

KANSAS COMMUNITIES MINISTRY UPDATE

"My objective is to know Christ in my own life in ever-increasing depth and to make disciples and develop laborers at all times, under any conditions, in every place I go."

Proverbs 17:8

"I (Wisdom) will love those who love me and those who seek me diligently will find me." (NET Bible –used by permission)

Evangelism

What are you doing to help fulfill the Great Commission? Our Lord commanded us to make disciples and the start of making disciples must be to share the Good News with those who have not heard it.

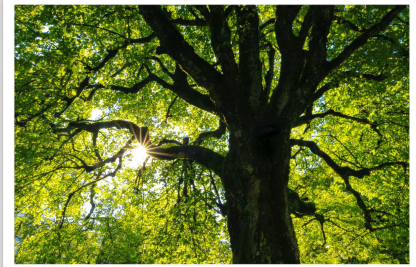
I have a friend who shared with me his approach to evangelism. If he meets someone and starts a conversation with him, he will eventually ask if the other person is a Christian. If the person says "yes," he takes them at their word.

He then will ask them if they'd like to learn how to share their faith with others. If they say "yes," he proceeds to explain the gospel based on John 3:16 (or Romans 6:23 – One Verse Evangelism) or other passages. He'll ask them if that makes sense to them. Often my friend will find out that they really didn't understand the gospel themselves until this explanation. So rather than being confrontational, he simply takes people where they are and, in the process of "teaching them how to witness," they themselves hear the Gospel!

Finding Your Zacchaeus

by Ron Bennett

A key discipleship question is, "Whom should I invest in?" For those who would like to disciple others, coming alongside to help them take the next step in their spiritual journey, the initial question is not *what*, but *with whom*?



When my discretionary time is limited, I need discernment to invest wisely. I want to avoid investing in those who are not interested in what I have to offer or only have a casual interest that will be temporary at best. I have started mentoring relationships with some, only to discover they were not serious. Consequently, they were unmotivated, undependable, and unfaithful. Those mentorships eventually fell apart.

A few failures motivated me to ask the question, "Are there some initial indicators that can predict a better outcome?" That's when the story of Zacchaeus came in handy.

Jesus entered the city of Jericho, where crowds of people were following Him. At this point in Christ's ministry, He often drew a crowd to listen to His teaching or experience a miracle of healing. Although Jesus taught the multitudes, He didn't trust them. He knew their interest was self-serving and fickle. But He used the crowds as a fishing pool to find individuals for more focused attention.

Zacchaeus was one of those who stood out. Zach was not content to hang out with the crowd; he wanted a better view. So he made the effort to find a better observation platform: a tree. Jesus recognized his effort and singled him out for a home visit. The result was a transformed life. (continued on page 3)



Goads and Nails

Excerpt from *Goads and Nails*
Vol. 1, pp 109-111

"Gain Instead of Loss"

"He is no fool who gives up that which he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." - Jim Elliott

Jim Elliott, along with other missionaries, was convinced that the Lord was leading them to the Huaorani tribe, a group known as those who killed outsiders. Jim and the others subsequently gave up that which they could not keep (their earthly lives) to gain that which they could not lose. John 12:23-26 states, "Jesus replied, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds....'"

The Lord calls some to lay down their lives as did Jim Elliott... He calls the rest of us to lay down our lives daily that we might keep what is truly life for all eternity...

– Richard Spann

How reliable is that Bible in your hand?

by David Dennis

I've been doing some research and teaching a Sunday School class on "How to Study the Bible" and in the process have learned a lot about issues surrounding the reliability of Scripture. We plan to do a podcast series on this, but here are some things I have learned.



Through the science and art of "textual criticism" (not to be confused with "higher criticism" which has served to destroy the faith of many), scholars have been able to determine with an incredible degree of accuracy what the original text of the Old and New Testaments actually said. While we do not have any of the original documents ("autographs") we do have several complete New Testaments dating back to at least the 4th century AD, with several fragments dating older than that. Textual criticism is the process of looking at multiple manuscripts and through painstaking methods determine what the original documents said.

With regard to ancient documents, we have only 5 of Aristotle's manuscripts with the oldest dating to some 1400 years *after* the original. We have 8 manuscripts of the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus, with the earliest dating to 1300 years after the originals. We have some 600 manuscripts of Homer's Iliad, but the earliest of these also date to 1000 years after the original was written.

But God sovereignly and providentially allowed us to have nearly 6000 Greek (plus 20,000 Latin and other languages) manuscripts of the New Testament some dating to within 100 years of the original. Many of them date to the 3rd and 4th century. This is amazing and astonishing, considering the efforts to eradicate Christianity over the centuries as well as the sheer length of time which has elapsed.

