

# MAC

## Trusting God vs. Using God by Pat MacPherson

"I appreciate your time this morning as I'm not sure what is going on with me, but I feel that it's time that I get more serious about God. Especially if He can help me with..."

I am always excited to hear the comment above from those that I encounter. One reason, is because deep down they already know that the answer lies with God and not within themselves.

The challenge, for me is to present a different approach which is not contingent on a result happening because of our meeting. So many of us are consumed with doing the "right" thing at home, work, church, family, friends, etc.

But, what is the "right" thing?

Right is not always what brings the most benefit to the most people. Nor is it always what feels best in our gut. Nor is it what seems most practical. Just think about if these were part of the litmus tests that folks like Abraham, Moses, Samuel (in anointing David as king), or Joseph (Jesus' earthly dad), or



Bridget, Liam, and Pat – Prom 2018

# News

MEN ABIDING IN CHRIST MINISTRIES  
modeling + multiplying discipleship

SUMMER 2018



any of the disciples used when responding to the Lord.

Our understanding of "faith" would be a lot more confused and self-absorbing if we allowed practicality, knowledge, and end-results drive our response.

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Trusting God vs. Using God by Pat MacPherson	1
The Good Lord moves in strange and mysterious ways by Piet Strydom	1
Keeping Ministry Relevant by Jay Watts	3
A Note From Bridget's Heart	4

## The Good Lord moves in strange and mysterious ways. by Piet Strydom

**Around 35 years ago** I read a copy of the comic book Snappy Answers to Stupid Questions by Al Jaffee. One of the strips was of an irritating new golfer playing with an experienced golfer. The penultimate frame had the novice asking at the start of the final hole: "Would you like to play again someday?", to which the answer was "I'd rather be struck dead, the good Lord willing."

The final frame shows the experienced golfer lying on the ground with a golf ball sized hole between his eyes, and the novice bouncing off, saying "The good Lord moves in strange and mysterious ways."

### Meeting Pat

I was born and raised in South Africa, in a Christian family. We attended the Dutch Reformed church, which is very much an Afrikaans version of the Presbyterian Church. (No relation to the American Dutch Reformed Church.) In middle of 2007, I started work on an SAP software project for The Coca-Cola Company. Eighteen months later TCCC asked me to move to the USA. I, and my wife and the kids, had no desire and no intention to move to the USA, but we decided to go through the application

process for the H1B visa and pray about it, submitting that the outcome would be God's will for our lives. A year later we were in Atlanta, attending Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Marietta.

And behind each of those steps, I can write a full article to narrate the moves of the Lord, sometimes straightforward, sometimes more strange and mysterious.

While at Eastminster, I attended their annual men's weekend, somewhat reluctant, as I am not "one of the boys" or men, for that matter. It turned out to be a very enjoyable weekend, and it is also the weekend where I first came into contact with Pat and MAC Ministries.

Over the years I have attended more of these retreats, and also attended Pat's Intentional Leadership and Intentional Discipleship classes. I really enjoyed the courses. "Intentionality" and "Abiding in the Lord" have become important ideas for me. In the beginning, I was always intrigued by Pat's one-on-one mentoring, however, I never quite got serious about it. For various reasons – not for me, I'm not good enough of a Christian, or maybe I thought I was a good enough Christian.

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**The Good Lord moves in strange and mysterious ways,**  
*continued from cover*

### Moving to Japan

After about 5 years, TCCC eventually got around to hiring me as a full-time employee into a new department they created. And then promptly retrenched the whole department 15 months later. Eventually I found another long-term contract, again with Coca-Cola. But this time in Japan. First my wife, my daughter and I balked, but it later became clear that for some strange and mysterious reason, God wanted us in Japan.

After I had been in Japan for a year, Pat sent out a newsletter in December 2016, and his editorial article grabbed me. This time I contacted him. Strangely I just so happened to be in Atlanta at that time and managed to get in a meeting at Pat's office (booth) at the Marietta Diner before I had to return to Japan. For the last 18 months we have now been Skyping and Facetiming across a 13 (summer), 14 (winter) hour time difference.

My original intention was to learn from Pat to start my own ministry, but as God,

Pat and I worked through Watchman Nee's *Sit, Walk, Stand* and other books, it is clear that I should be patient, and sit with Christ for a bit more. Working with Pat, living in Japan, and reading a Chinese missionary, God is teaching me important lessons in the full meaning of being a human, being a Christian, being a soul whose temporary residence is in an earthly body. I am coming more and more under the impression that the modern Christian experience, with its downplaying of the supernatural, is missing half of the wonder of being alive.

