

# PERSPECTIVE

JULY 2021

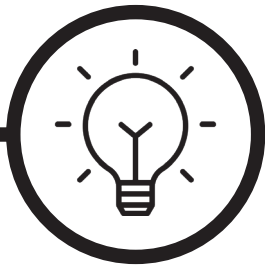
## *Serving Other Churches* FEG Munich



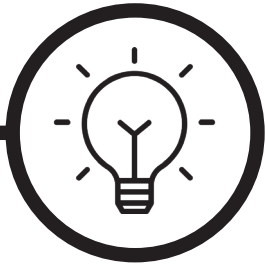
# CONTENTS



**ARTICLE** ..... 1  
*Serving Other Churches: FEG Munich*  
Aaron Menikoff



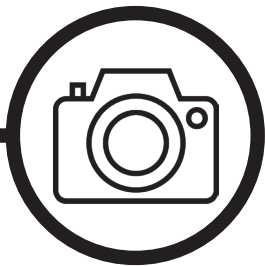
**BOOK HIGHLIGHT** ..... 3  
*The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church*  
by Albert Mohler  
Recommended by Denny Crosby



**BOOK HIGHLIGHT** ..... 4  
*Is It Loving to Practice Church Discipline?*  
by Jonathan Leeman  
Recommended by Brandon Davis



**BIBLE READING PLAN** ..... 5  
*Take Up & Read*  
July



**NEW MEMBERS** ..... 6  
*Moses Kangah, Sesame Kangah, Allison Leffler, Clay Mimbs, Caleb Oliver & Chase Waddington*

## Serving Other Churches: FEG Munich

For a number of years, MVBC has partnered with Matthias Lohmann and the church he serves, FEG Munich. FEG stands for “Free Evangelical,” which means his congregation is not state-supported. Much like England, Germany has a national church system. Though he pastors in the country that gave birth to the Protestant Reformation, Germany and much of Europe are in spiritual darkness. To his secular neighbors, Luther is a relic of the past and not a hero. Instead, he is a figure of interest and, perhaps, even a little embarrassment.

Much of Mount Vernon’s resources go to the unreached and unengaged parts of the world—the Middle East and neighboring regions. However, our partnership with FEG Munich provided an opportunity to lift up the arms of a brother God is using to create a network of Bible-based, theologically-driven, evangelistic churches throughout the German-speaking world. As you can tell from the interview below, Matthias is also doing all he can to raise up leaders with an internship program within his own congregation. Over the years, our partnership has helped the church provide for these interns.

**MVBC: What can you tell us about the city in which you serve?**

**ML:** Munich is Germany’s third-largest city with 1.5 million residents in the city proper and about 3 million including its suburbs. Historically, Roman Catholicism has dominated Munich, but in recent years, many Germans have left the church. The city has also seen a significant growth in Muslims, many of whom have come as refugees from Syria and Afghanistan.

**MVBC: What unique challenges do you face in 21<sup>st</sup> century Germany?**

**ML:** Germany is dominated by a mix of humanism and postmodernism. Much of our context is similar to the U.S., but the total number of Christians is far smaller, and even those who claim to be believers are often very liberal theologically. Unfortunately, reliable statistics don’t exist, but I would estimate only 1–2% of the population of Germany are true believers.

The numbers for Munich are even more bleak. Munich might have no more than 2,000-3,000 Christians who would affirm the doctrine of inerrancy and probably not more than 500-600 who would also agree with reformed theology (most of whom would be members of our church).

The biggest challenge here is a culture that is increasingly hostile towards Christianity. Churches and Christians have very little Bible knowledge, and therefore, are poorly equipped to stand against the cultural pressures they are facing.

**MVBC: What is your church, FEG Munich, like?**

**ML:** We are a church right in the city center of Munich. Our building is rather modern and can seat 300 people. Currently, we have 410 members, and prior to Covid-19, we had on average 500 adults and 100 kids attending each Sunday. Consequently, we are a church that is really three churches since we are having three separate Sunday congregational gatherings—one at 10 AM, another at 12 PM, and a third at 7 PM.

