

# Emmanuel Living

volume 2, issue 6



## Emmanuel Exists...

to glorify God through the prayerful nurturing and sending of disciplined believers to present Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

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## Summer Issue:

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Managing Editor:

Janie Thiessen

## Being Missional in an Age of Comfort or How to Fish Without Becoming the Bait

By David Rafeedie

**"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."**

One of my favorite fish stories is the Book of Jonah. I like it because it is a great negative illustration of what the church (you & me) should **not** be. Jonah is the antithesis of what it means to be missional.

Essentially the story goes like this:

First, God calls Jonah to go to the thriving metropolis of Nineveh to preach against it because its' wickedness was a site to behold - or not. At that time Nineveh's population was more than 120,000 people (very large for that time). It was a bustling and successful community. People were comfortable and doing well.

We do not know much about Jonah but one thing we know for sure is that he was a man of action. As soon as God called Jonah to go preach to Nineveh he immediately left - in the opposite direction! He thought taking a cruise to Tarshish would get him away from Yahweh. I guess he didn't realize that the LORD didn't mind water.

To make a short story even shorter, Jonah gets thrown overboard and is swallowed by a big fish. After some reflection and prayer (by Jonah, not the fish), the fish spits him out. Then God once again tells him to go to

Nineveh and this time he goes and preaches what God told him to preach.

But Jonah was not a man to take "Yes!" for an answer. He was quite happy with his own group, and the last thing he wanted to do was witness to a people he had nothing in common with and that he did not know. If I had 120,000 conversions after preaching, I would make a DVD series, have my own website, and negotiate a TV contract. But Jonah sat there morose, saying to God: *Oivey! I knew it! I knew you were gracious and compassionate, so kill me already.* What a guy.

Poor Jonah. God had pushed him way out of his comfort zone. I don't know why he picked Jonah (really), but I do know that God cared about the Ninevites. And he cares about the people around us too. And to be witnesses for Jesus we are always called out of our comfort zone. For some who have the gift of evangelism, it is no big deal, but most of us do not have that gift and so it is scary when an opportunity arises and we know we should say something. It goes against our grain to move out of our comfort zone to witness to someone about what Jesus has done in our lives. Sometimes we behave like Jonah and run the other way, as if we didn't really care whether a person is going to hell or not.

But if we are to be missional we must care

(cont. p.2)

## Being Missional in an Age of Comfort... (continued)

Connecting

about people and their eternal souls and we need to have the attitude that church is not a place that we invite people to, or a place where we go to. We are the church where we live, work and play. The building is where the church gathers for worship, some discipleship, and a variety of other activities. Like Jonah, God has called us to witness to those who do not know him.

Growing

I want to encourage us to shift our thinking away from church being a place where **we go**, to thinking that you and I are the church every where **we are**. Since we are the church wherever we are, we are always witnesses; it is a part of our DNA as the church. But the question is what kind of witnesses are we? Mission (and being missional) is larger than evangelism, mission involves our interaction with the world we live in as well. It involves what the world **sees and experiences** from the church, not just what we say. Like Jesus and his miracles, it is our actions and daily behavior that vindicate what we say.

Serving

Sometime ago, I was in line at a large department store in Vancouver to buy a Christmas present for Ellen. It was a long line and for some reason department stores really crank up the heat, so it was warm and the line was moving very slowly. So slow, in fact, I thought the item I was buying would be out of style by the time I paid for it. The person ahead of me was really getting agitated by the wait. Pretty soon he was griping loud enough for everyone to hear, including the person behind the counter. "Can you go any slower?" "You need more help in this store." "These people are idiots!" "Anybody around here ever hear of customer service!?" I was tempted more than once to tell him to shut up, but I thought that would be a poor witness. I have never used that word in our home so I was not about to start now. We finally made it up to pay and the gripey guy was frowning and generally showing his displeasure. After he had paid and his purchase was bagged, he said to the cashier, "God bless you as you celebrate Jesus' birthday." I think my jaw literally dropped when I heard him say those words. Here was

Multiplying

the church in action, unfortunately. As a result of the movement to stop saying Merry Christmas in some retail establishments, and because I can be a contrarian, I always say *Merry Christmas* no matter what they say. Not this time! I was embarrassed to be associated with that guy. I can imagine people thinking that if that guy was a Christian I don't want anything to do with Christianity. I would not have blamed them. But I should have spoken up. I should have said something to him and to the cashier. I was not a very good witness either. I was a very silent part of the church. Too bad the other guy was not.

