**Message for Lighthouse 23rd June 2013**

## Introduction

# Immanuel-Discipleship!

Jesus is God’s Immanuel

God and Man are reconciled - to co-habit through Jesus

This intimate relationship is the essence of Eternal Life

This co-habitation (God with us – Immanuel) is guaranteed and increased through our obedience – especially via Discipleship – Matt. 28:19-20

* *Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.*
* *Then Jesus came to [the eleven disciples] and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and* make disciples of all nations*, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you…*’

As we disciple others – Jesus is with us

His presence is manifested more in discipling others than any other process!

After *loving God with all our heart, soul, mind strength* etc – our greatest priority (No.1) should be discipling others – extending God’s family – extending and fulfilling God’s eternal desire

It was Jesus last command – it is our first priority

Jesus says – YOU disciple others – I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH!

### “Discipling” is μαθητεύω - mathēteuō

***math-ayt-yoo'-o*, intransitively to *become* *a* *pupil*; transitively to *disciple*, that is, enrol as scholar: - be disciple, instruct, teach.**

### *Disciple/* *mathēteuō* was different from a *didaskalos* –

*Disciple* meant one who learns, follows and put his learning to action and endeavour – with a view to taking over the *master’s* cause and teaching

*Didaskalos* was simply the process of learning/teaching – a mental process

This being the case, discipling becomes the most important activity on earth – the extending of God’s eternal desire

**a.** One who embraces and assists in spreading the teachings of another.

**b.** An active adherent, as of a movement or philosophy.

The essence of Discipling is –

* *one person influencing the life of another toward a cause for life*

### So Why is Discipling so scarce and rarely practised today?

Discipling is not essentially - Preaching, holding services, choir practices, WOW meetings etc – although these could all be part of it

### Some Reasons that Immediately come to mind are:

* Learning today is via numerous sources (multi-media, libraries, formal settings – mostly inanimate modes, compared to ancient times
* We have become depersonalised as a society and lost a sense of ‘community’
* We have become self-reliant and self-focussed. We resist the *people influencing people* style and prefer to learn personally/at home, and make up our own mind
* Most Christians feel inadequate through:
  + Not being thoroughly disciple themselves
  + Not being confident of their faith
  + Not realising the importance of it
  + Being held in traditions and culture that ignores it
* Most Christians are bound by fear of the exercise – not being willing to face rejection and unpopularity etc

### But there is one mode of discipleship that is timeless and the most effective:

# Discipleship in the home and family!

We are living in a world that is modernising and therefore we are losing a lot of stuff – e.g.

I just heard the other day…….

9 Things Will Disappear In Our Lifetime

Believe it or not, the following 9 Things Will Disappear In Our Lifetime.  Whether these changes are good or bad depends in part on how we adapt to them. But, ready or not, here they come.

