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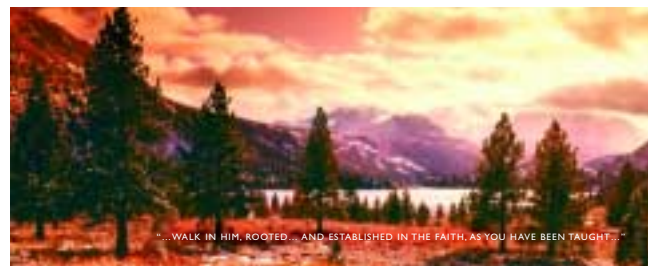
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# JOURNEY

EMMAUS BIBLE COLLEGE • FALL 2004



**E v a n g e l i s m i n t h e C h u r c h**

# Features



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## Church Evangelism

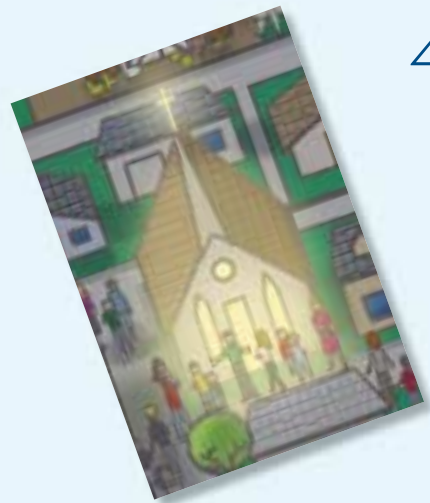
Join Journey staff members Angie DeArment and Jesse Lange as they visit Assemblies in Connecticut, Michigan, Missouri, Illinois, Iowa, Texas, and Washington reporting on the evangelistic outreach of growing Assemblies.



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## The Heart of an Evangelist

Assembly leaders share their passion for evangelism. Stimulate your own concern for the lost as you understand the motivation for evangelism from these leaders.



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## Evangelize or Fossilize

Iron Sharpens Iron comes to Journey! The concluding message of ISI 2004 is reproduced for Journey readers. Alex Strauch presents practical guidelines for evangelism in the local church.

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## CONTACT THE EDITOR

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

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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  
 Contributing Editors: Dr. David J. MacLeod, Sue Tyler  
 Online-Journey: Mark Woodhouse

How to contact us:

Journey Magazine  
 Emmaus Bible College  
 2570 Asbury Road  
 Dubuque, IA 52001  
 (800) 397-2425  
[www.emmaus.edu](http://www.emmaus.edu)

Editor: [journey@emmaus.edu](mailto:journey@emmaus.edu)  
 Subscriptions: [journey@emmaus.edu](mailto:journey@emmaus.edu)  
 College Admissions: [info@emmaus.edu](mailto:info@emmaus.edu)  
 Alumni: [jdsmith@emmaus.edu](mailto:jdsmith@emmaus.edu)  
 Correspondence School: [ecsorders@emmaus.edu](mailto:ecsorders@emmaus.edu)  
 Believers Stewardship Services: [stwrdsph@aol.com](mailto:stwrdsph@aol.com)  
 Other: [info@emmaus.edu](mailto:info@emmaus.edu)

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## From the President

### What We Need is Evangelism

The assemblies used to be known for their gospel meetings and missionary outreach: not so much anymore. Increasingly we have followed our culture in becoming more interested on our own needs and less on those of others. We tend to spend our resources and time building ourselves up to the point that we seldom reach out. We have lost our balance. To be biblical, we need to reemphasize evangelism.

I am amazed at how many assemblies dot the countryside in the Midwest. They were planted largely as a result of traveling evangelists. These days we rely on transfer or biological growth, rather than reaching out to the lost. It has caused us to become ingrown and self-centered. I'm not very old but I can remember the days when the majority of our budgets went to foreign missions. Not so anymore. We spend our resources on ourselves. We placate our consciences by suggesting that we, too, are a mission field. That is true, but we are not doing very well. If we were to examine the state of the assemblies in North America, we might be frustrated that we do not see greater health and strength. A good number of new assemblies are being planted, but we are losing as many as we are gaining. We also may notice that we see fewer young families and teenagers. The trend toward resident full-time workers has not solved the problem.

May I suggest that the missing ingredient is evangelism? We used to have Sunday evening gospel meetings. Why did we let those go? Were we preaching to those already saved? Did people lose interest? In Ephesians 6:15, part of our spiritual armor against the attacks of Satan is to have "shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." Much of our vitality and enthusiasm is lost when we are not active in sharing the good news.

Many of our outreaches into the community only succeed in making contacts. No actual evangelism takes

place. What we need is old-fashioned person-to-person witnessing. The easiest place for us to start is with our neighbors and friends. We need to witness to them and invite them to meetings where the gospel will actually be presented. It may well take time. Even seeker-sensitive churches do not see immediate results. In an amazingly candid admission, Bill Hybels wrote, "Most of the conversions that happen at Willow Creek come after people have attended the church for six

months or more. The secular person has to attend consistently for half a year and have the person who brought him witness to him the whole time" ("Speaking to the Secularized Mind," Christianity Today, 1989). Actually, the best place to have evangelistic conversations is in our homes. We should have people over for dinner, or dessert, and talk to them about spiritual things. From there we can invite them to special meetings our assembly has planned to reach out with the good news.

We should place a great emphasis on evangelizing children. They are much easier to reach. According to George Barna in *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions* (Regal, 2003), children between the ages of 5 and 13 have a 32 percent probability of accepting Christ, whereas teenagers have only a 4 percent probability. I don't believe God is tied to statistics, but I do believe that Jesus reached out to children, and so should we. This realization argues for active Sunday Schools, youth groups,

Awana, and camp work. Probably the most effective method assemblies are using today to reach people for Christ is camp work.

Many regions used to have missionary conferences and study classes because there was a greater interest in foreign missions. Support of missions work is declining. Whose fault is it? Where does our interest lie? I am suggesting that for our own health we must take our eyes off of ourselves and reach out. We are not biblical if we are not evangelizing.



President, Emmaus Bible College

## Ask the Faculty

Jack Fish

I am afraid that too many "assemblies" have become so enamored with the way they do things that they have forgotten the One who made the Way in a real sense. Grateful for my upbringing, but shamed by the continuing pattern of legalistic dogma, I wonder where the "assembly movement" is heading. In some places it is heading down the tubes as more and more Christians are turned off by "meeting in the Lord's own appointed way"—which cannot, by the way, be confirmed from Scripture as pertains to pattern, place, time or method. In the name of defending the purity and sanctity of the Lord's Supper we have built shrines unto ourselves (only we do it the right way). For shame! In other places, rebels dare to replace the holy ways with the things of this world (I wish I could have been in the first meeting where they used a piano...oh, the audacity!) The bigger question is: At what point do we dare change our methods in order to remain relevant in this present day? We are thankful for another assembly in our city that we can attend. After 23 years (me) and 39+ years (my wife) we finally had to leave our beloved assembly because the liturgy could not be disturbed. For that, what has been gained? — Anonymous

### TRADITION AND CHANGE

A number of years ago a mid-western assembly was discussing whether they should change the time of the Lord's Supper from the morning to the evening. One of the men became very upset and threatened to leave the assembly if such a change was made. This change would be a radical departure from the truth.

This same story could be repeated over and over again with just the specific issue being different. We hold our traditions as if they were the Word of God, and any change would be a departure from the faith. In regard to the Lord's Supper it has been almost universally agreed in the history of the church that this is an ordinance of the church which was commanded by Christ and is, therefore, obligatory for believers. But where in Scripture does it say when

it should be celebrated? We might infer that the Lord's Supper should be observed at least weekly. In Acts 20:7 the Christians were gathered together on the first day of the week to break bread, and in 1 Corinthians 11:20 the Corinthians should have been meeting to eat the Lord's Supper (but were not because of their abuse of the occasion). But in Acts 2:46 they were day by day "breaking bread from house to house." Whether that was to be the normative practice for us is not the issue here. We would simply note that none of the passages mention whether they observed the Lord's Supper in the morning or the evening. We might even ask ourselves whether the Lord's Supper was a supper or a breakfast. The fact is that the time of day when we meet to celebrate the Lord's Supper is part of our individual church's local tradition.

### TRADITION AND THE BIBLE

Not all traditions are bad. In fact Scripture uses the word tradition in two or perhaps three senses. One is positive, one negative, and the third sense is neutral.

#### Positive Tradition

In 2 Thessalonians 2:15 Paul commands the believers to "stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us." In 3:6 they were to "keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us." In 1 Corinthians 11:2 Paul commends the Christians because they "hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you." Here the word *tradition* is used positively to

refer the authoritative teaching received from the apostles. The word itself simply means “what is handed over or passed down.” It was used of the teaching passed on from a teacher to his disciples. In these verses Paul is referring to the teachings of the apostles which had been delivered over to the churches. Since the apostles were the authorized representatives of Christ, their teaching had his authority. This is the teaching that we have in the New Testament. It is inspired and authoritative. This is the tradition that refers to the unchangeable truth of the New Testament. This refers to the essential truths of the Christian faith which are universally accepted. It also refers to truths such as eternal security which some Christians have disputed, but which are still the teaching of Scripture. We may examine these truths like the Bereans to see if they are so (Acts 17:11), but we are not at liberty to accept or reject them on the basis of our personal preference.

#### Negative Tradition

In Mark 7 Christ opposed the traditions of the Jewish elders which he said was simply the tradition of men (7:8). In the period between the Old Testament and the New Testament there had developed a body of teaching by the rabbis in which they explained and applied the Scriptures. This oral teaching had assumed an authority equal with Scripture. The authority of this oral tradition is rejected in this passage when it comes to ritual washing before meals. It is specifically condemned when it is contrary to the teaching of Scripture. The Pharisees set aside the commandment of God in order to keep their tradition (Mark 7:9).

#### Neutral Tradition

Not all human traditions are contrary to Scripture. Paul had grown up zealous for the Jewish traditions (Gal. 1:14). When he trusted Christ, he became free of the law as well as the traditions of the Jews. In Galatians he strongly defended and insisted on that freedom (5:1). At the same time he was free to use his freedom to adapt himself to the traditions of Jews or Gentiles which were neutral, i.e. not contrary to the Word of God. “To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law” (1 Cor. 9:20-21). Paul was unchangeable when contending for the truth, but very willing to change and adapt to different circumstances if it would further the Gospel.

### TRADITION AND CHANGE IN THE CHURCH

Every church has its own traditions. We are free to change any of those traditions which are in the neutral category. The problem sometimes comes in distinguishing between those “authoritative scriptural traditions” and our own traditions. This can especially be a problem for those who strive to have a New Testament assembly. Because we want to follow the New Testament in areas relating to the church (e.g. the headship of Christ, the priesthood of all believers, the plurality of elders, the centrality of the Lord’s Supper), we

may think that everything we do and the way we do it is the teaching of the New Testament. In reality, we all do many things simply because that is the way we have always done them. There is nothing wrong with that. You have to do it some way. The problem comes when we think that our way is the only scriptural way when Scripture is silent on the subject.

There is another problem which may develop when the principle is held that we may only do what the New Testament authorizes us to do. Some have opposed Sunday school, youth groups, or Christian concerts on that principle. The problem with this principle is that it is too restrictive and it does not have the authority of Scripture. Instead of restricting us to those things that are specifically commanded, the Bible gives us great freedom to do anything that will help us glorify God and is not specifically contrary to the principles of his Word.

We live in a changing world. The fundamentals of church truth will remain the same in each generation, but the face or appearance of the church will continually change as we seek to adapt to changing times. Our task is to determine how we can best do the things as Christians which the church is commanded to do (the apostle’s doctrine, fellowship, the breaking of bread, prayer-Acts 2:42) and how can we best reach the non-Christian world.

It would be impossible in our limited space to list all of the areas of freedom, but let me mention a few.

1. The order of our church services. Many are only familiar with the Sunday morning breaking of

bread, followed by the family Bible hour, along with a Sunday evening preaching service and a mid-week prayer meeting and Bible study. There are some around who will remember when the only meeting on Sunday morning was the breaking of bread. Sunday evening was a gospel meeting and the Bible teaching was during the week. We are free to make variations here according to what works best for our congregation. We tried a year ago to begin with the preaching on Sunday morning and have the breaking of bread at 11 o’clock. We thought that that would give more prominence to the Lord’s Supper. After four months we went back to our old way because the new schedule didn’t work. But we were free to try.

2. Procedural matters at the Lord’s Supper. Who opens the meeting (an undesignated person or someone who is assigned that task)? Is there a theme assigned for the meeting relating to the person and work of Christ or not? Who gives thanks for the bread (anyone, an elder, someone appointed to do so)? Who breaks the bread (anyone, an elder, the person who gave thanks)? I have seen all these practices in different “New Testament” assemblies around the country.
3. Evangelism. I remember when the Sunday evening service was

an evangelistic meeting and we also had special gospel campaigns which would last one or more weeks. Christians would invite their non-Christian friends to come and hear the gospel, and they often did come. Why don’t we have these kinds of meetings anymore? It isn’t because we have lost interest in evangelism. Rather we are living in a society where non-Christians just don’t come to church to hear the gospel. If all we do today is announce that we are having a gospel meeting to which no non-Christians come, we have not fulfilled our responsibility. In fact we are being disobedient to the command to go into all the world and make disciples of all men (Matt. 28:19).

4. Music. Perhaps the area where we have more problems and more discomfort today is in the area of music. There are some styles of music that many of us just don’t like. Particularly, there tends to be a generational gap in this area. Some insist on only the grand old hymns, and they drive away the young people. Some insist on only new choruses with a rock band accompaniment, and they alienate the old. We need to adapt our music in the church in a way that edifies the whole church and follows Scripture. There are some things that I am against—choruses with endless repetitions, mindless drivel, or unscriptural teachings.

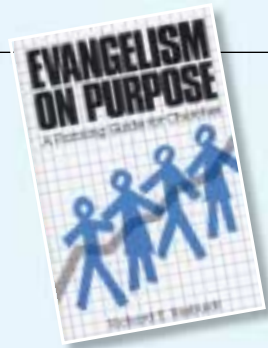
I am also against insisting on one style of music so that the church is divided into a youth church, a young couples with children church, and an old folks church. This destroys the unity of the body of Christ. All of us, young and old, need to stretch and adapt so that we use the best of the old and the best of the new without alienating any by insisting on the extremes of either end.

Change is necessary and change is inevitable. We recognize the need for missionaries to adapt themselves and the churches they plant in the different cultures of the world. (I have heard of two or three hour preaching services in some areas of the world, and as a preacher I say, “Amen.” But as a listener in the pew, I groan.) We also in the United States live in the midst of a changing culture and society. Our task is to hold to the foundations and at the same time adapt to our changing world. That task is not always easy. It involves having a knowledge of the Bible and having discernment—particularly discernment as to what is the unchanging truth of Scripture and what are our own traditions which we are free to change. It also requires a flexible mentality which is willing to do some things in different ways in order to best meet the needs of the saints and to reach out to the non-Christian world.

### SUBMIT YOUR QUESTION

The faculty of Emmaus Bible College address questions from our readers. Address your questions to **Ask the Faculty, Emmaus Bible College, 2570 Asbury Road, Dubuque, IA 52001**, or e-mail to [journey@emmaus.edu](mailto:journey@emmaus.edu). Please include your full name, town, state, Emmaus class year (if applicable), and daytime phone number. We cannot respond personally, but will address one or two submissions each issue.

# Travel Guides



## **Evangelism on Purpose: A Planning Guide for Churches**

Richard E. Rusbult  
Judson Press, 1980

Provides practical ideas to help congregations accomplish evangelism objectives that reflect God's will for the church.



## **Finding Them, Keeping Them:**

### **Effective Strategies for Evangelism and Assimilation in the Local Church**

Gary L. McIntosh with Glen Martin  
Broadman & Holman, 1992

Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin have distilled the complex formulae of church growth and retention theory into concepts that are comprehensible to non-experts with a view toward recruiting the church at large in the work of evangelism and discipling.

## **Growing Your Church Through Evangelism and Outreach**

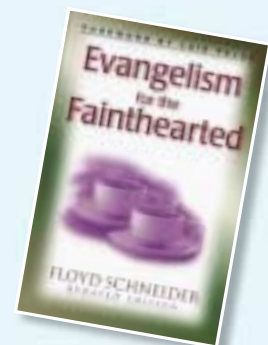
Marshall Shelley  
Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1999

## **21 Things God Never Said:**

### **Correcting Our Misconceptions about Evangelism**

R. Larry Moyer  
Kregel Publications, 2004

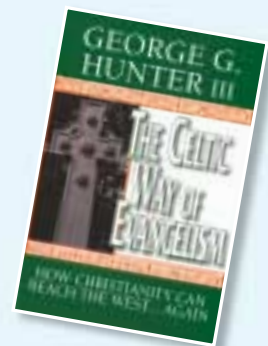
A veteran evangelist frees Christians to share the gospel by tackling twenty-one erroneous concepts believers have about witnessing.



## **Evangelism for the Fainthearted**

Floyd E. Schneider  
Kregel Publications 2000

A real-life proven approach for communicating the gospel through meaningful conversations, earning trust, and studying the Bible with interested seekers. Offers a comfortable and natural approach that replaces guilt with positive results.



## **The Celtic Way of Evangelism:**

### **How Christianity Can Reach the West...Again**

George Hunter  
Abingdon Press, 2000

Describes Celtic Christianity as one of the most successfully evangelistic branches of the church in history. Shows what contemporary church can learn.

## **The Gospel and Its Meaning:**

### **A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth**

Harry Lee Poe  
Zondervan Publishing Company, 1996

The textbook lays a biblical/theological foundation for evangelism in a variety of cultural settings without moving toward the relativism or pluralism that undermines the gospel. Poe identifies the basic elements of the gospel, demonstrates their relationship to specific doctrines of theology, identifies evangelistic issues, and suggests avenues of ministry.

## **Building a Contagious Church:**

### **Revolutionizing the Way We View and Do Evangelism**

Mark Mittelberg with Bill Hybels  
Zondervan Publishing Company, 2002

This is a vision for turning every church—new or old—into a contagious church that is a powerful magnet for attracting and influencing unchurched people.

## **Evangelism in the Early Church (Revised)**

Michael Green  
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004

Now a modern classic, this book provides a comprehensive look at the ways the first Christian—from the New Testament period up until the middle of the third century—worked to spread the good news to the rest of the world.

