

JANUARY 2008

Dear Ones,

“Go and make disciples, and I will be with you always...” ...we have, and He has! Ed Underwood, who dates all the way back to the 60's with us, is writing his second book for David C. Cook Publishing. He has called, asking that we reach back in our memory and write about the Jesus Movement and its effects upon the Church today.

As Ted and I talk and I write, we are gaining greater understanding about our strange ministry adventure: First, discipleship/ youth work; then the pastorate; then discipleship, then another pastorate, then back into discipleship, then another short pastorate and right back into.....DISCIPLESHIP. Given our history, it was predictable that, like a compass needle, we would return, again and again, to what is “north”. We were emotionally and spiritually abandoned children prior to our coming to Christ, then AFTER coming to Christ, we were like a kid pulling on his daddy's coattail and his mommy's apron strings, begging for attention. Out of our own deprivation, the Lord revealed to us both that discipleship must include the sacrifice of entering into the very souls of new believers.

Are you willing to do that, or are you going to hide in the holy huddle, gathering information that is never shared with a soul who is longing for God? Discipleship is a hidden ministry that does not make a list of statistics...but that is what Jesus modeled. He came away from the crowds who wanted to see him do his “tricks”, and hauled the disciples down to the lake to minister to their souls. Don't you know that those fishing trips, eating their catches, stretching out to sleep, then getting up to walk along “The Way” included conversations covering every aspect of the human soul's longing for a Dad who loved them for who they were, and not for what they could DO for Him? These men, all but one who would be replaced years later by Paul, would apply the principles of soul/discipleship wherever they introduced the Gospel.

...and now we are starting with seven new couples opening our hearts and the Word to the New Covenant in I Corinthians. We do not know how God will use all that they will learn about Him, but it certainly gets us excited about 2008!

—Jo for the two of us!