

MAC

Response to the Gospel

by Pat MacPherson

She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said... Mary has chosen better, and it will not be taken away from her.

Luke 10: 39; 42

Much of my time is spent tilling the soil of the men that I meet with week to week. As you may have heard me say before, my desire is for folks to become 4th seeds.

From the Parable of the Sower, found in Matthew 13, the 4th seed is that "one" that is sowed in good soil, therefore multiplying 100 fold. The difference between the 4th seed and the other three seeds is not that there isn't a desire to grow, or that they are not intending to grow, but that their soil is not conducive to growing. Along with a faith that is not fully anchored, growth can stop abruptly or over time.

In seeking discipleship, our focus is not to become disciples, because much of the time, we're already there. For one to enter into



News

MEN ABIDING IN CHRIST MINISTRIES

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WINTER 2019

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discipleship, one must already be a disciple. Let me try to explain.

Sometimes, I ask the question "when did the Disciples become disciples?" This question usually results in some good discussion as responses seem to vary from after their first year of following Jesus; to when they started to performing miracles; or at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit indwelt them. And other times in between.

One belief that I propose is that the Disciples became disciples when they said "I do" to Jesus. Or, for some of them, when they dropped their nets and followed Jesus. Similar to marriage, one becomes a wife or husband at the response of "I do". At that moment, you may not be a very good wife or a good husband, but you're still a wife or husband at your first response.

My point is discipleship is not the process of becoming a disciple -as this may indicate an end point or end-goal- but it's the process of growing as a disciple. This understanding also helps when being intentional with the soil of your surroundings. Nutrition is a very important part of the "abiding" process. Your growth as a disciple is received through the Word and prayer, AND through fellowship and relationships that surround you.

Taking stock of your soil and positioning yourself at the feet of Christ is essential for discipleship. Bearing fruit for Christ is our purpose. As we know from John 15, we cannot do this without abiding in Christ. In my experience, this happens at the feet of Christ. Bearing fruit is an active process, but this activity comes from a posture within the heart. A posture that clearly defines that your purpose is to respond to Christ by being at his feet.

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The Sin Factor.

by Pat MacPherson

I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do.

Romans 7: 15

"But Dad, I know I wasn't giving my best tonight on the court, and I know that you think that I don't care, but I do. You know what you saw tonight....that's not me."

My friend was sharing his son's response from a recent basketball game in context to our discussion about sin. He shared this with the group because the discussion seemed to reflect Romans 7, where Paul keeps emphasizing that "he does what he doesn't want to do, and what he doesn't want to do, that he does." So, goes the plague of sin and if you're not careful, your identity.

Our group realized that our greatest barrier in our relationship with God is ourselves. We are experts at creating rationale or excuses on why we respond so poorly to God's calling. Though we might fully believe that we have been delivered from sin through Jesus, we struggle with it daily. Part of this struggle is that even though we know that we're delivered from sin, we are not "removed" from sin. It's all around us. The soil around us

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Looking Through God's Eyes. *by Judie Ebert*

"Do we have to go to Taco Mac again? We always go there, can't we go somewhere different?" I heard these words come out of my mouth just a month after my very first mission to Mexico. A short month before this in Racimiento, I saw at least 100 women line up with various types of containers to have them filled with some kind of soup, and then wait again to receive a bag of fruits and vegetables to feed their families. This bag of vegetables I would have thrown out because they were too rotten for my family. I saw houses half built where people lived. I saw preschoolers playing on the second story balcony where there was no railing of any kind. I saw dogs roaming the streets looking for any little scrap of food. I saw children eating a white mush soup that turned my stomach. What I saw brought tears to my eyes and confusion to my mind.

I was completely overwhelmed on my first day of the trip. I felt defeated, and I had so many questions. How could I help these wonderful people? Their needs are so great. I was struggling with where could I even start? Build homes, get clothes and food, help them find jobs, get them health care, educate and protect their children. My mind was spinning and I went to bed with such a heavy heart because their situation was, in my mind, insurmountable.

