

EMMAUS BIBLE COLLEGE • FALL 2008

Journey



Emmaus Bible College
2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001

Educating the Church

Scripture Memory to the Rescue

Throughout my life I have participated in a number of programs to help me commit the Scripture to memory. I memorized a number of key verses and passages as a child. Once memorized, these Scriptures can be recalled at the most opportune moments. There may be times when a Bible is not at hand, or the moment requires an immediate decision. There is no time for a concordance search or a Bible study. Knowing what the Scripture says by memory can be a life-saver. Isn't that what we saw our Lord do when tempted by Satan? Did He not answer back with the truth of Scripture? The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17). We need to have a scriptural answer for the problems we face. We need to know what the Scripture says. Our decision-making needs to be influenced by the Truth. "How shall a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word... Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You" (Psalm 119:9-11).

My Scripture memory rescued me on the worst day of my life. My family had traveled back home to see my mother, who was succumbing to cancer. Up until this point, we had held on to the hope that she might recover. Now we were beginning to deal with the painful realization that she would die. That evening my mother took two pillow cases from the linen closet and gave them to my wife. She wanted her to have them. They had been embroidered beautifully by my wife years before. They were like new. My mother was embarrassed to admit that she had never used them because they seemed too beautiful. She was returning them now because she was disposing of her more precious belongings. The brief ceremony in the hallway brought home in a powerful way the fact that we were losing her. I went to bed that night grieving for the impending loss.

I was awakened by my wife in the middle of the night. She was pregnant, but she was miscarrying. We rushed her to the hospital. There was nothing that could be done. We lost the pregnancy, and our unborn child. The two losses were overwhelming to me. I could barely breathe, much less think. My mind and my emotions were running away with me. I turned to the Lord in prayer, asking for help. He brought to my mind a verse I memorized thirty years earlier and had not thought of for years. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). The Word of God was powerful. God used it to meet my need. God's work in my life was aided by Scripture memory. Quoting the verse to myself caused me to trust in God and focus my mind on Him. I felt the peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:7). Though the experiences were among the most painful of my life, God used His Word to minister to my need. Scripture memory is a life-saver!



Kenneth Alan Daughters
President,
Emmaus Bible College



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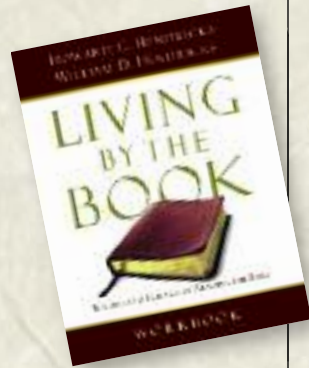
Travel Guides



The Essential Bible Companion: Key Insights for Reading God's Word

John H. Walton, Mark L. Strauss, Ted Cooper, Jr.
Zondervan, 2006

This unique, easy-to-use reference guide quickly provides context for reading God's Word. Each book of the bible is presented on a colorful two-page spread, helping readers understand the biblical story and its significance. It can also be used as a companion to *The Bible in 90 Days* curriculum.



Living by the Book: The Art and Science of Reading the Bible

Howard Hendricks, William Hendricks
Moody, 2007

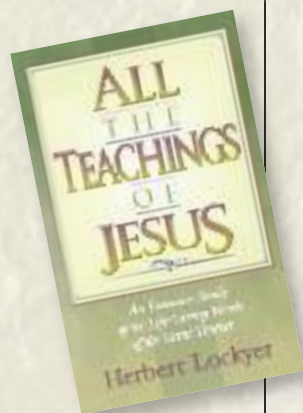
Father and son authors believe practicing effective, inductive Bible study methods can make the difference in one's Bible study experience. After taking Howard Hendricks' course at Dallas Theological Seminary, Chuck Swindoll said, "What a difference it would make if all God's people could get hold of the techniques and principles necessary for the cultivation of their own spiritual nourishment."



Creative Bible Teaching (Revised and Expanded)

Lawrence O. Richards, Gary Bredfeldt
Moody, 1998

In this newly revised edition of *Creative Bible Teaching*, the authors focus on how to better understand the Bible we teach and how to unleash the transforming power of Scripture.



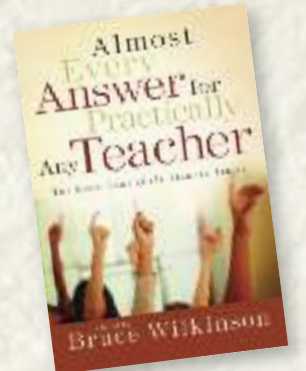
All the Teachings of Jesus: An Extensive Study of the Life Giving Words of the Great Teacher

Herbert Lockyer
Hendrickson, 1999

Almost Every Answer for Practically Any Teacher (Seven Laws of the Learner)

Bruce Wilkinson
Multnomah, 2005

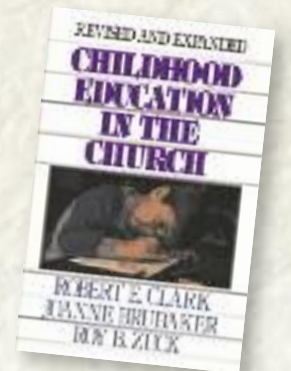
This book contains 100 articles that provide insight, inspiration, and instruction for those who communicate God's truth at school, church, home, or the workplace.



Childhood Education in the Church (Revised and Expanded)

Robert E. Clark, Joanne Brubaker, Roy B. Zuck

Written by a wide variety of experts in Christian Education, this volume is designed for use in teacher training classes, and for professional training in Bible colleges and seminaries.



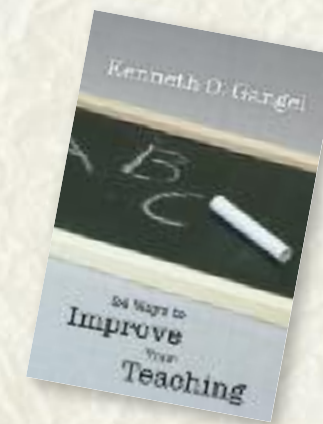
Christian Education: Foundations for the Future

Robert E. Clark, Lin Johnson, Allyn Sloat
Moody, 1991

This book introduces you to the basics of a healthy Christian education program, then takes you beyond, showing you how to develop a fresh, innovative Christian education program that will revitalize your church, home, or school.

24 Ways to Improve Your Teaching

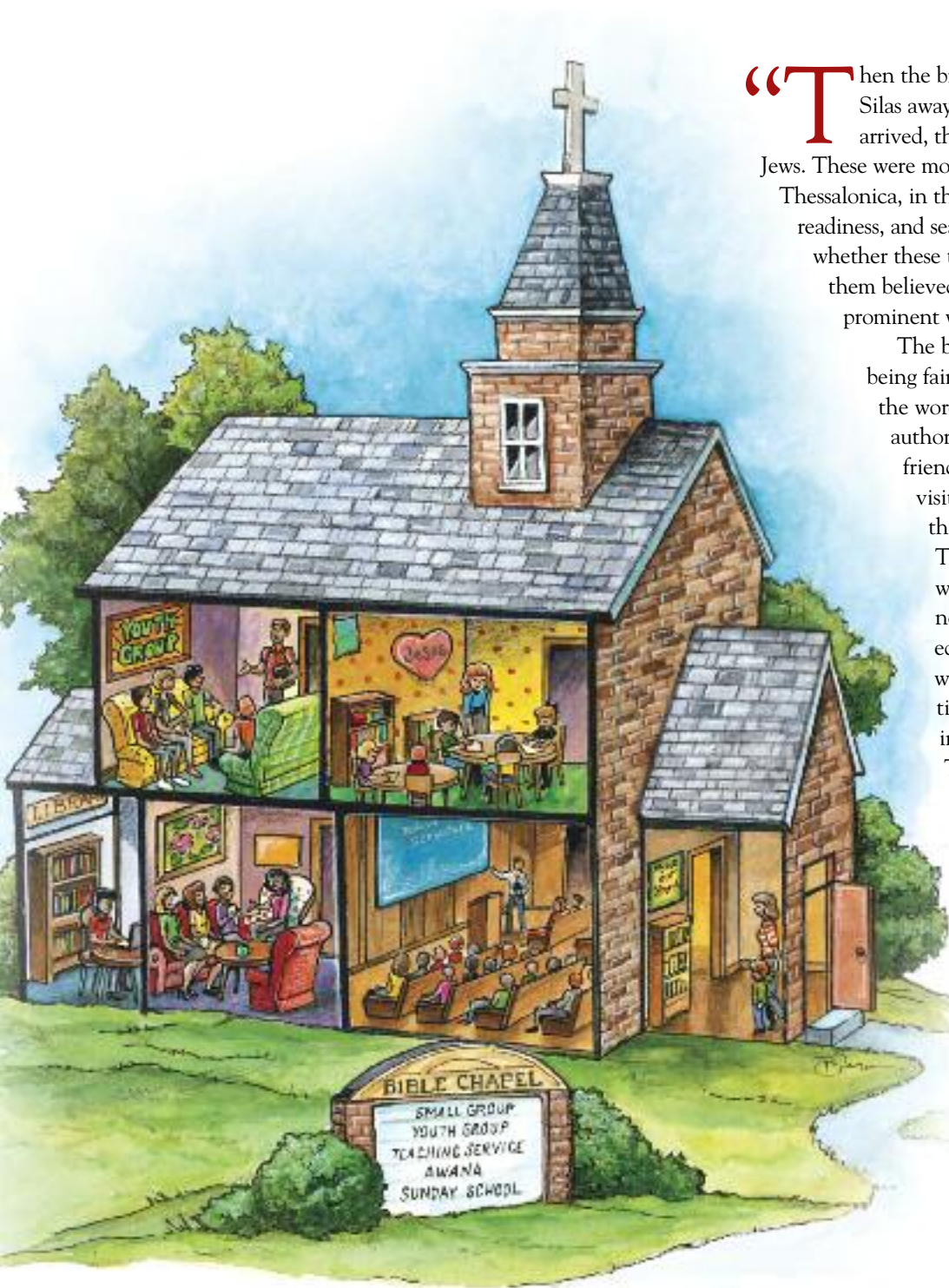
Kenneth O. Gangel
Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2003



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

Berean Believers

Dave Glock, Editor



“**T**hen the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.” Acts 17:10-12

The believers at Berea were marked out by being fair minded, by their readiness to receive the word, and by their commitment to the authority of Scripture. Some years ago a friend of mine was asked a question by a visitor inquiring into church life. “Does this church teach the whole Bible?” The immediate response by this elder was a strong, “Yes, we do!” That afternoon he called the visitor and corrected the answer with an apologetic, “No we don’t!” He realized that great sections of Scripture were never touched in the teaching ministry of his church. The Bereans had a high view of Scripture and they searched the Scriptures daily as the source of authority for life.

How would you answer the question, “Does your church teach the whole Bible?” Your answer is really an evaluation of the teaching curriculum of your local church. I think I hear someone saying,

“A church is not an academic institution!” That’s correct, it is more than that. It’s a group of organized, baptized believers meeting regularly for the breaking of bread, for prayer, for fellowship, and for the teaching of the apostles. The teaching of the apostles...

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” Hebrews 5:12-14

“From Miletus [Paul] sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house. ‘For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.’” Acts 20:17-20, 27

The teaching of the apostles teaches us that the entire Bible is to be taught to the church. How that is done establishes the curriculum of the church. It is particularly the responsibility of the elders of every church to feed and defend the church;

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” Acts 6:4

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” Acts 20:28-29

A number of factors must be considered in structuring the teaching curriculum for a local church:

- the cycle of the teaching ministry—4 years, a decade, etc.
- the number of slots for teaching in the weekly church calendar
- the desired period of time in scheduling a series of subjects
- the age demographics of the congregation
- the specialized groups involved in the teaching ministry— Sunday School, youth, small group studies, etc.
- the gifted personnel to be used in teaching
- the content of subjects to be taught

Only the last item in the list above is fixed. The content of subjects to be taught includes the whole of God’s revelation to us in the Bible. All of the other items relate to the uniqueness of every local church. In deciding on the content of the teaching ministry of the church, it is helpful to consider three categories:

1. The individual books of the Bible or groups of books
2. The major doctrines of the Bible
3. Applied Christian living and service

The goal of the first point is to provide an understanding of each book

of the Bible and its major contribution to the revelation of God to the members of the congregation. This could be done in a survey of larger segments such as Old Testament Survey, New Testament Survey, Psalms; in groupings of books such as the Pentateuch, the Gospels, the Prison Epistles; or in intensive book studies such as Romans, Corinthians, Revelation.

The goal of the second point is to teach the ten major doctrines of Scripture:

- The Study of God
- The Study of the Bible
- The Study of Christ
- The Study of the Holy Spirit
- The Study of Angels and Satan
- The Study of Man
- The Study of Sin
- The Study of Salvation
- The Study of the Church
- The Study of Prophecy

The goal of the third point is the “how to” of applying the principles of Scripture to life. This would include subjects such as:

- Evangelism and Missions
- Marriage and Family Life
- Counseling
- Apologetics and Christian Evidences
- Christian World View
- Ethics
- Teaching Methods, Homiletics, Music

It is a major task to set aside time and energy of the church leadership with the goal of producing a unified plan of teaching for a local church. But if there is to be a comprehensive teaching ministry in the church, that time and energy must be expended. It will be worth it. Just think of the joy of being able to say with all confidence, “Yes, this church teaches the entire Bible! †”

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY FOR BIBLICAL EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH

Editor's Note: This article is an edited transcription of a message delivered by Alex Strauch at the 2008 "Iron Sharpens Iron" Conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.

By Alex Strauch



THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

If you are in Christian leadership at any level in the church, you are involved in the education business. The first New Testament glimpse into a Christian congregation focuses the spotlight on believers attentively listening “to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42, NASB). In His “great commission” to His disciples, Jesus told them to teach their converts “all that I commanded you” (Matt. 28:20). Writing to a troubled church in the death grip of false teachers, Paul reminded them through his understudy Timothy that the local church is “the pillar and support of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). And what is that truth? It is the message centered in Jesus Christ—the Son of God who assumed human flesh, who was vindicated at His resurrection, who ascended into heaven, who has been proclaimed throughout the world as the way of salvation, and who will one day take His place on David’s glorious throne (1 Tim. 3:16). That is the great truth we are involved with. It is not our renowned universities that teach this; nor is it our state and national governments. Only the local church has the awesome responsibility of being “the pillar and the support of the truth.” No man-made institution can do what the church does. Every local church is a “gospel school.”

Since we prize good teaching and the principles of the Word of God, we must ask, “How can our teaching task be carried out effectively?” This is a vast subject. Our evangelical Bible colleges and seminaries offer degree programs in this one area, namely, Christian Education. In one message I can only survey the field and offer ideas you may take and implement right away. My goal is not to present a philosophy of Christian Education, although that is an important subject in itself; rather, I want to present ideas that are down-to-earth and concrete. I trust you will take these and use them in your home assemblies. And as I make practical suggestions, I hope I will also challenge you to seek greater excellence in whatever level of teaching you are involved in your local church.

The importance of feeding sheep is evidenced by the fact that sheep are nearly incapable of feeding and watering themselves properly.

STRATEGY FOR ELDERS FOR FEEDING THE FLOCK OF GOD

A POSITION TO BE FILLED BY QUALIFIED MEN

Our discussion of biblical education in the church must begin with the elders because the Bible identifies them as the teachers and feeders of the church. Both Peter and Paul, apostles of Jesus Christ, command the elders to shepherd the church of God (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). Shepherding has four aspects: feeding, protecting, leading, and healing. The primary duty of a shepherd is to feed the flock. The importance of feeding sheep is evidenced by the fact that sheep are nearly incapable of feeding and watering themselves properly. As author and pastor Charles Jefferson wrote, "Everything depends on the proper feeding of the sheep. Unless wisely fed they become emaciated and sick, and the wealth invested in them is squandered. When Ezekiel presents a picture of the bad shepherd, the first stroke of his brush is, "[They do not] feed the flock" (Ezek. 34:2, 3, 8).¹ That is why every elder must be biblically qualified in the Word. The apostle Paul told Titus that an elder must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught so that: (1) he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also: (2) to rebuke those who contradict it (Titus 1:9). In other words, he must be able to give instruction from the Scriptures and he must be able to spot false teaching and stop it. We cannot stress too strongly that the biblical qualifications for eldership must be met before one can serve.

A POSITION TO BE FILLED BY HARD-WORKING MEN

In one of his two letters to Timothy, Paul underscores the fact that the elder's role as teacher is hard work (1 Tim. 5:17-18). Timothy was working with the church in Ephesus to help them with a serious problem. False teachers had arisen within the church, and there is evidence that some of the problem involved leading men—even elders. So Paul set forth the qualifications of an elder because the Ephesians had evidently fallen short of these qualifications in their appointments. It's possible that recent converts had been appointed as elders without adequate preparation or testing (1 Tim. 3:6). In any case false teaching had appeared, and Paul suggests that the best defense against such teaching is a well-fed or well-taught congregation.

Paul writes, "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5: 17, ESV). The word labor is a strong one; it suggests manual labor to the point of weariness and tiredness. My question to you today is this: Are there any elders laboring diligently in preaching and teaching in your local church? If there are, they should be honored. Their work is the greatest defense against false teaching.

The elders protect the flock, guide the flock, lead the flock, nourish the flock, comfort the flock, educate the flock, and heal the flock—all by means of the Word of God. This cannot be over-emphasized. We do our work by the means of the Word. In fact, many of the congregation's pastoral needs can actually be met or partially met by the teaching of the Word of God. I am

sure that you, my fellow elders, are doing this, but the questions remain: Are you doing it effectively? Are you accomplishing what you need to accomplish, or are you just filling the pulpit?

How then can we carry out our teaching responsibilities effectively?

A PASSION FOR CONTINUAL GROWTH AND LEARNING

The first place for elders (and other leaders) to start is with a development of a passion for continual, personal growth or education. I start here because this is the key to the whole process. If you as an elder (or leader) in the church are not growing, not maturing, not expanding, not changing, and not moving forward, the church will not grow or move forward. It's just that simple. If you as an elder are not excited about the Lord, His work, and His Word, then don't expect the flock to be either. Douglas K. Smith wrote, "When leaders are learning and growing everything about them communicates the same opportunity for other people. They're excited. They do things differently."