This summer many of us will be travelling, camping or living at the cottage. Chances are we will have opportunity to make new friends or just visit with people we do not know. It is not unreasonable to think that opportunities will arise for spiritual conversations, opportunities to minister to someone, sharing Christ's love. While we may be on vacation and not attending Emmanuel, let us not forget our mission, the great privilege we have to share Jesus with those that do not know him in deed and word. Let us be the church wherever we are this summer. Jesus has called us to fish for people and has empowered us with the Holy Spirit to do just that. That is our only mission to the world we live in, to make disciples. That is it, simple. Just hard for us to do sometimes.

My prayer is that Emmanuel dispersed will be a blessing wherever and everywhere we are this summer. May God be glorified in all we say and do and may he grant us the tremendous privilege of sharing Jesus with a world in need of his saving grace.

**Dr. David Rafeddie** is the husband of Ellen, father of Tom and is the Executive Pastor at Emmanuel Evangelical Free Church.



## Missionary Hi-lights

### FEATURE MISSION:

#### BANIWA RADIO MINISTRY

By Henry Loewen

Connecting

"We began our ministry to the Baniwa Indian tribe in 1954. Language learning took priority. Then teaching began to the small groups of believers who had been reached by Miss Sophie Mueller a few years prior. Then translation and distribution of portions of the New Testament began. A bi-lingual informant was my constant helper. These were very helpful to the young churches. By 1963 the New Testament was ready for rechecking and was printed in 1965. That was the very first complete New Testament in an Indian language to be printed in Brazil.

More than seventy local church groups have been established along the banks of the Isana River faithfully gathering to read the Word of God and to pray.

Growing

When we returned from Brazil in 1985, God led us into a radio ministry to teach the Baniwas. We got the necessary equipment and recorded all the messages and sent them to Trans World Radio in Bonaire to be broadcast every Saturday morning. This was enthusiastically received by the Baniwas. Letters came to us by the dozens saying:

"Now we have our own program in our language." / "We don't want you to stop telling us God's Word." / "Every Saturday morning we always hear that which you send to us, we are so glad that you help us with God's Word which we don't know, we're not abandoning it." / "I hear you speak like my older brother in the Lord."

Serving

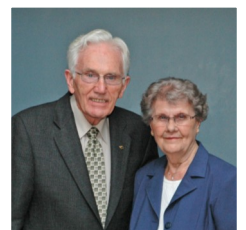
Now, after over twenty years of broadcasting the Baniwa people are still tuning in to the weekly programs. Through the years we have received letters from listeners from nine different tribes. These are bi-lingual people who know Baniwa as well as their own language. When they hear the message they interpret it to others of their tribe who don't know the Baniwa language.

Requests for printed copies of the radio messages came from listeners in Colombia, they wanted to use them to teach others of their tribe, and to evangelize other tribes. When we finished the lessons from the book *Building on Firm Foundations*, we printed four hundred copies of all these lessons, in six volumes.

Donations for this ministry have been coming in without fail. Emmanuel has been supporting it for a number of years. Thank you to all of you."

Multiplying

Henry & Edna Loewen have been part of our Emmanuel family for 66 Years, spending 33 of those years in Brazil working with the Baniwas. Several years ago Henry wrote a book called *God in the Rainforest*, a personal diary and fascinating insight into the real life experiences of the Loewen family as they shared their lives and their faith with the indigenous people of Brazil. This book is available at the Info Centre or the Church Office for \$10.



