

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 364

EEM.org & DiscoveringMErcy.org

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Host: Trey Stricklin (TS)

Episode Summary

In this episode we welcome back some familiar guests to the podcast for updates on their ministries. The episode has two parts. Fern and Audrey return to the podcast to talk about the launch of their new online curriculum, accompanied by Brenda, a consultant for the project, and Marie, who served as a beta tester for the first course. The long-awaited curriculum is part of Discovering Mercy, Fern and Audrey's ministry to trauma sufferers. Our other guest is T. Dirk Smith, Vice President of EEM.org, a ministry that prints Bibles in over twenty languages for free distribution throughout Eastern Europe and beyond. Despite the pandemic (or perhaps because of it), EEM has seen a remarkable increase in desire for Scripture in those countries in which it operates.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 364: EEM.org and DiscoveringMErcy.org. I'm the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike! Well, we've got two great organizations to talk about today.

MH: Yep. Both of them should not be new to long-time listeners of the podcast. Of course we always get new listeners, so we'll make sure that you get up to speed. But yeah, nice to get an update from both of these ministries and just find out what's going on.

TS: Absolutely. And with Fern and Audrey's curriculum, man, it's been a long time coming. So I'm excited to hear about it, what's involved.

MH: Oh, yeah.

TS: And they've still got a long way to go, but I'm just excited that at least Phase 1 is here. And it's the start of being able to do what they do and help others that need help and replicate them, which they needed. Two people could only do so much, so we need *more* of them in the world doing this kind of work.

MH: Mm hmm.

TS: So I'm excited.

MH: Yeah. This is a milestone for sure. Our audience is familiar with this. They've probably been anticipating at some point an update on the progress of the curriculum. So that's what we're going to do.

Well, we're thrilled to have Fern and Audrey back on the podcast. It's been quite a while. For those who are in our audience that might be new and have no idea who Fern and Audrey are, I'm going to ask them in a moment to introduce themselves to new people in the audience. We also have with them Brenda and Marie. So Fern, why don't we just start with you? Tell the audience again who you are, what you do, a little bit of history with the podcast. And then we'll move to Audrey and then Brenda and Marie.

Fern: Sure. Mike and Trey, thanks for having us on. I am the co-founder and a counselor at Discovering MErcy. We are a nonprofit that works with individuals who have survived severe childhood abuse. Our specialty is those who have endured trauma-based mind control. Folks who are coming out of Satanic Ritual Abuse, Luciferianism, governmental programming—those are the people that come to us for help. And we deal with clients all over the world.

MH: And you are *busy*.

Fern: Yes, we are.

MH: This is full-time.

Fern: Yeah. Not only with clients, but with folks (therapists, pastors, and prayer ministers) who are asking for help and to be trained.

Audrey: And I'm Audrey, and I'll explain trauma-based mind control. We have the definition of, "repetitive trauma and abuse a person endures that causes him or her to be submissive to another in their thoughts, will, and choices." And so that's the trauma-based mind control portion of it that our survivors really... We love them dearly to help them walk out of fear and into love, and live from their heart.

MH: And for listeners who might be thrown off by a term like trauma-based mind control, there you have the basic definition. If you want more information, we've had Fern and Audrey on the podcast several times. And the first episode was way back. So it's number 68. And then I would recommend Episodes 186 and

then 209. In 209 they have someone with them sort of to give a testimony of the experience of working with Fern and Audrey. So those are the episodes that if you want more information, like, “What in the world is this about? Is this (fill-in-the blank)? Is this deliverance ministry? Is this possession?” All these questions naturally come up. The short answer is, “No,” even though you guys run into situations where terms like that might be more workable, or there would be vocabulary in those worlds that might be applicable in some way. But for the most part, just like Audrey said, this is generally the kind of people that you minister to. And if you want more details, you can go back and listen to those episodes. So we also have Brenda and Marie. So Brenda, why don’t you introduce yourself?

5:00

Brenda: Yeah, my name’s Brenda. I began working with Fern and Audrey on the course that’s being developed for Discovering MERCy—the curriculum that we’ve been producing. And I got connected with them because I am part of the transcription team for the Naked Bible Podcast. So I heard the podcast episodes that they were on earlier and got connected to do a transcript for them. And then in a very silly way, I asked, “Is there anything else I can do?” [laughs] And they said, “Yes! Help us create this course!” And so that’s how it started a few years back. And we’ve had quite a year being together on this. It’s just been a blessing to call you friends. So that’s who I am.

MH: Marie?

Marie: Hi, I’m Marie. It is such an honor to be with all of you. Brenda and I have been friends for quite a few years. And she started telling me about the curriculum for those that are working through trauma. She knows that I have a history of sexual abuse and the healing that God’s brought into my life. And so I was excited the minute that I heard her talking about this. And then, even more so, when she asked me about being a beta tester for the curriculum. She knows me well, that I just have a hunger to know more about myself, about others, and especially about my relationship with God. So I was just so thankful for the opportunity.

MH: Yeah, I mean, you all... I mean, this is a really efficient team. We have Fern and Audrey producing the curriculum. Brenda, I think your role is curriculum advisor (or something like that). And including hands-on writing this thing out and ordering it and so on and so forth. And then you have a beta tester right off the bat that’s familiar with the goals, and of course fits right in with one of the models—one of the templates—as far as user. So you really couldn’t ask for more than that, I mean, as far as an efficient group to produce this thing.

Fern: We were very thankful for the team. We couldn’t have done it without Brenda and Marie. It’s been a beautiful journey. And to think now that we’re already live with the first class, and we’re here to tell all about what it looks like to

take the curriculum and what the curriculum's about. We couldn't be here without these two ladies.

MH: So let's just jump in at that point. I mean, the first course has launched, correct? And so give us an update on the journey—the beginning steps here.

