

# *The Five Houses on Raleigh's Emmaus Road*



## ***Jesus Called Us***

**A Record of Discernment**

Inspired by Jim Hutchby

Compiled by Dan Figgins

**Pullen Memorial Baptist Church**



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Raleigh's Emmaus Road*

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This report is based on questionnaires answered  
by 15 Emmaus House participants and multiple boxes  
of documents archived at

PULLEN MEMORIAL BAPTIST CHURCH,  
RALEIGH NORTH CAROLINA

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## JESUS calls us; o'er the tumult

JESUS calls us; o'er the tumult  
Of our life's wild, restless sea,  
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,  
Saying, "Christian, follow Me."

As of old apostles heard it  
By the Galilean lake,  
Turned from home and toil and kindred,  
Leaving all for His dear sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship  
Of the vain world's golden store:  
From each idol that would keep us,  
Saying, "Christian, love Me more."

In our joys, and in our sorrows,  
Days of toil, and hours of ease,  
Still He calls, in cares and pleasures,  
"Christian, love Me more than these."

Jesus calls us — by Thy mercies,  
Saviour, may we hear Thy call;  
Give our hearts to Thy obedience,  
Serve and love Thee best of all.

Words by Cecil F. Alexander (1823-1895)  
Tune by W. H. Jude (1851-1922)  
(8.7.8.7.) GALILEE

## Preface

This report was conceived by Jim Hutchby to honor the leaders who invented and guided the Raleigh Emmaus House endeavor, to complete the archives of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, and most hopefully of all, to serve as an inspiration and resource for other “clouds of saints” in churches laboring in similar lifegiving “vineyards” in other cities. It would be a blessed service if Pullen Church could serve others as the Washington, D.C. Church of the Savior served the Raleigh Pullen group, as described in the Chronology on page 4, June 6-8, 1986.

## Acknowledgments

Thank you to the following participants in the Emmaus House story for replying to the 21 questions in the Emmaus House Report Questionnaire (see Appendix A) and for checking the initial first draft summary for accuracy and completeness.

Paul Carr	Jim Hutchby	Debbie Bennett Reynolds
Bob Cato	Nancy Jones	Mahan Siler
Joe Demuro	Renee Keever	Jonathan Sledge
Hilda Highfill	Alan Reberg	Barbara Smalley-McMahan
John Hilpert	Bill Reynolds	Brooks Wicker

Special thanks to Brooks Wicker who, through the years, guarded half a dozen boxes and laundry baskets full of documents which served as primary sources for this principal report; the best of these will be permanently archived at Pullen as primary reference appendices.

*Note: These reference documents are not included in this written report and will remain available for review at the church.*

CHAPTER  
1

## Chronology of Emmaus Houses I, II, III, IV, and V

- September 9 1965** US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) established under President Lyndon Baines Johnson.
- January 20 1981** Ronald Reagan was inaugurated President and HUD funding and staffing were dramatically reduced. In the final year of the Reagan Administration (1988) a HUD official announced that between 1981 and 1987 funds for housing were cut by over 70% from over \$32 billion to \$9 billion.
- 1981** Urban Ministry Center (later Urban Ministries of Wake County) founded.
- August 1983** Mahan Siler succeeded W. W. Finlator as senior pastor at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church.
- December 1983** Two men froze to death in 20-degree temperatures. One had climbed into a refrigerator trying to get warm. His name was Snuffy. He was a World War II veteran who carried a guitar with him in his homeless condition. The second man was found frozen to death curled up on a school athletic field; his body has been attacked by rats. Consciences were awakened — mobilizing an intent that “No one should ever freeze to death for lack of shelter.”
- January 1984** Pullen Memorial Baptist Church established a Homeless and Housing Mission Group. The initiating leaders included Jim Hutchby, Paul Carr Larry Highfill, Nancy Jones, and Bill and Debbie Bennett Reynolds.



**1984** The Ark Shelter, led by Nancy Osborne, opened downtown at 401 Cabarrus Street across the street from the railroad station. Several Pullen members volunteered there. When Nancy discerned that she was no longer called to continue her work at the Ark in the Fall of 1986 during a retreat at the Cedar Crest Conference Center, Dot Ellis became the director. Dot continued to work closely with Emmaus House to determine who would best be referred to Emmaus House. She was a wonderful, down-to-earth, non-nonsense African American woman. As of 2020 the Ark is located at 353 East Six Forks Road, Suite 300, Raleigh.

**January 1985** Jim Hutchby led in the creation of the Overflow Shelter Steering Committee. It was later renamed the Wake Friends of the Homeless, and by 1998 the Wake Friends of the Homeless membership had grown to approximately 800 volunteers from 24 churches and other organizations.

Among the many leading churches were Pullen Baptist Church, First Baptist Church (Salisbury Street), Sacred Heart Catholic Cathedral, Forest Hills Baptist Church, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, and Martin Street Baptist Church. They stepped forward to operate as “overflow shelters” opening their doors in alternating months from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM when the Ark was overflowing.

