

You also must love the foreigner, since you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. – Deuteronomy 10:19

March 2007

Dear Friend,

“Habla Francisco...quisiera asistir la igelsia con usted hermano. Habla Francisco.”

(Translation: Francisco speaking...I would like to attend church with you, brother. Fransisco speaking.)

Francisco is from Guatemala.

I met him last year while we were living in the missionary residence. He was part of the roofing crew that was repairing the wind damaged roof of the residence.

He was a short, dark skinned man with unkempt graying hair and dark brown eyes. He kept mostly to himself because his English was limited. Basically, Francisco was a clean-up and fetch man – a grunt!

I spoke to him briefly in Spanish as I was leaving to run errands - basically just hello and how are you doing. Penny and Jeremy had already been building relationships with the crew – they baked some cookies for them while I was away. Francisco’s eyes brightened up as he said, “You speak Spanish?” “Yes, a little,” I said in Spanish.

He began to speak about 90 mph in Spanish. I tried to slow him down a little as I listen to Spanish much slower than I speak it.

The next day, Francisco was there working. I talked with him again asking if he attended a church in the area. He said no. I told him about the Hispanic work that our church had started. I gave him my card to contact me about church. He thanked me. I then went into the garage and found a Spanish New Testament to give him. He was very grateful.

I didn’t hear from him again until January when we were coming back from Caraway Conference Center in Asheboro. There were two messages on my cell phone from Francisco – both in Spanish. I had a hard time understanding the messages because of his rapid speaking. Francisco didn’t leave a phone number either. I didn’t call him back.

Duh, You Idiot!

A couple of weeks later on a Sunday, I got the above message on my cellular phone. It took several times listening to understand it. This time, I returned Francisco’s phone call.

As I was talking to him in my limited Spanish, I asked if he had someone to translate. He found someone and we proceeded to converse through the interpreter. I told Francisco that I would get back in touch with him after I talked to our Hispanic pastor, Abel Grande.

After I hung up the phone, the thought occurred to me... “You idiot, why don’t you go pick him up and take him to the 3:00 P.M. Spanish service...” Especially since Penny was playing piano for the service that day.

I called him back and told him I was coming to get him. Francisco lives in Benson – thirty five minutes away. I had just enough time to pick him up and return to Garner to get Penny and Jeremy.

Upon arrival, I saw that Francisco's left arm was in a sling. He tried to explain to me that he had injured himself – I think at work – and that he was in a lot of pain. He took me behind the house to a barn and showed me copies of his x-rays from the hospital.

As we were walking back to the van, it occurred to me that Francisco was actually living in the barn. It was cold and smelled like gasoline from the lawnmower that was stored inside. Even Francisco smelled like gasoline. He was sleeping on a couch at the back of the barn.

When we arrived at the church, I introduced Francisco to pastor Abel. I explained how I knew him. We began worship and Francisco paid close attention to the songs and the preaching. I had asked Abel to follow-up with Francisco because I didn't know if he was a believer or not. Abel promised to do so the next day.

I took Francisco home after the service. We went through a restaurant drive thru on the way to Benson to buy him some supper. Later that week, Abel told me that he passed Francisco's information on to a Hispanic church in Benson for follow up. After talking with Francisco, Abel determined that he is not a believer even though he has heard the gospel several times before. **Please continue to pray for Francisco and his salvation.**

I shared that story with you as an example of what to do and what not to do. I believe and teach that we all need to build relationships with the lost in order to win them to Christ, build them in faith, and send them back into the world to influence others. I call it FriendFluence. However, I nearly missed an opportunity to influence a lost person because I allowed time and a language barrier to stand in the way.

I have often preached that no price is too great and no barrier too large to keep us from getting people to Jesus. We teach this precept in our FriendFluence conferences in churches. But, it's hard to practice what you preach sometimes!

I want to encourage you to build a relationship with someone you know that is lost in order to win them to Christ. The truth is most people who come to faith in Christ do so because of the influence of a family member or friend. For more about becoming a friend who influences others to faith in Christ, visit my new Blog site at <http://friendfluence.blogspot.com>.

Until the Net is Full,



Darrel Davis

P.S. We want to reach more people like Francisco, but we need your continued prayers and support to do so....Thanks for praying!