Fern: Sure. I'm going to give you an overview. So our first course did launch. And it is a course that's about discovering "me." What the course was designed for is to be able to go through the interactive online class to be able to feel what it is to be human. That's one of the things, Mike, that sitting with you for all those years in the living room at Discovering MErcy, going over theology, and just kind of being with us, you really changed our perspective about ministry and this place of "God really likes humans." It was, like, the design of a human to be human. And that was really outside of every one of our survivors' understanding, because they've been dehumanized. So this first course is 12 modules about being human, and what it is to be human, and image God. The second course, then, will come out next year. And in it, we're going to see what happens to a human that gets hit with trauma. And what does trauma do to the human condition? What happens?

MH: Mm hmm.

Fern: And then the third course is when a human is bombarded by trauma. The defensive posture with a lot of trauma is to use dissociation. The third course will be called Defended In Dissociation. Instead of DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder), we look at it as Defended In Dissociation (DID). And so really, this course is the hands-on, to know what it is to be human, and we give you tools to know *you*. And for prayer ministers and therapists, we give them tools that they're going to need in order to sit with another.

10:00

MH: Mm hmm. So let's focus on the course that's already available. Describe who it's for. In other words, just what kind of person do you see as benefiting the most (or to a significant degree) that would take this course? What are you looking for here?

Audrey: We have it geared towards prayer ministers and therapists and things like that who already have a desire to help others. And that's how we kind of wanted it to be—kind of like a way that we have compassionate coaches for survivors.

MH: And you're doing that to help get other people to essentially replicate what you do? Is that what you're hoping comes out of this?

Audrey: That *is* what we're hoping that comes out of it. We've also had a target for groups that help with domestic violence shelters and trafficking shelters—the people who've been rescued from trafficking. They've all asked for it before we

had it ready. So that is really kind of our main focus at the moment. But really, it's for anyone. The focus has been to help those who are helping others.

Fern: I would say the only ones that we would say the course is *not* for is someone in acute trauma right now. This would not be an intensive for an acute trauma survivor. They would need to go get help somewhere first. This is for the helpers, and those who...

MH: Yeah. In your model, the person experiencing trauma has to have someone to come alongside of them anyway, so this is not designed to have them sort of take care of their own problem.

Fern: Correct. Yes.

MH: Well, how is the curriculum structured? What does it look like?

Brenda: I'll take that one. This is Brenda. Fern already mentioned that there are 12 different modules to the course, and each one has an average of five lessons. So there are about 60 lessons in the course. And people will go through it at their own speed. They're given a year of access, so they can take up to a year to complete it. It shouldn't take that long. It's really interesting, so they're going to want to keep going with it quicker than that. But it could take up to a year. Every lesson of those 60 lessons—every single lesson—contains teaching content that people will read about, and then there's at least one video on there that includes either more content or a reinforcement of the ideas that were brought up in the reading. And then there's a practice activity for applying it. There are different prompts to reflect on certain elements of it personally, and then there are also prompts for a group discussion.

So some of those videos that have been created.. I have to give kudos to Audrey here for becoming a tech expert on learning how to create videos, something she never wanted to do or knew how to do before. But she's done an amazing job creating these little explainer videos to help just really illustrate the concepts that they're teaching. Some of the other videos included are other experts in brain science and human emotions—things like that. So it's a really big variety. And it really moves along and keeps flowing. So there are a lot of videos in there.

People can learn a lot just by progressing through the course at their own pace by themselves, but we really found from the beta testing (and Marie will want to speak more to this) that the experience was greatly enhanced when they had at least one more person to go through the course with them. So we've really added a couple of connection points with other people, based on that feedback that we got. So for one thing, people who sign up for the course will be placed into small groups where they'll schedule a time together for a weekly connection with each other, and they'll also have a monthly session with Fern and Audrey. That'll be a Zoom call, scheduled once a month, depending on which session of the course

they sign up for. So that'll be some great personal one-on-one (well, not one-on-one, but one-on-however-many [laughs], 21) time with Fern and Audrey that'll be really meaningful. So that's how it works. Sixty-ish self-paced lessons. Could take you up to a year. Built-in interaction. A lot of different activities. A lot of variety to keep it interesting. And yeah, it's fascinating content.

15:00 **MH:** This is probably going to be for Marie, but I'm going to put myself in her slot. And then I think Marie is just primed [laughter] to answer this question. But okay, let's say I'm a person and I've got some familiarity with either Fern and Audrey or just the whole trauma field with respect to helping people. And so I hear this. And yes, I know enough about Fern and Audrey and what they do, or at least what they talk about. And I want to get involved. So I take this course. As a care provider, how do the personal reflection exercises help me do what I want to do better? In other words, just walk me through some of the things that the user will experience and flesh it out a little bit that way.

Audrey: And I'm going to pre-empt that first, and then I want Marie to go on. We looked at it as, if you've seen the movie *The Karate Kid*, Daniel went to Mr. Miyagi to learn how to do karate, and Mr. Miyagi had him paint fences, paint the house, wax cars. And all of those skills, Daniel didn't understand why he was doing them. But all of those things that he was doing as chores were preparing his muscles so that it was very easy for him to learn karate. And that's how we built this curriculum. You're going to build skills upon skills upon skills until you have it and you can easily walk through the movement of helping someone out of fear into love. So with that, Marie, go right ahead.

Marie: As I mentioned earlier, I did have many years of being sexually abused while I was growing up. And God had brought a lot of healing into my life. But if 15-20 years ago you had asked me if I'd be ministering to people who have been abused, I would've laughed at you. But the last couple of years I've been a lay counselor at our church. And many times, I'm working with women who have been through some kind of sexual brokenness, so I'm always looking for ways I can minister to them better. But I have to say that when I watched the very first video in the Welcome, it just was something that was just so affirming to me. And it brought tears about how far I've come in *my* journey. But knowing that I still haven't arrived. And one blueberry (it's a term in the course) that I saw right away is that I have a defensive posture sometimes with mistrusting people, and I can't always identify why. I've come a long way, but it just gave me a desire to find further healing in my life. And so that very first module helped me to think of details in my life that I'm still being affected by today. And it brought these new thoughts to my mind. And I realized that there were times where I was still processing as if I was that 11-year-old child who was raped when my abuse first started. So going through this has helped *me* so much. And then it's going to continue to help me as I minister to other people.