Volunteers picked up men who needed shelter from the downtown Salvation Army Headquarters at night in VW buses and returned them back downtown in the morning. Providence Baptist Church, a conservative congregation, lent their church bus. Paul Carr often drove the bus.

**January 1985** Pullen Baptist Church held a congregational meeting to consider the disposition of a \$30,000 surplus in the 1984 budget which had celebrated Pullen's centennial year. In one of many 5-minute proposals advanced, Paul Carr proposed that \$5,000 be dedicated to addressing homelessness. Pastor Siler was supportive behind the scenes and \$4,500 was allocated in 1985. For many years thereafter \$4,000 was granted in successive Homeless and Housing Mission Group annual allocations as a "major grant."

**January 1986** John Hilpert became the Pullen Minister to the Community.

**February 1986** Paul Carr invited John Hilbert to meet for breakfast in a Hillsborough Street restaurant with himself, Jim Hutchby, and Larry Highfill to tell him of their hopes to obtain a house and to start a residential program for working, homeless men.

**March 1986** Sunday, after church, Paul Carr brought to John Hilpert's attention an ad in the March, 1986 News & Observer about a house for sale at 10 North East Street, one block north of Oakwood Historic District and three blocks East of Capitol Square at the head of Raleigh's major downtown commercial street. Two individuals later put up personal money to hold the property temporarily.

**June 6-8 1986** Ten members of the Emmaus House leadership visited Washington, D.C. and learned firsthand about the programs of 1) the Church of the Savior (an Ecumenical network formed in the 1940s), 2) the Catholic Workers House, and 3) the Lutheran Memorial Church. Paul Carr had previously bonded with the minister of the Church of the Savior when Paul had invited him to go with Methodist Ministers to march with Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma 21 years earlier in 1965. (Reverend Carr was at that time the pastor of a Methodist Church a few blocks away between the Church of the Savior and the White House) The hosts provided manuals of the operation for each program and discussed their strong points. (John Hilpert was already familiar with their models).

- Fall 1986** A follow-up discernment meeting was held at Cedar Crest Residence and Retreat Center, provided by John and Margaret Hilpert, a few dozen miles from Raleigh.
- 1986** Jim Hutchby described the Emmaus House in a Pullen worship "Focus."
- April 1987 to Summer 1989** After Emmaus House, 10 North East Street, was leased and opened, Bill and Debbie Bennett Reynolds for these two years were the first of eight live-in directors between 1987 and 2020.
- Spring 1987** Edenton Street Methodist Church founded Raleigh Urban Ministries.
- Thanksgiving 1987** A devastating fire completely destroyed one room and water and smoke damage throughout the house were too extensive for anyone to live there. While the Emmaus House was being restored, John and Margaret Hilpert let Bill and Debbie live in their upstairs apartment in Boylan Heights and, for some months, lived in Barbara Hill's apartment. The Reynolds report that during these times they "learned something about how it feels to be homeless."
- May 1988** Emmaus House was repaired and reopened with the restoration paid for by the Affordable Housing Association.
- 1988** The property owned across the street from Emmaus House gave the residents permission to use their lot as a community garden.
- Spring 1988** During the early years evening meals were provided by outside churches including youth and other outside organizations. The Reynolds directors recruited meal-givers, and the meal-givers interacted with the residents over dinner. The Reynolds also obtained in-kind and financial donations by speaking in numerous churches.

- December 1988** An eleven-page report on the needs of the homeless in the City of Raleigh reveals that neither the City of Raleigh nor Wake County provide any facilities for the homeless.
- 1989** Emmaus House is incorporated as a 501(c)(3).
- Spring 1989** A group from the Emmaus House Board visited local governments in Greensboro, High Point, and Charlotte to learn what comparable homeless and transitional services they were providing. The group expected that they would use the information that they had gathered to shame the Raleigh and Wake County Governments for their meager efforts. They discovered instead that as inadequate as Raleigh and Wake County governments' efforts were, they were better than the efforts of other comparable governments.
- May 26 1989** A letter from the City of Raleigh Human Resources Director to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that there were six privately sponsored emergency shelters with an estimated bed capacity of 239 and that the City government supported these private programs in the amount of \$311,619.
- November 3 1989** In the first substantive response (beyond financial support) the City of Raleigh Department of Community Development and the County of Wake met with the private Raleigh Rescue Mission. As a result the City provided a shelter on South Saunders Street and churches committed to provide "overflow shelters." At first the South Saunders Street Shelter was staffed by churches but five years later the city "professionals" dis-invited the church volunteers.
- 1990 to May 1993** David Harris is the 2nd Emmaus House resident director.
- June 1992** Nancy Petty joins Pullen Memorial Baptist Church as Minister of Christian Education.