I roomed with Susan Christensen and that first night we both talked and talked about how we could help and how sad their situation was in our eyes. I was physically bothered and had no clue how I could offer all the help they needed. My focus was on



Becoming friends in Renacimiento

me. How could I help these people? God was just shaking his head at me.

After prayer and sleep, and watching the leaders on the trip I was able to see the people of Casa Samuel as God sees them. The women and children and very few men are HIS children. HE loves them and provides for them. I took the cue from the trip leaders that I was not there to solve their problems. I was there to show God's love. Plain and simple. But what did that mean? How do I do that? These questions floated through my mind all morning until the children came.

That first official working day, I went into teacher mode and just totally enjoyed the children. I made crafts with the children and smiled and tried to learn a few words of their language, I did not have anything to give them, except my love. I believe that was exactly what God wanted from me that day. I was finally getting it. In the past, I thought I had to produce something quantifiable to qualify as a service. How do you quantify smiles and hugs and laughter? If there is a method, I reached my quota and then some. In the afternoon, I had the privilege of sitting with the women of Casa Samuel. We were all sitting around tables crafting. We were making beads which the women will turn into jewelry and hopefully sell to make money for their families. As we were sitting there crafting we were doing what women do when they get together. We were talking. We talked about our husbands, our children, a wedding that is coming up. Obviously, I could not understand much of what they were saying, but they translated so that I could be a part of the conversation. I left that afternoon in tears. I sat with a group of women in a foreign country and it did not matter that we did not share the same language or that we had different skin colors, or that we have different economic situations. There were so many differences, yet we came together and sat and talked as one. It was like a normal afternoon of a group of ladies getting together. All that I could think of as I left that afternoon was how amazing God is. I went down to Casa Samuel with the vision of "helping these people". All I did, was love God's people and learn from them.

On that same day, Pastor Eva and the women of Casa Samuel took us down the road from their center saying they had a surprise for us. I was thinking of all sorts of things, but nothing came close to the true surprise they shared with us. The women of Casa Samuel had saved money to buy land



Judie and Susan ready to get started in Renacimiento.

for a church. They opened these large metal doors to reveal a small, cinder block walled, roofless, stone and debris covered area and told us joyously that this will be their new church. Their faces were glowing with pride and excitement that they would have a place to worship right in their community. They would not have to leave their families for the better part of a Sunday to travel to church. Even better still their husbands will be involved in building the church and hopefully attending and hearing the word of God. Again, God is so good.

Joy was shared in Mexico on those few days we were there. Pre-teen girls flocked to our girls and fun was had by all. The women of Casa Samuel blessed Ryan, one of our youth, with a birthday cake. The boys played endless games of nine square and duck, duck, goose. The women from Marietta Community Church were crushed by the women of Casa Samuel in a kickball game. Smiles were shared, laughter was abundant, and hugs were graciously given.

Did I solve any of their problems? No, not one. Did I come up with any grand capital improvement plan? No. Will I go back to Racimiento with open arms and a heart full of love for my new friends in Christ? Yes. When is the next trip Pat?

On the first day in Mexico, all I saw were problems that I needed to fix. By the last day, I saw God's people. Women who love the Lord and work hard in their community to show God's love to their neighbors. I saw beautiful children with huge smiles and all the wonderment that childhood brings. I saw community and compassion for one another

and a dedication to service that trumps anything that I have ever done. God puts us on this earth to love and serve him. The people at Casa Samuel are so obviously

servicing the Lord each and every day. I am walking away from this mission trip asking myself how will I serve the Lord each and every day? How will you?



Doing arts and crafts in Renacimiento

Chairman's Update. by Scott McLain

December 31 marked not only the end of 2018, but it also ended our annual matching fundraiser. With a goal of \$25,000 in new donations, the fundraiser is obviously a significant part of our annual budget. And December is a very busy month for Pat as he communicates with many potential donors during the month, with most of those meetings taking place face to face. These face to face meetings are my favorite thing about the fundraiser, each meeting an opportunity to shine a light on the work of the Ministry.

