

E-MANUAL

The Newsletter of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, MN

November 2016

Vol. 63

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From the Desk of Pastor Kim...

I want to start out by again thanking everyone for your prayers, cards, gifts, meals, and love when I had surgery. Recovery is going well and I am trying to take life easy for now so I don't slow down the healing process. Thanks for letting me do that. I appreciate all you have done for my family and for me. It is great to be a part of this church family!

Chris and I decided we would start adding to the newsletter with a “From the Desk of...” post. We hope this will be a good way for us to share with you all some of what is on our hearts and minds as pastors. The content will certainly vary from one time to the next, especially since there are two very different people writing it. We hope you will enjoy reading our meandering thoughts.

Something that has been on my mind a lot is how we can be a welcoming church. By that I mean, in what ways can *all that we do* show newcomers they are welcome here, and that we want them to feel at home here. In the next few weeks I'd like you all to intentionally view this church, our website, our facilities, our signage, our order of service, our musical worship, etc.

with your best attempt at seeing it all as a first-time visitor might. What if you had no knowledge of this building, this denomination, or even any church perhaps? What things are confusing to a visitor? What things are showing that we are a welcoming church? In what ways are we not very welcoming? What are we doing well? What are areas of improvement? I want your feedback. I have some of my own ideas on this, but I'd love to hear your thoughts and ideas. We need to work together to be a welcoming church! It is only together that we *are* the church. Please email your thoughts and comments to me at kbecker@emmanuelmennonitechurch.com. I will follow up this initial post with our collective thoughts and ideas on this very important topic. Thank you!

May God's peace go with you wherever you are. And may you pass that peace to all whom you encounter.

*By God's grace,
Pastor Kim*

POSTSCRIPT ON MALE LEADERSHIP

from 1 Timothy 2:11-15

by Philip Friesen

1 Timothy 2:11-15 is a text that many preachers today prefer to avoid because of its incompatibility with egalitarian ideology. It appears to be another painful dose of patriarchal injustice. Here is the difficult text:

¹¹A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. ¹²But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. ¹³For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. ¹⁴And it was not Adam

who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. ¹⁵But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint. (NASB)

When Paul first preached the gospel in the Roman world, few women would have been qualified for leadership in the church. With the changes the gospel brought, a new liberty not experienced before was emerging, and it appears the new freedom to stand up and speak got somewhat out of hand in Timothy's church. Paul tells Timothy to deal with the disorder. In his paraphrase of the passage, Eugene Petersen translates verse 12, "They (the women) should be quiet and obedient along with everyone else" (NASB). Classroom decorum needed to be maintained.

Paul did honor the service of a few educated women who did take positions of leadership. Phoebe (Romans 16:1) and Priscilla (Acts 18, Romans 16, 1 Corinthians 16, 1 Timothy 4) were two. It was the common pattern at the time for men to lead, but not exclusively so. Paul gives primary leadership to men as an established norm based upon Genesis. The question for us is whether this is a universal norm or a vestige of patriarchy not applicable to egalitarian society. Why did Paul make an issue of the man being first?

I suggest the relationship of male and female may be in some sense asymmetrical. A perfect, symmetrical balance of power cannot guarantee the oneness that the creation story prescribes. Perfect balance only guarantees perpetual conflict in a sinful world. That is why patriarchy was necessary. Perhaps a simple example can help understand the difference between equality and oneness. My right and left hand are not equal. When peeling an apple the left hand holds the apple and the right hand handles the knife. While the right hand may be superior in handling the knife, the right hand is still helpless without the support of the left. In terms of risk the left hand suffers the greater danger of injury, but not nearly so much danger as would the right hand were the roles reversed. Unity is achieved when both hands

match their differences and cover for each other. Equality exists only when each member equally needs the other. The fact that some are left handed and some ambidextrous does not change the norm.

Asymmetry lies at the foundation of the material world. We learn in physics that at the big bang the perfect symmetry of the universe was shattered by a quantum fluctuation. Had there not been an imbalance between the quantity of matter and anti-matter, the material universe could not have come to be.

(<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/physics/universe-asymme>). This principal is found repeatedly in chemistry and biology as well. "That something is not identical to its mirror image is a property known as chirality" (<http://theastronomist.fieldofscience.com/2011/01/universe-and-life-is-asymmetric.html>).