**September 3 1992** In a “grace-fill evening at Emmaus House” the decision was made to Purchase Emmaus House after leasing for five years. The negotiated net purchase price was \$107,142 with a planned down payment of \$40,000 — supported by NGOs, churches, and private individuals.

**June 1993  
to March 1995** Pruitt Allen is the Emmaus House resident director.

**Winter 1994-95** Pullen church operated a women’s overflow shelter. Among several volunteer were Cathy Tamsberg, Brooks Wicker, Pat Hielscher, Jane Clark, and Hilda Highfill. The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints proved much appreciated support.

**1995** Note: A snapshot of the Emmaus House board in 1995 reveals 12 men and 5 women. One participant estimates that the age groups among the most active members were five members from 20 to 35, ten from 35 to 55, and two above 55.

**March 1995  
to Fall 2000** Ron Collier is the resident director. (He had previously been a resident from February to August in 1992.)

**October 2000** After eight years of mortgage payments Emmaus House I at 10 East North Street was paid off.

**Fall 2000  
to Fall 2002** Larry Finch is the resident director.

**Fall 2002  
to March 2003** Michael Watkins is the resident director.

**June 23, 2002  
to Present (2020)** Nancy Petty is called as Senior Pastor of Pullen Church.

**March 2003 to November 2011** John Allen was hired as resident director. He was a graduate of the Healing Place where he had overcome alcohol and drug addiction.

**2011** When faithful financial supporter the A. J. Fletcher Foundation questioned why on average only three or four of the seven beds were occupied, John Allen began to fill all seven consistently with a pipeline of Healing Place graduates. In order to avoid confusion that the Healing Place and Emmaus House were the same organization, when asked from where Emmaus House residents originated, subsequent resident director Joe Demuro replies, “from residential treatment programs.”

The men and women on the Emmaus House board shared an ambitious and at the same time realistic vision for Emmaus House: 1) in its first iteration beginning in 1987 as a refuge for working, homeless men and 2) in its second iteration starting in 2003 as a place for men who had achieved being sober and clean to transition to self-sufficient independent living.

**2005** Alan Reberg, a member of the Raleigh Mennonite Church, was hired to raise money to purchase the house next door at 16 North East Street. When he was hired Pullen Church had already raised \$13,000 toward its purchase.

**2006** Emmaus House II at 16 North East Street was purchased over the objections of the Oakwood Historic District residents. The Raleigh Board of Adjustment overruled their objections by applying zoning flexibility. The cost of the house was \$120,000. The Federal Home Loan Association made a loan of \$20,000: \$5,000 outright and \$15,000 with insurance. Restoration costs were \$300,000 mostly financed by the Steward’s Fund.

**March 2006** With leadership by Jim Hutchby the capital campaign to finance Emmaus House II raised \$32,000 from current and former board members.

**December 2007** Emmaus House II opened with ten beds and a typical stay of one to two years compared to 90 days to six months at Emmaus House I. Emmaus II was opened after months of extensive renovations by Greg Paul. The renovation was supported by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency within the Raleigh Planning Department. Some residents of the Oakwood Historic District were placated by the use of materials, paint colors, and designs as required in their adjacent district.

Besides the need for more shelter beds, additional incentives to purchase 16 North East Street were the almost weekly disruptions which brought the police to deal with “public nuisances” and the non-existence of property maintenance. These conditions also contributed to the Raleigh Planning Department’s decision to approve two such houses on adjacent properties contrary to the default policy against this.

**2010** Notification to leave set at 90-day maximum and 10-day minimum

**2011** Emmaus House III was opened at 28 Shepherd Street near NC State University. It had previously been a half-way house called Haven House. It contains 10 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, and 2 kitchens. With reluctance by neighbors, the realtor was reluctant to sell, so Paul Carr made the purchase directly from the owner. A typical stay at Emmaus House III is one to three years. All previous Emmaus House residents who can be contacted are invited to an annual Christmas Party at Emmaus House III.

**November 2011 to Present (2020)** Joe Demuro became the resident director of all Emmaus Houses.

**2017** Emmaus House IV was acquired at 2537 Lake Wheeler Road in southwest Raleigh. It is a triplex housing six men. Joe Demuro was involved with the purchase.

Pullen Memorial Baptist Church

**Spring 2019** Emmaus House V was acquired at 2621 Steward Drive in southwest Raleigh. It is a fourplex that houses eight men with private baths. Emmaus V required major renovations. Its purchase price was \$415,000. The ABC Stores public interest services fund provided \$100,000. This was more than its usual amount; amounts vary from year to year.

**2020** As of 2020 Bob Cato is the only Pullen Church member on the Emmaus Houses Board. He serves as secretary.



## A Biblical and Spiritual Endeavor (The Providential Work of the Spirit)

### CHAPTER 2

The original name of the Pullen church-group taking leadership in addressing the need for transitional housing was the Homeless and Housing Mission Group. In the Pullen church organizational structures of mission groups, the groups meet once per month and begin with brief devotions. From the beginning, the Homeless and Housing Mission Group met once every week. A typical experience: “75% or more of my motivation was by faith, prayer, & scripture.”