One of the most profound and unusual experiences people can have on the job is to see their leaders grow. I once heard leadership expert Bobby Clinton claim that he had studied every leader in the Bible.² He noted that he had also studied the lives of many Christian leaders in biographies. He said that only about one fourth of them (25%) finished their lives well for God. Most leaders do not end well. Great men like Solomon and David illustrate the point. He concluded, "We have observed that most people cease learning by the age of 40." (Who

am I to argue with Bobby Clinton? But in our church it seems that most stop learning at age 25!). "By that we mean that they no longer actively pursue knowledge, understanding, and experience that will enhance their capacity to grow and contribute to others. Most simply rest on what they already know. But those who finish well maintain a positive learning attitude all their lives."³

Now is this conclusion scriptural? Paul says, "Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7, ESV). That's the best translation of this word: *train yourself for godliness*. In other words, we have a part in this. The Holy Spirit has a part, but we have a part. There is both a divine and

human aspect to sanctification—there always is. Paul uses the athletic metaphor ("train yourself") to show that there is a cost to growth in godliness. It involves self-discipline, strategy, and sacrifice.

Then, after counseling Timothy about his spiritual gifts, he says, "Take pains with these things ..." (1 Tim. 4:15, NASB). This is a call to total commitment; "be absorbed in them." He adds, "So that your progress will be evident to all." "Timothy," Paul is saying, "I want everyone in the church to see that you are growing, that you are moving forward for God, and that you are learning and progressing—even though you are a young man." It is a fact of the Christian life that we are either progressing or regressing. No one

stands still. The apostle says further, "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching" (v. 16). He had earlier told the Ephesian elders, "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock" (Acts 20:28). His point is simple: an elder cannot take care of others if he cannot take care of himself.

Writing to the Corinthian Christians, Paul spoke of the outer man decaying (2 Cor. 4:16). As we grow older we know this is true. We find that we need hearing aids, glasses, knee and hip replacements, and wigs! We take Geritol Senior, and we take up walking. Why? Our physical bodies are decaying, and, although we may try, we cannot stop the process. Yet Paul, a man in his 60s, adds, "Our inner man is being renewed day by day." For the believer every day is a day

of inner



renewal and restoration. The Christian life is the most exciting life there is because there is constant growth in the inner man. Nothing is boring in the Christian life except the hours we waste in front of the TV.

In his first Epistle Peter wrote, "Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word" (1 Pet. 2:2). We all know how a new baby tells us he or she wants to eat. Babies scream! They long for the mother's milk; they crave it. Peter says that believers should be like newborn babies in the way they crave the nourishment of the Word of God. Why do we need to ingest the Word? Peter says, "So that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." We do not fully understand all that has been accomplished in our lives through the death of Christ. It's a lifelong process to gain such understanding, and we are to have a passion for that kind of growth. In his second Epistle Peter continues the emphasis on growth. "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Such admonitions to church age believers are an echo of Old Testament teaching ("A wise man will hear and increase in learning," Prov. 1:5).

The education of the church begins with the elders. When we lose our zeal for knowledge, we shall lose our zeal for teaching. When we stop growing, we shall stop influencing others. When we are not excited about the Scripture, we cannot excite others. If we expect to challenge the hearts and the minds of the next generation, our minds must be expanding. If we're going to influence people for God, we need to be learning and growing all the time. Every day should bring renewal. Every day, as I enter the Word of God

and seek to apply the principles of God, I continue to be a growing, renewed person.

It doesn't matter how old we are. We had a man in our assembly (Edward Ristow, Sr.) who just celebrated his 100th birthday a month ago. Up until two years ago he was teaching our seniors' class! The only reason he hasn't continued teaching the class is that he has moved to Phoenix. At 98 years of age, whenever we visited one another, he would show me the newest commentary or book he had been reading. Does anyone really believe that spiritual and intellectual growth stops at 25 or 40? What a dull life that would be! The Christian life should not be dull. It should be a life of constant growth, change, and renewal.

The education of the church begins with the elders. When we lose our zeal for knowledge, we shall lose our zeal for teaching. When we stop growing, we shall stop influencing others.

If we are educators then we have to be growing. Let me give you some suggestions as to how to grow as an eldership, or as leaders of various ministries in the church.

Conferences (tapes, books, and seminars)

One of the ways that we at Littleton Bible Chapel seek to grow ourselves (I say "grow ourselves" because every eldership is a self-managed group) is by attending conferences. We have found this to be of vital importance. Conferences provide a medium for educating

ourselves, keeping ourselves thinking, and becoming conversant with new ideas and contemporary issues. This year we've attended four different conferences. We sent a group of men, some of our newest elders, to the Shepherds' Conference sponsored by Dr. John MacArthur in California. We've been attending that conference for years. More than 3,500 men show up each year. There are many superb seminars. Those who attend always come back home excited. They bring tapes and CDs, which we pass around. In fact, if it's a special conference, dealing with important contemporary issues and problems, those who attended will give a report to the elders. All of our leaders are presently listening to the tapes of the plenary sessions and seminars of the MacArthur conference. We also sent a group to the "Together for the Gospel Conference," where 10,000 men listened to some of our finest evangelical speakers. We're passing the tapes around from those meetings also. Attendees bring back new books and share fresh insights they have learned. We also went to Mark Dever's evangelism conference this year and now some of us are attending the "Iron Sharpens Iron Conference" at Emmaus Bible College.

Conferences, as I've suggested, don't do the assembly any good unless the attendees come home and share what they've learned and how they've been challenged. We should not be alarmed if some get agitated or angry. The worst thing we can do is allow those who are spiritually asleep and apathetic to dictate the direction of the church. We should go home from such conferences and say to the flock, "We have learned some fresh and creative approaches that will help us

with our mission."

There will always be naysayers who resist any change, no matter how helpful and biblical it might be. I have even heard complaints about the Emmaus students who return home after years of study. The critics will say, "Why, these students have come home to our assembly with new ideas!" Listen, that is not a bad thing; it's a good thing. Such freshly invigorated and enthused students should be put to work and not driven away.

The Internet

Not every assembly is healthy, and not every assembly has first-rate preachers. Yet through the Internet, one can go to the finest churches in the world and download sermons by the best expositors of our day. The Word of God expounded is the basic method for instructing the flock, and it is important for the growth of elders that they regularly listen to the best preaching available. One can download messages, listen to them, and then pass them around to encourage growth. The objective is to keep everyone growing—growing in the content of the Word and growing in appreciation of how good preaching is done.

This last point is worth repeating. There are many young men in our churches with evident gift in speaking. Yet they have never had good role models in preaching. My friend Dave MacLeod has told me that listening to Bill McRae's taped series on Daniel (and taking good notes on it) provided a first-rate tutorial in expository preaching. Dave had heard Haddon Robinson's great lectures on preaching at Dallas Seminary,^{iv} but McRae's preaching, as well as that of Dr. S. Lewis Johnson, gave him role models

to follow in his own preaching. I'm not suggesting that we mimic other preachers, but I am suggesting that we learn from them many of the tried and true skills of good exposition.

In any case, the point I want to make is that we must be continually growing, and we are helped along by hearing gifted evangelical preachers and new ideas. These ideas are most often old truths freshly packaged, but they are new to us because we have not sat under strong teaching before.

Have you ever considered the fact that there is no end to spiritual growth? There will be no end to it in heaven either. God is infinite (without boundaries), and though we shall one day be glorified and made immortal (1 Cor. 15:53-55), we shall still be finite and dependent upon God for every aspect of our existence. We shall be learning forever of God. The Lamb shall be our shepherd, and He will guide us to newer and newer pastures and springs—places of learning and growth (Rev. 7:17). Human beings do not yet fully understand this present creation, yet we shall see the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21-22). Forever and ever we shall be awed by the intelligence and wisdom of our Creator and Redeemer. There are millions of life forms on this earth, and there will be millions more (new animals? new trees and plants? new insects?). If one does not like learning new things now, he would not, but for the grace of God, enjoy the new heaven and new earth.

Elder Discussions

Talk to one another as an eldership. Share new books and articles with one another. Help one another learn the skills of personal evangelism and visita-

tion. Discuss with one another how you are educating yourselves. What has God been teaching you through His Word? What weaknesses has He exposed, and how may we help one another deal with them? Let me repeat: there's nothing more exciting for the congregation than to see you as an eldership grow. They look to the elders to provide fresh vision for missions, evangelism, improvement of the meetings, and Christian education. They look for it, expect it, and appreciate it.

Sacrifices

If you are going to grow and mature as an elder or leader, you are going to have to make sacrifices. There's no easy way around this. There will be a price to pay. There's no little hole we can put in the side of your head to blow the information in. It doesn't work that way. You're going to have to say "no" to the television. You're going to have to control that box, because it controls many lives. You're going to have to control the sports and other things you love to do. There are many things we all love to do, and they may be innocent in themselves, but they use up the time we could be devoting to more important things. This is the price one must pay to learn and mature. So my challenge today to elders is this: sit down as a group and talk about your spiritual education. As a self-managed group you and no one else can manage your education in God's things.

A PASSION FOR TEACHING GOD'S WORD EFFECTIVELY

The world is passionate about teaching its values. And it has powerful tools at its disposal. It has the motion picture and television industries. It has the



major universities, the advertising industry, the Internet, books, and magazines. With these powerful tools the “god of this world, [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving” (2 Cor. 4:4). He is a liar and a teacher of lies (John 8:44; cf. 1 Tim. 4:1). With the most up-to-date educational devices he is teaching consumerism, pluralism, radical individualism, egalitarianism, relativism, post-modernism, and atheism. To cite just one example of the devil’s curriculum, for the past several years both the motion picture and television industries have actively promoted the legitimacy of homosexuality. The plots of movies and TV shows make it clear that anyone who rejects homosexuality as immoral and perverse is a complete moron, a bigot, and a purveyor of hate.

The entertainment industry is passionate about their lies, and they make no apologies for them.

The advertising industry is selling its products. Religious people are doing the same. Religious programming is filled with self-centered messages and false teaching such as the “Health and Wealth” gospel. The expensively attired preacher promises the viewer that if he or she will send him donations (preferably large ones), the viewer will receive back from the Lord three or four times that amount. If such promises were true, of course, the major banks in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles would be sending all their profits to TV preachers to double or triple their incomes. These preachers are passionate about their message because while the viewer is impoverished, the preacher grows wealthy.

Now, do we have a passion for

what we believe?

Are we teaching and educating the minds and the hearts of the congregation? Are we challenging the minds and the hearts of our young people, or have we abandoned the field and allowed the world to mold their minds? Remember, the local church is a gospel school. So, assuming we are teaching, are we doing it effectively? Yes, the elders can get a speaker who can fill an hour. Anyone can do that, but are we accomplishing what needs to be done? Are people actually being taught, changed, enabled to grow, and strengthened in the faith? How are we going to do this? Let’s look at some specifics.

A Vision for Relevant, Systematic, Expository Bible Teaching

Many churches throughout American live off of what is called the “sermonette.” G. Campbell Morgan said, “‘Sermonettes’ produce ‘Christianettes.’” Many churches have “preacherettes”

delivering these “sermonettes”—messages in which there is little content, little serious instruction, little passion, little continuity, and little learning. The content of these “sermons” is weak, irrelevant, and often-times unscriptural. There are stories and sentimental thoughts, but there is little authority and power of the Holy Spirit. What Amos said is true in many churches today. Believers are suffering from a “famine on the land ... [a famine] for hearing the words of the LORD” (Amos 8:11). My challenge is to make your assemblies churches of the Bible; in place of “sermonettes” offer solid, consistent, systematic exposition of the very words of God. This is not just the eccentric opinion of one man. It is the opinion of all the great reformers down through the ages. Let me give you a couple of examples. During the time of the 16th century Reformation, one of the major themes of the reformers was, “Back to the Bible.” John Calvin, in Geneva and Martin Luther in Wittenberg were regularly teaching through the Bible. The following is a description of Luther’s Wittenberg:

There were three public services on Sunday: From 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. on the Pauline Epistles and from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. on the Gospels. In the afternoon, there was a continuation of the theme of the morning, and teaching on the catechism. On Monday and Tuesday there were sermons on the catechism using central passages from the Bible. On Wednesday there was a message on the Gospel of Matthew, and on Thursday and Friday there were messages on the Apostolic Letters. Saturday evening was given to John’s Gospel. No one man carried this entire load, but Luther’s share was prodigious:

including family devotions, he often preached four times on Sunday. No wonder there was a reformation! They were taking the people through the Bible.

“Sermonettes” produce “Christianettes.”

There was also a reformation in the 19th century known as the “Brethren movement.” It was a great back-to-the-Bible movement characterized by biblical exposition in its meetings. George Mueller, in his autobiography, wrote, “That which I have found most beneficial in my experience for the last fifty-one years in the public ministry of the Word, is expounding the scriptures, especially going now and then through a whole Gospel or the Epistles.” He adds that sometimes they went verse-by-verse through a book of the Bible, sometimes paragraph-by-paragraph, and sometimes chapter-by-chapter. Whatever their method of exposition (in survey fashion or in great detail), Mueller and his partner in ministry, Henry Craig, took that church through the Bible.

Many are still familiar with William Kelly’s commentaries. They’re actually quite excellent but sometimes hard to read because they are written and printed in an older style. Looking at the beginning of those commentaries, one will see that they were addresses given to a local church. In other words, William Kelly would go to a church and he would give biblical exposition for a number of weeks. His works were prized by preachers throughout the English-speaking world—and not just by preachers in

the Brethren assemblies. Even today many still refer to Kelly. For example, in our local assembly, we have recently gone through the Epistle of 1 Thessalonians on Sunday mornings. One of the resources we used was the commentary on the Thessalonian Epistles by William Kelly. We agree with his approach of taking a congregation in successive meetings through a book of the Bible.

Other examples of Brethren Bible expositors include W. E. Vine, C. F. Hogg, F. F. Bruce, David Gooding, and H. A. Ironside. Mr. Edward Ristow, Sr., whom I mentioned above, remembers Dr. Ironside coming to his assembly for three weeks and ministering every night on Paul’s first Epistle to the Corinthians. Those messages eventually made their way into print as a commentary. In fact, almost all of Ironside’s commentaries were originally expository sermons in local churches in which he would take the congregation through a book of the Bible.

Alfred Gibbs in his book *The Preacher and His Preaching* says this, “Of all the types of sermons this, though perhaps the most difficult, is the very best. ‘There may have been a great expositor who was not a great preacher, but there has never been a great preacher who was not a great expositor.’”^{vi} Steven Lawson adds, “Throughout church history, the preachers who have left a lasting impact on the church have known that, in the words of Michael Horton, ‘the regular proclamation of Christ through the close exposition of Scripture [is] more relevant in creating a worshipping and serving community than political causes, moral crusades or entertaining services.’”^{vii}

For the sake of clarity it is important to explain what I mean by expository

tory preaching. Jack Hughes says that a proper definition of expository preaching must contain the following elements:ⁱⁱⁱ

The *content* of expository preaching is the word of God. The *method* of deriving the sermon is the application of the historical, grammatical method of interpretation and exegesis. The *quality* of the sermon is accuracy to the text of God's word. The *goal* of expository preaching is to represent or expose to view or plainly reveal what God and the authors of Scripture meant by what they said, exactly and entirely. The *practical purpose* of expository preaching is to show how the text of Scripture is to be applied in the believer's life. The expository sermon must also be *personally applied* by the preacher and *delivered in the power of the Holy Spirit*. The *mode* of delivery is public preaching or proclamation.

Let me suggest a plan many churches have used. It is not a divinely inspired plan, so you are free to adopt what you like and ignore the rest. I should add that any such plan should be agreed upon by the elders and shared with the congregation. Whatever the plan, the elders must have a strategy for teaching the Word of God on Sunday morning. Someone might ask, "Why Sunday morning?" What happens on Sunday morning trickles down to the whole church. The whole church gathers on Sunday morning (I am speaking here in the North American context). On Sunday morning the congregation is psychologically and spiritually ready to hear from the Lord. What they see and hear then will filter down through the whole assembly: the attitudes that are set, the way the Word is preached, and how God and His Word are honored. These things will be adapted during other

meetings and ministries of the church. So I will start with the Sunday morning curriculum—especially the ministry of the Word to the whole church.

Your strategy in the main service for the ministry of the Word will help the elders clarify to other teachers exactly what they expect whenever the Word is taught. We cannot blame the teachers of the assembly if they are not effective if we as elders have not clarified exactly what we expect of them. The congregation, as well, should know exactly what the elders are doing and what they can expect on a Sunday morning. It will not do to have a superb preacher one Sunday and then have a preacher the next Sunday who is so incompetent that the people would be embarrassed to bring a friend. Let the congregation know the kind of quality you are striving for and why this is best for the flock. A well-fed flock will happily get behind a strategy that is providing them with top quality ministry of the Word. Here are some specifics:

(1) Regular, Systematic, Expository Bible Teaching

The basic diet for the congregation should be the exposition of the Word of God in a regular, systematic fashion. (This does not mean that some problem or issue cannot be dealt with in topical fashion; although even then the text should be handled in an expository way). The first step in expository preaching is for the elders to decide on a book to preach; for example, they might choose the Epistle to the Romans. The book can be divided into paragraphs to determine exactly how many sessions (and months) the series is going to take. There is great value in selecting Romans, of course, because in the course of the series most

of the major doctrines of Scripture are touched upon. We cannot assume today that our assemblies are well versed in Scripture and theology. We cannot assume that people understand justification by faith, redemption, propitiation, reconciliation, sanctification, and glorification. Today's assembly people need to hear the great foundational core doctrines expounded as they come up in the systematic exposition of the Epistle. In chapters 9-11 they will hear of God's eternal plan as it relates to individuals and to Israel. Then, in chapters 12-16 they will hear how the doctrines of chapters 1-11 relate practically to the Christian life. If the Epistle is expounded systematically, carefully, and ably over the course of six months or a year the congregation will learn and grow much.

(2) Clear, Challenging, Well-Prepared, Easy to Understand Messages

There should be a commitment on the part of the elders that anyone who teaches the congregation as a whole will be gifted for the work and will expend time and effort in the preparation of a message. I have been invited to churches, and the person inviting me will say almost apologetically, "Now don't do any preparation. Just share with us." I was at a meeting where the man said, "We don't like to preach. We just share." What does the Bible say? "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2). When a speaker says he is going to "share" something with the assembly, watch out! It usually indicates lack of ability, lack of preparation, and lack of solid content. On Sunday morning those who teach the Word should inform the mind, challenge the conscience, and inspire the heart. There should be clear, easy to follow, informa-

tive, and interesting outlines. And there should be credibility, that is, the preacher should know his subject, give evidence of preparation, and speak with authority. People will not tolerate messages that have no credibility. Or, they will get used to them and expect nothing from them. In summary, this is our plan. We ask our teachers that their messages be clear, challenging, well-prepared, and easy to understand.