Chirality can also describe our human existence as well. The genetic basis of every living human is 100% human. No one person is more or less human than another. Yet no two humans are perfectly equal. This being true, we should also expect chirality to characterize gender. In history, men have been the builders, explorers, and inventors. They have always pioneered. But sometimes women have done this too, and done as well as men, even better. In the New Testament, whenever God called and gifted women for leadership, Paul accepted them. But he still recognized in the creation story the expectation for men to lead and women to support them as the norm.

Biblical complementarians argue that male leadership does not obliterate equality. A complementary relationship is easily illustrated in the relationship between a board and the nail that secures the board in place on the joist of a building. The nail may seem hardly as significant as the board, but the board is helpless without the nail. This should help us understand what we read in Genesis 2:20 where the woman is the helper. We might say she keeps him in his place.

In this metaphor, the board is first and the nail is second, but neither has relevance apart from the

joist to which they adhere, and both are useless without the other. In the service of God mutual submission and obedience become holy and empowering. Having defended complementarianism, however, I wish to dig deeper.

There is hierarchy in the Godhead, an asymmetrical relationship, if you please. The Father sent the Son and the Son obeyed. Although at one with God, Jesus did not insist on equality (Philippians 2:6). Oneness and equality are two different concepts. Jesus' relationship with his disciples reflects his relationship to the Father, "I no longer call you servants." He said. "A servant does not know the master's business. (Instead) I call you friends. Every (secret) the Father has told me, I have told you" (John 15:15). The sharing of secrets produces intimacy, and intimacy makes oneness possible. In the preceding verse, however, Jesus also said, "You are my friends if you do what I command." This retains hierarchy. Authority does not go away with the achievement of intimacy.

In the beginning the task of the man to dress and keep God's garden was to be a shared experience once the woman arrived, but sin destroyed the trust necessary for this to work, with the result that men and women divided into their own separate spheres except for reproductive and domestic necessity. Men took leadership because they were designed to do so. Men have been first in exploration, invention, and building of civilization, mostly without female input, but every civilization the men have built has fallen down. The board without the nail cannot stay in place forever.

Might it be that absence of women in the design of economic construction was the missing piece? Men who care for children and women who visit the work site fits well with what Genesis 2 envisions, but probably not in perfectly equality. Perfect equality is sterile and unnatural. In some areas women should dominate, in other areas men. This is natural. But this does not alter the original gender hierarchy.

From Genesis 3 onward in the fallen and sinful world, patriarchy, monarchy, and slavery built

human civilization. There has never been a female led civilization. Men were the explorers, the builders, the conquerors, and the managers. They took the number one position because they were number one at creation. What we see, however, is raw nature apart from grace. If, according to Jesus, the first will be last and the last first, then how does this play out? Jesus' teaching reveals the final outcome. The last become first, even though it may not appear to be going that way.

Imagine a village with a factory providing employment and a bridge connecting the village to the larger world. The factory and the bridge make possible for the village to prosper and participate in civilization. The engineers who built the bridge were men. The visionaries and builders who designed and built the factory were men. The women raised the children. Let us suppose some danger comes to the village, perhaps a forest fire raging over the hillside. Among the three assets of the village, the bridge, the factory, and the children, which will demand the highest priority for protection from the fire? Every decent village in all human civilization would let the factory and the bridge burn before it abandoned its children. In reality then, on a day to day basis, whose role would be ultimately more vital to the protection of the village assets? Who is entrusted with the greatest treasure? Whose task is more significant for the future of the social order, the men or the women? That which appears more significant and worthwhile turns out to be less significant in the overall scheme.

If women do not readily step up to leadership as we want them to do in egalitarian society, it is not merely because they were not socialized to do so. God designed the men to lead, and in a fallen world patriarchy was the shape of society in which they could lead. Oneness, as envisioned in Genesis 2:24, is only possible when trust has been established, and when trust is reestablished, hierarchy recedes from mind, and nobody cares who leads. Men usually do, but when God calls women it needn't bother anyone.

Chirality applies not merely to marriage, but also to the way in which male and female were

designed to interrelate and work together in society outside of marriage. But the unredeemed erotic imagination has made this arrangement unworkable, as current experience continues to demonstrate. Patriarchy emerged in the beginning to restrain the sexual chaos of society and abuse of women that continues to grow in our society where inappropriate office romance and dormitory misuse of women multiplies year by year.