## **Church Evangelism: Basic Principles, Diverse Models**

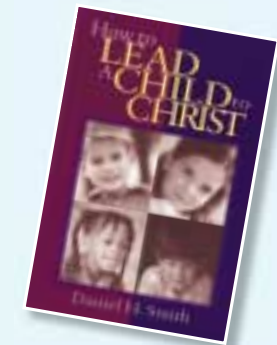
John Mark Terry  
Broadman & Holman, 1997

Church Evangelism takes a wide-ranging look at evangelism techniques in the local church today, reviewing the most productive methods of community outreach and their applications.

## **How to Lead a Child to Christ**

Daniel H. Smith  
Moody Publishers, 1987

This is a primer on leading children to Christ. Attending first to the biblical basis for child evangelism, the author then discusses the psychological needs and wants of a child, and concludes with a section on methods and techniques.



These books can be purchased as a group or individually by contacting John Rush at (563) 588-8000, extension 1003 or jrush@emmaus.edu.

# To Bring or Announce Good News

The subject of evangelism is found throughout the New Testament.

Romans 10:14,15

1 Peter 3:15



Matthew 28:19,20



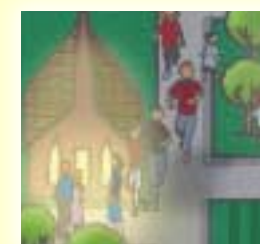
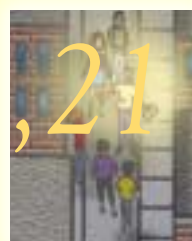
Philippians 2:15



John 3:16



2 Corinthians 5:20,21



Thessalonians 1:8

**Matthew 28:19,20**

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit 20 “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

**Romans 10:14,15**

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

**2 Corinthians 5:20,21**

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Philippians 2:15**

That you may become blameless and harmless children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.

**Thessalonians 1:8**

For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything.

**1 Peter 3:15**

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

It was my happy setting to grow up in a family and in an Assembly where evangelism was a major emphasis. Every neighbor heard a clear message of the gospel often repeated by my father. Yes, there was the Sunday Gospel Meeting, the weekly meeting of the Tract Band for distribution of literature in the neighborhood and by mail, the street meetings in the depressed sections of the city, the Open Air meetings in the public parks on Sunday afternoon, the extended gospel campaigns sometimes in the great tents, evangelistic children’s meetings on Friday evenings—the list goes on almost endlessly. In the present day

the venues are not the same and the methods, of necessity, have changed. But what has replaced the old venues and methods? The teaching and commandments of the New Testament remain the same, and they need a new expression and implementation in contemporary scene.

The next three issues of Journey will focus on the subject of Evangelism. This issue will address corporate or church evangelism. Journey staff has visited a number of Assemblies throughout the country which carries out effective evangelistic outreach. A cross section of Assembly life is included from city to rural, small to large, ethnically diverse and various graphically different. You will be encouraged and challenged through the various means of Church evangelism

reflected in these reports.

The second issue in this series will deal with the subject of Parachurch Evangelism.

Many groups are standing with the Church to provide assistance and specialization in evangelistic outreach. We will explore the various agencies available for your implementation and participation.

The third issue will treat the subject of Personal Evangelism. It all begins here! Neither Church nor Parachurch evangelism has validity apart from a heart for personal evangelism. What is the heart beat of the evangelist? In this initial issue on the subject of Evangelism, we have asked a number of leaders from the Assembly movement to express their thoughts

on evangelism. Please pray with us that this series will help in producing a renewed interest in sharing the heart of God with the lost world.

**John 3:16**

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

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

# Small Town, Big Heart...

## Evangelism through a Rural Iowa Assembly

**Angie DeArment**

I'm proud to say that I've been an Iowa girl my whole life. The town I call "home" (despite being a resident of Dubuque for the past eight years) is Atlantic, having been raised there since the second grade. My memories of growing up in a small rural town are the typical ones: 4-H clubs, the county fair, high school sports, church activities, Vacation Bible School, summers spent at the pool. However, what keeps this particular town near and dear to my heart (in addition to my family) is the extended network of Christians who live there. God used this small town and the people at the assembly of Atlantic Gospel Chapel to take firm hold of my life. And God is still using these people to reach the

unsaved with the message of Christ's love and sacrificial death. Atlantic is a tiny dot in the southwest corner of Iowa. The latest census declared the population of the town to be 7,257. Atlantic has one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. A typical graduating class is around 120 students. Atlantic is home to twenty-two churches of varying denominations. As is the norm in a smaller town, many residents claim membership in at least one of these churches. However, Stefan Johnson, the full-time worker at Atlantic Gospel Chapel, estimates that up to 5000 of Atlantic's residents are unsaved or "lightly churchd." Stefan and his wife, Linda, have

lived in Atlantic with their four children since 1993. Stefan has an active pastoral and speaking ministry at the chapel, and together they organize many programs. Atlantic Gospel Chapel has approximately 150 members, with a pretty even split among the different age groups. Stefan is the only full-time staff, and the church is shepherded by seven elders. Weekly activities at AGC include the Sunday morning meetings (Breaking of Bread, Family Bible Hour and Kid's Sunday School), Sunday evening prayer meeting, College and Career Group, Ladies Bible Study, three evening Bible Studies, Wednesday night Potluck and Parenting Class, and "Super Wednesday" for kids. All of these

activities and programs serve the dual purpose of edifying believers and evangelizing unbelievers. For example, several ladies have come to know the Lord through the Ladies Bible Study and have, in turn, brought their families to the chapel. Also, Stefan rarely misses an opportunity to give the gospel when he is speaking on Sunday morning or at Youth Group.

### Get 'em while they're young

Each summer, the chapel holds Vacation Bible School for preschool through sixth grade kids. This year's theme was "Big Words." The kids learned the meaning of redemption, purification, substitution, and justification. Fifty to sixty children attended each day. The kids presented a program at the end of the week to sing songs and show their parents what they had learned. As in previous years, Stefan gave the gospel message during this program, knowing that unbelieving parents were among their visitors. "Some of the kids come to VBS because they were invited by someone from the



chapel. We want to be sure that they and their parents are given the gospel and invited to come back," says Stefan. During the school year AGC hosts "Super Wednesday" for kids. Preschool to middle school meets at the chapel to sing together, and then they split into classes for a Bible lesson, craft, and snacks. High school Youth Group meets at the Johnson's home for similar activities geared to their age level. The chapel also plays a big part in the ministry of Iowa Bible Camp. Many members volunteer at the camp in addition to sending their children, or they may help to make it possible for other kids to attend camp. Linda says, "Our members

are very generous; they give thousands of dollars each year to help send kids to camp." Anyone who has ever attended a Bible camp knows that camp provides a great opportunity for young kids to hear the gospel and accept the Lord.

### A Unique Approach

In the fall of 2003, Matt and Jenny Williams, who attend Atlantic Gospel Chapel, expressed a desire to start something new for young adults. They knew many unbelievers and young Christians, and they wanted to start a Bible study for this group. It was arranged that a Bible study on John's Gospel would be held on Monday nights at Stefan and Linda's home. Stefan would lead it, and childcare and a meal would be provided—great motivating factors for young families or single parents to attend! The Bible study has been steadily growing. On any given evening there might be anywhere from twelve to fourteen adults and ten to twelve kids. About one-third of this group is from the chapel. People



### Testimony of Rayna Tasto

I have always believed [about] Jesus Christ, but before now, I have never understood Him. These are two different things. I never knew that I could have made my life so much easier, thanks to our Bible Study group. It has taught me so many things about relying on Christ. It not only has helped me personally to become a better human being, but also a better friend, daughter, sister, mother, and wife. It seemed like before I understood anything about Christ and what Christianity is all about, I felt as though I had problem upon problem. I'm not saying believing will take all your problems away; everybody does and will have problems in every day life. But, I have learned to deal with them on a

much higher level. For example, I have learned to trust God, and to give myself and everyday living to Him and to only Him. Therefore, for me, it's easier to not hold grudges, my patience is growing more everyday, and things like money, stress, conceited things I thought about like clothes, and physical possessions no longer seem that big of a deal. Why? Simple, because I know God has a plan for me. He made you and I the perfect way He wanted us to be. I know God is taking care of us. This is only one of the many reasons I love to share this with others. If you just have trust in God and know that He takes care of you, that everything is for a reason, yes, even the bad things in life. For me, these things are easier to handle because now I

know He knows exactly what I'm going through. He knows these emotions I have; He too goes through them with me. I now thank God for everyday of my life, even when it gets ugly. I am proud to say I am saved, and Jesus Christ is my Savior.



generally come because someone else invites them. "Some come and go, but we have a core group here each week," says Linda. The provision of the meal and childcare really appeals to young families. Stefan and Linda also find that people are more comfortable coming into a home than a church building. When Jenny Williams invites people, she tells them, "It's just an hour to sit and think without any disruptions." What an attractive offer to young parents!

One of the side-benefits of the study is the opportunity it has given the chapel members who usually do not attend the study to be a part of this outreach. They do this by providing the meal: someone always contributes homemade macaroni and cheese, another will bring along desserts, while someone else supplies the main dish. After everyone is fed, the kids are sent downstairs or outside where Amanda Johnson (Stefan and Linda's daughter) keeps a close eye on them.

Stefan usually prints off sufficient copies of the section of John to be studied, and the group watches the related portion of the movie "The Gospel of John" (recently released on DVD). Discussion follows, during which Stefan presents the gospel clearly and consistently. They end the evening with a time of prayer.

I was able to attend and observe the study on a recent Monday evening. The camaraderie and familiarity among the group was evident. People of all levels of biblical and spiritual understanding are accepted. One woman, who came that night for the first time, announced, "I know nothing about the Bible. Nothing!" She was promptly reassured that she was in the right place.

It was clear to me that lives are changed not only through the study time but also through the relationships being formed before and after. I observed friendships deepening and doors opening for the gospel to be proclaimed. One woman, who had been through a divorce as a Christian, counseled another woman that she needed a relationship with the Lord if she hoped to endure her own marital problems. Moments and opportunities like these have given the Christians in the group the courage and strength to share their faith.

### It all boils down to people

"People are praying for our Monday night study. They tell us this all the time and are always asking how it's going," says Linda. Prayer is one factor that is causing this Bible study to prosper. The other is the people. Stefan and Linda agree: "You need someone to lead the study who knows the Scriptures; you need someone to invite people; you need someone to provide food, someone to watch the kids, and someone to provide their home. Any chapel anywhere could start this type of study if they have the commitment of their people." This evangelistic effort has the support of the church members through prayer, participation, and the contribution of practical needs.

My last impression

of my evening there came from a child. A mother called to her kids that it was time to go home, and her son replied, "Please, Mom, can we come back next week?" Maybe people return for the food, the babysitting, or the fellowship. Whatever draws them back is unimportant; the fact that they may one day surrender their hearts to Christ is the important thing.

The gospel is going forth in Atlantic, Iowa! Atlantic Gospel Chapel is seeing children and families come to know the Lord through its "classic" church programs as well as through this unique home study for unbelievers and young Christians. Yes, Atlantic may just be just a dot on a map, but in the Lord's eyes neither its serving saints nor its seeking sinners are insignificant. He is blessing both alike.

**ATLANTIC GOSPEL CHAPEL**  
104 E. 13th St.  
Atlantic, IA 50022  
(712) 243-2439



## Looking in on Cape Bible Chapel

Jesse Lange

My wife and I set off from Dubuque for Cape Girardeau, Missouri with a bottle of ice water and a couple packs of fruit snacks. Never having been to Cape Girardeau myself, I was excited to see a new place and to meet new people. This was to be the furthest south that my wife, Kelsy, had ever traveled having lived in the Northwest since she was born. Not only was she entering the land of humidity and kudzu, she was about to experience the way the South does Church!

Heading South on I-55, our eyebrows were rising with the temperature as we began to be bombarded with fried chicken joints and gospel stations on the radio. The scenery was changing gradually and the culture was too.

Nearing Cape Girardeau we stopped at a roadside Dairy Queen for some lunch. Opening the door let the steamy air into the car, and in a matter of seconds I felt like I was being fried along with the rest of the chicken in the South. Ordering my lunch (fried chicken, of course) inside the restaurant, I was sure that the Coke was sweeter and the air conditioning colder than they are in Iowa. We were forced to choose between the outdoor sauna and the indoor freezer, so we decided the car was the best place for us hungry Northerners and continued on. The further South we drove, the greater the

influx of church steeples that sprinkled the fields and towns we passed.

Entering Cape Girardeau from the highway, we were both amazed to find LARGE churches in every direction. Looking out one window we saw Lynwood Baptist Church and St. Mark Lutheran Church. Out



comes a respect for Christianity and a compulsion to attend church. It is still normal—almost expected—that a family in the South is a part of the membership at a local church, and with a membership of over 1000 people and several hundred families, Cape Bible Chapel is clearly succeeding in reaching the people of Cape Girardeau within their culture with the good news of the gospel.

### A History of Growth

the other window were La Croix Methodist Church and Cape Bible Chapel. "There are more churches here than Starbucks!" Kelsy exclaimed. It was apparent that Church is to the South as coffee is to Seattle: a way of life proclaimed by the many denominations of churches that occupy nearly every square mile.

Like Cape Bible Chapel, each of the huge church buildings sit on hilltops surrounded by parking lots that outsize the average high school football field! With the church culture comes Christian radio, televangelists and radio preaching ministries. But most significantly, with church culture

We had the privilege of spending the weekend with Hal and Norma Greene, the couple who started Cape Bible Chapel in the mid-1960s. Touring the city with them, we saw where CBC began and expanded until it outgrew its first facility in 1983. Nestled in a well-established neighborhood on a corner lot, Cape Bible Chapel grew slowly but steadily into the mid-seventies when growth exploded, filling that facility to capacity by 1979. Because CBC was bursting at the seams, a satellite church in Carbondale was proposed. Under the able leadership of Glendall Toney and others, Neighborhood Bible Fellowship was born and continues to be blessed of God today.

Reaching capacity for the second time in 1983, CBC relocated to its current property on Kings Highway, positioned on a hilltop



near a busy intersection at the edge of town. With the Lord's blessing, CBC has expanded four times and currently contains 81,000 square feet of ministry space.

### City on a Hill

The fellowship at Cape Bible Chapel is expanding, and its facility is partly responsible for its growth. It has been said that crowds attract crowds, and this is one place the crowds want to be when Sunday morning rolls around. CBC has purposely surrounded its 81,000 square feet with an attractive building that is clearly visible from the west side of town. Its modern construction and convenient location are inviting to visitors and members alike. "Many assemblies across the country have facilities that are hidden in an obscure part of a congested neighborhood—or out in the woods a few miles outside of town. That

makes it very difficult to get your friends and neighbors to visit your church," Hal said while admitting that with prime real estate comes great cost. Hal identified CBC's current location years ago and began asking the Lord to make a way for them to relocate there. "I just felt a very real confidence that this was where God wanted us to build."

CBC is easy to find in the YellowPages as well. Consuming a large portion of the page, Cape's full-color ad lists its service times, its staff and its well known programs such as MOPS and AWANA. There is no mistaking CBC for another church in the telephone book, and it is clear to any reader that Cape Bible Chapel welcomes families to attend. Advertising for their church is made easy for members of CBC, and many of them appreciate the beautiful facility and the community awareness that assist them in inviting their friends.

### Connecting with People

Although CBC displays a strong visible presence in Cape Girardeau, a closer look also reveals a fellowship of believers who are working hard to minister to the community. How does Cape Bible Chapel reach so many people for Christ? By connecting with them.

Meeting with Hal Greene for lunch is an everyday event for the people of Cape Girardeau. Hal has a shepherd's heart, and meeting with people in the community is his passion. "Personal contact with people is the most important thing we do," Hal said with a smile. "Hal never eats lunch at home," said his wife Norma. "He's been so effective in connecting with people that the church now helps pay for his meals so that we don't bear the expenses alone." Like Hal, the leadership at CBC believes that churches excel in evangelism by first exposing themselves to the community, then by

connecting with people and earning the privilege of sharing the gospel with them. "It's like soil," said Hal, "until it's ready, you're kind of wasting your time. You have to allow the Lord to prepare the soil."

People seem to fall into Hal's lap from all over the community. A local physician met Hal and shared his burdens with him. Soon after meeting with him he and his wife received Christ, and within days this doctor excitedly called to encourage a friend. "You need to meet with Hal—he can help you." This kind of referral is normal to the circle of connections CBC members have within the community, and each Sunday the church sees a crowd of visitors. "We don't view the church as a big fish bowl where the preacher casts out his line in hopes of reeling in a new convert. We provide consecutive, expository preaching with good, practical application in a warm, non-threatening atmosphere. This brings our visitors back and allows us to follow up with one-on-one evangelism," Hal said.

CBC hasn't known evangelism in any other way. Having started the church over 30 years ago, Hal remembers no time when the congregation was discouraged from witnessing—in fact, the friendliness displayed towards people within the community is visible and active, and the attitude towards evangelism is infectious within the assembly. "We simply haven't told our congregation that they're NOT supposed to witness," he said. "If people learn to think evangelistically the opportunities will open up."

### Programs with Purpose

At CBC people are earning the right to be heard, and they're doing it with the help of several programs that serve as tools for reaching into the community. For over 25 years, Hal Greene preached the gospel on the radio. His broadcast has been heard by thousands of people. "I would mention that I'm from the church in Cape Girardeau, and they would know where they could come to hear more of this teaching," said Hal. Hal is very well known and recognized throughout the area.

CBC provides a dynamic youth program for its families and has employed a full-time youth worker for many years. Their youth worker would often visit the local high schools where he would grill burgers for the students on their lunch breaks, building relationships with them and then inviting them to youth group at CBC. Students have a full itinerary of events during the year which facilitate peer-to-peer relationship building and evangelistic ministry opportunities such as VBS and serving at Camp Barnabas, a ministry to physically and mentally handicapped children. CBC designed its youth rooms to attract teens, offering a lounge area filled with couches, pool tables, a snack bar and a meeting room equipped with a stage and sound system for youth-led praise and worship teams.

CBC also has an active AWANA program that reaches over 100 children each year with the gospel message and equips them to memorize God's Word and apply it to their lives. Over

the years, CBC's AWANA program has been an integral part in attracting families to the church.

