

Reflection on New Year's

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I hate New Year's Resolutions! In fact, a 2007 study by Richard Wiseman from the University of Bristol involving 3,000 people showed that **88%** of those who set New Year resolutions fail. So why bother? I've quit the yearly treadmill... literally!

However, there are some things that need to be addressed, even in the Church. There is a statement by our Saviour, Jesus Christ called The Great Commission. These are His final words to the Church before He ascended to Heaven. I would characterize these as VERY IMPORTANT! But... can you quote these words or even find them in the Bible? Here they are –

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

The core of this mandate is "to make disciples." In fact, of the four verbs (Go. Make Disciples. Baptizing. Teaching.) "make disciples" is the only verb in the imperative – a command!

Sadly, in the Anglican Tradition, the Great Commission has become The Great Omission. So, if we made a resolution to fulfill this mandate, what would it look like? Here's my stab at the issue – Pray to the Lord to lead you to three people. Ask them to pray if the Lord would confirm in them a resolve to engage in an experiment. Here's the plan: Meet with each person monthly for 60 to 90 minutes over coffee and discuss the following questions –

1. Where do you see God at work around you?
2. What are you learning about Jesus as you read the Bible?
3. What challenges are you facing in your daily life? How might Biblical principles and prayer address these issues?
4. How are you communicating the love of God to others through word (sharing about Jesus) and action?

Covenant together to take action (especially on Question #3) and pray regularly for the person to deepen in their walk with Jesus. Some study may be required to find practical ways of dealing with the issues raised – by both parties! Ask the Lord to direct you to a person who might address these questions with you! That makes four intentional conversations a month with specific individuals. Usually men mentor men and women mentor women. After 6 months, the three you are "mentoring" are becoming familiar with the plan. At this point, begin to suggest that they too ask the Lord who they are to encourage and disciple? Recommend that they pray and ask the Lord to

direct them to three people... so the cycle continues!

Seems simple? Yes! God designed it that way! You will also note that the model grows not arithmetically but by multiplication. You wonder how the Church exploded in the Early Centuries? This was one of the key elements to strengthen believers. It worked then and still works today!

An African friend opined, "You (North) Americans complicate the Gospel. IT IS VERY SIMPLE!!"

So... here's a New Year's suggestion (not Resolution!) that you jump in and give this a try.

