble attitude as beautiful, and they will want it for themselves. We are attracted to "beautiful" people, and we all want to become more beautiful. People who are like our Lord Jesus are so pleasant to be with because they radiate beauty as He does. What can be more beautiful than a repentant, humble heart?

What all disciple makers need more of in the discipleship relationship is humility. Pride divides and scatters the sheep. I've been a witness to this. My heart as a young girl was full of confusion and frustration over a split in my home assembly. An assembly should behave as a family. I think that the elder-disciple training relationship is analogous to the parent-child relationship. This shouldn't shock us since the mystery of the church is compared to the mystery of marriage. No parent is perfect, and no parent is capable of "perfectly" training a child. Likewise no elder is perfect, and no elder is capable of "perfectly" training the young to rise up and take their proper place in the assembly. An elder teaches so much by his attitude. An attitude of humility and submission is what is required. Our society today would not equate a contrite spirit to leadership; but God does. If the Bible is our standard and Christ is our example, we should submit to one another. See Psalms 34:18; 40:17; 51:17; 69:33; 72:13; 107:41; Isaiah 57:15; 66:2 Matt. 5:3; Gal. 5:16-26.

Tami Swaim, Nowy Sacz, Poland

## Vera Watson responds:

Elders should not be training young men for the next generation. If God calls someone into the ministry, He will empower them with the aid of the Holy Spirit. John 17:17 gives a clear understanding of what God wants from His people, "Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth." God's people ought to have a clear biblical understanding of God's purpose in their lives. All believers should be well-versed in the Word. The church needs God-strong Bible teachers past, present and future. Paul was strong in the Word. Are there any Pauls in the churches today?

Vera Watson, Bronx, NY

## David MacLeod comments:

The opinion of Ms. Watson is not supported by the Bible. The Lord Jesus trained young men for the next generation, as did the Apostle Paul. Are there any Pauls in the churches today? The answer to that question is, "Yes!" They are in healthy churches, where the leadership has been trained by godly men (Mark 3:14; 2 Tim. 2:2).

## Jim Price responds:

Perhaps I'm being too simplistic for some people's taste, but, to me, training, mentoring, or discipling is simply showing someone else how to apply theology to life. Elders, just like everyone else, will need to do that until the day they die or the Lord comes back. Showing others how to "convert" the principles to practice should cause other things to fall into place.

I would hope that it would be obvious that elders need training. In fact, leadership in the church is probably the first example of a group recognizing the necessity of continuing education! We shall never attain a level of development where we can say we have arrived. So, we keep learning; we apply that to life; we share what we're learning with others; we encourage them to apply it to life; they keep learning; they apply that to life, etc.

I cannot answer how "an elder who sees the need of training in his assembly's young men, but hasn't the faintest idea where to start" except to suggest that he start with one man, go out for coffee, keep it relaxed, ask questions, get together again, pray for him, ask for follow-ups to prayer requests, etc. It sounds like he doesn't have a real relationship with these young men if he doesn't know where to start. That's why I suggest getting to know them first.

Jim Price, St. Louis, MO

## Brian Young responds:

*Editor's Note: Like many of our letters, Mr. Young's has been somewhat abridged and edited. We trust that our editorial work does not in any way misrepresent his intentions.*

I apologize ahead of time for bringing up two issues that weren't addressed in Dr. MacLeod's question. First, in today's world it is rare for every member of an assembly to stay in the same church throughout his or her lifetime. Fewer and fewer people are staying in the same area for years on end.





Young men who appear to be prospective leaders may be gone in a year or so. So I'd like to add another question: How do you provide for generational succession in a laterally shifting age, that is, in an era when the logical choices for the next generation of leaders move to another city or church? Can we transfer leadership to another church?

Second, some of our elders are biblically qualified for the task, that is, they meet the requirements set forth by Paul in 1 Timothy 3, yet they are still unqualified for pastoral work. They do not have any idea of how to deal with some of today's psychological, emotional, and physical issues, nor are they equipped to deal with the myriad of personality profiles and legal issues that the church may run into. So, the issue facing elders today is that they need a thorough comprehensive knowledge, not only of scripture, but the issues (spiritual and otherwise) that affect peoples' daily lives. If they don't have ready answers for the myriad of questions coming at them, they will look inept, they will feel inept, and the congregation will wonder if they should be in leadership at all.

