

# MAC

## What makes a Mission Trip successful?

by Pat MacPherson

### Upon returning from our annual Soccer Festival in September, I

remember being very unsettled with what the team of 25 had just experienced on that 4-day mission trip.

The confusion became even more clear the next day at church when folks started asking how did the "mission trip" go? I quickly realized that I didn't know how to answer.

At the same time, I needed to be discerning on how I answered the trip. The truth of the matter was that it was "amazing" because of what our team witnessed. However, that might be misleading to someone thinking that it was a rich and fulfilling trip for each person attending. The other truth is that it was one of the most difficult soccer festivals that we've hosted in our seven years of partnership with Casa Samuel. This seemed to lead to other questions of "did someone get hurt" or "did someone get sick"? No.

The trip was full of ups and downs. The festival itself is a two-day event focusing on 300+ children from 5-11 years old as well as a carve out of activities for 50+ mom's that attend a half-day retreat (without their kids!!).

So, just the large volume of kids can be overwhelming and at times, chaotic. Usually, it's in the chaos that everything seems to come together. But it didn't happen that way on this trip.

On the first day, things started out great! The kids were easily checked-in receiving their event t-shirt and immediately shuffled to the turf soccer field, or arts & crafts station, or to the music station. The energy was high and the smiles were abundant.

And then came the snack break which is a "big" part of the day because of the lack of meals in this community. That's when it started raining, not sprinkling but a hard rain

# News

MEN ABIDING IN CHRIST MINISTRIES

modeling + multiplying discipleship

WINTER 2018

10  
YEARS  
MAC  
Ministries

that did not let up again until the next morning!!

The rain is something rare, not unheard of, just rare, in this area of Mexico so we had to scramble. Quickly getting all the kids indoors and creatively entertaining them along the way. However, the common response to rain, for the average mom in this community, is to gather your children and keep them home, even if it means missing school. Catching a

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## Going Deeper by Pat MacPherson

**A question that I like to ask men** (especially in a small group setting) is "When did the Disciples become disciples?"

What I like about this question is the discussion that follows. Many times I will hear answers such as...

- When they (the disciples) started performing miracles...; or
- When Jesus gave them the Great Commission (Matthew 28: )...; or
- At Pentecost (when the Holy Spirit was distributed/received).

However, through the discussion, it always seems to lead back to when the disciples responded 'I will' to Jesus when asking them

to follow Him. At least this has been my experience.

I bring this up because this belief of when someone becomes a "disciple" has impacted my approach to discipleship. When MAC Ministries first began in 2005, my belief was that discipleship was the process of becoming a disciple. As time went by, I realized that discipleship is the process after becoming a disciple.

The men that I continued to meet one-on-one with or through churches would identify themselves as disciples, yet they wanted to go deeper. They wanted to serve God more. They wanted a stronger relationship with Christ.

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## What makes a Mission Trip successful?, *continued from cover*

cold due to rain exposure is a much serious matter in Renacimiento than Marietta and the response to get your kid and go home quickly ensued.

Within an hour the kids and moms had left for the day and we were left disappointed and discouraged.

As we entered into the second day, the rain came to a stop and the sun started to peak through the clouds. From the moment we arrived at 8 am, we were put to work. First packaging and distributing the weekly vegetable bags for 100 families in the community. And then immediately welcoming and checking in 200 eight to ten year-olds who were ready to play soccer.

Coming off a day of little action (and the feeling of little impact), we were excited to see so many kids...and so many smiles.

By 4 pm, hardly any of us could still stand. The day was exhausting and we were beat! So much so, that I think all of us couldn't wait to get back to the hotel so we could rest.

Although, emotionally, the trip seemed to be down and up. Spiritually, one couldn't ignore the challenge that God was placing before us to stay focused on Him and keep responding with a trust that He had each and every one of us there for a purpose.

The night after the second and last day of the event was truly amazing as we all seemed to experience a similar experience of how God showed Himself even when we couldn't see the impact.

As one person pointed out, that each day he walked towards the soccer fields, it reminded him of a church made of people. Although, it didn't look like a church (with no building), there was a joy present and a miraculous fellowship among everyone present even though we weren't sharing/speaking the same language.

We also got the opportunity to hear Pastor Eva share how many of the kids and mom's attending the event come from abused families and struggle when hearing messages about how much God loves them because it can be difficult to accept. However, that changes when they experience an intentionality to connect with each kid present and allow smiles, hugs, and sincere love to bring hope to a community and to a people that fight to survive each day.