(3) Relevant, Inspiring Application of the Word for 21st Century People

The preachers' neglect of message application is an area where there is serious failure today. There are speakers who read the commentaries, study hard, and even produce a nice outline. But they do not apply the Word of God. Some men who have preached for years would not even understand what I mean by application. Some time ago a person sent me five tapes of different speakers in his congregation, and he asked me to critique them. In a moment of weakness I agreed to listen to all five. Out of the five only one actually took the information from Scripture and applied it to the people. Only one sought to challenge the hearts and minds of his hearers. Only one sought to speak to them about how the passage should affect their everyday lives. Applying the sermon means that our listeners are faced with the imperatives of Scripture. We have to be different Monday morning as a result of this teaching. It should have an effect upon us at work and in our families.

Let's suppose you are preaching through the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7) and you've arrived at the paragraph that deals with storing up treasures on earth and in heaven (Matt. 6:19-21). You exegete the pas-

sage, read the commentators, and produce a careful outline. In the pulpit you carefully and clearly explain to the congregation what the passage means. But you fail to ask, "What does the passage mean to me in daily life?" You have neglected the important ingredient of application.

It is the job of the preacher to take the words of God, explain them to the people, and then bring fire and lightning to their hearts, minds, and consciences by applying them.

How then should you apply this passage? You do it by saying, "Brothers and sisters, what about that credit card in your wallet? What about your checkbook? If you dropped your credit card statement or your checkbook and someone paged through it—just to see whose it was—would he find anything for God in that checkbook? Or would it all the expenditures be upon self? Do you just go out and use that credit card willy-nilly, accumulate big bills, and find yourself dangerously in debt?" You continue, "We have so many young couples in our church in serious, financial trouble. We have people losing everything and declaring bankruptcy." Now, you, as the preacher, are taking the Word and applying it. Will the congregation feel a little convicted then, when the text is applied? I think so! Some will shrink down in their seats at the application. The Word of God should convict and move the conscience and move people to action. If when you preach you just give facts, you are not allowing the Word to transform, change, and challenge lives.

The Word of God is to be transformational. Information leads to transformation. It is the job of the preacher to take the words of God, explain them to the people, and then bring fire and lightning to their hearts, minds, and consciences by applying them.

Whenever I prepare a message I have before me two separate pieces of paper. The first sheet is for the sermon outline. As I am reading and studying, I am continually tinkering and playing with an outline. On the second sheet I am seeking to answer the questions, What are my applications?; How does this passage apply to daily life? This is an essential part of the preacher's work, for what good is a sermon that has no summons, no call to action, or no application of the Word of God? The message must mean something to the listener in the days following its delivery. Those who teach and preach on Sunday (whether in the main service, the adult Bible class, and the Sunday school classes) need to be told this. They need to be told this and given instruction in it because (believe it or not) for many people application is an unknown concept. It will not do to provide your listeners with just information—dry comments on the text. The elders need to tell all teachers and preachers, "We want you to apply the Word." And provide them with guidance and literature that will show them how.

I have this as a personal rule: in a 45-minute message there must be at least fifteen minutes of application. This application can come at the end or it can be interspersed throughout the message. I personally like to apply the text throughout my message. It should go without saying, but the application must come out of the text you are preaching. Too many preachers

pluck their applications out of thin air. They make a point, and the listener asks, “Where did that application come from?” The biblical preacher, however, applies the text he is proclaiming. In the example I gave earlier of preaching from Matthew 6:19-20 (“treasures on earth ... treasures in heaven”), the illustrations I used (credit card statements and check book registers) come right from the text. In that passage the Lord is guiding His people in their attitude toward and use of money. The preacher takes that guidance and applies it to his 21st century audience.

If our church had a preacher who never applied his messages, the elders would meet with him and tell him, “This is not what we’ve promised the congregation. We have promised them that the Bible will be taught with lots of application for daily life.” That is what God’s hungry people want and need. I had one preacher tell me, “It is not my job to apply the Word.” I said, “That’s exactly your job! People can get the facts, but they don’t seem to have the ability to understand how to apply the facts. That’s your job as the preacher—to apply the facts.”

So, in laying out a strategy for the teaching ministry, on whatever level in the church, the elders must make it clear to the teachers that the Word is to be applied. They must insist they do not want a gutted-out list of facts. Of course, facts are necessary. As Charles Ryrie once said, “Every good meal begins with a grocery list.” But we must go beyond the grocery list to a well-prepared, nourishing meal. So it should be with biblical sermons. They must be practical just as the Bible is practical. It is a book that touches upon every area of human life. So, as elders, let’s help our teachers and preachers in the

important area of application. Let’s teach them how to touch souls, move hearts, and challenge minds.

(4) Appropriate Teachers for Each Situation

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to believers. There are many different gifts, and each of the gifts varies according to the person who has it. Gifts come in many shapes, colors and sizes. For example, the gift of evangelism differs according to person. There are evangelists like Dwight Moody and Billy Graham who spoke to crowds of thousands. Other evangelists work in the area of personal evangelism and are most fruitful when witnessing to an individual or speaking to a small group. Some are skillful debaters and apologists who are comfortable proclaiming the gospel on university campuses (C. S. Lewis, Josh McDowell, and Ravi Zacharias). Some use correspondence courses to reach criminals in prisons, and others use coffee clubs or book clubs to reach their neighbors. There are many different kinds of evangelists.

The same thing is true of those who are teachers. They also come in all shapes, colors, and sizes. Some are able platform teacher-preachers who are quite at home in front of large audiences. Some find fulfillment in teaching children in Sunday school, while others enjoy teaching small groups. Not every teacher is a suitable teacher of the whole congregation on Sunday morning, a congregation that includes saved and unsaved, and children and adults. I work with a man who is a superb teacher in classroom situations. He is good at generating questions, leading the group in discussion, and providing excellent comments on the text. He’s a serious stu-

dent and does an excellent job in that particular situation. Yet he is not at home on the platform, and we would misuse him by placing him in that role. We need to place our teachers in the situation that is appropriate for their gifts.

It is good if the elders can promise the congregation, “On Sunday morning we are going to put our best teachers up front.” If God raises up a superior teacher in your local church, you must use him. It is not uncommon, of course, for an assembly to be very small and not have a gifted Bible teacher. In such a situation you have to use the best you have. Get behind such men and help them. Every preacher can improve if he has the desire to learn and change. Work with what you have and do your best to place each teacher in the appropriate slot.

I also want to say that the platform is not the place for practice. If you have gifted young men, find a situation where they can exercise their gifts at least once a week. We don’t develop a gifted man by having him speak once in a while in the main service when he’s still a novice and inexperienced. Provide him with another venue where he can speak once a week and develop his skills (adult Bible classes, Sunday school classes, high school or college age classes, small group fellowships, etc.).

(5) Gospel Proclamation

Another thing we have promised our congregation in Littleton is that every Sunday at the 11:00 a.m. preaching service (“Family Bible Hour”) the gospel will be proclaimed. We have told the people they should feel free to bring unsaved friends and relatives to that meeting. There will be interesting



Bible teaching, lots of life application, and the preaching of the gospel. Because of this the congregation knows what to expect on Sunday morning. It’s not going to be a hit or miss situation. They know they have elders working hard at making that meeting one that will provide good spiritual food for believers and a challenge to unbelievers who are present.

The apostle speaks of elders who “work hard at preaching and teaching” (1 Tim. 5:17). This means more than picking up the phone and scheduling a Sunday speaker. The teaching ministry of the church falls directly under the job description of the elders. That is the primary area of their ministry, namely, the teaching and feeding ministry. Lots of discussion in the elders’ meetings needs to be devoted to the work of preaching and teaching.

A VISION FOR TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD TO THE WHOLE CHURCH OF GOD—BOTH ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Teaching the Full Counsel of God

The apostle said to the Ephesian elders, “I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27, ESV). He was leaving them, but he was confident he had given them everything he could. Everything he had received by divine revelation he had passed on to them (vv. 20, 24, 26-27). In similar fashion he taught the Thessalonian believers. Although he was only with them for a month or so, he diligently taught them the truth. He did not stop with basic doctrine but taught serious theology to these new

believers—even discussing God’s prophetic program. As 21st century elders, those in charge of the feeding of the flock, we, too, must discuss the whole counsel of God. As a group we must ask ourselves some blunt questions: “How much have we taught the people? What do the people need? What have we neglected to teach? What doctrines and principles do they need to hear at this particular time?”

I’ve recently noted a healthy development in a number of churches; they have taken Wayne Grudem’s book *Bible Doctrine*, and are using it as a textbook for a course on systematic theology (some on Sunday evenings and some on a week day evening).^{viii} This is a good thing for these churches because many believers have no under-

standing of the major doctrinal categories of Scripture, and many have no idea of the basic story line of the Bible.

Many Christians live such busy lives and have so many distractions that their knowledge of Christian things is abysmal.

In any case, the elders have got to talk regularly about the spiritual diet of the church. It would be a good idea, furthermore, if a detailed record were kept of what has been taught in the various meetings (Family Bible Hour, Sunday school, Awana, Women's Ministry, etc.) over the years.

Sunday School Curriculum

We have many misconceptions about our Sunday school programs. Let me say this very strongly: Sunday school is not a babysitting service. It's not a place where you drop off the kids so you can go to the real thing in the preaching service. Big things happen in Sunday school. Countless people have been saved there, and most Christians get their earliest Bible teaching there. The elders of the assembly—remember, they are responsible for the teaching ministry of the church—need to know and guide the curriculum of the Sunday school. The work of elders is to feed the flock, and the children are included in that responsibility. Elders need to ask, "What are our children learning?" They should know and help pick out the materials to be used and the curriculum that is to be followed. This task is not one that is settled once and then forgotten. The curriculum must be reviewed regularly. Furthermore, in concert with the teachers the

elders need to discuss how the materials are to be supplemented. Almost any published Sunday school curriculum you purchase for use in your assembly will need to be supplemented. The publishers themselves acknowledge this.

You may notice, for example, that your materials say little or nothing about baptism and the Lord's Supper. Supplementary material will be needed to cover these areas. You may find that materials for the teens skip over certain important ethical areas that young people struggle with and that need to be biblically discussed in class, for example, chastity, pornography, homosexuality, and abortion.

If the Sunday school receives careful attention it will pay long-term dividends.

Someone (or a small group of parents) in the assembly (approved by the elders) should review the curriculums currently available from evangelical publishers. After the research has been done a report can be given to the elders of the best available. If there is a Christian education specialist in the area, he or she could be brought in to discuss with the elders and teachers what is available and why certain materials are better than others. Having an expert in the field give a report can be an interesting, even fascinating, experience. Appoint as Christian education director someone who has a real burden for the spiritual education of your children.

We must remember that we have these children with us for years.

Tragically many of them learn little or nothing in Sunday school. Emmaus Bible College gives a Bible test to all incoming freshmen. The indications are that our assembly-raised young people are not being taught as well as in the past. Set goals for your program. By the time a child enters junior high he should have covered certain Bible books and doctrines. By the time he enters high school he should have covered yet more. You might determine, for example, that every high school graduate will have read through the Bible in Sunday school and will have surveyed the major biblical doctrines. Elders must be involved in this process, and they must get others involved. If the Sunday school receives careful attention it will pay long-term dividends.

Sunday School Teachers

The elders are responsible for the teachers. The elders should approve anyone teaching in the church. No one should be picking and appointing teachers aside from the elders. At our assembly in Littleton we have some basic requirements for teachers. They have to sign our doctrinal statement. If they disagree with a point of doctrine, we as elders want to know about it. We also ask them to read Paul Little's book, *Know What You Believe*, as well as a few other volumes before they can teach on any level.^{ix} Every year or so we have a course for our teachers that is designed to help them become better teachers. All gifted teachers can improve if they are challenged.

Adult Education

We need to be teaching the adults in

our churches. The Southern Baptist Church, the largest evangelical denomination in the country, owes much of its growth to adult Sunday school classes. Logistics may prevent your assembly from having such a class on Sunday morning, but you could have one on Sunday evening or on a midweek evening. New believers and newcomers need to know what you as a church believe and teach. There may be people attending your church who have been coming for four or five years and do not know what your convictions are and how you operate. Such classes can be held in your church building or, if the group is small, in a private home. Larger classes can also be held for long-time members to help them study different doctrines or biblical books in depth. The people in our assemblies should know that the elders are serious about their spiritual growth and are providing teaching that will encourage it.

The Christian Home

We regularly offer courses on the Christian home and raising children. Such courses are not only helpful to families in the assembly, but they are also great evangelistic tools for reaching unsaved people. Parents want and need help, and the local church needs to give it to them by educating them in the very difficult task of raising children in modern society. Happily, there are very good materials available for such teaching—even for the local church that has no teachers competent in the field. For example, there are several video series available on the subject of marriage enrichment and child rearing. One very impressive series,

entitled "The Truth Project" has been produced by Focus on the Family. Several adult groups at our chapel have used it and profited from it. Del Tackett teaches the 12 one-hour lessons. It is a DVD-based small group curriculum designed to communicate the Christian worldview.

Seniors' Ministry

One area that is being neglected in many churches is ministry to seniors. It is not easy growing old, becoming a widow or widower, and living far from children and other family members. They need to be cared for, supported, and taught the Word. At our chapel we have a seniors' class on Wednesday mornings at 9:30. Two of our deacons are responsible for teaching the class, and refreshments follow the teaching time. The group also gets together regularly for lunch and other activities.

Shut-ins need special attention, and each one is assigned a deacon ("point man") who is responsible for him or her. The point man calls his shut-in regularly, and he brings him or her the weekly bulletin and a CD of Sunday's message. In the main foyer of the chapel we have a bulletin board with a picture of each of our shut-ins. On a table by the bulletin board there is a stack of pre-addressed envelopes. Chapel members are encouraged to take a card and envelope and send a brief note to the older brother or sister who can no longer get out to the meetings.

A VISION FOR DEVELOPING MORE TEACHERS AND MORE EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Part of overseeing a congregation is assuring there is a future for the congregation. Elders need to provide men who can feed and protect the congregation in the future. I believe that educating and training the next generation of leaders is a major responsibility of elders. Those who neglect this important work are sealing the coffin of their assembly. We start with identifying future leaders and teachers. Then we need to train them and encourage them.

Develop an Eye for People

First, we have to develop an eye for future leaders and teachers. In many assemblies no one is even looking for future teachers and preachers. We have to be deliberate and take initiative in watching out for those who have an interest in the study of the Word of God and who volunteer for teaching positions. In our elders' meetings we have to identify them by name and talk about their interest and gifts. Remember Paul's words to Timothy: "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2, NASB). It goes without saying that Timothy could not have done this if he didn't know the "faithful men" by name.

Provide Regular Teaching Opportunities

Even after the elders have identified

future prospects it will take time to train them. But the process begins with having an eye for potential leaders and teachers and *pushing them forward*. Potential teachers should be put in regular teaching positions. If they are young, put them in a Sunday school class and tell them they need to be teaching every week. Or, give them a small group Bible study. Even if they have good communication skills they need to be improved, so tell them the elders want them to be teaching regularly.

Teaching just once or twice a year on the Sunday morning platform does not help them; it terrifies them. Yes, there are exceptional people who have an enormous gift, but that is not the norm. Most of us start out with a grade of C- or below in teaching, preaching, and leading. Exceptional people stand out almost immediately, but I am not talking about them at this point. I am talking about the average person you are going to train.

Furthermore, guide them into the areas of their special gifts and abilities. As I noted above, not all teachers are Sunday morning Family Bible Hour teachers. Teachers come in all colors, shapes, and sizes. Many are not public orators. Some are small group teachers or personal one-on-one teachers. Help them to understand where they fit so they do not become frustrated. Each teacher needs to be guided into the ministry slot that is best suited to his temperament and gifts.

Provide Materials and Conference Opportunities

As I noted earlier, but would like to emphasize, a major part of our strategy for developing our leaders and teachers is to send them to conferences, and to provide good tapes and CDs to pass around to other gifted men. Listening to the tapes and CDs gives a real challenge to our young men. Hearing great preachers provides a regular tutorial in the elements of good preaching and teaching. They should also be provided with good textbooks on preaching.

CONCLUSION

Here is my closing challenge to elders: Be deliberate about these things. Take the initiative; be proactive and do not allow things to just happen. Do not lead and feed the assembly by delegating all your responsibilities to others. Make sure the majority of your discussions with one another relate to the feeding of the flock. Ask yourselves: If we had a flock of real sheep, how would they be doing? Would they be well fed, protected, and secure? Or would they be sick or dead because of our neglect? And remember, all of the people of God (children, adults, seniors) need to be cared for so well that they are flourishing. This requires you to teach them the whole counsel of God and not a few traditional hobby-horses or pet subjects. Give them a full, healthy diet of biblical teaching. †



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ADDENDUM: RESOURCES FOR PREACHERS AND TEACHERS

SERMONS ON CASSETTE TAPES

Cassette Study Guide (rev. ed., Dallas: Believers Chapel Tape Ministry, 2000). An excellent model of what a New Testament church can do in providing consistent expository ministry to the congregation. Contains theological lectures and sermons by S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., as well as sermons by William McRae, Dan Duncan, Haddon Robinson, Zane Hodges, Bruce Waltke, J. I. Packer and others.

Grace to You, PO Box 4000, Panorama City, CA 91312. The tape ministry of John MacArthur.

Tapes From Scotland, c/o J. Bruce Laing, 177 Hamilton Street, Broughty Ferry, Dundee, DD5 2RE, United Kingdom. Distributes the tapes of the outstanding expositor, Eric Alexander.

Word of Truth Bible Study materials, PO Box 10514, Kansas City, MO 64188. Distributes the tapes of Bible teacher, Chester McCalley.

Talks for Growing Christians, c/o Growing Christian Ministries, Inc., PO Box 5757, River Forest, IL 60305. The tape ministry of "Dr. Dave Reid," retired member of the Emmaus Bible College faculty.

All Souls Tape Catalogue, c/o All Souls Church, Langham Place, 2 All Souls Place, London W1N 3DB, United Kingdom. Distributes the tapes of John Stott and others.

SERMONS ON THE INTERNET

For any sermon that may not download but takes you instead to an online streaming format, simply right click on the link for that sermon and choose "save link as"

<www.believerschapeldallas.org/temp/online.htm>. Believers Chapel offers both audio and printed notes as well as MP3 files on expository addresses by S. Lewis Johnson, Bill McRae, and Dan Duncan as well as addresses by guest preachers (James Boice, Bruce Waltke, Haddon Robinson, etc.)

<www.sljinstitute.net>. This Web site is devoted exclusively to the Bible teaching, lectures, and sermons by S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. Printed notes, audio messages, and MP3 files are all available.

<www.pbc.org/dp/Stedman>. The complete catalogue of Ray Stedman's sermons. He was a very able expositor of the Word.

<www.SermonCentral.com>. Thousands of sermons and illustrations from a variety of sources. They are of mixed value.