At the gentle and persistent insistence of John Hilpert (the Pullen Minister for the Community) and, in contrast to most mission groups, they spent approximately one third of their time together in prayer, scripture, and liturgy such as singing and listening to music; one third of their time in personal sharing and discernment; and only one-third of their time in doing business. The personal sharing of what was on their hearts and what was going on in their lives transformed the participants into being vulnerable to each other and to God. They built a true faith community which provided space to hear the Spirit and ultimately to expand their vision from overnight sheltering to facilitating transition to independent living by residents.

They report that “we bonded as a group and for the first five years we met in our newly leased house every Tuesday night for scripture and prayer.” Bill Reynolds was seen as the visionary who was willing to delve deeply into Scripture to prepare for meetings. Others who often joined John Hilpert and Bill Reynolds in taking leadership in the weekly group worship included Paul Carr and Jonathan Sledge both of whom had formal theological training.

Between November 1987 and May 1988 while Emmaus House was being restored after the fire, Jim Hutchby, John Hilpert and Paul Carr also met for lunch every Monday noon. At their newly repaired house they graded the basement to provide a space for meetings. When the basement was used by residents, the practices never involved proselytizing to demand

acceptance of any specific Christian dogmas. The spirit of interchanges with and between residents was more along the lines of the sharing in typical twelve-step meetings (which were also held there). The front porch chairs were another place conducive to mutually supportive conversations.

Jim Hutchby effectively recruited participation by churches other than Pullen as well as locating properties and finding financial supporters. Paul Carr was convener, consensus builder, and financial resources finder. “Larry Highfill had a genius for finding life-giving ways to respond to everyone by paying attention to the life of the group and by helping individual Emmaus House residents. Larry was a strong, steady presence, willing to spend time with the men and to develop friendships.” When Larry came home from a meeting he consistently shared with his wife, Hilda, an enthusiasm for the dedicated hard work and constant enthusiasm of the board.

In addition to Bible exposition in group worship Bill Reynolds was also consistent and persistent in taking practical action. Debbie Bennett Reynolds, acting with spontaneity, was gifted in hospitality and loving each person. Living in the downstairs apartment Debbie and Bill dealt with unimaginable challenges with loving kindness and practicality.

## Seeing Christ in Strangers (Discernment)

The name of the group (Emmaus House) was settled upon after Bill and Debbie Bennett Reynolds had gone on a church retreat and had an epiphany that what happened to Jesus’ followers on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the day of Jesus’ resurrection was a model for their new group. What is recorded in Luke 24: 31 is that when the followers of Jesus shared a meal together with a man who was a stranger to them, they recognized that he was Jesus.

The full story of the events on the road to Emmaus is succinctly told in Luke 24, verses 13-16, 30-31, 33, 36, and 49 (quoted on page 14).

## Serving Christ in Strangers (Servant Leadership; Leaders as Servants)

The story of meeting Christ in the stranger on the Road to Emmaus also spoke to the group as an example of what Jesus had said in the Olivet discourse in the last hours of his ministry just before he was betrayed. In the parable of the sheep and goats recorded in Matthew 25, verse 35: Jesus said, "I was a stranger and you took me in," and Jesus said in verse 40, "Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least (lowest status) of these, you have done it unto me." Matthew 25:35 echoes Isaiah 58:7 "Give to those who are homeless a place in your home." (See page 15.)

A related relevant scripture is found in Luke 10: 30, 33, and 34 when Jesus answers the question, "Who is my neighbor?" "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead ... . A certain Samaritan (adversary of the Jewish orthodox hence a "cautionary" tale for religious people) as he journeyed saw him and had compassion on him and bound up his wounds and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

Such scriptural references that moved the Emmaus House Directors illustrated the concept of "the servant leader" practiced by Jesus at the last supper recorded in John 13:14. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you ought to wash one another's feet."

On the occasion of worship during the trip to Washington, D.C. at the Church of the Savior Jonathan Sledge led a worship service which included the moving and humbling experience of washing each other's feet.

John Hilpert observes that "from the weekend trip to the District of Columbia ... the idea that God might well have an integral role to plan seeped into group thinking."

## Humility and Justice Tempered with Mercy

Finally, a signature scripture repeatedly stated at Pullen is Micah 6:8, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.”

### *Fuller Bible Contexts for Seeing Christ in Strangers and Serving Christ in Strangers*

#### **Luke 24: 13-16, 30-31, 33, 36, and 49 (Amplified Bible)**

And behold, that very day (of the resurrection) two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, which is about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things that had occurred. And while they were conversing and discussing together, Jesus Himself caught up with them and was already accompanying them. But their eyes were held, so that they did not recognize Him.

