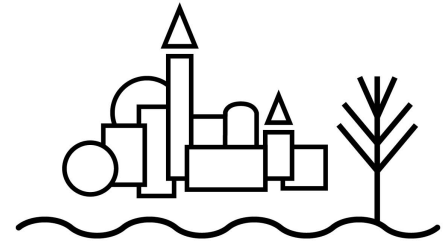


Connecting with My CROSS-CULTURE Neighbor

Luke 10:29-37



I accepted a call to a Latino church, not knowing how to serve my cross-culture neighbor. I didn't speak Spanish and knew almost nothing of this culture. All I had was a very intense sense of God's call. Initially, I thought my most significant contribution to my neighbors was using my strong English skills to help with school, legal, and medical problems. Then as I began to love and admire my neighbors, I discovered how isolated they were from mainstream Americans. I was the first such person that many of them had spent time with. Other realizations followed—my neighbors had never been in an American's home, much less enjoyed a friendship with one. Worse still, they believed that they had less value, less worth, than an American. I recognized that nurturing friendships and building bridges between my neighbors and other Americans were very important parts of my ministry. Welcoming my neighbors into my home, offering what I consider the most basic element of hospitality, had a huge positive impact on my relationship with my neighbors. Gradually, they developed the confidence to minister to me and made me their neighbor. They sent delicious dishes home with me, taught me about their culture, and gave me gifts from their home countries. And along the way, I've been blessed to meet some incredible good Samaritans who sacrificially minister to my neighbors—interpreters, doctors, attorneys, teachers, and school administrators.

Reflections

1. God has shown me that my most important tools for ministry to cross-culture neighbors are love of God and love of others. What tools do you have?
2. What are your greatest fears about connecting with people of a different culture?
3. Read Leviticus 19:33-34. What can you do to love your cross culture neighbors and treat them as if they were native born?
4. Our cross-culture children often have no one at home who can help them with their schoolwork. How could you help these children to succeed?
5. What can your church do to build a bridge to a cross culture church?

A Call to Action

1. Pray for just immigration laws and policies that will protect our vulnerable cross-culture neighbors.
2. Provide financial support for school supplies and camp registration fees for cross-culture children.
3. Partner with a cross-culture church to learn from and encourage each other.

Prayer

God of all people, open our eyes to the isolation experienced by our neighbors from other cultures. Show us ways that we can support and build relationships with them based on our common love of you. Amen

ABOUT THE WRITER:

Rev. Diann White serves three Latino and two Korean churches in her new role as the Intercultural Ministry Coordinator for West Tennessee Presbytery. She is a graduate of Memphis Theological Seminary and has worked with Latino churches in Memphis for the past five years. She and her husband, John, live in Bartlett, Tennessee with their two labradoodles. If you would like to discuss with Diann ways that you or your church can help build relationships within a cross-culture church, you may contact her at diannwhite12@yahoo.com.