<www.bible.org>. Producers of this site offer a host of resources for the preacher, including a large catalogue of expository messages. They are the organization that produced the NET Bible.

OTHER SITES ON THE INTERNET CONTAINING SERMONS AND THEOLOGICAL LECTURES DOWNLOADABLE IN MP3 FORMAT

Capitol Hill Baptist Church - Mark Dever and Elders
Link: <http://resources.christianity.com/default/hbc.aspx>
Summary: Mark Dever provides sermons to buy on CD or download in MP3 format, also includes sermon summaries.

Covenant Life Church - Joshua Harris and Elders
Link: www.covlife.org select "Tools For Growth", select Sermons Past or Recent.
Summary: In his somewhat middle americanized way, Joshua Harris brings the message of the cross home powerfully. The well known CJ Mahaney once was a senior pastor here and his messages are also available.

Biblical Preaching
Link: <http://www.biblicalpreaching.info/>
Summary: Desiring God sets out to put all 30 some years of John Piper's preaching. The site also contains a good selection from preachers like Ray Ortlund, Dr. Kent Hughes, Carey Hughes, and Paul Rees, pastor of Christ Redeemer Church.

Believers Chapel
Link: <http://www.believerschapeldallas.org/online.htm>
Summary: S Lewis Johnson's sermons are, for the most part, available in full in MP3 format here. Dan Duncan, Bruce Waltke, William McRae and others also have sermons available.

The Al Mohler Program
Link: http://www.albertmohler.com/audio_list.php
Summary: Al Mohler provides some of the most culturally relevant and biblically solid material available communicating openly and often about post modernism, homosexuality, tolerance, and many other hot evangelical and secular arguments. While not entirely expository he does lecture flawlessly with wonderful, God-centered, biblically based, doctrine driven, lecturing and preaching.

First Presbyterian Church, Jackson Mississippi
Link: http://www.fpcjackson.org/old_recent.htm
Summary: From the preaching ministry of J. Ligon Duncan comes a database of useful sermons, an especially comprehensive passage by passage sermon series is available for Ephesians.

Christway Media
Link: <http://resources.christianity.com/archives/cm.aspx>
Summary: Sadly, all the sermons of DA Carson available here are \$1.50 a piece or \$9 a series...and that is just MP3 download. Still though, 272 DA Carson sermons...

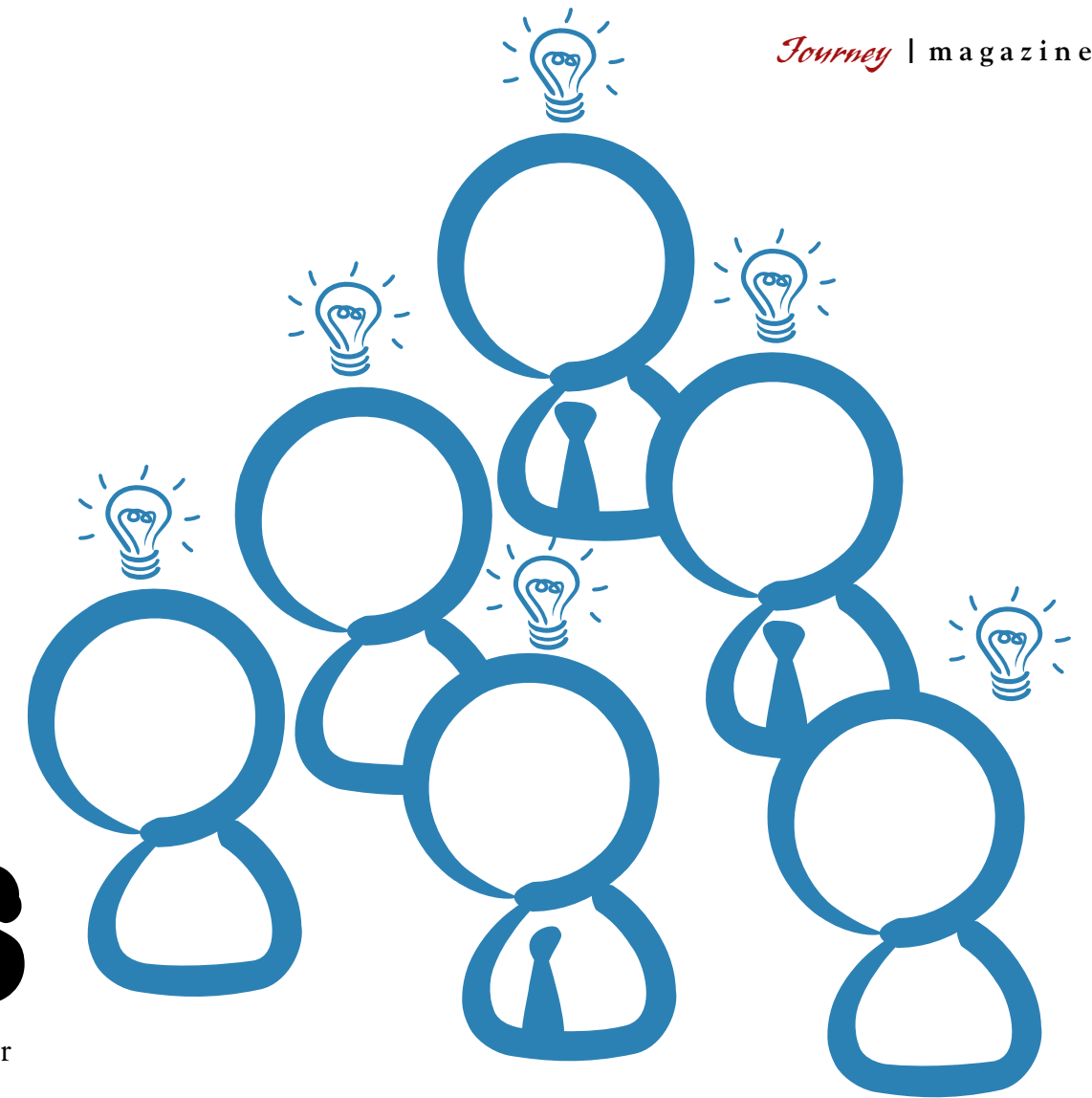
Voices for Christ
Link: <http://www.voicesforchrist.org/index.html>
Summary: Thousands of sermons by Brethren assembly preachers past and present.

This list is in no way comprehensive; most churches and many famous theologians and pastors have lectures, sermons, and interviews readily available on the Internet and most of them are free of charge. Keywords are: Audio, Sermons, By/Of, Name of theologian, church, pastor, elder, conference, Bible study. Not all of it is good and some of it is outright poor, but if you know who is who in theology, finding the right content is not too hard.

ⁱ Charles Edward Jefferson, *The Minister as Shepherd* (New York: Crowell, 1912), 59-60.
ⁱⁱ See Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 213-229.
ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 222.
^{iv} Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: the Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).
^v Alfred P. Gibbs, *The Preacher and His Preaching*, 4th ed. (Topeka, KS: Walterick, 1958), 241. One should read Gibbs' list of the advantages of expository preaching (242-44).
^{vi} Michael Horton, "James Montgomery Boice: Servant of the Word," *Modern Reformation* (Sept., 2000): 56; quoted by Steven J. Lawson, *Famine in the Land: A Passionate Call for Expository Preaching* (Chicago: Moody, 2003), 26.
^{vii} Jack Hughes, *Expository Preaching with Word Pictures* (Fearn, UK: Christian Focus, 2001), 17-18.
^{viii} Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, ed. Jeff Purswell (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999). This work is a condensation of Grudem's larger *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995). The larger volume (1200 pages) has been reduced to 450 pages in Purswell's abridgement. Grudem's original *Systematic Theology* would be suitable for an advanced adult class.
^{ix} Paul Little, *Know What You Believe* (Wheaton: Scripture Press, 1970).



that Preaching[^] Connects



By Daniel Degeer

The cover of Time Magazine's March 24, 2008 edition featured the headline, "10 Ideas That Are Changing the World." Time's version of the "Top Ten" reminds us that every culture and society is impacted by ideas. After all, it is a commitment to an idea that compels the already over-worked dad to take on over-time, and the frazzled mother to babysit the fourth kid from the neighbourhood in order to finance the next gadget to complement the purchase of the new house already complete with a three car garage. The goddess of materialism, with her deceptive allure, continues to be a dominant idea in our western culture that grabs most of us by the throat. People who

strap bombs to their bodies and commit themselves to martyrdom in the crowded marketplace, believing they are destined for a sensual paradise, are committed to an idea. The idea of atheistic hedonism motivates others to go for the gusto...now...as they ride the "freedom carousel" of eat, drink and be merry, thinking that this is all there is to life. We are all shaped, influenced and impacted by ideas. That is why it is important that when we stand and preach, we preach the ideas of the Bible; ideas that have come from God.¹ How people respond to these ideas impacts their eternity. Because the stakes are so high, it is crucial that when we preach, a connection is made;

that when we communicate these biblical ideas, we do so with relevance because great communication is relevant communication.

Great Communication is Relevant Communication

But what does it mean to be relevant? David Henderson, in his book *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to Our Changing World* says two things must exist for there to be relevant communication. First of all, there must be *Actual Relevance*. Something that possesses actual relevance speaks to those issues that impact me. It deals with matters that reside at the intersection of "Real" and "Life"; issues that

catch us in the cross-hairs of life. However, actual relevance alone is not enough. There must also be *Functional Relevance*: for something to be relevant, I must be able to see and understand its relevance.² Now, here is the challenge. As followers of Jesus and preachers of His word, we are convinced that the Bible speaks to the issues of life; that it possesses actual relevance. However, not everyone sees it that way. For some, the Bible is perceived as merely an ancient text. While conceding it might have possessed relevance for the people of its time, they wonder what significance it can hold for the likes of you and me living centuries later and half-a-world

away. These divergent perspectives present a challenge for those wishing to effectively communicate the ideas of the Bible because *great communication...is relevant communication*. How should we proceed in order to meet this challenge? Tucked away in the Old Testament, the unlikely book of Nehemiah provides some helpful insights as we read: "And they read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading" (Neh. 8:8 NASB). This text reminds us that communicators of God's truth do not merely preach and teach the Bible, they preach and teach the Bible to people. As in Nehemiah's day, so also

in ours, we need to preach in such a way that the text is brought to bear upon the needs and circumstances of our people by communicating in a language that they understand. In our preaching, a connection needs to take place between the words that we preach and the people who listen. To be sure, it is not the preacher's job to make the Bible relevant. It is already over-the-top in the way it speaks to the issues of life. It is, however, our responsibility to demonstrate its relevance to people's lives today. How can we best accomplish this? It is the premise of this article that the kind of *Preaching that Connects* is best achieved through *expository preaching*.

Expository Preaching...ugh!

But...listen...what is it that I hear? It is the sound of dejected moans and groans from people who cannot believe they are reading “effective, relevant communication” and “expositional preaching” in the same sentence! After all, experience tells many people that expositional preaching is equal to “boring”, “dry” and “irrelevant” sermons. To them an expository sermon is as dry as a desert heat and as painful as a root canal. The tragic reality is that expositional preaching has suffered as much from its so-called friends as it has from its critics. One of the challenges people face when advocating expositional preaching is dealing with the misconceptions surrounding it. These misunderstandings cloud one’s vision regarding what exactly constitutes expositional sermons and preaching. Therefore, in order to deconstruct some of these “urban myths” we need to consider expositional preaching as a matter for *Clarification, Definition and Explanation*.

Expositional Preaching... A Matter for Clarification

First of all, contrary to some people’s understanding, *expositional preaching is not an exegetical lecture*. Presenting one’s exegetical findings is not to be equated with preaching an expositional sermon. Sunday morning is neither the place nor time for us to empty the bucket of our exegetical front-end loaders all over our congregations. To be sure, our exegetical studies impact our sermons, but they do not comprise them.

Secondly, *expositional preaching is not the same as verse by verse preaching*. An expositional sermon is not a running commentary on the text. This kind of preaching usually provides a variety of exegetical insights and textual information. While there might be an explanation of each phrase or sentence, in some cases each word, this sermon does not reflect a unity of thought that is held together by the overarching idea of the passage. At the end of the sermon there might be twelve baskets of fragments left over but there is not a sense that the listener has just enjoyed the wholeness of a full-course dinner.

We are all shaped, influenced and impacted by ideas. That is why it is important that when we stand and preach, we preach the ideas of the Bible; ideas that have come from God.

Thirdly, *expositional preaching is not a sermon model*. In discussions or lectures on preaching, reference is made to sermon types or models. There are topical, narrative, biographical and prophetic sermons, to name a few. Sometimes included in this kind of a list is the term “expositional sermon”, as if an expository sermon is just another type or model. This notion however, does not reflect an accurate understanding of an expositional sermon.

An expositional sermon is a broader category than any of the previously mentioned sermon types. In fact,

a topical, narrative, or prophetic sermon can all be expositional. This is so, not because of a particular format but because of the approach that has been undertaken in developing the sermon. This fact leads to another important clarification: *Expositional preaching is more of a philosophy than a methodology*. Matthewson writes, “At its core, expository preaching is more of a philosophy than a method. That is, it amounts to a set of pre-commitments or convictions rather than a particular method.”³ The following question illustrates the point. “Do you as a preacher, endeavor to bend your thought to the Scriptures, or do you use the Scriptures to support your thought?”⁴ In expositional preaching we are committed to the former. The text must inform our thoughts rather than us forcing our thought on to the text. Here is another question that serves as a certain kind of self-administered test if answered honestly. As a preacher, how do I respond when, having examined a particular text, I discover that it does not say or mean what I originally thought it meant or said? Do I change my sermon or do I bend the text to make it fit? Hopefully, we do not make this discovery at 10:00 p.m. on a Saturday night because a commitment to expositional preaching demands that I change my sermon! This is part of what we mean when we say that expositional preaching is more of a philosophy of sermon preparation and preaching than a method; it is a philosophy clearly seen when examining a definition of expositional preaching.

Expositional Preaching... a Matter for Definition

Review a number of definitions put forward by advocates of expositional preaching and you will discover that there are key elements that emerge as identifying features of expositional sermons. Haddon Robinson in his book *Biblical Preaching*, a book which has become a standard homiletics textbook used in scores of Bible Colleges and Seminaries, offers the following representative definition:

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.⁵

From this and other similar definitions, at least three key elements of expositional preaching can be identified which include the following:

1. There is the communication of a main idea.
2. The main idea comes from a study of the text.
3. Application is a main feature of the sermon.

It is fair to say that without these three elements, a sermon cannot, by definition, be identified as expositional. Therefore, each point merits further explanation.

Passage Psalm 73	Textual Idea In the midst of doubting God’s goodness Asaph sought God’s presence and perspective and renewed his trust in God.	
Acts 5:17-42	The apostles obeyed God in the midst of great opposition because God is supreme and His purposes will be accomplished.	
Passage Psalm 73	Textual Idea In the midst of doubting God’s goodness Asaph sought God’s presence and perspective and renewed his trust in God.	Preaching Idea A God-centered vision silences the doubt of God’s goodness and transforms us from discouragement to trust.
Acts 5:17-42	The apostles obeyed God in the midst of great opposition because God is supreme and his purposes will be accomplished.	As followers of Jesus, we must obey God even when it hurts knowing that his cause will triumph.

Expositional Preaching... An Explanation

An Expository Sermon Communicates a Main Idea

Communicators for centuries have contended that effective communication requires a central idea. In homiletics, the concept is referred to by different names, including: the “big idea”⁶, “sermon theme”⁷ or “the major idea, or theme, that glues the message together...”⁸ The terminology differs but the concept is the same. Duane Litfin superbly defends the importance of a central idea in a speech or sermon when he states:

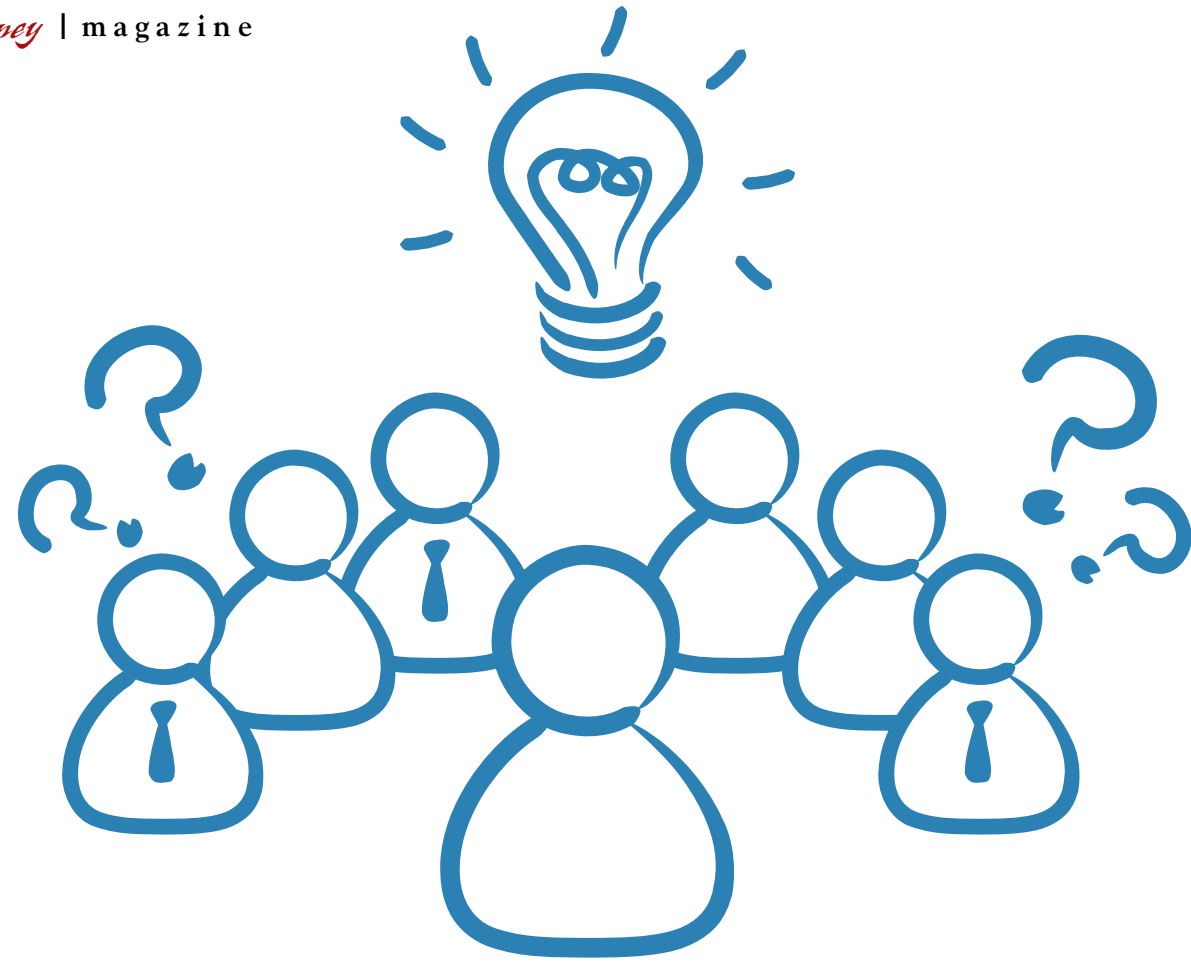
from the ancient Greek and Roman rhetoricians to the latest communication theorists, from the preaching in the Bible to the sermons heard in pulpits today,...the history of public speaking and the

lessons we have learned from that history unite to argue forcefully that a speech to be maximally effective, ought to attempt to develop more or less fully only one major proposition.⁹

Expository sermons reflect the importance of this feature of effective communication.