Another program that serves as a tool for evangelism is MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers). MOPS International's vision is to reach all mothers of preschoolers to the glory of Jesus Christ. Andrea Roth, who leads the MOPS program at CBC, gave further explanation of their plan. "Locally our vision is to reach out not only to Christian moms, but those moms that might just be beginning to have a spiritual interest. We use lifestyle evangelism by establishing relationships with moms and trying to share Christ's love.

Approximately 75% of the moms attending our MOPS group do not attend CBC. Some attend other denominations and others do not attend church at all. We view the season of early parenthood as often a second door-opening into women's spiritual lives. Moms often look for support, encouragement or help with bringing up children when they become parents, and the season of motherhood can sometimes be confining and overwhelming. Church sometimes becomes a new priority or interest [to moms.] Another blessing of MOPS is that it gives Christian moms a chance to develop and use their outreach skills." MOPS provides a framework for ministry while providing the training, themes and ministry ideas that have made the program successful for years. For more information about the program visit the MOPS website at [www.mops.org](http://www.mops.org).

Believers of all ages are encouraged to participate in the churches' Vacation Bible School that runs for a week every summer.



A traditional method of child evangelism within the Church in North America, VBS attracts a large number of new children each year and in turn reaches their families. CBC saw 16 children make a decision for Christ this summer, and several families are introduced into the fellowship at CBC each year through this effective ministry.

### Fulfilling the Great Commission

Baptism is a tremendous outreach ministry at CBC. The leadership here believes New Testament believers were baptized upon the declaration of their faith in Christ and welcomed immediately into fellowship with the local believers. Baptisms at CBC are purposely evangelistic, regularly performed in the presence of unbelieving friends and family members. In fact, CBC believes so strongly that baptism communicates the gospel that they have positioned their baptistery as a focal point beneath the cross, high within the beautiful stone wall that is featured in the Worship Center (see picture). There is a baptism nearly every Sunday here during the worship service, and 52 new believers were baptized last year alone!

In addition, CBC offers an eight-week Newcomers Class that has become a good evangelistic tool. Visitors and contacts are recruited into the class, are welcomed by the group and pursued by a personal letter and an invitation to meet with a leader for a one-on-one visit at the conclusion of the class. The church advertises for the Newcomers Class in the

local paper, in the church bulletin and through word of mouth in the community. Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Jews and even Atheists have attended the class in the past, and some have placed their faith in Christ as a result!

Another exciting ministry at CBC is called Campus Outreach, and as a result many students from the local university attend the services and Sunday School. During the past couple of years many of these college students have been saved and baptized, several have gone to the mission field, while others have married and remained in the assembly here. One Sunday in August, CBC invited the entire football team to the preaching service and capped their visit off with a delicious lasagna dinner! 118 players and coaches attended and the meal provided a unique opportunity to visit and interact with the team members.

These ministries represent a mere sampling of the work that is being done by CBC members. From Ladies Bible studies to

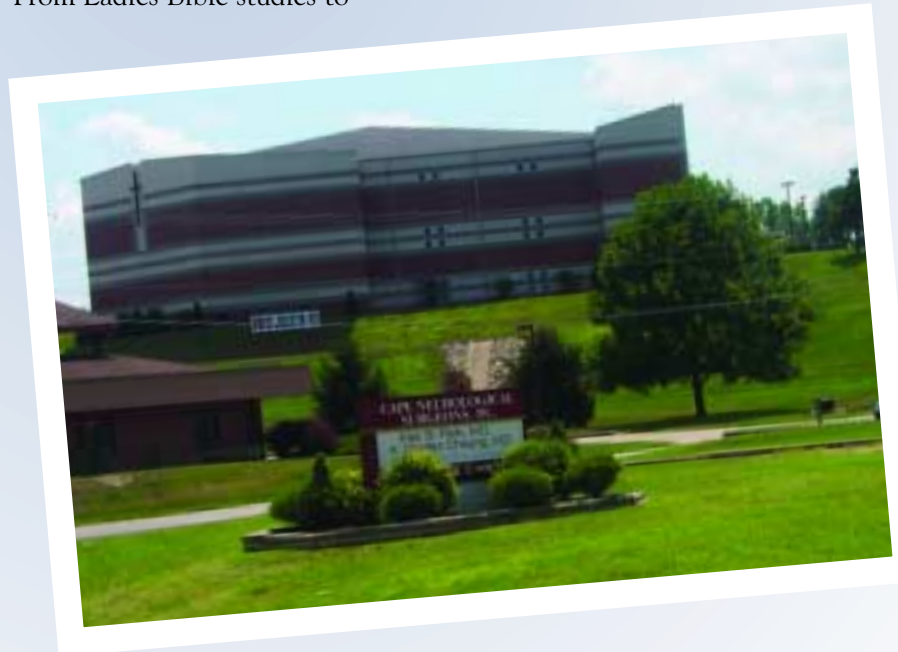
prison ministries, from Bible Study Fellowship to delivering meals to the sick and needy, many more ministries are focused on bringing Christ to Cape Girardeau. The people at CBC are a team, and as a body they are scoring souls for the kingdom one by one.

### Homeward Bound

While heading for home, my wife and I reminisced about the weekend and the conversations we enjoyed during our visit. Looking in on the ministries at CBC left an impression on both of us. Whether our next visit to the mighty South is for the chicken or the heat, we're sure to stop again at Cape Bible Chapel. After all, it's just off the highway—you can't miss it.

For more information about CBC or its programs, please contact Hal Greene at (573) 334-6590.

[www.capebiblechapel.org](http://www.capebiblechapel.org)



## Lakeside's Driving Force

Angie DeArment

"We purpose to reach our community with the salvation message of Jesus Christ through the teaching of the Word of God and by equipping each Christian to be an effective witness in their home and workplace."

So reads the succinct mission statement on Lakeside Bible Chapel's internet website ([www.lbchapel.org](http://www.lbchapel.org)), which is one of the many means by which this assembly of God's people is effectively letting people know of its existence. Located in Sterling Heights, a suburb of Detroit, three hundred-plus people can be seen pouring through the chapel's doors on any given Sunday. What brings them in? Practical, hands-on programs that work well at most churches, like MOPS, VBS, and youth programs. How does Lakeside keep them? By making the most of these programs and following up with unstinting energy. The church exposes itself to the community at large and then connects with individuals. People are coming to Christ, and the saints and angels are rejoicing!

### Reaching the Children

Lakeside wants to provide a healthy environment for families. One way they do this (like many other assemblies) is by focusing on evangelizing children. This year's

theme for their annual Vacation Bible School was "Son Games," based on the Olympics. The parking lot, gymnasium, and sanctuary were decorated with flags from around the world. To kick off the event a carnival was held in the parking lot. The carnival games and decorations were enough to attract attention from the neighborhood and community, and as a result, 220 children came, and 150 of these kids were not from the chapel!

The chapel invites parents to their VBS closing program. This year the sanctuary was full, with about 300 kids and parents. Steve Collard, the VBS team leader, takes advantage of this event to "advertise" for Lakeside by telling parents about their other regular programs. They show a slide show of Lakeside activities and present a strong gospel message along with it. Awana also "feeds" kids into VBS, and vice versa. "Kids entered the chapel through VBS, that led them to Awana, and then personal interest by Scott and Bev Clode, the Awana leaders, brought the kids to Sunday School and eventually to Bible Camp this summer. Seven of these children accepted Christ this past year. This is a powerful example of combining programs with personal follow-up," Steve says. He goes on to say, "All of these programs—MOPS, Awana, VBS—are great entry points for families to come to

the chapel. These kinds of programs unite the church too. When you have a hundred people working on VBS, it not only gets people excited about sharing the gospel but unites the church in fellowship and service."

### "Love 'em to Jesus"

Mark Collard is the full-time youth worker at LBC. "I tell the kids that God doesn't have any grandkids: either you're a child of God, or you're not. They must make their faith their own," he says. Mark covers every book of the Bible in his youth teaching curriculum. His goal is that they will know God's Word well enough that their "walk" will reflect Christ and their "talk" will be come from personal knowledge, so they can feel comfortable defending it. "Today's young people are a thinking generation; and they want to hear truth. But it can't just be, 'this is what the Bible says.' It has to be 'this is what my lifestyle says because I believe what the Bible says'. And I want my kids to know Jesus so well that when they are faced with the counterfeit, they can just tear it to shreds." Mark sends the Lakeside youth door-to-door and encourages them to stand up for Christ at school. Some of these young people hold leadership roles in the Christian groups in their high schools.





### Testimony of Michael Fasbender

I came from a life of struggles and hardships; lost in a world of sin and unbelief. During my struggles, I realized that Christ died for my sin, and that I could be relieved of this burden by repenting and realizing that I was the problem. So I surrendered. I got down on my hands and knees and actually believed that Christ died for me. I asked the Lord to take over and show me what He wanted. I asked him to please relieve me of myself; I couldn't do it on my own. I surrender to You. He relieved me of my pain, lifted the weight off my chest, and to this day has been showing me purpose and direction. I owe it all to Jesus for his finished work on the cross. Jesus came for me and all sinners.

Thank you, Jesus, for your grace, your love and your acceptance to anyone who asks. Thank you. In my love for God, I want to be obedient and be baptized in the name of the Lord showing others that I belong to Christ, not the world.



In their training for personal evangelism, the youth have recently completed "The Case for Christ" in Sunday school, and on Wednesday evenings they are going through the Dare2Share program, where they not only learn an effective technique for presenting the gospel using the initials G-O-S-P-E-L but have been "dared" to invite their friends to youth group activities. Mark promised that he would preach the gospel if they would bring them—and he challenges them to go make some friends of unbelievers if they don't have any! They've had visitors every week since this program started.

Mark also feels it is important to meet the needs of the church youth. Mark wants to "love 'em to Jesus." He thinks that we in the church make a mistake when we demand they do things our way before we accept them. "Jesus met peoples' needs right where they were at," he explains.

Other activities for the youth group at LBC include a gym night and coffeehouse each month. As fun as these activities are, the crowning event of each year is the annual "13 hour Blitz" (a rally for evangelism and outreach) that is held over Christmas vacation. Held lock-in style, the youth enjoy an evangelistic message, extreme games, lots of food, and a concert by a Christian artist that the young people are familiar with and enjoy. They use between fifty and a hundred volunteers to make the blitz run smoothly: the College and Career group pitches in to run games, and a large contingent of helpers work on security. They advertise in the local Christian bookstores and the kids take flyers to school.

The purpose of all these programs

is to get the youth excited about their Savior. "I'll stand on my head if that's what it takes to get the message across," Mark says—and he's not kidding.

### Women's Ministries

A vital part in any corporate evangelistic outreach is the support of the women's ministries. MOPS (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers) and Book Club are just two examples of outreach activities that the women's committee at Lakeside organizes.

Book Club was just getting on its feet last fall; this season it will have an evangelistic focus. In introducing the new format of the Book Club to the Lakeside ladies, the committee will be encouraging them to invite their friends and co-workers. They've chosen Christian books or books that provide a Christian world view, such as Lisa Beamer's *Let's Roll* and Karen Hughes *Ten Minutes from Normal*. In choosing books like these, it will be easy for discussion in the Book Club to move towards spiritual things. This is also a great fellowship activity that will help establish relationships among the women.

Lakeside introduced its MOPS program in 1993. Although its purpose was always to create opportunity for evangelism, 90% of the mothers who attended the first year came from the chapel. Today, only about 20-30% of the MOPS mothers attend the chapel. MOPS is not a Bible study, but they do have a teaching time with a biblical basis in each message. "MOPS focuses on meeting the needs of mothers of preschoolers. One of those needs is to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. We are very upfront about this," says Lydia Collard who has been involved with MOPS since

its inception. "MOPS has served us well as a means of outreach. We've really focused on lifestyle evangelism. The mothers get to know the circumstances of our lives and see how the relationship that we have with Jesus impacts those circumstances," says Lydia.

One of the "quiet" ways in which Lakeside ladies support the various evangelistic efforts of the church is by praying for them. The Ladies Prayer Team comprises about twenty women (many of whom are older ladies who can't attend many of the events but who still want to be involved) who meet to specifically pray for the workers on the frontlines.

### Lakeside's Philosophy

Ray Gonzalez is Lakeside's full-time pastor/elder. He, his wife, Laura and their three children came to Lakeside two years ago from Texas. Ray has a real heart for evangelism; he is a firm believer in friendship evangelism, follow-up, and discipleship. "If unbelievers come through your door and you ignore them, you

are blowing it," he says plainly. Ray attends many activities at the church just to "work the floor" by talking to the people. For example, at the VBS kick-off carnival Ray was there just to chat with the people from the neighborhood who dropped by. He is not shy about welcoming them and telling them what the chapel has to offer them and their children. Ray and others are trained to do the same thing on Sunday: they befriend the visitors, make them feel at home, get them to start talking, and invite them to come back. This helps to characterize the church as friendly and welcoming. In this upper-middle class neighborhood the people don't have material needs, but Ray says, "These people are used to a world where people lie, cheat, and steal. They need someone to be interested in them and care about them, and that's where we come in. We tell them that we are glad to see them and they know we are not lying." Ray feels that this helps to pull people towards LBC.

As practiced in many other



### Testimony of Megan Babich

Hello! My name is Megan Babich, and I am 18 years old. I became a Christian when I was 15 years old. One of my best friends, Tom MacQueen, whom I met in 8th grade, took me to his church on December 27, 2001 for the "blitz." It was a night I'd never forget. At about midnight, the guest speaker, Pastor Rodney, gave us a speech. He had us all close our eyes and imagine Jesus after he's been beaten and crucified. He said, "Imagine him looking at you with his blood-filled eyes and saying, I love you!" "I did this for you..." That was the push I needed. I was raised a Catholic, and I believed in God. But I'd never even heard about the rapture, or any of the other things that the Catholic Church leaves out. I always thought you had to work to get to Heaven. Pastor Rodney and Tom both helped me to see that, as Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." It was at that moment when Pastor Rodney spoke that I realized I wouldn't be going to Heaven unless I accepted Jesus. It was like someone had me in a room with the lights off, and I was running in circles trying to get out. Jesus turned the light on for me...

Thank you to everyone in this church who helped me to know the Lord—Justin who led me through prayer, and Tom who brought me to this church.

### Baptism Testimonial of John Luther

When I was younger, I went to church every week with my parents. Throughout my life, I have always made it a point to hang-out with good and decent people. If someone I knew was doing something objectionable, I would exclude myself from their activities. I have always considered myself a believer and a Christian, but since I was not reading the Bible I was naïve about many things. I don't think I truly knew what it meant to be saved. For many years, my parents encouraged my family and I to go to church. For a long time we knew we needed to go to a church, but failed to do so. We were also encouraged by several family friends to do the same, and a couple of them are sitting in the pews today, and I would like to thank them personally and publicly.

I did it, I took their advice, in September of 2002 I took the first steps and went to the Wednesday night Bible study, the class was "What the Bible Teaches." It opened my eyes and changed the outlook on my life and of my families. Soon after, I prayed and asked Jesus Christ to become my personal savior. When I was praying, chills went up and down my spine like I had never felt before; I knew that He was truly listening to me.

My priorities have changed, and I have been reading and/or researching the Bible daily without fail. I wish to become baptized today in obedience to God's word and in front of all these witnesses.



assemblies, each visitor is given a welcome packet and asked to share their address. On Monday morning, letters inviting them to return are already in the mail. The website usually brings in a visitor every month as well, and people often e-mail, asking what the church believes. This means of communication can lead to evangelistic conversations and is a non-threatening way for seekers to ask questions.

One unique idea that LBC tried to become better known in the community was by holding a Car Show. In Detroit, where owning a nice car is as basic as food on the table, this was a great method of drawing attention to themselves. A local newspaper heard about it and featured the show in an article with photos. "You have to know your area," says Ray. "In Detroit, if you put a sign up for a car show, people will come."

In assessing evangelism pro-

grams, Ray says that you can't get discouraged or measure your success by numbers of people who are getting saved. "If you take, for example, our Car Show, nobody came to Christ as a result of the event, and we didn't get a chance to share the gospel. But did we accomplish our purpose? Yes, because the community knows where we are and who we are," Ray says.

Following the Breaking of Bread meeting each Sunday the believers have a fifteen-minute "Family Huddle" to share announcements or to pray for specific things like mission trips. They have tried to take announcements completely out of the teaching time as they generally tend to be of no interest to visitors. During the Family Bible Hour the elders want the gospel to be woven into the message. Steve Collard, who also serves as an elder, says, "We have so many visitors in this hour that it is just a waste if we let the

opportunity slip by. This may be the only time that they hear the message."

Baptism Sundays (which happen about four times per year) also provide an avenue for the gospel to be presented and heard. Those who are going to be baptized write out their testimony, attend a class, and are interviewed by the elders. They are also encouraged to invite their unbelieving friends and family to the event. The sermon on a Baptism Sunday is always evangelistic. Testimonies are read, and the chapel family rejoice together about the new believers in Christ. "To me, this is one of the greatest things we have going," says Steve, "We celebrate people coming to Christ, and all these unsaved people are sitting there watching."

#### Drive them in, fill them up

Lakeside Bible Chapel is easy to find; its well-lit sign facing the busy street in this Detroit suburb beckons "whosoever" to come on in. Its use of

time-honored traditional assembly programs has continually brought people to its doorstep. But it's this congregation's unflagging follow-up philosophy that won't let unbelievers here in Motor City—anyone who is hungering after something more satisfying than a new car—leave without finding fulfillment in Jesus.

**LAKESIDE BIBLE CHAPEL**  
 39939 HAYES RD  
 STERLING HEIGHTS MI 48313-5728  
 voice: (586) 247-5226 or (586) 247-5801  
 fax: (586) 247-7920  
 web site: <http://www.lbchapel.org>



### Baptism Testimonial of Kelly Luther

I started attending Lakeside Bible Chapel in September 2002 with my husband John and our two children Brittany and Brandon. Lakeside Bible Chapel is helping me grow as a Christian. On December 13, 2002, my husband and I met with Ray Gonzalez. During this meeting, Ray had asked me if I had been saved? At that time, I was not saved. I had always believed in our Lord Jesus Christ but did not know what it meant to be born again.

Later that afternoon when I prayed, I asked Jesus to come into my life. I felt this feeling of peace and excitement come over me knowing that I am now a Child of God. I couldn't wait to tell my husband the good news about being saved. I continue to look forward to my walk with the Lord, I know he will always be there when I stumble.

