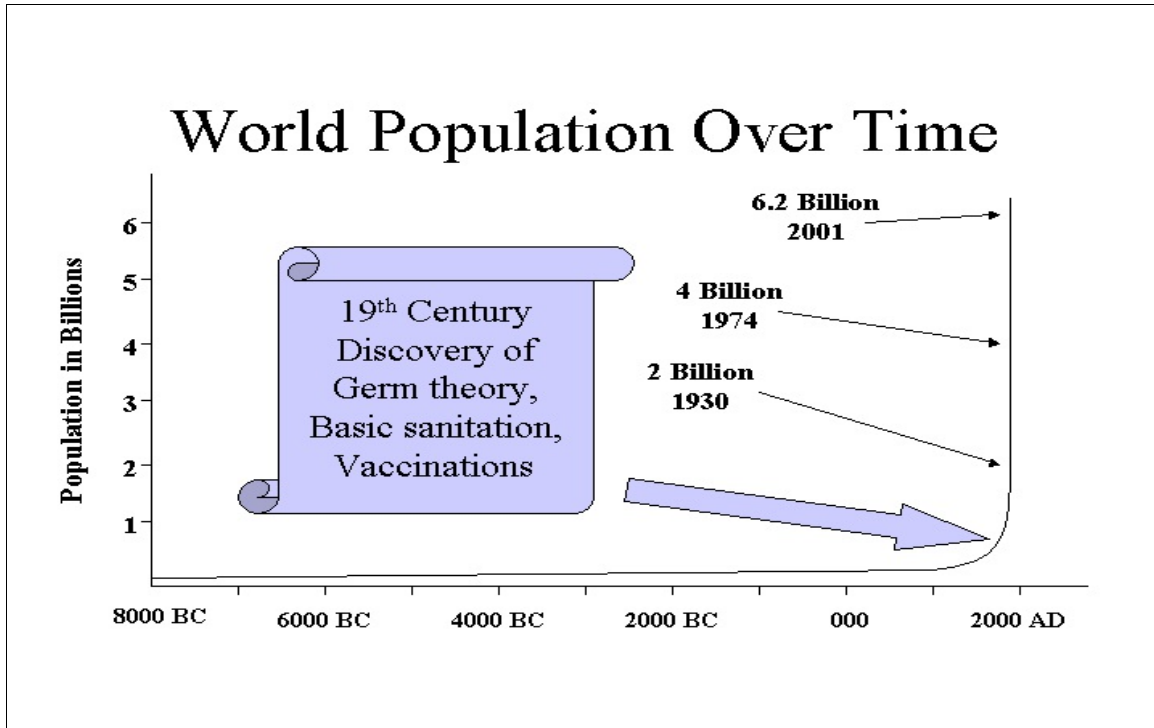


Lay-people and the Immanuel Approach

Part I: World Changing Forces & Vision for the Church

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I. “World Changing Forces” – Microbial Theory and the Immanuel Approach:



A. Microbial theory, basic infectious illness prevention, and the population explosion:

Germ theory, basic sanitation, vaccinations, and antibiotics provide an excellent example of how a few key discoveries can change the world.

The total population of the world has remained essentially constant for most of the history of mankind. The really short summary is that world population fluctuated between 10 million and 300 million for most of the last 10,000 years, never reaching 1 billion until the 19th century.

The biggest single factor in preventing sustained population growth has been infectious illness. Prior to the discovery of microbial theory in the 19th century, 50% of the people born into the world died before reaching the age of five, with infectious illness being the number one cause of death. An even more significant problem was infectious plague. Any time population became really dense, it was just a matter of time until an infectious-illness plague exploded in the dense population and quickly returned the population to previous low levels. Smallpox plagues and the black death in Europe are examples. This is also the best theory for the “mysterious” disappearance of the huge Inca civilization.

The 19th century discovery of microscopic organisms as the cause of infectious illness lead quickly to simple tools – basic sanitation, vaccinations, and antibiotics – that essentially

eliminated infectious plague as the single biggest population limiter. After 10,000 years with no significant sustained population growth, the world population grew from about 1 billion in 1800 to 2 billion by 1930, 3 billion by 1960, 4 billion by 1974, 5 billion by the late 1980's, and 6.2 billion in 2001¹. Note that with infectious plagues out of the picture, this population growth occurred in spite of the biggest wars in human history. In my assessment, the discoveries of microbial theory, basic infectious illness prevention, and antibiotics have resulted in a population explosion that has changed the ecology of the entire planet in the space of 200 years. This is an example of how a small handful of strategic discoveries can change the whole world.