In expository sermons the main idea comes from the text.

Sometimes when sermons are preached, an opening text is read, but at the end of the sermon one wonders what it had to do with the text; it is like the perfunctory reciting of the Lord’s Prayer at the beginning of the city council meeting; it doesn’t seem to have anything to do with what follows. Not so with an expositional sermon. The expositional sermon revolves around the text. The theme of the sermon comes from the text. The main



points and even the sub-points come from the text. The text is crucial to the expositional sermon and thus the challenge for the preacher is to exposit its meaning and to show how this idea connects to the reader today.

Two Key Stages in Communicating Your Idea

Now, there are two key stages involved in establishing and preaching the main idea of the expository sermon:

1. Determine your “Textual Idea”

It begins with determining the “exegetical idea” or “textual idea” of a passage. As we study the biblical text our goal is to capture, in succinct form, the message or main idea of the text as understood by the original audience. This summary can be expressed in a 15-20 word past-tense statement that interprets what the text meant “back then”.¹⁰ Consider the following:

At this stage of our preparation, we are underscoring the historical meaning of the passage. Emphasis on the past tense indicates that the main idea of the text is the same today as it was for the original hearers. While it might be applied differently today, its meaning remains the same.

As a preacher, how do I respond when, having examined a particular text, I discover that it does not say or mean what I originally thought it meant or said? Do I change my sermon or do I bend the text to make it fit?

2. Craft your “Preaching Idea”

Having determined the textual idea, the next stage is to transform it into our homiletical or preaching idea. This is where we craft our idea into a suc-

cinct 15-20 word present or future tense application linking it to life today.¹¹ The aim at this stage of our preparation is to cross the bridge of relevance by carrying the message of the biblical text from the ancient world to our world today. Consider the following:

This exercise of moving from the textual idea to the preaching idea, from the historical context to the contemporary context, can be one of the most challenging stages of our preparation in the process of crafting an expositional sermon. However, it is also a challenge that is most rewarding, because in the process we are connecting our listeners with the life-changing message of the Bible. This is the essence of expositional preaching — bringing people face to face with the transformational ideas of God’s word.

Application is a central feature of the expositional sermon

Having achieved an understanding of the main idea, and crafted the sermon to communicate that idea from the text, a final element is required of the expositional sermon. The idea must also be applied. This feature of the sermon is concerned with demonstrating to our audience what the central truth of the biblical passage looks like in real life. We want to show that the message connects to life. Our people need to see that the truth of the passage is not just meaningful for God’s people who lived centuries ago in a world far away, but it also relates to us. It has our address, even our zip code. In order to drive home this reality, application and the demonstration of relevancy can/should begin in the introduction and permeate the entire sermon. One helpful way of connecting biblical truth to real life is to consider how this truth affects our life. Next, consider how it might surface in the lives of our audience. The discipline of imagining various members of our congregation sitting around our desk during our preparation time can be helpful. Sixty percent of our audience will probably be women. How will this truth impact them compared to the men? How does this truth relate to the single mother of three, or the widower living on a fixed income, or the teen heading off to college and leaving home for the first time? Viewing the main idea of our sermon through the world of our listeners assists us in crafting applications that connect truth to real life.

A second way to ensure application is to establish a purpose for the sermon. Ask yourself, “What is my goal for this message? If there is someone who is convinced of what I say in this sermon what might that look like in

their life Monday morning?” If the main idea of my sermon is “The pathway of blessing is the pathway of obedience.” then my purpose might be stated as: “Each person will identify one area in their life where they are being disobedient to the Lord.” The goal is for them to confess this disobedience to the Lord, experience his forgiveness, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, make the necessary changes to deal with that sin. State the purpose in concise, concrete, measurable terms and remember ...every sermon should have one.

Conclusion

It is true. Every culture and society is impacted by ideas. The slick advertisers of Madison Avenue and the influential movie-makers of Hollywood repeatedly launch, with missile-like precision, their carefully packaged ideas. Daily their messages penetrate our personal worlds in a convincing manner. Sometimes we get swooped up in the faddish hoopla of the moment and at other times we are unknowingly impacted like the “frog in the kettle”.

In this battleground for allegiance, we are called to preach the life-changing ideas of the Bible. Standing between a glorious God and a needy people, we have the opportunity to connect God’s truth with his people. The challenge is to preach in a way that makes a difference...to preach for a change...to engage in “preaching that connects”! †

- 1 Haddon Robinson, *The Preacher and the Message Lecture* May 2005 at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts May 2005).
- 2 David W. Henderson, *Culture Shift: Communicating God’s Truth to Our Changing World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998) 24
- 3 Steven D. Matthewson, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002) 21
- 4 Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Bookhouse, 1980) 22
- 5 Robinson 21
- 6 Bruce Shelley, “The Big Idea and Biblical Theology’s Grand Theme,” *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible To People*, ed. Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998) 96
- 7 Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 131
- 8 Bryan Chappell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994) 44
- 9 Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking: A Handbook For Christians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) 80
- 10 Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How To Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999) 130
- 11 cf. Vines and Shaddix 134



Daniel Degeer

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Teaching Kids

G O D S

W O R D

By John Jimo

Easy as P.I.E.



friend from our assembly recently gave my family a “baggie” filled with what the accompanying recipe

described as “batter.” According to the instructions, only the Amish know how to combine these ingredients to create the batter. Intrigued by the hint of secrecy surrounding this mysterious concoction, my wife, Heather, and I carefully read about our participation in this ten-day developmental process.

We noticed after the first day how the sealed bag expanded and so I opened it to release the collection of invisible gases from the fermentation process. As a heavenly doughnut aroma escaped, I immersed my head in the aromatic cloud and took a deep breath. It was then that I determined that this kitchen project needed some daily supervision. I became a self-appointed scent inspector. All I needed to go along with this daily dolce vita olfactory experience was a cup of liquid

sunshine. The scent alone probably used up my daily caloric intake allowance. Finally, on the tenth day as instructed, Heather apportioned the batter into five equal parts, three of which she passed on to friends as their “starter” bread kits. Just as our friend enthusiastically shared a starter portion of the “Amish Friendship Bread” with us, I would like to pass on to you three key ingredients in the teaching process and an award-winning recipe for effective Bible teaching I received some years back as a student in seminary.

A Proven Recipe

Some Christians are hesitant to take on the role of teaching kids in their local church. I would like to think the primary reason for this reluctance has more to do with a lack of training than a lack of interest. True, teaching children does present a variety of challenges every now and then, but the assignment is not as difficult as some might speculate. Here are a few teacher-tested, student-approved principles I think you will find helpful.

Easy as Pie

To get started, all you have to remember is that teaching kids is as easy as **PIE**. The process involves three ongoing teacher responsibilities: (1) Preparation, (2) Implementation, and (3) Evaluation. **Preparation** entails **designing** the lesson you plan to teach, **implementation** entails **delivering** the lesson designed, and **evaluation** entails **digesting** the lesson delivered.

To understand this instructional process I have labeled with the acrostic **PIE**, it might be helpful to consider the question, “How is the teaching process like preparing and serving a meal?” As with any culinary endeavor, the preparation phase begins with the selection of a menu and a gathering of essential ingredients and cookware. After completing these tasks, the cook then initiates the implementation phase, which involves combining the proper ingredient amounts in an optimum environment so that s/he can present the table guests with an appealing and delicious product. The final stage involves the delicate process of gathering feedback from the guests for

either repeating the process if the product was enjoyed or improving the product if given an unfavorable evaluation. Some cooks explicitly seek out this potentially sensitive information and put their polite guests on the spot while others acquire it through observation or wait until guests depart to ask a spouse or other family member for their brutal opinion.

Perhaps a more succinct description of the teaching process would be, “preparation is what you **plan** to do, implementation is **what** you do, and evaluation is what you **wish** you had done.”

Similarly, the teacher’s responsibilities for preparing a spiritual meal and presenting it to children involve the same three ingredients or procedural tasks. When teaching the Bible to children, every instructor must first prepare or **design** the lesson around an objective intended to meet the students’ needs; then implement or **deliver** the lesson appropriate for the students’ age characteristics and spiritual maturity; and finally,

evaluate her/his effectiveness in accomplishing the lesson objective by engaging in **data collection** and **data analysis** for improvement.

Preparing Your Meal

Let us think about designing a Bible lesson. Effective teachers make

instructional decisions prior to stepping foot in the classroom. The two major decisions have to do with what you will teach your students, the curricular elements of the Bible lesson; and how you will teach that Bible knowledge to your students, the methodological elements of the lesson.

Here it



would be helpful to remember one of the seven principles of the teacher from *Teaching to Change Lives* by Howard Hendricks. In describing the “Law of Activity,” Hendricks writes, “Maximum learning is always the result of maximum involvement.” The primary role of a teacher, especially a teacher of young children, is to motivate her/his students to learn and one of the best ways to do that is to engage the student in a learning activity.

Whether utilizing a “ready-made” lesson plan and visuals from a Bible curriculum publisher or designing the lesson plan and creating visuals from scratch, the important thing is that the teacher thinks through both major elements of the lesson and walks in with a plan. Every lesson plan should begin with a purpose, aim or objective. What biblical knowledge should your students acquire, how will that information affect their beliefs, and what behavioral changes should occur in order for them to obey God’s revelation? A teacher must first be clear about her/his lesson objective before s/he can select the content and plan the learning activities. The Bible knowledge presented and the activities selected should focus on accomplishing the lesson’s objective. In writing a lesson objective, you should ask yourself, “What should my students know and believe and how should they behave as a result of my Bible lesson?”

You might ask, “Why have lesson plans?” I recall one Sunday morning barely making it out of that primary room alive because I failed to come up with a well-thought-out plan. Actually, I waltzed into that room filled with little ones a few minutes late but I stumbled out a few minutes early. I had decided to implement a five-minute early release plan so they could climb other walls in the chapel. I had never seen analog clock hands move as slow-

ly as a three-toed sloth. Moreover, that was only the first half of the hour. They moved even slower as they struggled to make an ascent to high noon. Gravity only worked in my favor at the top of the hour. I was substituting for a friend and had not even read the material in advance. My last-minute, fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants plan, if you can even call it a plan, was to open up the teacher’s guide and say what it told me to say and then expect the Spirit of God do His work in their lives. In case you are wondering, this is not a good plan for teaching children. If you choose to forgo a well-thought-out lesson plan, rest assured that some students will take the initiative and implement an activity of their own. “Why spend time being bored when playmates are ready, willing, and available?” The axiom is still true, “Fail to plan? Then plan to fail!” The Spirit of God usually does not bail us out. Effective teachers never fail to prepare!

How should I devise a lesson plan? Allow me to share an award-winning recipe for teaching kids the Bible. Once you have decided upon an aim or objective for the lesson, your plan should include the following ingredients in this proper sequence: **Hook, Book, Look, Took, and Nook.**

You want to hook your students within the first five minutes of the lesson. How will you grab their attention and get them ready to learn? Younger students need teachers to help them transition from the 21st century to the Bible times and/or provide them with the necessary background information they are lacking. Your hook should not only “set the stage” for the lesson but it also should directly relate to the lesson. Many exciting activities or “eye-catching” object lessons will get their attention but if tangential, “the hook” will most likely confuse students instead of helping them connect to and get ready for the lesson.

Once you have captured their interest or helped them connect to the story or topic, then present the message from God’s Book. Depending on their ages this could take from 5 to 20 minutes. In addition to knowing the narrative well enough to tell the Bible story, teachers of children, especially younger children, must use visuals such as puppets, song motions, pictures, objects, etc., to help the students’ developing minds make sense of any abstract concepts from biblical truth. When teaching older children biblical propositions or principles, it is imperative that teachers use examples and illustrations to help make a connection between the abstract and concrete realms. Because active listening is skill that takes time to learn and because your students will vary in their ability to self-engage, the teacher can help students better engage in the lesson by planning for and utilizing learning activities. I recommend *Creative Teaching Methods: Be an Effective Christian Teacher* by Marlene LeFever for a variety of suggested learning activities for children.

After presenting events from a biblical narrative or an outline of biblical principles, your next step is to help your young students think through how this Bible knowledge applies to their lives. Unfortunately, too many Bible lessons end with biblical information and never get around to making explicit applications for life change. I was reminded often at seminary, “The Bible was written for our transformation not just our information.” It is very important for teachers to have their students articulate specific ways they will obey God’s word. Application leads right into the next step, “the Took.” Students should take materials with them to help them remember the Bible content and their commitment to obey God’s Word.

For the last lesson ingredient, it

might be helpful to plan a summary of the Bible lesson so that students have a “Nook” in their brains to store and recall the lesson. This is another reason why Bible memorization is helpful for children because a Bible verse packs the main idea or point of the lesson in a nutshell. Think of the memorization of Bible verses as nuggets of God’s truth available for recall when needed.

While I describe this lesson format as “teacher-tested” and “student-approved,” never forget that lesson preparation must be Spirit-led since your goal is to communicate spiritual truth. Bathe both the lesson design and lesson delivery in prayer so that students’ eyes will be open to understanding Biblical truth and their hearts will be receptive to God’s commands.

Serving Your Meal

After adequate meal preparations have been made, now it is time to serve the spiritual food to your students. The implementation phase entails what you will do to deliver the lesson plan in the classroom. Delivering the lesson involves how you **present** the Bible knowledge and how you facilitate your students’ **participation** in the learning process. It is important to remember that not every lesson goes as planned. How you accomplish those two teaching roles in the classroom depends more on your students than on your lesson plan. Your lesson plan, though necessary, should be more of a guide than a master, more of an aid than a crutch. It should be adaptable to the needs of your students. Jesus, a master teacher, modeled for us how to teach people differently in order to meet their needs. Consider how Jesus responded differently to Nicodemus in Jerusalem, the woman in Samaria, and the nobleman in Galilee as recorded in the Gospel by John in chapters 3 and 4. Each one had the same spiritual need, personal faith in the Savior,

but Jesus utilized differing approaches to meet each individual’s need. Nicodemus was unaware of his spiritual need, the woman in Samaria tried to conceal her need, and the nobleman in Galilee openly communicated his need. Although Jesus utilized a different approach with each person, they all came to saving faith in Him. Like Jesus, effective teachers practice the “Law of Education” which states, “How people learn determines how you teach.”

Evaluating Your Meal

The final phase in the teaching process involves evaluation. Remember the principle, “Effective teachers are reflective teachers.” Teachers should spend time shortly following the lesson delivery reflecting on their students’ involvement in the lesson as well as their understanding and application of the biblical knowledge. Did your presentation and their participation help or hinder in accomplishing the objective of the lesson? What could you have done differently to assist in meeting your learning objective? You might want to ask your students what they “liked” about the lesson just as a cook dares to ask table guests what they liked about the meal. Methods that effectively engaged students should be repeated but ineffective lesson elements should be changed so that learning can take place.

The most significant way to measure a lesson’s effectiveness is to witness life change in the lives of your students and in yourself.

Challenge

I think it would be appropriate to conclude this article by focusing on “the Took” element of a lesson plan. Ask yourself, “What piece of the PIE do I need to work on in order to strengthen my commitment to teaching kids the Bible?” Is it my lesson preparation, focusing on knowing God’s Word and selecting appropriate learning activities? Is it my lesson implementation, focusing on my students and not my plan? Is it my lesson evaluation, focusing on changing ineffective methods? Ask God to help you in your commitment to improve one of these important elements of the teaching process. †



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Self-Soul-Care: A Challenge for Self-Directed Learning

By Larry Dixon



A recent visit to a Chick-Fil-A restaurant reminded me of a central issue in the Christian life. A cardboard advertisement on the table mocked boring breakfasts. Cereals with names like “Frosted Monotony,” “Stale Puffs,” and “Bland-O’s” did the trick, suggesting that such breakfasts provide half the flavor and are “chock full of stale mediocrity.” How like some of our experiences in living out the Christian life! Part of the solution to stuck, stale spirituality is self soul-care.

In speaking of self soul-care, we

I believe many of us Christians go on a spoon-feeding frenzy. That is, we live off second-hand Bible study, second-hand devotions, second-hand living out the Christian life.

are not suggesting that we are to direct our learning towards ourselves or that we should neglect godly teachers of the Word of God. Rather, we mean that we must stop blaming others for our lack of spiritual growth. We must take responsibility for where we are in our Christian lives.

The great theologian Calvin (and Hobbes) illustrates this point. Calvin says to Hobbes, “Nothing I do is my fault. My family is dysfunctional and my parents won’t empower me. Consequently, I’m not self-actualized.” He continues, “My behavior is addictive functioning in a disease process of toxic codependency. I need holistic healing and wellness before I’ll accept any responsibility for my actions!” Hobbes says to him, “One of us needs to stick his head in a bucket of ice water.” To which Calvin replies, “I love the culture of victimhood.” We all do, don’t we?

May I suggest that we not only need to stop blaming others, we also must reject any notion of spiritual osmosis. We do not grow in the Christian life simply by attending meetings and “being under the sound of the Word.” Our problem, if I may be so blunt, is that we hate doing homework, we avoid studying at all costs, and we’re not sure we want to take responsibility for our own lives.

I. Some of the Problems We Face in Self Soul-Care:

Before we look at two primary biblical passages, let me suggest three problems which keep us from engaging in serious, strategic self soul-care. The first I call voluntary illiteracy. Functional illiteracy refers to those who want to read but can’t. Voluntary illiteracy refers to those who can read, but don’t. John Wesley said, “It cannot be, that the people should grow in grace, unless they give themselves to reading. A reading people will always be a knowing people.”

A second problem in self soul-care I call a spoon-feeding frenzy. Sharks go on a feeding frenzy. I believe many of us Christians go on a spoon-feeding frenzy. That is, we live off second-hand Bible study, second-hand devotions, second-hand living out the Christian life.