We have members from 40 different nations. Next to our German language services, we do offer translation into Farsi during our noon service for roughly 30 Afghans and Iranians who regularly attend. Our membership is also quite diverse in age. Next to the many students—our 18-25 year group has grown to 80 weekly attendees even during Covid-19 restrictions—we also have a seniors group with 35 attendees, all 70 and older.

Due to our location in the heart of a busy city and our many young members, we do have a fairly transient membership. However, from what I’ve heard, our services are probably quite similar to what you know from MVBC.

**MVBC: How did your church weather the Covid pandemic?**

**ML:** Generally, really well. At the beginning of the pandemic, we had six weeks where we couldn’t meet at all. Thankfully, since then, we have been able to meet, but severe restrictions are still in place. Due to the mandated social distancing, we have had to require reservations, and we have been booked out for pretty much every service. This is a good sign because it shows that many of our members are eager to attend. However, we have had members every week unable to join our worship services.

In the last few months, we have seen many new people joining our church, some of whom just came to know the Lord.

**MVBC: How did you come to saving faith?**

**ML:** I was converted when I was 26 years old through the testimony of a young woman whom I tried to date. This is not a recommended way to try to convert people, but the Lord used it in my life.



**MVBC: You worked in business before ministry; when did you know you wanted to pastor, and how did that come about?**

**ML:** This was a process. I was invited to preach in a spiritually dead Lutheran church not long after my conversion. An older man afterward challenged me to use what the Lord had given me. Later on, I received more encouragement, and I started to attend seminary classes at night. I heard John Piper preach at the first T4G conference, and it finally settled in my heart and mind that I didn't want to do anything else with my life other than proclaim the Gospel.

**MVBC: You've been instrumental in founding Evangelium 21? Why did you start this work, and how have you seen God use it?**

**ML:** I had the privilege to see ministries like 9Marks and T4G come into existence and had longed to see something similar in Germany. At the same time, I met several pastors and theologians in German-speaking Europe who felt as alone as Bible believing Christians. I invited them to see what the Lord would do with it, and the friendships that formed through this were the nucleus of Evangelium21.

Today Evangelium21 holds conferences for up to 1500, mainly younger, mostly reformed Christians. An increasing number of them are thinking about full-time ministry—which makes me rejoice and gives me much hope for the future of the church in Germany.

**MVBC: What challenges do young men who want to enter ministry in Germany face? How have you sought to train the next generation of pastors?**

**ML:** Many of these young men have never been part of a healthy church, and very few get to hear solid preaching in their churches. Thus, they often know better what they *don't* like. Many are mainly fed through online sermons. I see a great need for these eager young men to be disciplined and to grow and mature in the context of healthy churches.

To this end, we started a pastoral trainee program to train young men "on the job" while they pursue their seminary degree part-time in addition to the training at church. I'm also meeting online with about 25 young pastors in group calls for sermon feedback, mutual encouragement, and training.

**MVBC: How does FEG Munich labor to see other churches planted in the city, region, and country?**

**ML:** Our church was founded 53 years ago, and after

20 years of slow but steady growth, the church started to think about church planting. Over the next 15 years, four daughter churches were planted. This stalled until eight years ago when we decided to restart the effort to plant more churches. We are now launching our seventh church plant, and our goal is to continue with one new plant every five years in the wider Munich area (which is severely under-churched). We also send out several of our former trainees to plant and revitalize churches in other parts of Germany.

**MVBC: We often hear that Europe is more secular than America. What counsel would you have for Americans who are bracing for threats to our own religious liberty?**

**ML:** Remember that Christianity was, for most of its history and in most places, not a majority worldview. Christians have often been persecuted. That is what the Bible tells us to expect. Therefore, you should enjoy religious liberty as long as you have it but be prepared for different, harder times. Know your Bible well and love Jesus more than you love your personal comfort and religious freedom.

