

MCA Connection

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Is Discipleship the same as Disciple Making? by Joe Showalter

I frequently hear people use the terms ‘discipleship’ and ‘disciple making,’ and sometimes I wonder what they really mean.

The term that I hear most frequently is discipleship, and sometimes I think people actually mean disciple making when they say discipleship. Other times, I think they’re using the term discipleship as something totally distinct from disciple making. One of the three core visions of CMC is discipleship, and this summer at our Annual Conference in Delaware we’re going to be focusing on that

theme. I’d like to pose some questions to be thinking about before then. And in case you have to miss all the various discussions and input at Conference, I’ll plan to write some further reflections later this summer so you’ll at least know how I answer the questions I’m asking here.

We of course want to go to scripture for our definitions of these two terms. If you’ve read much of the story of Jesus, you can probably think of some things he said that help us define the two words. Things like:

“Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people.”

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters —yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.”

“...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...”

“Here are my mother and my brothers” (pointing to his disciples).

“...those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.”

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The Vision of MCA is to become a vibrant community of transformed people committed to sharing the life giving power of Jesus with the World.

Rabbits, Sickness and Blessings

by Jeremy Miller



Recently I was sitting in the hospital visiting Locker Dan, his neck in a brace protecting two broken vertebra and fresh off a surgery that attached a brand new metal plate to his badly broken ribs.

His injuries were the result of an accident caused by someone else. He downed a cup of juice with a few pills and, as only Dan can, proceeded to tell me a story about his great grandmother. She was a hearty Swartzentruber Amish lady who had her garden ravaged by some rabbits. And so she made lemonade out of her lemons and, at 80, trapped those pesky rabbits. She then fired up her wood burning stove and canned all the rabbits she was unable to eat.

How much would we have today if we only had what we thanked God for yesterday?

We both chuckled and after a moment of silence Dan looked at me, his neck immobile but his eyes determined, and he says, “Jeremy, someone asked me how much we would have today if we only had what we thanked God for yesterday?”

The question was new to me and I wasn’t sure how much I would have if I only had what I thanked God for yesterday. The little frustrations in life can slowly eat away at our gratefulness. The disruptions we encounter too often have us responding in anger instead of patience and restfulness in God’s plan. But worse still, our selfish impulses frequently eliminate our gratitude. We want what others have. We wish for things we don’t have. We set goals to acquire and own and experience things we have not yet acquired, owned, or experienced.

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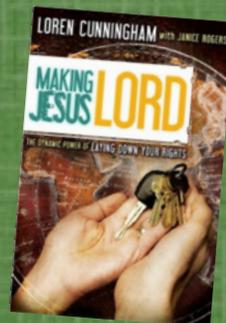
PASTOR’S PICKS....

Looking for something to read? Check out Jeremy and Jeff’s top pick.

The Secret of Contentment
by William Barclay



Making Jesus LORD
by Loren Cunningham



Copies of both books will be available for checkout in the MCA Library

If you would like to publish an article in the MCA Connection please let us know.
newsletter@mcachurch.org

Dave Mullet was the first to correctly respond to the April Newsletter trivia question.
The correct answer was
1996

Take It By Force

by Jeff Polen

In Matthew 11, John the Baptist is in prison at the end of his ministry on earth. He will soon be killed, and as he is awaiting a martyr's death, he sends his disciples to Jesus to find out if it was worth it. His life and ministry adamantly pointed the religious elite and wayward sinners towards Jesus, and now he is wondering whether or not it was worth it.

Jesus assures him that it was, and proves by his deeds that he is, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah.

As John's disciples leave with this message in tow, Jesus takes a moment to talk about the great man named John the Baptist. He was not a coward or a softy. John was a great prophet, and he faithfully and forcefully pointed the way to Jesus, even in the midst of persecution and threat of death.

Then Jesus says something peculiar:

From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.
(Matthew 11:12 ESV)

Two weeks ago I went on a family vacation. It was fun. We relaxed, played in the ocean, and genuinely enjoyed ourselves. We even watched a couple of Cav's games. It was nice.

Last week I traveled to Chicago, IL and was actively involved with training students to share their faith and pray for the city to be turned upside-down by the good news of Jesus Christ. As a result, we had nearly 700 Gospel Conversations and saw

more than 20 people put their faith in Jesus Christ! It was awesome!

During the time that you spend reading this article, a Christian brother or sister somewhere in the world has been killed for his or her faith in Jesus Christ. More than 160,000 Christians will be killed this year because of their faith.

The kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force...

The reality is that we are not going to see the kingdom of heaven here on earth by sitting around and doing nothing - whether we are sitting on a beach or elsewhere. Sure, we may see the Secular Humanist version of heaven (a happy place where I can rest and have fun with my family), but not the Biblical version (where the slain Lamb of God is absolutely central and we declare Him alone to be infinitely worthy of all praise, honor, and glory).

No, we will not see the kingdom of heaven here on earth by sitting around and doing nothing.

