

MAC News

Leading Men to Live a Life of Significance in Christ

When the Focus is Men

It started when I was asked to join a group of men at Marietta First United Methodist Church and help build an “all-inclusive ministry to men”. To put this request in perspective, were I given a choice between surgery and a men’s gathering, I’d probably choose surgery. Knowing that God is calling me to my own unique ministry, I agreed to “sit in” and see where the Holy Spirit led.

Enter Pat MacPherson.

Having actively served in church throughout my life, I came into this initiative with a bag of biases: more poorly-planned programs, more time-wasting events and yet another attempt at a social club under the guise of “men’s ministry”.

However, there was something different about Pat early on. He didn’t push his own agenda. He didn’t even try to sell us a box we were expected to fit in. As a matter of fact, he didn’t seem to have an agenda. At first. Weeks passed. Then months. And I noticed something happening. Relationships and bonds formed among our men.

Having attended MFUMC since 2002, I began walking the halls and getting handshakes and hugs from guys I had probably passed hundreds of times, but never knew. And it wasn’t just me. I’ve noticed all the men in our Friday morning men’s group connecting. Chatting in the halls. Offering handshakes. Becoming a tribe.

At this point, and we have only just begun, the worst I can come out of this experience is with new friends. At best, I am answering my Lord’s call to be a disciple and build disciples. Pat was the catalyst for this.

How do you “measure” ministry? It’s like asking, how do you measure love? Or faith? You really can’t. But you know when it’s there and when it’s not. Here’s what I’ve learned so far:

- 1. Spiritual growth is more important than numbers growth.*
- 2. The focus of ministries to men is men, not programs and events for men.*
- 3. Growing disciples in not a program, but a wide-to-deep process that takes time.*

Unlike many other “ministries-in-a-box” I’ve experienced, MAC Ministries is teaching the men of MFUMC to fish. To hunt. To farm. And to garden. These skills take time and experience. They require intentionality.

And that’s what sets Pat apart. He ministers rather than *administers*. He doesn’t church men into a mold. He molds men into a church.

And I’m a better man for having met him!

by Keith Jennings

Continued needs: HP Model 96 & 97 print cartridges for office printer; postage stamps; copy paper; and gasoline vouchers

A NOTE FROM BRIDGET’S HEART...

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.

Psalm 84:5,7

I was blessed this winter to have studied the Psalms of Ascent with Beth Moore and some lovely women from church. It’s been a while since I’ve participated in a Beth Moore bible study. I love the way she presents God’s Word. And, she’s from Texas—a plus in my book!

The Psalms of Ascent are 15 psalms—120 through 134. They include one of my absolute favorites. Psalm 127 reminds me to depend on God for everything and that having a “quiver-full” is a blessing. Trust me, some of my arrows get mighty prickly and I need to be reminded of the blessing that they are.

On the first and last day of the study, Beth Moore referenced Psalm 84. As she described the Israelites on their pilgrimage, she reminded us of this psalm. “They go from strength to strength,” the psalmist says, “until they appear before God in Zion.”

Being a mom and spending considerable amounts of time on the playground, the image that appeared in my head was crossing the monkey bars. The feeling of holding on tight to one bar, gathering courage and strength to let go and reach out for the next bar. It can be scary during the hang time, but knowing that all you need to do is reach out, you’ll be safe again on the next bar.

I’ve experienced some scary hang time, lately. Times when I’m not sure what I’m doing or wondering if it matters. I reflect on this verse and gain confidence that God is always watching me. All I need to do is let go and reach for Him and feel safe again.

GOD AT WORK THROUGH MAC MINISTRIES

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

IN ACTION & PRAYER NEEDS

- Another Christian Leadership Concepts small group launching on Friday mornings at FPC Marietta
- Upcoming No Man Left Behind sessions with the men's leadership team at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Snellville
- Upcoming Overnight Retreats for two different churches
- Please join me in welcoming Mark Humphrey to the Board of Directors.
- *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.*

Through the course of our almost 28 year marriage, when praying for and about what everything I felt I should be praying for, I always tried to boldly ask for Godly relationships for Mike. We have been blessed with many friends and for that we are very thankful, but I wanted Mike to have a group that was all his own! This journey has been a true testament that God's time is not always our own and also that good things do come from bad times.

Last year when Rick Kool was taken from us we were all saddened for many different reasons and our prayer was that something good could come from this. That was a hard prayer to pray. At the time, we could not imagine any good. Mike and Rick were friends and had played golf together and were actually scheduled to play in a UGA tournament just a few weeks after Rick's death. Rick would have been a great buddy for Mike. This was not to be for very long. We have known the MacPherson family for several years but had never known Pat and Bridgette; only who they were, not really "what" that were about. We met them over the course of events and were drawn to them.

Several months later Mike and Pat were both at a Rome Braves game with a group. Mike had wanted to go for several years but had just never made it. This timing worked perfectly. The two of them talked there and scheduled a time to reconnect later.

Pat shared with Mike about MAC Ministries and how it continues to grow in helping men develop their faith. Over time, Pat encouraged Mike to become more intentional in growing his faith by joining a Christian Leadership Concepts (CLC) group of 12 men that Pat leads. Mike started his CLC journey in September and it has been a blessing to watch relationships bloom at 6AM on Monday mornings! Men seeking men who are also seeking God!

I am thankful for a loving God who answers prayers (and through different circumstances) leads us to deeper relationships with each other! Our marriages, homes and the lives of our children and community are being richly blessed!

by Salli Beasley

I want to ask for your continued prayers up front as I am greatly dependent on them. Most weeks consists of meeting with 35+ men from Church Leadership teams, a CLC small group, and individuals in one-on-one or triad meetings. In all these meetings, I am surrendering to meet each person where they're at in their walk so I can be intentional about their faith development. Even with the church leadership teams, my focus is discipleship as I want these men becoming more fruitful individually and collectively. As you read in Keith's article, it is essential to understand that spiritual growth is not something automatic from a program or formula but as Michael Yaconelli writes in his book, Messy Spirituality, that it "thrives in the midst of our problems, not in their absence.....it occurs in the trenches of life, not in the classroom."

I am reminded daily of this truth and again I ask that you pray that I don't expend all my energy and time trying to have a life absent of these growth opportunities. It really can be a distraction in our prayer life and in responding to God. Also pray for our churches, that we get ignited through the relationships that God brings us and become more intentional in investing in one another. Discipleship is a process. As Rev. Craig Barnes says, "Our goal is to walk with God not to arrive at some point, but to walk with God."

Pat