MILLENNIALS AND MISSION: THE FARM MANAGER

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How can Christians reach jaded young people with the gospel? Jesus Christâ€™s calling to follow is not a comfortable Sunday morning gathering. Itâ€™s a radically different lifestyle that should permeate our actions and conversations. If each Christian rather than just supporting missions, lives their life as a mission, people are going to start taking notice.
Category: Observations

God calls every Christian to live their life in such a way that the gospel is made known. This can take many forms as we each serve different roles in the body of Christ. But if it looks like Jesus, this lifestyle is potentially just as radically world-changing as he was.Â I tried living my life as a mission, and oh boy, has it been an adventure!

I graduated from university, farmed fish for a while, lived with some nuns on an alpaca farm, then settled in at a job where I taught cross country skiing, aquatic ecology, and forest survival skills. Then one day I heard the voice of God telling me to apply for a missions program. I hadnâ€™t planned on it. In fact, I had been intending to keep living my â€œlife as missionâ€ goal in my hometown where there are plenty of unsaved people.

Nevertheless, I went to rural South Korea on a 1-year missions program to teach English and help on a farm. The missions placement was with a partner organization â€œDandelion Community,â€ an intentional community and boarding school that aims to teach technical skills, endurance, work ethic, and a lifestyle of being a friend to the poor and preaching the gospel.Â After my year of service with the missions organization, I purchased a plane ticket and returned to Dandelion community on my own. Missions support isnâ€™t always necessary if you work and live really cheaply. Despite living in community there were some really hard times of loneliness, language barrier and cultural uncertainty. But living and working together in community on the other side of the world gets better each year.Â Now, as farm manager, I get to build long-lasting relationships with teens as I teach them creation care in the form of sustainable agriculture. I get to work alongside these kids and watch them gain skills and confidence. I get to have long conversations with them all about the world and following Christ.Â As part of Dandelion educational programs I have prayed with Christians in Nepali tea gardens and travelled through floodwaters in India with 8 middle schoolers and a full drum ensemble in tow. As part of Dandelionâ€™s outreach, I have lectured on farming and nature education in India and China. And to keep my visa, I get to pursue a masterâ€™s degree in Oriental medicine and research herbs in the Himalayas.

Following Jesus isnâ€™t all fun and games. but if you want to make a difference in the world, relying on God to lead is surely the most effective means.Â

My generation and Gen Z is full of people who want to make the world a more just, yet compassionate place. I see it in the #metoo and womenâ€™s movements, I see it in the Climate Strike movement, and even the militant meme posting Bernie Sanders supporters on all my social media.Â

Most of the time I see people calling for the government to help solve these problems. Yet there exists a higher power than the government who represents the ultimate perfection of compassion and justice â€"God. As Christians, we are ambassadors of Godâ€™s mission on this earth. Often Christians get this right. I see countless individuals and missions organizations all over the world living out Christâ€™s mission to lift up the broken. Logically speaking, this should make the Church very attractive to young people with an interest in social justice.

Yet most western young people are frustrated with the church. Its seen as just a place where people listen to a boring sermon and socialize. They are bitter with what they see as a God who harshly judges actions they donâ€™t see as sinful, but in the name of free-will lets wicked people cause suffering to others. They hate Christians because while we claim to love our neighbor, we tend to support government policies that deny aid to those in need. Â

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What does this look like?Â

These are all examples from people I know:

- It looks like Jesse sharing the gospel to the guys on his shift at the factory, and showing up at peopleâ€™s houses on his days off to lend a helping hand.Â
- It looks like Jasmine, building relationships with at-risk teen girls in the inner city, taking the risk to tackle tough topics such as sexual purity.
- It looks like Terach, living with and mentoring boys who are in the system for delinquency, showing them tough love when needed.
- It looks like Micah and Silas being loving parents to foster kids with special needs, often actively helping the biological parents to rehabilitate themselves so they can get their kids back.

I see a lot of young people who want to be different than the norm and who get excited about social activism.Â My prayer is that the Millennial Christian remnant will model a radically different lifestyle as they follow Christ. This image will attract youth as they recognize the difference between those who live life as mission and the dysfunctional nominal Christianity that they reject.

Wilhelmina Witt, originally from Michigan in the United States has lived in an intentional community in South Korea since 2015. She manages a permaculture farm, teaches a variety of subjects to youth, and is in the middle of writing a masterâ€™s thesis on the medicinal herbs used by a Himalayan tribe.Â