And it occurred that as He reclined at table with them, He took a loaf of bread and praised God and gave thanks and asked a blessing, and then broke it and was giving it to them when their eyes were instantly opened and they clearly recognized Him. And rising up that very hour they went back to Jerusalem where they found the Eleven apostles gathered together and those who were with them.

Now while they were talking about this, Jesus Himself took His stand among them and said to them, “Peace.”

“And behold, I will send forth upon you what My Father has promised; but remain in the city of Jerusalem until you are clothed with power from on high.”

#### **Matthew 25: 33, 35, 40 (New Revised Standard Version and King James)**

Then the king shall say to those at his right hand ... “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren (brothers and sisters of low status), ye have done it unto me.”

**Isaiah 58: 6-7 (The Voice Translation)**

What I want in a fast is this: to liberate those tied down and held back by injustice, to lighten the load of those heavily burdened, to free the oppressed and shatter every type of oppression, ... sharing your food with people who have none giving those who are homeless a space in your home, giving clothes to those who need them.

**Leviticus 25: 8, 10, 15-16, and 35 (The Voice Translation)**

You are to count off seven times seven years.

When the 50th year arrives, sanctify it and declare liberty throughout the land for all who live there — dramatic radical liberty for all. It is to be your jubilee year.

When you lease property, you should pay only for the time you get to use it. He will base the price on the number of harvest years remaining until the jubilee returns. You will raise the price if the jubilee year is far away. You will lower the price if the year is near, for what you are buying is the number of harvests you can get in before the next jubilee.

If your fellow citizen becomes poor and cannot take care of his needs, then you must support him with what you have. Look after him as you would a stranger so he may keep living in your community.

**Luke 4: 17-19**

**(New Revised Standard Version and The Voice Translation)**

When he came to Nazareth he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day as was his custom and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written (Isaiah 61: 1-2): The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor and to bind up the broken hearted. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, and to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

The Spirit is upon me to proclaim that now is the time; this is the jubilee Season of the Eternal One's grace.

**Matthew 5: 6**  
**(King James and John Dear “The Beatitudes of Peace”)**

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”

“Righteousness is usually seen as referring solely to one’s personal integrity. Instead the word implies social, economic, racial, and political justice”

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after justice and equity for they shall find meaning and purpose for their lives.”

**Hebrews 13:2 (New Revised Standard Version and King James)**

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have Entertained angels unawares.

...

Concerning the choice of the name “Emmaus House” one may wonder whether, besides the obvious meaning of the presence of Christ in the stranger, Bill and Debbie may have had in mind another meaning: the two disciples on the road while returning to their old familiar life in Damascus before they had become Jesus’ disciples, by deciding to return to Jerusalem were deciding to enter an unknown but inspired new transitional life.

Because the Emmaus project was so firmly rooted in scripture and prayer and devotions, more related information is found in the section below, “Advice from Emmaus House Organizers to Anyone Seeking to Organize a Similar Project.”

## The Lives of the Residents

### CHAPTER 3

The lives of the residents before, during and after their stay at Emmaus houses can be explored by the reader studying the extensive Emmaus House documents in the following extensive paper files archived at Pullen Memorial Baptist Church: Appendix B: Emmaus House Forms and Appendix C: Emmaus House Historical Documents.

In addition, there are even more extensive paper file appendices on non-Emmaus House programs related to shelter for homeless men, children, and women.

### Resident/Church Member Personal Relationships

Emmaus House report to the Stewards Fund dated September 7, 1993 by Larry Highfill:

“An active network of volunteers continues to support Emmaus House in a variety of ways. Evening meals are provided Monday through Thursday by individuals, church youth groups, Sunday School classes and civic organizations. Simple repair work is often performed by these same people. The interaction of these volunteers with our residents is an important element in educating the general public about the issues surrounding homelessness as well as an opportunity for residents to build a support network within the community.”

“The key to our success is personal involvement with residents, and we are committed to nurturing that kind of support.”

Examples of such groups included Pullen youth who assisted side by side with residents in hurricane cleanup and routine house cleaning such as washing walls and cleaning window blinds. They also brought dinner meals to which they invited Board of Directors to join.

Just one more example were the youth of the college ministry of First Baptist Church (Salisbury Street), students from Peace College, Meredith College, and NC State University “hard at work” painting.