The norm of male leadership will happen, whether in healthy or unhealthy ways. As we try to control bad boy behavior, women continue to be oppressed as much as ever, and I would challenge the notion that egalitarianism has accomplished anything of real significance. Women have made great strides in terms of status according to the world's ideals, that is in political and economic parity, but the effect has actually divided men and women more than it has united. Today among the underclass the norm seems increasingly to be an order of poor single mothers and free ranging predatory males, whose violence the system cannot manage, and so it incarcerates them in ever growing numbers. Today in our universities rape, abuse, and the betrayal of young women by young men is appalling while the system scrambles to understand what is happening.

Paul wrote to Timothy that womankind is saved through child bearing. Elsewhere he insists we all are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 8-9). What does he mean being saved through child bearing? Since God promised that a seed of the woman would dispatch the snake, it has been common for men to fantasize themselves as a savior of the world. Most conquerors and tyrants have seen themselves in this role, and millions more at least dream of being the hero who rescues the damsel from distress in the den of a dragon or other such a monster.

Typically women, when given the chance in some way, have wished to be the mother of the hero. We observe this women's conflict in the patriarchal stories of Genesis 12ff and in the harem of many a king whenever political succession has been in doubt. Our society perceives these phenomena to be the consequence of Biblical

patriarchy, while in fact, it derives from natural law as Darwin described it. Egalitarians propose to rectify this situation by force of law with the hope that eventually social custom will make equality a reality. Unfortunately, as Paul teaches, the law cannot save us (Romans 1-8).

Whenever a New Testament writer appeals to Old Testament authority as Paul does here in Timothy, we need to take note, because there is usually some foundational truth at stake. In 1 Timothy 2 Paul applies the foundational truth of the creation story to the situation in Timothy's church. Here he insists on a norm of male leadership, but in other situations he also showed flexibility in blessing women whom God raised up for certain leadership roles. We need also to remember that in the end the first are last and the last first, and when we are truly one in Christ, it may become hard to notice which is which. Even the ancient Chinese philosopher, Laotze, understood something of this truth. He said "A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves" (Laotze).



EMC Reading List Recommended by Kim and Chris Becker

As announced, here is a book list compiled by Chris and me for your reading pleasure. This is just an initial list. We love so many great books, it was difficult to keep the list at a manageable length. So we may be adding to this for our next E-Manual.

We list the books by author and give a very short statement or two about each book. If you have any more questions about any of these books or authors we would be happy to share any information we have with you. You can email Kim at kbecker@emmanuelmennonitechurch.com, or Chris at cbecker@emmanuelmennonitechurch.com.

We hope that you will each find at least one book on this list that interests you, and that you will read with pleasure and feel free to discuss with us what you liked or didn't like about your

selections. We hope you enjoy some of these books and authors as much as we do. Also, know that we are not aligned with every opinion expressed in these books, but believe it is good to read and question and discern with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

~ Pastor Kim

Augsburger, David. *Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God, and Love of Neighbor* (2006)

- Kim's note: This book was one of the first books we read in seminary, and as I read it I knew I had made the right choice to attend. David Augsburger put to words a theology I had in my heart but hadn't yet articulated.

Baker, Mark D. ed. *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross: Contemporary Images of the Atonement* (2006)

- Kim's note: A must read. I believe a person's atonement theology colors all their theology, and how it is lived out. Who is Jesus and why did he die on the cross? Read this book for new angles from which to view the cross.
- Chris's note: Perspective matters. How we view Jesus matters. The essays in this book express these ideals well.

Baker, Mark D. *Religious No More: Building Communities of Grace & Freedom* (1999)

- Chris's note: Mark is a professor at our seminary and is a good friend. He is a very practical theologian who has spent time as a missionary in Honduras. As such, this book offers a genuine response to what society pushes on us and points to a gospel that pays attention to more than religion.

Baker, Mark D. and Joel B. Green. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (2011)

- Kim's note: It is a great follow up to *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross*. Again, read it.
- Chris's note: This is a book written by two theologians for whom I have a lot of respect. In this text they offer up a fresh look at what has become a controversial subject for many. I highly recommend it.

Bell, Rob. *Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* (2011)

- Kim's note: This book might make you think outside the box a bit. Jesus, as God incarnate – fully God, showed us that *love* is what is most important to our faith walk. Everything else matters little. Love wins all.

Bell, Rob. *Velvet Elvis: Repainting the Christian Faith* (2005)

- Kim's note: I read this book when it first came out at a time when I was seeking to know God better in a deep and tangible way. This book opened my eyes to seeing God everywhere – in a leaf, in a smile, in all that is good – every good and perfect gift come from Him (James 1:17). I highly recommend this one. His writing style is a little different but you get used to it quickly.

