

*Is it welcoming to newcomers?  
Is it passionate about outreach?*

*Does it have an attitude of unity?  
Does it look like Christ?*

*Is it humble?*

SOUTH ELEVATION-PHASE 2  
SCALE: 1/32" = 1'

WEST ELEVATION-PHASE 2  
SCALE: 1/32" = 1'

BELL TOWER & STONE VENEER  
STANDING SEAM METAL ROOF

BUILDING A CARING CHURCH		
DATE MAY, 2007	IRON SHARPENS IRON	SCALE 1/16" = 1'
REVISED ANNUALLY	CHURCH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE DUBUQUE, IA WWW.EMMAUS.EDU	SHEET 1 OF 8
DRAWING # C-2007	EMMAUS BIBLE COLLEGE FURNISHES THESE PLANS WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY AND EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS ANY LIABILITY FOR LACK OF USE.	

Learn more and register online at [www.emmaus.edu](http://www.emmaus.edu)

Emmaus Bible College  
2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001

EMMAUS BIBLE COLLEGE • SPRING 2007

# Journey

Until we  
all reach  
unity in the faith  
and in the  
knowledge of the  
Son of God  
and become mature,  
attaining to the  
whole measure of  
the fullness of Christ.

Looking Forward to Change

## How to Solve Church Disputes

Every church or group of churches has disputes from time to time. They can be quite divisive and often end in long-lasting damage. The New Testament records a contentious dispute in Acts 15 that threatened the unity of the Church. The methods used by the Jerusalem Council to solve the controversy are worth our study as a guide to solving disputes.

**Involve the right people.** Some men came from Judea teaching that unless one was circumcised according to the custom of Moses, he couldn't be saved. Paul and Barnabas dissented and debated with them. Though the churches were independent and autonomous, they were cooperative and interdependent, and they wanted a unified decision that would stand once and for all for the Church. The brethren sent Paul, Barnabas and a delegation to Jerusalem to discuss the matter.

**Keep it as open as possible.** The apostles and elders in Jerusalem called a council and allowed the people to listen to the debate.

**Include witnesses if necessary.** A group came from Antioch. The believing Pharisees were included, as well as the Jerusalem church.

**Allow people a voice.** The sect of the believing Pharisees was allowed to speak. The discussion that ensued developed into a controversy and debate. The issue was brought out into the open.

**Seek a solution.** Peter allowed the discussion to grow to a furor before he made a proposal. Paul and Barnabas joined in with corroborating evidence.

**Listen to all sides.** The people kept silent, listening to the arguments from both sides.

**Search the Scripture.** James quoted the Scripture and made a judgment that served as a proposed solution.

**Lean on guidance from the Holy Spirit.** In writing their conclusion, they said their decision seemed good both to the Holy Spirit and to them. They were conscious of the Spirit's guidance.

**Publish the decision.** The success of their solution was greatly enhanced because it was written down and then carried by letter back to Antioch. A delegation was sent with the letter to witness to its authenticity. The solution stood the test of time. We would do well to follow this example.



Kenneth Alan Daughters  
President, Emmaus Bible College

## Features/Departments

### Page 7: Change in Assembly Missions

Kenneth Fleming

*With constant change in the world there must be adjustment of methodology as we continue to respond to the Great Commission. This is true of the missionary, of the churches which participate in the ministries, and of the service agencies providing needed assistance. Reflect on these changes in this article by missionary veteran, Kenneth Fleming. Read and adjust!*

### Page 10: The Challenge of the Emergent Church

Larry Dixon

*Relationships are important, but not at the expense of biblical doctrine. The message of the emergent church has already touched our young people, and it is attractive to them – but be warned! Read and learn!*

### Page 16: The Challenge of Transitioning Leaders

Alex Strauch

*This article contains Biblical guidelines for bringing in a new generation of qualified leadership – a critical challenge for every local assembly. Read with care!*

### Page 34: The Value of Formal Biblical Education for Christian Workers

David MacLeod

*It should be no surprise that the beginnings of the Brethren Movement were marked by the contribution of men formally trained in the Bible and Bible Languages. Dr. MacLeod traces this pattern in our history and sets forth the case for following this pattern in equipping the saints to do the work of the ministry. Read and evaluate!*

Travel Guides . . . . .	2
To the Praise of His Glory . . . . .	4
Leading with Love . . . . .	42
A Word along the Way . . . . .	48
Dr. MacLeod Asks . . . . .	50
News From Emmaus . . . . .	54
On The Road . . . . .	55

**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. However, Emmaus incurs an average cost of \$10 per yearly subscription. Please consider making an investment toward this ministry of Emmaus by enclosing your contribution along with this form.

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Old Address \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Journey Magazine, volume 5, issue 1, Spring 2007

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.

Editor: David A. Glock  
Assistant Editors: Ken Daughters, Ken Murray  
Bible Editor: Dr. David J. MacLeod  
Circulation Manager: Angie DeArment  
Design, Lay-Out: Jesse Lange & Angie DeArment  
Online-Journey: Jesse Lange

How to contact us:  
Journey Magazine  
Emmaus Bible College  
2570 Asbury Road  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
(800) 397-2425  
www.emmaus.edu

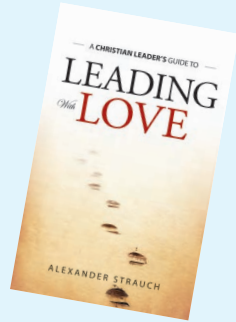
Editor: journey@emmaus.edu  
Subscriptions: journey@emmaus.edu  
College Admissions: admissions@emmaus.edu  
Alumni: alumni@emmaus.edu  
Correspondence School: ecsorders@emmaus.edu  
Believers Stewardship Services: stwrdsbp@aol.com  
Other: info@emmaus.edu

Journey Magazine is available online at:  
www.emmaus.edu

Journey Magazine will consider, but is not responsible for, unsolicited articles. Send submissions to Editor at the address above. Submissions cannot be returned unless accompanied by SASE. Advanced query is recommended.



# Travel Guides

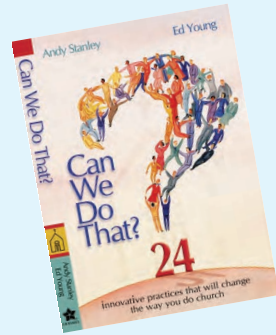


## Leading with Love

Alex Strauch  
Lewis & Roth, 2006

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

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



## Can We Do That?:

### 24 Innovative Practices That Will Change the Way You Do Church

Andy Stanley  
Howard, 2005

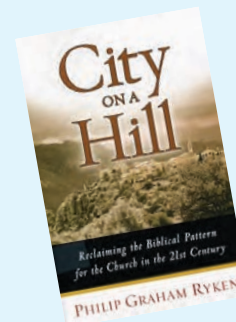
In this refreshingly practical book, Andy Stanley and Ed Young, two of America's most innovative and effective church leaders deliver twenty-four creative ministry tools that you can adapt and use to help your own church be all God intends it to be.

## Church on the Edge:

### Engaging Principles of 21st Century Mission Reaching the Unchurched Network

Chris Stoddard  
Authentic, 2006

This book examines the culture we now live in and suggests principles upon which mission in the future should be conducted. It contains real life stories of churches effectively engaging in mission within their culture, with cameos of personal experiences of how individuals have found faith. The failures and difficulties faced are examined as well as the encouragements and successes.



## City on a Hill:

### Reclaiming the Biblical Pattern for the Church in the 21st Century

Philip Graham Ryken  
Moody, 2003

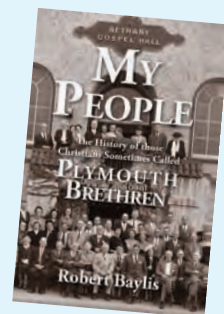
*City on a Hill* provides readers with a deeper understanding of how to live for Christ in the 21st Century: go back to the model established in the 1st Century. This book is sure to be an encouragement and challenge to anyone concerned about the effectiveness of the church today.

## My People:

### History of the Brethren

Robert Baylis  
Gospel Folio Press, 2006

Uniquely documented, with over 100 illustrations and photographs, this history of the Brethren in North America will take its place as the definitive survey by a veteran insider. Robert H. Baylis has worked on this history for years: "The Brethren are my people. Through a lifetime of association with the assemblies, I know them well, both their strengths and their weaknesses. My purpose in this history is to tell their story in a positive way."



## From the Ground Up: New Testament Foundations for the 21st Century Church

John Scott Horrell  
Kregel, 2004

A back-to-the-basics look at what it means to be the church—defined by the New Testament rather than by culture or tradition. Suggests that the customs, patterns, and structures of our churches may actually be barriers to God's purposes.

## The Master's Plan

E.A. Johnston  
Gospel Folio Press, 2006

In *The Master's Plan*, the author takes us through a journey that helps unfold that heavenly blueprint for our lives. Discovering what God has for us is an exciting adventure and one that has eternal rewards!

## Alone in Majesty (with study guide)

Bill MacDonald  
Gospel Folio Press, 2004

Explores God's characteristics—those unique to Him and those shared with humanity. With this in-depth Bible study you will gain greater knowledge of God's attributes.

## Enjoy Your Bible

Bill MacDonald and Art Farstad  
Gospel Folio Press, 2001

Studying God's Word should become a delight and a joy. This little volume is to help chart your own early excursions on the limitless seas of adventuring into the written Word of God.

## Here's the Difference

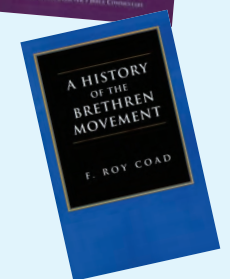
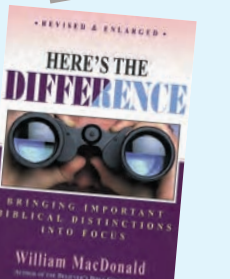
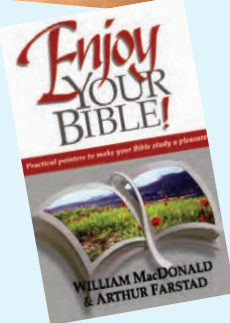
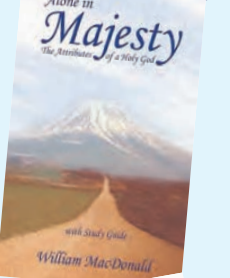
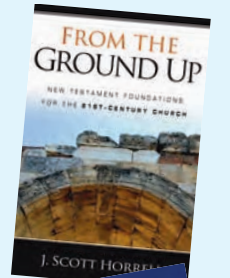
Bill MacDonald  
Gospel Folio Press, 2001

This book will bring into clear focus some of the most important teachings in the Word of God. *Here's The Difference* provides 96 careful biblical distinctions.

## A History of the Brethren Movement: Its Origins, Its Worldwide Development and Its Significance for the Present Day

Roy F. Coad  
Regent College, 2001

Coad's work traces the history of the Brethren Movement, which began more than 170 years ago and has since spread throughout the world. The author considers some of the outstanding characters produced by the movement, as well as its significance in relation to the whole Christian church.



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

...Is this a familiar scene in your local church? I hope not...but unfortunately, while the teaching ministry of the church is often planned months in advance, the music ministry of the church

often takes place “on the fly,” with little purpose or intention. It appears that in some local churches, the ministry of music is at times viewed as little more than a way to fill 15 - 20 minutes before the message.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul’s teaching presents a somewhat different view of the role that music should play in the lives of believers.

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Colossians 3:16)

This single verse is a rich resource of Biblical principles for those who seek to develop meaningful and purposeful music ministries that reach beyond the simple filling of available time.

- Paul encourages us to “let the word of Christ richly dwell within you.” Music in our churches should be intentionally Christological—it should emphasize the person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. This does not mean that every song need mention the name of Christ, but a Christological emphasis should be clearly evident.

- This word of Christ should “richly dwell” within us. Does this imply singing hymns with our minds elsewhere?

Absolutely not! Instead we are called to sing thoughtfully with both our minds and our spirits engaged. We should meditate on the thoughts and ideas sung until they become part of who we are.

- The next three words of the verse, “with all wisdom,” are easily overlooked but are a critical element of purposeful music ministry. Paul exhorts us to be

wise in our use of music, to exercise discernment. We should make thoughtful, purposeful choices when selecting music. We should consider issues of content and quality. We should make choices that effectively communicate God’s truth to those who sing and hear.

- God’s Word directs us to use music to accomplish a number of purposes. In this passage, Paul highlights two: teaching and admonishing. Martin Luther recognized the potential of music to teach Biblical truth. He wrote (and encouraged others to write) congregational songs full of doctrinal content that could be sung both in the church and in the home. “By these means, God’s Word and Christian doctrine may be instilled and practiced on a regular basis,” (Martin Luther, Preface to Johann Walther, Gesangbuchlein, 1524). Also, music should be employed to admonish one another. God can use the communication of His truth in song to convict of sin and challenge for spiritual growth and personal holiness.

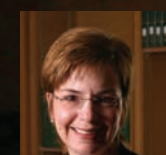
- We are called to “teach and admonish one another.” Music ministry is not a spectator sport. The ministry of music in the church is the responsibility of every believer. We are responsible before God to use music with intention in the lives of those around us.

- Paul recommends variety in music ministry. He advocates for the use of “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.” Most commenta-

tors define “psalms” as Old Testament songs, such as the songs of Moses or the psalms of David. “Hymns” are generally defined as songs of the new covenant—songs that focus on New Testament truths. The term “spiritual songs” may be used by Paul as a general category for songs other than psalms or hymns. Or it may describe an improvised song, an ecstatic utterance like “hallelujah.” Whatever the precise meaning, it is clear that Paul recommends a variety of musical genres through his use of three distinct terms.

- Finally, singing provides a way to express our gratitude to God. It is the response of a grateful heart to the grace and mercy we have received from His hand.

It is clear in this passage that God expects us to engage in music ministry with intention, discernment, and a thankful heart. Quick musical choices made during the fellowship break will probably not fulfill God’s purposes for the use of music in the lives of His people. Let’s commit to exercising this gift “with all wisdom” to edify, teach, and challenge those with whom we fellowship. †

 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.

To the Praise of His Glory #3

# With All Wisdom...?!

Lisa Beatty

The Breaking of Bread service has just ended at Hometown Bible Chapel. The song-leader grabs a cup of coffee and a hymnal and peruses the index to choose hymns for the 11:00 service. He had meant to call an elder to find out the topic for today’s message, but it had been a busy week and he hadn’t gotten around to it. He looks around quickly to see if there’s an elder close by now, but doesn’t see one. Since time is short (the fellowship break is only twenty minutes long!), he decides on a couple of hymns about faith (a theme general enough to ensure some connection with the message). And since he’s choosing the hymns today, he decides on his favorite four right before the message. After all, everybody loves to sing “Victory in Jesus.” He quickly jots down the hymn numbers on the back of his gas receipt and puts it on the piano just as the pianist begins the prelude. He promises himself that he’ll plan ahead for next week’s service...

## Looking Forward to Change

Dave Glock  
Editor

This issue of *Journey* is the second dealing with the subject of Change in the Local Church. “Looking forward to change” has two aspects, emotional and intellectual.

One of the comforting attributes of God is His immutability—there is no shadow cast by His turning.

“By this we mean that the nature, attributes, and will of God are exempt from all change. Reason teaches us that no change is possible in God, whether of increase or decrease, progress or deterioration, contraction or development. All change must be for better or for worse. But God is absolute perfection, and no change to better is possible. Change to worse would be equally inconsistent with perfection. No cause for such change exists, either outside of God or in God Himself.” Augustus Strong

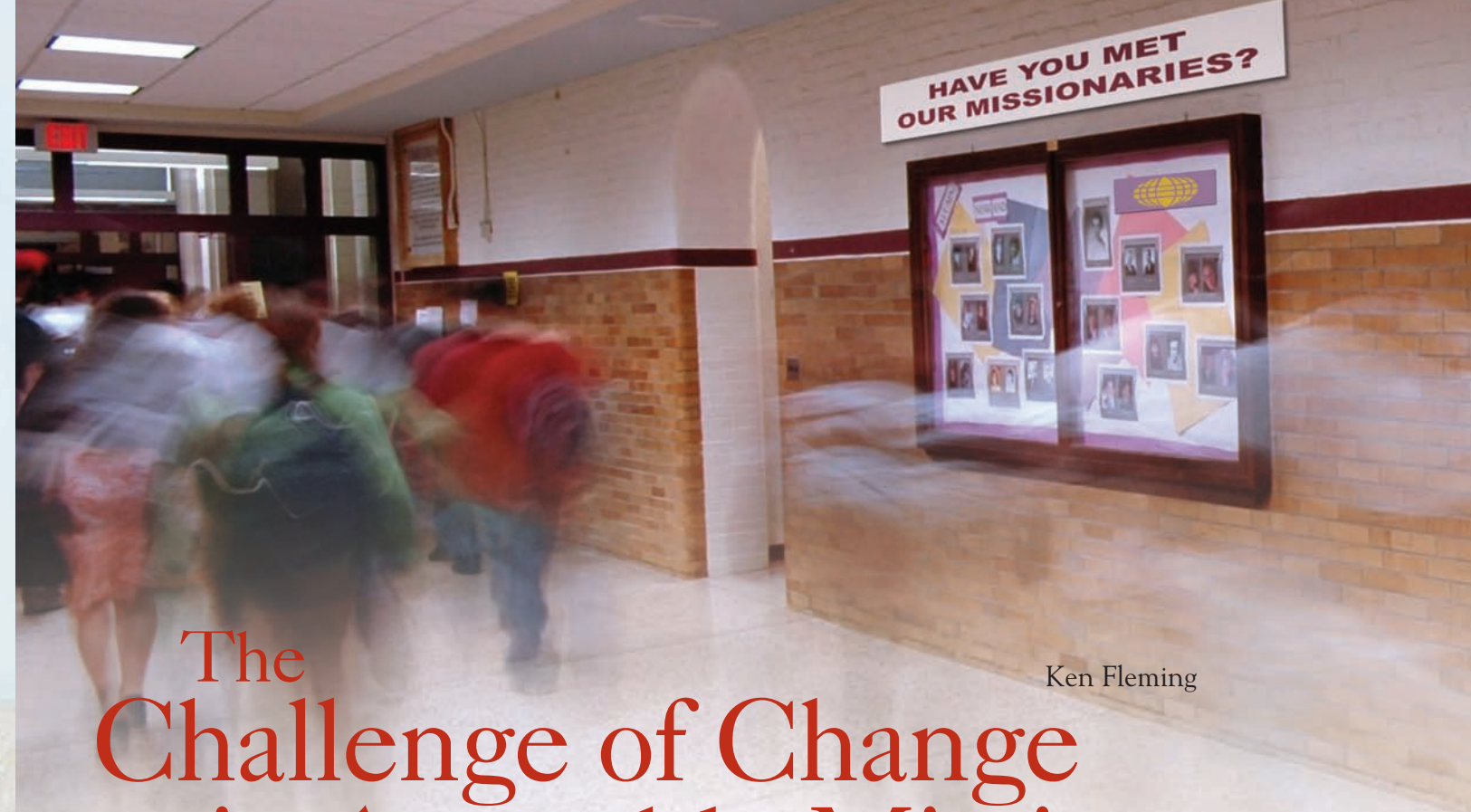
God does not change! But everything and everyone else does. Thankfully, change can be for the better, and there are numerous and obvious illustrations of this in every sphere of life. Therefore, change is not to be feared or avoided, but to be anticipated with enthusiasm and joy. Both individually and collectively, the Church is being changed “from glory to glory.” Let us joyfully look forward to change.

There is the intellectual dimension of change in the Church. Looking forward to change means planning for change. It includes future applications of the principles of Church life and practice as outlined in the New Testament. While there is a wide latitude of options for implementation, there is a limiting set of principles that serve as guidelines for Church life and practice. A biblically-oriented intellect must be engaged to navigate through the various options available. To combine principle and practice in introducing change requires both knowledge and wisdom that find their base in scripture.

This issue of *Journey* will treat areas of change. Alex Strauch will address change in the leadership of a local church in his article, *The Challenge of Transitioning Leaders*. Dr. Larry Dixon will challenge the threatening changes put forth by the Emergent Church in his article, *The Challenge of the Emergent Church*. Kenneth Fleming will address change on the mission field in *Change in Assembly Missions*.

Please read these articles and the other articles of *Journey* with the hope that, as changes come in Church life, we all may be enabled to discern the direction of God.

1 Corinthians 11:19: *No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.* NIV †



## The Challenge of Change in Assembly Missions

Ken Fleming

Assembly missions joined in God's program of world missions shortly after the beginning of the modern missionary movement. It began with the vision and work of Anthony Norris Groves who first went to Iraq, and later to India. Missionary activity soon grew in both the numbers of its workers, and in the number of countries in which they served. For the past one hundred years, Assemblies have sent and supported about 1,500 workers, about half of whom now come from North America. These missionaries live in the context of cultural settings that are constantly changing; first, on the “fields” where they work, and second, in the assemblies from which they come. We will examine how both these contexts affect their missionary work.

By the 1950s, assembly mission-

ary effectiveness had reached a high point. Quality workers were doing excellent work in more than forty countries. The assemblies in North America were alive with interest in missions. They were in touch with the service organizations who assisted the missionaries with excited staff. Local assemblies read letters from the field and prayed over them. Groups of ladies met monthly to pray, sew, cut, collect, and box materials that would go to workers in places like the Belgian Congo, the Philippines, and Zambia. Assembly families competed with each other for the privilege of entertaining missionaries who visited on furlough. Leaders were happy to arrange a meeting any night of the week for the many who eagerly came to hear their reports and see their Kodachrome slides.

Many young men and women became deeply exercised about serv-

ing God overseas. People actually looked at those maps posted on chapel walls studded with pins and strings leading to pictures of missionaries! When five missionaries in the jungles of Ecuador were killed by Waorani people, interest soared. Two directors from The Fields (now CMLL) immediately traveled there to assist the widows with the funerals and other arrangements. More people across North America offered themselves for missions in large numbers. Missionary conferences were popular and well attended. Assembly college students flocked to large conferences like the Intervarsity Conference in Urbana. Emmaus Bible School had a surge of students planning missions. Others went for specialized training in disciplines such as medicine, linguistics, and teaching. Our missionaries were on the cutting edge of what God was doing in the world.