We are called to be active participants in bringing the kingdom of heaven to earth. We are called to pray, we are called to make disciples, and we are called to actively share our faith and invite others into the kingdom of God through the free gift of God's grace. In fact, Jesus started making disciples with a call to evangelism ("Follow me and I will make you a fisher of men") and he ended his earthly disciple making with a call to evangelism ("Go into all the world and preach the Gospel"). As my friend Doug Holliday has said, "Any discipleship that doesn't

begin with evangelism and end with evangelism is not Biblical discipleship."

The kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force...

I believe that Jesus is calling us, like John the Baptist, to take the kingdom of heaven back... from Satan... by force.

It is time for us to get serious about our faith. No, of course we don't fight against flesh and blood, but when is the last time that you seriously waged war against the spiritual forces of darkness? When is the last time that you forcefully and passionately called out to God in prayer on behalf of the lost? When is the last time that you risked your life for the sake of the kingdom, boldly standing for Christ even if it meant death?

Sure, there is a time for sitting at the beach. Rest is good. But most of our lives, as followers of Christ, should be marked by forcefully advancing the kingdom of heaven. Let's do this! Let's not be like the generation that Jesus described a few verses later...

"But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn."

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds."

(Matthew 11:16-19 ESV)

Discipleship vs Disciple making continued...

Here are some questions about these two terms that I think are worth thinking about:

How did Jesus distinguish between discipleship and disciple making?

When does discipleship start in a person's life?

When does disciple making start in a person's life?

What activities are involved in my discipleship? My disciple making?

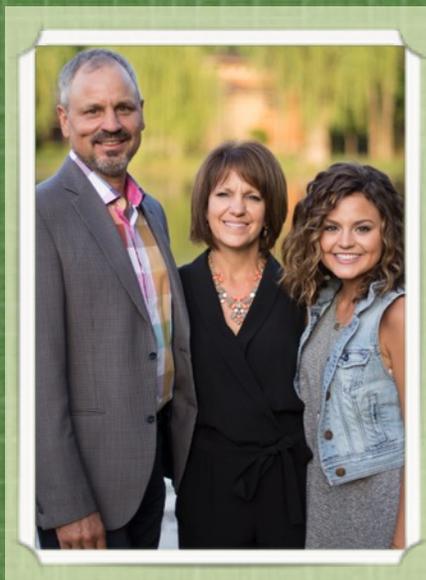
How do I know if I'm being faithful in discipleship? In disciple making?

Why does it matter?

Jesus sometimes framed these as life and death issues, so it only makes sense for us to think deeply about them. If these two terms are not synonymous, we ought to understand the distinctions between them. I hope we can all learn new things as we explore them together this summer.

Joe Showalter is the President of Rosedale Mennonite Missions

Trivia Question:
Name the traditional German stew that was made with Rabbit as the main ingredient. Send your answer to newsletter@mcachurch.org



Joe, Lori and Taryne

Joe and Lori Wenger live with their daughter Taryne west of Wooster, where they have lived for the past 19 years. Taryne just graduated from Central Christian High School in May. Joe and Lori also have 3 other daughters, who are married, and one granddaughter. Two daughters live out of the area.

Joe grew up in northern Wayne County near Northwestern High School. Lori grew up in western Oklahoma where her family travelled with the wheat harvest. Joe worked on the harvest crew for several years before asking Lori out for a date. The rest is history and they have been married for the past 28 years. They have been attending MCA for the past 5 years. Joe works at Venture in Orrville and has a variety of other things that keep him busy. Prior to that Joe and Lori worked the wheat harvest. They would pack up the girls every May and head out west to harvest the wheat and other crops. The harvest would go from Texas to Montana and North Dakota. Then they would travel back down through Colorado for the fall harvest. Joe took over the harvest from his father-in-law in 2001. Lori ran the chuck wagon and would cook for the crew until it was time to put the girls back in school. They made many friends over the years, but became great friends with a couple that they later learned was Jeremy's Uncle and Aunt from Kansas. They also worked the harvest circuit.

Lori says the family's favorite recipe is Bierocks. A Bierock is a yeast dough stuffed with ground beef, cabbage and onions. In the area of Oklahoma, where Lori grew up, they put a peppered milk gravy over it. It is the most requested meal from their girls.

Rabbits, Sickness and Blessings continued...

Our lives are driven by a thirst to obtain things and experiences. And this often leaves us ungrateful and unhappy. "How much would I have?" I wondered.

Breaking into my thoughts, Dan continued, "I'm not sure how much I'd have.....but I've been singing that little song today, 'Count Your Blessings.'" I felt a wave of emotion. You see, moments before our conversation, he had just learned his wife Ruth, in a neighboring hospital

The Wenger Family Profile

room, had suffered a stroke as a result of the accident. He grieved her pain and hurt....even as he counted his blessings. I had the clear sense that God was near and speaking to me. If Dan can count his blessings and worship his Father on this day, surely I can too.

This story was shared with permission from Dan Hershberger. Thanks Dan!