A third problem why we don’t fully engage ourselves in self soul-care is that there are few challenges to do so. Many of us have no non-Christian friends who ask us hard questions. We also frequently lack any exposure to genuine unbelief. I am convinced that, for those who have been Christians for a while, reading what I call “books that will boil your blood before you get past the preface” will challenge us and make us grow. Books like Charles Templeton’s Farewell to God or Richard Dawkins’ The God Delusion will get us digging into the Word of God for ourselves.

II. Two Texts That Challenge Us to Self Soul-Care:

Paul writes to the Colossians: “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strength-

ened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness” (Col. 2:6-7). Note the two stages of the Christian life: (1) receiving Christ Jesus as Lord, and (2) continuing to live in Him. In fact, the “continuing to live in Him” is actually a command: “continue to live in Him.” How can I know if I am continuing to live in Him? Paul gives us three tests: (1) I will be rooted and built up in Him; (2) I will be strengthened in the faith I was taught; and (3) I will be overflowing with thankfulness. Quite simply, I will be growing, glowing, and overflowing.

But the primary text I’d like to look at with you is a well-known passage. Would you do me (and you) a favor? Pretend that you’ve never seen the following passage before. Ready? Here’s a passage I’ll bet you’ve never seen before:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Mt. 11:28-30).

What a great text! Never seen it before? Well, it fits our discussion quite nicely. May I suggest the following outline:

- I. The Invitation (v. 28)
- II. The Invitees (v. 28)
- III. The Promise (v. 28)
- IV. The Commands (v. 29)
- V. The Explanation (vv. 29-30)

I. The Invitation

Let’s look at these fantastic statements from the Lord Jesus. First, the Invitation (v. 28). Biblical Christianity begins with an invitation. John Stott discusses how an invitation often has the cryptic letters “RSVP” at the bottom of the invitation. This is a French request to “please reply to the invitation.” Stott says, “There was a couple who found political asylum in this country during the Second World War. They came from East or Central

Europe. And they were not really well-versed in Western culture. One day they received an invitation to a wedding. And there, at the bottom of the invitation, were those cryptic letters: RSVP. And in his thick European accent, the husband said, “VIF, VAT does it mean?” “RSVP? I don’t know VAT it means!” So they thought for a while and then suddenly inspiration dawned on him. And the husband said, “VIF I know VAT it means! It means ‘REMEMBER SEND VEDDING PRESENTS!’”

Many fail to understand that Christianity begins with an invitation, not a demand. It is an invitation, please notice, not to a philosophy, or a religion, but to a person. Here’s a tough question for us all: Is it possible to be in this thing called Christianity but have little to do personally with Jesus Himself?

II. The Invitees

Let’s now notice the Invitees (v. 28). Jesus’ invitation is clearly to those who “are weary and burdened.” The term “weary” refers to those who are physically tired or emotionally discouraged. The word “burdened” can mean weighed down with troubles. Those who are not weary or burdened aren’t being invited!

III. The Promise

Jesus’ promise (v. 28) is quite simple: “I will give you rest.” There are several possibilities as to the meaning of this rest which Jesus promises. This word is used in Mark 6:31 to refer to physical rest, in 2 Corinthians 7:5 to a rest from trials, and in 1 John 3:19-20 to a rest of heart. I would suggest that the meaning is most likely a rest from one’s own works. If the rest that Jesus promises refers to the rest of salvation in Him, then His invitation is to those who are tired of trying to earn their own salvation apart from Christ. We read in Hebrews 4:10 that “anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.”

IV. The Commands

We next notice the two commands (v. 29) Jesus issues to those who come to Him. His first command is to “take my yoke upon you.” What an interesting juxtaposition: He has just promised rest in verse 28. Now He commands those He has invited to voluntarily take upon themselves His yoke, a symbol of work. Jesus does not promise unemployment to those who come to Him. I understand that the great American humorist Will Rogers said during the Depression, “100,000 Americans ain’t working, but, thank the Lord, at least they’ve got jobs!”

Jesus invites His followers to become co-laborers with Him in the work of the Kingdom (see also 1 Corinthians 3:9; Colossians 4:11). When I was a teenager, “Dobie Gillis” was a popular TV program. Dobie’s best friend, Maynard G. Krebs, was a hippie-like character who mooched off others. Whenever he heard the word “work” he would, in today’s vernacular, freak, and shout, “WORK! WORK!” There is work for each of us to do — and Jesus is inviting us to volunteer for that work.

The second command which Jesus gives to those who come to Him is also in verse 29: “and learn from me.” Here He invites us not to labor but to learn. What in the world makes us think that learning is optional? Our lives — as well as our eternity — will be spent learning from Him and about Him!

I am again helped on this point by a profound Calvin and Hobbes cartoon strip. Calvin is in his rain gear, waiting for the school bus, and he says, “Why in the world am I waiting in the pouring rain for the school bus to take me somewhere I don’t even want to go?” The next frame shows the rain coming down in buckets on him as he stands beside his mailbox at the street. In the last frame he says, “I go to school, but I never learn what I want to know.”

Jesus invites all of us to “learn from me.” Flannery O’Connor, who lived long before Calvin and Hobbes

came on the scene, actually attacks Calvin’s problem directly when she writes, “The high-school English teacher will be fulfilling his responsibility if he furnishes the student a guided opportunity, through the best writing of the past, to come, in time, to an understanding of the best writing of the present. And if the student finds that this is not to his taste? Well, that is regrettable. Most regrettable. His taste should not be consulted; it is being formed.”

That’s exactly right. When we come to Jesus to learn from Him our tastes are not being consulted. They are being formed. Our problem is we don’t know what it is that we need to know. It is the teacher who sets the educational agenda. As a seminary teacher, I’m deeply committed to training students for ministry. The issue is not so much what am I teaching as what are my students learning? The fundamental idea in the word “disciple” is not discipline, but learner. What’s involved in being a learner? Certainly an attitude of wanting to learn, a need to grow in knowledge, and a curiosity (an eagerness to learn). I don’t know about you, but I am alarmed at what I perceive to be the lack of curiosity on the part of many Christians. Dorothy Parker has said, “The cure for boredom is curiosity. There is no cure for curiosity.”

Two other elements are involved in learning: a teacher and basic study skills. We must resist the seduction of our post-modern culture that suggests that no one has the answers, that no story is absolute, that no teacher has authority. Teaching is highly esteemed in the Scriptures; those who would be elders must be “able to teach” (1 Tim. 3:2). I am convinced that many sincere believers in our churches could use a refresher course on basic study skills. How does one study a passage of Scripture? How does one develop an outline? How can one improve his or her reading skills?

When I was a student at Emmaus

(shortly after all the dinosaurs had become extinct), I remember my problem with learning. I made C’s and D’s. You see, I had an attitude. Not a good attitude either. If I had an exam on Tuesday, on Monday night I would flip a quarter. I said to myself, “If it lands on heads, I’ll watch ‘Monday Night Football’ until the wee hours of the morning. If it lands on tails, I’ll play chess with my roommate for several hours. But if it lands on its edge, I’ll study for my exam!”

We must resist the seduction of our post-modern culture that suggests that no one has the answers, that no story is absolute, that no teacher has authority.

My life changed dramatically when my wife-to-be came to Emmaus my second year. She saw great potential in me and decided to do something to inspire me. She said, “You are capable of doing so much better academically than you are doing.” “Yes, Dear,” I said, half-heartedly agreeing with her. “No, I mean it. In fact,” she said, “I will not date you this coming Saturday if you do not ace your doctrine exam this Friday!” Romantic blackmail. It worked! I aced that exam and was on the dean’s list every semester thereafter. Anybody love you enough to romantically blackmail you into becoming a better learner at the feet of Jesus?

V. The Explanation

Please notice that Matthew 11:28-30 concludes with Jesus’ explanation. Jesus says, “. . . for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” We learn about Christ’s character in verse 29 — He is gentle and humble in heart. Matthew

quotes Isaiah 42:3 when he says in his next chapter about the Messiah, “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory” (Mt. 12:20). This is certainly a clear reference to His gentleness. Christ again guarantees rest in verse 29, a soul-rest which makes perfect sense to those who commit to His labor and learning from Him. Jesus then speaks of His uniqueness in verse 30 when He says, “For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

Have you found His yoke to be easy and His burden to be light? Some scholars suggest that the meaning of His yoke being “easy” is that it would be non-chafing. One says that perhaps Joseph’s carpenter shop had a sign over it that read, “We make non-chafing yokes.” The point is that Jesus knows what we can handle — and He crafts individual yokes for each of us. How about His burden? I must admit that sometimes I feel that His burden is anything but light. I can easily become overwhelmed with my burden for this lost world. But when I allow my burden to overshadow His strength in my life, I have taken on too much.

A burdened heart is a healthy heart, if that burden is from the Lord. May the prayer of your life and mine be, “Lord, I want to grow in grace, and not groan in disgrace.” †



Larry Dixon

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Music's Role in Educating the Church

By Lisa Beatty

In Deuteronomy 31:14, the Lord makes it clear to His servant Moses that he is nearing the end of his life: “Behold, the time for you to die is near; call Joshua, and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, that I may commission him.” Moses and Joshua obey God’s command, and the Lord appears to them in a pillar of cloud at the doorway of the tabernacle. The Lord tells Moses that after his death, the people will forsake God and break their covenant with Him. The Lord will then hide His face from the people because of their great sin. In order to

remind the people of the character of God and all He had done on their behalf, God commands Moses: “Now therefore, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel...so Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel.”

In chapter 32, we see the words of Moses’ song. He reminds the Israelites of the character and works of God, and His care for them during their wilderness sojourn. He reminds them that God is compassionate, but that He will judge their sin. Moses ends his recitation of the song with these words: “Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law.

For it is not an idle word for you; indeed it is your life. And by this word you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess” (vs. 46-47). Moses was communicating words of great significance; it was critically important that the Israelites remember these truths as they entered the land. Rather than through the spoken word, God commanded Moses to teach the people these truths in song, thus illustrating the effectiveness of music as a tool for educating people in spiritual truth.

The Word of God reaffirms the use of music for educational purposes in Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” This passage teaches that music is a means of integrating the Word of Christ into our hearts—making it a part of who we are as believers.

Hymn-writers throughout history have recognized music’s ability to teach biblical truth. Ambrose of Milan (c. 340-397 A.D.) wrote hymns to combat

the Arian heresy. Simply stated, the Arians did not view Christ as fully God. The Arians used music to persuade people to their doctrinal position. Ambrose wrote orthodox hymns to combat this heresy and to teach the truth of Christ’s deity. “They (the Arians) say that the poetry of my hymns has led the people into deception. I certainly do not deny it. This is an important formula and there is none more powerful than the confession of the Trinity, which the people repeat many times each day. All strive to be faithful in acknowledging the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in verse. This has made them all teachers, who are scarcely capable of being followers.”¹ A contemporary of Ambrose, Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348-397 A.D.) penned these enduring words affirming the divine nature of Christ:

Of the Father’s love begotten,
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the Source, the Ending He

Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore.²

One thousand years later, Martin Luther again recognized the value of music for communicating biblical truth and internalizing doctrine.

“That it is good and acceptable to God to sing spiritual songs, I believe, is obvious to Christians, since everyone has not only the example of the prophets and kings of the Old Testament, but also the common use of psalmody in early Christianity. Indeed, St. Paul appointed it in 1 Corinthians 14 and admonished the Colossians to sing spiritual songs and psalms from their hearts to the Lord. By these means, God’s word and Christian doctrine may be instilled and practiced on a regular basis.”³

“Next to the preaching of the Scriptures, I afford music the highest place in the church. I want the Word of God to dwell in the hearts of believers by means of songs. There is a root-like unity of music and theology. Music is wrapped and locked in theology. I would allow no man to preach or teach God’s people who did not realize the power and use of sacred music.”⁴

Based on these views, Luther emphasized congregational singing in the church. He wrote roughly three dozen hymn texts and collected many others for use in the churches under his

influence. Luther’s hymns are doctrinal in nature. His themes often reflect the truths emphasized by the reformers—the priesthood of all believers, the authority of Scripture, and justification by faith alone. The following is a fine example:

Out of the Depths—vs. 2, 3 Paraphrase of Psalm 130

To wash away the crimson stain
Grace, grace alone prevaleth;
Our works, alas! are all in vain;
In much the best life faileth;
For none can glory in Thy sight;
All must alike confess thy might,
And live alone by mercy.

Therefore my trust is in the Lord,
And not in my own merit;
On Him my soul shall rest:
His Word upholds my fainting spirit;
His promised mercy is my fort,
My comfort, and my strong support;
I wait for it with patience.⁵

The early chapters of the Book of Acts provide a window into the life of the early church. Their activities were centered on a number of clear purposes: teaching, fellowship, worship, prayer (Acts 2:42), proclamation (Acts 2:14-

40), and pastoral care (Acts 4:34-35). God's purposes for the church have not changed, and we continue to pursue these same activities in local churches today. Our goals for teaching ministry include: 1) to increase knowledge of the Bible and theology in order to deepen our knowledge of God—His character and work, 2) to strengthen our faith and our commitment to obedience, 3) to strengthen our Christian worldview and challenge each other to think biblically, and 4) to equip the saints for service and ministry.

Music can be a powerful tool to accomplish the educational purposes of the church because of its ability to shape Christian belief. What properties of musical expression make it such an effective means for communicating truth?

- **Songs combine theological concepts with the emotional power of music and poetry.** Music often touches us in ways that the spoken word cannot. "For heights and depths no words can reach, music is the soul's own speech."⁶
- **Songs are memorable.** In fact, teachers often use songs to teach information to young children; for example, the days of the week or the names of the states. I remember the words to Psalm 100 because of a song I learned as a child at camp, and I wonder how many of us still hum the Books of the Bible tune when searching for the short books at the end of the Old Testament!
- **Songs compress profound ideas into a brief form.** "Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide Thee; Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see; Only Thou art holy; there is

none beside Thee; Perfect in power, in love, and purity."⁷ Many messages could be preached on the content of these few lines of text.

- **Singing requires active participation.** Educators affirm that students learn best by doing. Whereas, many may be passive listeners during a message, singing provides an opportunity for all to participate.
- **Songs can be repeated frequently without becoming tiresome.** For 250 years, congregations have been singing *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*. Watt's words are timeless; we can sing it over and over again without wearying of the truths communicated. Can you imagine a message from the Word being repeated word for word on a regular basis?

Music can be a powerful tool to accomplish the educational purposes of the church because of its ability to shape Christian belief.

Communication for the purposes of educating the church calls people to action—to conversion, to deeper faith, and to a greater commitment to obedience and discipleship. The goal is conviction and change. How can we best use the powerful tool of musical expression to further God's purpose of educating the church?

- **Careful attention should be given to content.** It is the Word

of Christ that we should teach and proclaim through music. Colossians 3:16 calls us to use wisdom and discernment in making musical choices. We should not relinquish this responsibility to the publisher of a hymnbook or the producer of a Praise and Worship CD. We must be committed to only make use of music that presents God's truth accurately. Those responsible for choosing music for the church have a responsibility to guard against false doctrine.

- **The content should reflect the whole counsel of God.** Don't limit your focus to a few theological ideas. Over a period of several months, the songs sung in the church should address the same doctrinal breadth as the teaching from the pulpit. Most hymnals and contemporary song collections have extensive subject indices. Make use of these to identify doctrinal areas that may have been overlooked in song choices and begin to fill those gaps.
- **Connect song texts to the message.** Songs can introduce and reinforce the truths taught from the pulpit. A well-chosen song following the message can provide an opportunity for hearers to reflect upon the message and respond to God's prompting in their own hearts. A great resource for this purpose is *Hymn and Scripture Selection Guide* by Donald A. Spencer, published by Baker Book House (1993). The book cross-references literally thousands of Scripture and hymn references.
- **Use scripture songs.** Music is a

wonderful memorization tool. Teach the text of scripture to those in your local church through the regular singing of scripture songs.

- **Balance the use of theologically-rich songs with those that focus on a single doctrinal idea.** We should seek to meet the needs of both young and mature believers in our song services. Simple truths are no less profound than those that are more complex. Choose music that will help new believers better understand their faith...and stretch their understanding by feeding them with songs that are theologically rich.
- **Guard against just going through the motions.** I Corinthians 14:15 reminds us that we are to sing with both the mind and the spirit. We should be intellectually engaged as we sing. Challenge the congregation to focus on meaning as they sing together.
- **Make musical choices that effectively communicate.** Look for music of good quality. Texts and tunes should support one another, not compete. Texts with archaic language should be explained. I Corinthians 14 teaches that understanding is necessary for true edification.
- **Music for teaching should be presented with skill.** The teaching purposes of God for the church will not be fulfilled if people are distracted by lack of skill. The Psalms call us to sing and play skillfully. Provide training for instrumentalists. Encourage congregational singing by providing many

opportunities to sing. Teach part-singing. If your local church uses a music team, be certain that they are well-rehearsed.

- **Use the unfamiliar as well as the familiar.** Involve gifted musicians to present new music that communicates familiar truths in a fresh, new way. Employ soloists, small groups, or choirs to sing the wealth of available music that may not be suited to congregational singing. Sing familiar hymns to new tunes or new texts to familiar tunes. Use variety to heighten interest and attention, and thus, achieve education and edification.
- **Don't neglect your children's music ministry!** The children's ministries of the local church provide many opportunities to teach through music. The music ministry for Sunday School, AWANA clubs, and youth groups should be as carefully planned as the music ministry of the primary meetings of the church.
- **Encourage the integration of musical expression into the life of the church and the home.** Encourage believers to memorize psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Encourage the purchase of CDs and hymnals for home use. Encourage the use of music in devotional life.

Music is a powerful form of communication. God created musical expression, and He calls us to use psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to praise and thank Him, and to teach and admonish our brothers and sisters in Christ. We often see music ministry

as the responsibility of a few gifted individuals, but the language of Colossians 3:16 calls all of us to engage in this ministry. When is the last time that you personally taught or admonished another believer through music? Let us not overlook the power of music to teach God's truth to others and to a needy world. †

¹ From *Sermo contra Auxentius*. Source: J.-P. Migne, ed. *Patrologiae Cursus Completus... Series Latina*. 221 vols. Garnier Fratres, 1878-1890. In *Hymnology: A Collection of Source Readings*, David W. Music, ed., Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1996, p. 26.

² *The Hymnal*, Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1995.

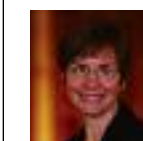
³ Preface to Johann Walther, *Gesangbuchlein* (1524). Source: D. Martin Luthers Werke. *Briefwechsel*. 18 vols. Weimar: Hermann Bohlau, 1930-1985. In *Hymnology: A Collection of Source Readings*, David W. Music, ed., Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1996, p. 39.

