

Discipling the nations (Graziano Crepaldi)

God's desire is to see his Church stepping out from his walls and effect the society with waves of strong disciples able to bring back nations to his unchanging purpose.

«All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age». (Matthew 28:18-20)

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has power to touch people's lives and creates hope in a fallen world that needs a radical change. We have often underestimated how God's truth can also transform our society and bring a significant change where there is darkness and poverty. In these years we have seen how small insignificant discipleship groups that we have started around the world have become like the mustard seeds and yeast in the dough (Lk. 13:18-21) of Jesus's parable. We are involved in incredible projects where God is shaping cultures and has opened the door to influence the education, media, government and business.

In history the believers have often restricted the Great Commission to the task of saving souls and starting new churches separating themselves from the practical applications of the Kingdom of God in everyday life. This attitude born out of the "greek thinking" opens the door to modern secularism where people started to seek solutions of life problems independent from their relationship with Jesus. We have seen as well in different nations pioneers and reformers realizing that our cultures need to be redeemed and healed and therefore they started to reach the world around them with a more practical Christ-like message.

Some years ago I was leading some people to a deeper commitment to God in discipleship and I red to them the words of Jesus: **«You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you».** (John 15:14-15)

The reaction of these loving fellows was surprising me. They struggled with these words that seemed too hard for them to understand and to follow and they explain me their worldview: They wanted to "enjoy God" and live day by day a Christianity based on events and new exiting evangelistic "encounters". That day I have realized that many believers are not really interested in the "master business". They are already busy in too many businesses that are keeping them occupied (church meetings included) and the idea of taking part of the biggest plan of God to transform our nations is not so attractive and doesn't give them incredible goose bumps.

We believe that God is still searching for people willing to cooperate with him in the wonderful plan to redeem and bless the nations (Gen. 12:2-4). God has built physical laws into the universe to govern creation. He has given us as well moral and kingdom laws that allow our society to function properly. Jesus came on earth to allow these principles to enter deeper in our lives and God has given us his Holy Spirit so that we will have the power and strength to live like Christ! Many nations rejected these values and replaced them with their human desires and man's made dreams.

The consequences are devastating and every year we are confronted with more injustice and deception.

«The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it». (Revelation 21:24-26)

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How can we enter in this vision?

We first of all need to turn away from ourselves and repent of our selfish attitude that is leading us to protect ourselves and our churches from changes that might effect our future. We desire to became strong disciples of Jesus. For this we might need the help of some other believers that have taken seriously the mandate of making disciples. We ask God to show us how to reach the people He has placed near to us (working place, neighbors and even enemies).

We need to be ready to search for "the best of God for our cities" and implement new practical ideas that will bring God's values in our society. We cooperate with Jesus in building a "regional church" that has a clear identity and understands his vision for the place it is located, instead of copying and parroting other communities around the world. When we will take on board the Great Commission to discipling nations, people will be really challenged and equipped everywhere to see **«His kingdom come, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven !» (Matthew 6:10)**