MH: Hmm. Any other... Without revealing the content of the curriculum... When you got to... Again, we'll just use the personal reflection elements, because maybe that'll just flesh something out. How did you process some of the content and realize how it would improve what you do?

Marie: Well, I think one thing that I identified again pretty quickly is being able to put names to things in my life that went on. One of the modules is on emotions. And I would automatically think of an emotion, especially a bad one, as being something that I just had to just put aside and not think about. But I learned that it's a way of being able to normalize the experience, by being willing to feel that emotion. And the words "Window of Tolerance" was a new phrase for me. And it just brought a lot of understanding to me of how and why I process, and how I don't process things at times. And then even another phrase was "Window of Emotional Capacity." How unresolved experiences just filled up and diminished that space so that even sometimes just regular everyday things, I didn't have an ability to maybe sometimes cope the best that I wanted to be able to. So I'd learned so much through the years, but I kind of felt, with my healing, with seeking Scriptures and going through counseling, there was something that was missing. And taking this course was that missing piece for me that brought even more healing.

20:00

Brenda: So when it comes to the actual contents of the curriculum, we've talked about how it's structured and how a person will move through it, but it's important to tell you really what it's about. And so the main thesis of the course is that every person hides their heart. And when Fern and Audrey first started talking about that, I didn't really know what they meant, but it became very clear early on that because of trauma and because of just negative experiences that every human has, we learn to protect ourselves in relationships so that we don't get hurt *again* by people. And when we do that kind of protection, we don't let ourselves be known by other people. But because God made us in his image and made us for connections with people, when we're not known by other people this causes a big problem inside of all of us. I mean, whether a person is traumatized or you wouldn't consider yourself at that level, *everybody* has this happen to them. *Everybody* hides their hearts so that they don't get hurt.

And so one of the recurring themes in the whole course is something that Marie actually touched on when she said "blueberries." And that probably sounded funny if you don't know what "blueberries" means. [laughs] But what that is, it's sort of a code word that I guess you'll have to take the course to find out exactly why we call it that. But it stands for those events that happened in the past that get stored in our brain as emotions without words. And so when we're going about our life and we're in the present day, these old emotions can suddenly get dumped onto us. So some people call that "being triggered." We don't really like that terminology. But it's just the whole idea that something from the past is kind of taking over and causing you to not have capacity right now, or for your body to behave in a way that you don't understand why it's really doing that. So this kind

of comes up over and over throughout the course, because it's so common in all of our lives.

I actually have a little example of that in my own life that I think your listeners would be interested in, because it happened when I was trying to teach some *Unseen Realm* content at my church. And I got turned in for it. [MH laughs] And it was determined that I needed to...

MH: You got reported? [laughs]

Brenda: I got reported. And my course needed to be evaluated. So... My husband is a pastor at the church, so it's a little complicated. [MH laughs] But a different pastor was assigned to oversee my course. Okay? Very awkward. But [laughs] every time I would go in to talk to him about the contents, which he didn't really love at first, I was overwhelmed. My whole body would be trembling, and I just was overwhelmed with the need to cry. And I'm thinking, "Brenda, you idiot! Of all times... If you're going to play baseball with the big boys, you've got to not be a girl right now!" [laughter] And here I'm just needing to cry, and I didn't understand why. And it was really through understanding how these old emotions come into the present day that I was able to figure out that, this is because my dad was generally disapproving of me and would randomly just take away things that I wanted to do, or things that I'd spent a lot of time on. And I never really knew if I'd be able to follow through on the thing I had worked so hard on, because he might randomly take that away from me. And so here I am in this office with this pastor who is being very nice to me, but I'm feeling like there's a man in charge of me who has power over me, and my body was telling me, "You're not safe here. You're not safe here." And my brain could tell me, "Well, he's not that. He's not your dad. This isn't the same thing."

MH: Mm hmm.

Brenda: But it *felt* the same to me. And so I'm not a person who would say that I've had... I haven't had intentional trauma perpetuated against me. But it helped me so much to understand why my body takes over and does things that I don't want it to do. So that's just one of the things that's very practical from the course that just helped me as a human to get it. So that was super helpful.

MH: I would assume that the course goes through a range of those kinds of things, topically.

Brenda: Yes. Those kinds of things. And for the record, I *am* allowed to teach your content at my church. [MH laughs] *And* that pastor has taught some *Unseen Realm* content recently, too. So it's all good. [laughter]

A few other things that the course covers in depth, just to give the tip of the iceberg on it... Some specific ways that emotions show up in the body. I mean,

it's very interesting that different emotions show up in different places in the body, and you can learn to identify that, become inquisitive about that, and understand what's happening. So that was really helpful. We spend a lot of time on the fact that most emotional pain comes from one of three causes. So that would be Shame, Powerlessness, and trouble with Attaching with other people. So we go into those in depth, and every one of those is extremely enlightening. We also talk about something that Fern and Audrey have addressed in previous podcasts, how often spiritual abuse actually happens to people when we misinterpret people's behaviors.

MH: Mm hmm.

Brenda: So people who have traumatized often have bad behaviors because they've developed all these defense mechanisms. And we tend to treat that as either sin or demons (demonic activity in their life), when really they're just acting out ways that they've learned to protect themselves from getting further hurt. So we cover that in detail, too. And that's just very helpful for me as a pastor's wife to be more sensitive to people that way. So another one Marie touched on too is just why we so often find ourselves outside of our own emotional capacity, and what exactly is happening inside of us when that's going on.

So yeah, that's just a little touch on what the course covers. But I would want to emphasize that this really is for everyone. They mentioned maybe not people in the thick of it—in the thick of a crisis. But as a person who would take a course like this so that I could minister to others, I have found it tremendously helpful for me to understand myself. And the really, really big change that I've seen in myself from this is an increased compassion for other people who are suffering. Instead of judging or thinking, "What is wrong with you because you're behaving that way?" I assume now that this is coming from some kind of pain in the person's past. And kind of my default now is to have grace and to think, "Wow, how beautiful that you've come this far," instead of zeroing in on the critical way that I might have viewed it before that: "You need to have this fixed about yourself." [laughs] Instead, I feel like, "Wow! You've really come a long way, if you've got all that pain buried inside of you." So it has really changed me. I'm really extremely privileged to be able to be part of this and to have learned at the feet of Fern and Audrey all the wonderful things they know. And yeah, I just really thank you for the opportunity to participate with you.