B. Immanuel Approach principles and tools: My perception is that the discovery of Immanuel Approach principles and tools for the church is analogous to the discovery of microbial theory, basic infectious illness prevention, and antibiotics for world population.

1. Endemic psychological wounds, and the toxic content anchored in them, have crippled the church in much the same way as infectious disease crippled world population prior to the 19th century: Any time more than a few Christians try to work together, triggering each other's trauma eventually leads to conflict and division. When this happens, the group/team either splits or spends so much time and energy dealing with conflict that they can't get much else done.² Psychological wounds also make Christians much more vulnerable to demonic harassment (including temptation and deception), resulting in chronic and widespread problems with deception, confusion, and persistent sin. My assessment is that psychological wounds, and the associated toxic content and demonic infections, are the single biggest reason that the Church has crippled along for 2000 years as opposed to sweeping the world in true victory.

2. Immanuel Approach emotional healing is more effective than any previous healing tools:³ I have been using Immanuel Approach principles and process in my professional work since 2003. My assessment after more than 30,000 hours of clinical experience with Immanuel Approach emotional healing is that it is much more effective than any other tools, techniques, principles, or approaches of which I am aware. As of January 2002, medical and psychological research shows psychiatric medication, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), cognitive-behavioral therapy, and exposure therapy to be the most effective treatments for psychological trauma. My experience is that Immanuel Approach emotional healing is more effective than any of these other tools or techniques. To

¹"Population: Trends in World Population," Encyclopedia Britannica, Copyright 1994-1998; <http://www.mukil.com/english/script/worldpopulation.htm> 11/2/2001.

²Christian missions provides a sad example. Irreconcilable interpersonal conflict is currently the number one reason for Christian missionaries leaving the mission field. See, for example, Paul Akins, "The Number One Reason Missionaries Go Home," *International Mission News*, June 15, 2017, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-number-one-reason-missionaries-go-home/#:~:text=The%20most%20common%20reason%20missionaries,or%20response%20to%20the%20gospel.>

³See chapters seven and eight, "What is Unique/New/Different About the Immanuel Approach," and "Jesus is an Exceptionally Effective Therapist," respectively, in Karl D. Lehman, *An Introduction to the Immanuel Approach* (Evanston, IL: Immanuel Publishing, 2024), pages 22-63, and , See also "The Immanuel Approach and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy," "The Immanuel Approach and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)," and "The Immanuel Approach and Exposure Therapy" (all available as free downloads from the "Special Subjects/Advanced Topics section of the Resources page on our IA website, www.immanuelapproach.com/special-subjectsadvanced-topics/).

my assessment, a number of other prayer-for-emotional-healing ministries include many of the principles of the Immanuel Approach in their prayer ministries. However, we perceive that the Lord has given us some new insights which have dramatically improved the bottom line effectiveness of the Immanuel Approach. My experience with prayer for emotional healing in other ministry settings is that almost everyone experiences some benefit, but that the really dramatic, profound, and rapid healing (for example, when the recipient works with Jesus inside traumatic memories with dramatic resolution of trauma) is rare. If I am painfully honest, my own experience has been that this kind of dramatic healing occurs in less than twenty percent of prayer for emotional healing sessions outside of Theophostic and the Immanuel Approach. In contrast, my experience with the Immanuel Approach is that experienced facilitators see significant, permanent healing in more than ninety percent of sessions. With respect to my own healing, the Immanuel Approach has been significantly more effective than any other therapy or healing ministry I have received.

3. *Dramatic increase in realistic availability.* As described in more detail below, I believe that most Christians could learn basic Immanuel Approach principles and tools to the point that they could facilitate healing for simple traumatic memories as lay-ministers. And I believe that many Christians could learn intermediate-advanced Immanuel Approach principles and tools to the point that they could facilitate healing for intermediate-advanced trauma. This would result in a dramatic increase in the real availability of effective healing.

4. *Less painful and scary, Increased willingness to receive:* Immanuel Approach emotional healing work is not painless, and some recipients still have anxiety going into the process, but it is much less painful and scary than any previous options. The on-ramp of connecting with Jesus in the context of an initial positive memory is especially gentle, and the actual healing work is less scary and less painful due to the presence of Jesus – due to constantly engaging with Jesus and receiving help from Jesus throughout the process. This reduction in pain and anxiety is relevant to our discussion because people are becoming more willing to do their healing work, and more people are actually getting healing, now that the process is less intimidating. (Just like with dentistry – people have become much more willing to go in for dental repair, and more people actually get dental care, now that high-speed drills and novocaine have made the process much less intimidating.)

