

Articles and Sermons :: MUST READ. Our Mission Demands the Most Effective Training Available - Rick Wood

MUST READ. Our Mission Demands the Most Effective Training Available - Rick Wood - posted by ArthurRosh, on: 201

Our Mission Demands the Most Effective Training Available - Rick Wood

Making disciples of Jesus from every tribe, tongue, people and nation is the most important job in the world. It not only transforms the lives of people here in this world but also for all eternity in the next. Few jobs are as difficult as this one—we have a powerful adversary who is working against our every effort. If this is true, should we not employ the most effective means available to prepare every believer in Jesus to accomplish this mission of making disciples who are able to disciple others? Does not a mission of such critical importance demand our very best efforts? Literally, the eternal destiny of billions of people hangs in the balance.

So how are we doing in preparing believers to make disciples in every tribe and tongue? Are we using the very best training methods—so effective that others are seeking to copy them? Are we giving this critical task our very best efforts?

Unfortunately, often the opposite is true. The church generally uses the least effective means available to make disciples and to train others to do so. And the sad fact is that in some cases we are actually doing less today than we were in previous generations. No other profession in the world uses the Church's methods to prepare its people for various jobs because they know that these methods do not work.

To train our people to make disciples we ask them to sit in a church and listen to lectures (sermons) week after week for years. Participation in Sunday school used to be expected for adults, but increasing numbers of churches have even done away with this modest avenue of training as well. Note taking is not required during these lectures; no tests are given; no outside reading or study is required; no opportunity for "student" discussion of the material presented in the lecture is provided. There is no one available to supervise or mentor the "student" toward mastery of the information and skill required to become an effective disciple-maker.

In the realm of academia this process would be called auditing a course. In such cases no academic credit is given because everyone in academia knows how ineffective this process is in enabling a student to gain competency in a particular subject. They know that only about 10% of what is given by lecture alone is remembered. In effect the majority of believers in Jesus are "auditing" the Christian faith. They have become passive participants in the most critical mission in the history of the world and most pastors and church leaders are content with continuing this means of "training." But it is not working to equip most believers for the essential work of making disciples who disciple others.

So after undergoing hundreds, if not thousands, of lectures in church we send out these "trained" disciple-makers to peoples, tribes and tongues all over the world with the goal of making disciples and planting churches without ever having proved that they can do these tasks within their own culture. The job of doing so cross-culturally is many times more difficult.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not saying that having worship services where the Word is preached is wrong or should be done away with. My life has been changed by some sermons. The problem arises when this is the primary means that is employed to equip all believers for the work of ministry. The worship service is not an effective means of training people in disciple making and should not be relied on as the primary means to accomplish this vital task. Many churches have small groups that could be effective venues for training in disciple making if they are focused on doing so. Real Life Ministries is one church that does this well. (See Jan-Feb 2011 MF)

Discipling someone must be a highly intentional, personal relationship between people where the disciple is trained in the process of making disciples by actually doing it, not just hearing about it in a sermon. It seems so basic but people learn by doing not by simply listening. I would never want to be operated on by a surgeon who simply listened to hundreds of lectures on how to do surgery. Neither should we send out disciple-makers with similar preparation.

Some will say that we train many people in Bible schools and seminaries with high academic standards. This is true but these institutions usually teach people biblical information to be mastered, not skills in discipleship and church planting that can be reproduced in the lives of others. When was the last time you heard of a Bible school or seminary in the West requiring students to demonstrate a mastery of disciple-making or church planting as a prerequisite for graduation? Also r

relatively few believers are able to receive this type of training. Our goal must be that every willing believer is trained as a disciple-maker.

Jesus Showed Us How

Jesus modeled for us the most effective methods for making disciples and the rest of the world has copied his methods while the Church has largely abandoned them. For three years Jesus spent most of his time mentoring or discipling 12 men, day in and day out. These disciples learned by watching and listening to the master and then going out on their own to practice what they had seen lived out before them. Then they came back for debriefing and correction. This was not just a sit and listen means of training. This was hands-on practice whereby skills and competency were mastered.

Throughout the centuries the world has often adopted this means of training and applied it to many occupations. There has been a long history of apprenticeship in many professions where those who have learned various skills are able to pass them on to others. See the article, "The Guild," starting on page 10 where the centuries-old model of apprenticeship is being applied to the training of today's missionaries.

We have a long way to go toward developing effective training for all believers to be disciple-makers but we must commit ourselves now to move in this direction. Approaches like the T4T Process (see page 18) and the Discovery Bible Study Method have been presented in recent issues of MF. They are an excellent place to start in developing the skills for the most important job in the world.

<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/from-the-editor1>

Our Mission Demands the Most Effective Training Available - Rick Wood - posted by ArthurRosh, on: 2015/3/16 11:09

What do others think about what this article is saying? Any thoughts? Feedback? Agree, disagree why or why not?

Re: MUST READ. Our Mission Demands the Most Effective Training Available - Rick Wood - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2015/3/16 11:09

I have reservations about methods like what is suggested here about trying to adopt a training method. My experiences with any such discipleship lacked the core element that made Christ's example effective, walking by the Holy Spirit.

There can be effective preparation but the core issue is the heart. You cannot overcome lukewarmness or apathy through methodology. The masses Rick Wood is suggesting could be mobilized can not because they do not have the Fire. The Disciples were those who already had a desire to know God and do His Will and Spirit direct Jesus to call them into discipleship.

There are many details absent about Christ's relationship to the Disciples and the preparations before He sent them and the seventy-two out to preach the Kingdom of God. However, we do know that they were empowered by the Spirit, having been given authority to do things like heal the sick and cast out demons and also the command to preach the Kingdom. These men were sent by God Himself.

The use of discipleship courses that rely on method rather than anointing suggests a more general "sending" wherein all are thrust into the position of evangelist. Most aren't evangelists and most gifts people claim to have are natural abilities rather than spiritual gifts.

I have heard that a major missions agency has taken the objective of training local converts to run house churches. This is their methodological goal. The people have been trained and there are hundreds trying to make it happen around the globe but the success rate is almost nil. The goal is commendable but the means and the purpose is false. They are instituting something abroad they do not practice at home.

In a similar vein, often missionaries have the humanitarian task of X or Y. These often correlate to ideals from their home culture. More energy gets spent on these developments and training than preaching the Christ alone. The children of these brethren often get so consumed by the lack of progress they see their parents making that they approach the problems from a secular perspective completely divorcing their witness from Christ.

As Willow Creek discovered after years of creating programs for its myriad of members, prayer and reading the Bible are in fact the most effective methods of spiritual growth. The parable of the sower is in the Word for good reason.

Re: - posted by ArthurRosh, on: 2015/3/16 13:24

I agree, there is no method or short-cut to walking with Jesus. Ministry is not forced or contrived or even burdensome, it is the fruit of our relationship with our Lord which is based on a life of communing with our Lord through daily Bible study and praying without ceasing. We need to walk by the Holy Spirit individually and together in order to accomplish His purposes.