What does it really mean to have been crucified with Christ, to no longer be alive, to have Christ live in me? Really, deep down in the mystery of a God that moves in strange and mysterious ways? I am no longer alive, but Christ lives in me... Think about that for a minute, or an hour, or a day...

That is the blessing of having one on one discussions with somebody like Pat, where the Spirit moves in a way that it can not do on a Sunday morning in church, Where two or three are gathered in His Name, strange and mysterious things happen. It does not reduce the importance of Sunday



*Renske and Ester (back row); Jan, Ri, and Piet*

morning worship, it fills it out. Just like the supernatural fills out our natural experience.

God has walked a strange and mysterious road with me, from the barefoot child on a smallholding in rural South Africa, through Atlanta to Tokyo – I am excited to see with the help of Pat how God intends to use me further.

And I am certain Al Jaffee not for one moment thought that one of his cartoons would serve in the Kingdom of God.

The good Lord moves in strange and mysterious ways indeed.

## Keeping Ministry Relevant

*by Jay Watts*

**A common struggle** in ministry is maintaining focus on the mission God called you to serve while being willing to adjust your methods to fit the changing times. It is easy to become distracted by the invitations to join some cause or another that inevitably follow success. It is equally harmful to be too determined not to budge and miss new opportunities to serve your mission. I have been privileged to watch MAC Ministries



since the very beginning, and have admired Pat's devotion to protecting the integrity of his calling while seeking ways to improve his message of reliance on God. He adds the elements to his ministry that are necessitated by God's calling on his life, and, as a result, MAC Ministries flourishes.

I remember the morning when Pat invited me to Marietta Diner and asked what I thought about his pursuing the Colson Fellows Program with his usual caution about adding to his full plate. I enthusiastically encouraged his participation. In fact, I told him that I am convinced the ability for him to maximize his calling and mission over the coming years depends on this type of training.

The world is changing so quickly it can be difficult to keep pace. I work in the field of bioethics and Christian apologetics speaking to audiences ranging from local churches, to Christian high schools, to groups at major universities. Almost every place I go pastors, school principals, and student leadership share their concern that their audience may not be interested in what I discuss. They are shocked during Q & A when the questions keep coming and coming. A student

development staffer at a college told me he hoped the community would ask enough questions to fill a thirty-minute Q & A. It lasted for three hours.

The take-away from this is that people have questions about the world they live in that they are not always comfortable sharing with Christian leadership. I ask them why that is, and they tell me two things. 1) They don't trust them to be able to answer their questions, or 2) they worry they will be judged for having questions. It is my experience that adults and students alike are seeking a reliable source to take questions to about the world around them.

The Colson Fellows Program exists to equip community thought leaders and community influencers to become that trusted source. They take good ministers for our Lord and make them better. They add arrows to the quiver, specific arrows that are desperately needed in today's world. Pat's willingness to take this on, from August 2018 through May 2019, gives me tremendous confidence that God will continue to develop MAC Ministries' role in the lives of men and our community for years to come.

## Trusting God vs. Using God, continued from cover

This past Spring, I spent time facilitating a study, at Eastminster Presbyterian Church, on Tim Keller's book *A Reason for God*. The book is divided into two sections focusing on 1) answering common questions that non-Christians might have about the Christian faith and 2) important truths about the Christian faith (regardless if you have a question about them).

One insight that came at the very end of the book which stopped me in my tracks was Keller's comment:

*Are you getting into Christianity to serve God, or to get God to serve you? The latter is a kind shamanism, an effort to get control of God through your prayers and practices. It is using God rather than trusting him... [Keller, Timothy. The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism (p. 228).]*

"Using God rather than trusting him." That was it! Almost everyone I spend time with is willing and sometimes, hungry, to trust God especially if they can still achieve the results/goals/outcomes that they desire. In fact, this is what most of us are striving for, however this is not the path to follow.