This newsletter is a means to highlight Pat's current activity and we certainly attempt to shine the light in a way that illuminates the long term, even eternal, effects of the Ministry. And in an age of on demand news streams (anywhere, everywhere!), and social media blasts on so many different "topics of the day", information about the Ministry often spreads in

much the same way Pat operates - through one on one conversations, by "word of mouth." On a related note, news about Jesus' ministry initially spread that way, too.

I am constantly reminded that, at the heart of it, this is a Ministry of, even about, Pat's availability to meet face to face and walk with people as they draw closer to God in obedience.

Oh, and by the numbers the fundraiser was a terrific success - again! We had over 85 donors and total donations that exceeded our target. Praise God for that! And thank you to all of our consistent donors as well as our fundraiser participants. Here is hoping that the fundraiser broadcast a little wider light on this very personal Ministry.

Scott McLain
Chairman, Board of Directors
Men Abiding in Christ Ministries

The Sin Factor

continued from cover

is contaminated with it.

The other part of the struggle is that we know this isn't the way it's supposed to be. Or as my friend's son exclaimed..."that's not me".

Being created in the image of God, gives us an innate understanding about this world, that we live in. It is contaminated and, deep down, we wish for redemption. As Christians, this belief is the driver of the hope that we place in Jesus Christ. In that at His second coming, all of creation will be restored to the way it was originally created (before sin interrupted everything).

Getting back to identity. Too many times, our ability to respond to the Lord is a reflection of the sin (noticed or unnoticed) in our lives. Although Christ has delivered us from sin, sin can consume us. It can consume our minds (i.e. anger and bitterness are common examples) which can lead to a season of confusion and frustration as we unintentionally process all that we're about through this consuming place that won't let us go. This place becomes our identity. It holds us until we intentionally grasp hold of the fact that Christ has delivered us from remaining in this place...and back to recognizing that "that was not me" or better yet, that was the "old me".

Embracing relationships to spur you on during these seasons is one of God's greatest gifts in our lives. Finding community with others (or at least one other) who can help you adjust and sometimes do an about face! The sin factor is not going away. Neither is Jesus' deliverance from this world. Allow relationships to be redeemed and allow God to call you into new relationships so that He can continue to use you as a tool in redeeming this world that we have been placed.

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
- Send a check payable to MAC Ministries at the address on the back of this newsletter

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A Note From Bridget's Heart by Bridget MacPherson

For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

– Matthew 12:50

Pat and I are blessed to come from wonderful, God-loving and relatively happy families. I am the oldest of 5 and Pat is the youngest of 3. Both of us have parents who are still living and still married to one another. We were both raised in families of faith; always knowing that we were loved by our families and especially God.

I do not want to take for granted the gift that God gave me in my family. We have shared experiences of joy, celebration, tradition, as well as heartache, trials and loss. I look back at those times and think mostly of the memories and the feelings that were created. Living life in the day to day, those memories and feelings seem really special and I long to create them again.

Before you stop reading to go gag at a story of a perfect family, please let me stop you. It isn't always that way. I'm not going to

air any dirty family laundry (though I have baskets full in my laundry room right now!). I just want to admit that there are times that I experience disappointment, hurt feelings and unmet expectations within my family. And I am certain that my siblings and in-laws would say the same thing. I don't always meet up to the memories and feelings that were created in the past. I don't always do my part to make the good times happen again. Why?

When I'm feeling sad or hurt, I want to wallow in that. Poor me. It doesn't last long, and thankfully, the details are usually forgotten. If I'm being honest though, the memories and feelings stick in a place in my mind that can be quickly recalled when it happens again. Why?

I believe that God designed the family as the very first place that we learn faith. We learn to love God and each other (just like the Greatest Commandment) in a small group so that we can show our love for God and others in our communities. I believe



Liam, Sean, Bridget, Pat, Rose, Mary, James – Christmas 2018

that the joyful times we remember with our families are God's way of giving us a glimpse of what it's like to be a member of God's family – the Kingdom of God. Those other not so fun times are God's way of calling us closer to Him so that he can love us unconditionally and heal us perfectly and through the Holy Spirit, show that love to God's family.