

Title: "Out of the Box" Follow-up

October 20, 2025

Greetings all,

I want to thank those of you who responded to my question from last week. I am hoping to eventually write an essay that will include many of the excellent ideas that came in. But for now, here are some highlights gleaned from the many responses I received.

The "big picture" good news is that a **lot** of people from the wider IA community have found ways to help conservative, evangelical, left-brain believers get to the place where they are able to embrace the Immanuel Approach. And many of these conservative, evangelical, left-brain believers have then received great benefit from experiencing contingent, interactive connection with the living, loving, life-giving, tangible, personal, friendship presence of Jesus.

Quite a few people noticed this one: A variety of much more specific concerns can be hiding behind "I'm just not comfortable with the idea of having a conversation with the tangible presence of Jesus."

If you are a therapist working with an individual client or a ministry team member working with an individual parishioner:

- You can clarify what they are really concerned about. Do they just need a bit of reassurance/teaching regarding whether the Immanuel Approach is biblical? Or do they also have a number of other very specific fears/concerns, such as fear of being deceived, fear that they will make something up, fear of getting too emotional, fear of losing control and doing something embarrassing, fear that IA won't work for them, fear of what God might say, fear of what memories or other issues the Lord might bring up, etc?.
- You can provide attunement, and very focused, contingent answers to the specific concerns each individual is bringing.
- You can help them to speak their concerns/fears directly to the Lord in prayer, and then ask the Lord, "What do You want me to know about this _____ (describe specific concern)?" And then coach them to notice any thoughts or insights that come into their mind. Or even gentler (less of the new/strange/scary component of interactive connection), you can offer something like, "Can we take a minute to pray together, and ask God for help about these concerns?" I have been persistently pleasantly surprised by how often these simple interventions reduce concerns to the point that the person is willing to try IA.

For people who are worried about "just making things up" from their own minds, or are afraid of being deceived in some way, you can reassure them that you will both be watching carefully, and discerning together, regarding whether the content that comes to them is really from the Lord. And you can reassure them that if they want more details regarding how to discern this important question, there is a LOT of material in the big lion book (three whole chapters). Often, just this simple reassurance and knowing that extensive additional resources are available will reduce their concern to the point that they will be willing to go ahead and try IA. (And if they want to look at the details, they can study the 130+ pages in the big lion book.)

For people who are unsure regarding whether the Immanuel Approach is biblical:

- There is a whole chapter in the big lion book about biblical support for the Immanuel Approach.
- Pastor Patti Velotta's *Immanuel: A Practicum* provides a **lot** of additional discussion of the biblical foundation for the Immanuel Approach (two thirds of the book).
- Mark Virkler's books about hearing God provide extensive additional discussion of the biblical foundation for the idea of an interactive connection with God.
- Dallas Willard's book, *Hearing God*, provides extensive additional discussion regarding the biblical foundation for hearing from God.
- One person references the verse reassuring us that the Lord is always with us, and then comments: "We believe that, but we often don't notice Him. This is a process that helps us to do that.")

Bringing the Immanuel Approach into the larger church/community is more complicated than helping one individual become open to trying it. It is important to think carefully about how best to do this. The eventual essay will have more regarding this larger, more complicated issue, but here are a couple of simple points that quite a few people mentioned:

- Many people mentioned that sermons/bible studies/book-study groups about hearing from God and interacting with God can help to prepare the ground. Especially since the people we are talking about usually emphasize the importance of scripture. The biblical-support-for-the-Immanuel-Approach sources mentioned above are good resources.
- A number of people mentioned that small-group book studies with *The Other Half of Church* (Jim Wilder and Michel Hendricks) have been valuable for preparing their churches for the Immanuel Approach. And several of these people emphasized that it is very important to include the practice exercises and debriefing discussions (as opposed to just reading).
- A number of people mentioned that it has worked well to start with Immanuel journaling (for example, interactive gratitude & thought rhyming from the *Joyful Journey* book), and that this has been especially helpful for preparing groups for the Immanuel Approach. Caveat from Dr. Karl: Some people (like myself) have good results when working with a facilitator, but poor/disappointing results with journaling. My perception is that working with a facilitator is especially effective for helping the recipient feel the importance and recognize the meaning of *subtle* content (explained in great detail in chapter 16 of the big lion book). Also, troubleshooting to identify and resolve blockages requires working with a facilitator. Therefore, if you start with journaling, let participants know that there are additional resources available for anyone who doesn't get good results.

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

Want to support the Lehman's Immanuel Approach work? Click here for more information:
<https://www.immanuelapproach.com/supporting-lehmans-immanuel-approach-work/>