

CCMC Weekly 59
January 23, 2017

Dear Christ Community,

Today I went to a workshop at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary's Pastors' Week. It was led by Malinda Berry and called Giraffe Meets Jackal: An Introduction to Nonviolent Communication. In describing nonviolent communication, she said it's about how we orient ourselves in the world and with other people. She said we could live in an affluent neighborhood with low crime, plenty of food and stability, but say our neighbor's dog always comes and poops on our lawn, and we think about poisoning the dog--we have oriented ourselves toward violence. Or we could live in a place like Syria, with bombs dropping and soldiers invading, but we could collect seeds to plant a garden to eat with our neighbors. That's a peace orientation. It's about how you choose to be in the world. Now it's tricky, because violence is contagious, so once you have been exposed, containing it healing from it is exponentially harder. But faith enables many people to rise above their circumstances and be non-violent in the midst of troubles. It is something that takes practice. I invite you this week to rise above your circumstances, rise above yourself, and think about proactive peacebuilding in your immediate life.

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LAST SUNDAY

We read about the beginning of Christ's ministry in the gospel according to Matthew, where he picks up the mantle of John the Baptist, who had been arrested, and he went out of his comfort zone and began to preach of repentance. (You can read it here: <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.biblegateway.com/passage/%3fsearch=Matthew+4%253A12-23&version=NIV&interface=amp>). We talked about the transition of presidential power this week, the marches, and how Jesus begins his ministry of healing, enlightening, and resisting under a particular empire. There are many things in the world we could be discouraged about, but there are also many things to be hopeful and energized about. We have seen them this week, and I wondered if part of the protesting that is happening has a spirit of repentance about it, and perhaps it should.

We reflected on the fishermen, how Jesus must have seen something in them that was transferable to discipleship skills, and how we are called to be fisher people. Whatever work we are doing, God may call us and have us transfer our skills to discipleship. In noticing the way the disciples left what they were doing to go with Jesus, I asked people to think of what they may need to leave behind to follow Jesus.

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NEXT SUNDAY

1 Corinthians 1:18-31

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

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STUDY QUESTIONS

- Why does he say the message of the cross is foolishness? Who is it foolish to?
- What things do God reverse/invert?
- How do we know God?
- Is there foolishness or weakness in God?
- Who does God call? Who does God choose?

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Remember I am in Elkhart this week, but will be available through phone/email etc. We were also going to try to meet up on Friday evening to discuss starting our conversation club.

Love,
Amy