1. **The Post Office**  
   Get ready to imagine a world without the post office. They are so deeply in financial trouble that there is probably no way to sustain it long term.  Email, Fed Ex, and UPS have just about wiped out the minimum revenue needed to keep the post office alive. Most of your mail every day is junk mail and bills.  
    **2. The Cheque**  
   Britain is already laying the groundwork to do away with cheque by 2018. It costs the financial system billions of dollars a year to process cheques. Plastic cards and online transactions will lead to the eventual demise of the cheque. This plays right into the death of the post office. If you never paid your bills by mail and never received them by mail, the post office would absolutely go out of business. **3. The Newspaper**  
   The younger generation simply doesn't read the newspaper. They certainly don't subscribe to a daily delivered print edition. That may go the way of the milkman and the laundry man. As for reading the paper online, get ready to pay for it. The rise in mobile Internet devices and e-readers has caused all the newspaper and magazine publishers to form an alliance. They have met with Apple, Amazon, and the major cell phone companies to develop a model for paid subscription services. **4. The Book**  
   You say you will never give up the physical book that you hold in your hand and turn the literal pages. I said the same thing about downloading music from iTunes. I wanted my hard copy CD. But I quickly changed my mind when I discovered that I could get albums for half the price without ever leaving home to get the latest music. The same thing will happen with books. You can browse a bookstore online and even read a preview chapter before you buy. And the price is less than half that of a real book. And think of the convenience! Once you start flicking your fingers on the screen instead of the book, you find that you are lost in the story, can't wait to see what happens next, and you forget that you're holding a gadget instead of a book.  
    **5. The Land Line Telephone**  
   Unless you have a large family and make a lot of local calls, you don't need it anymore. Most people keep it simply because they've always had it. But you are paying double charges for that extra service. All the cell phone companies will let you call customers using the same cell provider for no charge against your minutes **6. Music**  
   This is one of the saddest parts of the change story. The music industry is dying a slow death. Not just because of illegal downloading. It's the lack of innovative new music being given a chance to get to the people who would like to hear it. Greed and corruption is the problem. The record labels and the radio conglomerates are simply self-destructing. Over 40% of the music purchased today is "catalogue items," meaning traditional music that the public is familiar with. Older established artists. This is also true on the live concert circuit. To explore this fascinating and disturbing topic further, check out the book, "Appetite for Self-Destruction" by Steve Knopper, and the video documentary, "Before the Music Dies." **7. Television**  
   Revenues to the networks are down dramatically. Not just because of the economy. People are watching TV and movies streamed from their computers. And they're playing games and doing lots of other things that take up the time that used to be spent watching TV. Prime time shows have degenerated down to lower than the lowest common denominator. Cable rates are skyrocketing and commercials run about every 4 minutes and 30 seconds. I say good riddance to most of it. It's time for the cable companies to be put out of our misery. Let the people choose what they want to watch online and through Netflix. **8. The "Things" That You Own**  
   Many of the very possessions that we used to own are still in our lives, but we may not actually own them in the future. They may simply reside in "the cloud." Today your computer has a hard drive and you store your pictures, music, movies, and documents. Your software is on a CD or DVD, and you can always re-install it if need be. But all of that is changing. Apple, Microsoft, and Google are all finishing up their latest "cloud services." That means that when you turn on a computer, the Internet will be built into the operating system. So, Windows, Google, and the Mac OS will be tied straight into the Internet. If you click an icon, it will open something in the Internet cloud. If you save something, it will be saved to the cloud. And you may pay a monthly subscription fee to the cloud provider. In this virtual world, you can access your music or your books, or your whatever from any laptop or handheld device. That's the good news. But, will you actually own any of this "stuff" or will it all be able to disappear at any moment in a big "Poof?" Will most of the things in our lives be disposable and whimsical? It makes you want to run to the closet and pull out that photo album, grab a book from the shelf, or open up a CD case and pull out the insert.  
    **9. Privacy**  
   If there ever was a concept that we can look back on nostalgically, it would be privacy. That's gone. It's been gone for a long time anyway. There are cameras on the street, in most of the buildings, and even built into your computer and cell phone. But you can be sure that 24/7, "They" know who you are and where you are, right down to the GPS coordinates, and the Google Street View. If you buy something, your habit is put into a zillion profiles, and your ads will change to reflect those habits. "They" will try to get you to buy something else. Again and again.

All we will have left that can't be changed are "Memories".  
And then probably Alzheimers will take that away from you too !

But there is a tenth that I want to add:

**10 Fathers living at home with their families!**

### Fathers are now the most endangered species on the planet!

There are about 50,000 divorces p.a. in Australia! Each of these (with children) represent a fatherless home

# THE FACTS ON FATHERLESSNESS

Prepared for the Fatherhood Foundation by Bill Muehlenberg, Australian Family Association – August 2002

**David Blankenhorn (born in Jackson, Mississippi [1][2] in 1955) is the founder and president of the Institute for American Values and the author of The Future of Marriage and Fatherless America.[2]**

**He has stated:**

**“*Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation.”***

Fatherlessness is a growing problem in Australia and the Western world. Whether caused by divorce and broken families, or by deliberate single parenting, more and more children grow up without fathers. Indeed, 85 per cent of single parent families are fatherless families. Father absence has been shown to be a major disadvantage to the well being of children. The following is a summary of the evidence for the importance of fathers and the need for two-parent families.

