



E-MANUAL



The Newsletter of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Minneapolis, MN

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Two Book Reports

by Kristie Ristey-Mandel

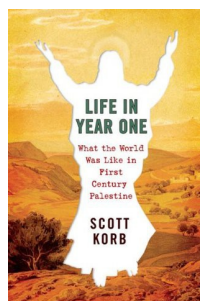
As an adolescent growing up in a Lutheran church, I learned in my first year of confirmation classes that the Bible—God’s word—was 100% accurate and recorded exactly as God would have it be communicated to us. Or, at least it was in the original language—Hebrew and Greek. As I am not fluent in either, I have had to rely heavily on the good people who have translated these holy scriptures into my own language—English. Over the years I learned not to ask questions that were too difficult to answer if something didn’t make sense to me, but rather just accept it. Maybe the original authors weren’t the best writers on the block, or maybe the things they were writing about were just plain odd...

About ten years ago I had the opportunity to take part in a class called Missiological Insights from Cultural Anthropology (or something to that effect), and was intrigued to learn of certain allowances translators have to make in interpreting scripture. For instance, how can one communicate Jesus’ message of being the “Bread of Life” to a culture that doesn’t know what bread is?

Answer—call him the “rice” of life instead. If the gist is the same, the original meaning isn’t necessarily lost.

But how often do we take what made complete sense in the time/place it was written, and try to view it within our own framework? A couple of years ago I participated in a Bible Study that made me painfully aware of how often my understanding of scripture may miss the mark entirely. These friends introduced me to an online tool called The Blue Letter Bible, which allows the user to look up the word in the original text and see not only a definition of it, but also how it is used in other places in Scripture. This was helpful, but to get through a single passage takes a significant amount of time. I began to wonder how I could ever be confident I clearly understood any part of scripture again...

Two books I’ve read in the last year have greatly helped me recover a little of that confidence, and I strongly suggest them as helpful to any Christian who is interested in understanding two key ingredients to interpreting scripture—culture and context.



The first book is of a secular nature and clearly has a disclaimer in the intro that it is not a book about Jesus. However, *Life in Year One: What the World Was Like in First-Century Palestine* by Scott Korb gives an intriguing view of the world Jesus lived in. The chapters of the book focus on the

World, Money, Home, Food, Baths, Health, Respect, Religion, War, and Death. I found the book to be a quick read and very informative. I also appreciated how the author’s voice is clearly audible in all he wrote—including the footnotes. The final chapter on Death features one of the book’s juiciest bits—the demise of King Herod. If

the tale weren't historically true, it might read as a gruesome best-selling thriller.

If you don't feel up to buying yourself a copy and can't find it at a library near you, I could be persuaded to lend my copy out...

Kenneth E. Bailey's *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* has done more in illuminating the gospels for me than any other book or bible study I can remember taking in. Bailey spent 60 years of his life living in the Middle East, and is familiar (to say the least) with its cultural norms and mores.

Before the chapters even begin, Bailey presents a quick tutorial on rhetorical analysis. I think sometimes it can be easy (for me anyway) to forget that people who lived thousands of years ago could be very intelligent. Bailey points out a number of different patterns that fit into what he refers to as the "prophetic rhetorical template". As the works of Shakespeare take on a whole new dimension when you realize they are constructed in iambic pentameter, so the lines of the gospels are comprised of strategic construction with inherent meaning that adds an entirely new shade of understanding. Throughout the book, Bailey faithfully looks at each chunk of scripture under the Rhetorical Analysis lens, and shares what these patterns would have told the original listeners. This all probably sounds a bit mysterious. I felt I got the swing of it by the end of the book, but I must admit it felt a little like trying to grasp a foreign language—I can understand what's said to me so much better than I can speak it myself.

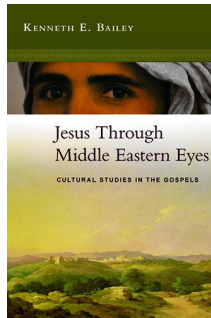
If grammar and literary styles aren't your passion, don't be put off. There are so many cultural insights included in this book that at least one is sure to knock your socks off. The book is divided into parts with various chapters in each. The parts are The Birth of Jesus, The Beatitudes, The Lord's Prayer, Dramatic Actions of Jesus, Jesus and Women, and Parables of Jesus.