I was brought up in the Catholic faith, and based on their traditions; I was baptized as an infant. I am older now, not only physically but also spiritually. I have more of an understanding of what baptism is about. I wish to be baptized here today under my own free will and to be obedient to God's word.

I would like to thank Ray Gonzalez and the other pastor/elders for their guidance in my walk with Jesus. I would also like to thank the Lakeside Bible Chapel community for welcoming my family and myself so warmly into this church.

# Des Moines Gospel Chapel: Anchored in God's Word, Harbored in His Love

**Jesse Lange**

Des Moines is a waterfront community just south of metro Seattle in Washington, "the Evergreen State." Most places in town offer a glimpse of the Puget Sound where ferry boats, private yachts, and sailboats share the calm water that has been inviting tourists and comforting residents for years. The people are friendly here. The climate is temperate. It stays green all year. Wild blackberry bushes flourish everywhere. It's no wonder many residents plan to live here for life!

Des Moines Gospel Chapel has become a fixture in this town. Believers began gathering during World War II, and by 1955 DMGC was established on a corner lot in the center of town where it built a reputation in the community as a family church that teaches the Bible and puts Christ at the center of its ministry.

## The Way God Meant it to Be

Meet Dave and Patti Cramer. In 1977 Dave was invited to a Men's Retreat at Lakeside Bible Camp; while there he heard the gospel and placed his faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Dave and Patti were dating at the time, and the next few months were rocky for their relationship as Dave grew in his faith. Six months after Dave's conversion, Patti gave her life to Christ, and the couple was married. They have been active in the church family ever since, commit-

ting their lives to serving the Lord at DMGC. Dave has served as an elder for many years, and Patti serves as the Children's Ministry Coordinator, as well as overseeing the Junior High ministry.

Interviewing Patti at a café next to the chapel, I asked her why she invests so much of her life into the ministries at DMGC. "I think it's the way God meant it to be," she said. "God moved the people at Des Moines (the chapel) to invest in Dave and me, and I feel responsible to give in return." That same belief is shared by numerous families in the church who have grown up benefiting from an atmosphere of discipleship and training that has been transferred from generation to generation. Patti organizes many of the efforts DMGC makes to bring Christ to the community around them. Many of these programs focus on reaching children, and the church has seen much fruit come from them over the years.



## The Right Combination

ACTION Club was designed by several men from the chapel as a Bible study and Scripture memory program similar to AWANA. ACTION is for children in 3rd through 6th grade and meets weekly during the school year. Besides benefiting chapel kids and being an outreach to children in the community, ACTION has been a great tool for training teen and adult leaders to evangelize and disciple. ACTION incorporates studies in Genesis, Mark, and Acts with fun group activities and a wood shop.

You need only to say "Day

Camp" and the entire church gets excited! DMGC has hosted Day Camp at the chapel since 1982. For a week each summer the chapel is transformed into a virtual theme park of activities and classes, and attracts over a hundred kids from the church and the community. Day Camp leaders work hard for weeks preparing the activities, messages, and one-to-one discussions that make up the program. Day Camp equips believing youth and adults to share the gospel using the "bridge" illustration in hopes of connecting kid's hearts with the reality of sin, judgment, and



forgiveness through the cross of Christ. Patti has worked in the Day Camp program for many years, seeing it as a tremendous tool for winning souls to Christ. She confessed, "It's a combination of everything together-the speaker, the games, the fun and the one-to-one time-that is so effective

in reaching kids. Every year we see five to ten kids make professions of faith!" On average at least 40% of the kids in attendance each year have little to no knowledge of the Bible. "For some, Day Camp is their first impression of what Jesus is like," Patti said.

Once a week each July, DMGC hosts a unique summer program for children age four to ten called Take-Off. Children are invited to spend three and a half hours engaged in fun activities and Bible stories. Child Evangelism Fellowship curriculum is combined with crafts, games, and field trips, offering an exciting and attractive alternative to mid-summer doldrums. Moms are free to "take-off" to make the

most of a break of their own while the kids enjoy the weekly adventure. Some DMGC women have used this time to host evangelistic Bible Studies with unsaved friends while their children attend Take-Off.

## Tag Team Ministry

The people at Des Moines believe that summer camp is a powerful tool in reaching kids with the gospel. Des Moines Gospel Chapel is part owner of Lakeside Bible Camp and plays a major role in staffing its programs. Located on the southern tip of Whidbey Island in Clinton,

Washington, Lakeside Bible Camp runs ten weeks of camp every summer as well as a variety of weekend retreats throughout the fall, winter, and spring. People at DMGC appreciate the media-free environment that Lakeside offers; free from routine distractions, they can focus on spiritual things with their peers. DMGC views LBC as a key ministry to their church, both for the edification of believers and ministry to unbelievers. DMGC's full-time elder, Mac Sauerlender, is the VP for Operations at Lakeside Bible Camp and often leads the Family Camp program there. So many children and teens attend LBC each summer from Des Moines that they often hire a school bus to transport them to and from camp! Many teens from the youth group serve at LBC in the TCL (Training in Christian Living) program, as Cabin Leaders, or on Summer Staff, and they look forward to the ministry opportunity all year long. DMGC has developed a deep loyalty to camp among its children and adults, and they have reaped the fruit of their partnership with Lakeside over the years. Many people come to Christ through the ministries of Lakeside Bible Camp each year, and Des Moines saints play a part in nearly every profession of faith.

In Patti's mind, all of the ministries to children at Des Moines work together to facilitate growth. "They might get saved at camp," she said, "but we need to follow up with them through the ministries at the church."

## Mobilizing the Youth

Jeff Riley, Youth Director at Des Moines, believes that teens are encouraged in personal evangelism

through his program. “We convey to our kids that people are important to the Lord—we want our young people to learn to love people like the Lord loves them,” he said. “We do our best to ensure that Youth Group is a tool to assist young people in reaching their friends for Christ. Young people want community. Our young people have no fear about bringing their unsaved friends to youth group; they know they won’t be embarrassed or rejected. In fact, they know the group will love them and accept them like any other person in the group.” Jeff believes that evangelism at DMGC is a team effort. His young people are strongly encouraged to participate in the outreach programs of the church (Day Camp, ACTION Club, and the summer ministry of LBC), and many of them serve together on multiple ministries. “The high school ministry is not an island—it’s an integral part of what we do as a whole church body. . . we may not bring our visitors to the point of decision each time we meet, but the truth of the gospel is evident in the songs we sing, the things we teach, and the behavior of our youth,” he said.

At DMGC, everything has a point, or P.O.I.N.T.:

- Praise God through everything we do.*
- Outfit believers to serve God and people.*
- Inspire Christians to pray at all times.*
- Nourish people to growth in Christ.*
- Transmit Christ to our world.*

The elders at the chapel emphasize one of these five tenets each year, and this year they are focusing on “T.” At the adult level, DMGC

leaders are currently being trained through the Evangelism Explosion program. By the end of the year over fifty adults in the church will have been through EE’s training program, having shared the gospel with numerous individuals in the process. Joel Babcock, part of the DMGC family, is convinced of the program’s effectiveness in spurring people toward sharing their faith, and he has led many people to Christ already, using the EE approach. Below is a portion of his testimony.

*My coming to know Christ as my Savior started like many; my life was falling apart. I found myself ill-prepared for marriage and being a father. It was out of desperation that I turned to the Lord.*

*In 1992 I had bought a house, right across the street from Dave Cramer, an elder at DMGC. By that time I had four kids less than nine years of age, and was in trouble! My wife and I weren’t getting along too well either. My wife’s brother “happened” to be one of those crazy born-again Christians, and he was watching all this take place. He and his wife started praying for us, and he also had someone send me an invitation to a Bible Study Fellowship class. He pestered me so much about going that I finally went, just to get him to leave me alone. BSF was doing a study on the life of Moses that year, and my discussion leader “just happened” to be Brad Russell, a deacon at Des Moines. I really enjoyed the class—nothing better than reading Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, right? So, all though I still wasn’t saved, I remember wondering what it would be like to actually go to church. I ended up going to one that had been started by Gail Harmon, who was now an elder at Des Moines.*

*Weird, huh? Do you notice certain “coincidences” here?!*

*That was in November of 1994, and I have been attending DMGC since 1997. Ever since I was saved I have been interested in evangelism and have tried to share the gospel with as many people as I can. Shortly after arriving at DMGC, I started meeting with Gail Harmon for breakfast. He was the first to suggest that I should get involved in Evangelism Explosion, and we started praying about that. It wasn’t until the summer of ‘03 that I was able to get trained, along with several others from the leadership at DMGC. The first class was a tremendous success. We saw about eleven people come to know the Lord. We followed that class up with another in the spring, and saw more fruit. We have great hopes for this Evangelism Explosion program at DMGC. It brings revival into the lives of those who go through the class as they learn how to share the gospel. It has energized the entire chapel and given all of us real hope as to the continued blessings of the Lord upon DMGC. Our focus this year for the program will be to improve the follow-up and discipleship of those who are won to the Lord. . . I would encourage anybody who is interested in EE to contact them and find out about the training they offer.*

— Joel Babcock

www.eeinternational.org  
 Evangelism Explosion  
 International  
 P.O. Box 23820  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33307

“I suggest to you that everything in the church hinges around evangelism,” said Joel. “The New Testament church preached the gospel—all of them! People tell me they don’t think they can evangel-

ize. I just tell them, ‘Come with me and we’ll do it together.’ I’ll never forget Brenda who, after joining me in sharing the gospel with a woman who accepted Christ, said, ‘Never in my life have I felt the presence of the Lord so powerfully!’”

I asked Joel why he thought believers have trouble sharing their faith. “They don’t know how to do it,” he said. “Once they try and realize they can do it, it changes them.” Some of the problem is due to closed social groups as well, Joel believes. “If you only hang out with Christian people all the time, you forget there are people out there who are hurting.” Joel himself was the hurting person when several guys from DMGC reached out to him and, like Patti Cramer, he wants to give in return for what the Lord has done in his life.

Opening their website reveals a catch phrase that describes the heartbeat of Des Moines Gospel Chapel: “Anchored in God’s Word; Harbored in His Love.” With each outreach program comes a solid grounding in the Word of God and a warm spirit of love. Appropriate to this city by the sea, God is making the saints at Des Moines “fishers of men.”

For more information about DMGC or its programs, please contact Mac Sauerlender at (206) 878-2145 or mac@dmgc.org  
 www.dmgc.org  
 www.lakesidebiblecamp.org



# Verdad en Amor: Offering Houston God's Truth in Love

Jesse Lange

Jesus spent his life serving people. His days were filled with helping the weak, healing the sick, and feeding the poor. Oftentimes Jesus would meet the physical needs—the felt needs—of the people before offering to meet their spiritual needs. He would package the truth in compassionate charity. This philosophy is the heartbeat of God's people at the Iglesia Christiana Evangelica—Verdad en Amor (Truth in Love).

The people at I.C.E. Verdad en Amor have been meeting together in the Lord's name since 1964. At that time they occupied the garage of South Houston Bible Chapel in Texas and held their meetings in Spanish. The elders at the time and other leaders saw a need to reach the growing Spanish-speaking community in the Houston area with the gospel, and by 1969 their fellowship had grown to 120 people. Establishing a daughter church in 1981, ICE continued to reach out to local Hispanics.

This assembly of God's people determined to characterize its evangelistic approach within the Brethren movement with an emphasis on community service. With this philosophy of ministry in mind, in 1994

some of the leaders established a separate nonprofit organization, the Christian Family Center, to serve as their primary tool for connecting with the Hispanic community in their area. But where would they house it? By 1995 they were reaching capacity at their facility again, and it was at this time that the Lord miraculously provided an opportunity for the church to purchase a sixteen acre "jungle" along the eastern city limits of Sugar Land, on the southwest side of Houston, for just under 50 cents per square foot. Under the leadership of Daniel Martin, Daniel Dominguez, Hugo Vainstein, and Daniel DiCesare, the land was soon to be transformed into a tremendous center for the Lord's work.

The heavily wooded, untamed, nature wilderness was filled with thick undergrowth and swamps. Snakes and bees did their utmost to protect their territory as a small crew of persistent men sacrificed their nights and weekends over the course of an entire year hacking through the unkempt forest. Leaving certain trees and shrubbery strategically in place, what emerged was a beautiful landscape that would provide a pleasing setting for the min-

istries to come.

ICE's philosophy was to create a campus that would attract Hispanic families from the area. Their first priority after clearing the overgrowth was to build a professional-grade soccer field, equipped with lights for night time use. Latin culture adores soccer, and the leaders at ICE wanted to harness that passion and use it to build God's church. "Football" in Latin countries is a source of great pride for the people, yet for many it is accompanied by alcohol, violence, and crime. ICE and the CFC have offered a different approach to the sport, usually beginning each game with a prayer. "We don't allow any foul language or bad behavior here on our field. We tell people, 'This is a Christian soccer school-and we are doing this for you-but you must abide by our rules,' and they respect them," said Daniel Martin, who is often



found visiting with parents or spouses of participating soccer players. "Word gets around that our soccer program is clean and safe for the children, and that attracts the parents."

A beautiful field was constructed within the first year that soon became a key drawing card for attracting new families to the church. Santos Cuchila, at that time a "pre-Christian" as they say at ICE, used to drop his family off at the church for the meetings. On one visit, Daniel Martin literally stopped him in his car and, as a result of friendliness and interest in Santos' spiritual life, Santos felt convicted; he was afraid to even enter the church premises from that day on and avoided Daniel by dropping his kids off at the corner. Through a series of conversations and prayer, Daniel was able to help Santos work through some difficult personal problems, and eventually he led Santos to Christ! Today Santos directs the soccer program, produces the church bulletin, hosts a sports program three days a week on a Spanish radio station in the area, and assists CFC with the Low Income Taxpayers program!

## Getting the Word Out

CFC has built up its ministry to currently run a broad spectrum of programs (heavily staffed by individuals from the church) that include English as a Second Language, Spanish, Preparation for Citizenship, GED preparation, soccer school and soccer leagues, swimming lessons, Mother's Day Out, children's camps, and Vencedores (Overcomers), a program for individuals seeking healing from deep emotional hurts.

CFC also runs a series of annual service events that expose them to the community. Daniel Dominguez, CPA for an international accounting firm and elder at the chapel, oversees the Low Income Taxpayer's Clinic, which is partially funded by the IRS. Two local newspapers advertise for this event as well as for Forums for

Immigration, Hepatitis B vaccinations, National Day of Prayer meetings, marriage seminars, and more. This August, CFC hosted a health fair on campus that attracted 4,600 people for children's vaccinations, blood pressure tests, and health education. As a result, several families visited the chapel the following Sunday, and two people professed faith in Christ!

ICE and the CFC advertise for their programs using citywide radio broadcasts and television programs, the combined weekly audience of which exceeds 75,000 viewers. On one Christian Spanish radio station they broadcast a sports program three times a week and an income tax education program. Each week they broadcast a Bible study on an English-speaking radio station, and they participate in a weekly Spanish television program. "When Billy Graham comes to town, thousands of dollars are spent advertising for his crusades, yet a majority of people who attend them say they heard about it through a friend. It would seem that the advertising dollars are a waste. But when people are invited to attend, they remember seeing and hearing the advertisements on the television and radio shows, and it has instant credibility with them—they feel like it is an important event, so they attend," reasoned Daniel Dominguez. CFC wants name recognition within the community, and it is earning it.

I had the privilege of meeting Flor Garcia while visiting the church. I asked Flor what attracted her to ICE. "I saw in the people here a genuine love and acceptance," she confessed. "Every time we came, the people loved us and were available." Flor, a young widow from Venezuela, had come to Houston when her daughter became ill and was not given any hope for survival. At the hospital she met Daniel Dominguez Jr. who invited her to the church as she did not know anyone in the US. Six years later and after many operations Kimberly is alive and well! Flor has

remarried and recently obtained her GED certificate after taking classes at the CFC.

## Meeting Felt Needs First

In the book *Giving Back: Using Your Influence to Create Social Change* by Merrill J. Oster and Mike Hamel (Navpress), Daniel Dominguez concurs with some social entrepreneurs when saying, "You have to meet people's felt needs first. If those needs are physical, they have to be addressed. But meeting physical needs will only produce short-lived results unless people also experience a spiritual change. The spiritual aspect is the key. We start with the surface problems, but work toward the root issues, which are spiritual."

Sharing God's truth in love often brings its own burdens on this group of shepherds. Some families have come into fellowship at ICE through difficult personal trials and family tragedy. Marcos and Marlene Avila share their testimony below.



Our family, my wife, a three year old boy, a six year old girl, and me, came to the United States to work for a better future. We had several odd jobs at the



beginning, and another daughter was born here. Several years passed, and one day on the way to work, we saw a sign announcing the construction of a Christian church. As we were Catholics, we didn't get interested in it. However, as Lizeth, our youngest daughter, grew up, she wanted to learn how to play soccer. A friend from work informed us that the same Christian church had started a soccer program for children, so our daughter became a soccer player there. One day we had a family problem, and although we weren't used to visiting there and we didn't know anybody, we decided to attend. We found a pastor there that not only listened to us but also helped us, and most importantly, prayed for us. This was the first time we prayed too—the way believers do it. Then we began visiting this church and we accepted the Lord as our Savior.

At this moment we didn't know that all this was to be the way the Lord had prepared us for the most difficult time of our lives. Our son became of age and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. Soon after on a Thanksgiving Day visit home, he was involved in an automobile accident that took his life. He was only 22.

Life stopped for us. We were out of answers. We didn't know how to start again. With the help of the pastors, their families, and the support of praying brothers and sisters from our church, we could feel that the Lord was with us, giving us consolation and care, and, of course, peace.

It is incredible that our daughter's interest in soccer is what the Lord used to bring us to Him.

—Marcos and Marlene Avila

"A lot of the efforts we make to advertise ourselves in the community seem like a waste of time if you look for immediate results," confessed Daniel Dominguez, "but when the need comes, people will remember hearing about us, and we want to be the church they come to for help." He admitted, "Marcos and Marlene probably came to the soccer program for a year and never cared about the church until there was a need. Many people

make use of the various ministries at CFC and we don't see them again until they have a need—but when the need comes, they call us. That's the philosophy behind what we do."