MH: Marie, would you sort of assess your experience the same way, or a little bit different?

Marie: There is a little bit of a difference. Brenda mentioned attachment and shame and powerlessness. And all of those, the modules just helped me so much. But in particular, the one on shame. I thought I had really worked through a lot of shame in my life, but it was a big "aha!" moment for me to hear "shame is just an emotion." And there's an illustration that was given of a surfboard and

learning to ride shame out. And again, that just brought so much validation to me. And I think what's a little different is that in one of the videos in particular, there was a truth that I heard that I found that I really need to hold on to. And I have it written so that I can remind myself of it. And what was said in the video is, "I heard the Lord say to me, 'My perfection is offered to you. It looks different from yours. You don't strive for it. You rest in it. It's being called human and receiving. What I did for you on the cross is enough. Just be human and image me.'" And if I just focus on being human, sometimes it can be kind of depressing, but if I also remind myself that I'm made in God's image, it just gives me this hope inside me that I know God has a purpose for me. And there's another thing that I wrote down for myself. I had written, "You are not less worthy than other people because you are just as human and just as much an object of God's desire as anyone else on the planet. Love, Jesus." And when I read that, there's just this response in my heart. Because I know that there's this little part of me that's being transformed a little bit more.

30:00 **MH:** It's important, because even the most well-intentioned ministry sometimes in teaching... And we've talked about this many times on the podcast (like when we went through Hebrews, when we went through Colossians), this whole thing that the gospel becomes reduced to or it morphs into—it's altered into—some sort of performance-based thing, where if people understand the gospel, they hear it, they embrace it, and then a little bit later they wonder if God *likes* them as much as he did back when they came to the Lord or something. It just becomes this performance-based thing, and we sort of lose track of not only the simplicity of the gospel, but the fact that, "Hey, way back then, you couldn't merit God's love anyway." "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." I mean, how much clearer can it be? So why has this turned into a "I have to perform to make God like me"? How do we get there? So when I hear you say that, to me that is a constant reminder. Of course, that can be part of trauma and manipulation and all that. But even if it's not, I think my experience is with people in the Church... there's a constant struggle with that. I think that we don't have anybody in the audience that would not... When we get into that, something's going to pop into your head either about yourself or somebody else, or something you've seen. That's just a consistent trap. So I'm glad you brought up that example.

Fern: You know, Mike, one of the things alongside of that, in the hours that we sat with you, was this understanding that the Holy Spirit lives inside of us—Immanuel, God with us. And he is love. And when we, even in relationship to each other, go into a defensive posture, like I hide my heart from you, or my husband, or even maybe Audrey, and the Holy Spirit says, "Why are you in defensive posture with your brother, with your sister, with your loved ones?" We can recognize now when we're in that place of fear, when we're in defensive posture, sometimes we just thought we had a right to be there or, "This is just me. This is part of my personality." But when you look at sitting as a human being imaging God in love, what he's done, and recognize when we're *out* of love in fear, that we're able to hear the Holy Spirit saying, "Hey. Why are you defended?"

I'm right here." And especially in the world we live in. I remember being 11 years old and reading the Scripture that men's hearts will fail them for fear. And I asked the Lord (I was 11), "Will you show me how to live in love so that I'm not afraid and I don't lose my heart in the last days?" I'm not real good at it. But I'll tell you what, I'm practicing and I have the tools to walk with the Holy Spirit on the journey of staying in love.

MH: This is for anybody, but I guess it's probably specific to Fern and Audrey. We mentioned at the very beginning this need to replicate what you do. This has come up before on previous episodes. And in between episodes, you get email and people contacting you. And you were at the Naked Bible Conference (the last one we had) and you had conversations there. People so often ask, "How can I help you do this?" And I remember we had discussions a couple of years ago about, "Good grief! We wish he had an answer for that! [MH laughs] Because we're exhausted!" Or, "There's just not enough time in a week or a day." So I'm assuming, and I think this is the right trajectory, a major goal of this curriculum is to be able to do that, to get people in your loop to begin to do what you do. And not only so that people are healed. I mean, from what I'm hearing, that's just going to happen along the way, even for those who want to serve other people, that it's going to help them. But that isn't the end point of the curriculum. The end point of the curriculum (I think you're hoping) is that this is the beginning point to assisting you, to have people across the country (or wherever they live—across the world, really) to be able to try to do what you do in their own setting. Is that fair enough?

35:00

Audrey: Yeah, I would agree on that. There's many people who have the... Their gifting from God is to help others and they just need tools. And so that is one of our main goals. And the other one is that this curriculum helps to fund our Fearless Love scholarship program so that the financial burden is taken off of survivors, after they've had such horrific things happen in their whole life. Our desire is that the body of Christ would come around and want to 1) learn how to help them, and 2) help to financially support them in the Fearless Love scholarship fund.

MH: Let's talk about that and marry that to, how do people get the class? How do people get in? Registration? What's the procedure?

Fern: Yes, there is a registration. I think Trey has that to put on the Naked Bible website. We have a March registration that's open. And we're taking 21 students. I think three have already filled that. So there is room there. So you can click on that link and then just sign up.

MH: What's the deadline for the March class?

Fern: February 26th is the deadline for that one. And then in April is another class starting up. So we started with three different classes this year. The first class

has already started. We have people... Two international students in that class. And we're looking for our March class to be filled well. So those links will be on NakedBiblePodcast.com.

Audrey: And they'll also be on DiscoveringMErcy.org's site.

MH: Is there a limit to the people in the class? Do you cap it?

Fern: Yep. Twenty-one is the limit per class.

MH: Okay. So if people want to get into this, they're going to have to respond pretty quickly, I would imagine.

Fern: Yes.

MH: Because that's... You don't need to get into the nuts and bolts of why it's 21, but that's not a *big* number. So if you're interested, you need to respond.