## Emmaus House Transitional Housing Program Admission Applications (2005-2006)

### *Samples from Three Pages of Questions and Answers*

Q. Have you had treatment for drug abuse?

A. Most answered, "yes."

Q. Why did you start to use drugs?

A. — I did not like myself  
— I could not face my life's problems  
— anger  
— to escape my feelings  
— for temporary good feelings  
— to fit in, to be cool, peer pressure  
— social use, recreation

Q. Why did you start to use alcohol\*?

A. — I did not like myself  
— to kill my pain  
— selfishness, instant gratification  
— recreation, to feel good  
— I lost my house and possessions

Q. How were you able to quit drugs or alcohol?

A. — The Healing Place of Wake County  
— Alcoholics Anonymous twelve-step program  
— By the grace of God  
— Went to prison and attended twelve-step program meetings there

Q. Where did you stay last night?

A. — The Healing Place of Wake County (the vast majority)  
— Garner Oxford House  
— at a friend's house  
— Community United Church of Christ

Q. How might Emmaus House benefit you?

A. — stay clean and sober  
— friends around who understand my addictions  
— people who are not using  
— a safe environment



## 2010 Detailed Report on 88 Residents of Emmaus I and II

### *Duration of Stay and Departures Due to Addiction Relapses*

Residential stays ranged from 1 week to 3 years, one month. The typical stays were 2 to 7 months or around 1½ years.

There has always been random drug testing, and if a resident is found to be either using or found to be drunk (both called “relapse”), he packs up and leaves the same day.

(The multicolored Appendix B document, titled “Emmaus Resident Report — As of April, 2010,” traces residents of both Emmaus I and Emmaus II and shows a success rate of 78% of residents who did not relapse.

Data on the 22% who did relapse includes the amount of time in residence before their relapse (in color red) and departure. The periods of residence before relapse and departure ranged from 1 week to 3 years and 10 months.)

## Funding Sources and Process

There was a \$30,000 surplus in the 1984 budget which celebrated Pullen's centennial, and the congregation met to decide how to allocate this surplus. In one of the many 5-minute proposals advanced, Paul Carr proposed that \$5,000 be dedicated to addressing homelessness. Pastor Siler was supportive behind the scenes. The congregation allocated \$4,500, and for many years thereafter \$4,000 was granted in successive annual Missions and Outreach Mission Group allocations for shelter support.

Emmaus Houses receive annual contributions in varying amounts from a fund set aside for public interest services by the ABC Board of Wake County (alcohol retail stores). The ABC Board is required by state law to put aside so much each year to help the homeless in North Carolina.

In April 1987 the Raleigh Federal Savings and Loan purchased the first Emmaus House at 10 North East Street and leased it to the Emmaus House Board for five years. Some of the board members, including among others John Hilpert, Jim Hutchby, Larry Highfill, and Paul Carr, made substantial private contributions of their own money to guarantee lease payments up to \$15,000.

In 1988 the Affordable Housing Association paid to restore Emmaus I after its Thanksgiving 1987 fire.

Emmaus II was purchased in November 2006 for \$120,000 financed by a Federal Home Loan American mortgage and a loan of \$20,000: \$5,000 outright and \$15,000 insured.

Emmaus II renovations for \$300,000 were financed mostly by Steward's Fund.

The Steward's Fund was established by a member of the Bryan Family Foundation in Greensboro. In the early days Mrs. Bryan attended community meetings at Emmaus House and wound up saying each year, "Tell me what your needs are for next year, and I will help you."

The A. J. Fletcher Foundation also attended Emmaus House community meetings. James Goodman, the former chair of the A. J. Fletcher Foundation, known to Paul Carr, introduced the Emmaus Board to a Bryan Foundation family member. The Bryan Foundation eventually founded the Stewards Fund which became an ongoing and primary supporter of Emmaus House.

James Goodman, who was also the owner of the Durham Bulls stadium, contributed to the morale of Emmaus House residents by turning over the "owner's box" to Emmaus House residents to watch a Durham Bulls game, play pool, and eat for free.

As a snapshot of the Emmaus House budget in 2003, the Emmaus House annual total income was \$42,844. Roughly \$30,000 was contributed by individuals and churches; the remaining roughly \$13,000 was paid by the residents. Also as of 2003, each of the 7 residents made weekly payments of \$130.

This \$130 per week was collected from the residents of Emmaus House all of whom were in various jobs outside of Emmaus House. When each resident left (after a typical stay of 3 months) he was given \$95 per week times the number of weeks he had stayed. In other words his \$130/week was allocated as \$35 for rent and \$95 for a personal fund to launch him into independent living. With the \$95 per week times the number of weeks stayed the departing resident could make a down payment and one month's rent for an independent apartment or room. In summary, \$35 times 7 residents times 52 weeks equals \$12,740.

As of 1990 the total monthly payment was \$170: \$70 for rent and \$100 for savings to be returned to the resident when he moved out.

Financing Emmaus houses has depended very little on loans.

Through the years many other churches in addition to Pullen have also contributed generously both as individual congregations and through ecumenical organizations.

CHAPTER  
5

## Advice from Emmaus House Organizers to Anyone Seeking to Organize a Similar Project

John Hilpert advises “Don’t do it:

- Unless you have at least one to three persons who have received a vision and a sense of calling.
- Unless there is one person who can weekly keep the process going.
- Unless there is a larger faith community that might be open to a major challenge.
- Unless you are willing to be vulnerable and open to be “converted” by the poor to a more Inclusive way of being.
- Unless you are willing to crack open the door of your heart where God may well be seeking to do a new thing.”