Hearing Pastor Eva explain that importance for us to donate our time and energy and allow ourselves to be used in an uncomfortable and challenging way, can



shine a light into someone's life that can build a lifelong dependence on our Lord, Jesus Christ.

## What makes a mission trip successful?

I wish I could point to attendance or some other measurable outcome, but for me, it's persevering to trust in the Lord even when it's not apparent that much impact is being made. This Trust has helped us become an integral part of a community in a far-off corner of Monterrey, Mexico and be included in the wonderful gift of relationships that can only be obtained through responding obediently to the Lord.

Experiencing these God-ordained relationships and the unconditional love that we receive from these people brings a feeling of success. But it's not the same kind of success that we define and identify within our world back home. It's a success that seems to get recognized due to our intentionality to serve and love and our willingness to be used, which pleases the Lord!

## Going Deeper,

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Similar to becoming a husband in 1997, I'd like to think that I am a stronger and better husband than I was when I started. However different and more effective as a husband today, I was still husband immediately beginning after saying "I Do" on that wonderful day of Nov. 29, 1997.

Over the years I have had some growth seasons as a husband and (probably) some seasons that were not so memorable. However, I was a husband. I believe that it is similar in being a disciple and that going deep in the discipleship process is essential once becoming a disciple.

As I continue to discover, that going deeper with men is the path to impacting

more people. As men grow their relationship with Christ, those involved with that person are impacted resulting in a broader impact.

From the parable of the sower as described in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 8, we are told of four different seeds being planted, but it is the fourth seed that sustains bearing fruit and multiplying. Luke mentions that the fourth seed is planted in good soil allowing it to grow, etc.

Through the discipleship process, I have found that my focus is helping cultivate the soil so that fourth seed men can be grown. My passion continues to be helping men to not become 1st, 2nd, or 3rd seeds as described in Luke. Most always, my focus is helping men dig deeper in their relationship with Christ. As you can imagine, this process can take years, but it is essential in being a

disciple.

For we disciples are called to bear fruit. And bearing fruit is about one's identity in Christ that results in abiding. And "Abiding" is the soil of the 4th seed!!!

So, when talking about cultivating one's soil, my greatest desire is to help other disciples grow deeper in their dependence on Christ in such a way that reflects what is captured in John 3: 30, "He must become greater, I must become less." This can only happen as you grow in knowing our Father and His Son, Jesus.

So, as you think about your discipleship process, know that the end-goal is NOT becoming a disciple, for this is only the beginning. The discipleship process is about impact. Going deeper with your Savior so others will be impacted by Him!

## Persistence and God's Power

by Tim Childers

I first met Pat in Tumlin Park at our church Movie Night in the Park. GracePointe Marietta Baptist Church is a Partner in Education with Hickory Hills Elementary School and Pat and his wife Bridget were taking their turn at the school concession stand for the evening.

I had met Bridget previously as we were volunteering at the school. However, I had not yet met Pat. In just our brief intro-

duction, I asked him if he was a pastor because I could sense it. Pat said no, but handed me his card and said we should get together sometime.

I took his card and put it with all my other business cards as I did not think very much about Pat and his offer to get together. Busyness in my life drowned that opportunity and I promptly forgot about Pat.

However, Pat did not forget about me. Soon, Pat began to stop by my office and call me. We missed each other a few times and finally, due to his persistence we finally put a date on the calendar and met for the first time.

During the first meeting He introduced me to a book called Sit, Walk, Stand by Watchman Nee. This little book intrigued me because I am a Nee fan but had never heard of this book. I took it home and read it from cover to cover at least two times in one evening. The principles in the book served to remind me of truths from God's Word that are absolutely FREEING and life-changing.

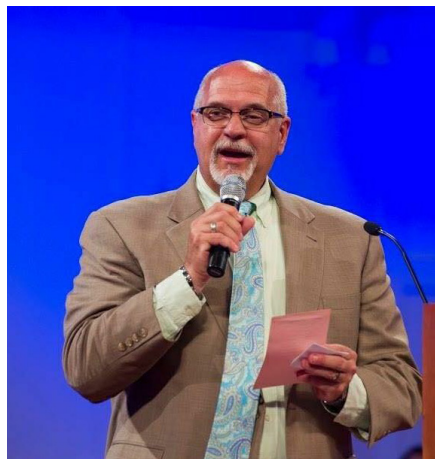
Over the next several months, Pat and I started meeting each week to go through the book and spend time in prayer.....and to build a much needed relationship.