### Praying for Summer Missions:

We encourage you to pray for those people that will be giving of their time to serve God in various places this summer. Pray that their relationship with God will grow, that they will learn to trust God more fully and that as they form relationships with those they are ministering to, that they will truly demonstrate the love of God and that many will come to know and love The Lord as a result of their ministry. A full list of Summer Ministry Workers and Short Term Ministers is available at the Info Centre.

## A Pastor's View on Social Ministry

Connecting

**A Necessary Discussion:** I recently sat around the table with some Christian leaders from across Canada to discuss the challenges and opportunities for the Church today. One of the recurring themes I heard was the issue of **justice**. This is a topic currently receiving a lot of attention, and rightly so. A recent discussion class was hosted at Emmanuel on this very topic. I was not a part of that discussion, but the conversation I was a part of suggested that for many years, as the Church gave attention to the proclamation of truth, it sacrificed attention to social ministry. It is a fair observation, and it is indeed time for us to pay more attention to social ministry (including care for the hurting and needy, social justice, and more) as this is something that Scripture clearly calls us to.

Growing

James tells us that pure religion includes the care of orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27). We are told in Isaiah that the kind of fasting that God wants from us is to “*loose the chains of injustice...to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter...*” (58:6,7). Earlier in Isaiah 1:17 we are instructed to “*...learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.*” And clearly, Jesus’ story of the Good Samaritan challenges us to redefine the *neighbor* we are to love, to include anyone in need. The call to care for others, especially those in difficulty, is clear in Scripture.

Serving

Our Statement of Faith captures this well:

*God’s gospel compels us to Christ-like living and witness to the world. We believe that God’s justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God’s Word, the Spirit’s power and fervent prayer in Christ’s name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ’s commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed (emphasis mine).*

Multiplying

**Mixed Reviews:** The question to be asked then is not **if** we should be involved in social ministry and social justice, but **how**. That requires us to also ask how the Church has been doing with social ministry over the past twenty years, not in an effort to criticize, but rather in an effort to understand and do better. There has been (and continues to be) a lot done in social ministries by Christians and the church. A recent editorial in Maclean’s magazine (May 10, 2010) said “...there remains much to celebrate about religion and its’ rela-

tionship with society at large. Without organized religion, the world would be a much poorer and less comfortable place for those less fortunate.”

Still, I believe it is fair to say that we could do much better. There are many areas of social ministry and social justice that the Church has barely noticed. If we are honest and acknowledge that not everything that should be done in areas of social care and justice are being done, the question then becomes “why?” Is it because of the world we are in? Is it because of the culture we are in? Is it because of the social and economic structure and system we are in?

Of course, the answer is both yes and no. Yes and no because any system, society, or culture, can find within itself a mix of good and bad. Ultimately though, I believe the root issue is not the system we are in, it is the “we” within the system.

In our culture, which is basically democratic and capitalistic, people can indeed treat others unfairly. But our society also has tremendous capacity to do good toward one another. Let me take one part of our system as a test case. The Bible does not say that wealth is sinful. So too, the creation of wealth is not, in and of itself, sinful. Proverbs notes, in positive tones, that those who through good planning and hard work gain prosperity (Prov 21:5). Obviously there is ill gotten gain, ill spent gain, and even ill held gain (see Prov 21:6). But much gain even in our capitalistic system, is not ill gotten and much is not ill spent. That gain provides for great opportunities. In Ephesians we are told that rather than dishonest gain one should be “doing something useful with his own hands, that he **may have something to share with those in need** (4:28, NIV). It was Christians who at some point accumulated assets who were then able to sell properties to care for others in the early church in Acts. Within the system in which we live, there is great opportunity for fair gain to be used for the good of others.