### What Happened?

My readers will know that the enthusiasm for missions I have described is no longer the norm in many assemblies at home. What changed? Before we try to answer that question, let's look at the parallel situation with missionaries on the field starting at the same time. Some were older with wide pioneering experience in places like India, Angola, Bolivia, Zambia, Eastern Europe, Nigeria, and the Congo. They mentored younger workers and trained national people, with the result that assemblies on the field multiplied. Other new missionaries were opening strong new works in countries such as Laos, Taiwan, Japan, North Belgium, Burundi, Tanzania, Ecuador, and Peru.

### Growth on the Field

These missionaries freely used every available tool or method they thought would further their efforts to evangelize the lost. They were people "for all seasons" working at translation, medicine, education, and helping the underprivileged, but always focusing on the biblical strategy of evangelism, discipleship, and establishing churches. They started Bible schools to train believers and evangelists. They used their resources to support their work. They sometimes worked alongside other evangelical workers in common causes. Away from the homeland, they had opportunity to "spread their wings" without raised eyebrows from the holders of traditions their fathers brought to North America in the nineteenth century.

They established and maintained the church principles taught

in the New Testament, but most did not feel bound to transfer all the cultural forms of their commending assembly in such things as music style, seating, clothing, Bible versions, order of meetings, etc. Instead, they encouraged the national brethren to examine their cultures, and through the lens of Scripture arrive at their own conclusion. Usually the more the national brethren were engaged in decision making, the faster the work grew. Missionaries and nationals in different cultural situations understandably arrived at different conclusions as to the forms they used to keep the pattern of the New Testament, but they did so without undermining harmony.

### Changes on the Field since the 1950s

During the 1950s many cultural elements, both in the homelands and on the field, began to change more rapidly. The communist takeover of China forced hundreds of missionaries out of the country. Governments in the colonial world dominated by European powers were suddenly, sometimes violently, replaced by national governments in the late 1950s. Missionaries had to comply with new laws and restrictions and much less safety. In some places they became unwelcome. Parts of their work in medicine and education became subject to government control. The infrastructure of many countries in Africa began a precipitous decline. Global instability increased when wars broke out on every continent and continued to spread—national wars, religious wars, tribal wars, and, worst of all, terrorism. In some

countries warfare has caused missionaries to flee and mission stations to be abandoned. Some were utterly destroyed in places like Angola and the Congo, but the believers remained faithful.

The populations of cities all over the developing world grew exponentially, creating a new challenge for missionaries to reach these crowded urban centers. Para-church groups multiplied rapidly. They often recruited their workers from the newly planted assemblies and other evangelical churches. The loss of these talented younger people often weakened the assemblies where they had grown up. Western European countries such as France, Belgium, and Spain became new mission fields as Europe was turning away from God. The decline of Western influence in the world was clearly evident in the seventies and eighties. Radical Islam suddenly emerged beginning in Iran, and spreading quickly from Manila to London.

### Changes in the Homeland Assemblies

The 60s brought the hippie generation to North America with their rebellion against authority. Its long-term effect resulted in large losses of assembly young people as they sought to "find themselves" in their changing world. Materialism tightened its grip on North Americans resulting in lifestyle changes in the suburbs. Missionaries took shorter furloughs and had less opportunity to visit assemblies that were off the beaten path. Assemblies on the beaten path tightened their Sunday and Wednesday speaking schedules and were less open to accepting

missionary speakers. Missions interest decreased to low priority, especially in assemblies where they did not have commended missionaries.

Monthly missionary meetings in urban areas attracted declining numbers of attendees. The average age of assembly believers in the homeland crept up and the older believers longed for the former days. Some younger families became discouraged and decided to move to another type of church. Assembly evangelism lessened while assembly closings rose. The decline in homeland assemblies led to the rise of a "progressive" element that pushed for change. Their push for change, in turn, caused a reaction of more conservative believers who advocated a return to the assembly forms of the 1950s. Now, assembly dollars are increasingly being used to support mission groups that do not subscribe to our distinctives. We sometimes fall prey to a double standard by sending money in response to slick marketing techniques used by many missions, but then criticize an assembly worker who may even mention his or her need for a car.

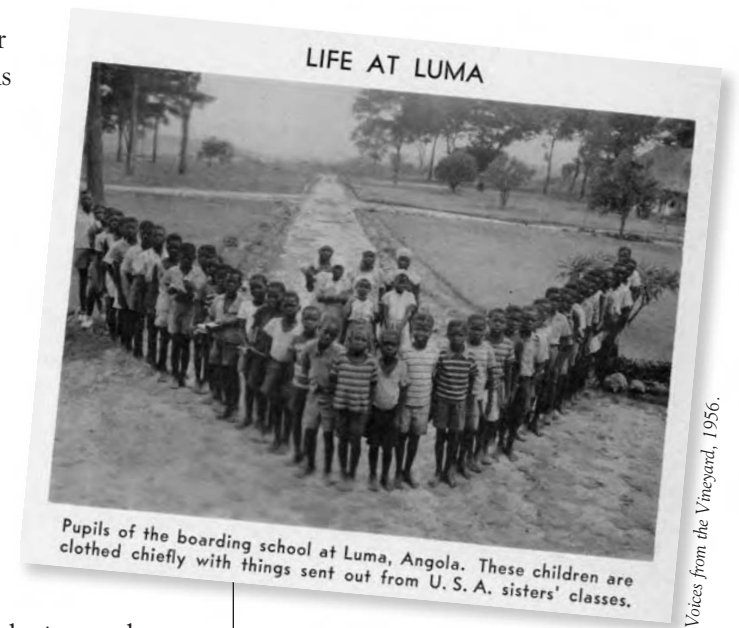
### Facing the Changes

How do we face these and other changes in the light of our biblical commission to disciple all nations, and our biblical convictions to promote New Testament church principles in other countries? It doesn't take great insight to see that the changes in the homeland assemblies have negatively affected our missionary outreach. It affects the recruitment, the levels of commitment, the commendation, and the support of missionaries. It affects the lifestyle and expectations of the missionaries. The materialism,

lifestyle, and lower commitment levels in the homeland touch their own expectations on the field, and may affect how soon they give up and come home when tough times arrive. The security we enjoy in the United States may affect how much risk some missionaries are willing to take in another country.

We need to understand these and other changes and apply ourselves to the opportunities we do have. Many good things are indeed happening. CMML has started an effort to reach young people. MSC in Toronto has organized large breakfast meetings. A group of fine young men is getting great experience going from city to city evangelizing and encouraging new growth. Conferences, camps, and some assemblies have youth programs that emphasize missions. Emmaus Bible College offers a major in Intercultural Studies for those with a serious interest in missions. Grace Bible Chapel offers an internship program in San Jose, California.

We need to review the truth of what God is doing in this age to take from among the nations a people for His name (Acts 15:14). For this purpose we need to work together in unity, building bridges rather than walls between other assembly people who share our love for the Lord and His worldwide church. I am convinced that the



Voices from the Vineyard, 1956.

assembly way of sending, supporting, and serving missionaries is wonderful. We need to reacquaint ourselves with it and tell potential workers how God has used it and is using it. We need to promote the use of the many excellent resources available to us. We need to get involved ourselves with those around us to be informed, to pray, to plan, to participate. We need to promote the love for Christ that has compelled spiritual men and women to labor sacrificially for Him. There are now nearly 10,000 assemblies meeting weekly to remember the Lord, but the job is just begun. As Dan Crawford, an early assembly missionary to Africa said, "Hats off to the past, coats off to the future." †



**Ken Fleming**  
Ken Fleming served as a missionary in South Africa for 25 years and as the Chair of the Missions Department at Emmaus Bible College for 25 years until his recent retirement.

# The Challenge of The Emergent Church

Larry Dixon  
Edited by Mark Stevenson

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

There is an old delivery van parked in a yard close to our university. It is broken down, rusted out, no longer delivering anything to anybody. It is a relic of a bygone day. It can't be steered; it can't be started. It just sits there, getting old and getting passed by more "modern" vehicles along life's highway. Is this a metaphor of our churches?

## The Need To Be Vigilant

### The Biblical Mandate

We read in 2 Timothy 1:14, "Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us." Paul continues in 2 Timothy 4:14-15 with these words, "Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message." It strikes me that the apostle Paul was not

reluctant to name names. Those who teach contrary doctrines, those who deny the fundamentals of faith, shouldn't get away with it; they shouldn't remain anonymous. Paul names them and we need to name those who do the same thing. We have a responsibility to warn other believers.

The apostle Peter says, "Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position" (2 Peter 3:17). We need to be on our guard lest we be carried away by error!

Finally, we read in 1 Corinthians 16:13, "Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong." We are to stand firm in the faith. We don't want to be so defensive or guarded that we fail to learn new ways to reach our culture for Christ. We need to be open to change. But we must be vigilant; we need to be on guard. God has entrusted us with the good deposit of faith—that is, the content of



truth, the message of the gospel which we must guard and never compromise or change.

## What Is The Emergent Church?

### Understanding "emergent"

The term "emergent" is defined as "new, appearing, arising, occurring, or developing, especially for the first time." Brian McLaren says, "Right now Emergent is a conversation, not a movement. We don't have a program. We don't have a model. I think we must begin as a conversation, then grow as a friendship, and see if a movement comes of it."

The emerging church is a diverse movement within Christianity that arose in the late 20th century as a reaction to the influence of modernism in Western Christianity. Proponents like to speak of the emerging "conver-

sation" to emphasize its developing nature with contributions from many people and no explicitly defined leadership or direction. The emerging church seeks to reshape traditional Christianity to better serve a postmodern culture.

Emergent Christians are predominantly found in North America, Western Europe, and the South Pacific. Some attend local independent churches that specifically identify themselves as being "emergent," while others contribute to the conversation from within traditional churches.

In the November 2004 issue of *Christianity Today*, Andy Crouch wrote the following in his important article, "The Emergent Mystique":

Not since the Jesus Movement of the early 1970s has a Christian phenomenon been so closely entangled with the self-conscious cutting edge of U.S. culture. Frequently urban, disproportionately young, overwhelmingly white, and very new—few have been in existence for more than five years—a growing number of churches are joining the ranks of the "emerging church."

### Core Values

While practices and even core doctrines vary, most emergents would identify the following values:

- *Missional living*—Christians go out into the world to serve God rather than isolate themselves within communities of like-minded individuals.
- *Narrative theology*—Teaching focuses on narrative presentations of faith and the Bible

rather than systematic theology or detailed biblical exegesis. There is an openness to many interpretations and a willingness to dialogue with diverse faith traditions.

- *Christ-likeness*—While not neglecting the study of Scripture or the love of the church, Christians focus their lives on the worship and emulation of the person of Jesus Christ. For many, the focus is on the life of Christ as a "corrective" to traditional evangelicalism's fixation with the cross.
- *Authenticity*—People in the postmodern culture seek real and authentic experiences in preference over scripted or superficial ones. Emerging churches strive to be relevant to today's culture and daily life, whether it be through worship or service opportunities.

### Works in Progress

The emerging church involves a new generation of churches which would call themselves "works in progress." Crouch points out they are "improvisational in their approach to everything from worship to leadership to preaching to prayer."

### Brian McLaren

My primary contact with the emergent church is through the writings of a friend of 30 years ago, Brian McLaren. In fact we worked together at Greenwood Hills Bible Conference in Pennsylvania that many years ago. Brian grew up in the assemblies but has since left and started his own church, Cedar Ridge Community Church, in Spencerville, Maryland. A prolific

writer, Brian has published a number of books. He is indeed a key leader in the emergent church. Crouch calls him "the de facto spiritual leader for the emerging church."

"I've been called everything from the father, to the grandfather, and even the godfather of the Emergent Church, but I don't break anybody's knees," Brian once said in a sermon. In 2005, Brian was voted one of Time magazine's 25 most influential evangelicals. In one month Brian was interviewed both in the conservative *Christianity Today* and in the liberal *Christian Century*. If "evangelical" means putting the gospel of Christ in the center, then (and it grieves me to say this), I have to ask, is he still an evangelical?

### Rob Bell

For his article Crouch interviewed Rob and Kristen Bell of Mars Hill Bible Church. Kristen says, "It's a cultural jump for our friends to come to our church. It's a cultural jump for us, and we grew up in the church."

"This is not just the same old message with new methods," Rob says. "We're rediscovering Christianity as an Eastern religion, as a way of life. Legal metaphors for faith don't deliver a way of life. We grew up in churches where people knew the nine verses why we don't speak in tongues, but had never experienced the overwhelming presence of God."

"I grew up thinking that we'd figured out the Bible," Kristen says, "that we knew what it meant. Now I have no idea what most of it means. And yet I feel like life is big again—like life used to be

black and white, and now it's in color."

As Crouch points out, "An earlier generation of evangelicals, forged in battles with 20th-century liberalism, prided themselves on avoiding theological shades of gray, but their children see black, white, and gray as all equally unlikelike. They are looking for a faith that is colorful enough for their culturally savvy friends, deep enough for mystery, big enough for their own doubts. To get there, they are willing to abandon some long-defended battle lines." Here is where a serious concern about the emergent church lies. In seeking to be culturally relevant, how much of the gospel and Christian truth is being compromised and abandoned?

When asked how they found their way out of the black-and-white world where they had been so dissatisfied, Kristen responded, "Our lifeboat was *A New Kind of Christian*."

**A New Kind of Christian**

Brian McLaren's *A New Kind of Christian* is the story of two

**Here is where a serious concern about the emergent church lies. In seeking to be culturally relevant, how much of the gospel and Christian truth is being compromised and abandoned?**

friends, a disillusioned evangelical pastor named Dan Poole and high school science teacher called Neo. Near the point of despair with his own ministry, Dan is introduced by Neo to a "postmodern"

**Modern vs. Postmodern Apologetics**

In his book *More Ready than you Realize*, McLaren contrasts modernist and postmodernist approaches to Apologetics. While there are some valuable things in the book, there are some issues that concern me. For example:

Modernist	Postmodernist
Evangelism as ARGUMENT	Evangelism as CONVERSATION
WIN/LOSE situation: You as the believer are presenting the gospel. The unsaved person has to lose, in a sense, when they realize their worldview is wrong and they need to repent and believe in Christ.	WIN/WIN situation: You don't go in it to have the other person lose. [I thought about my own conversion and my response is "Oh blessed defeat!" I'm glad by God's grace that somebody showed me I was wrong and that I needed to repent and believe the gospel.]
SALES and CONQUEST	FRIENDSHIP
PRESSURE to make a DECISION	PATIENCE as one CONSIDERS the Gospel
TRYING to CONVERT someone	Joining someone in their SPIRITUAL JOURNEY
PUNCTILLIAR conversion (one-moment-in-time)	Salvation as a PROCESS

But the Bible is clear in respect to a punctilliar conversion—a moment-in-time when we trust the Lord Jesus and move from death to life. We cross over from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His Son. It may take a while to get there but, it is a point in time when that happens. What I'm hearing from postmodern Emergent folks is we join others on their spiritual journey; we seek to help them in their religious evolution. While there is value to that in terms of joining people and being patient with them, is there or is there not a specific point of conversion?

approach to Christianity. Crouch comments, postmodernity is "an as-yet ill-defined borderland in which central modern values like objectivity, analysis, and control will become less compelling. They are superseded by postmodern values like mystery and wonder. The controversial implication is that forms of Christianity that have

thrived in modernity including Dan's evangelicalism—are unlikely to survive the transition."

McLaren indicates that Dan's dissatisfaction with ministry was ultimately a philosophical problem. He suggests that postmodernism is the new way of thinking and we need to get on board or we will be left behind.

**Postmodernism**

Ernest Gellner, professor of Social Anthropology at Cambridge, says, "Postmodernism is a contemporary movement. It is strong and fashionable. Over and above this, it is not clear what the devil it is." Perhaps the distinction between modernism and postmodernism is most clearly seen in the areas of truth and reason. Modernism optimistically believed that human reason, aided by science, could arrive at objective and universal truths that would solve the world's problems. In reaction, postmodernism denies that human reason is objective, and argues that truth is subjective. Narrative and mystery are preferred over cold rationality.

**The Gospel**

McLaren tells Crouch, "I don't think we've got the gospel right yet. What does it mean to be 'saved'? When I read the Bible, I don't see it meaning, 'I'm going to Heaven after I die.' Before modern evangelicalism nobody accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, or walked down an aisle, or said the sinner's prayer."

McLaren continues, "I don't think the liberals have it right. But I don't think we have it right either. None of us has arrived at orthodoxy." (Parenthetically, I would add that I think there is good evidence that Brian has joined the liberal ranks.)

Rob Bell told Crouch, "People don't get it. They think it's about style. But the real question is: 'What is the gospel?'" That question, of course, is not new. As Crouch asks, "Is it possible that a compelling new answer could emerge from

McLaren's 'conversation'?" Not so long as the emergent church remains open to adjusting the message along with their methods.

**Critiquing The Emergent Church**

There are some major concerns with the emergent church, but there are also some strengths from which we can learn. In the material that follows, I draw from D. A. Carson's book, *Becoming Conversant with the Emergent Church* (Zondervan, 2005).

**Strengths of the Emergent Church**

**1. Reading The Times**

Carson points out that the emergent church is attempting to read our changing times and make adjustments to communicate the gospel in this new culture. I'm reminded of Paul words in 1 Corinthians 9:20 - 22:

<sup>20</sup> To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. <sup>21</sup> To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. <sup>22</sup> To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.

I'm afraid that for many of us,

our life verse is, "I have become a couple of things to a few people that I might not be made uncomfortable!" So we need to read the times; we need to be flexible where we can be. Indeed, this is the challenge for all missionaries who move into another culture and another language. John Stott speaks about how preachers have to exegete (examine, understand, explain) two worlds: the biblical world and the present world. So we need to read the times.

**2. Pushing For Authenticity**

The emerging church is seeking to move from the Absolute to the Authentic. We might disagree with these two terms being put in opposition to one another, but the call for authenticity needs to be heard. Carson says that in many of our churches, "There is little intensity in confession...little delight in the gospel, little urgency in evangelism, little sense of privilege and gratitude in witness, little

**"Postmodernism is a contemporary movement. It is strong and fashionable. Over and above this, it is not clear what the devil it is."**

passion for the truth, little compassion for others, little humility in our evaluations, little love in our dealings with others." We do need to strive for authenticity.

**3. Recognizing Our Own Social Location**

We are socially-located, finite beings. Our knowledge and inter-



pretations are always partial. I would emphasize here that we are to reject the radical “reader-response” theory which says that the social location of the readers is the single most important factor in determining their conclusions. If you buy into that theory, you lose the Word of God in the process. Do we read the Word of God thoroughly, objectively? No, we all bring our biases and assumptions to it, but to the degree that we seek to be honest and follow good principles of interpretation, we indeed can understand what God has said.

We need people of diverse backgrounds and social contexts to help us understand the objective truth of the text. In fact, we need a kind of hermeneutical humility to recognize that our interpretations are not the Word of God. Where are our blind spots in understanding God’s Word? How could godly leaders of a past generation defend slavery? But they did! So we must ask, where are our blind spots? A mono-cultural church needs the whole body of believers.

#### 4. Evangelizing Outsiders

The emergent church attempts to break out of traditional “holy huddles” in order to reach a new generation shaped

by postmodern assumptions. McLaren says people can be divided into three groups. The first group is Christian and is comfortable with traditional Christian churches. The second group has been exposed to Christianity and is not alienated by traditional Christian churches. The third group is biblically illiterate, and finds traditional Christianity at best odd and at worst offensive. McLaren says this third group most needs to be evangelized and is the focus of the emergent church. Certainly we need to be creative in seeking to reach unchurched and unbelieving people.

#### 5. Probing Links with the Tradition

The emergent church is characterized by protest, often rejecting many practices of more traditional churches and adopting some practices that belong to other traditions. I’m reminded of the famous quote of the church historian, Jaroslav Pelican: “Tradition is the living faith of those now dead; tradi-

tionalism is the dead faith of those still living.” What do they say the last seven words of a dying church are? “We’ve never done it that way before.” We need to be very sensitive to that.

#### Some Weaknesses of the Emergent Church

Ironically, these same strengths can also be weaknesses.

##### 1. Reading The Times

The emergent church’s understanding of modernism, at times, appears reductionistic. Some Emergent leaders have been accused of misunderstanding both modernism and postmodernism. The most persistent question raised is whether “modern” and “postmodern” can be divided so cleanly. Wheaton College philosopher Mark Talbot points out that skepticism about values like objectivity, analysis, and control was already present in Enlightenment figures like David Hume. Meanwhile, Talbot says, “the great irony is that by giving us these sharp categories of ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ ways of thinking, McLaren is doing the very sort of categorization he describes, and implicitly condemns, as modern.”

So perhaps those who subscribe to the values of the Emergent Church have not read the times as well as they think they have.

Crouch remarks, “If a self-avowed postmodern Christian can’t differentiate himself from the moderns he is critiquing,

perhaps the divide between modernity and postmodernity is less like the San Andreas Fault and more like a crack in the sidewalk. And if there is no massive change under way in the culture, why make a case for a massive change in the church?” You’ve heard the statement, “He who weds himself to the spirit of this age will be a widow or widower in the next!” Disturbingly, Emergent seems uncritical of postmodernism’s serious weaknesses.

##### 2. Pushing for Authenticity

Looking for new ways to be authentic should not come at the expense of holding to the absolutes of the Word of God. Wanting to ask honest questions is one thing, questioning the heart of the gospel is another. When do “honest questions” become “dangerous unbelief”? Do our churches need to become more “authentic”? If by that term we mean “shown to be true and trustworthy, not fake,” then the answer is, of course, yes! We must strive for authenticity! Absolutely! But without giving up the absolutes of the Word of God.

##### 3. Recognizing Our Own Social Location

We need to ask if we are reaching our present culture for Christ. But the emergent church ought to ask if the present culture is leading them away from the scandal of the gospel. For example, why do some emergent leaders like McLaren resist understanding the cross in terms of penal, substitutionary atonement? One does not get the sense that it is for exegetical reasons, but rather because such

doctrines do not resonate with popular culture.

