

THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

BY DAVID SUMMY

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Jesus is calling us to a deeper walk with Him, a life more surrendered to His will. The call to discipleship comes to all of us who have been born again and have received God's grace in our lives.

This call to discipleship is personal. Jesus is calling you to be His disciple; calling you to follow Him more fully as you die to yourself and yield your will to His.

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26-27 NIV). Here, we see Jesus giving us the call for discipleship. There are those in life who follow Jesus for the benefits. These people have not counted the cost, and when times get tough and a sacrifice is required of them, they fall by the wayside.

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Jesus, in this scripture, is calling on us to count the cost. How much do I love Him above all else? Am I willing to bear my cross, and what does that mean? Am I willing to forsake everything to follow Jesus? As we look at the call to discipleship, we need to ask ourselves, "*Am I a fair-weather follower or am I a disciple who has counted the cost and am willing to give up everything, including my life, for Jesus?*"

So, what does it mean to be a disciple? Disciple means "student," and yet in the Greek, it is even more radical than a student. A disciple is one who studies the life and actions of another with the intention of becoming a living imitation of the master.

As disciples of Jesus, we seek not only to know Him better, but we also seek to live our lives as He did, setting an example for us. In Luke 14:26-27, Jesus gives us three prerequisites to be His disciples.

1. Our love for Jesus needs to be greater than anything else.

Jesus is not teaching an emotional hatred of one's parents or family any more than He is teaching self-hatred. The emphasis is on self-

denial and absolute surrender. Our love and commitment to Jesus must be greater than anything or anyone else in this world. The hatred Jesus is talking about means "to love less than."

2. We need to carry our cross and follow Jesus.

We often today refer to our cross as some obstacle that is in our way of getting what we want, but Jesus was saying that we need to die; we need to die to all we want and all we hold on to, all our dreams and ambitions, why? So that His will, His purpose, and His life can be born in us. You see, unless we die to ourselves, the life of Jesus cannot grow within us.

This is one of the great paradoxes of the gospel. The more we hang on to our lives, the more we lose them, but the more we die to self, the more we find life. This is because true life is found not within ourselves, but within the life of Christ in us.

3. We need to forsake everything.

While giving up something physically is part of what Jesus was saying here, I think it goes deeper than that. We need to let go emotionally of our possessions, so that what we possess no longer possesses us. "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them" (1 John 2:15).


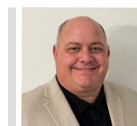
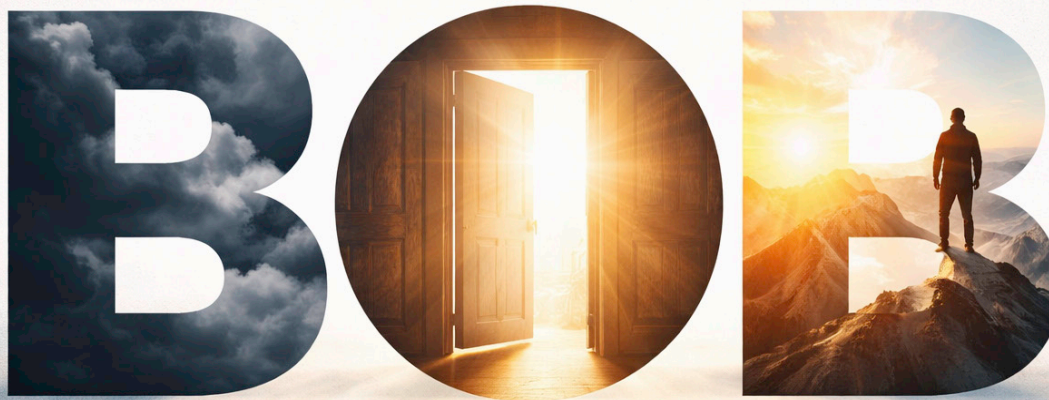
The time has come for us to abandon ordinary Christianity and choose to have a radical faith and trust in Jesus. This means that we choose to be intentional about being students of the way of Jesus. Loving God more than any other thing, dying to my will, my desires, and allowing the life of Jesus to come alive within me. 