Third, we need to address the question, "Is the 'assembly model' sufficient for today's needs? We are often told that the principles of the New Testament church, as interpreted by the Brethren, are uniquely applicable to every age and culture. Is that true of our current American culture? If it isn't, how do you get it to where it can be?"

As an addendum, I would like

to recommend the two training manuals for elders that have been developed by Lewis and Roth publishers to accompany the book, *Biblical Eldership*, by Alexander Strauch. They may seem overwhelming when one sees the size of them, but they are well worth while for the energetic desirous elder candidate.

Brian Young, Aurora, CO

**Chad Woolf responds:**

The simplest way to train new leadership is to start giving them small leadership tasks and then see how they handle them. I like the suggestion of others that it is helpful to take prospective leaders out for coffee to get to know them. Leadership training shouldn't happen outside of relationship, or outside of responsibility. So perhaps an elder might start off by asking a person to make some visits, offer an opening prayer to a service, teach a Sunday school class, or perform some other manageable task. Once that person has shown themselves faithful and capable in smaller things, then continue to give him more responsibilities that line up with his natural and spiritual giftedness. Eventually that person will be doing leadership, whether they have a title or not. Once the person is doing the work of an elder/deacon then you can officially recognize them. The real problem occurs when elders spiritually train people for years without giving them practical ways to work out that training. If elders refuse to give up parts of their leadership responsibility along the

way, they cannot expect new elders to be ready just because the older men quit and then give them a title. Training is more about showing while doing than anything else.

Chad Woolf, Ft. Myers, FL

**Terry LaBuff responds:**

Training is something we all need constantly. The qualifications of elders and deacons are spelled out in 1 Timothy 3. I hope we all realize how important and necessary it is to fulfill all of those requirements. Let us never refuse more training, no matter what position we hold, no matter what our role in the church. If I'm an elder in the church and I see the need for training the young men and don't have a clue where to start then I shouldn't be an elder.

Terry LaBuff, Kinder, LA

**Doug Engle responds:**

Someone has said, "If we wait until all our ducks are in a row to do anything, we might as well sell our shotgun at a garage sale." Something I like about my elders is that they constantly remind us that they're not perfect; they are just human sinners being saved by God's grace. Our elders don't just "eld." They also wash dishes, fix broken plaster, trim trees, and mow grass. Our elders recently appointed some new deacons, which include three Emmaus alumni that are just a tad younger than I am. Now these young men have plenty of time to continue developing in their personal rela-

tionships with the elders—and these young men also spend a lot of time getting their elbows dirty. What better training than right in the trenches? I don't think eldership training is just about imparting deep spiritual truths. It does include that, but much more than that. It is developing hard working Christians that love each other so much that they will work side-by-side to do what needs to be done.

Doug Engle, Abilene, KS

**Christina Montanari responds:**

If an elder is at the point where he realizes he himself needs training, but also sees the need for training the young people, he can approach them in a truly humble spirit and offer to learn along side them in the study of Scripture. You can't teach the things you do not know.

Christina Montanari, Colorado Springs, CO

**Jeremy Williams responds:**

Failure is prerequisite for success. I think one of the biggest problems with leaders (myself included) is that we are too scared

that someone will make a mistake so we don't train anyone else to do our job. Elders grow old, just like other people. Therefore they must continually train up the next man to be appointed to the eldership. If they are worried that that man may not do it perfectly, they are right. I really believe that we have to allow people to fail so they can understand how to do the work that God has for us and for elders. There is no greater training tool than failure. This means that the leaders must be patient and willing to walk through a mistake with the one who made it so that they can see what went right and what didn't.

Jeremy Williams, Missouri City, TX

**Ian Denham responds:**

Eldership is one course that Emmaus Bible College should have. I have found out the hard way that you do not want to be at any church that is not elder led. If the church is led by staff including pastors, you need to run. I left my one year at Emmaus and luckily ended up working for several years at a church that was elder led, and

this meant that they did not move into any ministry or project without the approval of the elders. I should have learned by observation but I did not, and five years later I was an elder of a medium sized church, and about five years later I ran into a new pastor that wanted to "run" everything and it destroyed the church. I now understand what I lacked in knowledge and it was great.