We are to be like the Bereans who "searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so." (Acts 17:11). According to Rick Cornish, "By examining so many manuscripts that close to the autographs, scholars can reconstruct the original New Testament with amazing precision. They can determine the exact wording to 99.5% accuracy, less than one word per page variation. The remaining minor differences are mostly spelling discrepancies and no doctrine is affected. The New Testament we read today is reliable and therefore trustworthy." (from 5 Minute Apologist, p. 62, Pub. NavPress)

Finding Your Zacchaeus by Ron Bennett (continued from page 1)

Here are some questions to ask when looking for a person in whom to invest.

- ◆ Does God seem to be working in her life?
- ◆ Does he ask more questions than the average person in the Bible study?
- ◆ Does she express a hunger to know the Scripture?
- ◆ Does he ask questions about core life issues?
- ◆ Does she show dissatisfaction with her current spiritual experience?

I am looking for a Zacchaeus in a tree.

Once I find someone who is a possibility, I ask if I can “come to their house for dinner”—not actually, but figuratively. I ask if we can visit sometime to learn more about their spiritual journey.

After we have shared our personal stories, I ask another series of questions.

1. Where are you in your relationship with Christ? On a scale of 1 to 10, where are you right now?
2. Where would you like to be on that 1-to-10 scale? What would that look like?
3. Would you like help from someone?
4. Would you like *my* help?

Sometimes people are stuck in a life issue and want help. It could be a marriage issue, a broken relationship, work-related friction, or a strained relationship with their kids. If this is the case, I explain that we can explore what the Bible has to say about that issue, but along with it, I want to help them develop their walk with Christ. If we only deal with the current symptom, relief will just be temporary. Sometimes people need the emergency room, but long term, they need a health club to make the ER visits less frequent.

Do you know a Zacchaeus? Ask God if He is leading you to invest in that person.



Ron Bennett joined the staff of The Navigators in 1970. He has lead and supervised collegiate ministries in the Midwest as well as serving on the national leadership team for the Navigators Church Discipleship Ministry. As a senior Nav staff, he continues to coach disciplemakers and discipling leaders. Ron writes a bi-weekly blog called “The Adventure of Discipleship: Knowing Christ on the resurrection side of the cross. (www.rbennett.net)

He authored the book *Intentional Disciplemaking* by Tyndale/NavPress and co-authored the books *Design for Discovery*, and *The Adventure of Discipling Others*. He and his wife Mary have authored a Bible study series for new believers called *Beginning the Walk* also published by Tyndale/NavPress. They and a Navigator staff team have developed the discipleship series called *HighQuest*. (www.highquest.info) His latest book “Rethinking Discipleship - The Quest” is discussed on page 4 of this newsletter.

Spotlight on Online Resources

◆*Kansas Navigators Media:*

Jerry Bridges was our speaker in 2013. His talks were entitled “Living by the Gospel Every Day” and included “Why we need the gospel every day,” “The motivating power of the Gospel” and “Depending on the Holy Spirit.” Take a listen to these messages at <https://kansasnavs.org/media/2013-summer-conference> (You can also download these to listen to on other devices.)

◆*Kansas Navigators blogs:*

What is the “Walk of Faith”? Dr. Richard Spann shares his insight into this topic and reminds us that it includes a walk by faith (Col. 2:6-7), a walk toward righteousness and away from sin and a walk in agreement with Jesus. Read the blog here: <https://kansasnavs.org/the-walk-of-faith>

◆*Podcast “Making Disciples Naturally”*

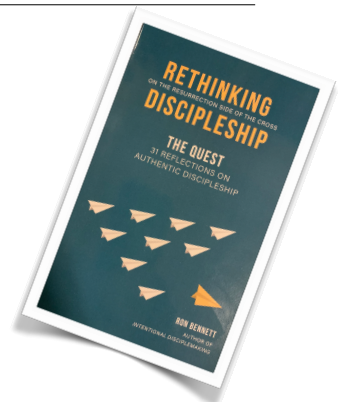
Be sure to catch the great panel discussion with Elmo Joseph, Art Sauder, Chris Majors, Ryan Henderson, John Anderson and David Dennis as they discuss some practical aspects of having a personal devotional time (“the quiet time”). The podcast can be found on Apple Podcasts, Overdrive, Spotify and other platforms as well as on our website <https://kansasnavs.org/podcasts>



Featured resource: Rethinking Discipleship - The Quest by Ron Bennett

by David Dennis

This new publication is an outgrowth of Ron’s thoughtful blogs and is packed full of practical insights about making disciples. From the back cover: “Do we really know how to make authentic disciples? What should discipleship look like today? Is there common ground between those first New Testament disciples and disciples in the 21st Century? How did the gospel change the face of discipleship?”



Nearly each one of these 31 chapters starts with a story and each one teaches an important truth about the issue of discipleship. For example, Ron talks about speed bumps (these slow us down), potholes (these may damage us) and detours (these take our lives in different directions). God may put each of these “road hazards” in our path, often to teach us lessons and to help us know Him better and to help us grow. At the end of each chapter are helpful discussion questions.

I highly recommend this book. You can order it on Amazon (Kindle version is only \$5.19) or you can get a discount on orders of 5 or more at www.highquest.biz.