While there is no perfect (or biblically endorsed) economic system, the truth is that every economic system is effective or ineffective, fair or unfair, just or abusive, based upon its members attitudes and actions toward each other. The problem cannot be isolated to the system, because social justice and action is also a heart issue, not just a systemic issue. Clearly we must **evaluate both our culture and ourselves** in order to understand how we are doing at living within any system as godly stewards of care and justice.

As godly men and women work effectively within the system in which we live, they create opportunities and resources that can then be used for God’s kingdom.

## A Pastor's View on Social Ministry (continued)

Such activity is seen as one looks to the historical beginning of great educational, medical, and scientific institutions through the work of benevolent Christian leadership and entrepreneurs. But one need not look that far. You can look within our community and our church and see godly men and women who work hard to provide for their families, provide jobs for other families, and provide resources and leadership for community ministries of justice and care, learning institutions, biblical training, outreach opportunities, and more. While we may not know they are giving, the fruits of their labor is seen all around us in drop-in centers, Bible camps, Bible schools and colleges, churches, etc.

**Why Bother?** Understanding why it is so important for us to be involved in social issues can help motivate us to do better. We must never forget that social ministry is everyone's issue. We **all** need to look for ways that we can help, and then actually help. We must care because those in need are our "brothers and sisters." We must care because it is right to do so. But more than that, we must care out of a concern for the **eternal spiritual welfare** of people. Social ministry, for the Christian, is integrally connected to our faith and the potential faith of others.

Jesus often addressed physical and social needs. But he did not leave spiritual needs unaddressed. Like Jesus, underlying all we do there ought to be a spiritual burden and concern for the **eternal welfare** of the hungry and hurting. They may not listen to the message of the gospel if we don't help to remove some of the suffering. But if we address the suffering without consideration for their eternal spiritual welfare, it could be likened to treating a mosquito bite while someone is bleeding to death. This is the difference between Christian social ministry and a social gospel. A social gospel will attempt to transform society through affecting its structures, while Christian Social Ministry will be motivated by a concern for the **ETERNAL** (including the present) welfare of people through the power of God's regeneration in our own lives. It is that recognition of eternity and God's grace to us that should both motivate and equip us for social ministry. Christians, of all peoples, should be active in social issues.

Tim Keller, in his wonderful book *The Reason for God*, notes that the atheistic philosophers, Nietzsche and Sartre, argued that if there is no God there is no good reason to be kind and loving and work for peace. If God is dead, they suggest, all morality of love and human rights is baseless. In Michael Perry's book *Toward a Theory of Human Rights*, he concludes that though it is clear there is a religious ground for the reality of human rights, it is far from clear that there is a non-religious

ground. Alan Hirsch, in *Untamed, Reactivating a Missional Form of Discipleship* says: "How men and women think about God – or don't think about God – has a great deal to do with how they envision a just society and how they determine the appropriate means by which to build that society."

It is our faith in, and equipping by God that propels us to a higher concern for social ministry, social welfare, and social justice. Christian faith and its concern for the eternal helps us see past ourselves and this life. Keller also reminds us that Jonathan Edwards, in his treatise *The Nature of True Virtue*, concluded that only if God is our ultimate centre will we find our hearts drawn out not only to people of all families, races and classes but to the whole world in general. With God as that centre we will be equipped and motivated to work for the good of others within whatever system and culture we find ourselves, and with whatever gifts, opportunities, and abilities God has given to us.

Of course, I have only been talking about our involvement as individuals. There is much discussion to be had about how organizations, and even our society as a whole, should be involved in social care. Our role in helping to shape our culture and system for more effective care of others also deserves discussion. But a good starting place is for us to recognize that because of God in our lives, and for the sake of eternity, we have a mandate to act in care for others, doing everything we can with the wonderful opportunities that we have been blessed with in our land.

**Some First Steps:** For me, this leads to many important conclusions; let me close with a few. I admit these are somewhat over-simplistic and deserve greater treatment, but let them serve to provoke us to conversation and action.