The elders need to be involved in all of the areas of the church's work including the children's work. Problems that occur in churches start in the different ministries, and the elders need to oversee each area. I didn't understand that, and I thought I could concentrate on one specific area, and I wouldn't need to look outside that area. If the elders do not provide leadership in every area of church life, then the church is not "elder led." Everyone in business knows the management cannot sit in an office and run a program, and the elders should be taught that also.

Ian Denham, Lancaster, CA

**NEXT ISSUE'S QUESTION:**

**Some local assemblies to which our readers belong provide a stock of Bibles for the use of visitors, just as they provide hymnbooks. Which edition of the Bible is used for this purpose in your local assembly? Why?**

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

# News from Emmaus

## Accreditation

This past school year was a busy one for the college. We had 3 separate on-site visits by three accrediting associations. The first one was from the State of Iowa in November, reviewing the Elementary Education program. The second one was from the Higher Learning Commission in February, for regional accreditation. The third one was from the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) in March for renewal of our accreditation with that agency. This meant a lot of work for all members of the Emmaus family: Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff and students. Praise God that all three were highly successful!



## President's Accreditation Announcement

It is with great delight that I announce to you that Emmaus is officially regionally accredited with the Higher Learning Commission of NCA. This broader recognition of the quality of Emmaus' education will facilitate transfer of credit, ease of access to graduate pro-

grams, and greater financial aid. This is the best news we have received in 20 years! We now have the same accreditation as the major universities. This achievement has given us opportunity to reflect on our future. We cherish the fact that we are a Bible college with a loyal constituency. All of our students come to us because they first and foremost want to study the Bible to prepare for future service for the Lord. Increasingly, our students want to prepare for their professional careers as they study the Bible. As we have grown, we have been able to add a number of majors that allow our students to do both. We intend to continue to add new majors as the college grows. We require 45 hours of Bible for every student. There are only three Bible colleges in the country that require that much. Our vision is to educate the next generation of spiritual leaders. We want to teach them the Scriptures and help them further their careers with second majors in professional studies. As the Lord provides we will continue to add new majors to make it possible for a wider range of future leaders to study with us.

The best part about Emmaus that we never want to lose is the close mentoring relationship that is built between faculty and student. This kind of discipleship is rare on the collegiate level. We

have created an environment where we not only educate the mind, but shape the character of the entire person. As our alumni look back on their Emmaus experience they report to us that it was life-changing. This is what makes Emmaus unique.

## New Music Ministry Major

With the arrival of Elisa Cooper and the return of Dr. Sharon Jensen this year, along with existing music faculty, Ethan and Heidi Johnson, Nancy Lange, and Lisa Beatty, Emmaus is pleased to announce the addition of a new major in Music Ministry. Graduates of the program will receive a double major in Biblical Studies and Music Ministry. Coursework includes Music Theory I-IV, Music History I-II, Foundations of Church Music, Principles and Methods of Music Ministry, and Conducting. In addition, students will choose two of the following electives: Sacred Music Literature, Composing/ Arranging, Leading Contemporary Music, Technology and Music Ministry. Students will also take private lessons in piano or voice and participate in a performing group each semester of study. During the last year of study, students will be actively involved in the music ministry of a local church to fulfill the requirements of the Music Ministry Practicum. The Music Ministry program is

designed to equip students for effective leadership in the ministry of music in the local church. With an additional year of study, students can be licensed to teach general/vocal music in an elementary school setting. If you are interested in more information about the Music Ministry major at Emmaus, contact Elisa Cooper at [ecooper@emmaus.edu](mailto:ecooper@emmaus.edu).