The most likely to successfully benefit from the transition of an Emmaus House are those who:

- had not been homeless for too long,
- did not have mental health issues,
- had a history of a significant time “in recovery” from drug and/or alcohol addiction, and
- retained some initiative and hope.

Men with such characteristics proved more likely to transition back into stable work and housing. Meanwhile, they provided informal leadership to the other previously homeless men, helped to resolve conflicts, explained the rules and were quick to help with chores like cleaning up.

Paul Carr advises to be a community instead of merely a committee. After a community meeting one is energized; after a committee meeting one is exhausted. Be willing to meet as regularly as once a week and to “waste” a third of each meeting in personal support and another third in scriptural, spiritual reflection before tackling “practical” issues.

Be willing to gladly, joyfully dedicate strategic, large amounts of time. For example, the Emmaus House Board met weekly at Emmaus house

Tuesday nights for five years and Jim Hutchby, Paul Carr, and Larry Highfill met weekly for lunch on Mondays for months during a building renovation from Thanksgiving 1987 until the Spring of 1988.

Be willing to play, for example, “one evening we ditched our meeting to sled down a hill at Dorothea Dix hospital after a snowstorm.”

There may be helpful contacts in Durham which has been heavily influenced by Duke Chapel and in Chapel Hill where the Kenan Trust is located. Sam Wells is a former Dean at Duke Chapel. He grew up in England and was Pastor in underserved/poor areas. He made sure that the Duke Chapel served the poor areas of Durham and he has written several books that illustrate his work.

Another organization with related activities and motives is located in Hillsborough. In the 1990s the A. J. Fletcher Foundation established a facility there called the Orange Congregations In Ministry (OCIM), and raised some \$300,000, to construct a building. Today the facility is a food bank, clothing store, and has supportive staff for the under-served in Orange County.

Be willing to try new skills. For example, while Jonathan Sledge contributed his established carpentry skills, John Hilpert and Bill Reynolds tackled an unfamiliar task. They tackled the infamous railing going upstairs at Emmaus House which was covered over with many coats of different colored paints, all showing through in patches. John suggested that they sand it down a bit and then paint over it. Bill advocated stripping it down to the bare wood and staining it.

Bill won. They applied “Strypeeze” and tried scraping it off, with little result. They then resorted to reading the directions which included waiting for a while after application. Trying that, they watched it bubble up, making the stripping much easier. Section by section, allowing one to work while applying the next, they continued up the railing and completed the task. John was to preach at the next Sunday worship. He began his sermon telling the congregation that the title of his sermon was, “You’ve got to let the strip-ease work,” which generated considerable laughter.

Brooks Wicker advises:

- Hire a “top notch” resident director and give that person the latitude to make decisions. Do not micro-manage, but meet with this person weekly.
- Fundraising is a constant challenge. Select two to three board members who are chosen because they are willing to spend time fundraising and preferably have appropriate organizational and private contacts.
- In one case when purchasing a new property the Emmaus House hired a consultant for a full year.

Nancy Jones and others emphasize that the success of the residents and the gratification by the supporting church congregations were greatly enhanced by the participation of members of congregations preparing and sharing meals, by working jointly on maintenance and construction projects on the houses, and by socializing and worshiping together. Youth groups from various churches also benefited greatly by their interactions with residents beginning with preparing or providing meals.

- Spend time investing in community formation through personal sharing, reflection, prayer, and scripture study. (See “A Biblical and Spiritual Endeavor” above.)
- The process cannot be rushed or have a timetable.

Debbie Bennett Reynolds advises:

- Develop a spiritual vision, discern a calling from God, and keep a worshiping mission group at the heart of the ministry.
- Network widely and develop a broad base of support.
- Form a leadership team/board to sustain the program.
- Develop a strong relationship with someone who has knowledge and ability to screen and refer residents, including dealing with bipolar disorder, and the hard task of confronting a man who has not paid his rent.
- And specifically engage experts in matters of addiction because remaining sober and clean and maintaining recovery are the biggest stumbling blocks for most of the men.

## Appendix A

APPENDIX

A

### Emmaus House Report Step I: Questionnaire

Written records such as those contained in Appendices B, C, and D, following, comprised one source of information. However, much more telling and much more inspirational sources were the stories told by the individuals who founded and operated the original Emmaus House and eventually the five Emmaus houses. Their stories were collected from personal interviews and from the answers given to the following questionnaire by the 15 participants listed in the “Acknowledgments” section of this report. The participants were given the following questionnaire which was prepared by Dan Figgins.