1. Let us understand that the way we treat others, not just our families and locals, but those around the world suffering from various abuses, is indeed our responsibility. **The hungry of the world are our problem too**, as the Body of Christ and as individual Christians! They are the widows and orphans we are called to help. We will have to answer to God for our care of them. We need to step it up!
2. Let us never be satisfied with only healing the temporal needs without paying attention to the eternal welfare of those in need. Temporal needs are real, but **spiritual needs are eternally significant**.
3. Let us begin right now with care for one another. We can start at home and in the church, but we must move out beyond that.

Connecting

Growing

Serving

Multiplying

## A Pastor's View on Social Ministry *(continued)*

Connecting

4. Our world is not homogenous, its systems and economies are not all the same; but different is not necessarily wrong. Let us be careful to not demonize beliefs that others may hold with a clear conscience before God. Since the Bible is silent on evaluations of one cultural system over another, let us not be found judging others unfairly.

5. Let us be careful to live and work within the system we have in a way that honors God's name. We can be effective in business, as employers or employees, as teachers, as politicians, as leaders of social institutions, in social action, social justice, mercy, giving, kingdom expansion, and more, all within the culture we are in, while not succumbing to patterns of this world inappropriate for disciples of Jesus.

Growing

6. Let us follow the commands of Scripture regarding those in authority in our land and respect them and pray for them, while graciously encouraging them to greater justice and fairness and care. If we spent less time criticizing our leaders, and more time helping them, they might be able to do more to help others whose needs are so much greater than ours. Rather than directing our authorities to address our petty concerns, let us help them address the real needs of the hurting around the world.

Serving

7. Let us recognize and celebrate those who are working in godly ways within our community:

- a. Thank you to those who challenge us to consider doing better and caring for others, those who draw our attention to the issues of care and justice we are missing. Thank you to those who are presently "stepping into the gaps" and helping others.

Multiplying

### Imitate!

"Imitate God, in everything you do, because you are His dear children."  
*Ephesians 5:1*

**Imitate!** Was our theme for the '09 - '10 Youth year. We spent time talking/studying/learning what it looks like to be imitators of God. It has been a great year of growing and learning who we are, as well as a year of having fun. Playing games, Bible studies, and service projects were all part of the good times.

**Some Serving Projects:** Our

b. Thank you to those who work hard and take risks to provide employment for others, and who take good and fair care of those who work for them.

c. Thank you to those who give generously, either from their mites or much, to help others and build and support organizations to help care for others.

d. Thank you to the leaders of our land who work hard, many sacrificially, to help make life more just and healthy for those under their watch.

Thank you to God, for giving us the hope for eternity that motivates us to care for others, and for His universal offer of salvation.

The bottom line, from my perspective, is that we can, and must, be very thankful to be where we are and to have the many opportunities that we have, but we must also acknowledge that there is much work to do! As Christians, with whom God has entrusted so much, let us lead the way in caring for others.

Pastor Terry Kaufman has served as Senior Preaching Pastor here at Emmanuel for seven years. Terry and Peggy have been married for 27 years, and have two children, Alisa and Rob.



posted on the board at the Youth Booth.

**Angela Plett** is our Youth Ministries Assistant and is completing her second year of service at Emmanuel. Angela and her husband Brendan were married in 2009 and now live in Steinbach.



Junior High group made 17 shoe boxes this Christmas and spent time helping our custodian, Dan Hewson, with a few extra cleaning projects.

The Senior High headed off to Winnipeg twice this year to serve at a Soup Kitchen, and also had a great time playing games with the folks at Resthaven.

All in all a great year and we are looking forward to summer break!

Info on summer Youth Events is

## Missions, Serving, and Small Groups

Several years ago the small groups at Emmanuel were encouraged to get involved with a service project of their own choosing; something in our community or even beyond. After looking into several possibilities, our group decided to get involved with Lynn Lake Bible Camp, and it has now become a regular service project. Over the past number of years we have been putting a practical application to our mission by supplying paper goods for the camp (ie: plates, cups, cutlery, etc) and also basic toiletry needs for each camper.

