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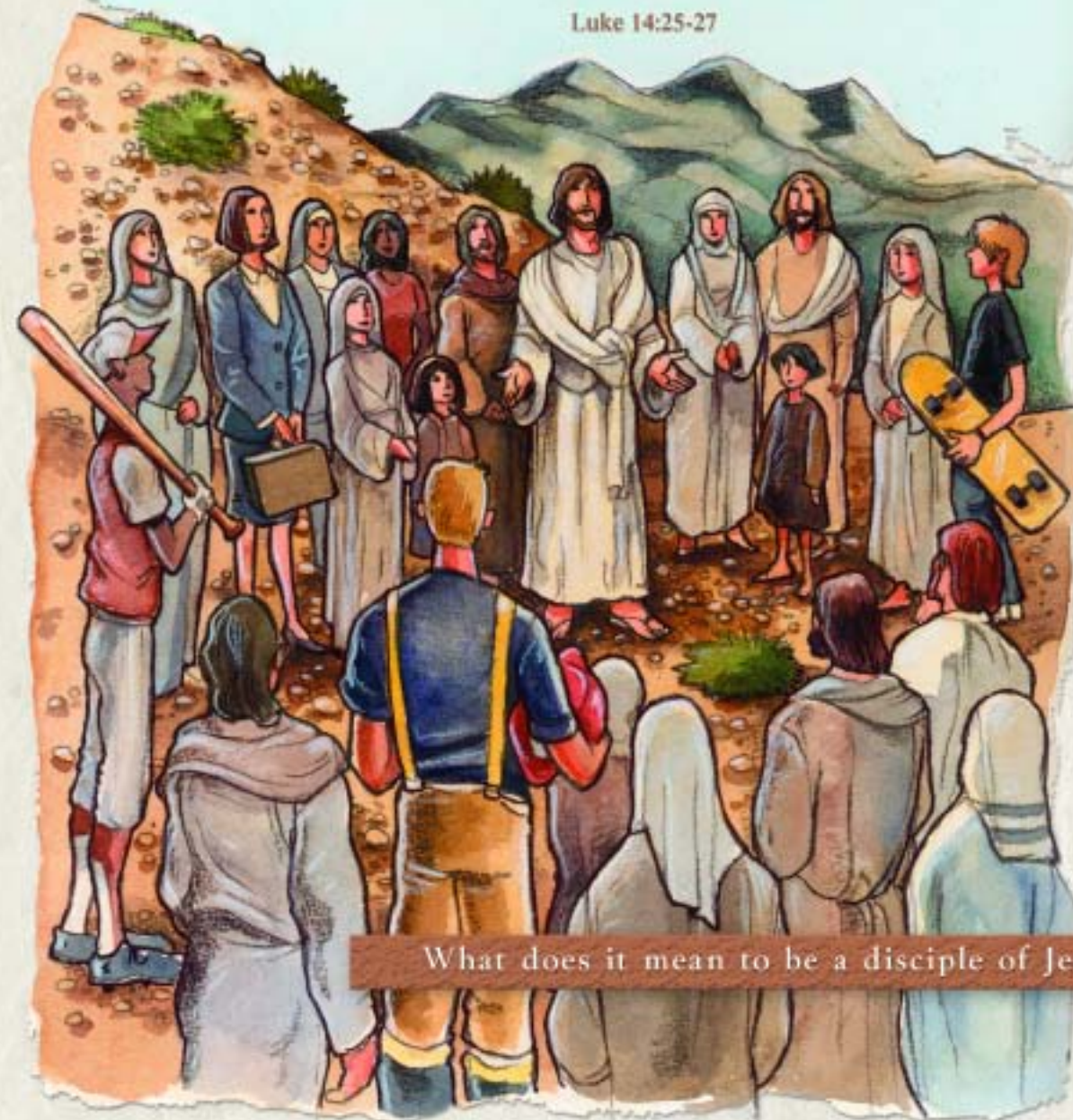
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Journey

EMMAUS BIBLE COLLEGE • FALL 2005

And Jesus turned and said to them,
"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother,
wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also,
he cannot be my disciple.
And whoever does not bear his cross and come after me
cannot be my disciple."

Luke 14:25-27



Putting Others First

One of the most startling remarks made in regard to being a disciple of Christ is that of the Apostle Paul as he picked someone to send to the Philippians. Paul is in jail in Rome and wants to send a colleague to strengthen the Philippians and receive back a report that will encourage him. He has a team of pioneer missionaries and fellow workers from which to pick. He is describing why his pick of Timothy should serve his purpose well. His remark shocks us even today: "I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:20-21). How can that be? Could those who were set apart as disciples of Christ and co-workers of Paul have been so selfish that they were useless to meet the needs of the Philippians?

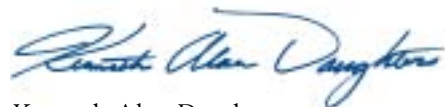
Before I judge those first century disciples too harshly, I must ask myself if we 21st century disciples would have fared any better in Paul's judgment. Are we known for our selflessness? Do we put others first? What shocks us so much is that Paul says Timothy is his only kindred spirit. He alone has grown in Christ-likeness to the point that he can see past his own interests to meet the needs of others. He is the only associate of Paul who will not act out of selfishness while seeking to minister to the Philippians. Wow!

That causes me to think deeply about my own discipleship and to examine my heart honestly to discover how my own selfishness is compromising my ability to meet the needs of others. Can I genuinely be concerned for the welfare of others? If I tolerate conceit, I cannot (v. 3). If I fail to cooperate with

God's work in my life, I won't (v. 12). I must have the same attitude Christ had when he humbled Himself in the incarnation and crucifixion (v. 8). It's only in following the example of Christ that I will regard others as more important than myself.

It involves seeing others as God sees them. I must see their neediness and recognize my ability in Christ to meet that need. I must be motivated by the affection and compassion that I experienced from Christ (v. 1). As Christ's love has consoled me, I must reflect His love to others (v. 1). I must deny myself and find fulfillment in serving Christ (v. 17).

Timothy was unlike many of us today. He was humble, and willingly served Paul like a child serving his father (v. 22). He didn't look to be exalted. He knew Christ would reward him in due time (v. 9). He humbly grew in his skill of serving others to the point that Paul gives him one of the best compliments ever paid to a disciple: *kindred spirit*. May we learn the lesson we see in the life of the young disciple Timothy.



Kenneth Alan Daughters
President, Emmaus Bible College



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A continuing series by Alex Strauch (edited by Dave MacLeod) from messages delivered at Iron Sharpens Iron.*

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Journey Magazine, volume 4, issue 1, Fall 2005

Journey Magazine is published by Emmaus Bible College, Dubuque, Iowa, USA.

Opinions expressed in articles published in Journey Magazine are not necessarily those of Emmaus Bible College.

Subscriptions to Journey Magazine are sent free of charge to addresses in the United States and Canada, as well as to those serving the Lord full-time overseas. Please contact "Subscriptions" at the address below for additions, corrections, or deletions.

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Journey Magazine is available on-line at:
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Fellow Travelers

Thank you very much for the most lucid, direct, Biblical message on N.T. elders I have ever had the pleasure of reading. I refer to the article in the Summer 2005 "Journey". I receive The Emmaus Journal and devour it as well.

My experience with Emmaus goes away back to one of its founders C.Ernest Tatham. I grew up about 9 miles from Lakefield, Ontario where Ernie started out preaching. I was just a toddler then. Listening to him, Bill Belch, John Smart, etc. gave me a solid grounding in the Word.

As they say, a lot of water has gone under the bridge since then. Suffice to say, one great preaching brother/friend is Jim Stahr who I met in Prince Edward Island when we were seeking to serve the Lord there around 1958-1960. At the present time I am living in Arkansas, attending a Southern Baptist church. I stay because I am teaching a class of "older men" with freedom from the pastor who gave me the go-ahead to use the S.S. quarterly as Scripture guide but 'take it and run' from there. Thank the Lord for this liberty. I teach them the need for elders or persons who act as such in the church.

Thank you again, may the Lord bless your ministry and that of Emmaus.

Yours, in Him
T. Blake Matthews

CONTACT THE EDITOR

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

From the front lines

We want to hear from you!

Our readers' thoughts and reactions to Journey's articles, stats and themes are always welcome here at Emmaus.

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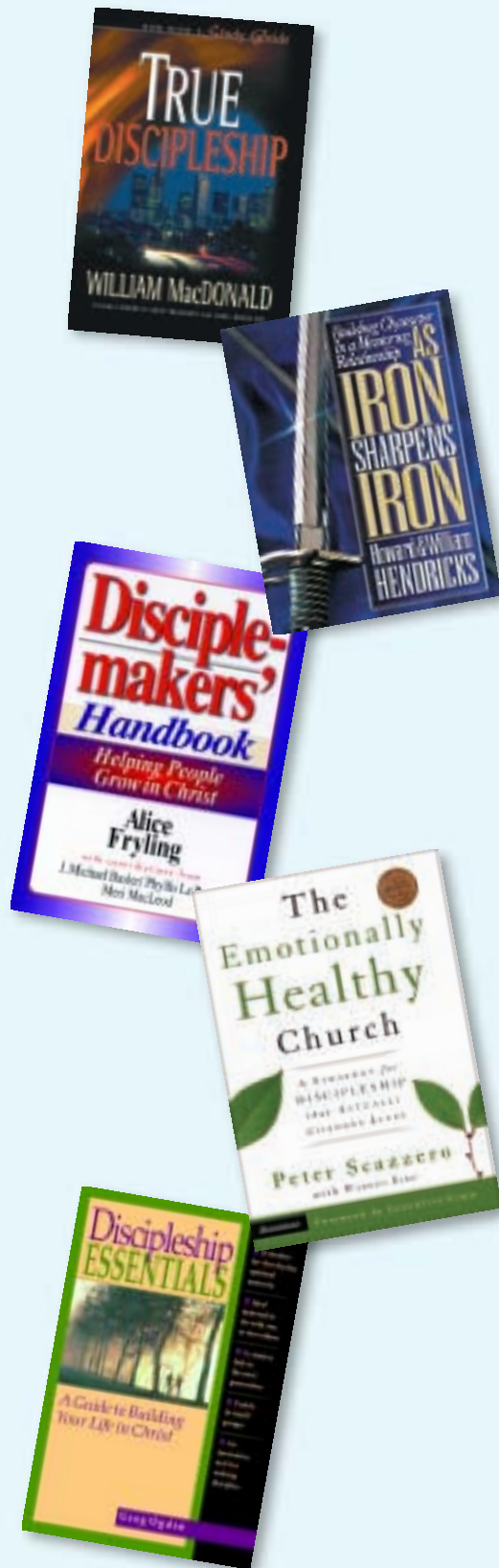
JOURNAL TOPICS

In the Current Issue of Emmaus Journal

David J. MacLeod, "The Year of Public Favor, Part 5: Israel's Unpardonable Sin (Matthew 12:22-32)"
S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "Once in Custody, Now in Christ: And Exposition of Galatians 3:23-29"
Kenneth C. Fleming, "Ismael and the Bible"
Larry Dixon, "The Doctrine of the Church"
Jay Swisher, "What Kind of Music Does God Like?"
Lisa Beatty, "What Kind of Music Does God Like? A Rejoinder"

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

Travel Guides



True Discipleship

William MacDonald
Gospel Folio Press, 1962

This book clearly explains the principles of New Testament discipleship. The Savior's terms of discipleship are not only highly practical and will reward in knowing the peace that passes understanding, they define true Christianity—an all-out commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing less than unconditional surrender could ever be a fitting response to His sacrifice at Calvary.

As Iron Sharpens Iron: Building Character in a Mentoring Relationship

Howard Hendricks, William Hendricks
Moody Publishers, 1999

So often it's not a therapist a man needs as much as a friend who offers accountability and spiritual challenge—a mentor. Men encouraging men to greater commitment to God and family. Whether you are looking to find a mentor or to be one, this is for you.