### Questionnaire

**I would be extremely grateful if you could devote some thoughtful hours to answering these questions — and even to suggesting other questions useful for you and other participants to answer.**

- 1. How and when did you become aware of the needs that Emmaus House was eventually designed to satisfy?**
- 2. The name is obviously based on epiphanies (Luke 24:13-16, 30-31, 36, and 49). How would you describe your epiphanies?**
- 3. How much were you motivated by faith, prayer, and scripture? (e.g. Micah 6:8, The Olivet Discourse, Matthew 25:31-40, and the Sermon on the Mount including the Beatitudes, Matthew 5:1-12).**
- 4. What did you expect to contribute to the project? What did you end up contributing? What were your unique contributions?**
- 5. What were the special roles of Mahan Siler, John Hilpert, Jim Hutchby, Paul Carr (from streets of Chicago), Debbie and Bill Reynolds, and others? Give examples of varying leadership roles.**
- 6. How were the managers of Emmaus House identified and recruited? Did any of them identify themselves and seek manager positions? What challenges do managers face?**

7. **What were the contributions and roles of Emmaus House staff including Bill and Debbie Reynolds and others?**
8. **What were the funding sources? How did they change over time, especially when more houses were added? What is the Steward Fund? How are the purchases financed?**
9. **How did other churches, including First Baptist church contribute or fail to contribute?**
10. **What are the demographics of the founders? Men? Women? 20-35, 35-55, 55+ Did Pullen youth play any part?**
11. **What roles were played by:**
  - A. **The Healing Place of Wake County**
  - B. **Friends of the Homeless**
  - C. **Epiphany House**
  - D. **The Ark**
  - E. **The Pullen Homeless and Housing Mission Group**
12. **What conditions cried out for the services of Epiphany House? Who used what services?**
13. **What are typical life trajectories of Emmaus House resident? Twelve-step participants?**
14. **How long did individual churches provide overflow overnight shelter in the coldest parts of the year? When and why did it end?**
15. **What two or three or more unanticipated “roadblocks” arose that threatened to block the founding or continuation of Emmaus House?**
16. **What two or three or more “gifts of grace” cleared the way for the founding or continuation of Emmaus House?**
17. **In retrospect, what two or three decisions influenced what major shifts in the mission and operation of Emmaus House?**
18. **How did local governments help or hinder the problems that Emmaus House addresses?**
19. **When, why, and how were decisions made and implemented to increase to: 2 houses, 3 houses, 4 houses, 5 houses?**



- 20. How did the trip to the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C. and visits to Greensboro, High Point and Charlotte contribute to the definitions of the role and operation of Emmaus?**
- 21. What advice would you give a group that wanted to organize a similar project?**
- 22. What other questions would you like to answer and would you suggest that other Emmaus House organizers be asked to answer?**



## Appendix B

APPENDIX  
**B**

### Emmaus House Forms

The Appendix B document archive at Pullen Church, in addition to the document summarized in “The Lives of the Residents” in Chapter 3, includes:

A nine-question two-colored biographical interview of seven residents filled out in June and July of 2010.

Four filled-in Admission Applications from 2005 and 2006.

Blank Application for Residency at Emmaus House.

“Lease Agreement” to begin residency at Emmaus House dated 1990.

Blank “Rental Agreement” dated 2006.

Non-discrimination policy.

House Rules dated 2006.

Blank Authorization Statement for Criminal History Record Check.

Epiphany House for Homeless Children Volunteer Feedback.

Log of Required Weekly House Meetings.

Contact Pullen church office to access document archives.

**Pullen Memorial Baptist Church**  
1801 Hillsborough Street  
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## Appendix C

APPENDIX

C

### Additional Emmaus House Historical Documents

The Appendix C document archive at Pullen Church includes:

Emmaus House periodicals from September 1988 to June 1993

Emmaus House newsletters from December 1993 to Summer 2004

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## Appendix D

APPENDIX  
D

### Documents of Various Other Raleigh Shelter Organizations

The Appendix D document archive at Pullen Church includes documents from organizations referenced in this report. Key organizations are:

Church of the Savior, Washington, D.C.  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)  
City of Raleigh Human Resources Department  
City of Raleigh Department of Community Development  
City of Raleigh Planning Department:  
    North Carolina Housing Finance Agency  
Urban Ministries of Wake County  
The Ark Shelter, Raleigh  
Wake Friends of the Homeless  
Salvation Army, Raleigh  
Raleigh Urban Ministries  
Raleigh Rescue Mission  
Affordable Housing Association  
Oakwood Historic District  
Kenan Trust, Chapel Hill  
Stewards Fund  
Bryan Family Foundation  
A. T. Fletcher Foundation  
Orange (County) Congregations in Ministry  
The Healing Place of Wake County  
Friends of the Homeless  
Epiphany House for Homeless Children  
The ABC Board of Wake County  
Raleigh Federal Savings and Loan  
Federal Home Loan  
Raleigh City South Saunders Street Shelter

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