### Reaching the Family People

ICE loves children. "We are a family people. We love on the children, and by showing them so much love we win their parents," said Daniel Martin. The elders believe that reaching the Hispanic community requires understanding the Latin respect for family, and they respond to their culture with opportunities for family interaction and support. To assist them in connecting with families, ICE built a beautiful swimming pool on the campus for swimming classes, parties, summer camp programs, and youth activities. Children of all ages are increasingly populating the pool activities as word travels within the community.

Swimming is not the only way the church connects with children. ICE is a licensed day-care facility. Mother's Day Out is one program that assists in ministering to moms by providing trained supervision, fun activities, and Bible lessons for a few hours two days a week. ICE is looking forward the day when it will provide full-time day care to children of working mothers.

Anyone between the ages of 4 and 11 is eligible to participate in Team Kid, a Saturday program during the school year that incorporates fun activities with Bible lessons and one-to-one discipleship. Perla Benavides, a young girl at the chapel, came to know Christ through Team Kid, and in her testimony she said, "I remember the moment they told us about Abraham . . . I believed that in the same way that he had faith in God, I should follow his example. This led me to accept Jesus as my Savior."

### The Bait Determines the Catch

ICE is connecting with youth as well. Ruben Martin, after serving on

the mission field in Australia for a number of years, joined the team at ICE two years ago as the chapel's full-time youth worker. Sharing the same vision as the elders, Ruben believes that reaching out to youth involves listening to their urgent needs and taking those needs to God in prayer. He regularly connects with teens through his willingness to listen and his gentle, friendly acceptance. "The Lord said to Peter, 'I will make you a fisher of men.' I tell the youth, 'The most important thing you need when you fish is bait—more than anything else, your bait determines what you will catch,'" Ruben said. Believers in the youth group are encouraged to participate in the chapel outreach programs and to seek out visitors on Sunday mornings or at youth group meetings. Ruben reminds them that friendliness and acceptance are essential to connecting with visitors. Ruben also leads the Primeros Pasos class—First Steps—which introduces visitors and new believers to basic Bible doctrines and the practices of the chapel. Several teens from the youth group have joined Ruben during the four-to-five week course, being trained how to lead it in the process.

### Passion for God

Iglesia Christiana Evangelica—Verdad en Amor—has a passion for God and compassion for people. That's who they are and what they do. They follow the Great Commandment and the Great Commission with Ephesians 4:15 as their guide—"but, speaking the truth in love, grow up in all things into Him who is the Head—Christ." As the Apostle said in 1 John 3:18, "Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth."

For more information about ICE/CFC or its programs, please contact Daniel Dominguez at (713) 986-3139 or [ddominguez@bdo.com](mailto:ddominguez@bdo.com) [www.centrofamiliarcristiano.net](http://www.centrofamiliarcristiano.net)

## Stratford Park:

### A Refreshing Example of New Testament Principles at Work

#### Angie DeArment

The Lord Jesus said "I will build My Church," and the history of one local church in the midwest shows how He is using a combination of diligent disciples and demographics to do it.

Stratford Park Bible Chapel is a thriving assembly located in Champaign, Illinois. Champaign's population (including that of Urbana, Champaign's next-door neighbor) is around 100,000. It lies 140 miles south of Chicago, 120 miles west of Indianapolis, and 170 miles northeast of St. Louis. Champaign is home to the University of Illinois at Urbana-

Stratford Park Bible Chapel is the church home of 85 permanent families. It has 63 children on its Sunday school roll. It is also the church home-away-from-home for a large number of students from the University of Illinois-Urbana, many of whom are affiliated with Campus Crusade for Christ. The facility was expanded in 2001 to include offices, classrooms, a gym, and a new kitchen, but the congregation currently has to meet in the gym on Sunday mornings as it has outgrown its main auditorium.

is concerned, Stratford Park likes to experiment and try new ideas. Ken says, "To me it's pretty simple: the church is in the world to fulfill its mission of expanding the kingdom through outreach, training, and worship. The vision at Stratford is to do that well. Not to just focus on one thing, but to keep a balance, and to do it all well. As far as outreach is concerned, you can't just talk about it—you have to do it."

Adult members of the congregation have the opportunity to receive training during Adult Sunday School. They have used a Navigator video series, "Living Proof," for the past seven or eight years, which they have found to be effective. They have also conducted an evangelism methodology class to help people become more comfortable in sharing the gospel.

One key development in sustaining evangelism as an emphasis at Stratford has been the formation of an outreach committee. This committee meets regularly to strategize about evangelism, and also to work at becoming examples for the congregation. They want their lives to exemplify their commitment to evangelism, so they are not just organizers, but doers. They work as a team holding each other accountable, furthering their own training, and praying for contacts they are working with.

About five years ago, Stratford's outreach committee planned an



Champaign, whose website states that "Champaign-Urbana . . . is a place where the sense of community found in small cities and towns meets the outstanding cultural and entertainment opportunities usually associated with major metropolitan areas" ([www.uiuc.edu](http://www.uiuc.edu)).

Stratford Park was built to grow, situated in a busy area of town with ample land available for expansion.

Ken Raymond is the full-time worker at Stratford, serving alongside 5 elders and 7 deacons. He and his wife, Tascha and their four children have been in Champaign since 1994.

As far as evangelistic outreach



aggressive series of events for the purpose of creating personal contacts for friendship evangelism. One such event involved sending out 5,000 flyers advertising a Car Care Clinic to be held on the weekend of Mothers' Day. The offer was for a free oil change, which kept the men of SPBC hopping as they serviced around forty cars. Inside each car they left a packet of information that included an evangelistic booklet by Greg Laurie, information about the chapel, and a chocolate candy car.

In the summer, the committee planned a clothing spree at the chapel, at which clothing was collected and then given away. The fall schedule included a block party in September and a pancake breakfast in November. Again, the neighborhood was invited via mailing flyers and everything was provided free of charge. The idea was to make it fun and inviting. The block party provided free hamburgers and hotdogs in a carnival setting with a trampoline, face painting, and a dunk tank. Similarly, the pancake breakfast featured a demonstration on bee-keeping by an orchard owner well known in the community. "A lot of organization, detailed planning, time, and energy were spent by the outreach committee on making these activities go well—and they did go well," says Ken.

Ken believes that the events were successful in the sense that they put Stratford Park Bible Chapel on the map as far as the community was concerned. A lot of interest in the chapel was generated and the original goal of creating contacts was realized. Unfortunately, however,

the outreach committee discovered they weren't prepared to follow up on all the contacts that were made. "So much energy went into the events that there wasn't enough energy left for actual evangelism, but there are people at the chapel today because of those events," says Ken.

Ken feels that their evangelistic efforts would be more effective if a second committee was formed to hold special events while the outreach committee focused on evangelism and conducted investigative Bible studies. That way, the contacts made could be immediately encouraged to attend an ongoing class among believers who would focus on evangelizing them. "You need to have all your cylinders firing at once," Ken says. That's the vision at Stratford Park. They are still in the process of fulfilling it, with God's help and blessing.

Stratford Park does take a strong initiative with visitors.

One of the elders is

responsible for making contact with new faces. He gets names and phone numbers and ensures that they are contacted within the week and invited out for lunch.

When it is evident that a core group of about eight to ten regular visitors may be considering making SPBC their church home, they are invited to attend a newcomer's class. This class is held over the course of three Sunday evenings, at various elder's homes. The atmosphere is informal: a meal, followed by the class. The elders relate some Plymouth Brethren history and background and cover SPBC's statement of faith, as well as topics such as church government, women in ministry, missions and ministries. Finally they discuss membership according to New Testament principles, stressing the organic nature of the church. Those who belong to Christ and who are willing to commit themselves to the fellowship at SPBC are members. This class is an effective way of getting to know these folk while giving them a

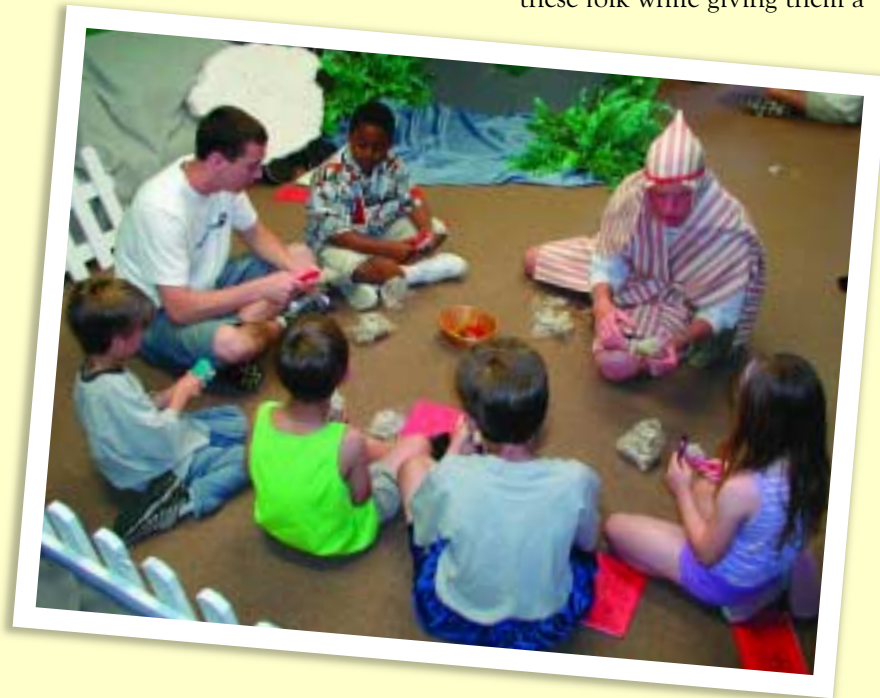
good, solid understanding of what Stratford stands for. A week or two after the class concludes, the elders visit newcomers in their home. They are asked to share their own personal testimony of how they came to know the Lord and if they would like to commit themselves to the fellowship and be publicly recognized.

There's no doubt that Stratford Park's growing congregation can be attributed in part to its being blessed with several evangelists—people who not only have the God-given gift and zeal to share the gospel but enjoy it, are not shy about it, and are out there doing it. Bob Whatoff, an elder, works with InterVarsity reaching out to international students. The local director of Campus Crusade and other staff members, also call SPBC home. This connection has led to a large number of students attending from the University of Illinois, all who are very active in evangelism. Many new believers attend Stratford Park as a result of being saved through the ministry of Campus Crusade and InterVarsity. Ken says, "Stratford has an influence in [the students'] lives, but they are not evangelizing for Stratford's benefit, so to speak; they are sharing the gospel under the auspices of other organizations. But the result is that new converts often end up in fellowship at Stratford Park." Of course, SPBC is happy to have the opportunity to help these young Christians to grow in their faith.

This church is growing, growing, and growing. God has blessed the

efforts of His people at Stratford Park with a thriving congregation that includes mature believers, eager young people, and babes in Christ. SPBC is a healthy, dynamic assembly that people want to be a part of. They want to be disciplined and to grow spiritually. This church is a refreshing example of New Testament principles at work, prompting growth not only in numbers, but in maturity in the faith.

**STRATFORD PARK BIBLE CHAPEL**  
 2801 W. Kirby Ave  
 Champaign, IL 61822  
 (217) 398-6778



# Fellowship Centered Evangelism

Jack Spender

Waterbury, Connecticut is an old, industrial city of about 100,000 people located on the Naugatuck River in the west central part of the state. The big brass mills that once made it the “Brass City of the World” are largely gone. Unemployment is high, and there is no shortage of crime and corruption. The diverse cultural makeup and inner city mentality all provide an ideal setting for the entrance of light and good news—really Good News. The Lord has worked in hearts, and Waterbury Christian Fellowship is one shining result.

Begun in 1997 following several years of informal fellowship and Bible study in the home of a newly converted couple, this young assembly of about one hundred people has just completed its fifth move to a new (rented) location in a downtown city school. We do have a building fund, but up to this point the Lord has led so clearly—sometimes miraculously—in opening and closing doors, that we are reluctant to part with this “moving of the cloud” in favor of a more settled location. Admittedly, moving has its trials and joys.

The age range of our assembly leans toward young families, although we do have some “grandparents” to help with the growing number of small children. An annual VBS week and a Christian day school help us in reaching out to neighborhood kids and in discipling our own.

## The Book of Acts — More than History

Our church’s philosophy of evangelism is based on our understanding of the book of Acts rather than on any particular proof text. The early church was blessed with strong leaders and great fellowship, and those factors are important to us. The church met regularly for the four activities listed in Acts 2:42: teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers—all family activities that pertain to the relationship between the Lord and His people. We therefore center the life of our church around relationships as expressed by these four. This influences our outreach. The church gathers for worship and training and then returns to the world with the gospel. Witness in the world is, therefore, strongly influenced by the quality of life in the fellowship.

Our understanding of “fellowship” is much more than having a good time together. It means serious discipleship and ultimately a vision for reaching the lost. Good teaching is crucial since the Word of God builds the church. Music, announcements, prayers, etc. have their place, but when we gather to hear the Word of God we keep introductory matters to a minimum and give little place to entertainment in order that prime time can be devoted to the message of the day—consecutive, expository ministry, for the most part. Even Sunday

School is limited, so that a maximum number of adults can be present for the teaching. In fact, once a child finishes sixth grade, no classes are offered. As young adults, these young people are moved into the main auditorium to study with their parents.

Having been equipped (Eph. 4:11-12), believers are sent back into their world with a life-changing message of which they are living examples. Certainly there is freedom to use evangelistic methods and tools, but the personal witness of every believer is emphasized. We have several believers who seem to be evangelists by gift—and we encourage them—but the expansion of the work depends on the joy and enthusiasm of every believer to speak about the Lord, regardless of gift.

The ideal is for believers to win people to Christ and then bring them into the church family for discipleship. Very often, however, we see people bringing their unsaved friends with them to meetings just to check us out. Visitors are welcome to the assembly (and it is a rare Sunday without any), but they do not become the focus of the meetings. Rather, they are spectators of the love of Christ in action in God’s family. We try to make this whole matter of welcoming visitors as practical as possible. Every visitor is given a warm greeting by many of the “regulars.” In addition, it is our goal that every visitor should receive an invitation home to dinner or out to eat. This is no prob-

lem for those who have limited budgets or for college students who live on a campus, because anyone can take visitors out for lunch and present the receipt to the treasurer for a full reimbursement the following week.

## The Important Place of Informality

Growth of the assembly is expected as part of the nature of living things, and baptisms are held as needed. Integral to our mission of reaching people is our strong commitment to a small group ministry. We believe that God has blessed this effort over the years because the groups embody some basic biblical principles: the importance of hospitality and being in one another’s homes; the importance of the older training the younger; and the recognition that people need an informal setting in which they can be open about their lives and seek practical help and counsel.

Two guidelines have been keys to this effort. First, the small groups are primarily intended for fellowship and care. They are not Bible studies (although the Word is always opened), so they are not called “Bible studies” but “care groups” or “fellowship groups.” Second, from the start we were given the advice (which we proved to be sound) that small groups must never be included in the church’s schedule of activities as optional programs since most Christians are already saturated with programs and cannot absorb any more. Rather, small groups form an integral part of the life of the church for every believer. This is an important point, because new believers are

taught that to be in fellowship in this assembly means being faithful to attend the teaching hour and the Lord’s Supper on Sunday mornings and fellowship and prayer in homes during the week. Our midweek attendance through the years has exceeded eighty percent.

## Another Kind of Increase

Not only is growth of the assembly anticipated, but there is a strong desire to see new works planted as a corollary of growth. Once again, the small groups have played a part in this. As homes in the city or surrounding communities open for families to gather, reaching out to friends and neighbors not only makes for increase in the assembly but also presents the possibility of new assemblies being formed. Should a crowded small group be divided into two groups (as happened recently)? Or should a new assembly begin (as seems likely to happen in the coming year)? With eleven different groups meeting during the past season it was an exciting question to face, and we will likely face it again this fall.

In all of this, the only advertisement to unbelievers is satisfied Christians sharing their faith with others. There are no evangelistic programs or committees sponsored by the church, although individuals would be free to participate in any of these.

This cycle of equipping for outreach must be ongoing. Discipleship of new believers is crucial. The elders hold classes for new people. They teach them basic Bible doctrines, including simple assembly truths. Sisters meet weekly to build relationships, support the decisions

of the men, and disciple the younger women. The men of the church (including elders and deacons) meet to pray, to make decisions, and to share concerns in both temporal and spiritual matters. This is a primary discipling tool; it frees the elders to spend quality time in the Word and prayer when they meet separately. It also communicates the value that the elders are shepherds and lead from among the flock (1 Pet. 5:1).

Perhaps the above sounds unrealistic, as if there are no problems. Of course, that’s not true. But being part of a growing work that is filled with people who love the Lord, love one another, and love the lost, makes whatever trials we face worthwhile. One student from the west coast who has joined our fellowship put it this way: “I may continue in school, or I may get a job and work, but I’m not leaving Waterbury!” Somehow, telling people about the Lord is a little easier when you can’t wait to involve them in the family you love and that loves you in return—God’s family.



## The Heart of the Evangelist

What makes the evangelist tick? *Journey* has asked a number of leaders in evangelism in the Assembly movement to share their passion for the lost. You may find some of the answers surprising, but you will find that all of the answers stimulate a renewed commitment to evangelism.

## The Real Story

By Floyd Schneider



As a young married man, I sold fire alarms to pay the bills. My last call this particular day was to an elderly lady living alone in an apartment. The company had trained me to scare people into buying their fire alarms. I started into my rote presentation: Cobwebs hidden behind wooden walls could catch fire so easily; a short-circuited electrical wire might burn a house down in minutes.

Then her eyes stopped me. I caught a glimpse of her lonely soul.

The thought of her dying in an apartment fire seemed insignificant compared to what would happen to her if she died in her sins.

I put my script aside and shared the gospel with her. I left her reading a New Testament with a smile on her face. That was the last day I sold fire alarms.

It wasn't guilt that caused me to give her the gospel. It wasn't a sense of obligation. It wasn't because I believed that I had the spiritual gift of evangelism. I saw the lady's real need, and I just had to talk to her about the Lord.

Grandparents don't ramble on about their grandchildren out of guilt. Golfers don't talk about that

perfect shot because they feel obligated to. Teenagers don't quote from their favorite movies because they are exercising the spiritual gift of "movie discussion."

A passion for lost people does not grow out of guilt or obligation or spiritual gifting. This passion grows out of deep convictions and our love for the Lord Jesus. We love Him because He first loved us. If we really love Him, as we claim to do during our worship services, we will also share His passion for the lost. Our witnessing (or lack thereof) tells the real story of our love for the Lord.