Recently, I've been meeting with a man who stated "that I want to trust God, but I also want him to help me be fruitful in my business." It's hard when your expectation is that God wants you to be happy and fruitful in all that you do. What Jesus calls us to do is to follow Him on His terms, not the way we think it should be. There are many examples from the Gospels where Jesus only provides the option to trust (i.e from John 4 when the nobleman ask Jesus to visit his son and heal him. Jesus' answer is to go that the son has been healed... we're only told that the nobleman followed his call to trust). To love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind and to love your neighbor as yourself.

It's important part of discipleship that we seek our success from happiness and fruitfulness that comes from responding to Him alone. Not because we have predetermined that this is what will bring us success. In my experience, it can be dangerous to watch someone figure it out on their own and gain confidence in their own efforts and resources. Discipleship is anything that grows your dependence on the Lord alone. As Isaiah says in 28: 28, grain must be ground to make bread so is the pattern used to grow us in serving Him.

Our faith in Christ is an act of FAITH. Our hope is in knowing the Father and His Son and not what that will bring us on earth. As a



July 4th on the Square – cousins Camille and Grace, Mary Emmalyn, Sean, Rose, James, and Liam.

Christian, this is one of the common attributes that we all share, trusting God is the path and the answer! As Walt Henrichsen says, "So important is walking by faith to our Lord that you will find Him often placing you in a position where you are forced to believe. You will find such times uncomfortable, but these are the moments when you learn to trust God."



## Chairman's Update by Scott McLain

**I hope you enjoy** this ministry update. Pat and the Board of Directors both desire to keep you abreast of the ongoing ministry activities.

But the Board's main function has been to advise Pat and to ensure he has the support needed to continue this "ministry of availability." As Jay Watts detailed in his article, Pat is developing his "toolbox" over the next year through the Colson Fellows Program.

For 13 years Pat has consistently conveyed to hundreds of men (and women) our need for dependency on Jesus. The reality Christians face today is that an increasing number of people in our lives do not view the world through the lens of the Bible. Pat's goal for this nine month training program is to better equip his ability to convey Biblical truths.

As ever, this ministry continues to evolve. One consistency has been the need for ministry supporters like you. Thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and ongoing financial support.

Scott McLain  
Chairman of the Board, MAC Ministries

## 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

PMB #104  
1000 Whitlock Avenue, Suite 320  
Marietta, GA 30064

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

**Many years ago**, Pat introduced me to a video that explains the difference between an Event and the Process. The main idea of the video clip is that an Event can be a catalyst for growth or change, but the Process is what helps you grow and sustains the change. The Event is exciting and exhilarating! The Process is mundane and ordinary. The Event is set for a fixed amount of time. The Process can seem like there is no end in sight.

I'm an Event kind of girl married to a Process man – and let me tell you, our world is a better place because God put the two of us together.

I am all about the show, the party, the trip, the meeting, the game – whatever it is

that gives me something to look forward to. I am energized in the preparation for the Event. I can make a list, organize supplies, delegate tasks – as long as I feel like there is a big purpose. In the day-to-day activities like laundry, meal planning, cleaning off the dining room table, I lack enthusiasm.

Pat, on the other hand, shows such discipline and determination in getting things done. Whether it's pulling weeds in the backyard or preparing himself for a bible study, he can focus and persevere in ways that I hardly understand. He makes lists and plans that give order to his day. He finds purpose in the Process. I admire him so much for these qualities.

Lest you think it is a well-oiled machine

here at the MacPherson house where Pat and I have learned to work with each other in perfect harmony, let me set the record straight. Let's just say, we have our moments.

There are times when I feel like I am letting him down because I get distracted with things I want to do rather than focusing

on things that I need to do. There are times when I frustrate Pat with a surprising idea that was not captured on his list. It is in these times that we work together to acknowledge that we are different and commit ourselves to living together in peace. Just like the Event and the Process.

I know that our marriage is not unique in this regard. In fact, I could point to several other relationships that I have where I need to seek balance in differences. What gives me confidence in my relationship with Pat is that I know it is based on God's plan for our marriage. I do not think that I am right and Pat is wrong, or vice versa. I truly believe that God designed us to be who we are as individuals and designs our marriage to complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. Because we both depend on God and submit to His authority over our lives, our marriage, our children and our world, we can focus on each other knowing that our foundation is secure. Isn't that all together exciting and ordinary, mundane and exhilarating!

*Though one may be overpowered,  
two can defend themselves.  
A cord of three strands is not  
quickly broken.*



MHS Lacrosse "Senior Night" – James, Pat, Liam, and Bridget