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Pray for BOB

BY DARREN PEACHEY

I have been thinking about BOB quite often recently. The Lord keeps bringing BOB to my mind the past few weeks when I am enjoying my morning prayer walks. I was introduced to BOB in February at the annual Rosedale Network Pastors Conference. I suppose I could blame my constant thinking about BOB on our keynote conference speaker, Greg Stier, founder of Dare 2 Share Ministries. He challenged all of the pastors, spouses, and ministry leaders who attended to pray for BOB every day. I have accepted the challenge—the Lord reminds me—so I pray for BOB.

The theme for February's Pastors Conference was "The Power of the Gospel," and a key Scripture passage was Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, 'The righteous shall live by faith'" (ESV).

What would the written gospels be without accounts of Jesus taking every opportunity to boldly proclaim the good news of a different kind of kingdom?

How we embrace the truth of these verses impacts our dedication to praying for BOB. Who is this BOB we were challenged to pray for? BOB is an acronym for burden, opportunity, and boldness.

Pray for a Burden. Pray for lost people—people who have no relationship with God through Jesus—who are not living the abundant life. Pray for the kind of compassion and burden Jesus had as He lived life in the towns and villages, as recorded in Matthew 9:36: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (NIV). The compassion Jesus had was deep in His inner core, an intense burden—a burden born out of love for the lost. *Lord, give us a burden, not disdain.*

Pray for Opportunity. Pray for opportunities and divine appointments to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the perishing, believing that the gospel is the "power of God for salvation." Jesus was the master of taking advantage of opportunities. He saw opportunities to converse

with people in the temple and synagogues, at feasts and weddings, and where people made a living, like fishing. Jesus took advantage of opportunities "as He went along" on ordinary days, in the middle of storms, and when He stood before Pilate. *Lord, open our eyes to the opportunities you give us each day to proclaim the gospel, as we go along.*

Pray for Boldness. Pray that a deep burden for people not living the abundant life would outweigh a lack of courage and confidence to share the gospel. What would the written gospels be without accounts of Jesus taking every opportunity to boldly proclaim the good news of a different kind of kingdom? No calling of fishermen to follow Him, no woman at the well, and an entire town's transformation, no feeding 5,000 people, no sinful woman being set free, no late-night conversations with Nicodemus, and no entering into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. *Father, give us boldness as you did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:7).*

The Apostle John made it quite clear that this prayer for burden, opportunity, and boldness, and the response it calls forth, is not just for Jesus: "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did" (1 John 2:6).

I have embraced the challenge to pray for BOB. Many of the approximately 350 people who attended Pastors Conference are also praying for BOB. That prayer is making a difference for Jesus' kingdom and for lost people. I have been hearing stories of burden, opportunity, and boldness. I wonder, *what would be the Kingdom impact, and how many people would move from death to life, if all of the 15,000 people scattered across the country who make up Rosedale Network of Churches would begin praying for BOB?* 🙏

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Darren travels extensively with his wife, Caryn, visiting churches in his role as conference pastor of Rosedale Network of Churches. They live in Belleville, Pennsylvania, and attend Locust Grove Mennonite Church.



Ethiopian Evangelical Worship

BY YEMIRU MINTESNOT

A Living Heritage Shaped by Two Worlds

A missionary pastor from the United States once remarked, “In Ethiopia, without singing, you can do nothing.” His observation captures a profound truth: in Ethiopian Christianity, worship is inseparable from music. Singing is not an accessory to worship; it is the very atmosphere in which faith breathes, moves, and expresses itself.

To understand the worship life of Ethiopian evangelical Anabaptist believers, one must first appreciate the deep historical and cultural roots that shape it. Much of Ethiopia’s Christian musical identity can be traced to Saint Yared, the monastic priest of the late fifth and early sixth centuries, whose influence continues to define Ethiopian liturgical tradition.