## The Heart of An Evangelist

By Dave Rickert



There is nothing that will ignite the life of an assembly more than seeing lives changed by the power of the gospel. When a congregation observes that transforming power (up close), it will energize its worship, its prayers and its preaching. There will be a new environment of spiritual vitality. The joy and enthusiasm of new believers will revive the hearts of God's people. Our Lord's "Great Commission" will take on fresh significance. Jesus said, "Go....make disciples....

baptize....teach" Matt. 28-19-20! Notice the inspired order. Everything that we do in God's work starts with evangelism. "Go." You can't baptize and teach until you reach!

As a young preacher, I found great inspiration from the ministry of Welcome Detweiler in Durham, N.C. God used this man mightily in leading many people to Christ. Welcome's approach to ministry was simple and effective. He coupled clear gospel preaching with visitation. Every day he was out in Durham following up his messages with personal contact and conversations. Like our Lord, he made sinners his friends. His personal interest won a person's confidence

and led them to the Lord.

With God's help, I've tried to imitate that example. Every day I am out among the people of Conway. I ask the Lord to go before me and guide me in my contacts. It's amazing how one visit will often lead to others. I've discovered that a sincere love for lost people will encourage them to visit our chapel and, in God's time, bring them to faith in Christ. There's no joy like seeing people fall in love with our Savior! Over the years, my life verse for ministry has kept me going.... "Do not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9).

## I Am Not An Evangelist

by Kevin G. Dyer



I have a confession to make: I am not an evangelist, and I don't have the gift of evangelism.

My brother in law is an evangelist. When he gets on a plane, he asks for the middle seat so he can talk to the people on either side. I like the empty row—or at least an empty seat between my fellow traveler and me.

However, I have learned over the years that even though I don't have the gift of evangelism, I still have the responsibility of sharing the good news that Jesus can bring hope, peace and forgiveness to those around me.

My wife, Eloise, has the gift of evangelism, and she builds relationships easily, but I have to work at it a lot more. I have a deliberate plan to help me keep at it, other-

wise it will get lost in the other things I do. Christ's love for me compels me to reach out to others with compassion (2 Cor. 5:14), so I do two things to help me keep on track:

### 1. Pray for those around me who don't know Jesus.

I made a list of six neighbors whom I wanted to come to know Christ as Savior. Over the years, four of them have become believers. One of the men on my list was an attorney. After two years of discussions, he trusted Christ. His wife, their four children and their four spouses, and their ten grandchildren, have all come to Christ. A whole family was transformed by God's power! But it all started with deliberate praying.

### 2. Build relationships.

You build friendships first and then out of those relationships you will have opportunities to share

Christ. This past week we had a potluck supper at our house for the twenty-six adults who live on our street. Twenty-one came. We set up three tables and had six to eight at each. We asked that, at their table, each person should tell three things about themselves one of which should not be true. The others had to guess which one wasn't true. There was talking and laughter going on at each table.

Afterwards people thanked us and wrote us notes telling us what a good time they had. It put us on a new level of relationships and it has opened the door for building deeper relationships on a personal level so we can share the love of the Lord Jesus with some of them.

So for me, the non-evangelist, it is specific praying and building relationships that lead me to sharing the good news of salvation.

## Let's Talk About Jesus

by Joyce Barinowski



Talk! Talk! Talk! Talk radio. Talk TV. Internet chat rooms. Cell phones. Endless, mindless, worthless, incessant talk! The world and our lives are dominated by talk. Yet there is little value in it. "Let's Talk About Jesus," an old chorus, needs reviving! We Christians today are not "talking about Jesus" as we should.

There is a crying need for personal evangelism. "If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing," (2 Cor.4:3). Evangelism puts a sparkle in our lives; its enthusiasm is contagious.

Evangelism needs to be done. Why? The desire of God's heart is that all be saved. The love of Christ constrains us. Obedience to the Great Commission is our solemn responsibility. Each believer will be accountable at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The value of a soul destined for heaven or hell demands it, and the Lord's return is imminent.

We are not "talking about Jesus." Is it because of apathy, lack of love, or lack of conviction? Spreading the gospel can be done! But it is hard work. It involves prayer, time, sacrifice, sowing, watering, waiting, and reaping. Evangelism involves a clear understanding of the basics of the gospel, love for Christ and others, desire,

preparation, and dependence on the Holy Spirit. One may sow the seed, another is a second witness, someone else may reap; but we are born again to reproduce. Seek opportunities, love people, expect results. The Lord will enable you and graciously reward all efforts.

In the classic words of Bob Brown after leading a lady to Christ, "Is there a more exciting place to be than in the birthing room of eternity?" When we realize the message we have, the destiny of a soul, the blessedness of heaven, the reality of hell, we dare not witness. Talk! Talk! Talk! Talk about Jesus! If not me, then who? If not now, then when?

## Lord, Open Our Eyes

by Sam Thorpe, Jr.



Elisha prayed to the Lord to open the eyes of his servant to the unseen realities of the Lord's powerful army (2 Kings 6:15-17). When considering the passion and motivation needed for evangelism, my prayer for myself first, and secondly for the Lord's people today, is that our eyes might be opened to the realities of three key events: 1) the sufferings of Christ on the cross as he bore our sins, 2) the blessed hope of the saints caught up with Christ in the

glories of an eternity in heaven, 3) and the horrors of everlasting torment in the lake of fire reserved for those who reject Christ. I am convinced that the apathy and coldness of heart toward the lost today is due to the lack of seeing by faith the genuine reality of these three invisible yet life changing sights. May we pray like Elisha of old: Lord, open our eyes to these things of eternal importance (John 20:29).

The zeal for evangelism to harvest souls in fields now white and ripe for the gospel is certainly part of the fruit God desires to receive as illustrated in the parable of the sower. Our passion for the lost will

drive us to sow the seed, God's precious Word (Rom. 10:17). There are three things stated that will rob us of a fruitful harvest: cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches, and pleasures of this life (Matt. 13:22; Luke 8:14). These things will both discourage the sower from diligently getting out the Word and distract the sinner from receiving the transforming good news of the gospel.

Therefore, may our prayer be: Lord, open our eyes to the things of eternal importance and close our eyes to earthly things of no lasting value.



## Dr. MacLeod Asks

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

*I once shared a conference with a well-known itinerant preacher who told the congregation that he never used commentaries or study aids in the preparation of his messages; he relied solely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He implied that his practice was the correct one for all preachers. On the other hand, Charles Spurgeon said, "In order to be able to expound the Scriptures, and as an aid to your pulpit studies, you will need to be familiar with the commentators: a glorious army, let me tell you" (Commenting and Commentaries, 1). The late Art Farstad was told by William MacDonald at Emmaus Bible College, "Don't despise the commentaries." Who offered the better advice to young preachers, the preacher at the conference or Mr. Spurgeon and Mr. MacDonald?*

### Lois Henderson Responds:

Perhaps the greatest error of the conference speaker who told folks that he never used any commentaries or study aids was to say that his method was "the correct one."

Following that method in secular disciplines shall all historians, scientists, physicians (etc) disregard previous thought and discoveries? And if the Holy Spirit reveals correct teaching to him will not the same Holy Spirit reveal it to me thus eliminating my need for the Preacher's thoughts? If that Preacher wrote a book why should anyone read it?

*Lois Henderson  
Staten Island, NY*

### Lee Roy Birney Responds:

Mr. Spurgeon's recommendation of commentaries as necessary and Mr. MacDonald's warning not to despise them are right on target. The risen Savior gave gifts to the church, including teachers. To ignore their writings is to despise the Savior's gifts to the church.

Nevertheless, a young preacher is well advised to study a passage first on his own prayerfully seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit, then to check the commentaries in order to benefit from their knowledge and the Holy Spirit's work in them. The aim is both freshness and accuracy in one's exposition.

It seems to me that a refusal to use commentaries and study aids is more a sign of pride and laziness than of spirituality.

No last minute preparation for the young preacher! First a prayerful choice of the passage, then personal study accompanied by prayer seeking God's leading, then digging into commentaries and study aids, and the the final preparation for the specific ministry situation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

*Lee Roy Birney  
Senegal, Africa*

### David W. Baker responds:

I was intrigued by the question posed in the Winter 2004 issue regarding the use of commentaries. I admit that my answer might be somewhat skewed, since I have personal involvement in writing or editing in at least six commentary series or individual volumes.

It would be refreshing indeed if your preacher was consistent with his statement, and used only the Greek and Hebrew texts for his work, since any translation is de facto a form of commentary. Also, what does he do in his preaching? If he does anything more than reading the actual biblical text aloud to the audience with no exposition at all, he is providing commentary in his exposition. His words, if applied consistently, would disallow him using much of the preaching of our Lord, since portions of it consisted of interpreting (i.e. commenting on) Old Testament scripture (for one from among many examples, see Luke 24:27).

Maybe what he is reacting against is reliance upon the words

of human beings rather than the words of God himself. If we agree, why should we listen to his preaching? A believer does indeed need the skills and knowledge to be able to approach the Bible directly, not looking at it through the mediation of anyone else. However, God has also placed each of us into a body of fellow believers, which body, like Scripture itself, is able to provide needed 'correction and instruction in righteousness' (2 Tim. 3:16).

*David W. Baker  
Ashland, OH*

### Keith Walker Responds:

This response is in regard to the question of whether one should use commentaries in prepara-

tion for messages. I read the question with great amusement as it immediately struck me that the itinerate preacher is offering his commentary on if it is proper to use commentaries. It is a self defeating argument. If we are only to listen to the Holy Spirit, then why does he preach at all? We should all just get together and read the Bible. Is it not possible that the Holy Spirit can teach us what He teaches this preacher? Again, why listen to him at all? If commentaries are to be avoided, then why didn't God tell us this instead of using the comments from the itinerate preacher?

*Keith Walker  
San Antonio, TX*

### NEXT ISSUE'S QUESTION:

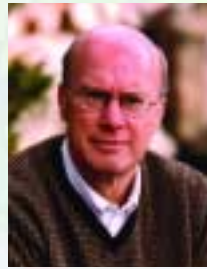
*Ernst Schrott, former president of Wiedenest Bible School in Germany, once made a careful distinction among the terms, "heresy," "error," and "difference of opinion." For example, an elder wrote to tell me that a brother "in fellowship" in his assembly strongly opposed the doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, this brother made quite a show of leaving a "Breaking of Bread" meeting because someone asked that The Doxology be sung. He said he objected to the Trinitarian line, "Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." My correspondent wanted to know if I considered this man's stand against the Trinity to be heretical. I told him that I did—in fact, I think most readers of Journey would agree. If rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity is heresy, what would you consider to be an "error?" What about a "difference of opinion?" I think we Christians in the Brethren assemblies are often careless in our use of the term "heresy." We need to recognize that there are errors and differences of opinion that are not heretical. My question is: What do you understand the word "heresy" to mean? How do you recognize it when you come across it? What are some examples of heresy? What are some examples of "error" and "differences of opinion?" Should we not treat a person differently who may be guilty of an "error" or may have a "difference of opinion" with us than we would a person who is a genuine heretic?*

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.

# Evangelize or Fossilize

Alexander Strauch

Edited by David MacLeod



*Editor's Note: This article is an edited transcription of a message delivered by Alex Strauch at the 2004 "Iron Sharpens Iron" Conference held on the campus of Emmaus Bible College.*

## Every Christian Is To Be Involved

Too many people think that the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) is just for evangelists, elders or missionaries. In Colossians 4:2-6 the great Apostle clearly demonstrates that everyone is to be proactive in evangelism.

*"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person."*

In this text the Apostle addressed the entire congregation, not just a select group. He charged them to devote themselves to prayer. Prayer is to be a priority among the people of God. A new freedom of access was opened to God through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Believers may come into God's presence any-time day or night with great confidence through the blood of Christ and in the name of Christ (Heb.

10:19-22; John 14:13-14).

Paul was a practitioner of his own words, so he immediately made two requests. First, he asked the Colossians to pray that God would open a door for him to preach the gospel (v. 3). It is a scriptural prayer to ask the Lord on behalf of any missionary or person in the Lord's work that they would have opportunities for evangelism. Paul's second request is that they would pray "that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak" (v. 4). Remarkably, this veteran missionary and preacher of the gospel asked for prayer for clarity in preaching the gospel.

Do you think it was easy for the apostle Paul in a Roman prison with polytheistic, pagan Roman guards to make the gospel clear? The gospel was almost unintelligible to these heathen Romans. The Christian message that a Jew had died on the cross as the Savior of the world and that one's sins would be forgiven as a result of his substitutionary death on the cross would be meaningless to them. It was not easy for Paul, and it is not easy for us today to explain the gospel to post-modern people. People today just don't comprehend the "one way only" gospel through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. So Paul asked the Colossians to pray that he will be clear in presenting the gospel to the Romans.

Paul's two prayer requests are followed by two charges to the Christians in Colossae. Each of the two charges parallels one of the

prayer requests. The first charge or exhortation is, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity" (v. 5). This parallels the first prayer request. They are to pray for open doors for Paul, and they themselves are to seize opportunities to communicate the gospel to outsiders, that is, unbelievers.

The second charge or exhortation is, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person" (v. 6). This parallels the second prayer request. They are to pray that Paul will have clarity in presenting the gospel, and they themselves are to speak graciously and clearly to unbelievers in order to win them.

The question often arises—we may express it verbally, or we may only think it in our minds—"Am I to evangelize? After all, I don't have the gift of evangelism. I'm sort of timid. I don't have that kind of personality." Our text gives a very clear answer to the question. Every single Christian is to devote himself to prayer, to walk in wisdom before the outsider, and to seize opportunities to share the gospel, that is, to evangelize with grace and clarity. That doesn't mean that every Christian has the gift of evangelism. It does mean that we all have a responsibility to our unbelieving neighbors, relatives, and fellow workers.

## Be Alert for Evangelistic Opportunities

The Apostle wrote, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders [that is, unbelievers]" (v. 5). We are to think of our unbelieving contacts with wisdom. We are "to make the most" of our opportunities. We are to use our intelligence, or God-given wisdom, to keep us alert to evangelistic opportunities. The word "opportunity" has the idea of buying something up—jumping on a sale.

For example, if you were a car salesman and someone walked on the lot, you would know exactly what this word means. You would think, "Here's an opportunity to sell a car, and I need to make money to support my family." You would seize that opportunity. If someone walked on the lot, and you said, "Oh my, there's a good baseball game on now," and you left the lot to watch it, you would have lost an opportunity. If you thought, "I just don't feel like talking about cars today. I'm awfully tired, and I talk about cars all the time. This customer can figure it out. If he wants to buy a car, he can come find me. I'm going to go lie down in my office in the showroom." No, you would never do that or you'd starve. Instead, you would seize the opportunity. You'd buy it up. You'd jump on it. That's what he's saying here. When an opportunity to share the gospel with an unbeliever arises, we are to seize it.

Campus Crusade for Christ tells us that every single person has as a minimum 75 people that he or she is in regular contact with. Some of us, because of our church contacts, may have hundreds of people that we are in contact with on a weekly basis. We all have contact with people at church, people at business, people in

the neighborhood, people that serve you in different ways at the grocery store, the UPS man, the mailman, the gas station attendant, the doctor, etc. Most of us have at least 75 people in our little networks. Some of us have hundreds. In other words, my dear friends, you and I have opportunities! They're all around us. Sometimes we are tripping over them, but we're not looking; we are not being alert.

My younger brother was a sleepwalker when we were in our teens. On a number of occasions, when my dad and I were in the living room talking, my brother would walk through, and he was sound asleep. We would talk to him, but he would not respond—he was sleepwalking. The amazing thing is that he did not walk into one piece of furniture. Many of us are sleepwalkers. We walk right past people and we don't even see them. They even come to our church meetings, sit next to us, say "Hello," and tell us their names. We may mumble a response, but we actually ignore them. We are sleepwalking. We are not awake or alert, and the opportunities go right past us.

Every time we go into a restaurant, someone is being paid money to be nice to us—I cannot get over that! That's an opportunity. All I have to do is be nice to them—be a little friendly and smile. It takes fewer muscles to smile than to frown. Just open a conversation. Give them your name and get their name. Joke with them a bit. It's an opportunity. Over the past few years my wife Marilyn has spoken in a friendly, courteous way to the trash man who stops in front of our house every week. In the summer she would often bring a Coke out to him. As they spoke he confided that he had marital problems, and she got him into

contact with one of our elders. Last year he was saved. Marilyn seized an opportunity. We walk right by such people. We don't see them. We are sleepwalking spiritually. Paul says, when you're with outsiders (unbelievers) open your eyes. Be wise toward them. Be intelligent towards them. They are people without the message of life.

Opportunities arise in our neighborhoods, and we don't seize them. For example, every time we have a snowstorm, it's an opportunity. Normally we see our neighbors briefly as they enter or leave their houses. But when it snows everyone comes out and spends time shoveling snow. We can shovel snow with them, or use our snow blowers to clear their walks. The Bible commands us to seize opportunities, and we either obey or disobey the command.

## Evangelistic Committees

There are specific ways that you as a local congregation can seize opportunities. Nothing has helped my home assembly more in the past few years than forming an evangelistic committee. This committee meets at lunchtime once every six weeks, and its purpose is to think of creative ways to evangelize, inform the assembly about them, and to plan for them. The committee's goals are to spread an atmosphere of evangelism in the church, identify all evangelistic efforts going on in the assembly, and identify people in the church who are interested in evangelism. The committee functions as a hub, center, or clearinghouse for everything evangelistic in the assembly—whether it be Sunday School classes, Vacation Bible School, Bible camp programs, etc. Let me encourage you, even if your initial efforts are small,

to form such a committee. Without such a committee your efforts will be inconsistent and hit-or-miss.

### Leaders and Evangelism

If the leaders in the church have no passion for evangelism, very little will happen. By “leaders” I, of course, mean the elders. But I also mean leaders on every level in the assembly—Sunday School leaders, small group leaders, youth ministry leaders, high school and college age leaders, etc. All the leaders must wake up to this subject and ask, “How does our particular ministry fit into the overall evangelistic thrust of this church? Which of our activities, with just a little adjusting, could be evangelistic opportunities?” Since most of us do not ask this question, we let opportunities go by. So leaders have to become a part of this. In our assembly we have several elders on the evangelistic committee. We’re not on this committee to add any more work to our busy schedules, but to show the church that this is important. You can’t tell the church it’s important and then have no part in it. Key Sunday school leaders and our youth leader are also on that committee. As a result concern for evangelism is being spread by leaders throughout the church.

