

To become a 3rd culture community, we need to understand what “Third Culture” means. It can be defined as: *the mindset and will to love, learn, and serve in any culture; even in the midst of pain and discomfort.* Specifically, it is to love our neighbor, even when it’s uncomfortable. Remember the parable of the Good Samaritan? Jesus was speaking to a group of Jews, but the most unlikely person in the story – a Samaritan – becomes the hero. Jews looked at Samaritans as half-breeds, both physically and spiritually. When Jesus asserted that the Samaritan was the one that showed mercy, his audience must have been speechless. I think they must have been in Third Culture shock. (Luke 10:25-37)

But loving in the **MIDST** of pain and discomfort? I understand the discomfort part . . . The other day I saw a young girl around the age of eleven. Her hair was greasy and a mess, as though she had just got up. But it was 3:30 and she was getting out of school. I realized as she walked by me that she needed deodorant. Boy was I uncomfortable! I wondered if I should tell her about showering. Was it my responsibility to advise her about anti-perspirant? Surely the kids at school were making fun of her. Had anyone bothered to help her? I didn’t say anything either . . .

I was thinking about this situation when I read through the Third Culture definition. I really didn’t understand the idea of loving in the midst of pain. What pain? Whose pain? Thoughts of this child flooded my mind as I reflected on what I knew about her from the past year-and-a-half. I met her dad; he’s so proud of her. I didn’t know until recently that her mom abandoned the family. It’s painful for her to talk about, and it seems the hurt is growing into bitterness. She’s also discussed her life as a migrant child. She didn’t like playing along the edge of the field or sitting in a truck while her father worked because the days were so long and boring. She’s grateful for school and after-school programs.

I began to wonder if she had any safe women in her life to talk with and who she could trust. Was there anyone to lovingly talk to her needs, her health or her hygiene? Has she been warned about the things young men say to young ladies for all the wrong reasons? Does she feel treasured? Does she know she’s a precious child of God? As I thought about her life, I began to understand the pain associated with loving my neighbor. Jesus knew this pain, too. He wept when Lazarus died. Not because Lazarus was dead, but because Mary and Martha were grieving. His heart had broken for them. (*John 11:1-44*) Does my heart break for this child? Am I willing to get uncomfortable to share the love of Jesus with her?

Jesus had finished teaching the Sermon on the Mount. “When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, ‘Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.’ Jesus reached out his hand and TOUCHED the man. ‘I am willing,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.” (*Matthew 8: 1–3*) Dan pointed out the word “touched;” I had always missed it before. Jesus TOUCHED a leper – an extremely contagious, disfiguring skin disease! If I were Jesus, I probably would have healed the man from a few hundred feet, and yet exactly because I am NOT Him, Jesus touched the man! Again, I thought about the young

girl...had I ever touched her? I'm pretty sure I haven't. An arm around the shoulder or a pat on the back might be the first time that she feels the loving touch of a Christ-follower, the touch of the Living God. I can't wait to see her again!

Questions to ponder this week:

Do we realize the importance of FIRST loving God with ALL we are, before we can fully love others?

Who is my neighbor? Who is the most unlovable person I know? Am I willing to get out of my comfort zone to love this person?

What more can we do to change the culture of Lenawee County? Our nation? Our world?

What's our motivation to help? Is it the Drum Major Instinct?

Do we love people out of compassion or obligation? Have we asked God to turn our obligation into compassion?

Are we modeling the idea of serving to others in our family? To those in the workplace?

We are all called to serve, but we've been given different gifts. What is yours, and how will you use it?

***James 2:14 – 17, from The Message:** Dear friends, do you think you'll get anywhere in this if you learn all the right words but never do anything? Does merely talking about faith indicate that a person really has it? For instance, you come upon an old friend dressed in rags and half-starved and say, "Good morning, friend! Be clothed in Christ! Be filled with the Holy Spirit!" and walk off without providing so much as a coat or a cup of soup – where does that get you? Isn't it obvious that God-talk without God-acts is outrageous nonsense*

***This Week's Memory Verse:** Jesus reached out his hand and TOUCHED the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cured of his leprosy." (Matthew 8: 3)*

***Additional Scripture to Read:** Luke 8: 43-48, Luke 6: 27-36, Luke 5: 27-31, Hebrews 10: 19-35, John 11:1-44*

REMINDERS:

Nov 21 – Sunday – 3rd Culture Night @ Salvation Army [6-7:30ish] – see website for details!

Nov 28 – Sunday – The Gathering at SHU at 6 pm..."Are we Thankful? How do we show it?"

***10 minute Share the Warmth informational meeting immediately after the gathering*

Nov 30 – Tuesday – "On Mission" meeting from 7-8:30pm in Dominican Hall @ SHU. Come hear what we are asking you to consider to be On Mission w/ 1MOSAIC. Child care provided!

1MOSAIC – is committed to fill the week of **Dec. 6 – 13 at Share the Warmth!!! Please sign up after the gathering if you are interested. E-mail Dan w/ questions or for open availabilities.

The Drum Major Instinct.

...“If you want to be important wonderful, if you want to be recognized wonderful, if you want to be great wonderful, but recognize this, that the greatest among you is he/she that serves. I like this definition of greatness, cause it means that everybody can be great, because everybody can serve. You don’t need a college degree to serve, you don’t need to make your subject and verb agree to serve, you don’t need to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve, you don’t need to know about Einstein’s theory of relativity to serve, you don’t need to know about the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve, you only need a heart full of grace, a soul generated by love, and you can be that servant.” ...