

*Started in 1295, the city of Plzeň - Czech Republic provides testimony to a religious presence in former centuries but a personal faith in Christ is rare in this 21st century. The city has about 170,000 people. Only around 1% of the population attends a weekly Christian church experience. So it is possible that 99% are not calling Jesus Lord & Savior.*

*Plzeň 247 is a year-round citywide movement. It involves a network of Christian believers across many churches within the city and others from around the world who desire to be God's ambassadors to the 99% in Plzeň.*

*2 Corinthians 5: 18 - 20 is the foundation for this movement because the Biblical words specifically point people to the God given ministry of reconciliation. There are many ways for Christians to have a ministry of reconciliation. Plzeň 247 is specifically focused on reconciliation to the city's 99% through prayer & worship.*

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**What does it mean to have a ministry of reconciliation through prayer for the 99% of Plzeň? How should you think about it? What should you do about it?**

**This is one part of a four part series on having a ministry of reconciliation through prayer for your city. Three of the speakers are different pastors from the city of Plzeň, Czech Republic. The fourth is a pastor from the West Indies island of Grenada who leads his denomination to pray for the 99% of Plzeň.**

**Since this actual talk was presented in Czech, this is the written English version followed by reflection questions that are suitable for individual or group study.**



Karel Řežábek is pastor of KS Plzeň.

I would like to read 2 Corinthians 5:20. *"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."*

I think this is really important to know that we are ambassadors for Christ, because there is a rule. The person you think you are has an effect on the things you are doing. If you feel insecure, you act in that way. If you are underestimating yourself, then you will always aim low. If you have a large confidence, other will feel that you are arrogant. So who we think we are has an effect on the things we do.

In these words of 2 Corinthians, it says that we are Christ's ambassadors. For us it's really important because we would like to follow God's word. The scripture tell us something

that should be projected into our way of living, because if I know who I am, than I know what is expected from me and the way how I should deal. What I should do and what I shouldn't do.

So if I am an ambassador, what does that mean? Ambassador is an official representative of their country or kingdom. We are ambassadors of Christ and we were called by him to be representatives of his kingdom in this world. We are representatives of his kingdom here in the Czech Republic in this 21st century in Pilsen. We have been called for this time, for this city.

The reason why an ambassador is sent into another country is that they are there to represent the government of their country. They are there on behalf of their country to represent their country.

Being an ambassador has some obstacles. They are a person that has to leave the comfort of their own country. They have to go somewhere to be in a country which is not their own. Very often they are sent to a country that has a different language which they do not speak. They have to leave parents or relatives. They know from their country that something works in some way and immediately they are in a country where people speak differently, they have different values, and things are done in different ways.

But the ambassador is there to start to understand the way how this other country operates but they should not merge with that country. They should not merge with that country because if they do, they will not be an ambassador anymore and they will become a citizen of the other country.

I think in these things we are thinking to low about ourselves. We are thinking in a way that we are just Christians. We are just Christians living here in Pilsen. There are just a few of us. But this is not a true. We are representatives. We are ambassadors for Christ and we are here on his behalf. We are here to represent his values, the values of his empire, his kingdom and our qualification is that we are a part of his kingdom, because we are his citizens, we are a part of his family.

And this is something that I believe is for all of us here. We became citizens of God's kingdom when we received the salvation in Jesus Christ through his sacrifice. We went from death to life. We can read that Jesus has taken us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of his beloved Son. All of these things have happened and this is exactly that qualification that we need. There is only one qualification that we have to have. We are a citizen of His kingdom.

That was the main topic. There is a second thing that goes hand in hand with it that is we know Christ's reconciliation.

We have already personally experienced his reconciliation. We do know this more deeply, which kind of life we lived, and we know the heaviness of sin and the lightness of forgiveness. We know that feeling we get with the heaviness of our sins, that we couldn't deal

with, that it was impossible to put it away by our self. So we also know the feeling when God took all of our sins away through the sacrifice of Christ. From that moment on we go immediately without those burdens of sin.

So once again we know Christ, we are a citizen of his kingdom, we know the heaviness of sin and the lightness of forgiveness, and we experienced his reconciliation. And that's all we need. This is all we need to be his ambassadors.

As I said before the ambassador needs to know how things are going in their own country. However there can be two things that can happen to ambassadors. One is that they will merge with the citizens of the country they were sent to and then there will be no difference between them and the other citizens. They lose their values, meaning the values of their own country. The second danger is that they will meet only with the citizens of their own country and they will not understand the people of the other country they have been sent to. They will forget the other person's language or trying to force others to understand our language which they don't understand. They will forget that they were sent to them as an ambassador with some goal.

For Christian ambassadors, the goal should be to represent our king and the values we hold from his kingdom.

I would like to read this lyric to you.

Reconciliation and forgiveness is like a celebration after a long time of grief. Like a fire during the night. As an opened gate in the wall. Like a letter after a long time of silence. Like a greeting in which you didn't know you would get. Like a leaf on the withered branch. Like rain in the middle of the desert. Like a fresh dew on parched soil. Like an essence of home to those who are lost. Like a friendship of enemies. Like a key in the jail. Like a lifeboat for the castaway. Like a pathway for the depressed. Like a smile on the face. Like a word from a dead mouth. Like a view that gives hope. Like a light on the tortuous path. Like a discovered continent. Like a spring, morning, song, lyric, life, love, God the right light. This is the right reconciliation and forgiveness, this is the right peace.

## Reflection Questions

1. It was said that the person you think you are has an effect on your behavior. How is your behavior toward the 99% of Plzeň influenced by how you think about yourself? You may say you never think about the 99%. If so, why is not thinking about them a part of your overall behavior?
2. Pastor Karel makes the point that believers are ambassadors for Christ and that Christians in Plzeň are in the city on his behalf. For Christian ambassadors, the goal should be to represent our King and the values we hold from his kingdom. So what are the major kingdom values that you hold and represent to your city as ambassadors for Christ?
3. Pastor Karel also makes the point that ambassadors have to be careful about merging too deeply with the citizens of the country they were sent to because then there will be no difference between them and the other citizens. Are there any kingdom values you think you have lost because you have merged too deeply with the ways of the 99% from Plzeň?
4. Reconciliation is not a concept that has a universally accepted definition used by everyone. In a general sense, reconciliation could be understood as the intentional bringing together of things that are not naturally going together, bringing together things not compatible. At the end of this talk, a lyric is given as a way to help your understanding on reconciliation. Which one statement within the lyric speaks to you most strongly? How does that one statement help you think about reconciliation between the 1% and 99% of Plzeň?