Fern: And they can also go to our website and sign up for our newsletter so that they can see when it's open enrollment for the curriculum.

MH: Okay. You mentioned (I think it was Brenda or Marie) about having someone take the course along with you as a buddy. So how do people do that? Do they each register? Does that count against the 21? How does this work with groups?

Fern: What happens is, groups can email us at DiscoveringME@DiscoveringMErcy.org. I think that I gave that to Trey as well. And for people who have groups, we're looking at... Maybe they run a nonprofit for human traffic survivors. Maybe they want to train their volunteers and their staff of a domestic violence shelter. The group pricing and availability... we can work with if you email us directly. Everyone else that can come in, like the 21 participants, we will put each person... Each person gets into a group of three and then that's going to be their group (of three people) that goes through the whole course with them, as well as the whole 21.

MH: Okay, so there's group pricing. So just correct me if I'm wrong here. And this is going to lead to another question. But so let's say I'm a pastor. I've got (I'm going to inflate the number here) ten people on staff that I want to go through this. So I would contact you for group pricing. We would pay whatever that is, and then we have a... All of us essentially have a way to get into the course.

Fern: Correct.

MH: Do we all have to take it at the same time? Now that we have the password or whatever it is...

Fern: What would happen is, you would all have your own group cohort—your own group together. And you would be taking the course together. Still self-paced. Still do the work all within your group. But it's one training of that facility.

40:00

MH: Let me throw this out. Here's the follow-up. If you're out there in the audience and you have friends (say, like Brenda and Marie), or if you're a pastor, you have people who would want to do this with you, check into the group pricing. Because MIQLAT... I'm willing to cover several groups. Because to me, this is a good investment. I'm in favor of speeding up the replication. [laughter] So we could cover some of those. Fern and Audrey would let me know what the numbers are. But I think that's just worth doing. So I'm just going to throw that out there. And if that's you, and maybe you don't know of a way to divvy up the price or whatever, or whatever your situation is, you need to contact Fern and Audrey and we'll go from there.

Fern: Awesome. Thank you very much.

Brenda: Can I throw in here that this course isn't just for women? [MH laughs] Just because there are four of us women here talking about it, and we're talking about emotions and all these... I don't know if the guys out there might feel like, "Yeah, this probably isn't for me, because I don't like thinking about emotions." But men experience just as many emotions as women do. They just express it differently. But it still affects men's bodies in their regular life. And out of control or... Emotions that you don't understand still cause a lot of obstacles in your life. So yeah, men, this isn't just a girly thing. [MH laughs] We don't try to make people cry it all out. You know? One of the things that Fern and Audrey talked about early on is that this whole course isn't about making... The whole ministry that they do is not about making people relive all their bad experiences.

MH: Mm hmm.

Brenda: Because that retraumatizes people.

MH: Right.

Brenda: So there's no goal here to try to make you, like, share all this stuff that ever happened to you, with these other women in the group, or anything like that. So it's really just about putting words to what's happening to you and learning to understand why that's happening. So it's not just female.

Fern: I have to liken it to... I'm doing your class, Mike, for the Awakening School of Theology. And I love that we're doing logical fallacies and thinking logically. And in a way, this course helps human beings look and be able to in truth see someone else's defensive posture and to understand. So even the men... A lot of times men interpret that they've got to fix what's going on, when really it is "mourn with those who mourn." And to be able to hold the place of defensive posture. So one of the things that we did was we have a "dynamic of being

human.” And that I think is really very proprietary to us. That’s very much our... What the Lord showed us to help people. And we have case studies. And what you’ll do in the case studies is you’ll read the case study and you’ll be able to see the defensive posture. You’ll be able to see where the wound is, what they’re thinking, where they’re limping, just like I’m learning how to do that in Logical Fallacies and Scripture, you’re going to be able to do that where people are limping along in life and not being able to image God, that they’re in fear. So there’s really a similarity there as far as a thought process [inaudible].

MH: Yeah, I’m glad you brought that up, because that’s the second year of the Awakening School, which officially opens this Monday. But that is the first session. We’re going to go through a whole series of logical fallacies. Because I want students to be able to see an argument, how someone (whether it’s a scholar or somebody out there on the internet) is processing either a passage or a topic or a question. You have to be able to understand their whole thought process and what’s getting in the way of coherent thinking. So we are going to spend time on the logical fallacies in the first week. But pro tip to you, Fern, that you’re in that, we’re going to use those through the rest of the class. The whole year (both semesters) you’re going to see those things pop up. “Oh! I know why they drew this conclusion! Because they’re thinking this way.”

Fern: Right.

MH: “Well, why don’t they think another way?”

Fern: And in the same way, this course is... You’re going to see someone’s behavior... A father will be able to see, “Oh my word! I see what’s going on with my child! I see where the fear is! They didn’t even know they’re terrified and they feel powerlessness. But I know by this ‘argument’ where their pain is.” So it really is very... I mean, I see the similarity. I’m grateful for the course I’m taking. And I just would really want everyone to be real smart about interpersonal relationship stuff and how Jesus wants us to live in love with each other.

Marie: If I can jump in here for just a moment. With being the beta tester, for about the first eight or nine modules, I was pretty well on my own. And then there was someone else that started participating. And she and I made a decision to start meeting together on a regular basis so that we could talk about the modules. And that really did add so much more—being able to talk with someone else about this.

45:00

And the other thing that I’m thinking about here, and just going through that very last module and watching the video on living wholeheartedly... When I finished that particular video, there were some thoughts that immediately came to my mind. Living wholeheartedly doesn’t mean that life will be easy, but that I will face life living in the present by working through the blueberries that will pop up in my life. And in the midst of difficulties, I can have a voice to stand up for myself if

I'm being mistreated. I can choose to face something calmly instead of taking a defensive posture. And I can find relationships to live securely, so that when I'm faced with the challenging relationships we all face, I'm not overwhelmed by them. So my prayer for this is that every hurting person could see what a blessing it really is to be able to live wholeheartedly.