5. *Summary: I believe that the Immanuel Approach could change the world:* Because Immanuel Approach emotional healing therapy/ministry is providing a dramatic increase in healing for emotional and spiritual problems, I am expecting a dramatic increase in the emotional and spiritual health of each individual Christian, and a dramatic increase in the ability of Christians to work together. These changes should result in a whole new level of “victory” and effective ministry throughout the global church, and this should eventually result in a dramatic increase of non-Christians coming to know Jesus. I am hoping and expecting that we are about to experience something that has never been seen before, and that this “new thing” will change the world as dramatically as microbial theory, basic sanitation, vaccinations, and antibiotics.

II. Components of the Immanuel Approach that make it possible for lay-ministers to facilitate: As described in detail in the big lion book, there are a number of components of the Immanuel Approach that make it possible for the average lay-minister to facilitate basic emotional healing for the average recipient:

- ***Relational circuits, positive memory recall, and appreciation:*** There are neurological circuits in our brains that have been created to provide the neurological hardware for relationships. I call these circuits our relational circuits, and the recipient can more easily perceiving and connect with Jesus when her relational circuits are online and strongly active. Furthermore, the recipient can reliably get her relational circuits to be online and strongly active by re-entering a memory for a previous positive experience and focusing on the details until she feels appreciation.⁴
- ***Relationships are memory-mapped:*** Our relationships are carried in the memories for past experiences with the other person in the relationship. If the recipient has positive memories of previous experiences of connecting with the Lord, she can use these memories as the positive memories for stirring up appreciation and activating her relational circuits, which will activate the memories carrying her relationship with the Lord and get her brain into an even better place for perceiving and connecting with Jesus.⁵
- ***Our brains work best in community:*** There are a number of ways in which our brains have been designed to work best in community. And one of these works-best-in-community design features is that describing the details of our mental content out loud to another person pulls the content through the parts of our brains that help us to feel it's importance and recognize it's meaning. Therefore, coaching the recipient to describe subtle mental content will help her to perceive the Lord's presence by helping her to recognize and feel the importance of *subtle* manifestations of His presence *that she might otherwise miss*. And coaching her to describe subtle mental content will help her to connect with the Lord by helping her to recognized and feel the importance of *subtle* content from the Lord *that she might otherwise miss*.⁶
- ***Simple troubleshooting can resolve many blockages:*** There are blockages that can hinder recipients from perceiving and connecting with the Lord, but the most common blockages can be resolved with simple troubleshooting interventions.⁷
- ***Lay-ministers can enable recipients to perceive and connect with the Lord:*** By applying the four points just mentioned above, the average lay-minister can enable the average recipient to perceive the Lord's presence and establish a "good enough" interactive connection.
- ***Jesus provides most of the expertise:*** The Immanuel Approach facilitator applies the principles above to help the recipient establish a connection with the Lord, and then once this connection has been established the facilitator coaches the recipient to engage directly with

⁴For thorough discussion of these points, see chapters six and eight, "Positive Memories and Deliberate Appreciation," and "Refreshed Perception and Interactive Connection," in Karl D. Lehman, *The Immanuel Approach: For Emotional Healing and for Life* (Evanston, IL: Immanuel Publishing, 2016), pages 81-102, 105-115.

⁵For thorough discussion of this point, see Karl D. Lehman, *And Introduction to the Immanuel Approach*, (Evanston, IL: Immanuel Publishing, 2024), pages 8 & 9.

⁶For thorough discussion of these points, see chapter sixteen, "Describe Everything that Comes into Your Awareness: Our Brains Work Better in Community," in *The Immanuel Approach: For Emotional Healing and for Life*, pages 171-202.

⁷For thorough discussion of these points, see chapter thirteen, "Immanuel Approach Troubleshooting, Part II: Immanuel Interventions—A Special Form of Immanuel Approach Troubleshooting," in *The Immanuel Approach: For Emotional Healing and for Life*, pages 139-154.