Saint Yared is credited with formalizing the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church’s musical system, known as *Zema*, which encompasses lyrics, melodies, rhythms, and sacred dance. According to tradition, Saint Yared received this musical revelation through an angelic encounter, and the Ethiopian church has preserved his system for more than 1,500 years.

Saint Yared was not only a composer but also a pioneering music scholar and one of the earliest known developers of musical notation. His compositions in *Geez*, the ancient liturgical language, remain central to Orthodox worship. He encouraged priests to cultivate poetic expression in their adoration and introduced a rich array of worship elements: traditional drums, the *tsinatsil* (metal clappers), prayer sticks, *elliita* (joyful ululation), *shibsheba* (sacred dance), and distinctive liturgical garments. His legacy is not merely historical; it is lived and felt in every Orthodox service today.

Although Ethiopian Anabaptists do not follow the full Orthodox liturgical system, we are undeniably shaped by this heritage. Evangelical worship in Ethiopia is a hybrid expression, blending the influence of Western missionaries with the deep cultural memory of Ethiopian Christianity. This fusion has produced a worship style that is both globally recognizable and uniquely Ethiopian.

Western missionaries introduced modern musical instruments, such as the piano, accordion, keyboards, guitars, and drum sets, which quickly became standard in Evangelical congregations. Yet, instead of simply translating Western hymns, Ethiopian believers embraced their own musical creativity. Most congregations write original songs in their local languages, drawing on indigenous rhythms and poetic forms. This practice has given rise to a strong choir tradition. Nearly

every church has its own choir, often dressed in coordinated outfits, sometimes incorporating traditional Ethiopian attire.

While *Geez* is rarely used in Evangelical settings, Ethiopia’s linguistic diversity finds full expression in worship. With more than ninety languages spoken across the country, believers praise God in Amharic, Oromo, Tigrinya, and many other languages. Traditional instruments frequently accompany modern ones, creating a soundscape that is both ancient and contemporary. *Elliiita* and *shibsheba*—joyful shouting and sacred dance—remain integral parts of evangelical worship, linking the community to its cultural and spiritual ancestry. It helps the church with mission and outreach programs because any Ethiopian, from any religious, ethnic, or economic background, can be attracted and easily join the worship songs.

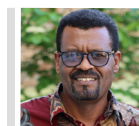
Is worship something we must always structure according to our customs and traditions, or is it a space where the Holy Spirit may lead us beyond our expectations?

Singing occupies a central place in Evangelical gatherings, often taking up a significant portion of the service. During overnight prayer meetings, worship can continue for hours, creating an atmosphere of deep spiritual engagement. In evangelistic events, music becomes a powerful tool for outreach. Ethiopian evangelistic songs, with their emotional intensity and cultural resonance, draw crowds with ease. Solo singers play a particularly influential role, often shaping the tone and direction of the entire gathering.

There are moments when singing becomes the sermon. I recall a Sunday service when the pastor approached me and said, “What do

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Photo credit: [Amanuel Sileshi](#)



Yemiru serves as the director of the Africa Mission Partnership Initiative and as an Immigrant Church Growth Consultant at Rosedale International. He and his wife, Zway, have five children.



An Update from RBG

BY ROSEDALE INTERNATIONAL

Rosedale Business Group (RBG) is experiencing a significant leadership transition following the retirement of Larry and Dot Chupp, who joined the organization as its directors in 2014. An interim leadership team, comprised of Mary Edgington, Jerry Sauder, and Lloyd Kuhns (interim director), was put in place earlier this year.

Mary brings twenty-nine years of local government experience, primarily in finance and human resources, to the interim team. Her involvement with RBG began in 2018 with an introduction to Café Diego; since 2024, she has served as RBG's administrative assistant.

