

Making Disciples: Alastair Wood

Unfortunately the title does little to encourage us to contemplate the vibrant subject Living Faith moves us into this week. The very phrase itself drips with imagery, flavours and tastes of uncompromising evangelism.

Rather than being 'Fishers of men' encouraging people to examine the lifestyle and person of Jesus by presenting him in attractive incomplete and tantalising glimpses, we are reminded more of the huge trawler or factory ship, catching indiscriminate loads and subjecting them to Processing.

As an evangelical I am repulsed by my memories of religious entrapment, door to door salesmanship, and the superior smugness that was encountered with blinkered eyes.

But society above all has moved from the scientific reason based culture of rationalism, technique and absolutes, to a society that seeks to experience spirituality, through story, authenticity and reality. And yet the desire to see others investigate this Jesus, and to walk with them through to points of decision, relationship, and equipping, remains as deep a desire as it did for me as a young teenager.

I suggest we change the title from Making Disciples to something altogether different, that in fact we are 'inviting friends on a spiritual journey' We are 'walking with' we are making Jesus known through the ordinary everyday process of living, we are in fact 'Going out to preach the Gospel' but only using words when we have to. Allowing glimpses of Jesus in us, by being just the ordinary people we are, going about our ordinary things: This is when God can then use us for His extra ordinary work

How did Jesus call his Disciples?

Both Matthew (4:18-22) and Mark (1:16-20) have Jesus calling out to Simon (Peter) and Andrew. The response to the call was immediate, and then too with both James and John.

- What was that call?
- Why was the response immediate?
- What made the invitation so transforming?
- What is our response?

The account in Luke (5:1-11) is different, much more detail, and here we encounter Jesus calling Simon Peter, demonstrating his intention with the order to fish on the other side of the boat, and catch Simon Peters reaction, he recognised something special in Jesus, and something fundamental about himself.

In John's gospel a different account of the disciples calling is given, however the 'Come and See' invitation remains just as intriguing, and carried with it the same transformation of lifestyle outlook and behaviour.

Examine then the whole style of Jesus role as Rabbi, Teacher. a Leader with his group of Disciples, experiential, practical, organic, Making Disciples? Or Inviting friends on a spiritual journey?

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The sending out of the 72: How best to enable learning by understanding learning styles. Sending them out, allowing them to have a go, and give and receive feedback afterwards,

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If we are to fulfil our calling and commissioning by Jesus as in Matthew (28:16-20), how can we do this and retain cultural and personal relevance and integrity? And yet respond to God's evangelistic call?

Come and See? Will we?