

MAC News

Leading Men to Live a Life of Significance in Christ

I've been working with Wieuca Road Baptist Church since last October, helping them first host a men's retreat which evolved into a leadership team that wanted a sustainable men's ministry that focused on discipling their men. In the process of identifying the purpose and vision for the group, their leader decided to share some thoughts that highlight where we've been since October.

Similar to our response to God when we say "use me", it's never really clear what we're getting into when we "sign-on". The team experiences more than what they were expecting. Not just meeting the goals set in the beginning, but some of the fruit that grows as the team develops and evolves has been captured below.

- We've learned about each other. Once again, we discovered we didn't know each other as well as we assumed (a recurring theme it seems).
- We've agreed that there's something irreplaceable about men ministering to men that can't be accomplished through mixed or more generic approaches. A subtle shift occurring over many years may have put us men in a spiritual predicament that we need to counter in a way that responds positively to the 'new' ways of the world.
- We've learned that discipleship should be a central focus from which flows our desired outcomes. Missing this point can derail the best of intentions.
- We've learned about our church and who we're primarily 'catering' to and reaching through an analysis of our existing activities, events, and programs. Our current predominant target audience is narrower than we would probably have guessed.
- We've discovered or confirmed that we can no longer assume that our church is adequately reaching men unless we are intentional and methodical in our approach.
- We've learned that if we are to ensure the creation of a sustainable ministry, we've got to begin ministering not necessarily through multiplication but rather through simple slow addition, in the greater body of the church--investing in one man at a time through personal contact, personal invites, and caring about each other. It's going to be more +1's than x10's.

The email sharing these thoughts concluded asking how this team can help grow the body of Christ by reaching the spectrum of men that interface with their church. From the husband on the fringes who follows his wife and kids to church, to the committed man serving in multiple areas of leadership, to those who are hurting from loneliness, divorce, pornography, wayward children, or marriage struggles reminding that God is preparing this team to make a difference in the lives of many men through the initiatives and leadership that come out of our planning.

I thank Gil and Wieuca Road Baptist Church for sharing and capturing what God has been doing with this team over that past 10 months. It's a privilege to serve! - Pat

Men Abiding in Christ Ministries in Action-

- No Man Left Behind sessions with the men's leadership team at Wieuca Road Baptist Church and First United Methodist Marietta.
- **May 10** "How to Ignite Your Men" seminar at Mt. View United Methodist Church.
- **June 28—July 1** "How to Ignite Your Men" seminar at the Christian Life Conference, Montreat, NC.
- **August 14-16** Global Fellowship Conference in Long Beach, CA.
- **August 23-24** men's retreat for FPC Douglasville.
- **September 13-14** men's retreat for FPC Morganton.

A NOTE FROM BRIDGET'S HEART...

The word of the Lord came to me thus: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you.

Jeremiah 1:4-5

In February, we experienced the tragic loss of our brother, Rick Kool. As I wrote my message last month, I reflected on God's Word where Job reminds us the God gives and God takes away and how we should remember to Praise God in all things. I didn't realize how immediate God's response would be. We knew that Rick had been "taken away." Shortly after Rick's death, we found out what God was going to give – a new life in the form of a new baby that now grows inside my womb.

Yes, baby number five. Pat and I were shocked. Now, believe me, I've heard all the comments, such as, "Shocked, how could you be shocked? You know how that happens, don't you?!" And one of my favorites, "You know there are ways to prevent that, don't you?"

As innocuous as those comments sound, they hurt. Our family has been grieving for the precious life that was lost. God, in His wonderful way, reminds us of His power as our Creator and again, restores us to hope. Though shocked at first, Pat and I fairly quickly came to realize the incredible blessing that God was bestowing upon our family through this new life. Once again, we are able to share in the miracle of life. Once again, I will hold one of God's newborn children in my arms.

When I was sharing our news with a group of women, of course, someone asked if this baby was "planned." Feeling dejected, again, I hesitated to answer. Another woman in the group quickly added, "Yes, this baby is God's plan." My heart rejoiced at her response. I was affirmed by this comment, knowing that God is sovereign and knows all things and that we are in concert with His plan.

Men Abiding in Christ Ministries

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MAC MINISTRIES IS CALLED TO SERVE GOD BY:

- *Partnering with churches to build sustainable ministries for men.*
- *Discipling and coaching church leadership teams to develop a vision and purpose for intentionally growing their men.*
- *Launching and developing environments where relationships can be fostered with each other and with the Lord.*

****If you prefer to receive this newsletter via e-mail, please notify me at
pat@macministries.net**

MINISTRY UPDATE

- If you're not already, please consider joining the MAC Ministries financial support team. As we draw closer to 2009, we will need continued growth in contributions to serve those men and churches that God continues to bring.
- I invite you to join 90 others as part of the Prayer Team. This Team is intentional in praying for the protection, sustainability and growth of the Ministry. Please contact Jim Ford at jimfordmanager@aol.com or (678) 429-9089.
- Please join in praying for a new small group that will be starting this Fall using the curriculum from Christian Leadership Concepts. Pray that this will be a fruitful experience for the men as well as for my co-leader of this group, Mark Humphrey.
- Continued needs: HP Model 96 & 97 print cartridges for office printer; postage stamps; copy paper; and gasoline vouchers.

GOD AT WORK THROUGH MAC MINISTRIES

I am deeply grateful for Pat and MAC Ministries because he knows that an abiding relationship with Christ ought to be the heart of all we do. Many churches (and men) today are so caught up in strategies and techniques for growth (sacred and secular) that we lose sight of God in all of our striving and grasping. Pat not only helped our retreat planning team put the nuts and bolts together for our first ever men's retreat; he helped them discover the power of lay ministry, the importance of relationships in discipleship, and the centrality of abiding with Christ. Pat brought an atmosphere of patience, discernment, and simplicity to what can easily become an overwhelming process. Our meetings were very meaningful times of sharing, dreaming, visioning, and praying. All throughout

the "retreat planning" process we found ourselves being prepared spiritually to dream new dreams and to be open to what God is calling us to be and do in the future.

I am also grateful for a wonderfully successful first men's retreat. Many of our men who knew one another for over 30 years learned new insights about one another. Others got to know persons 30 years removed from their own age! Our conversations about what it means to follow and abide in Christ, support one another, and journey together were very meaningful for everyone who attended. A few men had some of the most significant spiritual experiences of their lifetime at our retreat! Yet this wasn't just a great event—it was the start of a movement. We are excited to see how God's Spirit will continue to

lead, renew and inspire the men of our church.

Pat has been a tremendous help to me and to our lay leaders—giving us some breathing space and helping us bring focus to our men's ministry initiatives. We look forward to the fruits of our partnership and what can happen when men truly allow themselves to abide in Christ.

Rev. Matt Rich

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