**Looking for new ways to be authentic should not come at the expense of holding to the absolutes of the Word of God.**

#### 4. Evangelizing Outsiders

I do not agree with some in the emergent church who say “belonging precedes believing.” So, for example, they invite non-believers to participate in a mission trip even before the person has come to know Christ? We must first believe in order to be a member of the Body of Christ, but certainly there are a lot of things we could do to let outsiders know that we welcome them and want to spend time with them, so that they might come to faith in Christ. I understand that in the early Brethren movement, there were times when unbelievers would sit at the back and watch the Lord’s Supper being celebrated by believers, and some came to saving faith because of what they witnessed. We need to think of creative ways to reach out to the outsiders of our day.

#### 5. Probing Links with the Tradition

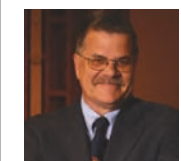
The emerging church is characterized by protest, often rejecting many practices of more traditional churches. Unfortunately, they seem blind to what traditional evangelicalism has done well. There is little sense of balance in their critiques. Certainly past generations of Christians have made their share of mistakes, but should we not be grateful for generations of

evangelicals who sought to be faithful in their times, just as we seek to be faithful in ours?

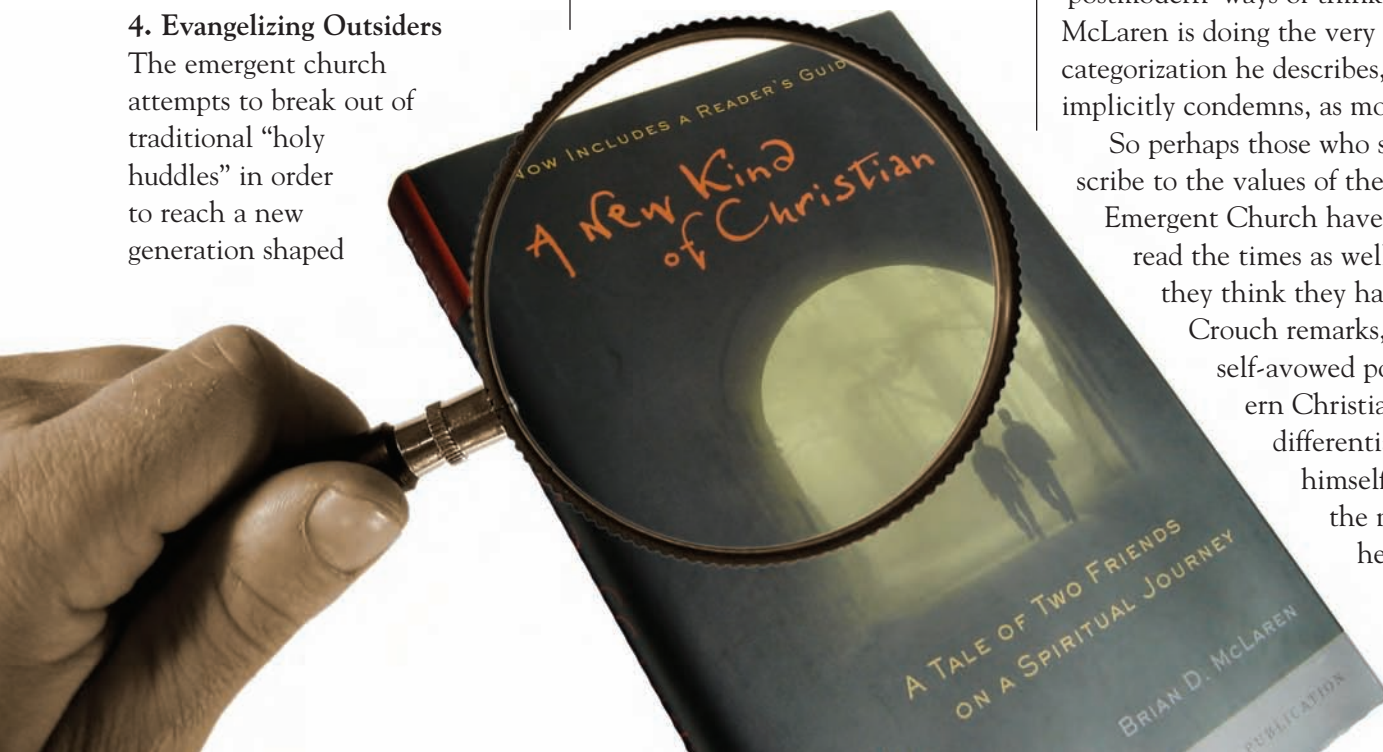
How self-critical ought we to be in examining our own history? What emphases and central truths of the early Brethren movement ought to be rediscovered and re-deployed for this generation? Which attitudes and practices ought to be biblically critiqued and left behind?

#### Conclusion

We do not want to become like that old delivery van—broken down, useless, pathetic. Nor should we try to be so “relevant” that we lose the unchanging message of the gospel—that we no longer have anything to deliver. Rather, let’s remember it is the Lord Jesus who is building His church, and we have the privilege of cooperating with Him. Let us be faithful to that “good deposit” which He has entrusted to us, and let us “become all things to all men so that by all possible means we might save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22). †



Larry Dixon  
Larry Dixon, professor of theology and church history at Columbia Biblical Seminary and School of Missions, is a 1971 graduate of Emmaus. Larry has written five books: *The Other Side of the Good News* (2003), *DocDEVOS* (2002), *Heaven: Thinking Now About Forever* (2002), *DocTALK* (2002), and *DocWALK* (2005). He and his wife Linda served with International Teams in Germany.



# The Challenge of Transitioning Leaders

Alexander Strauch  
 Edited by David J. MacLeod

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

## The Perennial Problem of Transitioning to Younger Leaders

**Scripture Reading:** "You therefore, my son, be strong

in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:1-2, NASB).

The problem of transitioning from one generation of leadership to another is a universal one fraught with many difficulties, and this is true in every area of life. In the world of politics, changes in leadership are often accompanied by the killing of former leaders or by running off the old guard.

This was true even in the Old Testament times. A dramatic example is Jehu who, when he was anointed as king, killed Ahab's seventy sons. He slaughtered them and had their heads put in baskets and sent to Jezreel. Then he killed the whole household of Ahab: "...all his great men and his acquaintances and his priests, until he left him without a survivor"

(2 Kings 10:1-11). That's often the reality of the political world—right up to the present time. Ruthless leaders believe they must get rid of all those who could possibly compete with them.

Think of what a great contrast King David was. When he became king, he did not slaughter the house of Saul or Jonathan. In fact, years later he looked for someone from Jonathan's house who would normally be viewed as a threat to his kingship and said, "Is there anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" Ziba, a man who had served in Saul's house, told David of Mephibosheth, a crippled son of Jonathan. In a magnanimous act of generosity and kindness, David brought Mephibosheth like a child to his table and he ate with him. He also gave his grandfather's land back to him and put servants under his control (2 Sam. 9:1-13). How many kings would have done that? In those days, not one; they would have seen him and immediately killed him. They would eliminate all competition, but not David; he was a man of grace. David was a wonderful leader, the greatest of all the kings of Israel.

I think today of our Brethren churches, and how many problems we have with this issue of transition. Some of us just can't do it. In many cases the problem seems so insurmountable that the church has to go through a near catastrophe—and sometimes it simply dies. Some time ago there was a

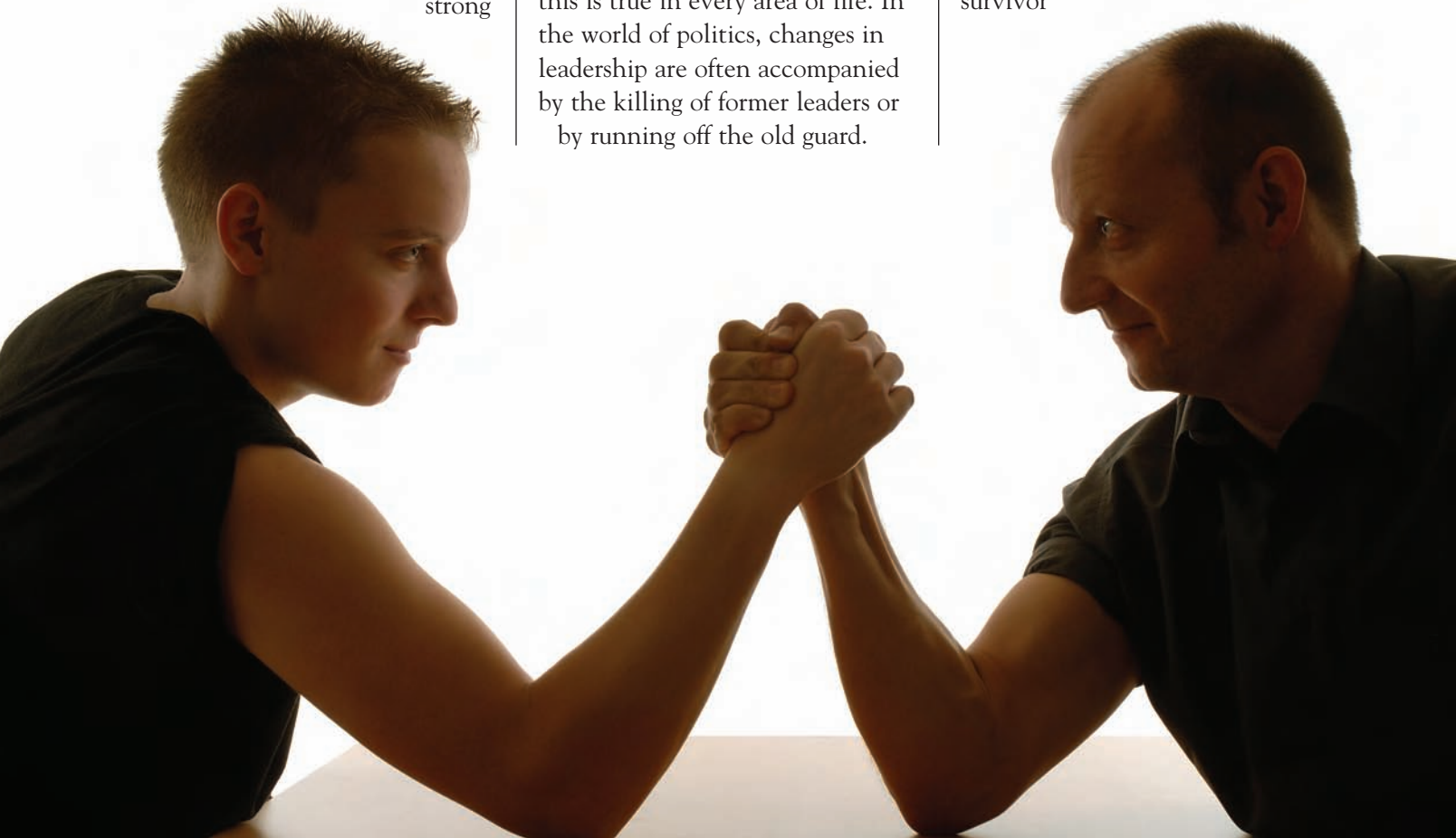
news report about Dr. Carl McIntire, head of one of the great fundamentalist churches the United States, as well as founder of a Christian radio station and a college and seminary. In 1996, the Collingswood's Bible Presbyterian Church elders concluded that Dr. McIntire could no longer fulfill the needs of Senior Pastor, a role he'd held since 1933. When McIntire refused retirement, the session took the issue to the Presbytery of New Jersey. In response, Dr. McIntire withdrew, intending to form his own Presbytery. Eventually, the Presbytery determined that McIntire had left the denomination and declared the Collingswood pulpit vacant. Dr. McIntire said he was fit to continue as Senior Pastor at ninety-two, and he had been illegally thrown out of the Bible Presbyterian Church. He said he would soon take legal action, but he died three years later in 2002 at age ninety-five. Quite famous in his prime, his brief obituary mentioned little more than that he was a "defrocked preacher."

It sounds bizarre, doesn't it, but you can go anywhere in the world today, and you will see this in churches. You have the old guard and the young guard, and the old guard will not leave. They will hold on to the reins of power until they are in their nineties, and they will take that church down with them. It's happening everywhere, and it is not a small problem—it is a big problem. When I first moved to Denver, Colorado

in 1968, I went to a local church, and I decided to put all my energy and time into that assembly. After three months I left! I saw that there was no possible way, within the next fifty years, that I would have any kind of significant ministry in that church. There was a group of old men in charge, and no one was going to be invited to be a trainee or leader until they all were laid flat and put deep into

**The Lord Jesus Himself provides our best example of One who developed the next generation of leaders.**

the grave. After I left that church, I went to Littleton Bible Chapel where I've been for thirty-eight years. After about a month at Littleton Chapel, one of the elders took me out to lunch and said, "Alex, there's a place here for you. We want you to stay here." I thought, what a different attitude. And when Dr. MacLeod—then young, twenty-five year old Dave MacLeod—came to the church in 1970, the same thing happened to him. The elders opened up doors. They told us, "We are looking for men like you; join us and be a part of us." What a difference in attitude between one church and the other. The Littleton elders, rather than being threatened and fearful and holding on to some kind of control and power—only to lose it all in the end, anyway—welcomed young men they could mentor and train.



The widespread failure to groom new leaders doesn't have to be. If developing and training leaders is a regular process of church life, as it should be, leadership will always be developing, and the church will regularly be incorporating new people and new heights. The best and ideal way to transition to new leadership is to always be at it so that you avoid sudden shifts and dramatic changes. In another words, it should just always be going on as a natural process in the local church. Developing and growing and changing is the Great Commission in a specialized form of developing leaders.

I want to devote part of this article to looking at the pattern of transitioning from one generation of leaders to another in the New Testament. This will reinforce the idea that developing new leaders is thoroughly Christian. I'm not going to devote a lot of space to the teaching of the New Testament, however, because I dealt with this in a previous article. [A transcript of this lecture can be found in the Spring 2006 issue of *Journey* magazine.<sup>1</sup>] I want to spend our time on the practical application. How do we do this—that is, transition leaders—practically?

### Jesus Christ Prepared the Next Generation of Leaders

The Lord Jesus Himself provides our best example of One who developed the next generation of leaders. Mark wrote, "And He went up on the mountain and

summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach" (Mark 3:13-14).<sup>2</sup> Our Lord Jesus Christ did not wait for the moment of His death to find a replacement for Himself. He spent three years praying, calling, preparing, planning, and developing a group of men. After His death they were trained and ready to go. In his classic work, *The Training of the Twelve*, A. B. Bruce writes often-quoted words:

"The great founder of the faith desired not only to have disciples, but to have about Him men whom He might train to make disciples of others...Both from His words and from His actions we can see that He attached supreme importance to that part of His work which consisted in training the twelve. In the intercessory prayer (John 17:6), for example, He speaks of the training He had given these men as if it had been the principal part of His own earthly ministry. And such, in one sense, it really was. The careful, painstaking education of the disciples secured that the Teacher's influence on the world should be permanent."<sup>3</sup>

Our Lord was a trainer of men unlike anyone else and, as A. B. Bruce said, it was "the principal part of His own earthly ministry."

And He didn't wait until the end of His life to begin training them. Their education began at the very beginning of His ministry. "Follow me," He said, "and I will make you [that is, train you to be] fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). "I'll show you how to capture men for the kingdom." According to Luke, the Lord Jesus spent the whole night praying for these men (Luke 6:12). He prayed about it, and then He

**Every Christian is to be shepherded by the elders of the church, but there should always be a few who are receiving special training as future elders and leaders.**

chose twelve. Jesus had many disciples at this time—perhaps hundreds. All those who followed Him and believed in Him were His disciples, but this incident in Luke 6 is a record of His choice of future leaders. And He had his own name for them: "apostles." These men would be the official link between Himself and the church of the future. These personally chosen men heard His words and watched His actions. Then Jesus insured that they would tell His people exactly what they needed to know by sending the Holy Spirit, who would guarantee that what they taught would be complete and without error (John 14:26; 16:12-14). Because of the work of the Spirit we can be sure that in the Gospels we read the very words of Christ. While on

earth Christ was training leaders, replacements to whom He would hand on His work. Every believer is, of course, a disciple of the Lord. But the appointment and training of the apostles demonstrates that Jesus believed in the development of a specialized few into leaders. Every Christian is to be shepherded by the elders of the church, but there should always be a few who are receiving special training as future elders and leaders.

### Paul Prepared the Next Generation of Leaders

In his great farewell address to the Ephesians, Paul did not call the whole church to hear him. He only called the elders of the church (Acts 20:17). He reminded them, "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God" (Acts 20:27). These were men whom He had probably appointed, men with whom He had worked closely. In fact, as they parted, they prayed together and then they began to openly weep and hug him. They were crying because they had spent time with him, worked with Him, and had seen that wonderful, marvelous life of dedication. No doubt part of that final message to them was, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

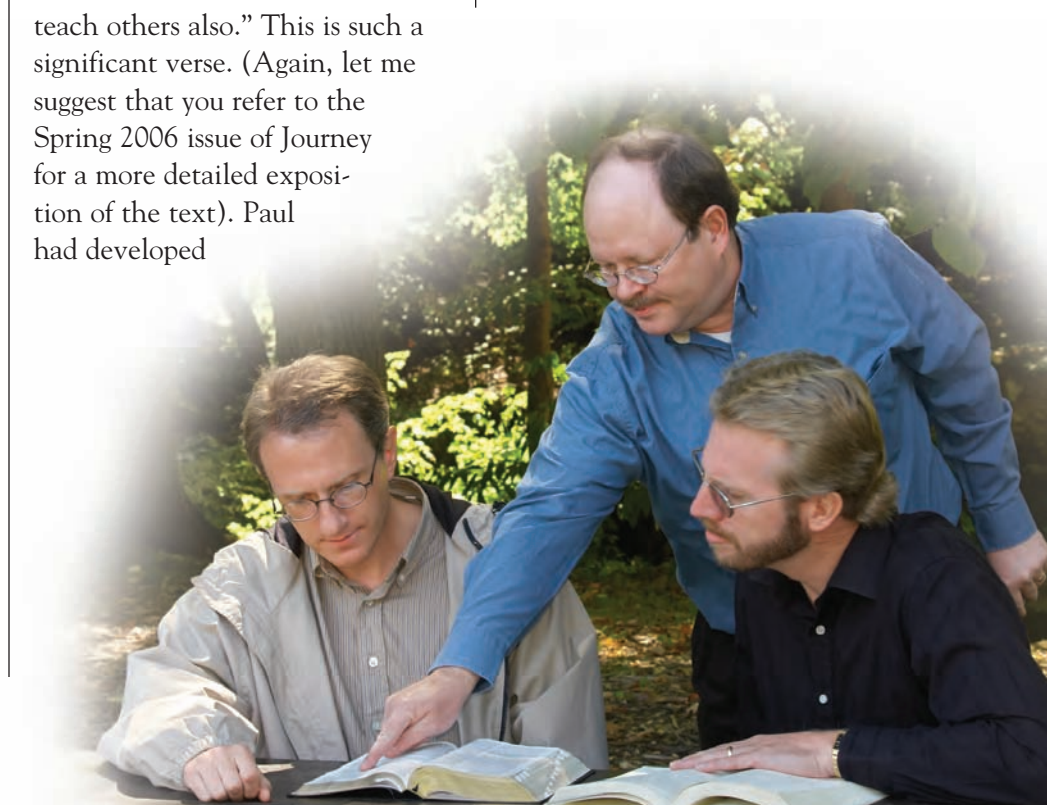
I find it interesting that the men Paul trained are named for us in the New Testament (Timothy, Titus, and others). We know their

names! Those of you reading these words: do you know the names of the people you are training, or is it more of a theory thing? If you and I are training men, who are they? Some will avert their eyes and say, "Well, we don't know their names, but we're training men." That's like saying, "We don't know what we're doing, but we're doing it!" No, Paul, like the Lord Jesus, knew the names of his trainees. You and I should be able to name names and say, "These are the men that God has placed on our hearts after prayer and after watching their leadership traits, and we have been developing them for years."

### Timothy Prepared the Next Generation of Leaders

Read again the admonition of Paul, "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." This is such a significant verse. (Again, let me suggest that you refer to the Spring 2006 issue of *Journey* for a more detailed exposition of the text). Paul had developed

in Timothy a colleague—a man to help in the work, and a man to carry it on. He was what some have called, "an apostolic legate," that is, an apostolic assistant and representative. The word entrust is a verb meaning, "to entrust for safekeeping, give over, entrust, commend" (BDAG). In 2 Timothy 2:2, the thought is that what is entrusted will be passed on to others for safekeeping and transmission to others. The NASB uses the translation entrust while other versions use the translation, "commit." Paul speaks here of a process or task that must be accomplished by people. Some people have erroneously thought of leadership training, "Well, that's the Holy Spirit's job." Yes, it is the Holy Spirit's job to call men and to put the burden of leading on their hearts, but there's a human element also. We must not remove



the element of human responsibility. God doesn't, and we shouldn't. We are to be involved in the process or task of developing men. Writing about the imperative nature of this verb, writer and pastor Kent Hughes says, "Entrusting the apostolic deposit to others is our God-given task and joy."<sup>4</sup> 2 Timothy 2:2 is an apostolic directive—it is a command and not an optional suggestion.

### Elders are to Prepare the Next Generation of Leaders

It is evident, I believe, that in 2 Timothy 2:2 Paul is speaking about the preparation of the next generation of elders—overseers or pastors (shepherds). He is talking about the training of the caliber of men "who will be able to teach others." Certainly every believer in the congregation is to receive instruction in the Word, but the process described here of entrusting the work to others must be put into the hands of men who have the capability to carry on the process.