Disciplemakers' Handbook

Alice Fryling
InterVarsity, 1989

This comprehensive introduction to discipling includes chapters on beginning a friendship, modeling the Christian life, and recognizing change and growth in others.

The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship That Actually Changes Lives

Peter Scazzero
Zondervan, 2003

Despite all the emphasis today on spiritual formation, church leaders rarely describe what spiritual maturity looks like. This book addresses how to grow disciples with relational depth—balanced people who are genuinely intimate with God, with their inner being, and with others.

Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ

Greg Ogden
InterVarsity, 1998

Growing True Disciples

George Barna
Waterbrook, 2001

Christ's command to the church is clear: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." It is in building disciples—helping others to embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, mature in him, and then lead others to do the same—that the Kingdom grows. And when the Kingdom grows, churches do, too. In "Growing True Disciples" respected author and researcher George Barna helps pastors and leaders assess how their churches are doing in fulfilling their role as disciple makers. And he reveals models and examples that will equip churches to dramatically increase their effectiveness. As a result, your church can begin to see more involved members who want to live out their faith in submission to God, and joyfully share their resources to fulfill Christ's commission.

Come Walk With Me: A Practical Guide to Knowing Christ Intimately and Passing It On

Carole Mayhall
Waterbrook, 1998

Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential Into Reality

Gary R. Collins
Navpress, 2001

For those who long to make a difference in the lives of others, this book by a well-known author in the field of counseling takes the successful principles of coaching and gives them a God-centered application.

Down to Earth Discipling: Essential Principles to Guide Your Personal Ministry

Scott Morton
Navpress, 2003

At last there is a personal ministry book that anybody can use. The practical, friendly, workable guide delivers everything readers need to know about being a disciple, without terrifying themselves or those they want to reach. It divides the process into simple, manageable steps based firmly on biblical principles about reaching the world for Christ.

Discipleship: The Growing Christian's Lifestyle (Fisherman Bible Study guides)

James Reapsome with Martha Reapsome
Shaw Books, 2002

In a culture focused on success and individuality, many people are desperately seeking someone or something to follow that will give their lives meaning. Who people follow reveals a lot about who they are and who they want to be. Christians desire to be true followers—true disciples—of Jesus in their daily lives. Through thoughtful study of several key New Testament passages, this study guide offers new discoveries from Scripture that will help the reader live out God's call to follow Him.



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

“Be ye followers of me...”

Dave Glock, Editor

Being a disciple precedes making disciples! Likewise, being a disciple will naturally result in discipling those in our circle of contacts in the course of life. Discipleship, then, involves being a disciple of Jesus Christ and discipling others in our cooperative growth in grace. As Paul says, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ.”¹

This issue of *Journey* will examine what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. You will be able to benefit from an exegetical study of the Greek word and usage. We have asked a number of leaders in the Assembly movement to describe a true disciple of Jesus Christ. You will be challenged by their convicting answers. Allow the word of God to stimulate your

thought and conscience as you reflect on the selected passages in the center pages of *Journey* – read them slowly and with contemplation. Once again William MacDonald arrests our attention with his call to true discipleship – his message of the written page and of a consistent life of discipleship!

In the next issue of *Journey* we will address various methods of mentoring or discipleship that have been used with success in a number of different church settings. In the meanwhile:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”²

¹ *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

² *The King James Version*, (Cambridge: Cambridge) 1769.

The Place of the Cross in Christian Discipleship

The Immortal God is dying for you and me. It is the most astounding fact in the history of the universe.

William MacDonald

The subject of Christian discipleship is best considered against the backdrop of Calvary. It's what happened on that “old rugged cross” that provides the rationale and motivation for obedience to the hard sayings of Jesus.

Who hung on that middle cross? Let us be clear on this point. It was not a mere human being like ourselves. It was the Incarnate God, the Maker of heaven and

earth. We have a tendency to create Him in our own likeness and after our image. We see Him as Mary's son and the Perfect Man. But He was more. He was God manifest in a human body. He is not God less something, but God plus something, that is humanity. And He was dying on that cross for a world of lost sinners. The truth staggers the imagination.

It is a marvel beyond all marvels, a thought beyond all thought.

The Creator is dying for His creatures. The Immortal God is dying for you and me. It is the most astounding fact in the history of the universe.

But there is a problem. How can one who is immortal die? It is because He is both God and Man, two indivisible attributes in one Person.

That raises another question. Who ran the universe when God died on the cross? Jesus ran it from

In the eyes of the world, Christian discipleship is a form of fanaticism.

earth at first, then when He died, He ran it from heaven. It was a change of location, not of consciousness.

Does the Bible teach that it was God who died at Calvary? Two verses should suffice. In Acts 20:28, Paul told the Ephesian elders “to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with His own blood.” It was the blood of God the Son that purchased the church. Then in Hebrews 1:3, it is clear that the One who purged our sins is “the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person,” and “the upholder of all things by the word of His power.” This could only refer to the Son of God. It is He who purged our sins at the cross.

Believers who object to saying that God died have no difficulty singing the truth.

“Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou my God should die for me?” (Charles Wesley)

“Well might the sun in darkness hide and shut His glories in, When Christ, the mighty Maker, died for man the creature’s sin.” (Isaac Watts)

Believers who accept the truth find a new dimension to their worship and a new motivation for service.

The stupendous truth that God died becomes even more mind-boggling when we think of the unworthy ones for whom He died. He died for you and me. No one can ever be the same after he

grasps this overwhelming truth.

The only reasonable response to the death of God the Son for us is everything or nothing. Cold or hot—yes, but lukewarm—never. We never really come to terms with Calvary until it becomes the most important thing in our lives.

In the light of the cross, we see that the hard sayings of Jesus weren’t so unreasonable after all.

He said, “Forsake all.” Of course. Those whose eyes have been opened feel that it’s just too bad they don’t have more to forsake. They simply ask, “Lord, what is this verse going to mean to me?”

He said, “Hate father and mother, children, brothers, and sisters.” Of course, Christ must come first. All other loves must be hatred by comparison.

“Hate your own life also.” Of course, the same God who gave it to me originally bought it back at Calvary. It is His, and I must not use it as I wish.

“Having food and clothing, with those we shall be content.” Of course, His cause is of first importance. Everything else must be subordinated to it.

When the truth that God died for me possesses me, I can no longer be like the hamster on its wheel, constantly active but never productive. I can never be content to be born a man and die a grocer. I can never preach sweet nothings while above me burns the vision of my God upon a cross.

I must seek to imitate the early Christians who took Jesus’ words literally. They went every-

where preaching the gospel. Wherever there was need, they shared their resources. They sought first God’s kingdom and His righteousness. Their lives had such an impact that their enemies lamented, “These men have set the world upside down.”

In the eyes of the world, Christian discipleship is a form of fanaticism. Festus called Paul mad. Paul knew that people thought he was beside himself. It is to our shame that we are so regular, so ordinary.

Once we grasp the overarching significance of Calvary and of the true and living God dying for us there, our discipleship will be total commitment.

The only reasonable response to the death of God the Son for us is everything or nothing.

William MacDonald served as president of Emmaus Bible College from 1958–1965. He is the most widely published author in the Christian world today. Besides many devotional books, booklets, and tracts, he has penned commentaries on every book of the Bible. MacDonald has devoted himself to a Bible teaching ministry that challenges Christians to honestly embrace true discipleship.

Being a Disciple

Myrue Spivey

“Disciple” is an interesting and familiar word to those of us who claim the name of Jesus Christ as Savior. When asked to define “disciple,” most Christians respond readily, “a learner,” “one who follows another,” “a student,” “a pupil,” etc. All of these are right answers. But too often when answering, we are thinking in abstract terms. First century Jews tended to think in more practical terms. The epistle of James, the first New Testament letter, is a classic example of this kind of Jewish thinking. James’ thesis is: “Prove that your faith is authentic by what you do, not what you say.” If James were responding to the question, “What is a disciple?”, he would probably say something like, “A disciple is one who is continu-

ally following obediently in the steps of his Lord.” That is how we, too, must understand what it means to be a disciple.

Because of time and space in this article I am using only two of the above terms—“learner” and “follower”—to probe what it means to be a disciple. My prayer is that God will be pleased to use this article to encourage each of us to be more prayerful, intentional, and tenacious in our endeavor to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. I want to use the apostle Paul as a model of what it means to be a disciple

Paul the Learner

Upon his conversion, the apostle Paul began preaching

immediately. However, the Lord Jesus called him into the desert where He taught him for three years (Acts 9, Galatians 1). Imagine—three years of personal discipleship from the Lord Himself! Some of us would think that with such an opportunity we wouldn’t need anything else, but it is that kind of thinking that has caused so many who have served faithfully—sometimes for years—to shipwreck. That is a consequence of abstract thinking. What do I mean? Even though we say to be a disciple means that one is a “learner,” in practice we understand the meaning instead to be “one who has learned.” This was not true of the apostle Paul. Though he was taught personally by the Lord Jesus, he was one who

One of the characteristics of the apostle Paul as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ until death is the fact that he was a lifelong learner.

He may at that instant have lost his family, his inheritance—everything.

continued to pursue lifelong learning. He testifies to this in Philippians 4:11 – 12: “Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.”¹ Prior to his conversion, Paul was a man of privilege. He was born in Tarsus, a very important city. It was the capital of Cilicia (Acts 22:3), ranking with Athens and Alexandria in culture and learning. Paul, a Jew, was born a free Roman citizen, which was very costly to attain. He was taught by Gamaliel—the teacher who made the pharisaical teachings great (Acts 22:3). He was a Pharisee in the tradition of his father (Acts 23:6). Most conservative scholars agree that these were the kind of advantages that only Jews of wealth could experience (Acts 22:25 – 28).² So when Paul says, “I have learned” (Philippians 4:11 – 12), it is very likely that he is explaining that his conversion did not result in immediate contentment about the things over which he “suffered loss” (Philippians 3). McClain says, “When he was struck down on the way to Damascus, he called Jesus ‘Lord,’ and from that time on acknowledged Him and preached Him. He may at that instant have lost his family, his inheritance—everything. *The tense of the Greek word in Philippians suggests the possibility*

of an instantaneous catastrophe—lost, all at once [emphasis added].” The fact that Paul says, “I have learned,” suggests that this had been a process which, in this area of discipleship, became a reality. However, this never impeded his commitment as a disciple to lifelong learning. He says in 2 Timothy 4:13 “Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.” Here, the aged disciple is nearing the end of his life, yet he is still eager to learn. Most conservative scholars agree that in this text “books” are to be distinguished from “parchments,” because “parchments” refers to the Scriptures and “books” likely refers to non-inspired literature. One of the characteristics of the apostle Paul as a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ until death is the fact that he was a lifelong learner.

Paul the Follower

Having simply scratched the surface of what it means that a disciple is a *learner*, I now want to turn our focus to what it means that a disciple is a *follower*. According to the apostle Paul’s own testimony, he followed the Lord Jesus. He said in 1 Corinthians 11:1, “Imitate [follow, KJV] me, just as I also imitate [follow, KJV] Christ.” From the day of his conversion, the apostle Paul began to follow the Lord and never looked back. What does it mean to follow Jesus? The apostle

John said in 1 John 2:6, “He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.” To follow Jesus, we are to “imitate” Him; we are to “walk as He walked.” Now, the word “walk” connotes “lifestyle.” Therefore, authentic disciples ought to live as Christ lived. How did he live?

Walking Prayerfully

First, He walked prayerfully: Mark 1:35, “Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.” In Luke, the Lord is faced with needing to choose His disciples. Luke says in Luke 6:12 – 13, “Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.” In Mark He is up “a long while before daylight” to pray. Luke’s account says he “prayed all night.” Here, the Son of God is praying for the Father’s leading. He is committed to doing nothing but “the will of the Father” (John 5:19, 30), and He understood that to do so, He needed to be in continual and constant prayer to the Father. So, how did He walk (live)? He walked prayerfully.