One expert from Harvard medical school who has studied over 40 years of research on the question of parental absence and children’s well-being said this: “What has been shown over and over again to contribute most to the emotional development of the child is a close, warm, sustained and continuous relationship with both parents**.” Or as David Blankenhorn has stated in Fatherless America: “Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation.”**

## Fatherlessness brings poverty

a.. In America, among families with dependent children, only 8.3 per cent of married couples were living below the poverty line, compared to 47.1 percent of female-headed households.

b.. In Australia, a recent study of 500 divorcees with children five to eight years after the separation found that four in five divorced mothers were dependent on social security after their marriages dissolved.

c.. Figures from Monash University’s Centre for Population and Urban Research show that family break-up, rather than unemployment, is the main cause of the rise in poverty levels in Australia.

## Fatherlessness lowers educational performance

a.. American children from intact families have a 21 per cent chance of dropping out of high school whereas children from broken families have a 46 per cent chance.

b.. American school children who became father-absent early in life generally scored significantly lower on measures of IQ and achievement tests.

c.. A study of Australian primary school children from three family types (married heterosexual couples, cohabiting heterosexual couples and homosexual couples) found that in every area of educational endeavour (language; mathematics; social studies; sport; class work, sociability and popularity; and attitudes to learning), children from married heterosexual couples performed better than the other two groups. The study concludes with these words: “Married couples seem to offer the best environment for a child ‘s social and educational development”.

## Fatherlessness increases crime

a.. A British study found a direct statistical link between single parenthood and virtually every major type of crime, including mugging, violence against strangers, car theft and burglary.

b.. One American study even arrived at this startling conclusion: the proportion of single-parent households in a community predicts its rates of violent crime and burglary, but the community’s poverty level does not. Neither poverty nor race seem to account very much for the crime rate, compared to the proportion of single parent families.

c.. In Australia, a recent book noted the connection between broken families and crime. In a discussion of rising crime rates in Western Australia, the book reported that “family breakdown in the form of divorce and separation is the main cause of the crime wave”.

## Fatherlessness increases drug abuse

a.. A UCLA study pointed out that inadequate family structure makes children more susceptible to drug use “as a coping mechanism to relieve depression and anxiety.”

b.. Another US study found that among the homes with strict fathers, only 18 per cent had children used alcohol or drugs at all. In contrast, among mother-dominated homes, 35 per cent had children who used drugs frequently.

c.. A New Zealand study of nearly 1000 children observed over a period of 15 years found that children who have watched their parents separate are more likely to use illegal drugs than those whose parents stay together.

## Fatherlessness increase mental health problems

a.. From nations as diverse as Finland and South Africa, a number of studies have reported that anywhere from 50 to 80 per cent of psychiatric patients come from broken homes.

b.. A Canadian study of teenagers discharged from psychiatric hospitals found that only 16 per cent were living with both parents when they were admitted.

c.. A study of nearly 14,000 Dutch adolescents between the ages of 12 to 19 found that, “In general, children from one parent and stepparent families reported lower self-esteem, more symptoms of anxiety and loneliness, more depressed mood and more suicidal thoughts than children from intact families.”

## Fatherlessness and family breakdown cost Australia 3.5 billion dollars per year

a.. In Australia it has been estimated that marriage breakdown costs $2.5 billion annually. Each separation is estimated to cost society some $12,000.

b.. Also, Australian industry is reported to lose production of more than $1 billion a year due to problems of family breakdown.

c.. Homelessness is also closely linked with family breakdown. A recent Australian study conducted at two Melbourne universities has found that children whose biological parents stay together are about three times less likely to become homeless than those from other family types.