Paul also wrote, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11). The word *pastor* here literally means "shepherd." In the New Testament the words *pastor* (or *shepherd*), *overseer*, and *elder* all refer to the same office (Acts 20:17-28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2). According to the grammatical structure of the phrase in Ephesians 4:11, "and some as pastors [shepherds] and teachers," shepherds and teachers

are closely linked together, but not identical. Shepherds are included in the category of teachers, but not all teachers are included in the category of shepherds. In other words, you can be a teacher and not a pastor but you can't be a pastor without being a teacher. The shepherd gift, then, uniquely combines teaching and governance.<sup>5</sup> If you pastor people, you lead and

---

**Frankly, unless you yourself are growing in the Lord, you cannot train people. You cannot set a vision before men's minds to be elders or teachers of the Word of God, and to live sacrificially for the Lord's flock—unless you are excited in the Lord's work and about the Lord's things. In other words, you've got to be contagious.**

---

feed. It's a two-fold gift. In this passage, Paul singles out teaching as the elder's job. It is the work of these gifted men (pastors, shepherds, or elders) to equip or prepare the whole congregation "for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12).

There is another text, 1 Timothy 5:17, which is important for understanding eldership. It is important for our local assemblies, yet many assembly Christians have not yet come to grips with it. They are not applying it in their local

churches. Paul writes, "The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." The verb translated "work hard" has the idea of working *to the point of weariness*. Let me ask you a question: Is there anyone in your church who works at preaching and teaching to the point of weariness? Or is preaching in your assembly done by lot? Is it a last minute thing, where a designated committee asks, "Who is going to preach this week? Let's see, we'll make some phone calls to see who's available."

Is there anyone in your local assembly laboring in preaching and teaching? Now some of us haven't even thought about what that might mean. Paul says such an elder is "worthy of double honor," which he explains in verse 18 as financial remuneration. Paul counsels that if there is a person who is giving his time and labor to preaching and teaching, there should be pay or wages to take care of him and his family. Paul is not suggesting that all elders should be paid. What he is saying is that those elders who give themselves full time to the work of shepherding and teaching should be materially cared for.

In light of the context of 1 Timothy where the church has been shattered by false teaching, the best remedy (and the best defense against a repetition of the problem) is to have elders laboring in the Word of God. Such men would be proclaiming the whole

counsel of God—they would be preaching the gospel, and they would be teaching the Word in order to equip the saints.

In light of 2 Timothy 2:2, one aspect of their hard labor would be the preparation of future leaders. This takes time and availability. As is often said, "You've got to be available!" You cannot do the work of training men unless you are available. You need to spend time with those select few men who have the character and teaching ability to be elders.

Now to prepare the next generation of elders, overseers, or pastors (shepherds), we need two things. We first need a vision for it, and second we need a strategy. Some of you have the vision but no strategy. Some of you have the strategy but you haven't really caught the vision for what it is you need to do.

One thing is for sure: we need to act now, because the next generation is coming fast. Five or ten years will fly by quickly. Suppose I visit a local church, and I speak to them about training future leaders. Someone may say, "Hey, everything is going well here; we have five good elders and the church is alive." "But," I ask, "Are your elders working hard at preparing the next generation of leaders?" It's evident that they haven't given any thought to this. In fact, they may not even comprehend what needs to be done. Now, suppose I revisit this assembly in five years. Things have changed: One either had to move away for

his business, one is burned out and has no desire to serve, one had a serious illness that has left him chronically fatigued, and the remaining elder is frustrated, tired, and fearful for the future of the church. I have been to churches like that. Paul's lesson for Timothy and for us (2 Tim. 2:2) is that leadership in a healthy church is a continual process of men coming up through the ranks. If your assembly is involved in such a continual process, you know that when an new elder joins the eldership, if it's done properly, there's no big shakeup in church. If such a continual process is lacking, then the need for new elders will be a major earthquake in the assembly which frightens everyone, and drives some away.

---

**The simplest and best definition of leadership that I've heard is, "Leadership is influence."**

---

My point is that if your church is healthy, then the preparation of new leaders will be a natural process that is done very smoothly. We've seen this over the last twenty years in our assembly. Every elder that has come onto the oversight has been part of a very natural process. There has been no shake up in the eldership and no big battles. Two new elders will come on this year, and it will be a very smooth process. They've already been meeting with the elders, and all that remains is the

public recognition that they've been through the process of training.

### A Vision and Commitment to Training Future Elders

#### Understand the Plan

Part of pastoral oversight is preparing for the future—seeing that there are future pastors for the church. What kind of shepherds of a flock would only want a one or two generation church? We should be securing, if the Lord does not return, the future of the church. We must not wait until we die, leaving the next generation unprepared for leadership and holding the bag! And we must not wait until we are old and frail and then decide that something needs to be done. ("Golly, I'm dying; I'd better make arrangements for the assembly's future!") No, it is part of pastoral oversight to insure, so far as humanly possible, that there is a future for the flock.

All of us soon find that our time on earth is limited. Even if you serve as an elder for thirty years, you will find that the time flies by. You look back and say, "Where did those thirty years go?" Some time ago David MacLeod gave me an article from *U.S News and World Report*. You may have read it. The article had some significant things to say about the family owned business in America. Economists estimate that such businesses account for nearly 50% of the nation's gross national product. The authors listed all the advantages of family owned busi-

nesses and why they are so successful. Toward the end they made an astonishing observation: only a third of such businesses survive into the second generation. There were two failures that account for this disturbing trend: (1) They lack confidence in their young people, and (2) they are too busy to train them.<sup>6</sup> Think of it! They didn't have time to train them and they didn't trust them. I thought after reading this, we're in the gospel business. We're the household of God. We should be in the business of training the next generation of leaders. We've got to make time for this, and we've got to trust them; we've got no other choice. And if we train them properly, they will carry on well.

### Be the Man

Be the man. You must be willing and able to develop others. You must be the change agent. Frankly, unless you yourself are growing in the Lord, you cannot train people. You cannot set a vision before men's minds to be elders or teachers of the Word of God, and to live sacrificially for the Lord's flock—unless you are excited in the Lord's work and about the Lord's things. In other words, you've got to be contagious. You can't raise the interest of others if you have no interest yourself. You can't light the fire in others if you don't have the fire yourself. Paul could say, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). He told Timothy, "Take pains with these things; be

absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:15-16).

Can I ask you a question? If I were to go to your local assembly and ask about brother so-and-so and his progress in the Lord, would they say, "He's the same old deadhead he's been for twenty years"? Or would they say, "That guy's always growing; he's always reading new material. He's just got a fire about him; he's contagious and infectious"?

The simplest and best definition of leadership that I've heard is, "Leadership is influence." You cannot influence people if you're not contagious—if you're not excited about the Word of God and the mission of the Lord throughout the world. I love Paul's words in 1 Timothy 4:15. Let me paraphrase, "Timothy, I want the whole church to see your spiritual progress." Paul does not say, "Timothy, you've arrived; Timothy, don't worry, you're good enough!" No, he says, "Timothy, I want people to see your progress."

I love Paul's words, "Our outer man is decaying!" (2 Cor. 4:16). Physically he's not the man he once was. His blood pressure and cholesterol are going up, and he doesn't have his zip anymore. He's taking his vitamins, but he knows he's going to die. Yet, he can say

that his "inner man is being renewed day by day." Here is a man growing in his spiritual life every day. In the great apostle we see a positive life of growth and maturity and Christ-likeness. Physically he is getting old and frail, but spiritually he is growing and maturing, and he is more alive than he's ever been. He walks into a Christian bookstore, and he can't control himself. Studying the Bible with good books is a good sign that you're alive.

So he tells Timothy, "I want everyone to see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself." Yes, even Timothy has to keep a close eye on his spiritual life and on his teaching. He continues, "Persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (v. 16). Dr. Howard Hendricks says, "When you stop

---

**Teachers who love God and His Word are contagious. But those who have no interest in growing themselves will have nothing to say to the next generation of leaders.**

---

growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow." Paul Stanley and Robert Clinton, in their book, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed In Life*, have done a study of the biographies of all the leaders in the Bible. They made the startling

discovery that most of these leaders did not end well. In fact, I heard Bobby Clinton say at a conference that only 25% of the leaders in the Bible ended well.

What a blessing it is to see a man who is thirty, forty, or fifty years old going strong for Jesus Christ. I find that to be one of the most encouraging things I've ever seen. Many start out well, but five or ten years later they drop out. Stanley and Clinton wrote, "We have observed that most people cease learning by the age of forty. By that we mean they no longer actively pursue knowledge, under standing, and experience that which will enhance their capacity to grow and contribute to others. Most simply rest on what they already know. But those who finish well maintain a *positive learning attitude* all their lives."<sup>7</sup> Age forty? I've seen people who max out at age twenty-five. They stop learning, watch an enormous amount of TV and movies, and know all the newest restaurants. Stanley and Clinton continue, "Many people, particularly leaders, plateau. They become satisfied with where they are and with what they know. This often occurs after they attain enough to be comfortable or can maintain a relatively secure and predictable future. But this contradicts the biblical principle of stewardship."<sup>8</sup>

The Christian life is a continued life of growth and zeal—of constant inner renewal. I'm more excited today about Bible study,

world missions, and prayer than I was ten years ago. When we lose our zeal for knowledge and teaching, when we stop growing, we will stop influencing others. When we're not excited about Scripture anymore, then we will not excite others. If we expect to challenge the hearts and minds of the next generation of men and woman, then our hearts and minds have to be challenged and growing. Teachers who love God and His Word are contagious. But those who have no interest in growing themselves will have nothing to say to the next generation of leaders.

### A Strategy and Plan for Training Future Leaders (Elders)

Many would agree with everything we've said so far. It's like prayer. We all know we should pray—it is essential to the Christian life. It's a great privilege of this age to come to the throne of grace to our Father and speak to Him about anything. But many believers don't do it. Why? I think it's very simple. They don't have a plan; they don't have a place; they don't have a time; and they don't have a list of things to pray for. They just sort of willy-nilly do it when "the Spirit leads," and that doesn't seem to happen very often. People with a plan pray more and pray better. I think the same thing is true in this area of training leaders. Until we have a plan and a strategy, nothing much gets done.

But the theories stay and we're great at theory! But theory doesn't get the job done. I was in Long Island speaking at a church, and after I had finished a man came up to me and said, "I want to tell you a story." He had graduated from a seminary and returned to Long Island where he had grown up. He wanted to be a pastor in a church in Long Island. Well he got back to Long Island, and a church without a pastor approached him and asked, "Would you fill our pulpit for six months?" He stayed for six months, after which another church called him and said, "Look, we don't have a pastor; can you come fill in for a few months?" He went, and he stayed there for a year. He then said to me, "For the last fourteen years that has been my job. I'm a fill-in pastor. I stay six months to a year, and no longer. Here is what I've learned in fourteen years: no one trains people; no one is planning for the next generation. When one pastor leaves, the whole process starts all over again, and, in the meantime, no one has been developed. Men in their forties and fifties in those churches can't even open the Bible and instruct the congregation. The whole system is a failure. It's a graduating class that never graduates."

He continued, "In many churches people stay in infancy throughout their lifetime memberships, and the system is geared that way. They will say, 'Our pastor is leaving or retiring. Well, we will just hire another pastor. We'll just

find someone from seminary.’ That’s not biblical. That pastor should not have left until he had trained and developed people for leadership. He should have prepared them to develop on their own.” He added, “Church after church is just like this. They have no strategy. They have no desire to develop their men so that they could open the Word and lead the church. Every new pastor develops his own new ideas and philosophy.”

In Colorado there is a very large church near ours that for a number of years had a very good pastor. He was good biblical man, but he made a strategic mistake. He trained and prepared no fellow workers, so when he left, the church could not cope with his absence. In fact, that church has never recovered. For the past fifteen years they have had a succession of pastors, and every one of them has come in with a whole new philosophy of doing church. That poor church has bounced all over the place due to the changing

**Seeing potential is part of shepherding. A shepherd empowers people, and if you’re a leader you will open the closed doors.**

whims of new pastors. The congregation is very discouraged. There is no continuity of programs and philosophy from pastor to pastor. They went from being a solid Bible teaching church that was growing, to a church that has no commit-

ment to Bible teaching. They have devolved into a church centered in a huge music program. A good biblical man caused this by not preparing leaders for the future.

**Strategy #1: Develop an Eye for People and Potential**

If you love the Lord’s people, you must ask God to give you an eye for people. Good shepherds have an eye for sheep. They can see the sick ones, the rebellious ones, the healthy ones, and the leaders. You have to ask God to give you an eye and a heart to be watching for new arrivals in the church and who among them is developing. Are you keeping an eye on your teens and young adults? Do you see potential in some of them, and are you praying about them?

One of the reasons so many parachurch organizations are successful is that they are always on the lookout for talented young people. They’re like vacuum cleaners going around sucking up all the talent they can find. And they’re prepared when they find one. They’ve got a plan and a program they can show the young person. They tell him or her, “Join us, and you’ll go to exciting places and do exciting things for the Lord.” It’s very appealing. Local churches, on the other hand, act like they are asleep. They are sleep walking, and potential leaders just slip through their hands. Several years ago I visited an assembly. While I was there a young man spoke in the meeting, and I was very impressed with his skills and gifts.

I said to one of the elders, “This is an exceptionally gifted fellow.” “Oh yes,” he said, “He’s very good.” “I said, “Well, are you doing anything with him? Are you opening any doors of service for him?” He said “Well, he gets his turn.” In other words, they had fit him into their preaching rotation, and he ministered three or four times a year. I went back about four years later, and the gifted young man was gone. The elders didn’t understand that God had given him a gift. The local church grows by the ministry of its gifted men. It doesn’t grow by wishing or painting the walls. God has chosen spiritual gift and the ministry of the Word as His plan to develop His people and to bring people to Himself. Develop an eye for people and potential.

**Strategy #2: Open Doors for Potential Elders**

As elders of the local church, you have the authority to assign responsibilities to people and to approve and disapprove of peoples’ tasks. You can do what people call, “The Ask.” That is, you can ask people to do things. This is a marvelous privilege we have in leadership. Use it or lose it. We can guide people; we can nudge people on. What a privilege—the power to influence and guide people. But we must take the initiative.

Let me give you an example from our own assembly. This year we are about to take on a fine young man as an elder. If we had asked him ten years ago to assist at

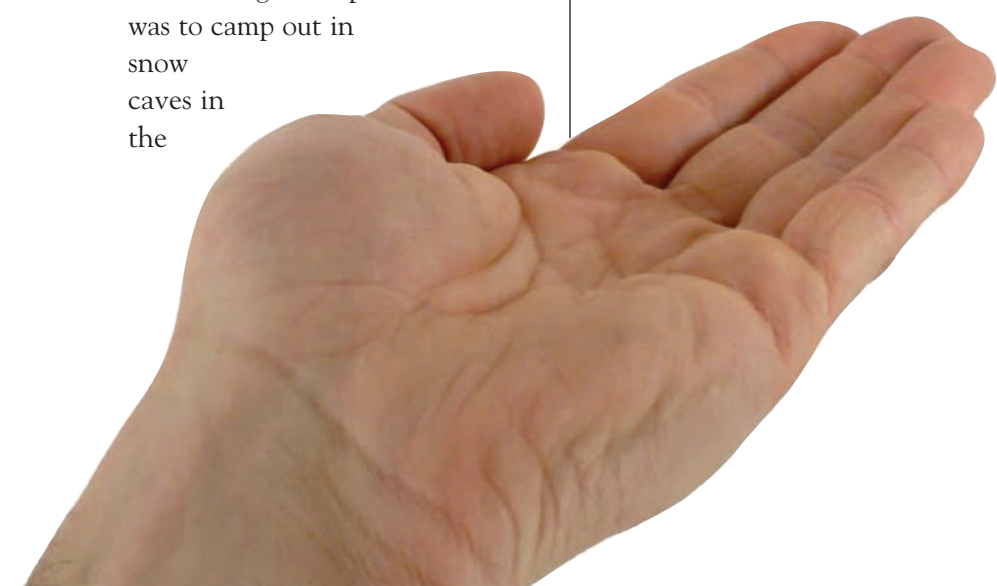
the Lord’s Supper by handing out the bread and the cup, he would probably have passed out; he was so shy. Once I encouraged him to pray in the Lord’s Supper and he replied, “There’s no way I can do that. I would tremble and shake.” At that time someone might have concluded, “Well, there’s no way he’ll be an elder.” But ten years have passed, and he has grown as a Christian. He preaches on the platform now. He has a brilliant mind, and he has a wonderful pastoral spirit with people. We are so happy with him. He will join our pastoral eldership this year. Ten years ago you would never have guessed that such a shy person would one day be an elder. But we saw something in him. We saw ability and good character, and we just started. Ten years is a long time, and he has developed into the kind of man that you could gladly hand the church over to.

Another of our elders, a man who serves full time, came onto the eldership a few years ago. Ten or twelve years ago he was also incredibly shy. And his highest aspiration was to camp out in snow caves in the

Rockies—he wanted to be a mountain man. If you had told him that in twelve years he would be an elder in the church, directing a big program and leading hundreds of people, he would have said, “You’re crazy, leave me alone. I don’t want to do that. I’m Jonah, and I’m going to sail away on a ship.” Yet today he is a wonderful elder; every day I thank God for him. Men like him are our future.

You cannot look someone and say, “He’s not presently a leader, he’s not presently this or that.” You’ve got to see the potential. You have to ask the Lord to give you eyes to see that. Even the Lord Jesus prayed about men (Luke 6:12-13). I’m sure

if people were



advising the Lord about Peter, they would have said, “Peter’s a loose screw; stay away from him, he’s going to get you in trouble. He doesn’t seem to have the leadership quality that you need for your organization.” But they would have been wrong. The Lord Jesus had an eye for people, and He saw potential in Peter.

We need to get hold of young people when they are in their teens. We must not wait for them to be forty or fifty when they are bogged down with life. We need to be looking for future leaders when they are young. Do you know a teenager in your assembly who has interest in the Lord’s things? He is at all the meetings and enjoys being there. Give that young man a good book, a good biography. Challenge him. Ask him, “Why don’t you start working in the Sunday School department, week after week? Take this responsibility.” We must catch them when they’re young and set a vision before them. I’ll never forget seeing Dr. Vernon Grounds, the well-known president of Denver Seminary, walking down the hall. He came up behind two students and, stepping between them, put his arms around their shoulders. In a friendly but serious way, he said, “Men, the future of the church is going to rest on your shoulders in just a few years.”

That’s an awesome thought for a young man, but it’s true! Put your arm around a young man in his teens, and give him a vision for service. That happened to me when I was fourteen years of age.

Paul B. Sapp put a book, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret*, into my hands, and he said, "Read this book, or I'll sit on you." Paul weighed about 250 pounds, and was six foot four. I immediately said, "I'll read the book!" Set a vision before a young man. "The church is going to rest on your shoulders in just a few years. I believe there's a place for you here, and God will use you beyond your own expectations."

I think the Lord likes to take

---

**The first piece of literature you must give a man is a good Bible.**

---

the most unlikely people and do the most unlikely things with them. I remember a young lady in our church saying, "I could never be a missionary. I hate bugs and I hate heat." Well, for the past fifteen years she has served as a missionary with her husband in Indonesia. Together they've started over ten churches there. Don't ever tell God what you're not going to do, because He may send you to do that very thing! He loves to get glory out of taking the most unlikely people and doing great things through them. What a privilege to nudge someone on. You just need to give them a little push—or sometimes they need a kick! Sometimes you need to say to people, "You've got to stretch yourself a little bit!" What a great privilege to guide someone like that. And then, ten or fifteen years later, they look back and say,

"Hey, that guy put his arm around me, and he said I could do this. He put a vision before me, and now it has become a reality."

Open doors for people by setting suggestions and opportunities before them. I like to say to people, "All you can do is fail; that's the worse thing that could happen." Perhaps you see potential in a person in his early twenties or thirties. One good idea is to say to him, "Listen, why don't you teach a class for six months. We'd like you to try the Junior High class (or the Senior High class, or the College class, or the Young Adults' class)." Or say, "We'd like you to work on the missions committee for six months. It will not kill you, I guarantee you, and if it does we've got a good insurance policy at this chapel."

Open doors for future leaders. Watch for signs of potential—intelligence, a caring heart, a faithful participator, or a good character. Seeing potential is part of shepherding. A shepherd empowers people, and if you're a leader you will open the closed doors. I've come to see that people know if the doors are open or closed in a church. People catch on very quickly, and they can soon tell if this church is locked at a certain point. They'll quickly understand the unwritten policy, "You won't find anything to do here until you're at least thirty-five or forty, and then only if you're really persistent. Don't expect anyone here to open doors."

What a different attitude

churches display when they say, "We're looking for talent!" and "We're looking for talent better than the current crop of leaders. We are not afraid or intimidated by talent and gift; we want to find it and use it. We want to get out of its way and let it shine." Have you ever seen a Russian doll? You open the doll, and there's a smaller one inside, and you open that one, and there's an even smaller one inside it. That's how some want their leadership. They want future leaders smaller than themselves. And so each year the leadership of the church gets smaller and smaller until finally you've got flat, passive, little people who do not threaten anyone. We must not operate on the principle of the Russian doll. We must look for people who are better than we are, people who can take the church to the next level. We must seek people with greater teaching gift and ability, for we are looking for the very best for God's house.

### Strategy #3 Build Relationships with Potential Elders

A local church is a family, and in a family, relationships are absolutely vital. A significant part of developing leadership is entering into a relationship with a person. You are the leader and potential mentor, and you must take the initiative. You must show interest because so much of this process is interest in people and availability. When speaking of the greatest disciple maker, Mark makes this telling

Are you keeping an eye on your teens and young adults? Do you see potential in some of them, and are you praying about them?

observation, "And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him" (Mark 3:14). Being with these men was a large part of His ministry with them. He developed an intimate and close relationship with these few men by spending time with them and by being available to them. This was a marvelous thing.

One way to be available and

---

**Invite trainees who are showing real promise to come to the elders' meetings. These meetings are one of the best places to train elders.**

---

show an interest is to take men to lunch. I try to do this regularly and consistently with a few select men that we as elders know are going to be our replacements in the years ahead. We're available to them. We talk to them about the Lord's work, about theology, about contemporary issues, and about what is going on in their lives (family, career, and spiritual life). We have activities with them (hunting, fishing, boating, camping, outings, skiing, tennis, hiking, racquetball, etc.) just to be with them. Have fun with them.