Perhaps my favorite thing about this book is that it gave me the opportunity to get to know

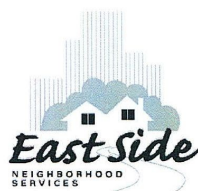
Jesus better. (And as Greg Boyd would be quick to point out—how do we know what God is like? We look at Jesus.) Several inconsistencies I had previously pushed to the back of my mind were suddenly confronted and turned on their heads. One of the best examples is Jesus' interaction with the Syro-Phoenician woman... I could never equate the loving and gentle-welcoming Jesus with the seemingly harsh and unwelcoming man in the story. I had very much misunderstood the entire scene—what a relief! In nearly every page I found more and more reasons to love and admire our savior... he was gentle and kind, but he was also revolutionary and didn't shy away from doing counter-cultural things to spread His kingdom.

Years ago I came across author/theologian/historian N.T. Wright's thoughts that Jesus purposefully invited women to participate in his ministry. He suggests that Mary is technically the first evangelist as she left Jesus' empty tomb and told others of her interaction with the risen Christ. What an earth-shattering viewpoint to consider for much of Christendom even today! Incidentally, Bailey is on a similar wavelength but presents the Woman at the Well as the first Christian Female Preacher. What is more, point after point after point is made in this book which shows just how graciously Jesus extends himself to make his message accessible to both men and women. Parables were often presented in pairs—one from a man's context, and another from a woman's. The mere action of Jesus even speaking to women in public was completely frowned upon by his culture—but he did it time and time again.

Phil Friesen had kindly lent me his copy of this book to read, but after returning it, my husband and I quickly bought our own copy. I look forward to reading it through again and again and hopefully retaining a little more truth each time. I believe the book will be added to Emmanuel's library soon... I encourage everyone to get on the waiting list.



Thank You



Serving Our Community Since 1915

July 30, 2014

Emmanuel Mennonite Church
PO Box 7302
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Dear Friends at Immanuel:

It is my pleasure to write on behalf of the clients and the Board and staff of East Side Neighborhood Services with our thanks for your gift of \$915.58 in support of the Glendale Food Shelf. By sending your gift in July, it will be matched by the Open Your Heart Foundation.

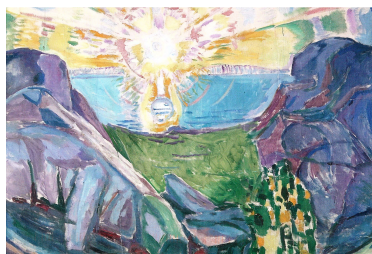
Thank you!

We have been able to expand our food program to include 37 senior high-rise apartment buildings throughout Hennepin County. We are planning for our 100th Anniversary in 2015. Thank you for being part of our story with your support of this basic need for many in our community who, with their modest incomes, need to choose between food, rent and prescriptions each month.

Sincerely,

William J. Laden
President

Thank you!



A Postcard from Nathan Detweiler

8/21/14

Dear EMC Friends,

By the time you receive this I'll likely be back in MN and you'll probably have seen me already. It has been an incredible summer and I feel unbelievably blessed. While the academic component of this trip was wonderful it is the relationships that I will remember and cherish until I die. On my flight over I talked with a woman who has worked for years with the lower school in Mountain Lake. And while a Lutheran, I tried not to hold that against her, she was full of praise for the role the Mennonite Church has played in that community. It was a reminder that as individuals

and as a church we must remember to live our love in word and deeds. And as the larger Mennonite body struggles with questions like homosexuality may we remember that "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." And from that place of weakness and humility let us love even when we know not how, through the strength of Christ who sat with sinners.

Blessings!

—Nathan Detweiler

What the world needs now...

by Robert Yutzky

In my August 31 sermon, I began with a reference to the 1965 song, "What the world needs now is love sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of." And yes, it does need sweet love, but more than that, the world needs to experience what love is in concrete ways. I suggested that what the world needs now is for EMC to live out its vision.

Currently, Emmanuel Mennonite is edging closer to calling its next pastor. The Council is working to shape a search committee that will take the lead in the process of interviewing potential candidates. My caution is to not let the anticipation of "getting on with it" cause Emmanuel to sidestep its focus of doing what Emmanuel is called to do and ascribes to do.

Emmanuel's vision statement reads, "As followers of Christ, Emmanuel Mennonite Church commits to worshiping God, choosing peace, nurturing community, and extending hospitality."

