



SONrise **March - April** **2004**
EMMAUS
NEWSLETTER
... Strengthening the Local Church

At the recent Women's Closing, several expressed the uncertainty of "returning back to the world on Monday", and I tried to quickly change my comments to address starting those Fourth Days. Here I'd like to restate what makes Emmaus so desirable, but what makes Emmaus so dangerous. And why we MUST go back to the world on Monday morning!

For many of us, going on the Walk as a Pilgrim (and for some it hits them later when they get to serve on a Team thinking they know what to expect!) is truly a life-changing experience that we would call a "mountain top experience". Even if you don't get to the "summit", at least you climbed a little higher up the mountain than maybe you've ever been. And we can return to Emmaus events (attending Gatherings, serving at Walks, being on Teams) to keep getting renewed and recharged and refilled. That's the good and desirable part of Emmaus.

The downside is the temptation to "stay on the mountain top", where it's safe and comfortable, to let Emmaus become our church, to only serve God when we're doing the Emmaus-thing! We CANNOT stay on the mountaintop. As I told the ladies at Closing, we're not really needed on the mountaintop. Everyone there is getting fed by Jesus, and not by us. Our work, where God needs us, is down below... In the valley. Where it's damp, muggy, skeeter-filled, boggy underfoot. Not where we'd like to have to go because we know what it's like back there. But, that's where the hurting people are. The ones who're searching without a guide. The ones without a home to run to (maybe without a church home, maybe without a physical home!) or without a family to love them (again maybe without a church family, maybe without a real family). Here you find the lost or the unloved. And where in the valley do you find those in need the most? At the lowest part of the valley. Where the river flows. So, to find the hardest people to reach, you have to wade in the river, walking against the current on rough footing. Where *they* are. Where maybe *you* used to be. Not waiting on the banks for them to come to you. We must go to them! Where they are. And it's not fun, but where we're needed.

The song I dwell on is Delirious' "Find Me In The River":

Find me in the river , Find me on my knees
I 've walked against the water, Now I 'm waiting if You please
We've longed to see the roses, But never felt the thorns
And brought our pretty crowns, But never paid the price

Find me in the river, Find me on my knees
I 've walked against the water, Now I 'm waiting if You please
We didn't count on suffering, We didn't count on pain
But if the blessing's in the valley, Then in the river I'll remain

Find me in the river, Find me there
Find me on my knees with my soul laid bare
Even though you've gone and I 'm cracked and dry
Find me in the river, I 'm waiting here for You.

The key phrase is underlined. There is a blessing in struggling through the "rivers of Life" because there is where we find the kind of people you find Jesus ministering to! Not sitting on the banks watching the water (and whoever is floating in it) passing by, where all we offer are shouts of encouragement. Getting wet may be the only way to reach some people. And that's why we have to leave the mountain Sunday night and return to the valley on Monday morning where we start each of our Fourth Days with the people who need us. And I agree, it's scary and we can feel deflated so quickly. That's where your family comes in: a real one, or a church one, or maybe just a small group of people who agree to support each other, pray for each other, be accountable to each other!

Steve Rochelle
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"Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers [or sisters] of mine, you did for me." Matt 26:37-40 NIV

so, if the blessing's in the valley, where should we be on Monday morning?