⁴ Source: D. Martin Luthers Werke. *Briefwechsel*. 18 vols. Weimar: Hermann Bohlau, 1930-1985. In *Sing to the Lord: A Survey of Christian Hymnody*, Stephen W. Nance, Shippensburg, PA: Ragged Edge Press, 1995, p. 38.

⁵ Nance, Stephen W. *Sing to the Lord: A Survey of Christian Hymnody*. Shippensburg, PA: Ragged Edge Press, 1995.

⁶ Anonymous

⁷ *The Hymnal*. Waco, TX: Word Publishing, 1995.



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

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:

Is the present interest in conservation of the environment and global warming something that should be a major Christian concern? Is any light shed on this by Genesis 1:26 – 30? What about Romans 8:19 – 22?

Darrel Harman Responds:

“And God saw all that He had made and behold it was very good,” (Gen 1:31). Genesis also speaks of God’s directive to man as ruling over all the earth and subduing it. I do not believe that the environment and global warming should be a major Christian concern; though I do believe that we are called to be good stewards of what God has provided, and to subdue the earth in a wise manner.

Since the Fall in the Garden, and as you referred to Romans 8 in your question; “Creation has been subjected to futility and groan to be free from its slavery to corruption.” This corruption affects the natural as well as the spiritual world; and freedom from this corruption will not be complete until after the Lord Jesus returns. But this does not relieve us of the responsibility to tend to what God has entrusted to us.

The rub comes in how do we go about subduing while also protecting the environment? Sometimes, as the song says, we have to “pave paradise and put up a parking lot.” Our country has come a long way due to reclamation, reforestation, and recycling policies; as well as clean air and water standards that have significantly impacted the quality of our environment. I remember as a youngster travelling on a summer vacation from Chicago to Washington, D.C. and stopping in Pittsburgh on the way. After a long day of driving with six people in a car with no air conditioning; we couldn’t wait to get to the pool to cool off. We ran to the pool’s edge and were about to jump in when we realized that you could not see the bottom of the pool—the water was jet black from the soot of the steel mills. We started crying and returned to our motel room much disappointed. On trips from Chicago through Gary, Indiana, you had to roll up the windows to keep from gasping for breath—Sodom and Gomorrah must have had a similar odor.

Strict environmental standards have caused many industries in the U.S. to disappear—many of them now showing up in other countries along with the accompanying pollution. Any of you who watched the Olympics in China can attest to that fact—even with closing many factories and instituting odd/even days for motor vehicles; you could barely see across the street in Beijing. Are we

just sending the jobs and pollution overseas?

What can we and our government do? We can keep developing technology that will provide clean and safe energy—coal, oil, nuclear, wind, solar and other renewables, and pass it on to other countries; encouraging their good stewardship and conservation as well as our own. Should we unilaterally set standards that will threaten our economic viability and national security? These are difficult decisions—balance is needed in addressing them. Unfortunately, extremism on both ends of the spectrum does not work. I’m all for helping to save the snail darter and the whale; but what about those created in God’s image? And what about other moral questions; like putting corn into our gas tanks rather than into the hungry mouths of millions around the world. Some in the environmental camp have almost made it a religion of the environment and as Romans 1:20 says, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” “For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever. Amen.”

As Christians, we have seen the end of the movie—read the ending to the book. “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to

be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless.” (2 Pet. 3:10-14)

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth passed away and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the Holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there shall no longer be any death: there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain: the first things have passed away. And He who sits on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” And He said, “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” And He said, “It is done.” (Rev. 21:1-6)

He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus (Rev. 22:20)

When the Lord does return; those who know him as Lord and Savior will not be concerned about the environment or the temperature.

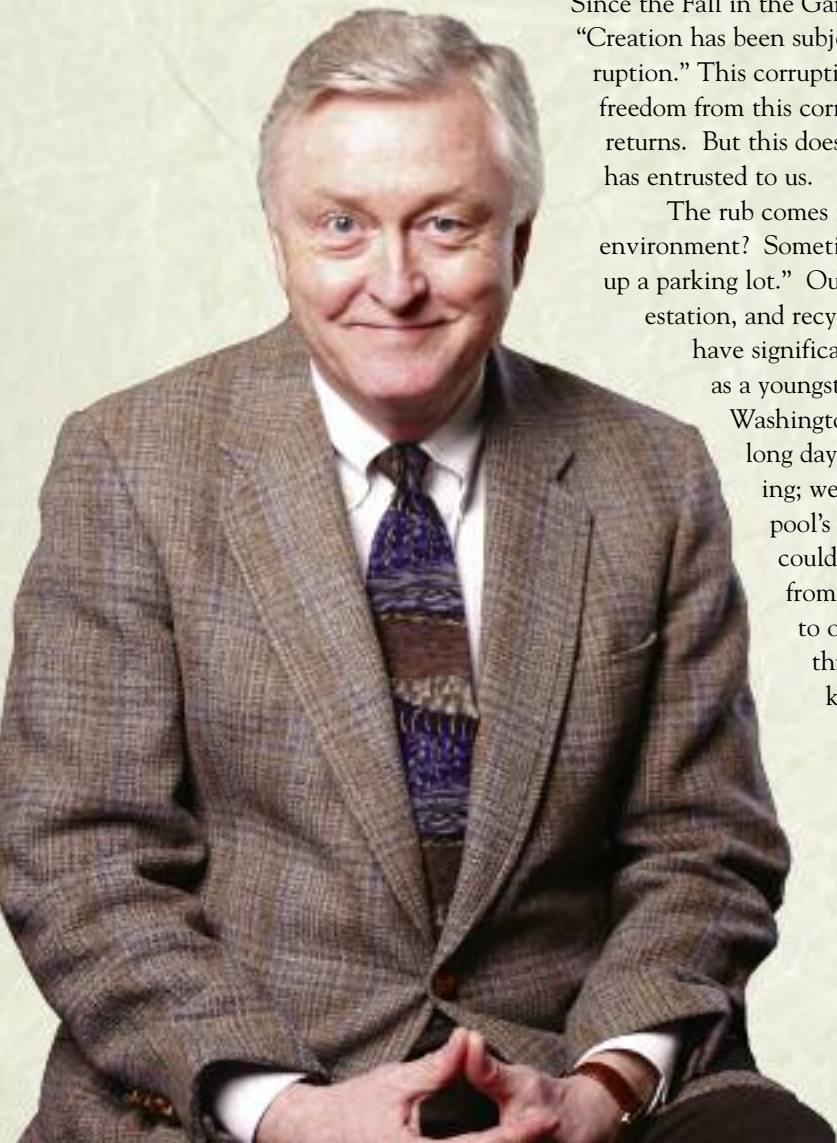
For those who don’t, that’ll be a different story.

Steve Bricker responds:

Environmental stewardship is a concern for every Christian. God’s command to “fill . . . subdue . . . have dominion” (Gen 1:28) establishes man as the primary manager of this world. What resources are available should be used to benefit us as individuals, families, and societies. However, incumbent in that mandate is the responsibility to maintain a proper level of care and nurture for the natural resources. This is evident from God placing Adam “in the garden of Eden to work and keep it” (Gen 2:15). Adam was to work in the garden to do those things which would ensure proper growth and fruitfulness.

Many have misinterpreted the signs of creation “groaning in the pains of childbirth” (Rom 8:22) to be evidence of resource mismanagement and the call for strict regulations concerning carbon monoxide emissions, waste management, oil drilling, animal species protection, etc. While some of the laws may have proved beneficial, the underlying motivation is generally that man is no better than any other animal life on this planet. There is little or no regard for the imago dei. In the modern era, the political balance has yet to be struck between these opposing viewpoints as each continues to vie for greater influence.

For the believer, the task remains as it did with Adam—responsible care for what the Lord has entrusted to you.



Tim Goff responds:

I am your stereotypical ultraconservative evangelical fundamentalist voter. I also have a degree from a large, liberal, public university.

And what I learned in my Economics 101 class is that the owners of private property will, by and large, do a better job protecting their land than the government will. The example that comes to mind up here in Washington State is our timber industry. A logging company like Weyerhaeuser will do a better job preventing disease and fire in their forests than the government will do in theirs. Yes, the companies cut down trees. But it's in their best interests to replant the forests and keep them healthy for future use. So I'm always on the side of private property in these environmental issues - history tells us that individuals and corporations will be better stewards of God's creation than the government will. Now there is no private property involved when it comes to keeping our air and our bodies of water clean. Air and water are common properties. The government has to take the leadership in these areas. As an example, the government has to play a role in protecting our fish and marine life from extinction due to over-fishing.

The debate that seems to have the nation's attention these days is whether or not we should be drilling for oil in Alaska and along the continental shelf with our gas prices hovering around \$4.00 a gallon. I say that we should. I can't think of another reason why God created oil, other than for us to use it. And technology has advanced so much that the local environmental impact of additional drilling will be minimal. Lower gas prices would result and the amount of

our money flowing to oil-producing, Christian-persecuting nations will be drastically reduced. There's no doubt that we should continue looking for alternatives to oil, but that's not the job of the government. Any time the price of oil goes up the private sector has an increased incentive to find an alternative. The government spending our tax dollars to find alternatives will always end up making things worse.

Ethanol, Iowa's big issue, is a good example. The government subsidizes ethanol with our tax dollars, more farmers convert their land to make corn for ethanol, more production of corn means less production of food, and the price of food goes up for the whole nation.

Besides the local impact, the critics of more US drilling tell us that cheaper oil will lead to more gas usage which will increase global warming. The vast majority of Americans believe that the globe is getting warmer, but it's the cause of global warming that is in question. The media tells me that the cause of global warming is mankind and that I'm a village idiot for not believing them. But they don't site any evidence to prove it's a man-made phenomenon. Even the scientists can't agree on whether man is the cause of global warming.

And if global warming is caused by God and not by man, then there is nothing that the government can do about it. I don't want taxpayer money spent fighting global warming if there's no proof that it can have any impact whatsoever.

The bottom line is that my money is really God's money. The vessel that God chooses to work through may be our government via

taxes or the government of Saudia Arabia via the high gas prices we pay. But I tend to think that God would rather work through the church, and so I support growing the economy, by paying less in taxes and less at the pump so I can give more to my church. Paying more at church means more funds to Emmaus and more to missionaries serving and sharing the gospel overseas.

Steve DuPlessie responds:

"Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it." (Deuteronomy 10:14 ESV).

I can think of at least four good reasons why Christians should be concerned about the environment. First, the "environment" is simply another word for the world around us, God's creation. Colossians 1:15-20 tells us that what we call the environment is actually the personal handiwork of the Lord and Savior that we say we love and serve, Jesus Christ himself. I would think that an expression of our love for the Lord Jesus Christ would include taking very good care of that which He made, wouldn't you? Is it possible that ignoring the abuse of the creation around us might be insulting to Him? I think so.

Second, since all of creation declares the glory of God¹, caring for that creation is simply upholding and proclaiming the excellencies of His glory. Is that not a task very worthy of our effort? Not to save the whales, but to glorify God? Isn't that what we were created for in the first place?²

A question of Stewardship... Third, "creation care," caring for the environment, is simply being part of a good steward of what really belongs to

God.³ This stewardship is part of the creation mandate given in Genesis 1:26 and should be seen in the context of a deliberate delegation of the Creator's authority to those made in his image⁴ to exercise ruling authority⁵ on His behalf. Talk about responsibility!

Notice in the Genesis 1:26-30 text that the mandate to rule was decreed by God before the creation of Adam. The implication is that the intention of the mandate to have dominion over God's creation was not limited to the singular man Adam but to all who are made in the image of God. That includes you and me.

God made the practical application of Adam's personal responsibility in the dominion mandate very clear to Adam in Genesis 2:15; a job description if you will: "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it," and again in verse 19: "Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name."

To give something its name demonstrated one's authority over that creature.⁶ While Adam had gardening responsibilities and naming rights, he also had full use of all the blessings of the garden, bound only by one restriction.⁷ Likewise, we all have both dominion responsibilities and privileges. So I need to ask myself the question, "How do I think God would want me to use this and take care of that?" and then try to live and work accordingly. Does the job that I do abuse the environment? Is the trash in my yard an example of "best practices" in

gardening for God's creation? Does the neglected landscaping at the Chapel reflect "the glory of God?"⁸ Is there a better way to control what we consume and dispose of? As a steward left in charge, can I help stretch and not squander the resources God has graciously provided?

Anticipation...

Finally, while this earthly creation is impacted by the fall⁹, it eagerly awaits its release from the bondage of corruption¹⁰ just as we do. And ultimately, redeemed blood-bought believers will rule and reign for eternity with Christ in his Kingdom, not in a cleaned-up, recycled earth but in a new heaven and new earth because all that we see around us will be destroyed and recreated.¹¹

It is interesting that our resurrection and future eternal life is not only "spiritual" but physical as well: we will have physical bodies like our resurrected Lord's¹² and we will rule and reign with Him on a physical, redeemed earth in our physical, redeemed bodies.¹³ That seems to imply that unlike the dualistic Buddhist and Hindu worldview, the creator-God of the Bible is concerned about the physical, as well as the spiritual. If it concerns God, it should concern us.

Our efforts at caring for the environment are not to worship the creation, nor to usher in the return of Christ, nor prepare this doomed earth for his reign. But the fallenness of creation does not excuse us from our responsibility here and now as stewards. Rather, creation care is just another expression of our love for the Creator, of glorifying God, of being found faithful when He returns, and of looking forward with great expectation to our new creation.

Advancing the cause of the Kingdom...

On a practical note for advancing the cause of the Kingdom, responsible creation care resonates with many non-believers around us. The cause of Christ is set back when Christians are "so heavenly minded that they are no earthly good" as Oliver Wendell Homes put it.

In his lectures on Simply Christian, N.T. Wright correctly and rightly notes that Evangelicals are in danger of reducing Christianity to little more than a "ticket to heaven" with a worthy but possibly excessive focus on the Cross without much concern for the responsibility for Holy Spirit-inspired service¹⁴ that should follow the acceptance of Christ and a transformed life.¹⁵ Our focus on the Second Coming has encouraged an unfortunate blindness to the extreme neediness for Christ-like service in the world around us.

And you can be certain that the unsaved are watching closely. They notice our well-intentioned "spiritualness" that seems "fussy" to them and mostly irrelevant to life. At the same time, don't think that they don't notice our dismissal of the "messy stuff" of life; feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for the orphans and widows, visiting those in prison¹⁶, and ... creation care.

Christ followers should be on the front lines of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the widows, orphans and prisoners and ... caring for creation. Shame on us if the Godless are out there caring for creation and we're at Chapel singing "When I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds Thy hand have made..."¹⁷

We should be participating in neighborhood clean-ups, river clean-outs, recycling drives and following best practices for resource management. We should be looking for new ways to care for God's creation, all as an expression of responsible, stewardship that extols the glory of God and anticipates His imminent return.¹⁸

1 Psalm 19:1-4; 29:3; Romans 1:20-23

2 Psalm 108:5

3 Psalm 24:1,2

4 Genesis 1:27

5 cf. 1 Kings 4:24; Ezekiel 34:4

6 Daniel 1:7; Revelation 3:12

7 Genesis 2:17

8 What does it say when many of our yards at home look finer than the landscaping at the Chapel? What does it say when the landscaping at the local Roman Catholic church looks neater and more cared for than that at the assembly? What does that say about our God and His glory? I vote for putting the family with the nicest yard in charge of Chapel landscaping and the family with the most beautiful flowers in their yard in charge of the Chapel's "flower ministry."

9 Genesis 2:17

10 Romans 8:21

11 Isaiah 66:22; Revelation 21:1

12 Luke 24:39; 1 Corinthians 15:51; 1 John 3:2

13 Romans 8:21-23

14 Thoughts from the blog of Andy Rau.

www.thinkchristian.net/index.php/2007/01/05/so-heavenly-minded-were-no-earthly-good-nt-wright-on-simple-christianity. Accessed August 4, 2008.

15 Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 1:10

16 Matthew 25:31-45; James 1:27

17 How Great Thou Art. Lyrics by Carl Gustav Boberg, 1885; translated into English by Stuart K. Hine. Please do not misunderstand. I am not at all suggesting here that worship is in any way to be neglected for community service. Worship is always first and foremost since it glorifies God and foreshadows the throne room of heaven for all eternity (Isaiah 6:1-3; Revelation 5:13). I am suggesting that worship is much more, much larger, than singing hymns and choruses, listening to preaching, and even remembering the Lord with the elements. While those are certainly not to be neglected, I am suggesting here that creation care is also a part of our reasonable sacrifice of worship (cf. Acts 20:7; Romans 12:1-2; James 1:27) that God desires. "God is glorified not only by His glory's being seen, but by its being rejoiced in." (Jonathan Edwards, The "Miscellanies," ed. by Thomas Schafer, The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. 13 [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994], p. 495. Miscellany #448; see also #87, pp. 251-252; #332, p. 410; #679 [not in the New Haven Volume]).

18 Mark 13:32-37; Acts 1:7

NEXT ISSUE'S QUESTION:

How can we more effectively contribute to the improvement in the moral standards in our community? To denounce "wickedness in high places," as some do, is easy but makes no impact where impact is needed. To set a good example in our own lives is essential, but is it sufficient? What further suggestions can readers make?

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

Letters may be edited to yield brevity and clarity.

I figured that, if we were discovered, the city of Baden would understand and look kindly on two hapless travelers (which we were not, because I speak German) and graciously agree to overlook our free ride into the city. I figured that it would not matter in the great scheme of things. I figured that even if no one were to know, it wasn't such a terrible offense.

I succeeded in rationalizing away any significant culpability before God for the offense, regardless of whether or not I saw any lasting consequence in the free ride we took.



The Ticket to Transparency

Chris Lange

The circumstance was at once recognizable and perhaps understandable. My wife Nancy and I were on a streetcar heading into Vienna to see the sights. Tickets for the trip were sold, not by a conductor, but by an onboard machine that charged accordingly based on the length of the trip. I knew we were headed to the Opera House in Vienna, but I couldn't figure out how much to pay; in addition, I didn't have the exact coins to pay for the fare. We sat there wondering if we would be extricated from the train at the next stop, handed over to the police, and deported...a familiar psychological situation for those of us who have travelled abroad. We reached the downtown area after about fifty minutes, unnoticed, without paying. I figured it would be ok. I figured that, if we were discovered, the city of Baden would understand and look kindly on two hapless travelers (which we were not, because I speak German) and graciously agree to overlook our free ride into the city. I figured that it would not matter in the great scheme of things. I figured that even if no one were to know, it wasn't such a terrible offense. I succeeded in rationalizing away any significant culpability before God for the offense, regardless of whether or not I saw any lasting consequence in the free ride we took.