Walking Purposefully

Not only did He walk prayerfully, He also walked purposefully.

Mark 1:21 – 34 indicates that the Lord’s ministry had begun to blossom. Verse 28 says, “His fame spread throughout the region around Galilee.” Instead of being distracted by His fame, He sought God in prayer. Then Simon Peter and others with him found Jesus and said, in verse 37, “... ‘everyone was looking for You.’ But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth’” (Mark 1:38). Jesus walked purposefully to do “the will of the Father” (John 5:19, 30).

The apostle Paul, a true disciple of Jesus Christ, walked as He walked; he walked prayerfully. Read how he prayed: for ministry, in Romans 15:14 – 33; to the sovereign God, in Ephesians 1:15 23; for power, in Ephesians 3:14 – 21; and to overcome hurdles, in Philippians 1:9 – 11, just to list a few.³

Like his Lord, Paul also walked purposefully. Luke gives us a glimpse into Paul’s dedication and determination to be committed to a purposeful walk in Acts 20:17 – 27: “From Miletus he 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, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.’”

A Walk of Commitment

Even though Paul has a clear word from the Holy Spirit that he is going to suffer, he is not deterred from his purpose of living in a holy manner among the people and proclaiming the whole counsel of God. Paul, a true portrait of what it means to be a disciple, practiced

this purposeful commitment throughout his life. Even when facing death, he could declare in 2 Timothy 4:6 – 8, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

Therefore, to be a disciple means that from the moment of our conversion until death or the Lord’s return for His Church, we are to be consistently walking as our Lord walked. Two telling characteristics of such a walk are evidenced in the life of saints who committed to walking prayerfully and purposefully. By God’s grace, may each of us be found so walking in the energy of the Holy Spirit!



Myrue Spivey is a Resident Worker, conference speaker, and influential spiritual leader in his community of Melbourne, Florida. He has been married to Patricia for 30 years and is the father of five adult children. He is also the proud grandfather of 16 grandkids and has been known to say, “If I had known they were this great, I would have had them first!”

¹All Scripture references used are from the NKJV, unless otherwise stated.

²See the late Alva J. McClain’s, Romans: The Gospel of God’s Grace (BMH Books).

³For a detailed study of these and other prayers of Paul, see D. A. Carson’s, A Call To Spiritual Reformation (Baker Books Publishers).

What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ?

Journey invited a number of leaders in the Assemblies of North America to share their viewpoint on the meaning of discipleship. Please interact with these opinions and compare them with your own as we all seek to be true disciples.

Mac Sauerlender Des Moines, WA



One of the earliest usages of the word “disciple” in the New Testament is found in Matthew’s gospel where he writes, “When He [Jesus] got into the boat, His disciples followed Him” (Matthew 8:23). Jesus climbed into a boat and His disciples all piled in after Him. The Lord headed out in a direction. His disciples hustled to go that way, too. Christ left the shore for a landing of His choosing. His disciples left land and people to be with their Master, wherever He was going.

A disciple of Christ is more than a student of Christ’s life and teachings. A disciple of Christ wants the person of Christ now and forever—more than life itself. Jesus said that eternal life can be summed up by the pursuit of personally knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He sent. Heaven will be filled with disciples who love their Lord and, because He is there, want to pile in after Him.

Joyce Barinowski North Augusta, SC



“I” must die daily! That is the heart of being a disciple or learner attached to Jesus Christ whose goal is not just learning about and from Him but also has the purpose of becoming what He, the Teacher, is. A disciple of Christ is an exchanged life. It is surrender—the definite, deliberate transfer of the undivided possession, control, and use of the total

being (spirit, soul, and body) to Jesus Christ to whom the believer rightly belongs by creation and redemption.

“Our theology becomes our biography.” (Tim Hansel) We are not human beings having a spiritual experience but spiritual beings having a human experience. Christ’s true followers are free—not to do as they like, but rather to become what the Lord desires.

It is interesting that the word “disciple” is not used after the Gospels and Acts. Yet the Lord Himself gave us the criteria of being His follower. There is always an “if” involved. “If” we are His disciple, we must love Christ supremely. Jesus does not coerce anyone. “If” we are His disciple, it requires a commitment—an active, ongoing choice. “I” must die daily! “If” we are His disciple, there is a personal cost. The degree of devotion can be measured only by the cost. Instead of being consumed by self and personal desires, a disciple carefully assesses every thought/motive/action to see how it will affect Christ and His glory.

The overwhelming claims of the Savior who bears the wounds of Calvary demands the true believer to forsake all for Him. We must take up our cross and follow Him. It is a voluntary pathway of sacrifice, suffering, shame, denial, loneliness, rejection, humiliation, hostility, persecution, and perhaps even physical death. The disciple’s life is absolute commitment and total surrender.

“I” must die daily! “Oh, the joy of having nothing, being nothing and seeing nothing but a living Christ in glory and being careful for nothing but His interests down here.” (J.N. Darby)

Dave Rickert Conway, SC



God’s glorious gospel calls sinners to become disciples of Christ. A Christian is not one who simply buys “fire insurance.” It is not a person who signs up with Jesus just to avoid an unpleasant afterlife and then goes on with life as usual. True believers in Christ will express their faith in loving submission to Christ’s lordship. The miracle of the new birth plants within us a heartfelt desire to please God. A disciple is like Mary, who sat at Jesus’ feet to learn from Him. A disciple is like Saul of Tarsus who, on the road to Damascus, humbly cries out, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice and follow me.” Discipleship means to follow in the footsteps of a Savior who gave His all to enrich the lives of others. There is no greater or more privileged calling!

Larry Dixon Columbia, SC



To be a “disciple” means to be a learner. As a seminary teacher, my business is helping others learn and grow in their commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. But am I still learning? How foolish for any of us to think that we have arrived and no longer need to learn.

Two disciplines have helped me immensely in staying on the learning path. The first will surprise no one: I need to be in God’s Word daily. John Bunyan said he sometimes found the Bible “dry as a stick,” but it doesn’t have to be that way. Varying my quiet time with the Lord is a necessity for me. Presently I am working my way through Jonah, typing out a few verses on my computer, making some observations on the passage, then typing out my prayer for the day.

The other discipline I really don’t have time to talk about. But I’ll tell you what it is: Periodically I try to read books that I know I’ll disagree with before I get past the preface. They make me think and defend

my faith and search deeper in God’s Word. I should not read only books that I already agree with—and neither should you. Email me (theoprof@bellsouth.net) and I’ll send you my list of books that make me hopping mad—and, in a strange way, help me become a better disciple of the Lord Jesus.

Ray Gonzalez Sterling Heights, MI



The word disciple means “to learn, to be taught.” It is someone who has been taught and follows the instructions of his teacher.

There are four principles that constitute a real disciple:

1. A true disciple leaves all (self interest) for his master (Lk. 5:11; 18:28-30).
Chambers, “You must go to the funeral of your own independence.”
2. A true disciple is teachable, “trainable,” hopefully will eventually be “fully trained,” mature, taught, and grown-up (Matt. 10:24-25).
3. The goal is to reflect the image of God’s Son (His master) to think and act like He does. (Rom. 8:29).
4. A true disciple must be willing to give up rights to self (Matt. 10:38-39; Lk. 14:26-28, 33).

He who does not give up rights to self is not worthy of me! But, I have my rights, my life, my privacy, my secret pleasures; I don’t want to give them up.

Chambers, “It’s not a question of renouncing sin! It’s renouncing the right to yourself.”

Jack Faulkner
Washington, TX



“The Passionate Pursuit of Perfection.” A car manufacturer has come up with this slogan. By the way, they just want your money.

I thought immediately of what Christ wants from me. He has a passionate pursuit of my perfection. He gave his life for mine. He paid the extreme price for my pardon. He continues to work at making me like Himself. It is His intention to make me like Him in all that I do.

Discipleship is a call to eternity from the midst of time.

My life is to be characterized by following Christ and Him alone. All that I do, say, and reflect should be Christ. Paul says, “For me to live is Christ....” I have no higher calling, no stronger desire. I have no greater passion than to do what Christ wants me to do.

My life is not my own, I am bought with a price: the precious blood of Christ. As His disciple, I am to follow him and him alone.

In my life, I battle the world, the flesh and the devil. Any compromise in the slightest way gives in to the enemy. I must have the passionate pursuit of perfection. I must only and always follow Christ.

Jerry Mattix
Turkey



Since my decision to follow Christ whole-heartedly back at Teen Bible Camp in Bolivia, life has been a breath-taking adventure. At first, seeing that true discipleship demanded total surrender of self, daily mortification and unmitigated following, I had serious hesitations. Soon, however, doubt was overwhelmed by faith and excitement as I began to get a glimpse of the glorious horizon in God’s eternal plan. The trek has not always been easy-going and there have been many a deep and dark ravine. But in it all is the assurance that my guide is trustworthy, understanding, and, most of all, near at hand. Through all the ups and downs, one critical lesson

stands out most prominently: our master is much more concerned that we capture and convey His heart than that we become masters at aping His steps and stride. Ultimately, becoming like Him is so much more important than merely mimicking Him.

Scott DeGroff
Topeka, KS



A disciple of Christ is a fruit-bearing follower of Him. In John 15:8, the Lord Jesus says, “...bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” The gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John show that the follower/disciple is to: confess the Lord Jesus before men; take up his cross daily; hate father and mother, wife and kids—yes, his own life—in comparison to the surpassing privilege of knowing and seeking Christ. He must forsake all (Lk. 14:33). As the disciple obeys these commands while abiding in Christ, he is used to bear much fruit. I recently heard the challenge, “What must you die to (forsake) in order to be a fruit-bearing follower of Christ?” This is much the same question as the one we consider today. What does it mean to be a disciple of Christ? It means forsake all, follow Him, and bear much fruit.

Steve Witter
Dubuque, IA



To be a disciple of Jesus Christ means to obey *Him*. Paul suggests in Romans 12:2 that believers who have been transformed and had their minds renewed will prove what the will of God is. The Lord Jesus demonstrated to us, through His life, that our response to God’s will is complete and total obedience and acceptance.

John writes in 1 John 2:3, “By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.” Sometimes this isn’t so easy. Far too often we as believers struggle with our sinful nature. We believe that our ideas, our wants, or our desires are better than what God wants for us.

When my daughter Joann was younger and I would try to give her direction and help, she would

frequently say, “My do it Dad, my do it.” Often, the results of her independence would be disastrous! How often do we, who claim to be Disciples of Christ, respond in similar fashion? As we strive towards maturity, may we follow *His* example and learn to say, “Not my will, but *Thine* be done.”

Steve Sanchez
Dubuque, IA



Being a disciple means loving God by enjoying him above everything else that screams for our affection. Jesus said the greatest commandment is “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Mt. 22:36). This is the essence of discipleship. We must love him more than our families, our jobs, our wealth, our relationships, our churches—yes, even our lives. We must find greater pleasure in knowing him than in vacations, retirement, possessions, sex, goals, influence, sports, raising children, even serving others. Anything we love more than God is an idol. A disciple chooses the pleasure of knowing God above every other pleasure. And she measures her love by the extent to which she finds satisfaction in Him versus everything else. The disciple who loves anything more than God does not love God as he ought, and is not the disciple he ought to be. God, open the eyes of our hearts so that we can see the beauty of Christ and be satisfied! O that we would we find him to be “treasure hidden in a field” and then in great joy “sell everything” else that brings us pleasure and “buy that field” (Mt. 13:44).

Daniel Dominguez, Jr.
Houston, TX



Without a doubt, when a person comes to know Christ as his Lord and Savior, there are fundamental changes. For example, changes in his/her values system and behavior. These changes take time. These changes also make us true Disciples of Christ.

The word “disciple” literally means “a learner.”