MH: Hmm. Well, we're excited about the curriculum. Again, this is something that I can just remember, sitting in South Carolina, having I guess the beginning stages of this discussion and just the need for it, both in terms of you two and also just generally. Because of people out there who want to be able to help, not only to help *you*, in terms of replication, but just, this is just stuff you run into everywhere. And wouldn't it be nice to have somebody in every church who was really skilled here? Just something like that, to be able to start moving down that road. So this is really great to finally see it born. And just to have the initial experiences, the way you guys have described them and what's in it. I would hope that our audience really takes advantage of this, and as it grows, more and more people participate in it.

Fern: Well, I want to say thank you, Mike and Trey, for walking with us, loving us, believing in us, and taking this journey with us. And thanks for having us on today.

Audrey: Yeah, thank you guys.

MH: Absolutely. Yep.

TS: Alright, Mike. Finally! It's been several years. I remember talking to Fern and Audrey about this curriculum and this course and even before they had this course, "What can we do to replicate them?" and whatnot. So just to see how much work went into it. And the fact that hey, they referenced *The Karate Kid*. So are you kidding me? [MH laughs] The fact they threw that in there, you got me on that one. But I'm happy to see that Phase One is finally done. And again, this is for the helpers. This isn't for people who need trauma help—abuse help—*immediately*. But maybe people who are already a long way down the road in their journey to help counsel other people. But to finally have some tools to help people who want to help other people. And we've talked about it with them several times, Mike. There's just so many abuses into even helping people. And you may not even know it, but you're actually hurting them *more*. You're doing more harm than good just by the way you help people in the Church, when it comes to some of these victims.

MH: Yeah.

TS: So I know they still have another year or two to get the rest of the courses fleshed out, because there's going to be three total. But just the fact that we have the first phase done is exciting.

MH: Yeah, it is. All these things have to start somewhere. And they have a clean beginning. This is a big step.

TS: Again, I will have links on the episode page with the sign-up to their curriculum. But you could go directly to their website, DiscoveringMErcy.org and get all of that information. And you've got a week, I think, Mike, since this podcast dropped to sign up for their March class.

MH: Mm hmm.

TS: And the deadline's February 26th. So get in there before that. And if you don't get in in time for that one, they have an April class coming up. So plenty of opportunity to get in. Don't wait. I suggest you do it sooner rather than later.

And with that, Mike, we've got our second interview coming up. We're going to get an update about EEM.org, which is another great organization giving Bibles to people in Eastern European countries.

50:00

MH: Yep. Bibles in other languages. And there's just a lot of... These are all people who have a history now with the podcast. Fern and Audrey might be more familiar than Dirk, who we're going to talk to again about EEM. But you know, we major on content here. But the content needs to produce useful things and be helpful. So it's nice just to get updates not only from Fern and Audrey (again, that's a big step with the curriculum) but also really interesting, good things are happening with Dirk with EEM as well.

Well, we're glad to have back on the podcast 1. Dirk Smith, who is the Vice President of EEM.org, formerly known as the Eastern European Mission. We had Dirk on in the past, back in around January of 2020 (just a little over a year ago). I'm going to let him, though, tell the audience (because we're bound to have a lot of new people in the audience) what this ministry is and that'll sort of give you a clue as to why we had him on. But we want to have an update with what's going on with the ministry. So Dirk, why don't you just tell everybody who you are and what the organization does? And thanks for coming back.

DS: Hey, thank *you*, Mike. Yeah, it's great to be back with you guys. I love this podcast. And I just appreciate what *you* are doing in putting to use all of your years of study and how you open up the Scripture to so many people that listen. So EEM (as you said, formerly known as Eastern European Mission)... We've kind of gone the way of UPS and IBM because we work in places that aren't Eastern Europe. And so when we're over there, to use that name...

MH: And it's easier to type, too. [laughter]

DS: It is! Much easier.

MH: You don't have to know how to spell "European." [laughter]

DS: That's right! But this ministry started... This is our 60th year. This year is our 60 year anniversary. So 60 years ago, seven 20-year-olds decided that they were going to go behind the Iron Curtain (and of course millennials don't even know what that is)—behind the Wall—when the Soviet Union was in power, and they were going to teach people about Jesus. But they got there and quickly realized, "Well, this is an impossible task. There are no Bibles in their language. So how do we tell people about Jesus without the Book?" And so that turned into this ministry. And we began publishing and printing small Bibles that were smuggled in. And now here, 60 years later, we publish, print, and distribute Bibles and Bible-based materials in... Well, we distribute them in 30+ nations and 20+ languages. So this past year, 33 nations and 22 different languages. And this past year we distributed (again, all free of charge)... As I tell people, we're kind of like the wholesaler for all of the retailers out there. So any ministry that is doing evangelistic work, we are the provider for them. So we distributed 1,331,000 books in 2020.

MH: Wow.

DS: 2020 was a crazy year.

MH: That's a lot.

DS: It was a lot. It was a record year.

MH: And that's remarkable, especially given the whole pandemic situation.

DS: Yeah. It was... I'm sure there's not any listener that would say, "Man, 2020 was fun. Let's do that again." And we're all praying for this pandemic to just go away and Covid to go away. But I'll tell you, once again we saw God take what Satan meant for evil and turned it into good. Of the 12 months of 2020, six of them were record distribution months for us.

MH: Wow.

DS: And we had never seen requests at this level. And it was nuts. We ended the year (in a 60-year history) with a record distribution year, and going into places that have just been astounding. A lot of requests from Cypress.

MH: Hmm. I wouldn't have guessed that.

DS: I know, yeah. And a lot of different languages. Because it's such a melting pot. So we're actually doing Sorani and Urdu and, of course, Farsi and Arabic there as well. But most of these, it's amazing how many of our children's Bibles and other Bibles are going into public schools. We're putting them into public schools in Ukraine and Croatia and Romania and Bulgaria and Hungary. It's incredible.

MH: Yeah, I remember you saying that last time, about how there was this draw from the public schools. It's just remarkable.