## Graduation

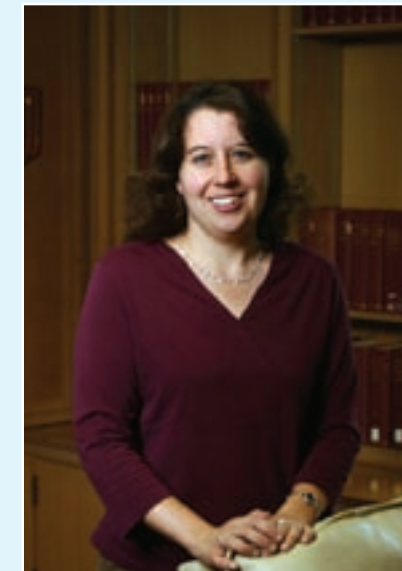
Commencement 2006 took place on Saturday, May 13th. Emmaus granted 38 Bachelor of Science degrees, 9 Associate of Arts degrees and 84 one-year Certificates in Biblical Studies. Clifford Ice, Trustee of Stewards Ministries, gave the commencement address. Pray for these young people as they go on to serve the Lord.

## New Faculty and Staff

This summer brought us several new staff members and a new faculty member. Steve Seeman



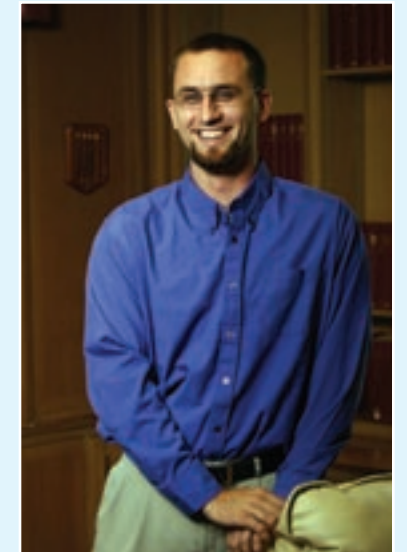
has joined our Admissions team as the Financial Aid Director. Steve comes to us from Des Moines, Washington and brings with him over a decade of experience in the field. Steve and his wife Cheryl have two grown children, Mindy and Eric.



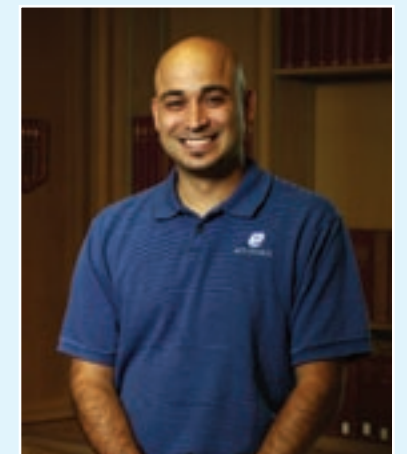
Susan Henderson has joined the Emmaus family as the newest faculty member in our Teacher Education program. Susan has a decade of teaching experience in both public and private elementary school settings. She comes to us from Dover, Pennsylvania, where along with her day job, she was actively involved in the ministries of North York Gospel Chapel and Greenwood Hills Conference Center.

Also new to the Admissions team are Wayne and Hillary Denny and Israel Chavez. Wayne recently received his ThM from Dallas Theological Seminary and has joined the staff as an

Admissions Counselor. Hillary will join Wayne on the road part-time as they recruit new students nationally. Hillary and Wayne are enjoying their newborn daughter, Adelaide.



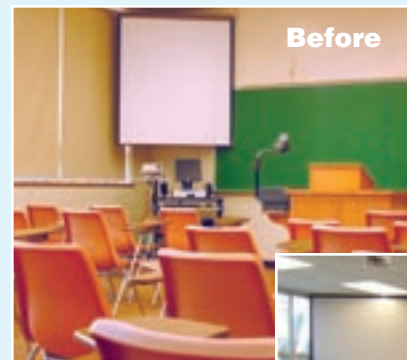
Israel Chavez has been serving Emmaus in the EMR Department for the past year. This fall he joined the admissions team part-time as our regional recruiter. Israel is married to Erica and has three daughters, Hannah, Julia and Autumn.