According to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, it denotes “one who follows another’s teaching.” But a disciple was not only a learner, he was a supporter, a believer, and an advocate—and for this reason, disciples were spoken of as imitators of their teaches. In Luke 6:40, Jesus stated “every disciple will be like his teacher.” To be Christ’s disciple, then, is to be like Him. According to the apostle Paul, this coincides with God’s goal in the redemption of mankind: that they be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). There are three basic marks of a disciple: one who is a doer of His Word, one who demonstrates love for his/her fellow brother/sister, and one who bears much fruit.

To truly be a disciple of Christ, a person must abide in His Word. This person would be a diligent student of Christ’s teaching. This would mean to be a “doer” of the Word (James 1:21-25). As a person spends time with the Teacher, then and only then can he/she understand His ways.

A disciple of Christ must live a life of love, patterned after the love of Jesus. John says it best in Chapter 13:34-35: “Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples—when they see the love you have for each other.” It sounds easy, but it is sometimes difficult.

John 15:8 says, “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” The key word is “much.” When we spend time in His Word and love others, then we will bear fruit for His glory.

In conclusion, the goal of a disciple of Christ is to truly be like Him. The mark of a disciple is to be a doer of His Word, to love others like Jesus loved them, and to bear much fruit, understanding what it cost the Father and the Son. Jesus’ death was a great sacrifice—a sacrifice of love for us that we would one day understand the truth and follow Him.

To the Praise of His Glory!

Lisa Beatty

The ministry of music in the local church is a topic of much emotional debate. What styles of music are appropriate for the church? How do we minister to both the old and the young through music? What is the place of music in the overall ministry of the local church? These are difficult questions without easy answers. Many churches wrestle with issues of musical quality and relevance. They struggle to find a balance between the new and old. It is unfortunate that these issues can cause dissension and even division in the local church.

God calls us to sing. He even gives us the song, "a new song," a song of the redeemed! And although any discussion of music

ministry in the church is fraught with difficulty, it is a subject well worth our attention. For the next several issues of *Journey*, I will share this space with my friend David Naylor from College Heights Chapel in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. We will explore a number of topics related to music ministry—some theological, some practical. The goal is not to find a formula for church growth or a solution to the generational tensions in the congregation; the goal is to bring glory to God through our use of music in the church. The ultimate question is not, "How do we please the youth or the elders?" but "How do we please God?"!

In Ephesians 1, Paul lays out

before his readers the full scope of God's dealings with man. Before time began, God had a plan for the salvation of those who believed. To what end? To the praise of His glory! God's ultimate purpose in His plan for the salvation of man was to bring glory to Himself. And our chief end as believers? To glorify God in all that we do. So...how can we use music to further the purposes of God in the church for His glory? In the next few issues, we will seek some answers to this question in His Word, as well as seek to demystify some practical matters related to music ministry.

In addition, I want to call your attention to a new resource for music ministry specifically for the

assemblies. www.assemblymusic.org is a project of Emmaus Ministry Resources. Our purpose is to assess the needs of local churches for resources in music ministry, and then try to meet those identified needs by providing resources and ministry support that will further the purposes of God for His church.

In Acts 2:42, Paul describes the activities of the early New Testament Church. "And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Music can be an effective tool when used with discernment and intention to support teaching, strengthen the bond of fellowship, and enhance corporate worship and prayer in the

local church, but we often struggle to find good resources for new music and other music ministry helps that fit our doctrinal and theological context. www.assemblymusic.org seeks to connect those involved in music ministry in the assemblies, and begin a conversation that we hope will lead to stronger and more vital music ministries in our local churches.

Please help us by going to the www.assemblymusic.org website and completing the online survey. We will use the information to develop programs to benefit and support the music ministries of local assemblies. If you have interest in helping with this project, we would love to hear from you!



Lisa Beatty is the Dean for Academic Affairs at Emmaus Bible College and has been a faculty member in the Music Ministry department since 1992. Lisa graduated from Clarke College with a B.A. in Music and obtained her M.A. in Vocal Performance from the University of Iowa. Lisa is married to Kevin and they have two daughters, Erin and Gwen.



“Disciple”

Jack Fish

in the New Testament

The Meaning of the Term

The Greek word for disciple, μαθητής, *mathētēs*, is related to the verb μανθάνω, *manthanō*, which means “to learn.”

The Teacher-Pupil Relationship

The teacher-learner relationship was involved as is seen in Matthew 10:24-25, “**A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master**” (cf. Luke 6:40). But more was involved. A disciple was not just a learner, he was also a follower and adherent of the teacher. He was a disciple and not just a pupil.

Specific Groups of Disciples

Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras and Epicurus developed their own schools and had their own followers who were their disciples. Among the Rabbis there was the school of Hillel and the school of Shamai. In the New Testament we read of disciples of John the Baptist (Matt. 9:14; 11:2; 14:12; Luke 11:1; John 1:35, 37)

and disciples of the Pharisees (Matt. 22:16). The Jews in John 9 called themselves disciples of Moses (John 9:28). Jesus also had his own disciples. This was a common term to refer to his followers. The word disciple (*mathētēs*) occurs 261 times in the New Testament (Matthew-72x; Mark-46x; Luke-37x; John-78x; Acts-28x; the word is not found in the rest of the New Testament).

The Absence of the Word “Disciple” in the LXX

It is striking and significant that in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, the word *mathētēs* does not occur. Moses and the prophets in the Old Testament were not teachers with their own group of disciples. They were spokesmen for God who were calling all the people of Israel to follow the Lord and obey him. They did not have their own authority, their own school, nor their own followers as did the heads of the Greek philosophical schools or even the Rabbis. Joshua is called the servant of Moses rather than his disciple (Ex.

24:13). This is also the way we should look at the relationship of Elisha with Elijah and Baruch with Jeremiah.

Disciples of Jesus

Jesus was different from Moses and the prophets. He did call men to be his disciples. He taught with authority (Matt. 7:29) and called men to follow him (Matt. 4:19). In the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19) he commanded his followers to “**go...and make disciples of all nations.**” This does not mean that Peter, Paul, James, and John each had their own group of disciples. They were to preach the gospel so that men and women would turn to Christ in faith and become his disciples.

It is the uniqueness of the person of Jesus Christ which makes him different from Moses, the prophets, and the New Testament apostles. He is the Messiah, the unique Lord, the Son of God. He is God who became man. He has an immediate relationship with each of his followers who trust in him and become his disciples. Apostles, prophets, and teachers

in the New Testament were directing the allegiance of men and women to the Lord and not to themselves. It is inappropriate and wrong to refer to anyone today as a disciple of a certain Christian leader. It is wrong for me to call others “my disciples.” There are only disciples of Christ. Paul might say, “**Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ**” (1 Cor. 11:1). But he was not seeking to have people follow him. He

himself was a disciple of Christ and was encouraging others to follow the Lord. He was only an example.

The Broad and Narrow Sense of Disciple

Disciple in the Broad Sense

The term “disciple” could be used in a general sense to refer to the followers of Jesus. But it was used in the Gospels in a broad

sense and a narrow sense. In the broad sense it could refer to the multitudes who gave some acceptance to his teaching. In the narrower sense it refers to a more restricted group.

In Luke 6:17 Jesus delivered a great sermon to a “**large crowd of His disciples.**” At the triumphal entry “**the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen**”

In Luke 14:25-35 the Lord Jesus describes what discipleship requires. It basically involves total commitment to him.

Illustration by Gustave Doré, public domain

(Luke 19:37). In John 6, after the bread of life discourse, many of his disciples were offended at what he had said and were grumbling (vv. 61-62). The result was that **“many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore”** (v. 66). Here the term disciple is used of many who had shown an interest in Jesus’ teaching and had attached themselves to him as followers. But their commitment was superficial and they were not genuine believers. In John 8:31 he says that a true disciple will continue in his word. This was said to Jews who had **“believed him”** but who ultimately rejected him. They were not truly his disciples.

Disciples in the Narrow Sense

In the great majority of uses of the term “disciple” in the New Testament, reference is made to a small group who had left their past lives and were actually following Jesus on his journeys. His disciples could fit into a boat (Matt. 8:23; 14:22, 26), go into a house with him (Matt. 13:36), and were traveling with him (Matt. 12:1-2) even into the regions of Tyre and Sidon (Matt. 15:23). In Matthew 10:1 the twelve apostles are called “his twelve disciples.” In the Gospels the term “disciples” is usually a reference to the twelve, although it is often difficult to determine if it is exclusively the twelve.

The Challenge to Discipleship

While the twelve were a specific group of disciples chosen by the Lord Jesus himself, the challenge and invitation to be his disciples was broader. But the cost of discipleship was high. In Luke 14:25-35 the Lord Jesus describes what discipleship requires. It basically involves total commitment to him. He is to be the number one priority in our lives and our first love. He is to have first place in everything (cf. Col. 1:18). Three statements show what true discipleship entails.

1) **“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple”** (Luke 14:26). The command to hate is not literal but rhetorical. Husbands are commanded to love their wives (Eph. 5:25). In Genesis 29:31 Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, but in verse 32 **“the Lord saw that Leah was unloved”** [lit. “hated”]. The expression is comparative. Our love for our dearest family members must seem like hatred in comparison to our love for Christ. He must be the supreme object of our love. All others must be loved less.

2) The second challenge involves willingness to suffer and die for him. **“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple”**

(Luke 14:27). The world rejected the Lord Jesus and made him carry his cross to his death. The world will also reject his disciples (cf. John 15:20). The disciple must be willing to bear the pain and suffering which goes with following him.

3) The third cost involves our possessions. **“So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions”** (Luke 14:33). It is so easy for us to become attached to the materialistic things of this world. Our hearts cannot be divided if we are true disciples. We cannot love our possessions and also truly love the Lord. Does this mean that we may have no home, car, change of clothes, or any possessions whatsoever? Of course not! A man is required to provide for his own family (1 Tim. 5:8). He is not to deliberately become homeless and a beggar. But the Lord Jesus is making a radical demand. Possessions cannot have a higher affection in our hearts than does the Lord. There is nothing we should be unwilling to give up for him.

The demands for discipleship are for total commitment. But we should also notice that some of our Lord’s “true” disciples were not always perfect. Peter denied the Lord. He was not willing at that moment to bear his cross. We see a different Peter in the book of Acts, and according to early

church tradition he did suffer the martyr’s death of crucifixion—upside down! No one has a perfect love for Christ and perfect commitment to him. Discipleship does involve growth in the spiritual life.

Marks of Discipleship

When the apostles were called to follow Christ in Mark 3:14, he appointed them “so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach.” They were called first to a relationship with him. The relationship precedes the service. In John 15 he calls the disciples to abide in him. This is the basis for their bearing fruit, and by bearing much fruit the Father is glorified and they are proved to be Christ’s disciples (John 15:8). The mark that distinguishes them as true disciples is that they “have love for one another” (John 13:35).