55:00

DS: Yeah. We've got a little matching fund campaign going this fall for the sole purpose... We have a request right now for 520,000 children's Bibles to go into 21 different nations, 15 different languages. And the bulk of those are going into public schools. It's just remarkable what we're seeing. And of course, with this pandemic, people are looking for hope. I mean, they're looking for, "Why am I here? What am I doing here?" And so much of what you talk about in *Unseen Realm*, people are... And I think in our nation, I'm having more and more conversations here in the U.S. where we tend to deny the mystical. They don't. In a lot of these places we're working, they get it. And they know there are powers out there that are at work. And they're wanting to know, "Okay, who's the ultimate power? How do I get to Yahweh? Where is he? And how do I learn about him?" So it's been a crazy year. And so far, 2021 is off to a record start.

MH: Yeah, it would be nice to think that that'll happen in the West, too, if the technological society and the scientific establishment, which I think most people having gone through 2020 have at least a sense is unfortunately politicized. "How do you trust any of this stuff?" So hopefully that will sink in and it'll move people to seek the Lord and just move beyond the comfort zone of our modernity and our technology.

DS: Amen to that.

MH: What is the update? What's going on? Before I cut in there, it sounded like you had some specific new news, or at least kind of tell the listeners what's going on.

DS: Yeah, we're seeing requests... And here's what should not be surprising to us. We're getting requests from people whose lives have been transformed. And they're the people who are open. And they're searching. And so when their life is transformed, it's like they have the cure for cancer. They're not about to keep it to themselves. And so they're coming to us and saying, "Okay, we've got to have more." The school systems... I think I shared this last time. The school systems... It's very pragmatic for them.

MH: Mm hmm.

DS: They're seeing test scores go up and discipline problems going down when they insert the Bible into the public school. So for them it just makes sense. "Okay, we need to have a moral rudder. We need to have something that we can stand down on." So we've seen it spread. Of course, the refugee situation is just continuing to grow. The news media's not covering much of that, but they're still pouring into Greece and to Cypress. So thousands and thousands of Muslim refugees are coming to Jesus. And it's like we've never seen before. And we're seeing that, really, in the footprint that we work everywhere. It just continues to grow, people wanting God's word. And the exciting thing is, they're wanting their kids to have it. So we've done a lot of work in translating what we call our children's Bible, which is basically a collection of a hundred Bible stories. And we've done multiple translations of that into new languages where we're getting requests. And then what we call our pre-teen Bible, which is actually just biblical text with some illustrations in it. The requests have just been flooding in, because they want their kids to know the Bible.

MH: Are you getting requests for *new* languages or is it just additional Bibles and other content in existing languages, or both?

1:00:00

DS: Uh, some of both. I mean, I would say some are new for us, because traditionally we have been in the former communist bloc nations. So when we in 2015 jumped into doing Farsi and Arabic, those were new languages for us. They're obviously not new languages. But they were for us. So our launching off into Sorani and Urdu are new languages for us. But again, God's just moving these people groups into our neighborhood. And so when we get the requests from ministries, if we can do it, we're going to say yes and provide God's word in those languages. So yeah, people are moving around a lot. And some by their own choice and some not by their own choice. And it's just been... 2020 just proved... We didn't really know what 2020 was going to hold. And it was just crazy. It was absolutely crazy.

MH: So if the demand... Again, I'm not surprised that the demand has increased. What about the giving? Because you're giving these away for free, so obviously it costs money to produce them. People have to... It's their job and they have to get a salary—get paid—for what they do, plus all the distribution. I mean, that's the reality, the boots-on-the-ground reality. So has the giving maintained through 2020? Did it drop? Did you see an increase? What's that situation like?

DS: Yeah, thank God, we have a very good donor base. But we actually saw a nice increase. Our budget was \$5.6 million for 2020, and God provided \$5.9 million. So there were some projects that we were able to kick into gear. That's one of the exciting things right now with this matching fund campaign that we have going. The total project... We can do two children's Bibles for \$5. So if somebody gives up a cup of coffee, we can give two kids a Bible and potentially change their eternal destiny. But we have some very generous and anonymous donors that have stepped up and said... It's a \$1.3 million project. And they've

stepped up and said, “Okay, we’re going to give \$650[,000]. So we’re going to match dollar for dollar. So for donors that are out there that want to get involved, instead of \$5 providing two Bibles, it provides four. And so it’s an opportunity to really cover a large part of this globe—21 different nations and in 15 different languages. Kids that... The amazing thing is when I go over there, Mike (and it’s sad but it’s exciting at the same time), I sit with kids. And if you were to do a word association game with these kids and you were to say, “Noah,” they don’t respond with “ark.” They don’t know these stories. They know nothing [of the Bible]. And then when you get into Jesus, I mean, that’s the real tragedy. They have no idea, no knowledge. So it’s an opportunity to really... I mean, I view it as, you know, this is God’s miracle. We just get to come along and, it’s like when Jesus fed the 5,000. Jesus did the miracle. He just invited the disciples to get in on it. And that’s really the way we feel. And we *really* saw that in 2020 with the requests coming in. We couldn’t do this if we tried. And in many ways, we feel like, we’ve been praying for it, and it’s that God’s out in front of us going, “Hey, you prayed for this. I’m knocking these doors down. Are you coming? Come on.” [laughs] And we’re doing everything we can to catch up. But it is exciting to see what is happening in that part of the world and in these people groups. So yeah, it was a good year, but this year is already off to a quick start. And the requests are pouring in.

MH: Well, all I have to hear is Eastern Europe and Middle East and stuff like that, and I’m predisposed to want things to happen there. I just enjoy the irony of, as things in the West are shutting down and getting more censored and whatnot, the people (especially the Christians but even those who are not Christians and they seek the Lord)... People who have lived under that, if you can get them committed to the Great Commission, they’re going to overwhelm the darkness descending in the West. And I just love the irony, that out of chaos (out of the terrible circumstance), there’s always a remnant, and there’s always something at work—there’s always something afoot. And we have to remember the Church is global. It’s not America.

DS: Amen.

MH: There’s no conflation there. And so the Church is going to be busy in all sorts of places, and that’s going to have redemptive value in the West in the long run. Because not only will those people not forget the assistance they got from the West, but that’s just the mission of the Church. You go where you’re needed.