### Elder Communication With the Church

Years ago we saw that leaders need to have time to communicate to the church. It’s so easy for the elders to be very busy eldering and yet not be communicating anything to the assembly. People start viewing the elders as “that back-room group” that opens the doors every week, prepares the elements for the Lord’s Supper,

and picks the Sunday preachers. Some in the congregation think that this is all that elders do.

At Littleton Bible Chapel we determined to regularly communicate to the congregation as a body of elders. Every week after the Lord’s Supper we have our little time with the congregation. At that time the people hear from the elders, and the elders share their heartbeat and set before them their vision for the future. Some weeks we give a report; other weeks we have a time of prayer or interview a visiting missionary. It is our time to communicate. Another large elder-run church I know puts a report of the weekly elder meeting in the church bulletin. They tell the people what was discussed, and they include prayer requests for the elders. However it’s done, the elders must do a good job of communicating with the congregation. And if evangelism is something you’ve been neglecting, you’ve got to verbally communicate that to them.

So think of a time when your elders can communicate something of their work, as well as their direction, values, vision, and guidance for the assembly. As elders, do not think you’re communicating with the people because you’re talking among yourselves. The elders can be speaking to themselves and the people in the congregation really don’t have a clue what’s on their minds. In some churches they might not even know who the elders are. So communication is extremely important—the elders have to be verbalizing.

### Fishponds

“Fishponds” is an expression that some have used for evangelistic opportunities. It is an important concept and one that has helped our

assembly. A fisherman knows that he has to go where the fish are. He has to go to a fishpond if he wants the possibility of catching fish. There are no fish in his bathtub, so he doesn’t fish there. There are evangelistic “fishponds”—opportunities to win people to Christ that are right in front of us, but that we are not seizing.

Let me give some examples of “fishponds.” Easter is the biggest fishpond of the Christian calendar. People who have no thought of Christian things will come to church on Easter—it is the most highly attended Sunday of the year. This past year many were open to religious things because of the film, *The Passion of the Christ*. In any case, Easter is a fishpond, a wonderful opportunity to evangelize. Your church can either seize the opportunity or sleepwalk right by it. Sadly there are churches that use Easter morning for a service totally unrelated to the Cross and the resurrection.

To make the most of this opportunity you must not wait until the week before Easter. You must start planning for it right after Christmas and the New Year. Twenty years ago our assembly started an annual Easter breakfast to which the congregation was encouraged to invite guests. We have sought to make this a beautiful, positive event with a full breakfast (eggs, bacon, sausage, and pancakes). Our people have grown to love this event, and they bring friends, relatives, and neighbors. We speak to the congregation about how to reach out to new people. This year we prepared invitations for the Christians to give to friends they felt would come. The whole church gets mobilized for this event, and weeks ahead of time prayer groups are organized to pray about the Easter morning service. Every year we have many visitors.

They have decided to go to church on Sunday, and they then decided to go where they would get a meal as well as a service. At such a service you will want to use your most gifted preacher to give an Easter message that is specially designed to communicate to unsaved people. You will also want to give special attention to your music program for this important day. Easter morning is our biggest annual evangelistic outreach as far as a church service is concerned. And the people want to be involved with something they can put their hand to—setting up, cooking, cleaning, greeting, etc.

A second “fishpond” is Christmas, another time of the year when people think about Christian things. All kinds of Christian music is being played on the radio. All of the groups in the assembly need to be alerted to make good use of Christmas. We all have a little niche in the church (a ladies group, a high school or college group, a small group fellowship). We need to ask, “How can we use Christmas to evangelize?”

Perhaps you could have a special party. As a family we’ve held neighborhood Christmas parties. Over the years every single one of our neighbors has attended, and they love it. We tell them ahead of time when the party is to be over, but many of them stay around and talk to one another. Most of these people are so busy that they never talk to one another during the year. At the Christmas party they can meet with their neighbors in a home. We have literature on one of the tables, and we invite them to our Christmas service.

Many people think it is nice to attend a religious service on Christmas Eve. Seize the opportunity with such people. Some time ago we rented a barn and had “Christmas

Eve on the Farm.” We provided lots of food and brought in a special speaker to give an evangelistic Christmas message. People were all dressed in heavy coats and draped in blankets. Large bonfires were burning outside, and it was a wonderful “Christmas” atmosphere. This is only one of many things that can be done when people think creatively about “fishponds.” It doesn’t have to be a big thing—perhaps just a rented room in a restaurant with a guest speaker.

A month or more before Christmas we make Christmas tracts, Christmas cards, and Christmas books available to the congregation. We encourage them to send them to their friends and relatives. They’ve got to be in the mail a good month in advance, so in early November we begin telling people to send tracts and books to their relatives. Most people send some kind of Christmas cards. It’s a time of year to connect with your unsaved relatives or people you’ve known from the past. The church should be prepared, all geared up, by the end of November for these things.

Thanksgiving has proven to be a big “fishpond.” We usually have just some small refreshment and an evening of music. Earlier in the month we remind the congregation it is the start of the holiday season, and it’s a nice time to invite people to a Thanksgiving evening. I would suggest that you make such an event an evening of testimony. But if you don’t plan ahead, nothing is going to happen. You’re going to have holiday after holiday pass you right by and you’ll say, “Oh, we’ve missed another opportunity.” Well, the Bible says walk with wisdom. Seize opportunities.

The Fourth of July can be a “fishpond.” Our chapel has sponsored

4th of July parties and picnics with all kinds of food and activities for the kids. Valentines Day can be a “fishpond”—invite friends and neighbors to a dinner with a special speaker who will speak on romance and recharging your marriage. There are many such fishponds that you can use to connect with the community. They’re opportunities looking you right in the face.

The key to this is planning ahead. It’s too late to be planning for the 4th of July on July 1, but you can start planning on July 1 for some things coming up in the fall. Talk to each group at the church. Ask them, “How are you going to use your group for some evangelistic opportunity this fall—at Thanksgiving or Christmas?” Every single group in the assembly should be seizing these opportunities. But if you’re not preparing people early enough, they won’t get anything done. That’s why you need some kind of committee that has a calendar and that will start warning people that the next big fishpond is coming.

### Be Prepared to Evangelize

#### Be Ready

The Apostle writes, “Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt” (v. 6). He is speaking of our conversation with “outsiders,” that is, unbelievers. We are to seize opportunities, but once we have seized them, we must speak with clarity and we must season what we say. The ancient world didn’t have the delicious, tender meats that we have today that we can preserve with tenderizers and refrigeration. The ancients would take meat and beat it to tenderize it, and they would salt it to preserve and flavor it. Paul is saying that our conversation

with unbelievers is to be salted, that is, it is to be attractively packaged.

Paul tells his readers that they need to know how to respond to each individual unbeliever the way the Lord Jesus responded. Elsewhere Peter wrote, “But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pet. 3:15). We are always to be ready to evangelize!

### Be Prepared

One message on evangelism every three or four years will not do the job. We need to be constantly and consistently training and helping people to seize opportunities and to be comfortable with opportunities. This means that as an assembly you must have sermons on evangelism. But more than that is needed. You will need to have classes on evangelism. Even if only one or two people show up for the class, you need to have it. You need to get started at some place.

At our assembly we’ve done a number of things. A couple of times a year we have classes on personal evangelism during the 11 o’clock Sunday service. We take some people out of the preaching service for a two-week course. One of the elders will give them training on the content and methods of evangelism. If one of our missionaries is home and is an excellent evangelist, we will ask him to run a Sunday evening class on evangelism. These classes, incidentally, are not long prolonged courses—people today will not commit to that. Rather, they are short courses instructing Christians in the many methods and approaches to evangelism. We want to help people evangelize.

### Be Simple

One of the most important things in training people is to help them to learn to be simple. I think many of our messages and presentations are far too complex. We have to remember to whom we’re speaking today. Modern people do not know anything about the Bible. Whenever I go to a restaurant and I meet a waitress or waiter who has a Bible name, I have an automatic opening to start talking to them. For example, the name Sarah is very popular today, and about once a month we’re waited on by a Sarah in a restaurant. Just this week we were waited on by a Sarah, and I said, “Sarah we want to have fun this evening at this restaurant. Are we going to have some fun?” She said, “Yes, you’re going to have fun.” I then said, “Do you know your name is in the Bible?” She said, “Yeah, I know that.” I then asked her, “What was the name of Sarah’s husband in the Bible?” As in ninety-nine percent of the cases, Sarah didn’t have a clue. However, she really took the question as a challenge. “It’s on the tip of my tongue,” she said. “Ichabod?” “Ichabod,” I said, “where did you ever get that?” She said, “Am I right?” I said, “No, his name was Abraham.” Then I asked her, “What was the name of Abraham and Sarah’s son?”

I told Sarah that she could ask for help from friends back in the kitchen. “Tell them I am giving you a test, and if you get the questions right I will double your tip.” She went back with our order and returned with an answer, “Isaac.” I asked her who knew the answer, and she replied that one of the girls knew quite a bit about the Bible. “All right,” I said, “What was the name of Isaac’s wife?” “Oh, that’s a hard one,” she said. She brought our

order, and said, “Rebecca.” I said, “That’s good. You girls are doing well. Let’s keep this going. What are the name of Isaac and Rebecca’s children?” We went on the whole evening that way, and we had a lot of fun together and got other people back in the kitchen talking about this. Most people don’t have a clue about the Bible.

So, one of the most important things you can teach Christians—and this will help them in their witness—is that they have to be very simple. In witnessing, we cannot be like a dump truck and dump fifty Bible verses on non-Christian people. They won’t know what we’re talking about. Give the unbeliever one verse—a simple verse like John 3:16 or 1 Corinthians 15:3. “Christ died for our sins” is five words. Or use simple illustrations. For example, explain that the Cross is like a bridge spanning the chasm between sinful man and a holy God. The person who died on that Cross was both God and man and is a perfect bridge between God and man. Leave a simple seed in people’s mind.

So, “keep it simple, stupid,” remembering that you cannot keep it simple enough in today’s world. If we keep it simple we are less likely to be afraid. Just cover the essentials—we are sinners, Christ died for sinners, God forgives sinners on the basis of the Cross. We’re afraid because we actually think that we’ve got to answer everyone’s questions. No one is smart enough to do that. Encourage people to be simple, friendly, and non-argumentative, and that will help them immensely.

### Be Creative

In being prepared, I believe the Lord wants us to be creative. Paul rented the school of Tyrannus, where he reasoned with unbelievers, both Jews

and Greeks (Acts 19:9). That was like renting a university room and giving lectures where people would come and hear him. It was a very creative idea in the city of Ephesus. It might not have worked in another place, but it worked in the cosmopolitan city of Ephesus. Let me suggest a number of ideas that might work for you.

### Neighborhood Hospitality

Many people will not go to a church today—they find it too too scary. They will, however, come to your home for a cookout. They’ll come over on a holiday. Your home is one of the most powerful evangelistic tools in your neighborhood. It’s a lighthouse in a dark place. Have some kind of plan to have your neighbors over for a meal at your dinner table or out in the back yard so you can, at least, meet them. And then you can start praying for them and be the neighborhood prayer warrior for all your neighbors.

### Home Bible Studies

The Lord has greatly used home Bible studies—especially home Bible studies for women. It’s very significant, I believe, that one of the apostles’ primary methods of evangelism was using homes to spread the Word. Peter and the apostles taught and preached “from house to house” (Acts 5:42). Paul taught “from house to house” (Acts 20:20). A private home has a very natural atmosphere. It is informal, relaxed, and non-threatening. Home Bible studies have been one of the most powerful tools of evangelism in our assemblies.

### Music Concerts

I recently watched an advertisement for contemporary Christian music CDs, and I thought, “What a terrific

idea for evangelism.” We’re going to have a music concert this summer and try and use it for evangelism. Music is a wonderful tool for evangelism—especially with young people

### Free Counseling

Counseling is a marvelous tool for evangelism—especially pre-marital or marital counseling. Unsaved people will frequently call our church and ask to rent our building for a wedding. We permit this if such couples will consent to a program of pre-marital counseling. Just a few weeks ago we married an unsaved couple at the chapel. For five months they were mentored by one of our assembly couples. For five months they opened up their hearts and talked about their lives. The newlyweds are not saved yet, but their mentoring couple gave them a special wedding gift—they are going to have a home Bible study with them on the Gospel of John. They young couple responded, “That’s neat, we’ve loved our time with you.” Marriage is a great way to enter peoples’ lives.

Incidentally, divorce counseling—helping people through a terrible marital tragedy—is another way to enter peoples’ lives evangelistically.

### Funerals

Funerals are a tremendous opportunity to share the gospel. I do a lot of them—at least ten or twelve a year. We’ve had some funerals with literally hundreds of unsaved people sitting there for an hour and hearing the gospel. I did the funeral for one of our neighbors, a well-known businessman, and there were five hundred people in the audience. Ninety percent of the group were unsaved people. It’s good to think ahead about what you are going to do at funerals. Read up on this and devel-

op some techniques. There’s a way to do it, and a way not to do it. People are serious at that moment and, strange to say, most of them love a good funeral.

Many preachers will yell and scream at the audience; that is inappropriate. We use the story of the deceased person’s life and we build about 20 minutes of the funeral service around that story. Beforehand we ask all the family members to write out characteristics of the person’s life and humorous events from his or her life. Focusing on the person’s life captures the audience’s attention, and you can easily transition into a presentation of the Gospel. It’s not necessary to mention whether the person was unsaved if that is the case. Go right from the person’s biography to the wonderful story of salvation. You may tell the audience that they have a wonderful opportunity to listen for 20 minutes to the truth about eternal life—something that they do not normally do in their busy lives. I have never had a person complain. Funerals are a terrific opportunity for evangelism—take as many of them as you can.

### Raising Children

People today are concerned about their young children and their teens. They are willing to leave their homes and go somewhere if someone can give them help. There is a wonderful film series entitled, *Shepherding a Child’s Heart*, that can be shown in your church. Advertise it in your local newspaper, and invite people to come. Another way to get families to come is to offer a class on raising young children or raising teens. This will provide another opportunity to share the Gospel.



### Youth Evangelism

Youth evangelism is one of our most important tools. Be willing to put money and manpower into any evangelistic outreach to youth—Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, and Bible camp. God has used Bible camps more than anything else we do to reach youth. I meet people all the time who were saved at camp. People are most open to the gospel when they are young. Statistics show that the older people get the more closed they become to the truth.

### Sunday Morning Service

Whether we like it or not, Americans think that Sunday morning is churchy time. So why fight it? Take advantage of it. If you have a church that unsaved people come to, use the opportunity. You have time during the service to teach God's people, and you also have time to proclaim the Gospel. It is important that the elders think long and hard about how to make your Sunday service one that is conducive to inviting unsaved friends, neighbors, and fellow workers. It should be a time that has your best preachers and quality music.

### Special Evangelistic Series

Last summer we advertised a three night series of meetings on *Pilgrim's Progress*. Many people have heard about Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, but they don't know much about it. We showed film strips, and we had a speaker who narrated it and explained it. The program was aimed at young people, but parents were invited to come if they wished. At the end of the three days a lady from the neighborhood, whom we had never seen before, came up front and sat down. I thought she might want to talk about her children, but she said, "I want to get saved." Someone

did get saved as a result of this opportunity. This summer we're having an evangelistic series using a video presentation of C. S. Lewis' *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. In addition to the video, we shall use power point slides and a sermon. If one is creative, there are a wide variety of evangelistic series that the local assembly can sponsor.

### Literature

Your assembly should have plenty of evangelistic resources. The local church should be a gospel church, and a gospel church must have gospel literature. Someone should be put in charge of selecting and replenishing a display of good, contemporary tracts. The assembly should also have available a wide variety of tapes and books. Recently a man asked for a book for his non-Christian mother in law, who is dying of cancer. You need to make the assembly aware of good books for unsaved people, and you need to have such books available.

### Personal Relationships

The best evangelism is personal evangelism—person to person. Everyday life brings all of us into a network of natural contacts with people. And the apostle Paul tells us, "Conduct yourselves with wisdom" toward these people (Col. 4:5). We are to keep our eyes wide open, and we are to be alert for opportunities. Be alert especially for those seasons in a person's life when he or she has tragedy or need. His time of suffering or grief, his financial problems, and his marital woes are all opportunities. At such a moment, you can say, "My church can help you in such and such a way."

Keep your many personal contacts fresh and open. I grew up with a number of young men, who all went the camp together and to the

local assembly together. Around the age of eighteen we all went our separate ways, and three of these very close friends walked away from the Lord. It is probable that, although they had made professions of faith as children, they were never truly converted. They married non-Christians and lived non-Christian lives. Yet we kept our friendship going because we had such a wonderful relationship growing up. We would do vacations together—they would visit us in Colorado, and we would visit them in New Jersey. For thirty years we maintained this connection, and in the last five years all three of those men have been saved. Isn't it interesting how God uses tragedy (terminal cancer, lives ruined by sinful habits, shattered marriages) to awaken people to their rebellion and rejection of the Lord? And when they have been awakened, God can use a Christian friend to lead them to the Savior and a new life. Do not neglect your contacts with unsaved friends. Keep those relationships, for the Lord may use you to win them back to Himself.

### English as a Second Language

With the tremendous influx of immigrants to America, teaching English has become a very popular. It can be an evangelistic opportunity. For the first time this year we are offering a course in "English as a Second Language" (ESL). We had no idea how it would work, but we advertised with a large sign in front of our church. Almost fifty non-Christians signed up for the course. Our building is near the public library, and a large number of Spanish speaking people from the area saw it and enrolled. A committee set up the program, purchased books and materials, and priced the course so that all could afford it. We

now have another opportunity to evangelize in our own building.

### Be Salt, But Be Bold

#### Be Salt

Evangelist Bob Smith says, "Ninety percent of evangelism is love." Evangelism involves loving people, wanting to reach out to them, being friendly and open to them, and serving them. We must not be argumentative in witnessing—conveying the impression that we have all the answers. We must not be obnoxious and proud, dominating every conversation. We must learn to relax—to simply give people the gospel and let the Holy Spirit unleash its power. If the Holy Spirit does not work in a person's heart, all of our arguing is not going to help. Answer questions the best you can, and if you do not have an answer tell the person to whom you are speaking that you will try to find it.

