

A Growing Vision for Mission

Scripture Reading — John 4:1-14, 27-42

“You will be my witnesses in ... Samaria...”

Acts 1:8 —

All of us are raised in a particular culture or subculture. We have language, clothing, music, geography—and many of us have church practices—that are familiar to us. We are comfortable with what’s familiar. Sadly, we often assume prejudices about people from other cultures and places.

Jesus calls us, his missionary people, out of our comfort zones. The people among whom Jesus carried on most of his ministry despised the Samaritans. Jesus’ own journey through Samaria and the encounter with the Samaritan woman in today’s verses give us a profound message. Jesus’ love, which he empowers us to share, knows no boundaries of sinful prejudice or cultural preference.

Churches and Christians in North America, many of whom come out of western European cultures, can fall into sinful prejudice and pride. We easily think our ways of worship and our kind of music set the ultimate standard by which all others should be evaluated.

We served a multiethnic church in New York for seven years. Jesus confronted us with our prejudices and subtle (or not so subtle) feelings of cultural superiority that needed to be confessed.

When we do that and go to the people of our “Samaria” with Christ’s mission of love, we are blessed and enriched. Who lives in your “Samaria”?

Prayer

Lord, forgive our superior attitudes and prejudices. Help us to appreciate the diversity you have created. Help us to see you in people’s lives. Amen.

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Printed on July 9, 2020