DS: Absolutely.

1:05:00

MH: So yeah, like I said, my ears always pick up when I hear “underground Church,” “Middle East,” “Eastern Europe.” It’s like, “Game on!” This is... the West seems to be getting most of the attention [laughs] lately. It’s like, “Okay. We got something going on over there, too.” So it’s... I love to hear stuff like that.

DS: And I'll tell you, we have seen too, Mike, with our donors and people that get involved, and I guess this is just human nature... When they get involved, they find themselves looking and saying, "Look at all these Bibles I have on my bookshelf or have on my..." The availability for Scripture here. You know, in the English language we have, like, 500 translations. It's everywhere. And we're seeing people dive into it more because they're being made aware of what's happening. So maybe it's the pandemic that's happening here. And you know, we're going to see who's truly a disciple and who's all in—who's been punching the clock, and not to be too harsh here, but "playing church" and just going and punching their card, and who's really diving in and being made aware and willing to open up and say, "Man, there is spiritual warfare going on. And I've got to get busy. I've got to be all-in." And we're seeing that more and more with our donor base, some of the questions they're asking, some of the... We've referred a bunch of people to the Naked Bible. And they're loving it. They're loving diving in and unpacking things that they've read past, and realizing that it has meaning here, now, right where we are. And God isn't off some place far away. He's here. He's amongst us. There are things happening and we have to be serious about it. And I think you're right. When the Church... The Church has a job to do. And I think we're seeing it in the East and we're seeing it... I've got an Afghani friend who became a believer, I think probably eight or nine years ago. And there's a bounty on his head because he is passionate about Jesus. And he is going into groups where it is extremely dangerous to say the things that he's saying. But you can't keep him from it. There's just no way. But you know, that population, as you well know, he doesn't deny the mystical. He's well aware of the spiritual forces that are at work.

MH: Yeah.

DS: And so he sees the seriousness, too, of what we're involved in.

MH: So what can this audience do? Do you have a specific place to send us to contribute to 2021 and meet some of the needs as this grows? What can our audience do? How can we help?

DS: Yeah, first and foremost, pray. That's... We appreciate...

MH: Yeah, you don't want the doors to close.

DS: Yeah. Pray that we will be bold and the doors will stay open. I mean, just lots of things to pray about there. And then secondly, yeah, if the audience wants to get involved, like I said, we've got this matching fund campaign. I mean, \$5 is going to get four Bibles in the hands of kids. You can go to EEM.org/Biblesforkids and that'll take you to that website where you can give. And again, just our website (EEM.org). But EEM.org/Biblesforkids is the landing page for this matching fund campaign. And it is exciting. To me it's groundbreaking, because if we could get it into the hearts of our kids here—if we as parents and

grandparents were committed like these people are to really begin to train up children to understand and to see a biblical worldview and to see what is going on like they are, God promises it's going to make a difference. He's going to do what... His word is going to go out and do what he wants it to do.

1:10:00

So that is a way. And then thirdly share with people. I mean, unfortunately, and like I've done with Naked Bible... I know you probably feel this way, even though you've got a good following. It's amazing when I share with people and say, "Man, have you ever heard of the Naked Bible Podcast?" And they're like, "What? What is this? Tell me about this?" [MH laughs] You know? And so I know you're like us—unfortunately, we feel, like the best kept secret. Because when people hear about EEM, they go, "You're doing what? How long has this been going on?" Well, this is our 60th year. [laughs] You know? I mean, that's an indictment on us. I mean, we need to be doing a better job of getting this message out there. But there is an opportunity for the Church to get involved in what God's doing. I tell people all the time... I often quote my favorite philosopher, Bono, and his statement was, "Quit praying for God to bless what you're doing and get involved in what he's doing. It's already been blessed." And that's kind of the way we feel. And I feel that with Naked Bible. I think so much of what you're doing is just igniting the Church and getting people who may be sitting on the sidelines to stand up and say, "Nah, not anymore. I've got to engage. It's time to engage in this war."

MH: Yep, Lord willing, that's one of the effects that we hope we are the catalyst for. And you know, I think it is happening. I'm not... Obviously we're not... None of this on this end are content. But that doesn't mean that it's not already happening. Because it is. We have a very responsive audience. They're engaged. They're committed. I mean, we see it all the time. We hear it all the time. So we're grateful. And hopefully this'll be just another outlet to being serious about what we're supposed to be serious about (the Great Commission) and not be fence-sitters or spectators. This is a good way to not be a spectator. So I'm glad we could have you back on. I'm glad that the report was good. We don't want (obviously) to take any step back. We want to keep on that same trajectory. So Lord willing, you'll get some help here from our audience. So thanks for coming back and just letting us know what's going on.

DS: Thanks for having me. And I just appreciate what you guys are doing. Enjoyed it, as always.

TS: Alright, Mike. Again, that's amazing, how many millions of books EEM distributes to children and to all people, to schools. It's amazing what's going on over there. I wish we could replicate some of that over here in the States as far as teaching the Bible in school.

MH: Yeah, really.

TS: Man, that would be... But that's such a blessing what they're doing.

MH: Yeah, those are big numbers. Those are really big numbers. So it's nice, even in a pandemic year, that not only has it continued, but it's on the rise. So yeah. It just needs to continue. It's like everything else. You do something useful. The Lord's in it. And so this audience and, really, anybody else who hears about it *from* people in this audience, these are really good ways to minister to other people, be useful for the kingdom, and just put into practice the kind of things we talk about here a lot.

TS: And don't forget they have a matching program. So now's your chance. It means even more if you can go to EEM.org and give \$5 to them. Because they've got a donor that's going to match it. So rather than two Bibles, you get four. So now's the time to do it. And again, don't forget, you can go to DiscoveringMErcy.org to get Fern and Audrey's curriculum, sign up for that class. That's exciting. And we appreciate everyone that came on. And I'm honored to be a part of it.

MH: Yep, absolutely.

TS: So next week, Mike, we're going to do a Q&A. And be looking forward to that. And with that, I want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.