Be an example to them. I can remember forty-five years ago when I left the Presbyterian Church and went to Elizabeth Gospel Chapel in New Jersey. I can easily recall the men who were the leaders there. I can even remember how

they-dressed with a suit and tie. More importantly I remember their faithfulness and concern. They never missed a meeting, and the way they led the congregation in prayer is burned into my mind. They had a powerful influence upon me as they modeled the Christian life. We elders today are models and examples for the flock of God. We are an example before these future leaders, and twenty or thirty years from now they will be carrying on the legacy we have started. Paul knew this.

The power of influence, example, and modeling—don't ever downplay it for a moment. You are a model, you are an example, and

when you're with these men, it may be twenty, thirty years from now, but they will be carrying on the legacy you have started. "Follow me; imitate me because I am imitating Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).

### Strategy #4: Provide Education and Resources for Potential Elders

We are in the education business; we educate people in the gospel. Our assembly is a gospel school, and if we're to have able shepherds



for the next generation, we need to educate them. We need to be proactive and deliberate about this. We cannot take an indifferent, laissez-faire approach, assuming that somehow it will happen. No, it won't happen. Nothing will happen if someone doesn't make it happen. That's how God has made things to operate in His church.

### Provide Them With Literature

Let me give you some ways in which we educate the people that God has given to us—that is, the future leaders in our assembly (2 Tim. 2:2). We use literature. The first piece of literature you must give a man is a good Bible. Advise a man about a good Bible. One of the great things that happened to me in my mid-teens was when someone at Pinebush Bible Camp gave me James Stahr's old *Scofield Reference Bible*. Jim Stahr had sent his Bible to be repaired, and somehow it got lost. It later fell into the possession of a man, and he gave it to me. I had no idea who James Stahr was, but his name was on the cover, and his notes, as well

as Dr. Scofield's notes, were inside. It was my first *Oxford Scofield Bible*. Years later I met Jim Stahr, and I told him I had his old *Scofield Bible*. He said, "I want those notes." I said, "No, they're mine. For a million dollars I'll give it to you!" (Just kidding.) I prized that Bible. You provide a man with a real gift when you help him get a good study Bible.

Second, he needs a Bible survey book. I'm shocked at how many people there are who do not have any idea what the Bible is all about. They have no understanding of the story line of the Bible and how the parts fit together. I had a man call me one time for advice. He said, "We've got some men coming on as elders, and I have a question about them. None of them have ever read the whole Bible." I thought to myself, "Please help us Lord—they haven't even read the Book!" Before a man becomes an elder, help him to get a panoramic overview of the Scriptures. Tell him to take the survey book and with it read the whole Bible from cover to cover.

Third, he needs a Bible doc-

trine book. Elders need to know the Bible doctrines, and there are good books that can help them. They need books on the Christian life, on prayer, on church life, on marriage and the family, on forgiveness, and on Bible study. Elders need a Bible and books! A great ministry to people is putting books in their hands. Books will change their lives. Don't do what I see so many Christians do. They buy a book, look it over, put it on the shelf, and never read it. No! Buy the book, read the book, and pass it on. When you read a book and find that it is good, buy multiple copies. If you have a person in your church that knows good books and likes to give them away, provide him with a budget to help him with the work.

### Encourage Them to Listen to Tapes and CDs

Encourage prospective leaders—and those who are already elders, for that matter—to listen to the tapes, CDs, and MP3 files of gifted Bible expositors and theologians. I confess to you that I am a "tapeaholic." I play tapes in the car, when I work out at the gym, and when I take a hike.

I've been listening to tapes since Dr. MacLeod introduced me to S. Lewis Johnson back in 1970. I had never heard anything like it before in my life, and I think of how those tapes have influenced my life. Listening to tapes and CDs by Dr. Johnson, Bill McRae, Eric Alexander, John MacArthur, and other gifted men has had a tre-

mendous impact on our assembly. This is a great way to train men.

When you've found a good prospect, and you don't have a lot of time to get together, introduce him to the joy of listening to good teaching on tapes and CDs. Some time ago I started the practice of giving such a man a 3x5 card and asking him to keep a record of how much time he spent in his car. People are invariably amazed at how much time they spend in their cars. Encourage him to always have a tape or CD player with him to listen to messages. I always start people off with the Epistle to the Romans. I tell my young future elder, "You've got to master the Book of Romans; it's the central epistle of the New Testament."

So, have a good tape ministry in your church and be using tapes. It's a great way to train men by giving them instruction in Scripture, doctrine, and practical Christian living. Tapes and CDs are especially helpful in providing good role models for future preachers and teachers. For example, suppose you assign a young man to teach a Sunday school class or youth group, and you request that he teach a certain book of the Bible or a certain topic. You will provide him with inestimable help if you give him the tapes or CDs of a great Bible teacher teaching the same book study or subject. Listening to the tapes he will learn much about preaching and teaching, and he will be given helpful

guidance in how to develop and deliver his material. So much first-rate material is available today, and much of it can be downloaded free onto the I-Pod or computer of the elder in training.

### Develop Mentoring Relationships

In their book, *Connecting*, Stanley and Clinton argue that what a future elder needs is "a constellation of mentoring relationships." Too often we think there must be only one mentor in a person's life. Well, hopefully you do have at least one, but the ideal is to have several. Suppose you are a young man who is being guided and trained by the elders with a view to your becoming an elder. They have given you responsibilities, and they have provided you with good books and tapes. You are being challenged by these things, and the elders decide you need some personal time. The best approach may not be to meet with just one man. Rather, it would be better to meet with a variety of men at different times, each of whom has a special gift, strength, or interest. For example the elders may ask you to have a number of lunches with an elder whose strong point is prayer and world missions. Then they may line you up for several meetings with a brother who is very knowledgeable about doctrine and contemporary issues. Then you are scheduled to have some sessions with an elder who is very strong in pastoral visi-

tation skills. Then another elder spends some time with you talking about fathering skills, something he is very adept at. If you aspire to be an elder, look around. If you see someone who has seen real fruit in an area of ministry, offer to take him to lunch. Then ask him about his work. In all of these sessions with your "constellation of mentors," ask a lot of questions.

### Attend Elders' Meetings

Invite trainees who are showing real promise to come to the elders' meetings. These meetings are one of the best places to train elders. In fact, no man should ever come on the eldership until he's sat for a long while in the elders' meetings. There he will see how they work together—how they make decisions and how they submit to one another. The interrelationships between the various men must be seen in action. Having these younger men come and observe the meetings is an application of Jesus' invitation to the disciples so that they might be with Him, that is, that they might have a personal relationship with Him, that they might be eyewitnesses of His character, actions, and demeanor, and that they might be "ear witnesses" of His teaching.

### Attend Christian Conferences

Sending prospective elders to conferences is another great way to train men. A number of able men sponsor conferences for the edification, training, and motivation of those who are serving the Lord



Jesus Christ. Tell your trainees, “We want you to attend a conference every year. We will even help you financially if you need it.” When these young men return home, they bring tapes of the conference sessions, and all of your elders can listen to them. I myself have listened to many of the sessions of these conferences. At our church we have a consistent program of education comprised of passing tapes, books, and articles around to one another to encourage one another. Another thing they bring home from the conferences is excitement. They have heard good things from fine men, and they have a new standard of excellence for which to aim. Every year in the fall we get the brochures for these conferences,

and we publicize them to encourage our people to attend.

### Short Term Missions Trips

Christ has a world vision, and we want the people in our assembly to have that vision. The gospel is for our world, not just for our local church. It is not a local God that we have; He is the one true and living God of the entire universe. A true balanced church program must have world missions as its base, so we try to get people involved in a short-term mission. It gives them the opportunity to see what God is doing through people on the foreign field. God is at work in the world, and it ignites a vision in people when they experience it firsthand. All of our elders are or have been involved in short-term missions. This excites our church

and makes it international. I remember when my wife Marilyn and I were in John Stott’s church in London. You could feel the energy in the place. They have a wall just full of pictures of young people who are out on short-term missions teams. They want their young people out on the mission field. The church of Jesus Christ is an international church. We need to be regularly reminded that we have a universal gospel to proclaim to all men and women.

### Formal Schooling

If you have a young person with the gifts, the talent, the ability, and the time, get them to a school. Encourage them to take at least a one-or two-year program of intensive study in the Word. Do everything you can to educate him in

the Word of God. Not everyone can get away to a Bible college or seminary, but if they can, strongly encourage them to do it—and help them financially.

### Strategy # 5: Pray for Future Elders

Our Lord Jesus prayed for the men he would train (Luke 6:12). As Christian leaders we are to be praying. I can say to you honestly before God that every week I’m praying for our future elders. They are all different—different in talents and gifts, and different in their level of growth and maturity. Yet I look at these men and realize our church has a future—and a great future, Lord willing—better than they have now. Why? Because we shall have better leaders and better teachers. They will be more educated in God’s things than we are, and they’ll work together in a better way. I don’t want to ever have the attitude, “Hah, this church couldn’t live without me!” No, I hope the church is far better when I have to step aside. I pray that it will have far better praying men, with greater love and greater unity in the local church. This is part of the job of the present elders—shepherding the church and preparing the next generation of elders. †

- 1 Alexander Strauch, “Generational Succession: The Imperative of Biblical Mentoring,” *Journey* 4 (Spring, 2006): 39-50.
- 2 For a full exposition of this and parallel passages, see David J. MacLeod, “The Year of Public Favor, Part 4: The Twelve Apostles,” *The Emmaus Journal* 13 (Summer, 2004): 7-59.
- 3 Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 3d ed. (1883; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1963), 13.
- 4 R. Kent Hughes, “1 & 2 Timothy,” in *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, by R. Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell (Wheaton: Crossway, 2000), 194.
- 5 Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, 3d ed. (Littleton, CO: Lewis and Roth, 1995), 210, 314-15; cf. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 284.
- 6 Steve Huntley and Jeannye Thornton, “The Silent Strength of Family Businesses,” *U.S. News and World Report* (April 25, 1983): 47, 50.
- 7 Paul D. Stanley and J. Robert Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1992), 222.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Stanley and Clinton, *Connecting: The Mentoring Relationships You Need to Succeed in Life*, 161.



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



# We Need More than the Local Church

David A. Glock

True or false? Since 1968, I have taught the course *Ecclesiology* at Emmaus Bible College. This course deals with the principles and practice of Church life. Every week of class there is a quiz with statements similar to the title of this article. What is your answer to the question: True or false?

The term *church* is used in the following two ways in the New Testament: first, in reference to the universal church, and secondly, in reference to the local church.

Matthew 16:18:  
*“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”*

Acts 14:23:  
*“So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.”*

The question in discussion refers to the local church. Is the local church—the bishops and deacons with the saints (Philippians 1:1)—a self-sustaining entity, independent from the rest of the visible church on earth and needful of no other source of assistance except the divine direction of the Holy Spirit and the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ?

In relationship to church government, it is true that each local church is independent, subject only to the Head of the Church and

scripture. There is no man or group of men outside of the local church to which the church is subject. Although this was not the case during the Apostolic Era when apostles did have authority from Christ over the churches, with the passing of the apostles, that authority ceased.

In other matters of church life, there was a mutual dependence of churches in relationship to spiritual and financial needs, as seen in:

- itinerant preachers (both apostles and non-apostles)
- Church councils with regional representation
- distribution of epistles between churches
- letters of introduction from church to church

- sharing of wealth and resources from region to region
- giving for missionary activity
- provision of hospitality for the saints

There is also a very interesting and informative passage related to this subject in Acts 19:1-10:

And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.” And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?” So they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. Now the men were about twelve in all. And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

In this passage, reference is made to the establishment of a special time of daily training of the twelve disciples who had identified with Paul. This extended for a two year period that resulted in the evangelization of the province of Asia. This accounts for the converts unknown by face to Paul, but whose conversions resulted from his teaching in this Bible school at Ephesus. This supplemental ministry took place during Paul’s extended ministry of three years at the church at Ephesus. Thus, there is biblical evidence of concentrated teaching outside of the normal scope of church life in order to train believers for leadership, evangelization, and church planting.

In many other ways, every church is dependent on the labors of other believers, past and present, for the daily functioning of Church life, as seen in:

- the many translations of the Bible
- the numerous commentaries providing a wealth of understanding of the Bible
- the rich collections of hymns for the service of the church
- service organizations that promote missions and evangelism
- publishing houses that foster spiritual growth through periodicals
- campus ministries for the benefit of Christian college students
- conferences, seminars, and regional leadership gatherings for mutual edification

- schools, colleges, and seminaries where the Bible is taught

This last point is of great importance for a movement marked by participative gift and priesthood—especially when understanding of biblical content is in decline.

While church government is autonomous and every church should be locally governed, it is also true that there is a broader fellowship of the saints that extends beyond the confines of any local church. From the church universal and the church visible, we all share in the great program of the Head of the Church, who said:

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.”

*We need more than the local Church.* True or false? True! †



*Dave Glock*  
 Dave is a graduate of Emmaus, Philadelphia College of Bible, and Dallas Theological Seminary. He has taught at Emmaus since 1968 and has served as Dean of Education for most of that period. He serves as an elder at Asbury Community Chapel. He and his wife Melsie have worked together at the College. They have four children, all of whom serve in Assembly ministries, and twelve grandchildren.



# The Value of Formal Biblical Education for Christian Workers

David J. MacLeod  
(Some Counsel from T. Ernest Wilson)

The following article is a review of Michael Browne's booklet, *Bible Colleges? A Warning Against the Spread of Bible Teaching Institutions Among NT Local Assemblies* (Glasgow: Gospel Tract Publications, 1994).

As I read the booklet under review, I thought back to a Sunday evening in 1964. I stood outside of Bethany Gospel Chapel in Worcester, Massachusetts and chatted with T. Ernest Wilson, retired missionary from Angola and gifted minister of the Word. Mr. Wilson was a favorite of mine (and of all that assembly's young people), and I was always delighted when he came to town to minister. That night I wanted his advice about Bible colleges and seminaries. Converted three years before, I had a great hunger to know more of the Lord and His Word. I wanted to go to a Bible college or seminary, and friends had recommended three schools. Mr.

Wilson said to me, "If I were you, I would go to Dallas Seminary." He said that he wished he had more preparation. "What a blessing to study Greek in a classroom with a gifted teacher," he said. "What I got of the biblical languages, I learned under a lamp in Africa." Mr. Wilson was a learned man, but he knew there were better ways to learn than others. He was like generations of assembly men—Harry Ironside,<sup>1</sup> William MacDonald, John Phillips, James Gunn, John Smart, and R. E. Harlow come to mind—who lacked formal education in biblical and theological studies yet knew the value of such studies and encouraged them for others.<sup>2</sup>

## Who is Michael Brown?

Michael Browne, respected minister of the Word and veteran missionary to Hong Kong, India, and other fields, disagrees. He acknowledges that many local assemblies have failed to provide edifying and systematic teaching of Scripture, and he recognizes the need to provide for the growth of promising young brethren. He rejects, however, the notion that Bible colleges and seminaries are an acceptable alternative to teaching by elders and gifted men in the local assembly, and he resents the fact that he and others who reject such institutions are branded as "traditionalists," "extremists," and "old-fashioned idealists" (p. 1). He

evidently has a conscience about the question and believes that Bible-teaching institutions other than the local assembly are a dangerous trend that will lead to "a shipwreck in our testimony" (p. 16).

## New Testament Freedom Versus Unbiblical Rigidity

Browne advances a number of arguments for his position, and he does so in a forceful, uncompromising way. I trust that my review will not be mean-spirited or taken to be disrespectful of an esteemed servant of Christ. Nevertheless, I believe that he is wrong from first to last, and I shall endeavor to say why as each of his arguments is set forth. He argues first that there is no Scriptural support for theological institutions. I would add that neither is there Scriptural support for Sunday Schools, Christian schools in Hong Kong, Bible camps, Christian magazines, missions' agencies, orphan homes, homes for the aged, nor the kind of Christian publishing house that printed Browne's book. The author's thinking is plagued by a rigidity

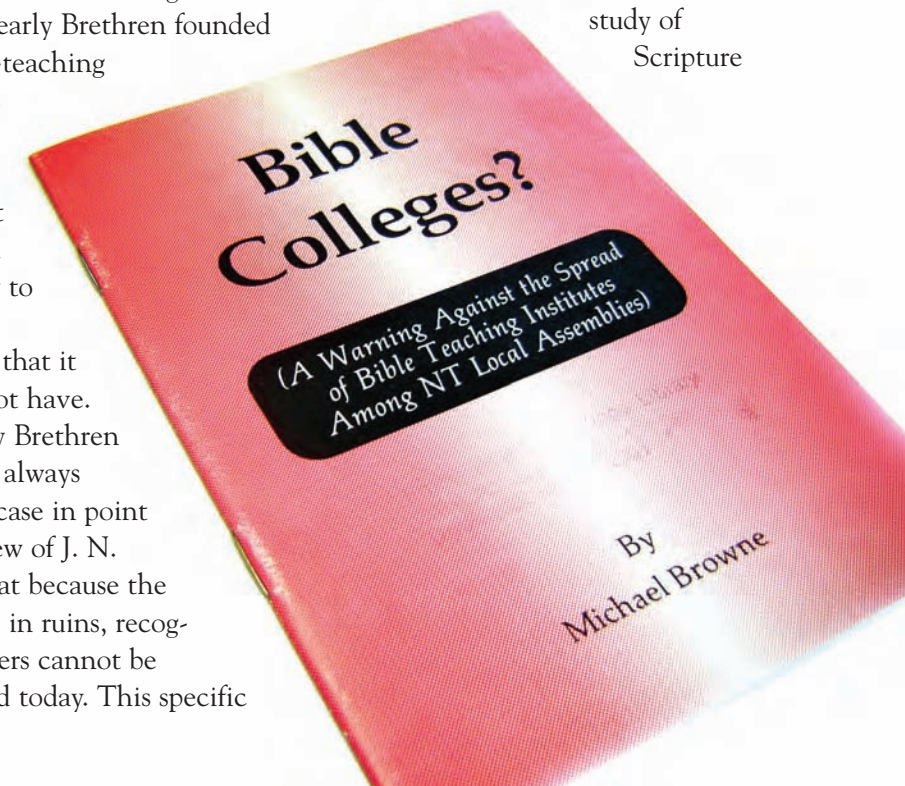
that recognizes the form, but not the freedom of New Testament teaching on the church. That the New Testament has clear guidelines for church life I do not doubt;<sup>3</sup> that the pattern is as full and systematic as Browne suggests is simply not true.<sup>4</sup>

## Brethren Tradition Not Infallible

Browne's second argument is that the early Brethren founded no Bible-teaching institutes (p. 6).<sup>5</sup> This argument grants an authority to Brethren tradition that it should not have. The early Brethren were not always right. A case in point is the view of J. N. Darby that because the church is in ruins, recognized elders cannot be appointed today. This specific

viewpoint highlights a problem that has existed since the time of the early Brethren movement—it has "shown itself lamentably incapable of perpetuating a race of leaders."<sup>6</sup> As the earliest historian of the Brethren observed, the assemblies have been characterized by "haphazardism"<sup>7</sup> in their preparing new generations of leaders,<sup>8</sup> and they have made no provision

for the higher study of Scripture



<sup>1</sup> When Tom Taylor, Biblical Theological Seminary professor and assembly Bible teacher, was a student at Bryan College in the late 1940s, Dr. Ironside came for special lectures. He stayed in the men's dorm. On a couple of evenings he sat in the main lounge of the dorm and talked with the men students. One of them asked, "Dr. Ironside (Ironside's doctorate was honorary), isn't it true that you never went to college or seminary and, in fact, began preaching for the Salvation Army when you were twelve?" "Yes," Ironside answered, "but that's because I didn't know any better. If I'd gone to school I would have learned in 2-3 years what it

took me over 30 years to learn. If I were you men I'd get all of the education the Lord enables you to get!" (As told to me by Tom Taylor at Conference Point, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, July 1997).

<sup>2</sup> The men I've mentioned differ in their educations, of course. MacDonald and Harlow had advanced university degrees, and Ironside, Phillips, Gunn, and Smart did not. All were, or are, gifted teachers of Scripture.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. my discussion of New Testament church principles in David J. MacLeod, "The Primacy of Scripture and the Church," *EmJ* 6 (Summer 1997), 45-59.

<sup>4</sup> There is something almost legal in the way

Browne speaks of the pattern for the New Testament assembly. Henry Craik, George Müller's partner in ministry, long ago pointed out the marked difference between the mode in which the regulations of the Old Covenant were given, and the manner in which matters of church order are set before us in the New Testament. In the Mosaic economy every detail of tabernacle/temple ritual is laid out in a detailed and systematic fashion. "No similar code of laws has been given for the guidance of the Christian church. The old economy was emphatically a dispensation of the letter....The instructions contained in the New Testament, respecting

matters of church regulation, are not given in the form of an express code of ecclesiastical polity, but are to be gathered from historic facts, Apostolic examples, and leading principles." Cf. Henry Craik, *New Testament Church Order* (Bristol: W. Mack, 1863), 1-2. I recently read a letter from J. R. Caldwell to his friend, the Scottish evangelist, Alexander Marshall. Caldwell confessed that he had once endorsed ideas as "assembly truths" that he now realized were not in the Bible! He singled out a particular view and practice he had once held and wrote, "I have lately asked in various places of various individuals what Scripture there is for [such-and-such a

view]. It is a standard phrase, loud and stoutly used by many of us. But where is the Scripture for it?...I have thought and searched much on this lately, and am astounded at the absence of Scripture and the coolness with which we use expressions that are outside the Book both in form and meaning" (John Hawthorn, *Alexander Marshall: Evangelist, Author and Pioneer* [London: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.], 137-41). I would simply observe that the "pattern" Mr. Browne is following is much fuller than the one found in Scripture.

<sup>5</sup> According to my colleague, Kenneth C. Fleming, the earliest assembly-related institu-

tion of this kind in America was a missionary training school in Brooklyn, New York. It functioned under the guidance of Richard Hill in the early 1920s.

<sup>6</sup> William Blair Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren* (2d ed., London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), 338.