Jesus regarding every issue, question, problem, and traumatic memory that they encounter. Another way to say this is that the facilitator helps the recipient establish the connection with Jesus, and then coaches her to engage directly with Jesus as the primary therapist. So for recipients who are able to establish a “good enough” connection, the facilitator just provides the structure for the Immanuel Approach process and then Jesus provides all of the expertise necessary for helping the recipient resolve traumatic memories.⁸

- **Immanuel Approach safety nets:** There are two “safety nets” that enable lay-ministers to facilitate this Immanuel Approach process safely. The primary safety net is that the recipient starts each IA ministry session with establishing an interactive connection with the living presence of Jesus in the context of a positive memory. And then if the recipient and facilitator encounter anything they don’t know how to handle later in the session (or they run out of time at the end of the session), they can deploy the safety net of going back to the positive memory and connection with Jesus from the beginning of the session. They might not always be able to resolve the traumatic memories they are working with, but they can always get the plane back on the ground and end the session in a safe place. The second safety net is that Immanuel Approach lay-ministers don’t go forward with trauma-healing work until/unless they have the primary safety net in place⁹

Again, these components of the Immanuel Approach enable the average lay-minister to facilitate emotional healing work for the average recipient. My hope is that lay-ministers will be able to provide basic Immanuel Approach healing work for MANY simple/basic issues/trauma, with Immanuel Approach mental health professionals providing consultation and/or stepping in to provide care when lay ministers encounter scenarios that are beyond their knowledge and skill.

III. The whole church must participate: This “new thing” will require that the whole church learn the Immanuel Approach and participate in Immanuel Approach emotional healing. I believe we can win the war, but all the soldiers have to get on the battle field. We’re not going to do well if 95% of our soldiers sit at home watching television coverage of the other 5% actually fighting the war.

Microbiology discoveries did not change the world through a few superstar doctors healing everybody. Microbiology discoveries changed the world when every grade-school taught its children about germs, every child learned to wash her hands after going to the bathroom, every community built sewage and garbage disposal systems, every family learned to wash its dishes, and every child got vaccinations.

The Immanuel Approach will not change the world through a few superstar ministers healing everybody. Charlotte and I could do Immanuel Approach therapy/ministry 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and we would still only get to a few thousand people. The Immanuel Approach will change the world as the whole church embraces this challenge and participates in this ministry.

IV. My dream/hope/vision

⁸For thorough discussion of these points, see chapter twenty-five, “Let Jesus Drive (with Respect to Non-process Aspects of the Session,” in *The Immanuel Approach: For Emotional Healing and for Life*, pages 325-347.

⁹For thorough discussion of these points, see chapter fourteen, “Immanuel Approach Safety Nets,” in *The Immanuel Approach: For Emotional Healing and for Life*, pages 155-166.

1. Everybody learn the basic principles and embrace an Immanuel Approach lifestyle: My hope is that all Christians will incorporate the basic Immanuel Approach principles into the way they understand the world. This will be part of the foundation from which we can all work to bring healing into the church, just as the whole population understanding germ theory is part of the foundation for everybody participating in basic sanitation. The average person is not a doctor or a public health worker, but the average person understands germ theory well enough to wash her hands, wash her dishes, and get vaccinations. The average person is not a mental health professional or emotional healing minister, but the average person can understand Immanuel Approach principles well enough to embrace an Immanuel Approach lifestyle. And a community full of people who are embracing an Immanuel lifestyle is the perfect foundation for widespread lay-ministry.¹⁰

2. Every church have a team of lay-people who can provide Immanuel Approach ministry: My hope is that every church will have a team of lay-people who can provide Immanuel Approach ministry. As mentioned above, these lay-ministers will not be able to deal with the most difficult cases, but they will be able to harvest a huge amount of low hanging fruit. As also mentioned above, another part of my hope/vision is that mental health professionals trained in the Immanuel Approach will be able to provide consultation and/or step in to provide care when lay-ministers get stuck.

3. Families and friends provide Immanuel Approach ministry for each other: An especially exciting possibility (that Charlotte and I have already seen working in a few situations) is for spouses and close friends to use these tools to facilitate healing for each other. Parents can also learn to use Immanuel Approach principles and tools to provide healing for their children.

