

SEEING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH GOD'S EYES

Date: 08/95

(2 HOURS)

- OBJECTIVES:**
1. Participants understand that they must view their community as God sees it.
 2. Participants will have a desire to reach their community in a wholistic manner.

OVERVIEW FOR TRAINERS: This lesson is critical for helping church members to catch a vision for reaching their community in a wholistic manner. This follows Great Commission-Great Commandment lesson with the Seed Project lesson following.

METHOD	TIME	KNOWLEDGE
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Role Play: Use *Pastor Juan Story*.

----SH questions----

S = What do you See?
 H = What is Happening?

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| <p>I. Observing their community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Break the group into small groups of two to three people. They are to walk through their community observing what good and bad things they find in it. They are to take no paper or pencil but to observe. B. They are to look at the community's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical resources and needs. - Social resources and needs. - Spiritual resources and needs. - Intellectual resources and needs. C. Upon their return they are gathered into groups of 8-10 to note down their findings under the four headings. D. The group findings are consolidated onto one form for discussion in the large group. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss what their impressions were. 2. What were their findings? | <p>I. <u>Observing their Community.</u></p> |
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METHOD	TIME	KNOWLEDGE
<p>II. What is vision?</p> <p>A. Talk about that we need to see our community through God's eyes to see what God intends the community to become. This is called getting a vision for our community. Break into small groups to discuss what vision involves. Report back.</p>		<p>II. <u>What is Vision</u></p> <p>A. Seeing our community through God's eyes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is the Biblical description of God's intentions for man and the rest of His creation. 2. It takes prayer and waiting on God. 3. It's observing and studying God's work in our surroundings and life. 4. It is testing our perceptions of God's intentions. 5. It is dynamic and changing. 6. We should seek it together as a group. 7. We then make plans with the vision as our goal. 8. It should be a balanced vision which should reflect God's concern for the whole person.
<p>III. Seeing our community through God's eyes.</p> <p>A. In small groups discuss: If you were to be walking again around your community and Jesus was king of it what changes would He make under the four headings? Make a list.</p> <p>B. Prioritize the list in regard to what are things that we can begin to do there to become involved in changing our community.</p> <p>C. In a large group discuss the implications of your work.</p> <p>D. FUTURE ACTION – Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and be obedient to your emerging vision of God's intentions for your community.</p>		<p>III. <u>Seeing our Community Through God's Eyes.</u></p>

ATTITUDE: Facilitator understands how to view a community through God's eyes.

SKILL: Participants understand that they must view their community as God sees it.
Participants will have a desire to reach their community in a wholistic manner.

EVALUATION: Facilitators will know participants have learned the content of this lesson when they have a desire to reach their community wholistically.

MATERIALS: -Newsprint
-Marking pens
-Masking tape
-*Pastor Juan Story* handout

This lesson is used in: Program Trainings – SALT, TOT I – Extra, Vision – Mobilizing the Church

PARABLE OF JUAN SEEING HIS COMMUNITY THROUGH GOD'S EYES

There once was a pastor of a small church in a very poor urban slum of a large city. His name was Juan. Juan had recently moved into the community because he felt God had sent him. The church was small, about 40 people. They were mostly women and children. Juan was bi-vocational. He worked in order to provide for his wife and two small children and he also did his best to pastor his little flock.

One day, as was his custom, he rose an hour before day break to have a private time with God. He got up, dressed, and went to the other side of his one room house in which the sleeping area where his wife and children slept was divided from the living area by a cloth. Quietly, he lit the small tin can filled with kerosene and topped with a wick and began to read from his Bible. On this particular morning, he was reading from Isaiah 58. He read that the kind of worship God wanted was, "...to loose the chains of injustice and until the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? It is not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter - when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

Juan could go no further. His heart fought with his mind. How could God care so much for the poor - and yet here he was in the midst of poverty and suffering that broke his heart. He knew how the people of his community struggled to survive. They were truly oppressed. Even he had barely enough to feed his little family and often couldn't even buy medicine when they were sick. He thought, "Where is God? "How does this Scripture square with the need right here in my place?"

While he was struggling with these thoughts, there was a quiet knock at the door. "Who could that be - so early in the morning?" Juan thought. He went to the door and asked, "Who is it?" The voice on the other side said, "I'm Jesus, Juan." "Who?" asked Juan. "I'm Jesus, Juan." "Who are you, really?" asked Juan again. The voice responded, "Juan, I'm Jesus. I've come because I've heard the cry of your heart. I want you to show me what is troubling you."