<sup>7</sup> Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 338. The real test of the movement, he suggested, was whether the assemblies, using a system that rejected formal training of its preachers/teachers, could produce the caliber of leaders that established them. Whether our "system" has met Mr. Neatby's test I shall leave each reader to answer for himself.

and theology by the gifted young men in their midst.<sup>9</sup>

### Early Assembly Leaders Were Well Educated

To imply, furthermore, that the early leaders of the Brethren were uneducated men without regard for academic ability is very misleading. It should be remembered that J. N. Darby, J. G. Bellett, A. N. Groves, G. V. Wigram, William Kelly, J. L. Harris, and B. W. Newton were upper-class products of the British university system. Darby did counsel his followers to eschew reason for revela-



tion, but he spoke more in terms of priorities than anything else. In his later published works he used his formidable intelligence and education in prodigious service to Christ. In addition to his knowledgeable theological tracts, he produced translations of the entire Bible in French and German and many volumes of expository and polemic literature. In his writings he addressed some of the major issues and figures of his time, and in these writings he used not only the Bible but the early Fathers, critical histories, and major theological works.<sup>10</sup> When he died his library of over 3,000 volumes was sold at auction, and it proved to be a library not of popular and devotional books, but a first-class library containing the major exegetical, theological, and historical tools of his day. It is simply untrue to say of the early Brethren, as does Browne, that all their teaching needs came only from “their study of the Scriptures in dependence upon the Holy Spirit.”<sup>11</sup> That Darby knew the value of formal education is illustrated by an incident recorded in one of his biographies. When he graduated with a B.A.

from Trinity College (Dublin) he received the highest honors in classics: the classical gold medal. Many years later, when he was in his 70s, he was invited to “tea” and sat next to A. J. Pollock, who later became a teacher among the English Brethren. When Darby discovered that Pollock was still a student he playfully remarked, “Be sure to get the gold medal.”<sup>12</sup>

### The Holy Spirit Uses Human Means (Gifted Men) to Prepare Others

Browne’s third argument is that Bible colleges diminish the status of the local assembly (p. 8). He admits that there are “some benefits” to be derived from the teaching given in Bible colleges and seminaries, but he argues that such institutions are “the wrong forum” in which to teach Scripture. Here I can only say that where I have firsthand knowledge the assemblies that have had men trained in such institutions have been strengthened. Local churches like Littleton Bible Chapel (Colorado), Believers’ Chapel (Texas), and Groton Bible Chapel (Connecticut) are known in their

areas as churches distinguished by their preaching of and submission to the Bible.

It is the Spirit who is to do this teaching and not academic institutions, says Browne.<sup>13</sup> The teaching and leading of the Holy Spirit is “being threatened by the substitution of human institutions to train men for what is in reality a divine and supernatural work (pp. 8, 10)!” W. B. Neatby responds to this view: “To expect ends by the miraculous intervention of God, in the absence of those means that He has committed to human responsibility, has been a foible of [the more rigid assemblies] from the beginning.”<sup>14</sup>

### Clerical Pretensions Are Found Among Those with or without Formal Training

Browne’s fourth objection to formal training is the danger of creating a professional ruling ministerial body (p. 9). He is concerned here about two things: (1) commendation to full-time work will become conditioned upon formal training, and (2) such trained workers will become a class of professionals who will

eventually exercise control over all the assemblies. It seems to me that formal training has nothing to do with either concern. The important question is whether or not the local assembly is committed to the New Testament’s teaching on church polity, specifically the government of the individual assembly by a council of elders and the autonomy of the individual assembly. In my own experience the most able defenders of elder rule that I have heard were both formally trained men, namely, S. Lewis Johnson and Alexander Strauch. Furthermore, the history of the assemblies (particularly of the “exclusive” and “closed-open” variety) shows that you do not need formal training for a group of preachers or churches to indulge in “ecclesiastical pretension” and exercise control over a group of assemblies.

### Evangelical Bible Colleges and Seminaries Require that Faculty be Spiritually Gifted Men

The fifth objection of Mr. Browne is that what is needed is Holy Spirit teaching and not

academic qualifications (p. 9). To go to such an institution is to slight the ability of the Holy Spirit to teach and to lean on the arm of the flesh. It is to turn to man instead of depending upon the help of God. Again, Browne is creating a false dichotomy. There can be spiritual teaching in an academic setting.<sup>15</sup> The best of the seminaries and Bible colleges are avowedly evangelical institutions, the likes of which did not exist when the earliest Brethren were alive. The faculty are regenerate men who openly tell the students that the teaching of God’s Word must be done in the power of the Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, the better evangelical institutions recognize the need of spiritual gift in the servant of the Lord. Many graduate from such schools only to find that academic qualifications do not mean that a person is spiritually qualified. That is why most of these schools seek to determine as the young man’s (or woman’s) studies progress whether he or she is gifted for full-time service.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>8</sup> My home assembly in Massachusetts is typical of many others. My father and a group of other men became elders when the previous generation died. No real effort had been made to prepare these men for the task.

<sup>9</sup> Browne’s booklet betrays an anti-intellectualism that is found among many Brethren, but, thankfully, not among all. He has little appreciation for academic theological study. Yet such study (whether formal at a school or informal at one’s home) is important for men who would be teachers. Our neglect of this has had serious ramifications for public ministry in our churches. To cite a few examples: Recently a man ministered in a Chicago-area

assembly and asserted there were four members in the Godhead. Another commended brother has dogmatically asserted that there are more than two ordinances in the church (baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and ?). A well-known brother has denied the imputation of Adam’s sin, and another has denied that people are born spiritually dead. Yet another (a magazine editor—thankfully, *Interest*, *Uplook*, *Mission*, and *The Emmaus Journal* were not involved) has advanced Sabellian views of the Trinity. That reminds me of a letter from an elder who told me of a believer in his meeting who did not believe in the Trinity; the elder wanted to know if that

mattered! Another brother—a former missionary—wrote me a letter expressing views on the person of Christ that were Eutychian in nature. Theological training in a sound evangelical seminary or Bible College would have kept these men from such errors. If one were to object that sound teaching in an assembly may also have kept these men from error, I can only reply that whatever teaching they received in the assembly was not adequate.

<sup>10</sup> Robert H. Krapohl, “A Search for Purity: The Controversial Life of John Nelson Darby,” Ph. D. dissertation, Baylor University, 1988, 385-95.

<sup>11</sup> Browne, *Bible Colleges? 7*; cf. *Catalogue of the Library of the Late John Nelson Darby, Esq... Which Will be Sold by Auction, by Messrs. Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge... 25th of November, 1889*. William Kelly, Darby’s editor, left a personal library of 15,000 volumes. Cf. Heyman Wreford, “The Late Mr. William Kelly, Biblical Scholar and Teacher,” in *Index to the Bible Treasury* (Winschoten, Netherlands: H. L. Heijkoop, n.d.), xv. Browne’s comments are misleading and actually quite harmful to younger men. He promotes a kind of Brethren “mythology” when he portrays early Brethren as being taught of the Spirit in some mystical way without

human means. They “had no degrees themselves,” he writes, “but were taught, on their own confession, by dependence upon the Spirit of God.” Why, then, did these men have such libraries—made up of volumes which only the learned could use?

<sup>12</sup> Max S. Weremchuk, *John Nelson Darby: A Biography* [Neptune: Loizeaux, 1992], 32.

<sup>13</sup> I should point out that pioneer era procedures give way to more settled procedures as time goes on in any work of God. In the New Testament era the time of church planting by an itinerant evangelist or apostle gave way to settled churches cared for by resident elders (Acts 14:23). In the early colonies of

North America most prospective preachers received their training by living and studying with an experienced pastor—a practice with a long English and New England Puritan tradition. Later, schools were built to train ministers. It is not an assembly distinctive to be opposed to such schools. Before the founding of Princeton Seminary the various presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church were polled as to their wishes. Six of them opposed the establishment of a theological seminary, apparently preferring the older approach. Cf. David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary*, 2 vols., vol. 1: *Faith and Learning 1812-1868* (Edinburgh; Banner of Truth, 1994), 4, 30. I

### Proud and Dominating Preachers can be Found Among Those with or without Formal Training

Browne is also concerned that such formal training will lead to pride in Bible college and seminary graduates. It certainly may, and wise teachers will warn their students of this danger.<sup>18</sup> Yet I would ask Mr. Browne if pride is unknown among young preachers who serve the Lord in his circle of assemblies. I won't press the point because I know that if he has spent any time with young preachers at all he has seen the sin of pride. I was amused as I recently read some letters to young preachers by Donald Ross, the great assembly pioneer evangelist. In his early days he supervised a group of young evangelists, none of them men with formal training. The one fault that he addresses more than any other is pride.<sup>19</sup>

### Formal Training Can Greatly Enhance The Ministries of Servants of the Lord

Browne's sixth objection is that God sovereignly uses humble instruments. He notes that the

humblest of people have been used by God to witness to the most learned and sophisticated of people. All of my seminary teachers would agree! I would say five things in response to Browne at this point: (1) It is true that education can make a person proud, as can any human accomplishment or talent. (2) It is also true that great learning can be used for the glory of God. The words of G. H. Pember, a scholarly Brethren writer, come to mind. He once said to G. H. Lang, "I took honors in classics at Cambridge, but I did it in my unconverted days for my own glory. Since I have known the Lord, however, I have tried to use it for the spread of the truth."<sup>20</sup> (3) Browne does overlook some of the evidence in his discussion. He overlooks the theological background of the Apostle Paul [Acts 22:3]. And he overlooks the scholarly training of such Christian giants as, to name only a few, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Owen, Wesley, Hodge, and Bruce. It is simply ignoring the evidence to say these men could have accomplished all that they did without the kind of training they had. And,

it is also safe to say, their theological education was part of God's providential training for service. (4) He has contempt for and knows little about the academic enterprise.<sup>21</sup> He says that "many of the textbooks" studied in Bible colleges and seminaries were written by men with no theological qualifications. In my experience that is untrue.<sup>22</sup> The textbooks used are almost without exception written by men academically qualified to write such books. (5) He dismisses the profit we all receive from the works of academically trained men. All genuine students of the Word will acknowledge the help they have received from the lexicons, language tools, church histories, systematic theologies, and commentaries in their libraries. The best of these study aids were written, we all know, by men with academic training in their respective disciplines.

### The Practice of Training Men in a Non-Assembly Setting was Followed by the Apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus

Browne's seventh argument is that the apostolic pattern is more

effective than the modern method of training men in Bible colleges and seminaries (p. 12). At this point he contradicts himself. He argues that the apostolic pattern was for gifted teachers to travel to the assemblies and minister, not to the select few, but to all the saints. His argument seems to be that teaching should be in the context of the meetings of the local assembly and not away from those meetings in training centers designed for a select group. In the very next paragraph he mentions favorably the Malayali evangelist, Mahakavi K. V. Simon, who took not "all the saints" with him on his travels but a small band of young disciples. He does admit that this was Paul's method as well. In short, the method of taking young men away from their home churches for a time of discipleship by older brethren is, in fact, the apostolic pattern. I might add that the Lord Jesus took a band of twelve men to be with Him for three and a half years to focus on the preparation of "the select few" that they might better serve "all the saints." The apostolic pattern is for mature and gifted men to hand on the truth to

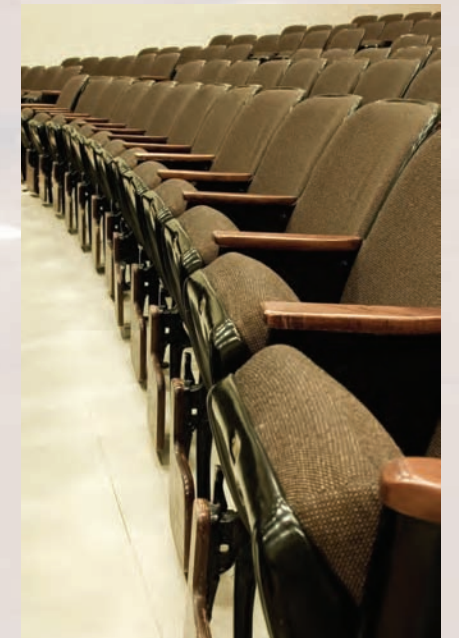
young men of promise that they might eventually entrust those things to the next generation (2 Tim. 2:2).

### New Testament Freedom and Flexibility Allows for Many Ministries Other than the Local Church

Browne's eighth argument is that it is a serious thing to deviate from the divine pattern (p. 12). With this we would agree. I would also add that the pattern has a lot more flexibility than Mr. Browne would allow.

His ninth argument is that if one builds other than God's assembly he endangers his reward (p. 14). Browne argues (pp. 13-14) that the "gold, silver, and precious stones" of 1 Corinthians 3:12 is the assembly of God and that the "wood, hay, and straw" are anything other than the assembly of God. His interpretation here is a stretch. In context the "gold, silver, and precious stones" are appropriate symbols for pure doctrine, while "wood, hay, and straw" symbolize false doctrine ("wisdom," 1 Cor. 2:6). It is quite clear that Browne is suggesting two erroneous

things: (1) He suggests that anyone who builds other than "the assembly" builds with "wood, hay and straw." This is a rather sectarian viewpoint that calls into question any evangelical work that is not a Brethren assembly. (2) He implies that because Paul only planted assemblies any other institution (Bible college or seminary) is unbiblical and those who build them are in danger of losing their rewards. Such an argument is shrill and without biblical merit. We might repeat that although Paul



recommend Calhoun's volumes to readers of *The Emmaus Journal*. The wonderful story of Princeton Seminary, its devotion to Christ and His Word, its impact on evangelism and world missions, and its inculcation into its students of devotional scholarship is truly inspiring.

<sup>14</sup> Neatby, *A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 338. Browne here creates a false dichotomy. Let me illustrate. Years ago in Texas I met a young test pilot who had been grounded in the faith by the able and well respected missionary, William Tidsbury. Upon learning that I was a seminary student, the pilot shared his testimony with me and offered the

opinion that Brother Tidsbury was "Spirit taught," but you seminarians are "man taught." The New Testament says, however, that the believer is Spirit taught and man taught. The Apostle John asserts that his readers have an anointing from the Spirit and do not need the false teachers to teach them (1 John 2:26-27). The Apostle Paul fills out the picture by telling the Ephesians that the way the risen Christ teaches us is through gifted men (Eph. 4:10-12).

<sup>15</sup> It is somewhat ironic to find in the libraries of men who eschew formal training the books of men who are teachers at evangelical Bible colleges and seminaries. What is the

difference between reading and profiting from such a man in one's study and listening to him in a classroom?

<sup>16</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, the first president of Dallas Seminary (and a man without seminary training!), delivered a message to the students on the opening day of classes every year he served. He would begin, "Men, there is a faculty of One at Dallas Seminary." This may have startled some of the students because in those days the faculty all sat on the platform surrounding Dr. Chafer. They soon learned that he was not referring to himself or to any of the other men teaching with him at Dallas. He spoke of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>17</sup> I recognize the New Testament limitation upon women's ministry in the assembly. Yet there are many areas where women can serve outside of the meetings of the church, and many are seeking formal biblical training to help them prepare.

<sup>18</sup> Standard fare for young seminarians is the little classic by Helmut Thielicke, *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962).

<sup>19</sup> Ross wrote to one young brother, "I am perfectly sick of writing you on these and kindred subjects. I cannot endure the nonsense you write." Cf. C. W. Ross, Donald Ross: Pioneer Evangelist of the North of Scotland

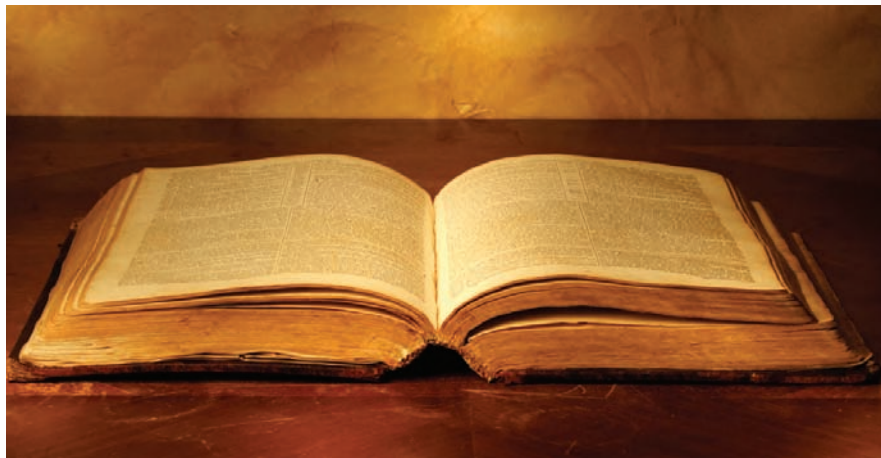
and United States of America (Kilmarnock: John Ritchie, n.d.), 83 and passim.

<sup>20</sup> G. H. Lang, *Anthony Norris Groves: Saint and Pioneer* (2d ed., London: Paternoster, 1949), 47.

<sup>21</sup> Browne mixes apples and oranges when he rails against academic degrees. He asks, "Who gave such institutions the right to bestow these academic honors?" Two things (academic accreditation and spiritual gifting) need to be distinguished. (1) The governmental accrediting agencies give the institutions the authority to award degrees. This is necessary to prevent such institutions from becoming "diploma mills," granting worthless

degrees for which no effort was expended. (2) On the other hand, the spiritual gifts are given to students by the Holy Spirit of God, and the teaching is done by spiritually gifted men.

<sup>22</sup> He ridicules the fact that a professor was awarded a doctorate for an in depth study of the prophetic works of the early Brethren. He does not seem to realize that literally any topic of human life and thought is a legitimate topic for academic research. I trust that Mr. Browne would see the profit in the study of the prophetic works of the early Brethren. The scholar involved was probably far more blessed than, for example, the many scholars



did lecture in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9), he did not find an orphan home, Christian retirement community, summer Bible camp, day school, magazine, publishing house (for the tracts, books and hymnals of the post-New Testament era). Yet in the providence of God all of these things have been raised up by God as para-church agencies to help the work of the local assembly—no church is an absolutely independent, self-sufficient island. And it is probable that the Apostles assumed that such organizations would develop as creative and intelligent believers sought to carry out the work of the Lord in the centuries to follow.<sup>23</sup>

Not all men called of God

to His service in preaching and teaching will be able to go to a Bible college or seminary. Yet they must be trained!<sup>25</sup> It will not do to say this is “a divine and supernatural work” (p. 8). The Bible says it is the work of gifted men to provide this training. Elders must work at equipping the next generation, and if they feel inadequate to the task they should consider bringing in men who can do it (cf. Acts 11:22-26). Bible college or seminary should be considered legitimate options, as well, if the local assembly cannot provide training. If a young person cannot get to a seminary or Bible college, he can take advantage of the many tape ministries and seminar programs that have risen around the coun-

try. He can attend conferences offered by evangelistic outreach organizations such as InterVarsity, Campus Crusade, and the Navigators, and he can take advantage of the seminars offered at assembly conferences such as “Decade of Promise” and “Rise Up and Build.” He should be made aware of other training programs provided by evangelical believers in the surrounding community. If he can’t bring himself to go to a non-assembly school or ministry, then perhaps he will consider Emmaus Bible College (we would love to have him—or her!) or a training program such as those that have been offered by Fairhaven Bible Chapel in California and North York Gospel Chapel in Pennsylvania.

### A Personal Testimony

I will conclude my remarks on Michael Browne’s booklet by listing some of the values I see in Bible college or seminary education. These values are those I found in my own experience at seminary:

- I was inspired by my teachers who were academically demanding and devoted to Christ and

His Word.

- In the first year class on the spiritual life I was encouraged to cultivate both my personal relationship with the Lord and a godly character.
- I enjoyed the sound and thorough teaching of the Bible. The level of Bible teaching was superior to anything I had heard before.
- I appreciated the emphasis on Greek and Hebrew. Even after many courses in the languages I did not become a language scholar, but I did learn to use Greek and Hebrew in the exegesis of the Bible. Furthermore, some ability in the languages opened up a new level of commentary literature that is very helpful to the teacher of Scripture.
- The courses in hermeneutics and exegesis instilled in me the tried and true methodology of evangelical Bible study.
- I learned to love systematic theology, i.e., the orderly and detailed study of the doctrines of Scripture.
- I was immeasurably helped by the classes on church history and historical theology. I was

given a fuller perspective on the church. I was inspired by the great men of the past, given help in identifying and refuting false teaching, and given a new appreciation for the importance of good theology.

- In the Christian service assignments and courses in practical theology I was helped in assessing my spiritual gift and in developing skill in its exercise.
- By meeting classmates from around the country and from various backgrounds I was stretched in my appreciation for others in the body of Christ.

I am thankful for the counsel of T. Ernest Wilson given to a young believer over forty years ago. I should add that I went off to Dallas with the full blessing of the elders of my assembly. They knew that I could get there what they could not give, and their humble recognition of that as well as their encouragement in the following years is something for which I am still grateful. †



David MacLeod received his theological education at Dallas Theological Seminary (Th.M., Ph.D.). In the past he has taught at Western Bible College and Dallas Theological Seminary. He is Dean for Biblical Studies at Emmaus Bible College where he has served on the faculty since 1983. Dave also serves as Associate Editor of *The Emmaus Journal*. He frequently ministers the Word across the U.S. and Canada and at his home church where he has served for many years as an elder. David and his wife Linda have four grown children.

who have been awarded doctorates for their studies of the poorly educated Adolf Hitler.

<sup>23</sup> Neatby wrote, “A failure to reckon with the ‘facts of life’ is a very deep-seated disease of [the narrow and sectarian wing of] Brethrenism” (*A History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 336).

<sup>24</sup> We can all point to men who were able evangelists, Bible teachers, or elders who did not have formal training. I was led to Christ by such a man, and he has been greatly used of the Lord in evangelism. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was such a man; he had medical training but no theological training. Yet in both cases these men gave themselves to reading

literature to help them in their work. Lloyd-Jones was greatly helped by his reading of Warfield’s writings. He later wrote, “Such was Warfield’s own knowledge and experience of the truth, of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, that more than most writers he gives a profound impression of the glory and wonder of the great salvation we enjoy” (Iain H. Murray, *David Martyn Lloyd-Jones*, 2 vols., vol. 1: *The First Forty Years 1899-1939* [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982], 286).

