

Wednesday Word
December 20th, 2023

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

In 2012 I was a part of a short-term mission team that went to Port-a-Prince in Haiti about 12 months after the devastating earthquake that shook the nation. I ended up flying into Haiti before the rest of my team and planned to wait at the airport for them to arrive on the next flight. Well, about six hours passed and I realized they might have had flight delays or cancellations and I needed to move out of the airport and try to find the ministry that was scheduled to pick us up. As soon as I stepped foot out of the airport doors, I was surrounded by locals trying to get me to pay them to carry my bags, escort me to parking lot, sing me a song, basically anything they could to make some money. They spoke both French and Creole. I spoke just a few words of French but nothing in creole. Needless to say, I was a bit overwhelmed by the situation and a very lost in the culture of the place.

I waited outside for two hours and finally paid a taxi driver to change my newly bought cell phone from French to English so I could call my ride. I was able to contact them, and they came and got me and I was united with the rest of my team and we made it back to the base with no issues.

I learned a lot that afternoon. The main thing that stays with me is the body language and desperation of the people in Haiti at that time. They were having food shortages and work was scarce. Crime was rising and the United Nations had a strong presence that was not helping much. Thousands if not tens of thousands of children were orphaned due to the earthquake. The nation was in chaos.

Yet we were on mission to bring the good news of Jesus to these people. However, I knew they would have no use for an "American Gospel" we had to learn to speak the language of the situation they were in. We spent the next two weeks teaching them carpentry skills, how to set up a fish hatchery, first aid and medical treatments, how to bake and cook, and many things that they could use to rebuild their lives. While doing that we laced every lesson with the gospel of Jesus.

I think this same type of approach needs to be used in our communities and circles of influence. We need to figure out the language of the nation we are assigned to reach. We need to speak their language in their situation and not make them speak ours. If we really want to reach people and fulfill the great commission, we need to step out of our comfort zones and speak to people right where they are-just like Jesus did.

Let that be a challenge this Christmas week. Let's make disciples of the "nations" around us in ways those "nations" will understand. People need a Jesus with an uncompromised message in a way they understand. It will take wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit, but he will guide us as we fulfill the Great Commission.

We love you and God loves you!
Merry Christmas
Pastor Eric and Naomi Lundberg