Paul says, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6). When you know that you're to be gracious and seasoned with salt, then you don't get so frightened and think, "I've got to argue them into Heaven. I've got to show them I'm right. I've got to show them I'm orthodox and not in one of the cults." It is an amazing thing when you seek to be gracious and winsome. You don't get concerned when the unbeliever argues and calls you names. You can quietly respond, "I understand your perspective, but I want you to know my sins have been forgiven. I have a new hope because I know that God's new life is in me."

#### Be Bold

The Apostle wrote, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). It is a very serious matter to be ashamed of the gospel. The great apostle himself said, "And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:19-20). Frankly, we are not seeing people saved today because we are afraid, and we are not speaking up. Do you know why certain groups are seeing so many people saved—even if their gospel is somewhat defective? They are speaking up! No one gets saved if we don't speak up.

#### Be Prayerful

Luke introduced one of Jesus parables with the explanation that the Lord was seeking to show his listeners, "that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart" (Luke 18:1). When it comes to evangelism many of us have lost heart. Many of us have never seen a person saved through our personal witness. People today ridicule the gospel, which is more and more out of sync with our modern culture. Biblical Christians are more and more offensive to the contemporary worldview. The end result is that we clam up and hide our Christianity. Many feel, "No one is going to believe me. They're going to misunderstand what I say." It's normal to feel that way, but we must not neglect to pray about it. Our prayer should be, "Lord, make me

*bold. Help me to seize opportunities.*" We should make a list of unsaved people to pray for. We should ask the Lord to give us an opportunity to speak to our neighbor across the street, our unsaved relatives, and the people with whom we work every day.

May I challenge you to keep praying about this. Never give up praying about this matter. May we all be challenged by Paul's words in Colossians 4:2-6. Remember that the Word of God is a transforming word. Its purpose is to transform and change us. If we don't have change, it's because we are not letting it do its work in our lives. May we end this study rechallenged—recharged with fresh vision, new boldness, new graciousness, and new excitement and love for the Lord and his work.

#### Conclusion

Pray for yourself personally and your local church that these words of the inspired apostle will have transforming power in your local church and in your personal life. Pray that the Lord will give our local assemblies unity in these matters. We can do almost nothing if we're fighting. We're paralyzed and the devil loves it. And the first casualty of fighting is the gospel. Who'd want a gospel where the saints can't get along? Who'd want to bring people to a church like that? So ask the Lord to forgive us for fighting, pushing our petty agendas, and wanting our own way. Ask the Lord for greater skill in changing and moving people for His glory with patience and wisdom. With skill and humility and the power of the Holy Spirit we can see change. Let's be change agents.

## NEWS • FROM • EMMAUS

**Iron Sharpens Iron**

Another successful Iron Sharpens Iron conference was held over Memorial Day weekend and attracted 410 individuals from all over North America. Plenary speakers Alex Strauch and Tom Taylor shared with the saints from Acts 2:42, covering Fellowship, Teaching, Worship, and Prayer. The conference ended with Alex's message entitled, "Evangelize or Fossilize" (see pages 40 - 47 in this issue for complete text) and introduced the "Evangelism" theme for next year. The plenary sessions are available for downloading on the ISI website, [http://www.emmaus.edu/ISI/isi\\_2004\\_info.htm](http://www.emmaus.edu/ISI/isi_2004_info.htm).

Please plan to join us next year for the 5th annual Iron Sharpens Iron, to be held May 26-29, 2005.

**London Team**

This team of 7 Emmaus students went on a dynamic missions trip to London, England this summer. During their 3 1/2 weeks there, they received intensive training in evangelism and cross-cultural ministry to the many ethnic groups living in London. They also had the opportunity to put their learning into practice through street evangelism and ministry in ethnic churches. Their experiences were intense, challenging, and ultimately rewarding as they had the joy of seeing a number of people come to saving faith in Jesus Christ. These new believers will be followed up by the permanent team that our students trained and worked under.

**Enrollment Services News**

As of early August, we had received 140 applications from new students. Sixteen of those were from foreign countries, which provided us with a diverse student body. 55% of the new applicants were women. We received many last minute applications, as students were still deciding on their college plans

right up until the semester started. We are now in full swing accepting students for the upcoming spring semester, which begins on January 10. Please continue to pray with us that God would use Emmaus to train many students in His Word.

If you are interested in attending Emmaus, know someone that we should contact, or have questions about our application process or financial aid, please call the Admissions office at 1-800-397-2425 x5. We would love to come to your assembly or youth group and let them know what Emmaus has to offer.

**Ensemble Tour 2005**

The Emmaus Ensemble is already making preparations for our Spring Break Tour, March 4-12, 2005. We are planning to visit the Southeast U.S. with possible stops in Missouri or Illinois, Tennessee, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Ohio. If your local assembly would like to host an Ensemble concert next spring, please contact Lisa Beatty at [lbeatty@emmaus.edu](mailto:lbeatty@emmaus.edu) or 563.588.8000, ext. 1103.

**Summer Projects**

Summer is a busy time for our maintenance staff. There are many projects that need to be done and are best accomplished when the students are gone on vacation. Bryce Davis, (Director of Physical Plant), and staff members, Shorti Cribb, Bob Flores and Randy Sylvester, along with a crew of students have been busy painting hallways and stairwells, cleaning dorm rooms, and repairing and installing new flooring in dorm rooms. One of the most noticeable improvements is the beautiful landscaping that has been done all over campus.

**Do the D.E.W.**

Are you thinking of attending Emmaus but are not sure what to expect when you get here? Discover what Emmaus is all about during one of our extended weekends designed to let you live through the "Emmaus Experience" for yourself. You'll sit in on classes, stay in the dorms, meet our faculty and students, and enjoy a variety of activities. Our fall DEW will take place October 14-17 and our spring DEW will run from March 31 - April 3. For more information, contact us at 1-800-397-2425 x5 or check out [www.emmaus.edu](http://www.emmaus.edu). Discover Emmaus for yourself!

**Graduates**

Graduation ceremonies for the Class of 2004 yielded fifty-seven new members of the alumni association, with twenty-four making the Dean's List. Seventy-one students were granted a Certificate of Biblical Studies, with twenty-eight of these students earning Dean's list honors. Congratulations, graduates, on a job well done!

**New Teacher Education Faculty Members**

After an extensive search, we are pleased to announce the addition of two new faculty members in our Elementary Education Department. Our new department chair is a familiar face at the college, as he has been serving on our Board of Trustees for the past several

years. Dr. Bill Moore has taken a leave of absence from the Board to join the Emmaus faculty. Dr. Moore has spent his career in elementary education administration, and brings a lifetime of experience with him to his new role.

Emmaus alumnus, John Jimo, also joined the Elementary Education faculty this fall. John is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, and has several years of teaching experience at the middle school level. John has spent the last two years serving on staff at Lake Geneva Youth Camp in Wisconsin. John is serving as Assistant Director of the Elementary Education program, and is teaching in the department, as well. John's wife, Heather (Mackay) Jimo, is also an alumna of Emmaus, and is looking forward to entertaining students in the home they purchased across the street from the college!

**New Academic Leadership**

Two longtime faculty members at Emmaus have been appointed to new roles at the college. Lisa Beatty has been appointed as the new Dean for Academic Affairs. In her role as DAA, Mrs. Beatty will administer the academic life of the college, and will be active in maintaining our accreditation relationships with the Association for Biblical Higher Education and the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association. Mrs. Beatty has served as an

## NEWS • FROM • EMMANUS

Emmanuel faculty member in the music department since 1992. In 2002, she was appointed Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and last year served as Acting Dean. Dr. David MacLeod, the chair of the Biblical Studies division, has accepted the position of Dean for Biblical Studies. As DBS, Dr. MacLeod will oversee the content of the Bible program and course offerings, and provide leadership in the hiring and evaluation of Bible faculty. Dr. MacLeod joins the administrative team at Emmanuel after 21 years of service at the college.

**Accreditation News!****Emmanuel Achieves Candidacy with NCA**

An accreditation milestone has recently been reached in the ongoing commitment to academic quality at Emmanuel. On May 20, 2004, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools granted Emmanuel Bible College initial candidacy with the commission. This provides Emmanuel affiliate status with a regional accrediting association. Achievement of regional accreditation will provide our students with greater ease in transfer of credits, and greater access to graduate programs and financial aid funding. Candidacy status with the Higher Learning Commission is for a period of four years, with initial accreditation the goal at the end of the process.

In 1993, Emmanuel Bible College expanded its academic offerings to include professional and vocational areas beyond biblical education. Along with a major in Biblical Studies, students can now complete degrees in Elementary Education, Computer Systems Management, Intercultural Studies, and Youth Ministries, as well as minors in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Music Ministry, Biblical Counseling, and Biblical Languages. In 1999, the decision was made to seek regional accreditation in order to provide greater recognition of the college academic programs. As Emmanuel continues to pursue its mission with excellence, the achievement of regional accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association will ensure continuing quality in higher education to Emmanuel graduates, their parents, their local churches, and their future employers.

**AABC Becomes ABHE**

Since 1986, Emmanuel Bible College has been accredited by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC), a national accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the United States Department of Education. AABC has been in existence since 1947, and throughout its 57-year history, the Association has provided accredi-

tation services for institutions providing biblical education at the undergraduate level.

In February 2004, the member institutions voted to expand the scope of accreditation services to include graduate-level and programmatic accreditation. The programmatic option will make accreditation available for Bible programs in comprehensive institutions that hold institutional accreditation with another recognized accrediting body.

To better reflect the breadth of institutions and services within the Association, the membership voted for a name change to the **Association for Biblical Higher Education**. Larry J. McKinney, Executive Director of the Association, states that "the new name continues to emphasize the Association's rich history and its continued commitment to Bible-centered higher education while recognizing the increasing diversity of the institutions that it serves."

As Emmanuel pursues regional accreditation through the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the college remains committed to the centrality of biblical education and will maintain its accreditation through ABHE.

**Faculty Position**

Emmanuel Bible College is seeking qualified applicants for a full-time faculty position in the Music Ministry department. The applicant should have a master's degree

in music with choral/vocal experience. Teaching experience at the college level is preferred, but high school experience will be considered. Nominations, letters of interest, and resumes should be sent to the Dean for Academic Affairs.

**Attention: Emmanuel Alumni**

We want to help alumni keep in touch with each other, as well as improve the communication between Emmanuel and our alumni. Do you have some news to share? Did you get married? Have a baby? Get a new job? Move to a new location? Plant a church? Earn an additional degree? Go on a missions trip? Change your e-mail address? We want to know about it, and so do your former classmates. Let us hear from you by e-mailing your news to **Justin Smith** at [alumni@emmanuel.edu](mailto:alumni@emmanuel.edu) (please include the years you attended EBC). You may also fill out the Alumni Update Form on the Emmanuel website

([www.emmanuel.edu](http://www.emmanuel.edu)), or send news and photos to Emmanuel at the attention of Justin Smith. Beginning this fall, we are including a two-page alumni newsletter in each issue of The Emmanuel Experience newsletter, so we are eagerly awaiting your news items. If you are not on our mailing list for the newsletter, contact us any of the above ways.

**Elementary Education Program News**

Emmanuel Education Graduates continue to impact the world. This year, all of our graduates who actively sought a full time teaching position, have them. A few have chosen to live in a specific community and will be substitute teaching there until there are openings. We have graduates teaching this fall in the public schools in Dubuque, Iowa; Bogota, Columbia; Gages Lake, Illinois; Salina, Kansas; Runnels, Iowa, and Florida. We also have graduates teaching in private schools

in Abaco, Bahamas and Cascade, Iowa.

Our program continues to train students both on campus and in the field. We have 13 student teachers this year, who all returned to Dubuque one or two weeks earlier than Emmanuel starts, so that they can see the start of a new school year with the cooperating teacher that they will student teach with next spring. We call it Teach 2005, and it is a yearlong practicum that sets an Emmanuel graduate apart from other new graduates because they have taught and assisted in a classroom for an entire school year. We will also take our Senior Education students to the Association of Christian Schools International Teacher Convention in South Bend, Indiana at the end of September.

**JOURNAL TOPICS****In the Current Issue of Emmanuel Journal**

Don Tinder, "The Doctrine of the Trinity: Its Historical Development and Departures"

Larry Dixon, "God the Holy Spirit and the Trinity"

S. Lewis Johnson, Jr., "Moses and Abraham, or the Law Versus the Promise: An Exposition of Galatians 3:15-22."

David J. MacLeod, "The Year of Public Favor, Part 4: The Twelve Apostles (Matthew 10:1-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16.)"

Kenneth A. Daughters, "The Doctrine of the Trinity: Its Practical Significance."

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

# Emmaus On the Road



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

Northeast	Midwest	
Southeast	<p><b>Ken Daughters</b>, Park Manor Bible Chapel, Elgin IL Sept 26; Warrenville Bible Chapel, Warrenville IL Oct 3, Dec 5; Men's Retreat, Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp, Vienna, MO Oct 22-23; Cedar Valley Bible Church, Cedar Rapids IA Nov 12-15; <b>Ken Fleming</b>, Praire du Chien Chapel, Praire du Chien, WI Oct 10; <b>David MacLeod</b>, Woodside Bible Chapel, Maywood IL Sept 26; Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel, Dubuque IA Oct 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov 7, 14, 21, 28; Countryside Bible Chapel, Stratford IA Dec 5; Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel, Cedar Rapids IA Dec 12; <b>Ben Mathew</b>, Oak Lawn Bible Chapel, Chicago IL Oct 17, 24; Warrenville Bible Chapel, Warrenville IL Nov 7, 14, 21; <b>Dan Smith</b>, Northwest Bible</p>	<p>Chapel, Chicago IL Oct 3, Dec 12; Evening School, Cedar Rapids IA Sept 27, Oct. 4, 11, 18 Arbor Oaks Bible Chapel, Dubuque IA Sept 26, Dec 5, 26; Sunset Bible Chapel, Salina KS Nov 21; <b>Mark Stevenson</b>, Evanston Gospel Chapel, Evanston IL Oct 3, Nov 14; Woodside Bible Chapel, Maywood IL Oct 24, 31; Cedar Rapids Bible Chapel, Cedar Rapids IA Nov 28; Northwest Bible Chapel, Chicago IL Nov 7, Dec 5; <b>Steve Witter</b>, Oak Lawn Bible Chapel, Chicago, IL Oct 3, 10; Park Manor Bible Chapel, Elgin IL Oct 17-24; Northern Hills Bible Chapel, Cincinnati OH Nov 5-7; Warrenville Bible Chapel, Warrenville IL Dec 12, 19; <b>Mark Woodhouse</b>, Keystone Bible Chapel, Omaha NE Sept 26</p>
Southwest	Northwest	Canada
<p><b>Ken Daughters</b>, Pacific Coast Christian Congress, Mt. Hermon CA Oct 11-15; Grace Bible Chapel, Fullerton CA Oct 17; <b>David Glock</b>, <b>Ben Mathew</b>, <b>Mark Stevenson</b>, First Colony Bible Chapel, First Colony TX Sept 24-26; <b>David Glock</b>, Sandy Creek Men's Retreat, TX Oct 29-31; <b>Steve Witter</b>, Laurel Bible Chapel, San Diego CA Nov 12-14</p>	<p><b>Floyd Schneider</b>, Spring Mountain Bible Chapel, Portland OR Oct 23-24; <b>David Glock</b>, Des Moines Gospel Chapel, Des Moines WA Oct 22-24</p>	Foreign
		<p><b>David Glock</b>, Northside Bible Fellowship, Calgary AB Oct 15-17</p> <p><b>Ken Fleming</b>, Yangon Bible School, Burma (Myanmar) Nov 22-Dec 3</p>

# READINGS

## The Hound of Heaven

By Francis Thompson

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;  
 I fled Him, down the arches of the years;  
 I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways  
 Of my own mind; and in the mist of tears  
 I hid from Him, and under running laughter.  
 Up vistaed hopes I sped;  
 And shot, precipitated,  
 Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears,  
 From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.  
 But with unhurrying chase,  
 And unperturbed pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
 They beat - and a Voice beat  
 More instant than the Feet -  
 "All things betray thee, who betrayest Me."

I pleaded, outlaw-wise,  
 By many a hearted casement, curtained red,  
 Trellised with intertwining charities;  
 (For, though I knew His love Who followed,  
 Yet I was sore adread  
 Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)  
 But, if one little casement parted wide,  
 The gust of His approach would clash it to.  
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
 Across the margent of the world I fled,  
 And troubled the gold gateways of the stars,  
 Smiting for shelter on their clanged bars;  
 Fretted to dulcet jars  
 And silver chatter the pale ports o' the moon.  
 I said to Dawn: Be sudden—to Eve: Be soon;  
 With thy young skiey blossoms heap me over  
 From this tremendous Lover—  
 Float thy vague veil about me, lest He see!  
 I tempted all His servitors, but to find  
 My own betrayal in their constancy,  
 In faith to Him their fickleness to me,  
 Their traitorous trueness, and their loyal deceit.  
 To all swift things for swiftness did I sue;  
 Clung to the whistling mane of every wind.  
 But whether they swept, smoothly fleet,  
 The long savannahs of the blue;

Or whether, Thunder-driven,  
 They clanged His chariot 'thwart a heaven,  
 Plashy with flying lightnings round the spurn o' their feet:  
 Fear wist not to evade as Love wist to pursue.  
 Still with unhurrying chase,  
 And unperturbed pace,  
 Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,  
 Came on the following Feet,  
 And a Voice above their beat -  
 "Naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me."

Now of that long pursuit  
 Comes on at had the bruit;  
 That Voice is round me like a bursting sea:  
 "And is thy earth so marred,  
 Shattered in shard on shard?  
 Lo, all things fly thee, for thou fliest Me!  
 Strange, piteous, futile thing!  
 Wherfore should any set thee love apart?  
 Seeing none but I make much of naught" (He said),  
 "And human love needs human meriting:  
 How hast thou merited—  
 Of all man's clotted clay, the dingiest clot?  
 Alack, thou knowest not  
 How little worthy of any love thou art!  
 Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,  
 Save Me, save only Me?  
 All which I took from thee I did but take,  
 Not for thy harms,  
 But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.  
 All which thy child's mistake  
 Fancies as lost, I have stored for thee at home:  
 Rise, clasp My hand, and come."

Halts by me that footfall:  
 Is my gloom, after all,  
 Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?  
 "Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,  
 I am He Whom thou seekest!  
 Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me."

**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.

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