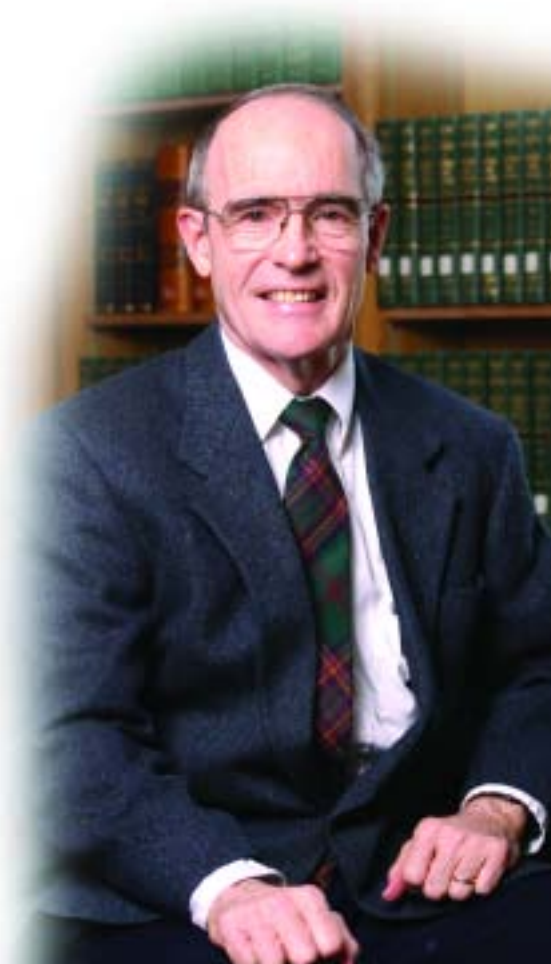
Disciples in Acts and the Epistles

In the book of Acts the term disciple has become a common term for all who are part of the church (Acts 6:1, 2, 7; 9:1, 26, etc.). Acts 11:26 says that “the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” In the Gospels it was the apostles, those who spent time with Christ and followed him in his ministry, who were the disciples. The use of the term in Acts recognizes that it is not a small inner group who follows Christ. He is with us always (Matt. 28:19-20). We may all be in his

“inner fellowship.” All Christians should be disciples. Christ should have the first place in the life of every believer. Self and all other aspects of life should be subordinate to him. Radical commitment to Christ is not the part of a select group of disciples but should characterize every believer.

“Our love for our dearest family members must seem like hatred in comparison to our love for Christ.”

Jack Fish graduated from Brown University with a B.A. in Linguistics and went on to receive Th.M and Th.D degrees from Dallas Theological Seminary. For the past 34 years Jack has been a member of the faculty at Emmaus Bible College. He currently serves as Editor of The Emmaus Journal and as an elder at Asbury Community Chapel in Asbury, Iowa. Nancy and Jack have four grown children all of whom have graduated from Emmaus and seven grandchildren.



Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Matthew 4:19-20

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."

Matthew 16:24-27

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

Matthew 10:34-39

"AND WHOEVER DESIRES TO BE FIRST AMONG YOU, LET HIM BE YOUR SLAVE—JUST AS THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE, AND TO GIVE HIS LIFE A RANSOM FOR MANY." MATTHEW 20:27,28

"But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"

Luke 6:46

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!"

Matthew 10:24-25

But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Luke 9:62

Luke

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Matthew 6:33

Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."

Luke 9:23-26

"THESE THINGS I COMMAND YOU, THAT YOU LOVE ONE ANOTHER. JOHN 15:17

John

So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Luke 18:29,30

So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

John 13:12-17

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Luke 9:26-27

"This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."

John 5:12-14

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one."

John 17:20-22

But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Mark 10:42-45

And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."

Mark 9:35

Mark

“Every high movement of spiritual awakening in the history of the church has been accompanied by a revival of song, for singing is as close to worship as breathing is to life itself.”

Editor’s Note: This article is an edited transcription of a message delivered by Alex Strauch at the 2003 “Iron Sharpens Iron” Conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.

Without question musical expression is the hottest issue in the evangelical church today. I recently heard Professor Howard Hendricks of Dallas Seminary, who has been preaching for over fifty years throughout North America and the world, say that in his lifetime he has never seen so much division and bad feeling in churches as there is today over the issue of music. Tragically this division has led to “music wars” in many churches.

Music is Indispensible to Biblical Christianity

One of the reasons for our contemporary music wars is that music is so important in the life of the church. As a matter of fact, a major distinction of Christianity among the world religions is jubilant celebration, especially in the songs of praise and musical instruments. If you want to know what

Christianity is about, look at our hymnbooks. There you will see the message of our faith. W. M. Clow draws our attention to singing as a unique feature of Christian worship. “A Buddhist temple never resounds with a cry of praise. Mohammedan worshipers never sing. Their prayers are, at the highest, prayers of submission and of request.”¹ John Stott adds, “By contrast, whenever Christian people come together it is impossible to stop them singing. The Christian community is a community of celebration.”² He continues, “In fact, the whole life of the Christian community should be conceived as a festival in which with love, joy and boldness we celebrate what God has done for us through Christ.”³ We celebrate the forgiveness of our sins, the joys of heaven, the Son of God’s becoming man and living among us, God the Father making us His children, and God the Spirit indwelling us. These are things to get excited about—to celebrate.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians the Apostle Paul tells his readers what the Spirit-filled, Spirit-controlled life looks like. “Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one

another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18-19). Paul followed his own counsel. Luke records that after they had been beaten and put in prison, “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God and prisoners were listening to them” (Acts 16:25). Most of us would not be praising God; we would be trying to contact a good lawyer so that we could sue the authorities and get out of there. James writes, “Is anyone cheerful? Let him buy a café mocha and eat fine pastry.” No, that is not in my Bible. He actually says, “Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises” (James 5:13). The largest and best known of all the books in the Bible is the Book of Psalms. It is largely a book of prayer and hymns. King David wrote much of it, and his son Solomon followed his father’s example, by writing over a thousand songs (1 Kings 4:32). In the Book of Revelation we learn that in heaven there is going to be plenty of singing (e.g., Rev. 5:9-10; 15:3-4). As the songwriter says of heaven, it is “filled with glory and grace.”

Musical Expressions in the Local Church

Alexander Strauch
Edited by Dr. David J. MacLeod

Music is Essential to Evangelism, Church Growth, Personal Devotion and Worship

Evangelism and Music

Music plays a major role in the life of the church and in the life of the individual believer. This is obviously so in evangelism. Andrew Murray insightfully asked, "How do children first learn about the Gospel? By reading the Bible and memorizing Scripture? Oh, no. They first learn it by singing it." When they can hardly carry out full sentences they will be singing, "Yes Jesus Loves me, the Bible tells me so." I can remember my little girls, when they were very young—so young they were just learning to talk—saying to me, "Jesus, Daddy. Jesus, Daddy." What they wanted me to sing was, "Yes Jesus loves me." I would sing it and when I was done, they would again say, "Jesus, Daddy. Jesus, Daddy." And I would sing it again. They heard the Gospel first through the singing of the Gospel. Dwight L. Moody, Billy Graham and others used music effectively in evangelistic crusades, and they were often criticized for it. Yet think of the thousands of people saved through hearing the great evangelistic hymn,

"Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come. I come!"

Who can count the number of people who have heard and repeated that song and have come to Christ as Savior?

Charles and John Wesley, in the great revivals in England, which they brought to America, spread the Gospel by song. One writer says, "In the early days [of the great revival, the great awakening], tunes were plain, often adapted to stately German chorales and sung fast." Many stirring tunes came later, often from the north of England to be sung to great hymns such as "And Can It Be," "Love Divine All Love Excelling," and "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing."

These hymns would change English worship, yet, for most of Wesley's lifetime, they were seldom heard in parish churches. Men and women by the thousands sang them in the market squares and in the hillsides and in the Methodist preaching houses. The revival was spread by songs. Lovelace and Rice in their book, *Music and Worship in the Church*, say, "Every high movement of spiritual awakening in the history of the church has been accompanied by a revival of song, for singing is as close to worship as breathing is to life itself."

In 1874 Dwight L. Moody went to Glasgow with his songwriter-soloist, Ira Sankey. Sankey's Gospel songs were sharply criticized as steam-kettle music by Scottish believers who had sung only the Psalms or paraphrases of them. But the new musical inno-

ventions were stirring, thrilling, and inspiring. The new songs, according to one writer, became popular at homes, offices, factories, and congregations, taking the place of previous musical styles.

In evangelism, music has been very much used of God. At the present time in South America many groups are using music in evangelism because Latin people love music. It is just a part of their living and breathing, and churches have used good music to draw people into their meetings. Some might argue that this is just a concession to modern marketing techniques. Let's remember, however, that John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace," wrote a new hymn every week to attract people to his mid-week services. Just recently there have been advertisements for CDs containing contemporary Christian praise music. Thousands of non-Christians have seen these ads on secular TV stations and have purchased the CDs. Many unsaved people are now getting hooked on singing the Gospel. Music is essential to evangelism.

Church Growth and Music

It has been said by many people that a major factor in the phenomenal growth of the Calvary Chapels is music and the music program they have used. Your growth will be affected by your music. People today will not come to a church with dead, lifeless music. You may think the words of your hymnbook are the greatest—

and they may be the greatest. But if the singing is powerless, lifeless, and dull, people will not stay, and your young people will not stay—except for a very few exceptions.

Personal Devotion and Music

James says, "Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises" (James 5:13). Paul agreed, "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 thanksgiving in your hearts to God" (Col. 3:16). The Christian life basically is a very positive life. It is not a life of drudgery. Part of King David's devotional life was singing, and he was a great worshiper of God. He was a man who loved to worship and he wrote many songs to God. Now, if you would like to improve your devotions—if they are getting rather dull—I have a suggestion

for you. It is something I have done many years. Give a little time in your daily devotional practices to singing. Take out your hymnal and sing a song or two.

Over the years I have sung through many hymnals. Back in the early nineties I lost my voice for over a year. I had no voice and for five years I struggled just to squeeze out a weekly message if I could. During these years I only had about an hour's worth of voice a day. Well, I had to stop singing. I have not sung since. If you think you see me singing at this conference, you are mistaken. I am not really singing; I am just mouthing the words. I have to save my voice for speaking, so I can't sing. Singing is very hard on the voice, and it was like a death when I could no longer sing. It is not until you can't sing that you realize how vital singing is to one's worship of God.

So, if you want to spruce up your devotions, sing. Singing is prayer. Singing is speaking to God. What a wonderful gift God has given to us in music. So sing and it will prepare your heart for prayer and for devotion. While you are praying, break out into a song. I once talked to a man who led a

Too often churches make the grave mistake of using music as time filler as they wait for the crowds to get there, calm them down, and prepare them for the speaker.

large Christian organization for many years. You can't lead anything without lots of criticism, and I asked him, "How do you handle all the criticism you receive?" He said, "Well, there were many years



when I became bitter, cynical, and very reactionary. Then I learned a secret: When I start thinking of all the personal attacks upon myself and am getting bitter, I just start singing. Singing is the only thing I have found that just recycles my mind out of these dark moments.” Singing is a powerful tool in your personal devotion.

Worship and Music

Singing to the Lord is a powerful tool of worship. Too often churches make the grave mistake of using music as time filler as they wait for the crowds to get there, calm them down, and prepare them for the speaker. Our musical program should be more than that. When you are singing, you are worshiping. Many of the hymns and songs we sing are prayers to the Lord. Too often we think that only when one of the brethren is leading in prayer is there true wor-

ship. That is faulty thinking. When we are singing, we are speaking to God, worshipping him, and acknowledging his worthiness.

John writes of a scene in heaven: “When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation’ (Rev. 5:8-9). They sing in heaven! The angels sing accompanied by musical instruments (harps). They are filled with joy, adoration, and wonder. If you think the singing at this conference is good, wait until you get to heaven and you have your new glorified body. You will

sing like an opera singer and, as our young people say, you will really be able to “let loose.” Really, most of us can’t sing that well, and we rely on others. We squeak out of tune. Some day you will be able to open your mouth and such marvelous sounds will come out that you will say, “Boy, I better be careful of the pride now!” Music is worship.

Making Changes in the Music Ministry

Change is not an option. People and circumstances are constantly changing. Some in the congregation may leave the area, others may retire, and some may die, and all the while new people will be coming in the door. The very neighborhoods in which our church buildings stand are always undergoing steady, sometimes imperceptible change. There is constant change going on, and the

only real issue we face is how we are to manage the change. We must identify the changes that are occurring and direct the ongoing process. There is no such thing as non-change; it does not exist. No one lives in animated suspension or in neutral gear. We are continually moving forward or backward, but there is always change going on. Your assembly today will not be the same in five years. I guarantee it.