We enjoyed the time in Vienna and on our return leg stopped to purchase from a man behind the counter two tickets for the ride home. I bought two tickets. My bride thought that I should have purchased four, ultimately discarding the two we didn't need, which would account for the two we had not purchased. We shuffled onboard and settled back for the trip. I was aware, nevertheless, that my bride

was not in a mood to rejoice over or to recount the great sights of the day. Men, has your wife ever looked at you all the way through you and you knew she was seeing absolutely no substance in your head, no depth of character, no manliness that drew her to marry you, and no reason for your existence at the moment? We didn't talk very much that afternoon.

On the day that we were to depart for Vienna and eventually back to the U.S., as all of our friends were gathering to say good-bye, I slipped down secretly to the streetcar terminal and purchased two tickets (about \$18.00 in U.S. currency) to Vienna—two permanently unusable, disappear-into-the-atmosphere, money-gone-into-thin-air tickets, and ran back. I thought about giving them to some unsuspecting person on the street, waiting to purchase his or her own tickets, and for a moment relished the surprised look on someone's face when free tickets were offered. But then that person would benefit from my indiscretion, from my theft. I tucked those two tickets in my wallet, and they are there today. In fact, keeping them there reminds me that, though I might think my heavenly Father winks at such indiscretions, He is as intolerant of them as He is of the "big" ones. In fact, it's not the incident that matters most—it's the heart's unconditional and immediate response to God's truth.

As an elder in our local assembly, my heart's desire is that those in my charge are both taught and encouraged to keep the whole Word of God. Knowing the Word is not simply memorizing the Scripture and being able to recite it appropriately. It is not head knowledge. It must not be an intellectual or emotional experience separate from the acute reality of living trans-

parently before God. And, of course, as a teacher, I ought to be the first to be fully captured by the awesome truth of God if I plan to teach others to be as committed. Hebrews 4: 12-13 suggests that no believers ever ought to indulge the notion that God doesn't know absolutely everything about them, absolutely every thought or nuance of the heart that we so often conceal from ourselves and from each other. The ongoing private conversations of our minds, prompted by the flesh in all of its trickery and perversion and deception, are at once open to God, "[a]nd there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (v. 13. NASB). Do I live according to this truth? Shouldn't all of us live this way?

What becomes absolutely essential for us as believers is to embrace the Word of God for what it is in all of its entirety—that which is "living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (v.12). This is the exhortation in the chapter to those who would feign the reality of faith and never know Sabbath rest—true, permanent, mind-boggling, life-changing, heart transforming, soul-filling rest in Christ *alone*. Trusting in human ingenuity and accomplishment while professing faith could be for some the most foolish of secrets hidden from God and the worst of mistakes to make this side of eternity. As believers, we must embrace the awesome living and active work of the written Word of God in our lives, and trust the transforming work of the Holy Spirit, hold-

ing nothing back, blending the pain of the knife edge of God's truth in our fleshly bodies with the healing balm of His forgiveness and cleansing. The goal is to conform us to our Redeemer, with whom we will spend all eternity. This is what must characterize our heart's desire as believers and must motivate our response to Scripture.

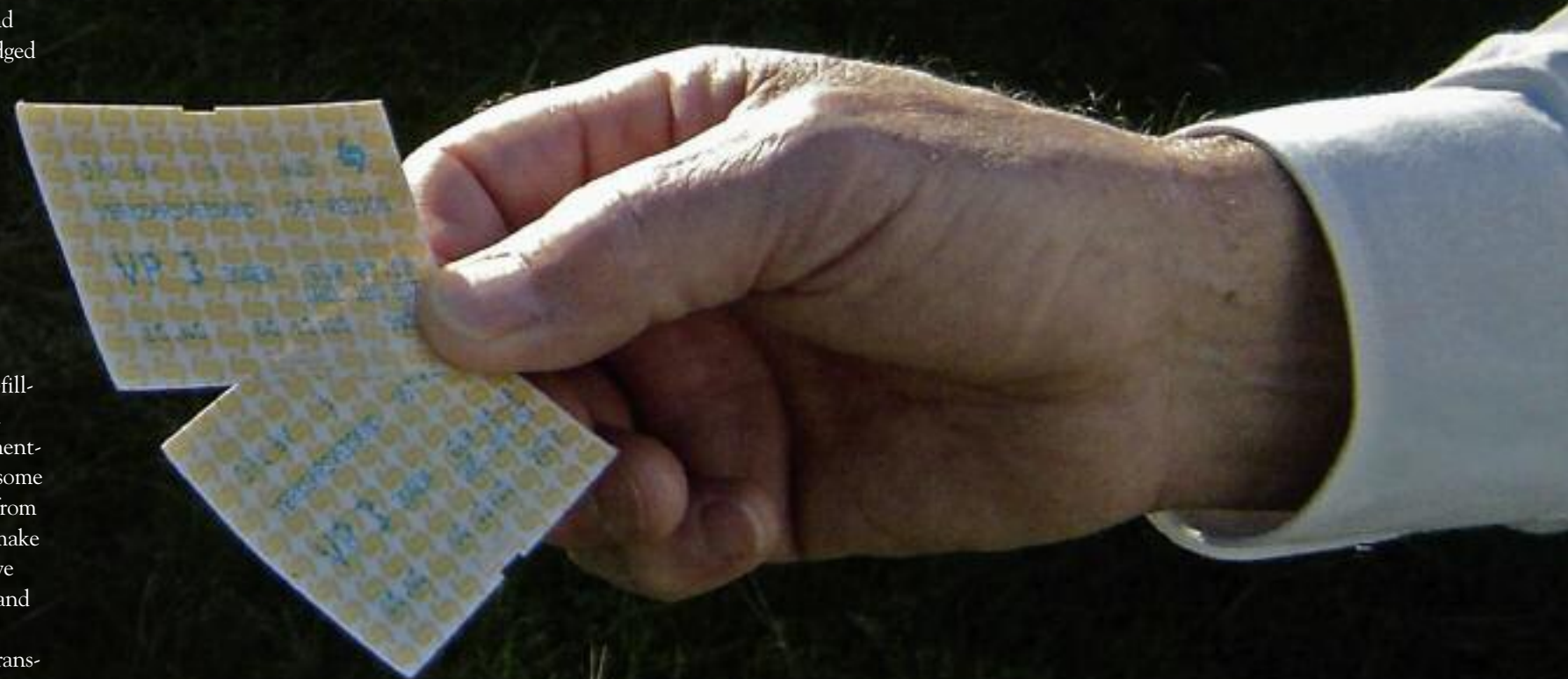
Does the Word of God say, "Do not steal?" Does that include streetcar tickets? I'm glad they are with me in my wallet because they remind me that I can fool others if I have a mind to—but not my Savior. When you see me next, ask to see them. It will be good for me...and for you. †



Chris Lange






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

Does the Word of God say, "Do not steal?"
Does that include streetcar tickets?
I'm glad they are with me in my wallet because they remind me that I can fool others if I have a mind to—but not my Savior.



Emmaus On the Road

Emmaus On the Road

Name	Location/Events	City/State	Dates
 Lisa Beatty	Ladies Conference - Women's Bible Studies of Dubuque,	Dubuque, IA,	Mar. 27-28
 Ken Daughters	Woodside Bible Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel Koronis Bible Camp, Winter Retreat	Maywood, IL Warrenville, IL Paynesville, MN	Dec. 14 Jan. 4, 11 Feb. 13-15
 Jack Fish	Community Bible Chapel	Dallas, TX	Nov. 30
 Dave Glock	Northern Hills Bible Chapel Lombard Gospel Chapel Oak Lawn Bible Chapel	Cincinnati, OH Lombard, IL Oak Lawn, IL	Jan. 25 Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 Mar. 1, 8, 15
 Jon Glock	Horton Haven Christian Camp Twin Lakes Bible Camp Lombard Gospel Chapel Oak Lawn Bible Chapel Lombard Gospel Chapel	Chapel Hill, TN Manson, IA Lombard, IL Oak Lawn, IL Lombard, IL	Jan. 9 – 11 Jan. 23 – 25 Jan. 25 Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 Mar. 1
 Joel Hernandez	Asbury Community Chapel	Dubuque, IA	Dec. 7

Name	Location/Events	City/State	Dates
 David MacLeod	Northwest Bible Chapel Park Manor Bible Chapel Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel	Chicago, IL Elgin, IL Dubuque, IA	Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25 Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22 Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
 Mark Stevenson	Warrenville Bible Chapel Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel Oak Lawn Bible Chapel	Warrenville, IL Dubuque, IA Oak Lawn, IL	Dec. 14, 21 Dec. 28 Mar. 22, 29
 Steve Witter	Greenwood Hills Gospel Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel Gwinnett Bible Chapel	Fayetteville, PA Warrenville, IL Lilburn, GA	Dec. 21 Jan. 18, 25 Feb. 22
 Mark Woodhouse	Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel Keystone Bible Chapel	Cedar Rapids, IA Omaha, NE	Dec. 7, 21 Dec. 28

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

News from Emmaus

Cooperative Programs with NICC Continue to Grow

Last fall Emmaus began to offer programs in Biblical Studies/Nursing and Biblical Studies/Business Administration through a cooperative agreement with Northeast Iowa Community College. Students pursuing these programs receive a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in Biblical Studies from Emmaus and an associate degree in Nursing or Business Administration from NICC. These programs have proven to be very popular with students. After just one year, the college has 29 students declared in the two cooperative programs—16 in Business Administration and 13 in Nursing. The programs are designed to provide students with solid biblical higher education and, at the same time, prepare them to serve the Lord in health services, business, or ministry settings. If you are interested in learning more about the Nursing or Business Administration programs at Emmaus, contact Enrollment Services at 800.397.2425.

History is in the Finding: A memory worth more than the souvenir Steven H. Sanchez

“Look at this piece. It has some markings on it.” I overheard those words while standing at the base of a large pile of discarded pottery at Ramat Rachel, a kibbutz seven miles south of Jerusalem, Israel. A colleague, Elisa Cooper, and I were leading a group of 14 Emmaus students on a 17 day tour of the Holy Land. On the day we vis-



Steven H. Sanchez

ited Ramat Rachel we expected nothing more exciting than a tour of ruins that date to the time of the Assyrian occupation of Judah, the 8th century BC. This in and of itself is fascinating. Ramat Rachel has been excavated a number of times by archaeologists and there are two competing theories for what the site might have been. One camp argues that it was a palace of Hezekiah king of Judah, while others argue that it was an administrative center for the Assyrian occupied region. In either case the question was not going to be solved by us that day. The Lord had something more exciting thing in store.

As we explored the site we passed some areas that had been previously excavated and were now just exposed soil. We were making our way to a large pile of pottery that had been found on previous excavations and discarded. The pile was large enough for several student to stand on top of it and as they did they shared interesting pieces they found with one another. It was on this pile that I overheard Sarah Lepisto, a junior, show something she had found to James Carlson, a freshman. I ran over to see what it was. Although pottery is ubiquitous in

Israel, a piece with writing is much less common. Little did she know Sarah hadn't just found a “piece of pottery with some markings on it” she had found something significant. Sarah found a piece of a jar handle with a seal impression on it! The seal impression identified this jar handle as belonging to a large storage jar that dates to the 8th century BC. The seal impression said “Belonging to the King—Socoh”. According to the leading theory, the phrase “belonging to the king (lemelek)” identified the jar and its contents as royal property. The word “Socoh” was not the name of the king but rather a city which may have been an administrative center. The leading theory says that this jar and, many others like it, were used to store food stuffs in preparation for the Assyrian invasion of 701 BC. If that is the case the king to whom these belonged was none other than King Hezekiah of Judah! Although over 2000 jar handles with this seal impression on them have been found in Israel, each new find is still significant because although the dating of these jars is conclusive (end of the 8th century BC), the purpose for the jars is not.



Steven H. Sanchez

Thinking that this might be of interest to the scholarly community, we asked our tour guide Adrienne Bernstein to help us get the opinion of an archaeologist. She contacted Gabriel Barkay, a well known scholar and he came to visit us in our hotel. After examining the artifact he pronounced it genuine and gave us an impromptu lecture on lemelek seals. Although we had to leave the piece with our guide so that she could give it to the official excavator of the site (anything with an inscription on it is the property of the Israeli government), it was wonderful to discover a piece of ancient history during our brief stay in the Holy Land.

Mark Presson joins the Emmaus Administration

In November, alumnus Mark Presson will join the Emmaus team as Vice President for Administration and Finance. Colonel Presson is retiring from his role as the director, Air Force medical support operations and administrator, Air Force Medical Operations Agency. In this capacity, he has been building a new headquarters directorate in San Antonio, Texas. Mark was born to missionary parents in Tokyo, Japan. He graduated from Christian Academy in Japan in 1972. In 1976, he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Business Administration and Economics from

News from Emmaus

Taylor University. In 1978, he graduated from Emmaus Bible School with a diploma in Biblical Studies, having served as Dean of Men. His graduate studies culminated with a master's degree in health administration in 1981 and a law degree in 1982, both from Saint Louis University. In 1993, he was board certified and today is a Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives.

In 1983, he began active-duty service in the U.S. Air Force Medical Service Corps as a first lieutenant. His diversified career has included assignments at seven hospitals, including the largest, Wilford Hall Medical Center, a five year tour at Headquarters Strategic Air Command, and two years on the Air Staff as the executive officer for the Air Force Surgeon General. He has been a command surgeon, group commander twice, a deputy group commander twice, a squadron commander and served three times as a hospital administrator. Join us in congratulating Mark on his distinguished service in the Air Force, and welcoming him back to Emmaus.



Emmaus Bible College Welcomes Jeff Riley

The Emmaus Ministry Resources (EMR) department has welcomed Jeff Riley to its staff as Director of EMRyouth, a division of Emmaus which will focus on networking youth leaders in the Assembly movement and providing them with partnership and support. In August, Jeff and his family moved to Dubuque from Des Moines, Washington where Jeff has served as Youth Director at Des Moines Gospel Chapel for the past seven years. Additionally, Jeff has been regularly involved in the ministries at Lakeside Bible Camp in Clinton, WA.

Jeff received his undergraduate degree in Biblical Studies from Emmaus in 2006 and is currently pursuing a master's degree in Christian Education from Dallas Theological Seminary. The Rileys have three children, Josiah, Madeleine and Jesse, and are expecting their fourth child in December. For more information about the EMRyouth initiative or to speak with Jeff about ministering to the youth in your assembly, please contact Jeff at jriley@emmaus.edu or by calling 800-397-BIBLE.

News from Emmaus

Plans for Business Administration at Emmaus

Emmaus Bible College is making plans to offer a new major in Business Administration. The program, when implemented, will give students the opportunity to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in Biblical Studies and Business Administration. This combination will equip graduates for effective service within a variety of business or ministry settings and at the same time assist in their development as men and women of strong Christian character and ethics—a great need in our world.

Emmaus is currently seeking qualified applicants for a full-time faculty position as the founding director of the Business Administration major. The applicant should have the minimum of a master's degree in Business Administration or a related area and significant experience in business. A doctorate and teaching experience at the college level is preferred. Please visit www.emmaus.edu for a complete position description. Nominations, letters of interest, and resumes should be sent to Lisa Beatty, Vice President for Academic Affairs at lbeatty@emmaus.edu or Emmaus Bible College, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, Iowa, 52001.



The Emmaus Sacred Music Department Presents...

Emmaus is pleased to present Higher Ground, a 14 track audio CD featuring the music from the 2007 Ensemble Tour. Recorded live in our own Marble Chapel, the CD features both a *cappella* and accompanied arrangements of songs including Beneath the Cross of Jesus, Draw Me Nearer, At the Cross, Say the Name, and Higher Ground.

Higher Ground is available for purchase for \$12. To learn more or to purchase this CD, please visit our website at www.emmaus.edu/store or send a note with payment to Lisa Beatty, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA, 52001.



FROM THE DESK OF
DR. STEVE WITTER

Dear friend of Emmaus:

By the time that you read this edition of Journey Magazine, the fall semester at the college will almost be over. The first weeks of December will be filled with papers, projects, concerts, and final exams. Join us in praying for our students that they would finish up well. We are thrilled with our student body and the overall commitment to the Lord Jesus that we see. It is a privilege to be a part of a ministry that is being used by God to prepare them for service.

Our freshman class was smaller than we had hoped for, and a significant number of our applicants cited finances as the number one reason they could not matriculate. Our tuition of \$10,368 is comparable to other Bible colleges our size, and is even competitive with some state schools. We recognize the sacrifice and commitment that families make to ensure that their student is afforded the Emmaus Experience.

Tuition and fees alone do not cover the entire cost of a student's education, and we remain dependant on God to supply the balance through the generosity of His people. Gifts for **Student Aid** and gifts to the **Annual Fund** are particularly important. Speaking of the **Annual Fund**, we are again the recipients of a kind matching gift offer. As in the past, we must meet a threshold, and then subsequent gifts will be matched. This year, as last, the match point is **\$500,000**. Once we meet that point, the next **\$65,000** will be matched dollar for dollar. Our **Annual Fund** budget for this year is **\$726,500**—and this matching gift will obviously help us towards meeting this goal.

We do not share our needs with you lightly, as we know that these are indeed difficult economic times. The moral climate and spiritual decay of our society is also evident, and more than ever we believe that young men and women who love the Lord need to prepare for a life of service for Him. Emmaus is committed to teaching the truth of God's Word, and we are thankful that you choose to partner with us.

When it comes to giving, let me repeat what I shared with you this summer. Cash gifts are not the only way you can give to the college. The college would be glad to receive your gift of a quality used car, van or pick-up truck—or you could consider a gift through planned giving. Our planned giving partner, Believers Stewardship Services, [BSS] can help you with additional ways of giving to Emmaus. Listed below are several ways that you can partner with Emmaus—and help us impact the world for Christ.

Donor Advised Funds

The staff of BSS would be pleased to assist you in establishing a Donor Advised Fund. Perhaps you know that you *want* to give, you just haven't decided *where* you should give. A Donor Advised Fund is designed to allow you to establish a charitable giving fund *now*, and then throughout the next year, as needs arise, you can direct BSS to send a gift, on your behalf to any qualifying tax exempt organization.

Legacy Gifts

Many people choose to take time at the end of the year to review their long-range estate plans and financial goals. Trusts, wills, life insurance, and other planning vehicles are special ways to leave a lasting legacy to Emmaus or to your other charitable interests. BSS exists to help you do just that, without charge, to the glory of God.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me. You may also contact Dave Allison, President of BSS at (888) 338-7810, or dallison@believerstewardship.org. Thank you for your continued support of Emmaus.

Because HE lives,

Steven R. Witter, PhD
Vice-President for Advancement

