

## From Our Conference Minister



### Living into Discipleship! (Matthew 10:24-39)

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? Living into the kind of discipleship Jesus has in mind for us comes at a high cost and may require us to rearrange our priorities and traditional family values.

In Matthew 10:34-37, Jesus told his followers:

*"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me..."*

Jesus seems to go too far to get his point across, as these words appear harsh and do not uphold cherished family values. However, there are times when God needs to go to extremes to get our attention, especially when prying us loose from patterns of life that are no longer helpful and understandings of God that have not evolved.

Jesus' words here were spoken to his followers in newly forming Christian communities who were experiencing persecution and betrayal from family members. Jesus wanted to help them acknowledge their new reality in ways that redefined family values with God's priorities for their newly formed family and life of discipleship.

We see this emphasis again later in Matthew 12:48-50, where Jesus used similarly extreme words in response to being told his mother and brothers wanted to speak to him. Jesus asked:

*"Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother!"*

Faithful discipleship in our UCC denomination occasionally provokes disapproval from family and non-family members. When we march to protest unfair wages and poverty, or advocate for refugees, or stand in solidarity with the [Dakota Association](#) or in solidarity with gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, we rarely experience violence as a result, but some of us know the criticism that comes from others who may disagree with our advocacy.

The criticism and fears we face as disciples should not discourage or limit us. God's love is much greater than fear. Jesus tenderly reminds us that we are all greatly loved, cared for and valued by God:

*"... even the hairs of your head are all counted." (Matt 10:30).*

This is indeed good news! Amen.

*In Christ,*

*Monica*

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