In my review I may seem one-sided in that I am addressing an attack on formal training. My main concern, however, is that the assemblies develop an appreciation for the

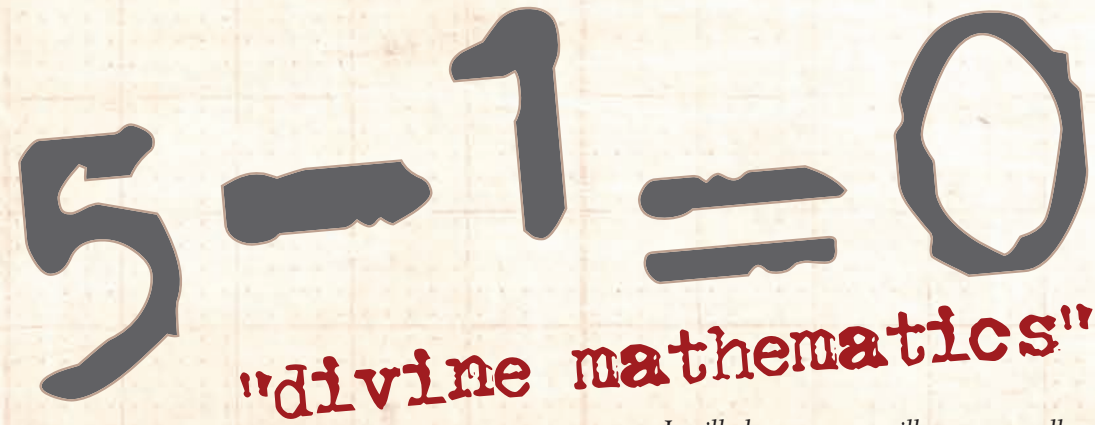
training of their gifted men—whether it be informal training in the assembly or private study, or formal training in the seminary or Bible college classroom.

A comparison between Paul and the Lord Jesus may be helpful. In his encounter with Festus, the governor said to Paul, “Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad” (Acts 26:24). His use of the word “learning” (gravmmata, *grammata*) indicates that Festus had detected in Paul the knowledge and understanding of a man taught in the professional schools. It is striking that when the Jews encountered our Lord they remarked, “How has this man become

learned (gravmmata), having never been educated?” (John 7:15). Undoubtedly the Lord had been taught the Torah by His father Joseph as custom dictated, and He probably also attended the village schools. He could speak Aramaic and Greek, and He could read the Hebrew Bible (Luke 4:16-22). Yet He had never studied under the rabbis, i.e., he was not professionally educated. Nevertheless the Jews detected in Him the same kind of expertise in the handling of Scripture that a formally trained man would have. He was living proof of David’s words, “The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him” (Ps. 25:14). In the service of the Lord

it is important that our teachers be “learned.” Whether that learning is gotten in the meetings of the church or a Bible college or seminary classroom is not the point. Cf. S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., “The Baptism of Christ,” BS 123 (July 1966), 224.

Alex Strauch



*I will show you a still more excellent way. – 1 Cor.12:31*

Dwight L. Moody, the Billy Graham of the 19th century, tells of his life-changing encounter with the doctrine of love. It began when Henry Moorhouse, a twenty-seven-year-old British evangelist, preached at Moody's church for a week. To everyone's surprise, Moorhouse preached seven sermons in a row on John 3:16. To prove that "God so loved the world" he preached on the love of God from Genesis to Revelation. Moody's son records his father's description of the impact of Moorhouse's preaching:

For six nights he had preached on this one text. The seventh night came, and he went into the pulpit. Every eye was upon him. He said, "Beloved friends, I have been hunting all day for a new text, but I cannot find anything so good as the old one; so we will go back to the third chapter of John and the sixteenth verse," and he preached the seventh sermon from those wonderful words, "God so loved the world." I remember the end of that sermon: "My friends," he said, "for a whole week I have

been trying to tell you how much God loves you, but I cannot do it with this poor stammering tongue. If I could borrow Jacob's ladder and climb up into heaven and ask Gabriel, who stands in the presence of the Almighty, to tell me how much love the Father has for the world, all he could say would be: 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'"<sup>1</sup>

Unable to hold back the tears as Moorhouse preached on the love of God in sending His only Son to die for sinners, Moody confessed:

I never knew up to that time that God loved us so much. This heart of mine began to thaw out; I could not keep back the tears. It was like news from a far country: I just drank it in. So did the crowded congregation. I tell you there is one thing that draws above everything else in the world, and that is love.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of Moorhouse's influence, Moody began to study the doctrine of love. This changed his life and his preaching. He later said:

I took up that word "Love," and I do not know how many weeks I spent in studying the passages in which it occurs, till at last I could not help loving people! I had been feeding on Love so long that I was anxious to do everybody good I came in contact with.

I got full of it. It ran out my fingers. You take up the subject of love in the Bible! You will get so full of it that all you have got to do is to open your lips, and a flood of the Love of God flows out upon the meeting. There is no use trying to do church work without love. A doctor, a lawyer, may do good work without love, but God's work cannot be done without love.<sup>3</sup>

D. L. Moody could not have been more biblically correct when he said, "God's work cannot be done without love." That is the message of the most famous love

chapter in the Bible, 1 Corinthians 13.

### The More Excellent Way

It is universally agreed that Paul is the greatest pioneer missionary, scholar, teacher, evangelist, and hero of the faith. Yet he knew that all his brilliance, multi-giftedness, and sacrificial dedication meant nothing if it were not bathed fully in love. *No other New Testament writer spoke more about love or provided more practical leadership examples of love than Paul. Through the lifetime ministry and letters of Paul, God gave his church, and all its leaders and teachers, a model of loving leadership.* In all of Scripture nowhere is it more clearly and forcefully stated that love is indispensable to leading and teaching than in 1 Corinthians 13.

Paul wrote this passage in response to disruptions that arose in the church of Corinth regarding spiritual gifts. To correct the church's misguided views of spiritual gifts and its overall self-destructive way of behaving, Paul promised to show the Corinthians a "more excellent way" to live (1 Cor. 12:31). He wanted them to know there is something far more important than supernatural gifts, something that transcends the most excellent gifts and performances, something that if absent will render all gifts worthless. That something is love.

The love Paul speaks of is primarily love for fellow believers. This love was defined by Jesus Christ when he gave a new com-

mandment to all his disciples to love one another "just as" he had loved them (John 13:34-35). This love gives itself in total self-sacrifice for the good of others. Jesus exemplified this new pattern of love by humbly washing the disciples' feet (John 13:4-17) and selflessly sacrificing his life on the cross for others. John puts it this way, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers [and sisters]" (1 John 3:16).

To silence any doubt that love is the "more excellent way" and to jolt the Corinthians' wrong thinking about spiritual gifts, Paul uses all his rhetorical skills to communicate with eloquence and force that love is the "more excellent way." He writes:

And I will show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. (1 Cor. 12:31-13:3)

Let's take a close look at this passage to gain a clearer understanding of what it says.

tongues  
- love  

---

  
nothing

### Without Love Even Heavenly Language Sounds Annoying

The purpose of spiritual gifts was to build up and unite the body. Yet the Corinthians' enthusiasm over the supernatural gift of tongues caused pride and disorder in the church body. The independent-minded Corinthians used their gifts for personal ego gratification, which caused division within the body.

To correct this distortion, Paul captures their attention by hypothetically picturing himself as "the world's most gifted tongues-speaker,"<sup>4</sup> being able to speak eloquently in "the tongues of men and of angels." Such a gift would have greatly impressed the Corinthians. But Paul declares that even if he had such an exalted experience because of heavenly giftedness, he would be "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal"—that is, an annoying, loud, empty noise—if he did not act in love, as described in verses 4 through 7. The beauty of his miraculous speech would be distorted without the grace of love.

Paul isn't merely saying that his speech would be a clamorous noise, but that he himself would

be a hollow, annoying sound. He would not be what he should be; he would be seriously deficient in his Christian life and not living according to the “more excellent way.” The reason Paul would be an empty noise is that he would be a loveless tongue-speaker. He would be using the gift of tongues to glorify and serve himself rather than to serve or build up the church, which is the goal of love (1 Cor. 8:1).

When I teach on this passage, I often use a visual illustration. I pull out from behind the pulpit a steel pot and a hammer and begin to beat on the pot as I talk about spiritual gifts and the need for love. At first, people laugh. They think it is a marvelous illustration. But I keep it up. While I am banging on the pot, I keep talking about spiritual gifts. Soon people aren't laughing or smiling anymore. They have had enough; they're annoyed and getting more agitated by the moment, but I keep banging. When it seems they can't stand it any longer, I stop and ask, “Are you annoyed? Are you enjoying this? Does it please you? Do you find it edifying? Would you like me to continue beating the pot for the remainder of the message?” No one wants me to continue beating the pot. At this point I remind them that this is what they are like to others and to God when they use their gifts apart from love. They are nothing more than “a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.”

knowledge  
- love  
nothing

**Without Love Knowing It All Helps No One**

Paul next speaks of himself hypothetically as possessing the gift of prophecy in such full measure that he would know “all” mysteries and “all” knowledge. He would thus have the theological answers to all the mysteries of God that people crave to understand. He would be a walking, talking encyclopedia of knowledge.

Some people love to display their intellect and theological superiority. They are proud of their learning and speaking ability. Such pride had become a serious problem at Corinth. Some people were arrogant because of their knowledge and puffed up with self-importance. They wanted recognition for their prophetic insights and superior wisdom, and they looked down on others with lesser knowledge and giftedness. As a result of their arrogant misuse of knowledge, they harmed the church body (1 Cor. 8).

Knowledge without love inflates the ego and deceives the mind. It can lead to intellectual snobbery, an attitude of mockery and making fun of others' views, a spirit of contempt for those with

lesser knowledge, and a demeaning way of dealing with people who disagree. I know of a pastor who had a phenomenal knowledge of the Bible but who hurt many people with his doctrinal scrutiny and divided his own congregation repeatedly until there was no one left but himself. He had a big head but a little heart. His theology was as clear as ice and twice as cold. Such is the path of one who has knowledge without love.

So Paul states that even if he had all-encompassing knowledge, apart from love he would be “nothing”—a spiritual zero. He insists that a loveless prophet, a loveless scholar, or a loveless teacher is worthless to the discipling of God's people. History confirms this, as John Short observes:

Loveless faith and loveless prophecy account for some of the more tragic pages in the Christian story through the ages. It has burned so-called heretics; it has stultified the sincere quest for truth; it has often been contentious and embittered; and it has often issued in the denial of Christian brotherhood to fellow believers.<sup>5</sup>

In a similar vein, George Sweeting, former president of Moody Bible Institute, makes this observation: “I have been keenly disappointed to find people more concerned about hidden mysteries than about needy people.... Too often Christians are concerned about hidden truth, but indifferent about loving difficult people.”<sup>6</sup>

Only with love can knowledge be used according to the “more

excellent way” to protect and build up the church (Eph. 4:11-16).

faith  
- love  
nothing

**Without Love Risk-taking Faith Is Worthless**

The third spiritual gift Paul presents is faith (1 Cor. 12:9). He imagines himself possessing the most excellent gift of faith imaginable, “so as to remove mountains.” Like Abraham, he would believe God for the impossible and actively trust Him to do miraculous works. He would be a powerhouse of prayer, a spiritual risk taker, a virtual George Müller,<sup>7</sup> greatly admired and sought by all. He would be a courageous David racing out in battle to kill the Philistine giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17: 32). But even with such a powerful spiritual gift, if love is not present, the gift becomes a means of glorifying oneself rather than serving others.

Some “miracle” workers on television may claim to do the impossible by faith, but they talk more about money, success, and themselves than about the people they supposedly help. Like the self-flaunting Pharisees, they want

“to be seen by others” (Matt. 6:5). They love the praise of man and want to be revered as spiritual giants who do great things for God. They use their wonderful gifts to promote themselves, not the body of Christ.

I recall a radio preacher who spoke often of the marvelous things God was doing through his broadcasts and how God miraculously provided funds without his begging for money (which can be a subtle way of begging for money). But those who knew the man personally and worked for him saw things differently. They saw a man who was obsessed with money and public image. They saw his gift of faith being used to guarantee his own financial security. They saw a man who didn't care much at all for people but who cared a lot about himself.

No wonder Paul declares so emphatically that such a powerful gift without love is worth “nothing.” Paul means what he says. Without love he knew he would be spiritually fruitless rather than a spiritual powerhouse.

Without love, the Christian leader is on the wrong path of the Christian life. But when faith is combined with love, the body of Christ is built up and advances forward on the royal road, the “more excellent way” of love.

**Knowledge without love inflates the ego and deceives the mind.**

giving  
- love  
nothing

**Without Love Giving All One's Money to the Poor Is Unprofitable**

Paul next considers giving away all his worldly possessions—his home, property, furniture, savings, and all the things he cherishes most—to feed the poor. He gives it all and reduces himself to abject poverty. Surely this is the ultimate, altruistic action. Wouldn't such giving be, by definition, love? Not necessarily. Paul makes it clear that the most extraordinary, self-sacrificing action can be done without love.

Self-sacrifice can be done for self-interest as illustrated by Ananias and Sapphira in the book of Acts. This couple sold their property and gave money to the apostles to distribute to the poor (Acts 5:1-11). However, they gave without love. They weren't really concerned about the needs of the poor, but about themselves. They didn't love God or their neighbor. Like the trumpet-blowing Pharisees whom Jesus condemned in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 6:1-5), Ananias and Sapphira gave in order to enhance their personal prestige in the sight of the church. They gave to receive the praise of



people. Their love was hypocritical love (Rom. 12:9). They gave to the poor, but without the true, inner motivating power of love, so their giving profited them nothing. Although they gave money to the poor, they were spiritually bankrupt, and God rejected their gift.

Paul says, therefore, that if he gave all he owned to the poor but did so apart from love, it would be unproductive, useless, worthless, and of no eternal value. Even after such sacrifice he would be a spiritually bankrupt man. He would not be humbly serving others, but would be serving himself.

In contrast, when one is moved by love to meet the needs of the poor, giving all of one's possessions profits everyone. Such is the love that motivated the Lord Jesus Christ to give up the riches of heaven and become poor for us. For that reason, "God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). Jesus gave according to the "more excellent way."

**"Too often Christians are concerned about hidden truth, but indifferent about loving difficult people."**

**George Sweeting**

sacrifice  
- love  
nothing

**Without Love The Ultimate Sacrifice of One's Life Is Pointless**

Finally, Paul envisions himself as the ultimate hero of the faith. In an act of supreme sacrifice, he surrenders his body to the painful flames of martyrdom for Christ. Such a sacrifice would certainly inspire other believers to faithfulness, greater dedication, and courage. It would provide a powerful witness of the gospel to nonbelievers. But Paul warns us that even suffering and martyrdom for Christ can be done for the wrong reasons.

Some people take great pride in suffering for their faith. For others, it is worth dying in order to be remembered as a hero of the faith. In the early years of Christianity, becoming a martyr became at times a means of achieving great fame. One historian comments, "It soon was clear to all Christians that extraordinary fame and honor attached to martyrdom."<sup>8</sup> Some martyrs, like Ignatius, were showered with adulations before their martyrdom. Not that Ignatius sought martyrdom for personal praise, but he illustrates that it could be a temptation to some to seek to be immortalized in the

annals of church history as a martyr for Christ. It was said of Polycarp, who was burned alive, that his bones were "more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold" and his grave became a sacred place to gather.<sup>9</sup> Recognizing the potential for such adulation, Paul finds it necessary to say that offering up one's life apart from love is a worthless sacrifice, an empty religious show, a hollow performance.

When it is motivated by the welfare of others and the glory of Christ, however, martyrdom becomes the ultimate sacrifice of love. Jonathan Edwards, in his book *Charity and Its Fruits*, summarizes God's perspective on love and self-sacrifice this way:

[God] delights in little things when they spring from sincere love to himself. A cup of cold water given to a disciple in sincere love is worth more in God's sight than all one's goods given to feed the poor, yea, than the wealth of a kingdom given away, or a body offered up in the flames, without love.<sup>10</sup>

Only when martyrdom is the result of love for God and others is it the "more excellent way."

**Divine Mathematics**

Imagine for a moment what the Corinthians must have thought when they first heard Paul's words read publicly in the congregational meeting. They probably couldn't believe their ears! Paul's message

was contrary to their entire way of thinking and behaving. They were deficient in love and they didn't even realize it! Their pride of knowledge and miraculous gifts had deceived them.

D. A. Carson, Bible commentator and professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, describes Paul's reasoning in this passage in terms of "divine mathematics." According to divine mathematics, "five minus one equals zero."<sup>11</sup> Or, as George Sweeting remarks, "gifts, minus love, equals zero."<sup>12</sup>

Author Jerry Bridges, giving a vivid illustration of divine mathematics, asks his readers to do this:

Write down, either in your imagination or on a sheet of paper, a row of zeros. Keep adding zeros until you have filled a whole line on the page. What do they add up to? Exactly nothing! Even if you were to write a thousand of them, they would still be nothing. But put a positive number in front of them and immediately they have value. This is the way it is with our gifts and faith and zeal. They are the zeros on the page. Without love, they count for nothing. But put love in front of them and immediately they have value. And just as the number two gives more value to a row of zeros than the number one does, so more and more love can add exponentially greater value to our gifts.<sup>13</sup>

Without love, our most extraordinary gifts and highest achievements are ultimately fruitless to the church and before God. In Paul's way of thinking, nothing has lasting spiritual value unless it springs from love.

**A Modern Paraphrase**

Picturing himself as the most extraordinary teacher or leader to ever live, Paul would say: *If I were the most gifted communicator to ever preach, so that millions of people were moved by my oratory, but didn't have love, I would be an annoying, empty wind-bag before God and people. If I had the most charismatic personality, so that everyone was drawn to me like a powerful magnet, but didn't have Christlike love, I would be a phony, a dud. If I were the greatest visionary leader the church has ever heard, but didn't have love, I would be misguided and lost. If I were the bestselling author on theology and church growth, but didn't have love, I would be an empty-headed failure. If I sacrificially gave all my waking hours to disciplining future leaders, but did it without love, I would be a false guide and model.* †

"Five minus One Equals Zero" is an excerpt from *A Christian Leader's Guide to Leading With Love* by Alexander Strauch, Copyright 2006, Lewis & Roth Publishers.

- 1 William R. Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody* (Chicago: Revell, 1900), 140. Also see Dwight Lyman Moody, *New Sermons, Addresses and Prayers* (Chicago: Goodspeed, 1877), 178.
- 2 Moody, *The Life of Dwight L. Moody*, 139.
- 3 Richard Ellsworth Day, *Bush Aglow: The Life Story of Dwight Lyman Moody, Commoner of Northfield* (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1936), 146; see also D. L. Moody, *Pleasure and Profit in Bible Study* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Col—portage Association, 1895), 87.
- 4 Gregory J. Lockwood, *1 Corinthians*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2000), 458.
- 5 John Short, "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Arthur C. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1953), 10:170.
- 6 George Sweeting, *Love Is the Greatest* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), 40.
- 7 George Müller was the founder and director of the Ashley Down Orphanage in Bristol, England; 122,683 orphans passed through this orphanage. Many biographies have been written on Müller's life of faith and prayer.
- 8 Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1996), 182.
- 9 *Martyrdom of S. Polycarp*, 18.
- 10 Jonathan Edwards, *Charity and Its Fruits* (1852; reprint ed., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1978), 61-62.
- 11 D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12-14* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1987), 60.
- 12 Sweeting, *Love Is the Greatest*, 117.
- 13 Jerry Bridges, *Growing Your Faith* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004), 164-65.



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

# “Who is lord of your time?”

Chris Lange

2007 is upon us and has asserted itself full-scheduled and fast-tracked. I'm already trying to dig my heels in to prevent time from slipping so relentlessly into a blur of weeks passing like so many cars on a speeding train. Unlike many, perhaps, I'm not keenly interested in "New Year's Resolutions" because they're always associated with the beginning of a year; truthfully, resolutions ought to be made whenever people realize that life is being wasted or beleaguered by bad habits or attitudes. Benjamin Franklin wrote of such intentions in his *Autobiography*: "Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve." This is good advice, and I take it with greater enthusiasm and determination as I get older—especially when I begin to live on cruise control or when I deal too casually with sin. As believers, we all ought regularly to take stock of what we do with our time and energy, our resources and our talents, and with our closest relationships. A dear friend reminded us recently that, according to the Bible, we can expect our "three score and ten... and if by strength fourscore." He good-humoredly

bemoaned the fact that he had but eight years left, Lord willing. We chuckled along with him—but not without a frozen moment of personal connection with the brevity of our own lives.

## Seizing the Days

Franklin's moral platitude sticks with me because I know that true spiritual growth can't be habitually relegated to the promise of a new year. Knowing who I am, both inside and out, makes me very thankful for the indwelling Holy Spirit and for the remarkable work He accomplishes in me—in spite of my old nature. I am thankful for the Holy Spirit's gift of a sensitive conscience, and I don't casually acknowledge those pangs anymore when I sense something is not right in my life spiritually. Age has its benefits. For one thing, I am not so easily blinded by the passions of youth and the dangers of impulse. The days I have remaining to love and sacrifice for my bride, maintain an influential role in my children's lives, and to influence my students and colleagues—all for the sake of Christ—may be fewer than I anticipate. It's an understatement to say

that I want to make them count. Loving service for the Lord—that which is of true and eternal value—ought never to be neglected. My days come and go so quickly that I can't even remember the last time I *wasn't* concerned about time going by so quickly. I ask myself, "Who is lord of your time?" If I say, "The Lord is," then I can't always look in the mirror without accusing myself of an essential untruth. The Lord has given me the freedom to prioritize my daily schedule and activities, but the greater responsibility is not in lifestyle management but rather in redeeming the time for His sake.