# News from Emmaus

## Classroom Renovation Begins

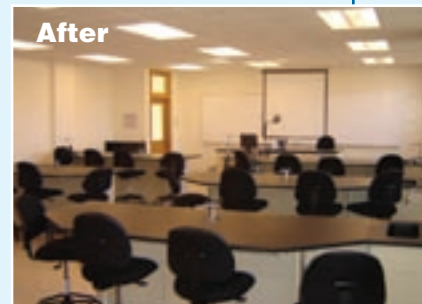
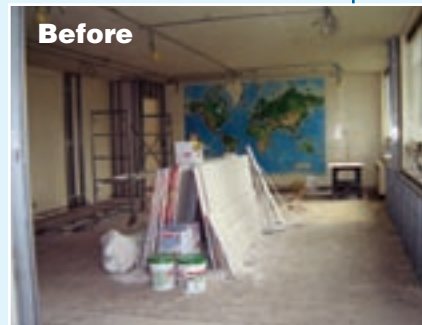
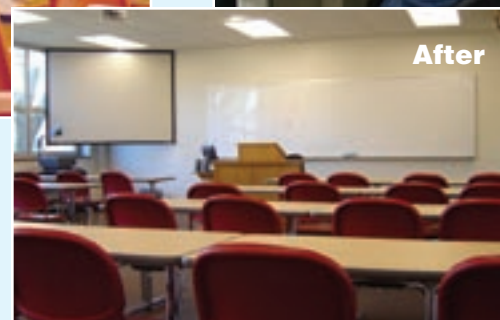
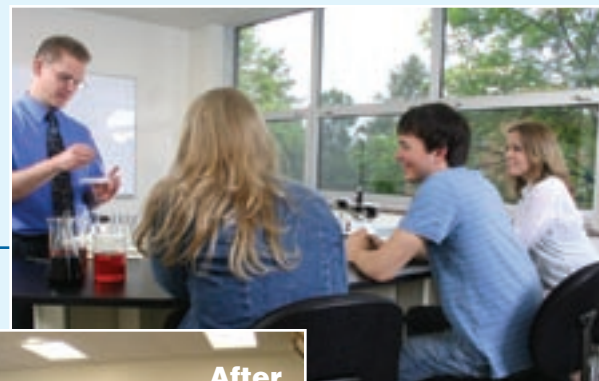
This spring we began an exciting project to remodel our classrooms. Seeking to create an environment that best accommodates student learning, we have begun to equip each of our classrooms with state-of-the-art technology and new furnishings. The first phase of this project began two years ago with the purchase of multimedia carts containing new computers, data projectors, VCRs and DVD players. The second phase will focus on the physical aspects of each classroom, including the replacement of carpet and windows, lights, white boards, projection screens, desks and chairs. Classroom A has been completed, and we desire to complete the remainder of the classrooms as the Lord provides the funds.



## New Science Lab Now In Use

A significant factor in our successful quest for regional accreditation was the completion of the science lab before the team visited in January. We are thankful for the science lab, and announce to you that the funds needed to complete the project have been provided!

Emmaus is committed to being used by God to grow the next generation of leaders, which is the theme of our Vision 2008 campaign. Rejoice with us that the first project of this initiative has been completed. This is a great first step in our journey over the next several years. Thank you to many alumni and friends for your partnership in making it possible.



# Emmaus On the Road

Name	Location/Events	City/State	Dates
 <b>Ken Daughters</b>	Campbell Baptist Church College Heights Chapel Wauwatosa Bible Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel	Windsor, Ontario Murfreesboro, TN Milwaukee, WI Warrenville, IL	Oct 28-29 Nov 4-5 Nov 18-19 Dec 3, 10, 17
 <b>Ken Fleming</b>	Bayside Community Church	Tampa, FL	Dec 17
 <b>John Jimo</b>	Oak Lawn Bible Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel	Oak Lawn, IL Warrenville, IL	Oct 29 Nov 19
 <b>Dave MacLeod</b>	Grace Bible Chapel Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel	Timmins, ON Dubuque, IA	Oct 28 – Nov 1 Nov 12, 19, 26
 <b>Dan Smith</b>	Ireland Outreach Retreat Sunset Bible Chapel	Orlando, FL Salina, KS	Oct 26 – 28 Nov 19
 <b>Mark Stevenson</b>	Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel	Dubuque, IA Cedar Rapids, IA	Oct 29, Nov 5 Nov 12
 <b>Steve Witter</b>	Chambersburg Gospel Chapel Northgate Gospel Chapel Tieton Drive Bible Chapel First Baptist Church Atlantic Gospel Chapel Woodside Bible Chapel Winter Youth Retreat	Chambersburg, PA Seattle, WA Yakima, WA Fremont, MI Atlantic, IA Maywood, IL Toledo, OH	Nov 3 – 5 Nov 12 Nov 12 Nov 13 Dec 3 Dec 10 Dec 28-31