**MVBC: Would you tell us about your family?**

**ML:** I'm married to Sarah, who is an American. Her parents were missionaries. We have two daughters, Anna Maria (14) and Christi-Rose (11).

**MVBC: How can we be praying for you this month?**

**ML:** Pray for my personal relationship with the Lord. For growth in intimacy with Jesus and in personal holiness. And pray for us as a church that we will stay united and close to the Lord. Finally, pray that God might use us to call many to Himself.

## ***The Gathering Storm: Secularism, Culture, and the Church***

Written by Albert Mohler

When I entered seminary twenty years ago, homosexual marriage, religious liberty, and secularism were storms over the horizon. I could talk about these sociological and political issues with ease because in my mind, these problems were far off and only affected other people. True believers weather these storms and remain faithful through them, but, of course, it is easy to weather a storm that passes to the north. We often assume that we are ready to endure these things and can stand firm amidst the flood. But then the storm hits our home, and that storm destroys our lives. It is then we see the cracks and failures of a faulty foundation that was unseen until the storm revealed it.

R. Albert Mohler Jr.'s *The Gathering Storm* helps us understand issues that we once thought were irrelevant to us are now raging in the hearts and minds of people we know. Our world is rapidly embracing secular ideologies that lead our communities, nation, and children into a cultural storm of confusion and conflict with the truth. As one of our generation's great evangelical thinkers, Mohler accurately describes the storms we are facing and helps us see where they will lead us if we fail to realize the shift in our thinking. But far better than just describing the current storm, he helps us see the causes of the storms so we can address these issues at their theological and biblical core. We ought to heed Mohler's wisdom, take note of the condition, and help the church stay off the sinking ship. Unlike the world dismissing Churchill when he warned the west of the dangers of the Nazi regime, we should note the warnings given to us here in Mohler's *The Gathering Storm*.

Mohler writes, "Through Jesus' atonement, he initiated a new family—an eternal family of brothers and sisters in Christ who will dwell with God for all eternity. Far from a social construct, families display the grace of God, the glory of the gospel, and are essential for any functioning society" (p. 74). The church will weather these storms because Jesus is no longer in the tomb. We will weather these storms together. Let us lean in and lean upon one another as we hold fast. Let us prepare for what is to come, protect those entrusted to our care, and seek to rescue those caught out in it. I recommend this book to each of you as we prepare for what may come before the sunrise.

— RECOMMENDED BY DENNY CROSBY



Excerpts From  
the Book

### 1

"The Bible is the norming norm that cannot be normed. Christians must affirm biblical authority and always remember that when you surrender the authority of Scripture, you threaten the very existence of the church. Where you find a church, you find a community committed to the Bible. If not, you have not found a church"

— *The Gathering Storm in the Church*, p.34

### 2

"The challenges the church faces multiply day by day and increase in complexity and danger. Notwithstanding, the church of Jesus Christ must stand and meet this storm of secularism with the full force of the gospel. The stakes are too grave. The fight too important. We cannot be silent—we cannot surrender."

— *The Gathering Storm over Gender and Sexuality*, p.115

### 3

"The gathering storm of secularism casts its ominous darkness over essential institutions that promote human dignity, flourishing, and freedom."

— *The Gathering Storm over Religious Liberty*, p.164

## *Is It Loving to Practice Church Discipline?*

Written by Jonathan Leeman

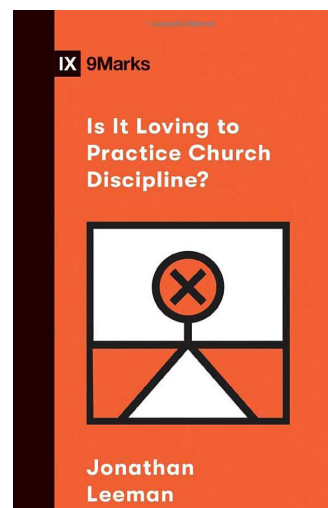
In *Is It Loving to Practice Church Discipline?*, Jonathan Leeman addresses the matter of church discipline and purposefully aims to answer whether it is loving. From the opening pages to the appendices, I would agree with a resounding yes! Church discipline is not only loving, but it is God-honoring and good for the church. Leeman explains how church discipline is used to provide clarity on God's love, a window into final judgment, and how to weave it into the fabric of church life. I believe every church member would profit from the biblical picture presented of the loving nature of church discipline condensed into this small yet immensely helpful book.