These campers will arrive at camp with little to nothing in hand, so we supply approximately 40 campers with a personal bag filled with a beach towel, face cloth, shampoo, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, paper and a pencil. We also include a brightly colored t-shirt with the imprint of the camp's current theme - this year's theme is: "Following Jesus". The camp will run from July 12-16, and is located on Burge Lake about 8 km outside of Lynn Lake, and is accessible only by water. We invite you to keep the camp director, organiz-

ers, staff and especially the campers in your prayers this summer as the gospel message is proclaimed.

The Lynn Lake Bible Camp has many dedicated people who are instrumental in making things work. Travis, Pastor at the local Gospel Church in Lynn Lake, is in charge of ministry at the camp, and the organization and staffing is taken care of by Dave & Maryanne, former residents of Lynn Lake, who now reside in Caronport, Sask. Darcy and Carla Thiessen and family, who attended here at Emmanuel before moving to Lynn Lake, have also been very involved. Approximately 2 years ago Emmanuel got involved by sending supplies and workers to assist with a building program for the camp. Join us and the staff of the camp as we ask God's special blessing on these precious children and the camp.

Submitted by Herb & Helen Rempel on behalf of their Small Group: Sule & Margaret Garba, Bert & Dora Penner, Vic & Sylvia Peters, and David & Ellen Rafeedie.

*Connecting*

*Growing*

*Serving*

*Multiplying*



## Children's Ministries - PARTNERING PAGE

### Practical Ways to Connect with Your Child's Heart

Connecting with a child is easier for some parents than others, and easier with some kids than others. Parents and kids have different personalities, likes, and dislikes. With some kids, connecting takes real creativity and persistence. Here are eleven suggestions to help you find ways to connect with your child's heart.

Connecting

1. Talking. Children often like to hear stories from your own childhood. Don't feel like you have to tie a lesson into the story. Just tell it to them as if you were relating the details to a friend.

2. Listen to your kids. Take an interest in their activities and their day. Once they start talking, draw them out with more questions.

3. Touching. A hug or a gentle hand on a shoulder communicates warmth and love.

4. High-energy activities. Kids love excitement. Look for exciting activities to enjoy together.

5. Look for ways to share your child's interests.

Growing

6. Give occasional special treats.

7. Find a task and work at it together as teammates.

8. Offer genuine praise for a job well done.

9. Have fun with your kids. Be silly, tell jokes, or wrestle.

10. New times in a child's life set the stage to connect emotionally. Be there and available to share the moment.

Serving

11. Traumatic events provide opportunities to develop closeness. Remember that the most important thing isn't fixing the problem, it's restoring the heart.

In short, enjoy your kids and have fun with them. Take an interest in their lives. If you don't feel like it, do it anyway. Your kids need your playfulness, love, affection, and joy. When you give to your kids, you contribute to their well-being and your family's strength. Yes, it's a sacrifice, but the time you put in now will go a long way toward reducing friction when it's time to confront or discipline. (Parenting tips from *Parenting is Heart Work* by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN.)

Multiplying

We talked with some people from our congregation to find out how they connected with their kids. Here are some practical thoughts and ideas. Tom and Mary Peters take time each Sunday to talk with their children about what the Sunday morning message and Sunday school classes were about. They appreciate the other adults who contribute toward their children's faith journey. Marcia Peterson talked about how connecting with each child is different, remembering that their developmental stages are different. It can be taking time to play play-dough with Million, their 3 year old, or reading to Olivia or Sarah before bed.

Remember, each child, parent and family is different. What you do to connect with one child may not work the same with another and what works really well in one family, may not work in your family.

### Prayer Corner

\* Please pray for the Children's Ministry Teams as they are prayerfully and actively seeking those whom God would have join them next year.

\* Pray also that God will provide someone to teach your children all about His love this coming year.



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