At this same time, I was starting a new Bible Study Group for college students from Life University and Kennesaw State University on Sunday mornings. God began to impress on my heart that this book that Pat and I were studying should be the curriculum for our Young Living Group. We started the study with 3 people and now we are growing. God used this study to open the hearts and minds of all who attended. (We are up to about 10) In particular there is a young couple attending, one from a Catholic background and the other from a Lutheran background. Both are coming to a better understanding of what the Christian faith and walk is all about. It is so refreshing to hear the questions they have asked.

I have found Pat to be a good friend, sounding board, accountability partner and a great encouragement to me personally. I am so thankful for his persistence and for God's power expressed through him each time we meet. Thank you, Pat!

Tim Childers

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## Chairman's Update

by Scott McLain

**I have been eager** to provide you with an update on our 2017 matching fundraiser that was held in December. Multiple supporters pledged \$25,000 in funds to match the same amount in "new" contributions. This was an ambitious goal for us, 60% higher than the \$15,000 goal for our 2014 fundraiser just four years ago. However, I am excited to report to you that through the generosity of many supporters we surpassed our fundraiser goal for December!

While reflecting on this event I was reminded of Jesus' comments immediately following the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:15-16 Jesus encourages His listeners to "let your light shine before others," comparing our good works to a lamp that people put on a stand so it "gives light to all in the house."

The December fundraiser has been a blessing by the unique opportunity it provides to share the story of the ministry with individuals who may not grasp the work, or the light, of the ministry. So while I am very encouraged by the monetary generosity supporters displayed through our fundraiser, there were a few other "numbers" that caught my eye. I would like to share some of those numbers with you:

**The Ministry maintains approximately 70 regular supporters**

**90 different supporters participated in the 2017 matching fundraiser**

**66 donors to the fundraiser were not regular donors**

*Now that is putting the lamp on the lamp stand!*

We are grateful for the support of all our donors, and we are excited as we look forward to a busy 2018. Pat has three Small Groups planned for the winter, with a fourth planned for the spring. He also continues to meet with over one dozen men one-on-one regularly, with two new gentlemen starting this month. And Pat has three trips to Mexico planned, including the annual Soccer Festival. The work doesn't stop because the need for this Ministry doesn't stop.

I give thanks for the generosity of our donors, and may God bless you as you give.

Scott McLain

Chairman of the Board, MAC Ministries

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## Will you help us multiply disciples?

*MAC Ministries is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization funded by individuals and churches who value this ministry in the community.*

We invite you to participate in supporting this ministry through your financial contributions:

- online through Paypal at [www.macministries.net](http://www.macministries.net)
- Send a check payable to MAC Ministries at the address above

## A Note From Bridget's Heart by Bridget MacPherson

**This month**, Pat and I celebrate a significant anniversary. It is the 18th anniversary of the day we became parents. The day we became significantly responsible for another human being other than ourselves. The day that our oldest son, Liam was born.

When Pat began exploring the call to ministry over 13 years ago, you can imagine that I had many concerns. How would we pay our bills? Where would we get health and dental insurance? Where would the "office" be located? How in the world are we supposed to raise three children (yes, we only had three at that time) on a Minister's salary? Basically, all the questions I knew that our parents would ask before we took this leap of faith.

Our son, Liam, was in first grade when Pat "officially" began his career with MAC Ministries in September, 2005. Another one of my concerns was "what will our children tell their friends when they ask, 'where does your Daddy work?'" I mean, what would they say—"My Daddy eats breakfast with men and they talk about Jesus." Would their friends make fun of them? Would they questions whether or not that was a real job?

Now that I am 18 years in to this life called parenting—and almost 14 years after Pat first approached me about wanting to minister to men seeking a more significant relationship with Jesus—I know that God answers all of my questions, even the ones I don't say out loud! I have heard my daughter tell her friends where her Daddy works. She tells them that Pat "eats breakfast with men and they talk about Jesus." And it is okay.

I have learned that when I love God, seek His purpose in my life, and submit to His plan, I will be okay. In fact, I'll be better than okay. I live confidently knowing that I am loved by an Almighty Father that works in the lives of all people to bring them to an everlasting life.

*Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God.*

**Psalm 84:3**