Often misunderstood as unloving, church discipline is clearly portrayed in the Bible as one of the most loving things we can do. Leeman points to correction as healthy for the growth of individuals and the church body. The world communicates acceptance of sin as "loving," whereas God, in his great love, wants us not to be deceived by our sin but to have it exposed for our good. Leeman candidly presents these opposing views of love against one another and argues genuine love desires another's good. Pressing one another towards God is for our greatest good, and we need to understand this to believe church discipline is loving.

Leeman portrays church discipline as a loving warning in the here-and-now to safeguard us from the final judgment to come. He explains God graciously gives us the "faintest whiff of what it means to be cut off now," as restoration is presented as the goal of church discipline. In this sense, it is understood that correction is loving, and letting sin remain is unloving.

Church discipline is biblical, and Leeman presses into Scripture for translation of practical use within the church. He says church discipline requires intentionality, and he provides good questions to ask both personally and corporately. Wisdom and love are needed, and much practical help is offered throughout: five purposes of discipline (p. 20-21); parameters given for what should constitute a matter of formal discipline—'outward, significant, unrepentant' sin; imperatives on how/when it should be practiced (p. 40-42) and ten steps found in the appendix. Leeman also denotes teaching and correction should be a normal part of church life and modeled in discipleship relationships, not just reserved for the formal church discipline process alone.

— RECOMMENDED BY BRANDON DAVIS



Excerpts From  
the Book

1

"Most of us need a radical reorientation of our understanding of love. In the Bible, love leads to obedience, and obedience is a sign of love."

— *Is Church Discipline Really Loving*, p. 32

2

"Fundamentally, then, churches should practice church discipline for love's sake: love for the sinner's sake, love for the other church members' sake, love for the non-Christian neighbor's sake, love for Christ's sake."

— *Is Church Discipline Really Loving*, p.35

3

"Public accountability should be an outgrowth of what's already going on in the private lives of church members. Formal church discipline works best when members already know how to give and receive loving correction. They do it in their homes. They do it over lunch. They do it gently, carefully, and always with the good of the other person in mind."

— *Clearing Up Some Lingering Questions*, p.41

# JULY

*These Scripture readings have been selected to help you prepare for the Sunday morning message. Take Up & Read!*

July 1	Nehemiah 12:27–47	July 14	Mark 8:1–10
July 2	Nehemiah 13	July 15	Luke 9:22–27
July 3	Revelation 21:27–22:5	July 16	Matthew 16:21–28
<b>July 4</b>	<b>Nehemiah 11–13</b>	July 17	Isaiah 52:13–53:6
July 5	Mark 5:21–43	<b>July 18</b>	<b>Mark 8:31–38</b>
July 6	Mark 6:1–13	July 19	Isaiah 6:1–7
July 7	Mark 6:14–29	July 20	Hebrews 11
July 8	Luke 9:18–20	July 21	Matthew 17:1–13
July 9	Matthew 13–16	July 22	Psalms 99:1–5
July 10	Isaiah 52:1–12	July 23	Psalms 99:6–9
<b>July 11</b>	<b>Mark 8:27–30</b>	July 24	Colossians 1:13–23
July 12	Mark 6:30–56	<b>July 25</b>	<b>Psalms 99</b>
July 13	Mark 7		

\*Sermons in bold

# TAKE UP & READ



# NEW MEMBERS

---



**Moses  
Kangah**



**Sesame  
Kangah**



**Allison  
Leffler**



**Clay  
Mimbs**



**Caleb  
Oliver**



**Chase  
Waddington**





*Mount Vernon*  
BAPTIST CHURCH