As I prepared that August 31 message, I was struck with how well Emmanuel's vision statement fits the Romans 12:9-21 passage. I even wondered if this Scripture was the original basis for the development of the vision statement.

The Romans passage contains 29 imperatives (by my count), and in my message, I organized these 29 calls to action by placing them under Emmanuel's four commitments found in the vision statement. I find it amazing how well Emmanuel's vision statement holds these characteristics and is further defined by them.

I thought the Emmanuel congregation may benefit from seeing this list in print rather than just hearing it in a sermon. It is instructive, empowering, and defining. I suggest that the Romans 12:1-2, 19-21 scriptures be read before reflecting on the list below. Prayerfully look at Emmanuel's four commitments and how Paul's words from Romans fit within them and yet expand them. The world needs love, sweet love and needs it demonstrated in clear and concrete ways.

Here are some further suggestions for reflections.

- Name one action from this list you experienced or saw this week.
- Are there any characteristics in this list that you want to make more visible through concrete actions? What would you suggest to do? Who might you share that idea with?
- What opportunities have you had this week to extend hospitality or welcome the stranger?
- When have you recently been the stranger and experienced the hospitality (or lack thereof) from others? How did those actions impact you personally?

This is what the world needs now!

| <u>Emmanuel's Vision</u> As followers of Christ, Emmanuel Mennonite Church commits to: | <u>Paul's Vision</u> and the characterization of the early church in Romans 12:9-21 |
|--|--|
| Worship God | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not lag in zeal 2. Be ardent/fervent in spirit (<i>literally "I boil"</i>) 3. Serve the Lord 4. Rejoice in hope 5. Persevere in prayer 6. Do not claim to be wiser than you are 7. Hate what is evil |
| Choose peace | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Be patient in suffering 9. Bless those who persecute you; 10. Bless and not curse them 11. Live in harmony with one another 12. Do not be haughty 13. Do not repay anyone evil for evil 14. Live peaceably with all 15. Never avenge yourselves. 16. Leave room for the wrath of God 17. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good |
| Nurture community | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Let love be genuine 19. Hold fast to what is good 20. Love one another with mutual affection 21. Outdo one another in showing honor 22. Contribute to the needs of the saints 23. Rejoice with those who rejoice 24. Weep with those who weep 25. Take thought for what is noble in the sight of all |
| Extend hospitality | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Extend hospitality to strangers 27. Associate with the lowly 28. Feed your enemies if they are hungry 29. Give your enemies something to drink if they are thirsty |

Annual Church Retreat

Emmanuel and Phillips: Strangers No More

September 27-28, 2014

Saturday, September 27

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|-------------------------|--|
| 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. | Arrive, Refreshments |
| 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Welcome & Orientation |
| 10:30 – 10:45 a.m. | Break |
| 10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Session I Emmanuel: Church as a Person |
| 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. | Lunch |
| 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. | Session II Urban Ventures introduces us to Phillips through a poverty simulation* |
| 3:00 – 3:15 p.m. | Break – Snack |
| 3:15 – 4:15 p.m. | Session III Emmanuel & Phillips: Face to Face |
| 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. | Talent Show |

Sunday, September 28

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 9:30 – 10:00 a.m. | Arrival & Fellowship |
| 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. | Worship |
| 10:30 – 10:45 a.m. | Break |
| 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Final Session Reflecting on 20 Pastoral Tasks |
| 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. | Lunch** Taste of Phillips meal at 24 th Street Mall |

Go in Peace!

*The poverty simulation is an exercise that splits participants into 'families of 5' facing the financial pinch that many families in our neighborhood, and around the city, tackle each month. Each family unit is given the same amount of money which they must manage for a month, taking into account medical insurance, transportation, food and housing costs and other decisions families confront in order to survive and thrive. Each team confronts the realities and sacrifices that the working poor face frequently in our society, the simulation being based on the actual cost

of living today in our neighborhood.

**A local mission trip to Africa will be sponsored by Missions & Service Commission. It will be necessary to sign up for this lunchtime adventure. Bring the whole family at our expense.

Don't take an expensive safari to East Africa before you've tasted East African food here and walked through a real African market just around the corner.

Cost: \$5 per adult - no cost for children under 18
To be collected in the offering - please note 'retreat' on it.

What to Bring:

1. mug/cup to cut down on our waste
2. snack to share on Saturday afternoon
3. Completed '20 Pastoral Tasks' sheet for Sunday

Childcare will be provided for children during sessions so all may participate.