The voice sounded genuine. Juan carefully unhooked the latch and opened the door. It was still very dark and all Juan could see was the silhouette, but it looked like who he imagined Jesus to be. "Come in, Lord," Juan said. "No, Juan, I want you to take me through your community and show me what it is that breaks your heart." Okay, Lord, but stay close to me. We don't have many latrines – there is lots of manure, and it's rained hard. Stay close, I'll keep you out of trouble.

As they walked carefully through the streets of the slum, Juan told Jesus the stories of the houses they passed. In that one, lived a woman who sold herself to feed her kids. In the next shack, there was an alcoholic husband who beat his wife and kids every time he got drunk - which was often. Over there was a house of the village president. He was a corrupt man who extorted money on the promise of getting electricity, but he drank and gambled away the community's money.

They passed an open place in the middle of the community that was supposed to be a sort of community square, but it was filled with bad smelling garbage and you could hear scurrying rats. "That house," said Juan pointing to a shack on the brink of the hill, "a woman and four kids lives there. They are very poor. The roof leaks, bad. They have very little to eat or wear, and they are almost always sick. By this time, they were at the edge of the hill on which his town was built. Juan pointed off in the distance. "Way down there - that's where the women and children walk to get water. There isn't any water in here."

Juan started to turn the corner, but he heard a soft weeping. He looked toward the sound. It was Jesus. Jesus was crying! Juan could see the same things that broke his heart, broke the heart of Jesus. He was about to comfort Jesus when Jesus reached out and put his arm around Juan, looked at him and said, "Juan, I want to show you what my intentions are for this place."

Suddenly, Juan found himself looking down on his community, and Jesus began to speak. As He spoke, Juan could see the things that Jesus described taking place. Jesus talked about the people in Juan's church - as poor as they were - sharing what they had with their poorer neighbors. Daily they saved a little rice and put it in a can. At the end of the week, they each had a full can of rice which they brought to the church to share, in Jesus' name, with the community people who had less than they did. They did the same with soap. They went to the widows in the community and kind of adopted them -- helped them wash, cook and care for their kids when they were sick.

Jesus talked about employment and Juan could see that the people had work. Not high paying jobs, but jobs which gave dignity and paid enough to meet basic necessities. Jesus talked about housing, and Juan saw that the shacks that let in the cold and rain were changed into houses. Not fancy houses, but houses that were safe and clean.

Jesus talked about water, and suddenly there were standpipes in strategic places where women and children were getting clean water. Jesus talked about sanitation, and Juan could see there were latrines - not one for every house, but enough that everyone had access to one. And the garbage heap in the center of the community was gone. Instead there were little trees and kids laughing and playing kicking a ball. Jesus also talked about transformed lives and Juan saw that the woman who had been forced to sell her body now supported her kids with a respectable job. The drunkard was now a loving husband and dad. The community president wasn't using money dishonestly, but was really helping the community.

Then Jesus said, "Juan, look at the church." Juan looked. It was full. There were men there! The people were happy. They were praising God for his goodness. And there was Juan, preaching, teaching and leading his people in the spirit and acts obedient love. Jesus looked at Juan and said, "Juan, this vision won't come in its fullness until I come again, but this is my intention for here. I want you to share this vision and begin to lead the people here toward it."

Juan protested, "But Lord, we are so poor." "Juan, who let the children of Israel cross the Red Sea? Who multiplied the loaves and fish and fed the 5000+ men plus women and children? Who stretched the oil and flour of the widow so that there was enough to feed her family for three years of famine? Who calmed the Sea of Galilee?" "You did, Lord," said Juan. "Then, Juan, be obedient to what I have asked you to do. Share what you have, even though it is little. Proclaim my good intentions for your people both spiritually and physically. And, I will heal your land."

Juan heard a rooster crow. His wife coughed and stirred on the other side of the curtain. He was sitting at his table, but the lamp had gone out. It was getting light. Juan looked around for Jesus, but he didn't see him anywhere. He wondered, "Did I have a dream? Was it a vision?" He didn't know. But, Juan did know that he had been met by Jesus, and that he had a new understanding of God's concern for the poor, and a fresh vision of how he was to lead his people to represent God's love in his community.