



Consider  
yourself  
sent!  
— p. 2



Lessons from  
a river cruise  
— p. 3

“We train disciplemakers...”

# Update from Kansas Communities Ministry

*Making Disciples  
Naturally* Podcast  
&  
Richard Spann's  
blogs are found at  
[KansasNavs.org](http://KansasNavs.org)

Don't “do” evangelism—  
live as a “sent” one!  
— page 2

Rejoice in the Lord!  
Goads and Nails excerpt  
— page 2

People are more  
important than places  
*See the article  
on pages 3 - 4*

*Update on Kansas State Fair:  
After 15 years of successful  
outreach, we have decided to  
focus more on individual  
discipleship opportunities.  
We will not have a Kansas  
Navigators presence this year  
at the Fair. Thanks to all who  
have helped over the years!*



## Spring Men's Retreat a Blessing to Many

Discipleship principles from the Sermon on the Mount was the theme of this year's men's retreat, March 28-29 at Camp David in Hesston, Kansas.

Around 50 men attended this year's event and feedback we have received indicated that many people were blessed and encouraged to walk closer to the Lord as a result of this retreat. Our speaker, Mr. David Wooddell, is the former Kansas City Ministry Director for the Navigators who

now serves as Kansas City Workplace Director. Prior to joining the Navigators, David spent 40 years in the corporate world working in the financial services industry with General Electric, Alliance Data, and Montgomery Ward. Dave brought two friends with him who shared their testimonies, which were powerful messages as well.

This year we initiated a “focused prayer time” first thing Saturday morning. This included readings from scripture and then group and individual prayer following the ACTS format and emphasizing our outreach and those with whom we are working in a discipling relationship. We ended each section by singing a hymn. This was felt to be a great addition to the retreat by many.

Audio and video recordings of the retreat will be available on our website ([KansasNavs.org/media](http://KansasNavs.org/media)) in the next several weeks. If you are on our email list, you'll receive a notification of this availability. Please sign up [here](#) for our email list if you are not currently on it. We urge you to re-listen to the sessions and use them as you reach out to others.

(Scripture quoted by permission. All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the NET Bible. “The Scriptures quoted are from the NET Bible® <http://netbible.com> copyright ©1996, 2019 used with permission from Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. All rights reserved”)

“And God will exalt you in due time, if you humble yourselves under his mighty hand by casting all your cares on him because he cares for you”

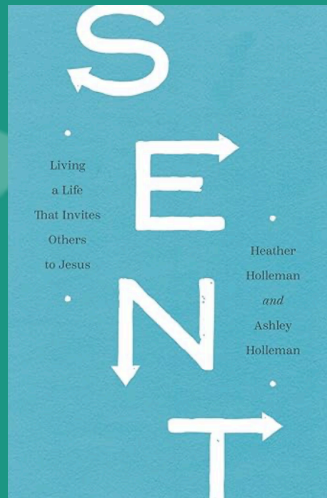
— 1 Peter 5:6-7 (NET Bible)

## *Sent: Living a life that invites others to Jesus*

by Heather Holleman  
and Ashley Holleman,  
Pub. 2020, Moody  
Publishers

What is evangelism? How do we share our faith in the 21st century? Heather Holleman and her husband Ashley come at evangelism from different perspectives as she is an extrovert and he is a self-described introvert.

In this very-readable book, they build their case on the principle that God is already at work, drawing men and women to Himself (John 6:44) and that we must look at ourselves, in our very identity in Christ, as “sent” ones. Thus evangelism is motivated more by *who we are*, rather than *what we do*. Evangelism should be thought of as



communion with God, rather than an activity that we do.

They bring out the point in this book that Jesus is always working (John 5:17: “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working”). Thus it is not we who are ultimately responsible for the outcome. God is.

Secondly, they remind us that God uses people to lead others to Jesus. We are privileged to be involved in this process of introducing Jesus to people. Thirdly, God continually invites us into the work of evangelism. In other words, bringing the saving message to people who do not know Him is our calling. This is my purpose here on earth.

Romans 10:14-15 tell us how the Gospel spreads, “How are they to call on one they have not believed in? And how are they to believe in one they have not heard of? And how are they to hear without someone preaching to them? And how are they to preach unless they are **sent**? ...” (NET Bible)

This book is a welcome addition to the literature that encourages us to freely and confidently share our faith in natural ways.

## Goads and Nails (excerpt)

By Richard Spann

*“Rejoice in the Lord!”*

(Excerpt from Vol. 3 pages 109-112)

*“Though the fig tree does not bud, and there are no grapes on the vines ... yet I will rejoice in the Lord.” (see Habakkuk 3:17-19)*

In the Old Testament, God’s hand of blessing and approval was made manifest through His abundant provision of visible resources. These are characterized by Habakkuk as figs, grapes, olives, grain, sheep and cattle. Whenever the Israelites departed from the Lord, these would be withheld for a time. Upon their return to the Lord, these provisions would again be granted. In our day, the Lord not only provides His grace to us in the provisions as mentioned by Habakkuk, but He also showers His grace upon the work done in His Name. This is manifested by what we would term as visible results of the ministry to which He has called us. These include the people who come to know the Lord, the changes that take place in the lives of His followers, and the enlargement of the scope of the ministry He has given ... Have you contemplated with dismay how few there are who have a hunger to know God’s word and who are willing to pray faithfully?