The topic before us, and the main issue we are addressing in this article, is this: How do we facilitate change and worship in our churches? In the last twenty-

The author of a recent article made the interesting observation that music is the new denomination.

five years, there has been a catastrophic earthquake among Bible-believing churches throughout the entire world in the area of music. The author of a recent article made the interesting observation that music is the new denomination. In the past people would go to a church because it held a particular doctrine, had certain programs, or because their circle of friends attended. Today’s young people and baby boomers choose their church for the music it offers. A man I have known for a long time—he’s not a very mature believer—told me he went to his particular church for the music. He says, “I love to worship now and I never miss attending church on Sunday.” The variety of music

offered at his church has struck a chord with him. “It has really changed my life.”

This is not just a North American phenomenon. All over the world the whole landscape of music has changed, and it is coming into our churches. Our young people know all about it. They go to concerts, hear the music on the radio, and they buy the CDs. Those of us who are older have Christian music, which we love. But they have their music, too. Everyone has to face this issue. I realize there are isolated groups that will not worry about this, but the vast majority of churches have to somehow address this change among Evangelical Christians. Let me give you what I believe are reasonable, balanced helps in dealing with this. I know it is a very sensitive and emotional subject.

Elders Need to Provide the Mandate, Guidelines, and Encouragement for the Music Ministry of the Local Church

The music ministry of most churches takes up probably the second or third largest portion of time in a service or meeting. In most of our churches the ministry of the Word of God rightfully takes up the largest portion of time. My observation is that in many churches music takes up the second largest portion—whether it is at the Lord’s Supper, the 11 o’clock service, or the meeting on Wednesday night. In brief, music takes up a large portion of our meetings together. Because of this, the eldership body needs to provide leadership in regularly evalu-

ating the music, challenging its improvement, and providing vision and guidance for this area of ministry. The elders do this with preaching and prayer, and they should with the music program as well.

You alone as elders have the authority to make changes, stop wars, and set parameters in which you are going to work. You have that authority as the eldership body, and you will use it or lose it. You must not just drift in this area. If you drift or if you are passive, you will not give clear guidance and vision, and this will cause a lot of back-scene conflict. You will eliminate conflict if you are clear about the direction in which you believe the church should go. People will usually listen to the elders if they provide strong leadership, but if they don’t give direction, there will be a lot of back-scene eruptions and frustration. People will begin to quietly leave. They may not say why they are leaving, but many times they go because they are frustrated, and they are unmoved and uninspired by this important area of their lives, namely, worship through music. Elders must not be indifferent to the fact that for young people, especially, music is a major factor in their lives. Don’t be like the actress, Doris Day, who sang the famous song, “Que Sera, Sera,” that is, “What will be, will be.” To adopt that attitude—“what will be”—is disaster. You have the authority. Give guidance, vision, challenge, and parameters. And always be ready to evaluate and reevaluate.

The local assembly is a family, and a family is a blend of old and young with a variety of tastes in music.



Learn to Enjoy the Rich Diversity in Christian Music and Worship

The Bible itself tells us that there is diversity in music. In the Old Testament hymnbook, the Psalms, for example, there is a rich variety of song, from the simple to the sublime. There are reflections on historical events, contemplations of deep theological themes, and expressions of rich and emotional devotion toward God. There isn't only one kind of song—there are all kinds. There is a rich diversity of songs for every occasion, for every emotion, and for every stage of the spiritual life. The New Testament twice offers a threefold classification of praise: “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). Again, we see music for different occasions, different expressions, and different emotions.

In spite of the Bible's provision of these wonderful examples of diversity, there are some believers who will sing only the psalms; others who will sing only Reformation hymns; others who are happy only with the hymns of Watts and Wesley; and still others who will only sing songs written within the past five years! Not only does the rich diversity of the Bible condemn our narrow provincialism in music, but the history of church music over 2,000 years provides hundreds of examples of how richly and diversely God has gifted people to provide chants, anthems, paraphrased psalms, hymns, oratorios, choruses, and songs to honor and address our Lord.

So I would say to you that a balanced music program will be a blended music program. There will be a blending of music and the blend of music will be determined by the kind of meeting you are having. Is the meeting for worship, evangelism, or teaching? Not only does the purpose of the meeting determine the choice of music, but the age and cultural makeup of the congregation will be determinative as well.

When I say “blended music,” I do not mean that there will be an equal number of old hymns, praise choruses, and contemporary songs. I don't think that really happens in any place. What will happen is that an older group will favor hymns and well understood songs they have sung for a lifetime—music they have no intention of getting rid of.

As Christians, we are doing more than singing pretty tunes and melodies. We have a message.

Yet if they are wise they will add some newer styles as well. If you have a younger group, they are simply going to favor more contemporary music, and, if they are wise, they will blend in some of the great traditional hymns that have been sung in the past.

Someone, of course, will have to monitor all of this to see that there is fairness in the blending because the church is a family. We have argued about this in our church to the point of exhaustion, and every five or six years we have

an evaluation of where we are at the moment. I can just see the emotion at the elder's table when the topic of music comes up. The emotion is there because these are very precious and dear things to us. They touch us at our deepest being and we have to evaluate. So we ask ourselves, “Now where is our music going, where are we imbalanced, and what do we need to do to improve—keeping in mind that we are a family?” There are older people in the congregation who have been there a lifetime. They are not just to be cast out into the garbage can. There are younger people who will be in the congregation for years to come. They cannot be just treated disrespectfully either as if their taste in music is irrelevant. The local assembly is a family, and a family is a blend of old and young with a variety of tastes in music. We have people in our church who are professionally trained musicians, and they enjoy a certain kind of music. We have others who want to strum chords on their guitars and beat the tomtoms. We have all kinds of people, and we have to acknowledge and honor them all.

A sticky point in discussions over music is the subject of content. As Christians, we are doing more than singing pretty tunes and melodies. We have a message. There has to be content, and the content has to be accurate. It has to truthfully convey the biblical teaching on the subject matter we are singing. The lyrics must have substance, content, truth, and meaning to them. The words must

say something that is true about the revelation we have received from God.

Yet through the centuries and in our own time we have learned that there is a rich diversity of musical expression in the church. Sometimes we sing hymns that are profoundly deep in theology. It would be a crime to remove these from use simply because they are sung at a slow pace and sometimes with difficulty. We would be criminal to rob our young people of the richness of older hymns by never having them learn them. We certainly cannot do away with great songs like “Jesus, Lover of My

Soul” and “And Can It Be?” And there are more contemporary songs that are beautiful direct prayers to God. I am thinking of pieces like “I Love You Lord” and “O Lord, You Are Beautiful.” We must not neglect such worshipful songs just because we sing older hymns.

Both forms of music have their place and we need to sing both. It is a beautiful thing to sing a deep, rich, and theological hymn and then move right into a lovely praise song of direct address to the Lord. They really do blend very well. Many churches that are doing an excellent job in music are blending these songs and run-

ning them right together. On occasion I have seen a song leader take a great hymn that has five verses, and he led the congregation in the first two. He then led the people into a couple of praise choruses before returning to the final verses of the hymn. There are many creative things we can do with the diversity of music as long as we remember the different purposes for the various pieces.

The same thing is true in your prayer life. Are all of your prayers theologically deep with rich biblical allusions? No, sometimes you just say, “Help, Lord.” Sometimes you say, “Lord, I don't know what



to pray.” There is a place for all kinds of prayers. Paul says in Ephesians 6:18, “with all prayer,” which means all kinds of prayer. When Peter was sinking in front of the Lord into the sea, he didn’t say, “Oh, merciful and great Father of Israel who...” and then go through a recitation of Old Testament history. He said, “Help, I’m going down.” There is nothing wrong with that prayer, because he was about to drown. The same thing is true with our songs. Sometimes when you are praying in the privacy of your home, you might want to break into a simple chorus of praise to God, thanking Him, telling Him you love Him, simply expressing your heart’s desire for communion with Him.

John Frame, a Presbyterian theologian, has written a number of serious works of theology. He is perhaps the last person we would expect to address the subject of Christian music. Yet Professor Frame is a musician and he has written a book to his Presbyterian and Reformed brethren, many of whom hate contemporary worship music, in defense of such music (*Contemporary Worship Music*). To the many Christians who view contemporary Christian music as heresy, Frame says, “Let us speak sanely about this question. Don’t throw the baby out with the bathwater. There is a place for this music, and if you listen carefully you will realize that some of it is very good.” Use the good songs, and get rid of the bad. The same approach should be used with our hymns. Many of the hymns are

great, but some of them shouldn’t be sung any more. Frame’s work is a good balanced book from a theologian’s aspect that carefully avoids an either-or approach. The praise choruses have a very important place in today’s assemblies.

I grew up for my first sixteen years in the United Presbyterian Church where we only sang hymns. Many of these hymns you wouldn’t know, but I remember

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that to a boy in his teens they were exhausting. They were not the kind of songs that you would ever sing at home. They were long and incomprehensible, and the organ was played so loudly that the young people did not sing. The choir would sing the revered hymns, but the organist made sure that you could not clearly hear the words. The result was that these “great and magnificent hymns” were not viewed as “great and magnificent” by the young.

Sometimes, then, old hymns can be unrelated to us. Sometimes they can be exhausting, and sometimes they are antiquated in

expression. Yet, there is a place for the great hymns. We must not lose them. That would be like losing history. People have written great music and great songs over the last two thousand years, and our young people need to learn and be connected with the history and the grandeur of these hymns, and older people need to capture some of the vitality and life and freshness of the choruses.

The contemporary praise choruses are very simple, easy to memorize, and eminently singable. You can go away from a meeting with many of them memorized and start singing them right away. People like that. Frankly, most of us are simple people who do not get tied up in our thinking about heavy theological concepts. The wise Bible teacher tries to keep it simple. The praise chorus authors write lyrics and melodies that are simple, contemporary, easy to sing, and within the range of our voices.

Let’s be honest—contemporary worship music and praise choruses have their problems, too. One of the problems is that there is too much sameness. There are too many platitudes about the kingdom and too little specificity about doctrinal matters. Some time ago I went with some friends of ours to the largest “Generation-X” church in the country. Located in Denver, it has almost four thousand young people. Some of our young people asked me to go with them to the mid-week service. I went with the intention of being open minded and objective. The service began with forty-five min-

Whatever you are singing—even if you have been singing it for sixty years—should be fresh and alive.

utes of music. It was loud (which I didn’t mind), but I noticed that the lyrics were bland and very unspecific. They were so general, in fact, that a non-Christian could have sung them. There was nothing specific about sin or redemption, so I later expressed my impressions with my younger brothers and sisters. I said, “I have nothing to say about the length of the music program or the quality of the band (which wasn’t bad), but I want you to notice that they really didn’t sing anything that an unsaved person couldn’t sing without being offended.” The song service didn’t really have any specific Christian content.

What, then, have we done in our assembly in Colorado? We have sought to pick the very best out of the contemporary worship music/praise choruses and songs because we believe they have a place. This kind of music is here to stay, and you are burying your head in the sand if you don’t realize that. We picked out the very best of what is available, paying particular attention to the content of the lyrics. Do the lyrics have sound doctrinal content that is specifically Christian and evangelical? Are they simple, and do they lead to worship of the Lord Jesus Christ?

So, some of the problems are that there is too much vacuous kingdom teaching and too much repetition. John Frame says that

he had been ordering music for several years from a particular publisher. After a while he gave up on this publisher because it was really repackaging the same themes over and over, and the music got very boring. I went one evening to a charismatic church that had a special speaker from England who has done amazing work with the house-church movement. Before he spoke there was about forty-five minutes of music. I enjoyed the first three or four songs, and then it became very repetitious. There was a sameness about the tunes and themes, and I was soon thoroughly bored.

I recently read that back in the early 1950s, hymn writers were saying that the hymns were becoming too much the same. They were so reverent and far off from people’s experiences that the new hymns of that period needed to be brought down to where people actually lived. In context, the author was speaking more of hymns being written for more liturgical and formal churches where they emphasize the grandeur, supremacy, and far-offness of God. The complaint was that these hymns missed something of God’s intimacy and closeness to the believer.