V. Challenging but doable (2026 addition): It has been almost twenty-five years since I wrote the first version of this essay, and I still believe that the Immanuel Approach can dramatically increase the health and success of the global church. But I have also become more aware of challenges that I did not perceive so clearly twenty-five years ago. One challenge is that some recipients have much more difficulty with perceiving and connecting with Jesus than others. My very rough estimates¹¹ are that twenty-five percent of recipients are able to perceive and connect with Jesus right out of the box, with no troubleshooting required; twenty-five percent require brief basic troubleshooting to enable them to perceive and connect with Jesus; thirty-five percent require one to several full sessions of intermediate troubleshooting; and fifteen percent require extended advanced troubleshooting before they are able to perceive and connect with Jesus. The good news is that close to one-hundred percent of recipients are eventually able to establish an interactive connection with Jesus. The challenge is that as many as fifty percent can require significant intermediate or advanced troubleshooting.

A second challenge is that lay-people's ability to learn to facilitate also varies over a wide range. At one end of the spectrum, some potential lay-ministers have good relational maturity skills,

¹⁰For further discussion of embracing an Immanuel Approach lifestyle, see supplementary chapter 35b, "The Immanuel Approach Lifestyle," available as a free download from the Resources page of www.immanuelapproach.com.

¹¹These estimates come from moderately rigorous follow-up surveys from a handful of ministry and training opportunities, in combination with very rough intuitive estimates from thousands of communications with trainers, facilitators, and recipients over the past twenty-three years.

good discernment, good understanding of basic biblical principles, lots of faith, high capacity, strong cognitive abilities, good self awareness, regular opportunities for ongoing healing, and minimal disruptive triggering. These people learn the needed Immanuel Approach principles and skills quickly and easily. Even as lay-people they find that facilitating comes naturally and flows easily, and they quickly see consistently good results. They encounter blockages, especially when they start working with more difficult recipients, but they learn basic troubleshooting quickly and easily, and they increasingly learn intermediate-advanced techniques and troubleshooting with a reasonable amount of time and effort. At the other end of the spectrum, some potential lay-ministers have poor relational maturity skills, poor discernment, poor understanding of basic biblical principles, less faith, low capacity, weaker cognitive abilities, poor self awareness, few opportunities for ongoing healing, and a lot of disruptive triggering. These people need a lot of healing, maturity skill building, general discipleship, capacity building, help with self-awareness, and closely supervised practice before they can even facilitate “Lite” Immanuel Approach sessions.¹²

My very rough estimates¹³ are that twenty percent of Lay-Christians are in this group that needs a lot of help before they can facilitate even “Lite” sessions, fifteen percent can learn to facilitate “Lite” sessions with a very modest investment, fifteen percent can learn to facilitate basic trauma-work sessions with a modest investment, thirty-five percent are able to learn intermediate techniques and troubleshooting with a reasonable amount of time and effort, and fifteen percent are able and willing (and even excited) to learn advanced techniques and troubleshooting.

So my bottom-line assessment is that it will be **challenging-but-doable** for the Immanuel Approach to provide dramatically increased emotional healing, and thereby dramatically increase the health and success of the global church. As just described, as many as fifty percent of recipients may require intermediate-advance troubleshooting, and it may be that only half of potential lay-ministers will be able to learn the necessary intermediate-advanced troubleshooting principles and skills. So the average church will not be able to train all of it’s parishioners to facilitate healing for each with a handful of weekend seminars. But my perception is that the necessary investment, for both facilitators and recipients, is doable – my assessment is that the time and energy required is similar to the amount of time and energy we spend pursuing hobbies, or watching TV, or playing video games. I believe that widespread emotional healing is at least as important as these alternative activities, and I believe that participating in this adventure will be at least as rewarding and life-giving as these alternative activities. Again, I believe that it will be challenging-but-doable for Immanuel Approach emotional healing to dramatically increase the health and success of the global church.

For more practical specifics on implementing this vision, See “Lay-people and the Immanuel Approach, Part 2: Promoting Healing, Preventing Breakage” in the “Kclehman.com Website Archives” section of the Resources page on our IA website,

¹²“Lite” Immanuel Approach sessions include coaching the recipient to the point of establishing an interactive connection with the Lord, and then help the recipient to engage in various **non**-trauma-work activities with the Lord (such as just enjoying time with the Lord, doing spiritual direction with the Lord, and looking at specific questions or issues with the Lord). But they do **not** include the recipient working with the Lord to resolve traumatic memories.

¹³Again, these estimates come from moderately rigorous follow-up surveys from a handful of ministry and training opportunities, in combination with very rough intuitive estimates from thousands of communications with trainers, facilitators, and recipients over the past twenty-three years.

<https://www.immanuelapproach.com/kclehman-com-website-archives/>.