There was a time in my life about thirty years ago when I was greatly discouraged. Few people were coming to the Lord. Those who had made a profession were manifesting little change in their lives. Even those who had at one time been faithful to share the Gospel with others were now content to live like the rest of the world... The more I thought about this, the more discouraged I became. It was at this time reading through Habakkuk that I came to the last three verses in his short book. As I looked carefully at what the prophet was saying, I began to see that the focus of my life was misdirected. My eyes were inclined to look at the results of the ministry, not at the Lord Himself. I was contemplating the visible, not the invisible; I was consumed by the temporal, instead of the eternal. My desire had been to enjoy the gifts instead of the Giver... He knew, infinitely better than I did, that my heart was designed to be fully satisfied only in Him. In His Grace and Mercy, He had withheld for a time what came from His Hand, that I might walk hand in hand with Him.

In Christ, Richard Spann

## What truly makes a trip unforgettable? by David Dennis

When you return from a trip, what lingers in your memory the most? The sights? The food? The history? For Karla and me, it was all this, but also something much deeper.

We recently had the incredible privilege of taking a Viking River Cruise with three other couples—dear friends we've walked alongside for many years. Among them were Sam and Barbara Claassen, longtime partners in the Kansas Communities Ministry with the Navigators. Our journey began with three days in the charming city of Prague, Czechia, before we boarded a motorcoach that took us to Passau, Germany. There, we stepped aboard our Viking "longboat"—our floating home for the next seven days.

Our route traced the Danube River from Passau, Germany to Linz and Vienna in Austria, on to Bratislava, Slovakia, and finally to the majestic city of Budapest, Hungary. Each stop brought new sights, new stories, and a fresh sense of wonder. We were immersed in the region's layered history, guided by passionate locals who brought centuries of culture to life.



Every evening, I blogged about our adventures—not just the landmarks and facts, but also moments where I sensed God's presence. Whether in the breathtaking landscapes, the stillness of the river, the grandeur of cathedrals, or the laughter of old friends, I was reminded again and again of God's handiwork and love.

Over the next several newsletters, I'll be sharing some spiritual takeaways from our trip. The first lesson is this:

*What stood out most was not the scenery—but the people. **Likewise, when it comes to discipleship, people matter more than programs.***

As we glided along the peaceful Danube, we often found ourselves in the ship's lounge, watching quaint villages and rolling hills pass by through panoramic windows. Nature's beauty was on full display—vivid greens, flowering trees, and the rhythmic pulse of the river. Even though modern engineering had shaped and refined it—through dredging, straightening, and locks—the river was still God's canvas. (continued)

“The need of the hour is an army of soldiers dedicated to Jesus Christ, who believe not only that He is God, but that He can fulfill every promise He has ever made.”

~ Dawson Trotman, Founder of The Navigators ®. Quote found [here](#).



## The importance of people (continued)

We also stepped inside towering cathedrals, many dating back to the 1400s. The soaring gothic spires, intricate statues, and dazzling artwork stirred the soul and lifted our eyes heavenward. I especially loved the massive organ pipes and ornate consoles—some churches even had multiple organs!

Yet, for all that beauty, what truly made the journey unforgettable were the people —our friends, our fellow travelers, and the new connections made along the way.

As Dr. Spann so wisely puts it: God didn't just send us words—He sent people. We are the message. (See Dr. Spann's [blog here.](#))



John 1:6 tells us, “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.” (KJV)

God didn't send a sermon, a cathedral or a program —He sent a person. And that's still His primary method. Yes, programs, buildings, and classes are useful, even powerful. But God's preferred strategy is—and always has been—people.

Jesus modeled this. In Robert Coleman's classic *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, he writes: “It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow him... His concern was not with programs to reach the

multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow.”

Before the sermons, before the crowds, Jesus called individuals. And that's how He continues to reach the world—through you and me.

Throughout the cruise, we tried to live out that calling—to be ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), to see ourselves as sent ones, co-laborers with God. Conversations over meals, chance encounters on deck, meaningful talks with friends—we were reminded that ministry happens in relationships.

Yes, the river was stunning. Yes, the cathedrals pointed us toward heaven. But the most profound beauty was found in the lives of the people we shared this journey with.

And here's the invitation: God is sending you, too. Into your neighborhood, your church, your workplace. You are His message. Imagine John 1:6 personalized: “There was a man/woman/boy/girl sent from God—whose name is... (insert your name here).”

“Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the One who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference.” ~ Max Lucado, pastor and author. Quote found [here.](#)