## Fatherlessness increases child abuse

a.. A 1994 study of 52,000 children found that those who are most at risk of being abused are those who are not living with both parents.

b.. A Finnish study of nearly 4,000 ninth-grade girls found that “stepfather-daughter incest was about 15 times as common as father-daughter incest”.

c.. In Australia, former Human Rights Commissioner Mr Brian Burdekin has reported a 500 to 600 per cent increase in sexual abuse of girls in families where the adult male was not the natural father.

Fatherlessness and Family Breakdown are the major social problems of our society

With the rise of fatherlessness Australia and the Western world has also experienced a marked rise in social problems. And the brunt of these problems have been borne by children. We owe it to our children to do better. We urgently need to address the twin problems of fatherlessness and family breakdown. Public policy must begin to address these crucial areas. Until we tackle these problems, our children and our societies will continue to suffer.

# The Consequences of Fatherlessness

Some fathering advocates would say that almost every social ill faced by America's

children is related to fatherlessness. Six are noted here. As supported by the data

below, children from fatherless homes are more likely to be poor, become involved

in drug and alcohol abuse, drop out of school, and suffer from health and emotional

problems. Boys are more likely to become involved in crime, and girls are more likely

to become pregnant as teens.

## 1. Poverty

- Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor. In

2002, 7.8% of children in married-couple families were living in poverty,

compared to 38.4% of children in female-householder families.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March

2002, P20-547, Table C8. Washington, D.C.: GPO 2003.

- In 1996, young children living with unmarried mothers were five times

as likely to be poor and ten times as likely to be extremely poor.

Source: "One in Four: America's Youngest Poor." National Center for children in Poverty. 1996.

- Almost 75% of American children living in single-parent families will

experience poverty before they turn 11 years old. Only 20 percent of

children in two-parent families will do the same.

## 2. Drug and Alcohol Abuse

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states, "Fatherless children are at a dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse."

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Survey on Child Health. Washington, DC, 1993.

- Children growing up in single-parent households are at a significantly increased risk for drug abuse as teenagers.

Source: Denton, Rhonda E. and Charlene M. Kampfe. "The relationship Between Family Variables and Adolescent Substance Abuse: A literature Review." Adolescence 114 (1994): 475-495.

- Children who live apart from their fathers are 4.3 times more likely to smoke cigarettes as teenagers than children growing up with their fathers in the home.

## 3. Physical and Emotional Health

- Unmarried mothers are less likely to obtain prenatal care and more likely to have a low birthweight baby. Researchers find that these negative effects persist even when they take into account factors, such as parental education, that often distinguish single-parent from two-parent families.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Report to Congress on Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing. Hyattsville, MD (Sept. 1995): 12.

- A study on nearly 6,000 children found that children from single parent homes had more physical and mental health problems than children who lived with two married parents. Additionally, boys in single parent homes were found to have more illnesses than girls in single parent homes.

- Children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems.

Source: Stanton, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics."National Health Interview Survey." Hyattsville, MD, 1988.

Source: Zill, Nicholas and Carol Schoenborn. Child Developmental, Learning and Emotional Problems: Health of Our Nation's Children. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. Advance Data 1990. Washington, DC: GPO, 16 Nov. 1990.

- Three out of four teenage suicides occur in households where a parent has been abs

## 4. Educational Achievement

- In studies involving over 25,000 children using nationally representative data sets, children who lived with only one parent had lower grade point averages, lower college aspirations, poor attendance records, and higher drop out rates than students who lived with both parents.

Source: McLanahan, Sara and Gary Sandefur. Growing up with a Single Parent: What Hurts, What Helps. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

- Fatherless children are twice as likely to drop out of school.

- After taking into account race, socioeconomic status, sex, age, and ability, high school students from single-parent households were 1.7 times more likely to drop out than were their corresponding counterparts living with both biological parents.