## Redeeming the Time

Ephesians 5: 15 - 17 exhorts believers to walk circumspectly in these days, to live fully aware of the spiritual hazards that this world presents daily. I believe that Satan intends to destroy the redeeming work of Christ in us *however he can*. It is our responsibility, therefore, to redeem the time we have been given. It is not simply a question of being alert to the dangers of worldliness and temptation; in a much more important sense, it is the exhortation not

to neglect or miss the opportunities the Lord brings into our lives that He knows will count for eternity—*because of so many worldly distractions*. Some of us, in the exercise of our Christian liberties, decide how and when we will engage the world. Some do so without getting burned. Others don't fare as well. I suppose if there were a resolution for us as believers—one that we should adopt each day and not just once a year—it would be to remind ourselves that we are not invulnerable and that we must live daily in the light of God's word and in the loving direction and protection of the Holy Spirit.

## Living Authentically

To live this way requires persistent personal conviction, absolute trust in the faithfulness and unconditional love of our Savior, and the genuine desire to grow spiritually—and not to float around in the doldrums of the flesh. I am reminded of the need for similar devotion to purpose in John Winthrop's sermon "A Modell of Christian Charity," delivered in 1630 aboard the *Arbella*. Winthrop knew that his fellow Puritans' covenant with their God had to be authentic or else they would suffer the consequences of unfaithfulness and failure in the Massachusetts Bay colony. He applied several practical suggestions for his parishioners, one of which follows:

The end is to improve our lives, to do more service to the Lord, the comfort and increase of the body of Christ whereof we are members, that our selves

and posterity may be the better preserved from the Common corrupcions of this evill world, to serve the Lord and worke out our Salvation under the power and purity of his holy Ordinances.

The gist of Winthrop's exhortation is as clear today as it was then: believers are to live their lives in such a way that requires diligence, determination, and unfailing dependence on the Lord Jesus. The health of the body of Christ—and the preservation of the spiritual dynamic that empowers believers to grow and live together in peace and love—must be protected and defended especially in these days of change. Regardless of what changes confront the church, believers must commit to each other and live together transparently and devotedly so that Satan can't gain the opportunity to destroy the work of Christ in us.

## Loving Genuinely

Not too long ago, my wife and I went to see a newly released film. We bought tickets at the theater counter from the daughter of one of our church families. Several days later, and aware that the film was less than appropriate for us as believers, I was quite concerned that our testimony before her had been compromised. It has been years since I have lost sleep for many nights about an issue that has not let my spiritual conscience alone. Awkward as it might be, I am to visit the family and make confession before this young girl, especially if I have made her stumble. It's

not only the right thing to do...it's the loving thing to do. I could just let it pass and not worry about it. But that wouldn't reflect the character that I ought to have as a believer. I could merely resolve not to let it happen again, to choose more wisely before we go to the theater. But the best resolution is not to be anywhere when my Lord is not honored by my presence there.

A current song by the group Avalon speaks to my heart about this. The words are worth remembering as we resolve to walk closer to the Lord this year and to make our days count as we serve the body of Christ.

*You changed my world  
When You came to me.  
You drove a passion,  
In my soul down deep,  
Lord, to follow You in everything.*

*I don't want to go somewhere  
If I know that You're not there,  
'Cause I know that me without  
You is a lie.  
And I don't want to walk that road,  
Be a million miles from home,  
'Cause my heart needs to be where  
You are.  
So I don't want to go. †*



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

# Dr. MacLeod Asks

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

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



Our chapel has a variety of “spares” for visitors. Most of the “spare” Bibles are either the New King James or the NIV (New International Version). We did a survey once to see what version was the most widely used by people who fellowship with us. It was inconclusive as most people at our chapel used a Bible that was not in English, or either was English in column one, but a different language in Column two. Of the English versions, the New King James, followed by the NASB (New American Standard Bible), were the most common with a few people using the NIV and KJV.

Michelle Bowen, St. Louis, MO

We currently use the NIV but will be changing to ESV (English Standard Version) this spring.

Jen Hanes, Waterloo, IA

We have just recently made the switch to the ESV.

Liesl Dunlap, Antioch, TN

The church I grew up in used the NKJV as their “stock” version though they were not dogmatic about its use. If I were in church leadership I would use and suggest an alternate translation for a variety of reasons.

First, the manuscripts used in the NT portion of the KJV and the NKJV are not as reliable as those available to present day scholars. The story of the Greek New Testament in back of the KJV goes back to the work of the humanist scholar, Erasmus. While I am thankful to Erasmus for publishing the first Greek NT edition for general use in 1516, he did it hastily to beat out his competition. He even admits later that it was “precipitated rather than edited.” Erasmus was lacking a portion of Revelation and other passages, so he translated the Latin Vulgate into Greek just to finish his Greek Testament quickly. Because of his haste he introduced readings which are unattested in any Greek manuscripts. He was even pressured to introduce the highly suspect (in his opinion) and unattested Trinitarian formula in 1 John 5:7–8. His work rests on a half-dozen miniscule manuscripts the oldest and best of which (it was used the least) was copied in the tenth century.

While the King James translators largely used Beza’s 1588-9 and 1598 editions of the Greek Testament, they differed little from Stephanus’ fourth edition of 1551. Stephanus’ edition differed little with Erasmus’ fourth and fifth editions. Hence, the KJV of 1611 was very close to the text of Erasmus. It was not until 1633, when the Elzevir brothers prefaced their second edition (based on Beza’s 1565 edition), that the phrase “[the reader has] the text which is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted”

(*Textum ergo habes, nun cab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*) first appeared. This is where the title “Textus Receptus” (TR) comes from. This was the commonly received or standard printed text of the Greek New Testament. The TR was dominant in New Testament studies for 400 years. Unfortunately, it was not nearly as accurate as The Greek New Testament, based on the best Greek manuscripts, we now have available to us. I say, “unfortunately,” because the TR, due to corrupt additions, gives us 110% of the Bible! This is not good for detailed study of the Scriptures. Interested students should consult Bruce Metzger’s *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* for a brief history of the TR and as in an introduction to textual criticism (the science and art of recovering the original wording of the NT).

I am not saying, of course, that a person cannot be saved through reading the KJV or NKJV, but these translations (and other European translations before the mid 1800s) are not as accurate for *detailed study of the Bible* as are the newer translations. It may surprise some of your readers to learn that the passage of the woman caught in adultery in John 7:53-8:11 and the longer ending of Mark 16:9-20 are probably not from the hand of the original authors. Let me hasten to admit that *no cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith is challenged or jeopardized* by the inclusion of or the exclusion of these and other scribal emendations and additions. However, we have discovered many

more manuscripts and many old manuscripts that are closer in time to the original autographs written by the NT authors themselves (no autographs exist that we know of). There is less chance of scribal errors in the older manuscripts than in manuscripts copied a thousand years later. The reason is that there are fewer copies between a 3rd century manuscript and the original than there would be between, say, a 9th century manuscript and the original. Because the NT textual basis of the KJV and NKJV is not the oldest manuscripts, I would prefer most other NT translations.

I would also suggest to your more interested readers that they read J. N. Darby’s introduction to his own English translation. They will find that Darby was quite up-to-date on matters of textual criticism and often chose readings from the older manuscripts and not those in back of the KJV. S. P. Tregelles, another one of the early Brethren, also worked on his own Greek New Testament and made choices that are contrary to the KJV and NKJV NT base text (see also his work *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*). From these two examples we can conclude that it is not outside our assembly tradition to use a better Greek NT textual basis as research continues to develop in the area of textual criticism and as more manuscripts are discovered.

I would also argue that the English language also changes over time. I would not recommend an old English translation because it would be inefficient at communi-

cating the truth. The common usage of a language by a populace determines how a language should be used. Hence, the old English is out of date because of its lack of use.

There are now a hefty number of good translations available for the English language reader. With all these translations made even more readily available to us, it seems to me that we are even more responsible for what the Bible has to say.

In summary, due to the textual research, the changes and development of the English language, and the research and understanding of the Biblical languages, I would use and recommend a very current translation based on a more reliable Greek NT edition.

Pete Smith, Dallas, TX

I would like to offer a world view answer to this question. We are a missionary family in Poland. We currently meet in our home for Sunday worship and Bible teaching. Obviously we use a Polish translation of the Bible. We are thankful we have never had to make what seems to be a strenuous decision as to which English version to use. Most missionaries in Poland, along with some Polish Bible teachers, do complain about their current translation of the Bible. They say that it uses old Polish, and those who are learned in Greek and English believe that some things have not been accurately translated. They do hope to make a new Polish translation available soon.

I often think about all the wonderful translations of Scripture which were available to us in America. The abundance of translations that we have available to use in the English language is a real gift and blessing. A Polish person would probably be very overwhelmed walking into an American Christian bookstore and seeing all the available versions. They would be even more shocked to hear that there is so much controversy over which English translation is the best or which one should be used in our churches. When thinking about this issue my mind also turns to the jungles where Elisabeth Elliot was instrumental in translating the Bible for the Auca Indian tribe. I am sure that they were not in any way worried about whether or not it was “the best” or most accurate translation. They were just happy to have a translation. They were thrilled to have God’s word (or according to their jungle traditions, God’s “tree scratchings”) put into words that they could understand. God finally spoke to them in an understandable way and told them to stop killing and thus changed their whole way of living.

When I observe the spiritual depth of many Polish people that we work with—knowing that in the past they have had very little Bible teaching and only one translation of Scripture—I am convinced of the great power of the Holy Spirit! The purpose of God’s word is to change lives, and I believe that any translation in a person’s native language can be

used by the Holy Spirit to do what it was meant to do, namely, save souls and change lives.

This experience that I have had makes me wonder about the abundance of Bible translations and gifted Bible teachers in America; why are these advantages so unappreciated? I think about Corrie Ten Boom living in Hitler’s concentration camps. She would have greatly appreciated having any translation of Scripture living in a place where she could not own a Bible. There is a story about a German Christian who, during all the years the Iron Curtain was closed and communism reigned in Europe, clung to one page of scripture he had found. Years later when the Iron Curtain was lifted, he was handed his first copy of Scripture, and tears streamed down his glad face. In our area of Poland we know a family of Christians who have met together by themselves on the mountainside where they live. For years and years and they have never had “good” Bible teaching, yet God sustained them through the work of the Holy Spirit. They only had this one old Polish translation of Scripture, yet God produced fruit in them.

I feel ashamed when I think of all the blessings I have had—especially the opportunity to study God’s word at a Bible College! I realize that my life should be deeper spiritually because of all that I have been exposed to, yet I am so weak in time of trial. Many Christian Polish families who have gone through life under the trial of

communism, and they have stood strong in the Lord through it all. Would I have been able to be so faithful? I am afraid that my own family growing up with the comforts of American life would have crumbled spiritually under the pains of communistic government. My point is that if I were asked which version of the Bible is best and why, I would tell of my experience over seas, and reply that any version would be fine. I would also say that for my own personal use I do like the new NET Bible!! I would also answer this question with another question: Do we need to have a uniform version of the Bible in our churches? Could we not offer a variety? In the assemblies each traveling speaker generally teaches from his own favorite version of the Bible, while each member of the congregation listens with his/her favorite version open before them. Uniformity of version does not, therefore, seem to be necessary.

Tami Swaim,  
Nowy Sacz, Poland

We use the NKJV for visitor Bibles and giveaways, because it’s what AWANA uses and it’s associated with the authority/beauty/reliability of the KJV, while having somewhat modernized language. Using anything else “formally” can lead to “why not this version?” so we stick with the NKJV. However, from the pulpit, the NASB is the most often quoted and read from and used in Power Point.

David Naylor, Murfreesboro, TN

Good News Bible Chapel uses and gives away hardcover “pew Bibles” from the International Bible Society in the NIV. That is the version that most of the pulpit teaching is done from – though other translations and paraphrases are frequently used in teaching to clarify a point or give a fresh perspective to a passage.

Steve Duplessie, Attleboro, MA

### NEXT ISSUE’S QUESTION:

**Over the years I have heard a number of preachers and Bible teachers make a distinction between “knowing about God” and “knowing God.” Recently, an able teacher told a congregation, “Knowing God is more than knowing God’s attributes.” How do you understand the distinction between “knowing God” and “knowing about God?”**

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

# News from Emmaus



## New Faculty Member

### Joel Hernandez

Emmaus is pleased to announce our newest addition to the faculty. This fall, Joel Hernandez will be joining the Emmaus family as the new director of the Intercultural Studies program. Joel and his wife Amy, along with their daughter, Sarah, have been serving the Lord as missionaries in Guanajuato, Mexico. Joel and Amy are graduates of Emmaus, and Joel graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary. He is a gifted teacher with experience and training in evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and church administration. We look forward to what the Lord will accomplish through Joel's ministry at Emmaus.

## Enrollment Services Personnel

### Israel Chavez

While not new to Emmaus or to the Enrollment Services Department, we are pleased to introduce Israel as our new Enrollment Services Manager. Israel is responsible for the day to day management of the department

as he executes the recruitment and marketing plan that is currently in place. Israel's past experiences as a full-time youth worker (Shannon Hills Bible Chapel, Greensboro, NC) and as a firefighter have proven to be a good training ground for the new ministry that God has called him to. Israel and his wife Erica were students together in the early 90's, and they returned to Dubuque 3 years ago so that Israel could finish his degree, which he did in 2006. Now Erica is pursuing her Elementary Education degree while home schooling and being mom to their 3 daughters.

### Grace Keith

Grace has joined the Enrollment Services Department as the Enrollment Services Coordinator. If you call or write the department, it is very likely that you will speak to or hear from Grace. Her efficiency and organizational skills are much appreciated by the other members of the department. Grace and her husband David met at Emmaus in the early 90's and make their home in Dubuque with their 3 children.

### Stuart Modrzejewski

Many young people in the Midwest have had the privilege of being led in musical worship to the Lord by Stu. A gifted musician with a heart for God, Stu has served the Lord in music ministry in several local

churches (most recently Cornerstone Community Church in Des Moines, Iowa). We are pleased that he has joined the college as an Admissions Counselor. Stu will focus on the Chicagoland area and the State of Illinois, as well as travel across the country on behalf of the college. You can contact him at stu@emmaus.edu.

### Stefan Johnson

Stefan is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, Biola University, and Emmaus Bible College. He has served the Lord for the past 14 years in full time ministry at Atlantic Gospel Chapel. Stefan will join the college full time in June serving in the role of Field Representative. Stefan will seek to travel among our constituency recruiting students, but also working in the area of Constituency Relations—working with elders and other church leaders to help them understand the ministries of the college better. Stefan and his wife Linda will move their family of 4 children to Dubuque in the early summer.



From left to right: Steve Seeman, Grace Keith, Wayne Denny, Stefan Johnson, Israel Chavez and Stuart Modrzejewski.

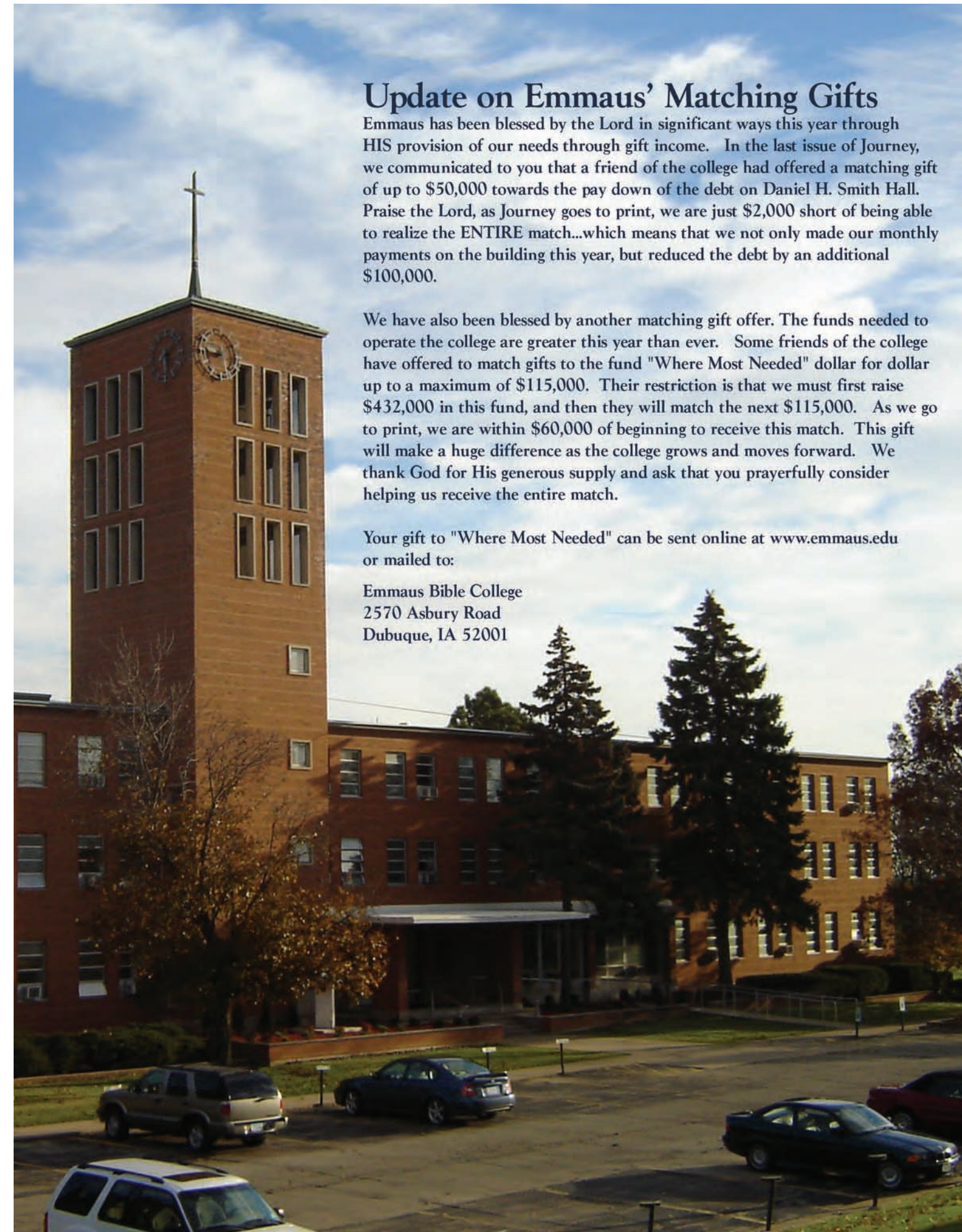
# Emmaus On the Road

Name	Location/Events	City/State	Dates
 <b>Ken Fleming</b>	Palos Hills Assembly Hokah Community Church Missionary Orientation	Chicago, IL Hokah, MN Greenwood Hills, PA	Apr 28, 29 May 20 June 9 - 15
 <b>Dave Glock</b>	Asbury Community Chapel Iron Sharpens Iron - Emmaus Bible College	Dubuque, IA  Dubuque, IA	May 20  May 24 - 27
 <b>Jon Glock</b>	Iron Sharpens Iron - Emmaus Bible College Sandy Creek Bible Camp Sandy Creek Bible Camp Lake Geneva Youth Camp	Dubuque, IA Washington, TX Washington, TX Lake Geneva, WI	May 24 - 27 June 3 - 8 June 10 - 15 June 24 - 30
 <b>John Jimo</b>	Woodside Bible Chapel	Maywood, IL	July 1
 <b>Chris Lange</b>	Asbury Community Chapel	Dubuque, IA	May 6, May 13
 <b>Ben Mathew</b>	Oak Lawn Bible Chapel Northeast Youth Retreat Horton Haven Christian Camp	Chicago, IL New York, NY Chapel Hill, TN	Apr 29 May 25 - 27 June 2 - 9
 <b>Donnie Patten</b>	Bethany Bible Chapel	Waterloo, IA	May 13

# Emmaus On the Road

Name	Location/Events	City/State	Dates
 <b>Dan Smith</b>	Bethany Bible Chapel	Cedar Falls, IA	Apr 15
	Asbury Community Chapel	Dubuque, IA	Apr 22
	Maplewood Bible Chapel	St. Louis, MO	May 20
	Iron Sharpens Iron - Emmaus Bible College	Dubuque, IA	May 24 - 27
	Bayside Community Church	Tampa, FL	June 3
	Lakeside Bible Camp	Seattle, WA	June 18 - 22
 <b>Mark Stevenson</b>	Oak Lawn Bible Chapel	Oak Lawn, IL	June 3, 10, 17, 24
 <b>Steve Witter</b>	Bible Truth Chapel	Wausau, WI	Apr 15
	Oak Lawn Bible Chapel	Oak Lawn, IL	Apr 22
	Open Door Bible Fellowship	Port Washington, WI	Apr 23, 24
	Northgate Bible Chapel	Rochester, NY	May 20
	Horton Haven Christian Camp	Chapel Hill, TN	May 27 - June 1
	Park Manor Bible Capel	Elgin, IL	June 3, 10
	Mt. Hope Bible Camp	Forbestown, CA	June 18 - 23
	Warrenville Bible Chapel	Warrenville, IL	July 1, 8
Koinonia Conference Grounds	Watsonville, CA	July 28, 29	
 <b>Ken Daughters</b>	Iowa Bible Camp	Manson, Iowa	June 24 - 30
	Koronis Bible Camp	Paynesville, MN	July 22 - 29

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



## Update on Emmaus' Matching Gifts

Emmaus has been blessed by the Lord in significant ways this year through HIS provision of our needs through gift income. In the last issue of *Journey*, we communicated to you that a friend of the college had offered a matching gift of up to \$50,000 towards the pay down of the debt on Daniel H. Smith Hall. Praise the Lord, as *Journey* goes to print, we are just \$2,000 short of being able to realize the ENTIRE match...which means that we not only made our monthly payments on the building this year, but reduced the debt by an additional \$100,000.

We have also been blessed by another matching gift offer. The funds needed to operate the college are greater this year than ever. Some friends of the college have offered to match gifts to the fund "Where Most Needed" dollar for dollar up to a maximum of \$115,000. Their restriction is that we must first raise \$432,000 in this fund, and then they will match the next \$115,000. As we go to print, we are within \$60,000 of beginning to receive this match. This gift will make a huge difference as the college grows and moves forward. We thank God for His generous supply and ask that you prayerfully consider helping us receive the entire match.

Your gift to "Where Most Needed" can be sent online at [www.emmaus.edu](http://www.emmaus.edu) or mailed to:

Emmaus Bible College  
2570 Asbury Road  
Dubuque, IA 52001