Christian balance will allow us to have variety—music that celebrates both God’s grandeur and His intimacy with His people. Our God is a great and awesome God,

but he is also the God who stepped into time and space and became a man and identified with us in the most incredible way. The great scandal of Christianity is that God became a man, lived among us, and died a criminal’s death. Muslims can’t believe that anyone could believe something so horrible. The great offense to them is the cross, the notion that the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, died to bear the sin and judgment of the world.

Well, these themes of grandeur and greatness and intimacy and closeness, can all be combined and blended together. So I am asking for blendedness and balance—for understanding the good in both the contemporary and the traditional and for an elimination of that which is not relevant or helpful today.

Keep Music Fresh and Alive

The key word in this discussion is “fresh.” Music can become old, stale, and uninspiring. We can sing without engaging our minds or our hearts. Singing can become a formality. Have you ever been in an assembly where they are singing an old hymn that they know well? They all have their hymnbooks out, but they seem distracted and are looking around. They have open hymnbooks, but they sing the old words without looking at them they know them so well. Meanwhile they appear to be checking out the clothing of their fellow Christians or else eyeing critically the misbehavior of someone’s children. They are mouthing



the well-known words, but their hearts and minds are disconnected from what they are singing. They are not talking to God and pouring their hearts out to Him in worship. It is deadening to a church, and people pick up on it quickly.

Frankly, when we are singing Christian music, we should see that it is as serious a moment as praying. We are talking to our God and expressing our thoughts to Him. So the key word is “fresh.” Whatever you are singing—even if you have been singing it for sixty years—should be fresh and alive.

Learn New Songs Each Year

After becoming a Christian in my teens, I left the Presbyterian Church and became part of an assembly in New Jersey. In that assembly we knew thirty songs in our hymnal. Apart from those thirty songs we did not learn any

other. The music program for each meeting was put together in about three minutes by a brother who rushed to the front of the auditorium and frantically looked for three hymns to sing. After picking the songs he would go over to the pianist and whisper, “We are going to sing these three.” That was the extent of our planning for the music. As you can see, there wasn’t a lot of Spirit led thought given to the process. Week after week we sang the same hymns, and that gets stale after a while. There should be some program in which, perhaps every month or so, you learn a new hymn from your own book or learn a new praise chorus that is acceptable to your group. Over a period of a couple of years, you will see your hymnody growing and it will bring some freshness and life to the church.

Freshen Up the Old Songs

Freshening up old songs is called repackaging. At our ISI Conference this year we have heard repackaging. Our musical group took some great songs and hymns that we have sung all our lives, and they added a variety of instruments to them (keyboard, congas, guitars, and tambourine), and they put a different tune to them and they freshened them up. I feel that some of us are losing the great hymns because we just haven’t freshened them up. This can be done by adding instruments and contemporary arrangements. You can take a great hymn and have the whole congregation sing the first verse and then have a few singers sing the second, and you can have just the musical instruments play the third. There are all kinds of creative ways you can

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repackage, freshen, and contemporize old songs. Frankly, we need to do that. Some songs need a little more pep put to them. Some of them need a new tune that accentuates some of the great words that are being sung—words that are lost by holding on to archaic arrangements.

Train and Evaluate the Song Leaders

It doesn’t matter what songs you are singing; the song leader can kill them or make them alive. I have actually seen song leaders who stand before the congregation with their hands in their pockets. Fearful of the people, they never look at the audience. They look only at the hymnbook, and they don’t smile. They look unhappy, “like they have been baptized in lemon juice,” as Sam Dalton used to say. They look like it is killing them to be a Christian and singing these songs. Such song leaders need help! Don’t blame them if you don’t help them.

I am going to give you an important word. It is “evaluate.” Anyone who leads music or is part of music team should be told beforehand that there will be an evaluation of the music program after the meeting. They should be told, “This evaluation is not to

hurt you, but to help you and to improve you. If you don’t want to improve or change or make this a greater experience for our people, then really you shouldn’t be part of this program.” Admittedly, these are very sensitive things. People do not like evaluation or accountability. They would rather stand up there with their hands in their pockets and think nothing is wrong, but you have to think of the whole congregation. The song leader needs to look at the people, smile at them, and watch them. He can see if they are singing or not singing, and he needs to encourage them if they are not participating. We are used to people not singing the songs. We are used to people just mouthing the words. But we cannot accept that. You have to say, “Hold it a second. We are singing great truths. We are singing to our God. This is a terrible testimony for new people coming here. They can tell right away whether you are into your faith and your singing.” The song leader needs to stop the congregation from lifeless mouthing of the words, “Please, let us all join together in our voices. Do not be playing with your children or straightening out the pew in front of you. Let’s lift our voices to God.”

You have to train people. People can be trained to sing better. That is the song leader’s job. But I believe it won’t happen if we don’t call all of our song leaders to

accountability, set a vision before them, and keep helping them improve. You know, many don’t even realize what they are doing. When you stand in front of people, you naturally get frightened and you don’t want to look at them because they are scary looking! So, to repeat, we have to train our song leaders to look at the people, smile at the people, and encourage the people to sing. The musical part of our service should be a spiritual experience—an inspiring time of worship from the head and from the heart.

Strive for Excellence in Music and Continual Improvement

As you think about your own assembly you may feel hopeless and defeated; after all, you may think, we are small. It would be better to approach the problem with hope and vision. Even if your church doesn’t have much musical talent, you can improve and move forward. Wherever you are at the present time you can and need to keep improving your music and worship. You may need to start small. That’s okay as long as you are making incremental changes. Above all, be committed to improving and changing.

Use More Instruments in Your Music Ministry

Many years ago in the assemblies the use of musical instruments was unheard of. Gradually, however, the piano was introduced at about the same time as the

“Family Bible Hour.” Some assemblies even went so far as to get a small organ, and eventually these were used even in the Breaking of Bread meeting. The piano and organ are not, however, the only instruments you can use. Find out what instruments the young people in your church can play and encourage them to bring them to the meetings. Encourage your young people to learn to play an instrument and use that ability to serve the Lord.

Do Not Interrupt the Flow of Music and Worship

As a boy in New Jersey I attended a church where the service would begin with a long five-verse hymn accompanied by the organ. We would stand for the hymn, and then we would be asked to sit. There would then be a prayer and we would be asked to rise again for another hymn. We would then sit for the reading of the announcements. There might be another prayer and then the honoring of a couple for their anniversary. Then we’d rise for another hymn, and sit to hear the sermon. There was a constant breaking up of the musical worship, and the standing and sitting was an exhausting experience.

In our assembly the meeting begins with the congregation standing for 15 minutes of singing (a blending of hymns and contemporary songs). It takes the average person about 10 minutes to get into the flow of worship. Some songs will be sung two or three

times. There should be a unity to the music selected to create a flow of thought. Plan the music so it flows in content and style. Do not break this up; do not start and stop and start and stop the music. Some churches will spend more time on announcements and tomfoolery, which is totally unrelated to their goal of worshipping God, than on their singing, which is central to worship.

Use Projected Lyrics

The use of the overhead projector or (even better) power point slides can greatly enhance the beauty of congregational singing. When people stand and look up at the screen they sing much better. When they sit they tend to look down and sing toward the floor, or else they look around and don’t get involved. Of course there are special cases when for health reasons a person cannot stand to sing. This problem can be easily remedied by encouraging them to sit toward the front where they can easily see the screen while sitting.

Seek Open and Creative Ways to Change the Music and Worship Ministry

When we suggest changing the music and worship in our assemblies, we are touching people in a very sensitive area. We have all be raised on a certain style of music and worship format. Many people love their way of worshipping and their hymns; these things are precious to them, and they don’t want them changed. For

them change means that true worship is being destroyed! We all need to be sensitive to other people’s preferences.

Sensitivity, however, is a two-way street. While there are people who do not want change, there are others whose worship is being hurt by the same old ways and songs. The more contemporary songs and styles that they prefer are not wrong or sinful! They are merely different. If experience is any guide, we can safely say that many of those who want change will leave. How do we keep these two groups together?

Address the Problem Openly at a Special Meeting

A number of years ago the music ministry became a real issue at our assembly in Colorado. To be honest there were harsh feelings and stubbornness on both sides. The elders called a congregational meeting, and we had a time of open debate and the presentation of options. The people clearly stated their minds, and we knew we had to act. Our creative solution was to have two Breaking of Bread meetings. This may not work for your assembly or seem right to you. We felt we had to do something or people would become so frustrated they would leave. You do not solve problems by indecision and inaction.

I do not want to leave the impression that one of our groups was right and one was wrong. In fact, the elders had to address insensitivity on the part of some of

those who were leading the more contemporary music. As we did the waters calmed, and gradually those in the more “traditional” meeting felt that many of their grievances had been met. Over a period of years they slowly rejoined the main body.

My counsel, then, is to talk about it openly and seek creative solutions to unity. As the apostle admonished the Ephesians, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3, NIV). It is vital that everyone in the church knows that they must understand and honor each other.

Don’t Accuse Others of Bad Motives

Many times in the debate over music people become arrogant; they are convinced that they are right and the music they enjoy is superior. Then a war of words begins, and people begin to hurl accusations that question the motives and spiritual reality of their opponents. One group says, “The old is dead,” and the other group responds, “The new music is just noise!” One group snarls, “You people are just traditionalists,” and

the other hisses back, “You don’t want to worship God; you just want to be entertained!” This is not the way of love in the local assembly. The way of love is to curb our selfishness and to seek the interest of others (Phil. 2:1-4).

Remember That This is a Test

The music wars of today are ultimately tests of our Christian character. We are being tested as to our love, patience, forgiveness, gentleness, forbearance, humility, and servanthood. Even when believers disagree, and they will, they must still act in a Christlike way. Let us all remember, therefore, that the current debate over music is just another test of living the supernatural Christian life in a fallen world. Let us be committed to submitting to one another and to putting the progress of the gospel and the unity of the local church above our own personal feelings and preferences.

As the apostle admonished the Ephesians, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3, NIV).

It is vital that everyone in the church knows that they must understand and honor each other.



Alex Strauch
Alex is the author of *Biblical Eldership* and *The New Testament Deacon*. He serves as an elder at the Littleton Bible chapel in Littleton, Colorado where he resides with his wife, Marilyn.

¹W. M. Clow, *The Cross in Christian Experience* (New York: Doran, 1908), 278.

²John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 1986), 258. Stott writes (258, n. 7), “If it be objected that in the Koran Allah is regularly styled ‘the Compassionate, the Merciful’ and sometimes ‘the Forgiving One’ (e.g., Sura 40), we would respond that, nevertheless, his forgiveness has to be earned and is never bestowed as a free gift on the undeserving. Hence the absence from Muslim worship of the note of jubilant celebration.”

³Ibid.

⁴Charlotte Elliott, “Just As I Am,” in Tom Fettke, ed., *The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration* (Waco: Word, 1986), 342.

⁵John Pollock, John Wesley (Wheaton: Shaw, 1995), 170.

⁶Austin C. Lovelace and William C. Rice, *Music and Worship in the Church*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 12.

⁷John M. Frame, *Contemporary Worship Music: A Biblical Defense* (Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1997).

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:

A friend from one of the Chicago assemblies recently asked me what I thought of raising one's hands in prayer during the meetings of the church—either at the Lord's Supper or during the opening time of singing at the Family Bible hour. I briefly answered that we are bodily creatures, and our times of prayer usually find expression in bodily form. In Scripture we find believers kneeling (Ps. 95:6), prostrating themselves (Rev. 4:10), bowing their heads (2 Chron. 20:18; Neh. 8:6), standing (1 Sam. 1:26; 2 Chron. 20:13; Ps. 24:3), and raising their hands (Ps. 63:4; 1 Tim. 2:8). In the Anglican church of my childhood there were kneelers for the congregation to use during worship. In the assemblies in which I grew up brethren would lead the believers in prayer by standing while the rest bowed their heads. The raising of hands in prayer has been common for years in Charismatic churches and is seen in some assemblies today as well. Most evangelical denominations and fellowships follow forms and structures that are traditional to their group—the Brethren are no different. My own feeling is that one would risk violating Scripture by prohibiting any practice allowed in the Bible. On the other hand, if introducing such a practice into one's assembly caused unneeded distraction or division it should be avoided. I'm interested in how readers of *Journey* would have answered my friend's question.