Enns, Peter. *The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It* (2014)

- Chris's note: If you are looking to expand your thinking when it comes to the Bible and how it works, this is a book for you. It's easy to read and offers up good ideas about how the Bible should inform our lives. It's one of the best books I've read in a long time.

Enns, Peter. *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (2015)

- Kim's note: This is a bit heady, but I really enjoyed it. Peter Enns expands on his thesis that the Bible is living and incarnate in the same way that Jesus is incarnate. The Bible is not static. Very inspirational.
- Chris's note: Yes! Old-school OT theologians' heads will spin around, but that's okay.

Enns, Peter. *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More Than Our "Correct" Beliefs* (2016)

- Chris's note: This is Peter Enns's most recent book. I've perused it, but have not yet read it. I've gleaned some quotes from it, but have not yet dived in. Enns challenges some long-held beliefs, but if our beliefs are not challenged periodically, then we will grow stagnant and complacent. I love Enns's writing style and intellect. Check this one out.

Geddert, Timothy J. *Double Take: New Meanings from Old Stories* (2007)

- Kim's note: Tim Geddert is a great friend, and an even greater professor. He carefully offers new

ways to view many familiar passages in the Bible in a way that leaves room for you to think and decide for yourself what it means. He does not do it in an in-your-face kind of way, yet writes with authority and clarity. Great read.

- Chris's note: Tim is one of the most intelligent people I know, and yet he is one of the most down-to-earth people I know. Read this book; you will not be sorry.

Halter, Hugh and Matt Smay. *The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community* (2008)

- Kim's note: This is a book about incarnational community, a way of living that Chris and I have been pushing here at Emmanuel. I invite you all to read this.
- Chris's note: This book was used a lot for our "Incarnational Mission" sermon series a while back. There's a lot of good stuff in here about how to bring along the ancient church as we move forward working together on God's mission. This one might be considered a little more "mainstream" than some of the others on this list.

McLaren, Brain D. *A Generous Orthodoxy* (2004)

- Kim's note: This book is great to help one open up their eyes to see that there is more than one way to look at God and the Bible. It opens up space to find commonality with the Other, creating a generous orthodoxy. Good read.

McLaren, Brain D. *The Great Spiritual Migration: How the World's Largest Religion Is Seeking a Better Way to Be Christian* (2016)

- Chris's note: McLaren has outdone himself with this one. This book will either make you mad or it will open your eyes to a fresh movement of God. If we're honest, it does both—over and over again. This book feels like it has been years in the making and needs to become a manifesto for Jesus-centered churches everywhere.

Miller, Donald. *Through Painted Deserts: Light, God, and the Beauty of the Open Road* (2005)

- Kim's note: This book is more like a novel or, better yet, a memoir. It allows room for the reader to question and learn alongside the author. I loved this book and recommend it highly if you want to read a book that isn't too heady but still makes you think and hopefully grow in insight.

- Chris's note: Miller is down to earth and writes with a knowledge of what it's like to be a regular person living life. This book is artfully written. And he drives an old Volkswagen.

Murray, Stuart. *The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith* (2010)

- Chris's note: If you haven't read this one yet, read it. Stuart is not from a traditional Ana-baptist background but has been led into being an Anabaptist through a wonderful move of the Spirit. He has become a leader in the greater Anabaptist world, moving beyond just heritage and into an active theology that really means something today.

Wright, N.T. *The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion* (2016)

- Chris's note: This one is brand new and I have not read it yet. But it's the very next one on my list. From what I can tell, Wright does something with this book that I've been threatening to do for some time now (but he gets paid to think this hard—I can barely think week to week!). *The Day the Revolution Began* is a book that re-envision what atonement means for humanity. In doing this, Wright pushes the meaning of the cross beyond just dealing with sin and opens our eyes to the work that Jesus calls us to: joining God in the restoration all of creation.

Wright, N.T. *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (2008)

- Chris's note: This is the "go-to" Tom Wright book. If you need to ease yourself into a theologian of Wright's caliber, this is the place to start. He has written more books than most of us have read in our lifetimes (exaggerating a little, perhaps, but he's written a crazy number of books), and this one is down to earth and much easier to read than his two-volume, 2,265 page tome titled, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God*.