Source: McNeal, Ralph B. Jr."Extracurricular Activities and High School Dropouts." Sociology of Education 68(1995): 62-81.

- School children from divorced families are absent more, and more anxious, hostile, and withdrawn, and are less popular with their peers than those from intact families.

Source: One-Parent Families and Their Children: The School's Most Significant Minority. The Consortium for the Study of School Needs of Children from One-Parent Families. National Association of elementary School Principals and the Institute for Development of Educational Activities, a division of the Charles f. Kettering Foundation. Arlington, VA 1980.

## 5. Crime

- Children in single parent families are more likely to be in trouble with the law than their peers who grow up with two parents.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville, MD, 1988.

- In a study using a national probability sample of 1,636 young men and women, it was found that older boys and girls from female headed households are more likely to commit criminal acts than their peers who lived with two parents.

- A study in the state of Washington using statewide data found an increased likelihood that children born out-of-wedlock would become a juvenile offender. Compared to their peers born to married parents, children born out-of-wedlock were:

1.7 times more likely to become an offender and 2.1 times more likely to become a chronic offender if male.

1.8 times more likely to become an offender and 2.8 times more likely to become a chronic offender if female.

10 times more likely to become a chronic juvenile offender if male and born to an unmarried teen mother.

Source: Conseur, Amy et al. "Maternal and Perinatal Risk Factors for Later Delinquency." Pediatrics 99 (1997): 785-790.

## 6. Sexual Activity and Teen Pregnancy

- Adolescent females between the ages of 15 and 19 years reared in homes without fathers are significantly more likely to engage in premarital sex than adolescent females reared in homes with both a mother and a father.

Source: Billy, John O. G., Karin L. Brewster and William R. Grady. "Contextual Effects on the Sexual Behavior of Adolescent Women." Journal of Marriage and Family 56 (1994): 381-404.

- A survey of 720 teenage girls found:

97% of the girls said that having parents they could talk to could help reduce teen pregnancy.

93% said having loving parents reduced the risk.

76% said that their fathers were very or somewhat influential on their decision to have sex.

Source: Clements, Mark. Parade. February 2, 1997.

- Children in single parent families are more likely to get pregnant as teenagers than their peers who grow up with two parents.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. National Center for Health Statistics. National Health Interview Survey. Hyattsville, MD 1988.

- A white teenage girl from an advantaged background is five times more likely to become a teen mother if she grows up in a single-mother household than if she grows up in a household with both biological parents.

Source: Whitehead, Barbara Dafoe. "Facing the Challenges of Fragmented Families." The Philanthropy Roundtable 9.1 (1995): 21.

## Biblical Injunctions to Fathers:

## "What does the Bible say about Christian fathers?"

* “*Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” “So that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.”* ([Deuteronomy 6:5](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deuteronomy%206.5)).
* *“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up”* [Deuteronomy 6:5](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deuteronomy%206.5)-7
* *“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”* To “train” indicates the first instruction that a father and mother give to a child, i.e., his early education. The training is designed to make clear to children the manner of life they are intended for. To commence a child's early education in this way is of great importance. [Proverbs 22:6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Proverbs%2022.6),
* “*Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord*. [Ephesians 6:4](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ephesians%206.4)

### Fathers are to DISCIPLE their children!

# **The home should be the greatest disciple-making agency on the planet!** Questions for Discussion:

* How would you describe ‘Discipleship’?
* What do you think of the question: *So Why is Discipling so scarce and rarely practised today?*
* How important do you feel Discipleship is?
* Where do you feel discipleship is the most needed – and by whom?
* ‘Fatherlessness’ is a massive problem, but what are some of the primary things that we can do in response to it?
* If this is appropriate – for those who have been victims of fatherlessness – share some helpful ways of overcoming this. Look up the following scriptures to sense God’s attitude to such victims: Ex. 22:22-24; Deut. 10:18;16:11-14; 24:17-19; Ps. 68:5; 146:9; Prov. 23:10-11; James 1:27.