Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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“Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch.” (Luke 5:4).

Col 1:9-14; Luke 5:1-11

One of fascinating aspects of the Christian revolution is that it was started by a carpenter who chose fishermen as his first disciples.

Historically, most great movements were initiated by intellectuals, privileged, educated radicals who had analyzed social and economic patterns and sided with the downtrodden to bring about change. Revolutionaries like Lenin, Che Guevara, Robespierre, or humanitarian leaders like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr, are examples.

But Jesus was a small-town carpenter, and Peter, Andrew, James and John were simple fishermen. What was it about these trades that served the Gospel so well? For one thing, they provide us with rich metaphors: Jesus builds the Kingdom of God; his Apostles know how catch people. The shop and the shore describe the starting points for a revolution that begins in the heart and expands to the world. New structures frame new ideas, sails raised high to the wind carry the Good News into uncharted waters.

At the same time, Jesus’ profession locates him at the heart of ordinary life, discipline and physical labor. The first Apostles are hard-working men whose livelihood depends on the many variables of weather and season. Each day as they set out in their fragile boats, they risked storms and failure, returning with a meagre catch or nothing at all.

Our life circumstances are our first teachers. What we experience determines how we will see the world and other people. Those who rise above the human mass to live with concepts and abstractions can serve us in broad strokes, but truth emerges from the ground up. Reality is more important than theory, or philosophy and theology or politics per se.

Jesus immersed himself in the common human condition, in the work of his hands and the smells and sounds of the streets, the marketplace and the teeming crowds. We do well to imitate him if we want to know God. “Put out into deep water and lower your nets.” Go long and deep into relationships and the conundrums and challenges of life. Grace is on the loose in the world.

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