



PG. 17 (1460)



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ROAD TO EMMAUS (working title)
The greatest mystery revealed.

We see an bustling scene outside the walls of Jerusalem. Vendors are selling baskets, spices, fruits etc. Lots of hanging blankets and tent lean-tos. Children play... a man with a donkey passes by. Eventually we see CLEOPAS and DISC#2 walking through the group--focused on their conversation.

NARRATOR 100
On a Sunday afternoon--about 2,000 years ago-- two men began a 7-mile walk to a nearby town. Before it was over, the answer to the most important question in the universe would be revealed.

Title fills the screen.

We see the same two men walking along a path continuing the discussion. There are now in a rural setting--the city we saw earlier is now in the distant background.

ROAD TO EMMAUS – Project Development

1. What is the problem to be addressed or opportunity to be seized?

The major concern is a world that does not know Christ and the eternal life that can only be found in him. Despair, gloom, or misdirected worldviews have overtaken so many. There is a thirst for a tool we can put in the hands of laypeople and church leaders to make an impact on our world by sharing Christ in a clear and understandable way to as many cultures as possible.

The desire was to create a tool that can catch people's attention in a world where the mode of communication has changed with modern technology or demands rethinking because of our ability to reach into other cultures. About half of the United States and at least half of the unreached people of the world are considered "functionally illiterate". The need to reach many cultures that are mainly oral in their communication suggests a different form of presentation than we have had in the past.

2. Background

In 2005 the WELS Publications Coordinating Commission decided that the victory of Christ should be a key theme to be emphasized in the next series of resources. A team was assembled that represented different entities: John Braun (Northwestern Publishing House), Paul Hartman (World Missions/ Multi-Language Publications), Mark Zarling (Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary), and Dave Kehl (WELS Adult Discipleship) as the project manager. It was determined to create a movie as a flagship piece that would spawn a suite of products to enhance the message or provide another level of training.

The project attempted to share the story of Christ within the big picture of God's workings since the beginning. At a concepting meeting in El Paso the Luke 24 account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus was chosen as the setting. The movie script was to introduce people to the main characters and events of the Bible that unfold the plan of salvation in Jesus. This resource was to be decidedly gospel-focused from beginning to end – one where Christ is central and seen as the central story of all that he has revealed. The intention was for it to become the flagship piece for other resources to get that message across.

BoettcherTrinklein Media Group was brought into the project to help develop, produce and distribute a quality product that has universal appeal. The script went through countless revisions. Auditions for actors were held and Bruce Marchiano from the Matthew video project was brought in to be Jesus. Filming was done in Grafton and Mequon, Wisconsin.

3. Who is the audience?

The primary audience we were hoping to reach are adults who have very little knowledge of Jesus or whose worldview may be so different from the Scriptures. The presentation of the message was intended to be able to touch those who are of lower education level or are illiterate while also presenting it in a style and depth that is engaging to those who are strongly literate. The primary audience would be people all over the world who speak many different languages and come from differing cultures.

A secondary audience would be those who know Christ but have not seen or understood clearly how he fits into the whole picture of God's workings through history or are looking for a simple way to share their faith.

4. How will it be used?

The movie was planned to be useful as a "stand alone" product. It would be one of the initial steps to sharing the story of Jesus with a panoramic overview of the storyline of God's grace. It would be shown on TV or computer by missionaries and lay people or given to people to view on their own. It could become an evangelism tool not only for missions but for every congregation. The other uses could be endless – from helping new members to see the big picture of God's working to giving the context of the Bible before a class.

Northwestern Publishing House is the main distributor of the product and contracts are being developed with other sales outlets. Congregations and mission fields may be able to purchase rights to customize the ending for describing their congregation. Select mission fields will also be targeted for free distribution of the product to make greater inroad with the gospel message.

There is discussion of also creating a "flashback" version by including artwork of the stories within the appropriate conversations. This could be a useful addition for Bible classes and publications.

5. What are our objectives or expected outcomes?

We intend this production to create interest in Christ so that people want to know more.

We expect this format to help people visualize the whole picture of the Bible and identify with the characters in the scriptures in such a way that they see, "this is about me."

We hope this effort will help people understand that it is one big flowing revelation that answers the question "Why did Christ have to suffer and die?" "What does that mean for me?" It creates another opportunity to plant the seed of the Word which creates faith in Christ for life.

We desire this to become a tool that can be used by laypeople to share Christ through good storytelling style and visual enhancements.

The plan is to make it available for use in many languages. The first version is in both English and Spanish. Presently it is being translated into Urdu, Nepali, and Mandarin.