After nearly twenty-five years of work in corporate finance, Jerry became RI (Rosedale International)'s Vice President of Finance, a role he has held for the last decade. His missional experience includes a two-year term with RI in Kenya and a wide variety of church leadership roles, including pastor, deacon, and elder. He has served on RBG's board since 2018.

Lloyd's long history with missions began in 1973 with time as an RI volunteer in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. His professional career includes twenty-six years with Mennonite Central Committee in several roles, including country representative in Brazil, Nicaragua, and Honduras; Associate Director of Ten Thousand Villages; and US Director of Finance. He gained additional experience through fifteen years in financial management with several businesses. He has served on RBG's board since 2016.

Since the beginning, RBG has operated with the belief that business as missions can be an effective tool to extend the kingdom of God around the world.

This time of transition has provided an opportunity to analyze RBG's strategies and structural relationship to Rosedale International. Since the beginning, RBG has operated with the belief that business as missions can be an effective tool to extend the kingdom of God around the world. They have used several different methods to implement this idea with varying levels of success. Recently, the board performed an analysis on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of each approach with the hope that their findings would highlight which are most effective.

The strategies evaluated include enabling missionaries to engage in business opportunities within their country of outreach; providing employment opportunities for professionals who serve in another country and seek to share the gospel through their work and life; providing financial, technical, and business resources to local Christian entrepreneurs in other countries; implementing a microfinance program in one or more countries; and implementing a savings and loan program in one or more countries.

This list is broad and diverse, which means that RBG leadership will need to make tough choices as they determine which approaches to prioritize moving forward. Guiding this conversation is a commitment to shaping the RBG program to more closely align with the vision, mission, and focus of RI.

They saw God's creative work in many beautiful contexts.

Looking back over their time with RBG, Larry and Dot express deep gratitude for what they see as a very rewarding and challenging time. They appreciate the support of RI and the RBG board and are thankful to Paul Kurtz, former RBG director, and many others who had the vision to begin the program of marketplace ministry that RBG is today. Says Lloyd, "There have been many challenges and cultural differences they encountered along the way, but nonetheless, they saw God's creative work in many beautiful contexts."

RI and RBG would like to extend our thanks to Larry and Dot for their invaluable work as RBG directors. Please lift them up in their new season of life, and pray for Jerry, Mary, Lloyd, and the RBG board as they guide the work of RBG during this transitional period. 🙏

Photo credit: [Nataliya Vaitkevich on Pexels](#)



RI is the mission arm of Rosedale Network of Churches, working to take Jesus to the ends of the earth by fully engaging Rosedale Network churches in maturing and multiplying disciples, especially among the least reached.

you think if we postpone your sermon to next week and continue singing for the rest of the service?" I agreed, sensing the Spirit's movement. That day, people came to faith, and others testified to physical healing, without a single formal sermon preached. The worship itself became a proclamation.

Experiences like this have led me to reflect deeply: *Is worship something we must always structure according to our customs and traditions, or is it a space where the Holy Spirit may lead us beyond our expectations?* Ethiopian evangelical worship, shaped by both ancient heritage and missionary influence, continually invites this question. Its flexibility, spontaneity, and openness to the Spirit remind us that worship is not merely a cultural expression, but a living encounter with God.

As I continue to witness diverse worship styles across cultures, the same question returns to me: *Are we willing to let the Spirit lead us beyond what is familiar?* Ethiopian worship, rooted in history yet open to renewal, offers a compelling model of how tradition and spiritual freedom can coexist in vibrant harmony. 🕊️



Going through old boxes and folders that people give me means that I stumble across treasures I often had no idea existed. That was the case with the Pleasant View Mennonite Church 75th Anniversary booklet. It was in a folder with a label that gave no clue it contained a rich congregational history. Does your congregation have a written history? Is anyone writing down those wonderful recollections from the generation that will soon be gone? I'm so glad Pleasant View wrote their history. Get an inspiration from this month's [From the Archives](#).