Tim Goff Responds:

I don't like it when people raise their hands during a church service.

At my current place of fellowship, it's usually occurs during the opening singing time in the Family Bible Hour. And it's usually just 2 or 3 individuals. And, for whatever reason, there is more hand-raising during the choruses than the verses. The Bible does give various postures of worship, but how many of these examples are in a corporate worship setting? It seems fundamental to me that if some in the Family Bible Hour were lying down, some were kneeling, some were sitting and some were standing, then you've lost the corporateness of the worship.

We had a scenario just on Sunday where the worship leader said we were free to stand or sit for the next song. Invariable, when we're given that choice, we spend 2/3 of the song figuring out if we're going to stand or sit. In this case, there was a family in the back row that wanted to stand and did so for most of the song, trying to draw others to stand up. It didn't work and they eventually sat down. When we are worshipping with different postures, we lose that unity that is so special on Sunday mornings.

Regarding the issue of raised hands, specifically, I automatically disapprove of it when I see it happening. Whether this is based on my God-given discernment or whether it is me sinning by judging others motives, I just don't know. I invariably assume that the person raising their hands is trying to draw attention to themselves.

"See how spiritual I am!" I haven't seen any evidence that people who raise their hands more are the people that have a closer walk with God. In fact, it's the very humbleness of the spiritual giants in my life that seems to preclude them from raising their hands in church.

However, I've recently been challenged in this area. My mother-in-law, an Emmaus alum, raises her hands during singing time. I know her well enough to know that she is genuinely worshipping and not trying to bring attention upon herself.

All of this to say, I just don't know if it's right or wrong to raise your hands during a church service. I'm anxious to hear what others have to say on the subject.

NEXT ISSUE'S QUESTION:

Much of the teaching in contemporary groups experimenting with non-religious and New Age spirituality is self-help advice, therapeutic or psychological counsel, guidance for relationships, and story-telling about how such spirituality has helped people. Much preaching in evangelical churches is also self-help advice, therapeutic or psychological counsel, guidance for relationships and story-telling about how such "spirituality" has helped people. What does such evangelicalism have to offer these new spirituality groups? By down-playing Bible exposition and doctrinal preaching, do we have anything to offer in a society that is the most religiously diverse in the world?

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.

News from Emmaus

New Faces on Campus!

Emmaus Bible College is delighted to welcome several new faculty and staff members for the 2005-2006 academic year. Mr. Jon Glock has been appointed as the new Dean for Student Affairs. Jon is a graduate of Emmaus as well as Dallas Theological Seminary, and has spent the last several years at College Heights Chapel in Murfreesboro, Tennessee working with youth and adult ministries. Dr. Don Patten has been appointed the director of the college's new Distance Education program. Dr. Patten is a graduate of Emmaus, and recently completed a Ph.D. in Historical Theology at Saint Louis University. Mr. Steve Sanchez joins the faculty of the Bible Department. Steve is also an Emmaus graduate, and is currently in the dissertation stage of his doctoral program at Dallas Theological Seminary. Ms. Elisa Cooper is the new chair of our Music Department. She is a graduate of Wheaton College, and has recently completed her Masters of Music in Piano Performance at Indiana University. Dr. Sharon Jensen has rejoined the Music faculty after a year at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

Music Ministry Major

With the arrival of Elisa Cooper and Dr. Sharon Jensen, along with existing music faculty

(Ethan and Heidi Johnson, Nancy Lange, and Lisa Beatty), Emmaus is pleased to announce the addition of a new major in Music Ministry. Graduates of the program will receive a double major in Biblical Studies and Music Ministry. Coursework includes Music Theory I-IV, Music History I-II, Foundations of Church Music, Principles and Methods of Music Ministry, and Conducting. In addition, students will choose two of the following electives: Sacred Music Literature, Composing/Arranging, Leading Contemporary Music, Technology and Music Ministry. Students will also take private lessons in piano or voice and participate in a performing group each semester of study. During the last year of study, students will be actively involved in the music ministry of a local church to fulfill the requirements of the Music Ministry Practicum. This year, we will offer the sophomore and junior level courses of the program, with full implementation planned for 2006/07.

Science Lab

It has been a rather noisy summer at Emmaus due to a construction project in the main classroom wing of the college. Two existing classroom spaces are being renovated to house a new science lab. The science lab will serve the natural science component of the General Education program at



Emmaus. In addition, the lab will be home to the Math/Science Methods course for Elementary Education majors. The total cost of the completed science lab with furnishings is \$240,000. The college has received approximately \$120,000 for this project to date. We continue to wait on the Lord for His provision.

Accreditation Visits

This is a busy accreditation year at Emmaus! The college will welcome three visiting teams to campus during this academic year. From November 1-3, a team from the State of Iowa will be on campus to evaluate the Elementary Education program for continued approval by the Iowa Department of Education. The program has been approved since 1995, which has made graduates of the Elementary Education program eligible to apply for teacher licensure in the state of Iowa. The state routinely visits every 5-10 years. From January 30-February 1, 2006, a team from the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association will be on campus to

evaluate Emmaus for initial accreditation. The college received candidacy status with the Commission in May of 2004, and has been preparing for the upcoming visit for the past two years. The final accrediting visit of the year is scheduled for February 6-8, 2006. The Association for Biblical Higher Education (formerly the Accrediting Agency for Bible Colleges) will send a team to evaluate the college for continued accreditation with the Association. Emmaus has held national accreditation through ABHE since 1986. The Association routinely visits member institutions every ten years. Please pray for us as we prepare for these very important visits!

Commencement 2005

Commencement is an exciting time at Emmaus. For students, it is the culmination of years of study. For faculty and staff, it is a milestone in the life of the college that allows us to mark another year completed in the service of Christ and in the fulfillment of our mission. This year we had a large



number of graduates, forty-nine received Bachelor of Science degrees, three received Associate of Arts degrees, and seventy-one received the Certificate in Biblical

Studies. We are proud of the academic achievements of our graduates, but more importantly we look forward to seeing the ways in which the Lord will use them in His service. Pray for these young men and women as they leave Emmaus and seek the Lord's direction for their lives.

Iron Sharpens Iron 2005

Emmaus Ministry Resources and Emmaus Bible College were pleased to sponsor the fifth annual Iron Sharpens Iron Conference on campus over Memorial Day Weekend, 2005. The theme was *Evangelism: What are We Waiting For?* Over 400 church leaders from across North America and Canada gathered to hear plenary sessions presented by Alex Strauch (Colorado Springs, CO), Kevin Dyer (Chicago, IL), Andy Street (London, England), and Floyd Schneider (Dubuque, IA). We were encouraged by the attendance of younger leaders (those under the age of 30), which accounted for almost 25% of the total number. Attendees were challenged to stop making excuses and instead make evangelism a priority in their lives. If you would like to download messages from this year's conference, please visit www.emmaus.edu and follow the link entitled "Click here to download audio recordings from the ISI conference."

Dave Glock, chairman of the ISI Planning Committee, announced the theme for the 2006 Conference, "Transitions." Larry Dixon of Columbia, SC and Alex Strauch will again join us as plenary

speakers. Plenary sessions will focus on transitions in leadership, culture, maturity, and church style. Please plan to join us for these important subjects! Registration will open soon. Send an e-mail to emr@emmaus.edu if you would like to be added to our ISI mailing list.



EmmausOnline


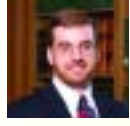

The summer has been very productive for the new online program initiated by Emmaus Ministries Resources. EmmausOnline is up on the Internet and accepting applications for both Bible study students and academic students. Currently, the course *Survey of Doctrine* is available for student participation. In the spring, plans are to have *New Testament Survey* (with Professor John Jimo) ready for launch. Our long-term vision is to develop the entire Certificate of Biblical Studies for Internet students.

As you continue to pray to our God, remember EmmausOnline and its efforts to edify the assemblies across the globe.

If you are interested in EmmausOnline and would like further information on the program, please contact Dr. Donald Patten, Director of Distance Education, at 1-800-397-2425, 563-588-8000 ext. 1206 or dpatten@emmaus.edu.

Emmaus On the Road

Name	Location/Events	City/State	Dates
 Ken Daughters	Cornerstone Church Des Moines Gospel Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel First Colony Bible Chapel	Marion, IA Des Moines, WA Warrenville, IL Sugarland, TX	Nov 13 Nov 18-20 Dec 11 Jan 15
 Dave Glock	Oak Lawn Bible Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel	Oak Lawn, IL Warrenville, IL	Dec 11, 18 Jan 8, 15, 22
 Jon Glock	College Heights Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel Iowa Bible Camp	Murfreesboro, TN Warrenville, IL Manson, IA	Oct 16 Oct 22, 23 Jan 20-22
 John Jimo	Oak Lawn Bible Chapel Northwest Bible Chapel	Oak Lawn, IL Chicago, IL	Oct 2, 9, 16, 23 Nov 6, 13, 20
 Dr. Dave MacLeod	Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel Northwest Bible Chapel	Dubuque, IA Cedar Rapids, IA Chicago, IL	Nov 6, 13, 20, 27 Dec 4 Jan 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
 Ben Mathew	Camp Berea Men's Retreat Woodside Bible Chapel	Hebron, NH Maywood, IL	Nov 11-13, 18-20 Jan 8, 15, 22

 Dr. Dan Smith	Bethany Christian Fellowship Sunset Bible Chapel Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel Bayside Community Church	Indianapolis, IN Salina, KS Dubuque, IA St. Petersburg, FL	Nov 12, 13 Nov 20 Jan 1, 8, 15, 22 Jan 29
 Mark Stevenson	Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel	Cedar Rapids, IA Warrenville, IL	Nov 13 Nov 20,27
 Steve Witter	Wilmington Bible Chapel Warrenville Bible Chapel Northern Hills Bible Chapel Boiling Springs Bible Chapel Woodside Bible Chapel	Wilmington, NC Warrenville, IL Cincinnati, OH Boiling Springs, MA Maywood, IL	Nov 5, 6 Nov 13 Nov 19, 20 Nov 27 Dec 4, 11

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

Emmaus Bible College is seeking comments from the public about the College in preparation for an evaluation visit by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. Emmaus will undergo a comprehensive evaluation visit January 30-February 2, 2006 for initial accreditation with the Commission. Emmaus Bible College has been a candidate for accreditation with NCA since May 2004. The visiting team will review the institution against the Commission's Eligibility Requirements and Criteria for Accreditation.

The public is invited to submit comments regarding the college to:

Public Comment on Emmaus Bible College
The Higher Learning Commission
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60602



Comments must address substantive matters related to the quality of the institution or its academic programs. Comments must be in writing and signed; comments cannot be treated as confidential.

All comments must be received by December 30, 2005

Please help us update our mailing list! If you moved this year or have changed your mailing address in any way, please fill out this form, detach it from the page and return it to: Emmaus Bible College, Journey Magazine, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA, 52001. Thank you for helping us keep our mailing list current.

Name _____
Address _____
Email _____ Phone _____

Subscriptions to Journey Magazine are sent free of charge to addresses in the United States and Canada, as well as to those serving the Lord full-time overseas. Emmaus incurs an average cost of \$10 per yearly subscription. Those desiring to make an investment toward this ministry of Emmaus may do so by enclosing their contribution with this form.

Emmaus Bible College

Charitable Gift Annuity

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

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

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

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

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Joint Annuitant _____

Birth Date _____

Relationship to First Annuitant _____

Phone () _____

Annuity Amount _____

Periodic Payout:
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