If you would like more information about having faculty speak at your assembly, retreat, conference or camp please call 1-800-397-2425 or e-mail [info@emmaus.edu](mailto:info@emmaus.edu).

# Are You Equipped For Your Journey?

Like any journey, a successful walk as a steward of the Lord Jesus Christ requires knowing where you are and where you need to go, as well as having a map to get there. Thoughtful planning is critical if you are to be commended for your stewardship service for the Lord (see Mt. 25:14-30; Lk. 12:16-40). Believers Stewardship Services, Inc. can help without cost or obligation. From assessing your current situation, to mapping out your stewardship goals, to implementing your goals in the most God-honoring, cost-effective, and tax-efficient manner, we are here to help you determine which "equipment" is right for your journey.

## BASIC "TRAVEL GEAR"

- ✓ An up-to-date Will or Living Trust
- ✓ Proper Powers of Attorney for property and health care decisions
- ✓ A "Living Will" giving directions for life-sustaining procedures
- ✓ A list to help an executor or agent locate assets and important documents

## SPECIALIZED "TRAVEL GEAR"

- ✓ Charitable Gift Annuities or Trusts that offer:
  - × Deferral or avoidance of capital gains, income, and death taxes
  - × Stable income streams, often guaranteed for life
  - × Ways to help family and the Lord's work
- ✓ Life insurance trusts to avoid death taxes or replace assets in an estate

## I Am Interested in Christian Stewardship!

### I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT:

- A CHRISTIAN'S WILL
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- DEPOSIT AGREEMENTS
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- CHARITABLE REMAINDER TRUSTS
- CHARITABLE LEAD TRUSTS
- BUSINESS SUCCESSION PLANNING
- USING A DONOR ADVISED FUND
- AVOIDING DEATH TAXES
- AVOIDING PROBATE
- EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS
- OR MATERIALS FOR MY ORGANIZATION
- OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

### I WANT TO PROMOTE THE LORD'S WORK IN:

- FOREIGN MISSIONS
- INNER CITY MISSIONS
- MY LOCAL ASSEMBLY
- RETIREMENT LIVING CENTERS
- BIBLE CAMPS
- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
- CORRESPONDENCE STUDY
- REHABILITATION CENTERS
- PRISON AND JAIL MINISTRIES
- EVANGELISM
- CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING
- OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

### MY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

### PREFERRED METHOD OF CONTACT:

- Regular Mail
- E-mail
- Telephone
- No Preference

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# Emmaus Bible College

## Charitable Gift Annuity

**Would you be interested** in an investment that increases income, saves taxes, pays for life, and provides support to the work of Emmaus Bible College? If so, perhaps a charitable gift annuity is right for you.

We know many of our supporters desire to support the work of Emmaus financially, but they must balance that desire with the prudent planning for future income needs. A charitable gift annuity purchased to support the work of Emmaus provides one option for bridging the gap between what may look like competing desires.

A gift annuity is a contract between the donor and the issuing organization where an irrevocable gift is given in exchange for a lifetime income stream. In addition to receiving a current income tax deduction, the donor receives a stable income for life (part of which is tax free), generates a better return than some comparable investments, and mitigates the effect of applicable capital gains taxes—all while helping in the future with the Lord's work.

Emmaus works through Believers Stewardship Services, Inc. to issue and administer charitable gift annuities. For more information without obligation, please call or return the form below to: Believers Stewardship Services, Inc., 2250 Chaney Road, Dubuque, Iowa 52001, (888) 338-7810.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Joint Annuitant \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to First Annuitant \_\_\_\_\_

Phone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Annuity Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Periodic Payout:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Quarterly      \_\_\_\_\_ Semiannually      \_\_\_\_\_ Annually