

called

By Kary Oberbrunner

Reviewed by Mark Norris

'The reason the world rejects Jesus is not because He asks too much. The Jesus we present asks too little.'

In this book, Kary Oberbrunner sets out a picture of discipleship that is transformational and exciting: a discipleship that is not just about believing, or belonging but is about becoming. This is not about a Christianity which is a commodity, a fashion or a leisure activity, but a Christianity which is passionate, adventurous, life-fulfilling and above all, costly.

Called is not a book which will tell you which career you should choose, what gifts you have or how you should use them for God. Instead, countering the culture of 'consumer Christianity', it helps the reader re-connect with the primary calling that God has on their life: a call to radical, costly discipleship which understands the full implications of the words of Jesus, 'Follow me.'

Suitable for youth leaders, or with its readable style, older youth, the book will help the reader capture a vision for 'becoming who you were born to be,' as the book's strapline suggests.

The Church, according to Oberbrunner, is 'buying in' to a

new Jesus who allows us to live our lives any way we desire. Things rarely get difficult because this Jesus never calls us to do anything. His book begins by returning us to the biblical Jesus and the concept of 'making disciples' rather than just 'converts'.

He goes on to help the reader connect their story with the larger story of God's mission and purpose. He challenges us to a deeper knowledge of Jesus, using the call of Peter, Andrew, James and John to encourage us not to allow 'nets' (good things that are important to us) to become 'anchors', which hold us back from fully following Christ.

He sets out four measurements of authentic discipleship, namely, knowing, being, doing and reproducing and demonstrates why we need to grow in all these areas, through theology, spiritual formation, ministry and coaching.

What has this to do with vocation? Vocation always begins with discipleship. Growing in these areas will help the reader understand more of God, themselves and who God wants them to be.

The final chapter is an encouragement to keep going even when we fail, and to

recognise that we are part of a story that is much greater than us, and greater than simply our life in this world.

The book is American, and so much of the language and most of the illustrations reflect American life. However, the point is clear and culturally relevant this side of the Atlantic.

Kary Oberbrunner founded Redeem the Day Ministries in 2004 and serves as the pastor of discipleship and leadership development at Grace Church in Powell, Ohio. Kary earned a D. Min. in transformational leadership and an M. Div. in counselling. He has spoken in many settings including colleges, camps, and conferences.

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