



## **BIOGRAPHY**

RAY VANDER LAAN, the host of the twelve-part video series “That the World May Know,” was brought up in a strong Christian home. His Christian education gave him a thorough training in the Bible yet it remained largely ‘head knowledge’ until his first visit to Israel in 1975. “God used the Hebrew approach to the text of Scripture to fan the flames in my heart and soul. This fire has continued to grow throughout my life and ministry” he says. He has been actively involved with studying and teaching the Bible in light of the culture in which God inspired it, using the methods of Jewish education his entire professional life.

“I have a special interest in using my teaching ability and background to understand and share the message of Scripture through the window of its language, culture, history and geography,” he says. “My prayer is that my teaching will encourage people to confront our culture with the

message of God. Seeing God's Word in its Jewish context helps equip Christians to impact their own culture with the power of God's Word. The ancient perspective can serve to make God's Word intensely relevant and our calling to be his disciples more urgent."

Vander Laan's teaching career began in 1976 in a Christian High School in New Jersey. The Jewish approach to Scripture and its methods were immediately popular among students as well as the larger community. The deep hunger for authentic engagement of the Biblical message prompted him to launch a study program called "Israel in Depth" in 1977 which continues to be a vibrant part of his ministry. People participate in the seminar by traveling to the lands of the Bible for 16-17 days of intense study with an overview of the history of the Jewish people from Abraham to Jesus. In the past 29 years, thousands of people, including more than three thousand high school and college students, have accompanied Vander Laan to Israel to participate in one of these study seminars. The faith lessons of "That the World May Know" video series, produced in partnership with Focus on the Family, were taped in Israel and Turkey during these study programs.

In 1995 Vander Laan created a second seminar, "In the Footsteps of the Disciples" which is taught in Israel and Turkey and focus' Jesus' teaching ministry as a Galilean Rabbi and his follower's response to his final challenge to "Go, make disciples." Through their faithfulness, the teachings of Jesus spread rapidly throughout the Roman World. Jesus call has not changed. This study program has been blessed, as Vander Laan has led more than 20 of the seminars with over 1000 people confronted with Jesus' radical call to "follow me!"

"The Land, The Culture, and the Book," "Walk as Jesus Walked," "He went up to Jerusalem", and "The Kingdom of Heaven," study seminars Vander Laan presents in Churches, schools and other ministries covers the same material in lecture format. Presented in several hundred locations, this study of Scripture through Jewish eyes, seeks to challenge people to read their Bibles through the window of the culture of its world in the same way.

Vander Laan founded "That the World May Know Ministries" in 1998. This organization provides support for the extensive ministry of cross-cultural seminars. The Ministry manages educational websites: [followtherabbi.com](http://followtherabbi.com), and [rvllon.com](http://rvllon.com). The video series, "That the World May Know" filmed in partnership with Focus on the Family, has grown to twelve sets of studies which bring to light God's Word in its Jewish context. He has also authored a book entitled *Echoes of His Presence*, published by Focus on The Family.

Vander Laan received his bachelor's degree from Dordt College and his Masters from Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia. He continued graduate work in Jewish Studies and Lands of the Bible at Yeshiva University in New York, Jerusalem University College, in Jerusalem and Trinity University International. He has been a teacher for 35 years and currently holds the Chair of Biblical Cultural Studies as a religion instructor at Holland Christian Schools in Holland, Michigan. Vander Laan is an ordained minister with the Christian Reformed Church. He resides in Michigan with his wife Esther. They have four children and sixteen grandchildren.

"While I have been immersed in the study of the world of the Bible from the greatest scholars, it is the gift of teaching that God has have given me. My calling is to present their scholarship to people today in a language they can understand. Their knowledge of the text is deepened as they

discover the ancient message is as real today as the day it was written. The eastern mind is not satisfied knowing about God. The eastern mind hungers for an authentic experience of God in everyday life. That is the focus of my ministry.

Ray is considered by others to be one of the most passionate teachers and historians of the Judaic people, land, and their culture.

Link:

<https://www.chestnutridgechurch.com/ray-vander-laan/>