

WHEN THE WHOLE WORLD AGREES

by Janet Denison

Churches all over the world prayed. The breaking news was reported in every language. The boys were coming out of that cave and they were safe. The whole world responded with jubilation and praise for the rescued and for the rescuers. It is easy to agree when we all believe in the same outcome.

I was struck by the contrast in the news reported. People everywhere cared about those boys in Thailand and wanted them to be saved. But, after the lead story united the country, the next stories divided. Our Supreme Court candidate is a positive for some, a negative for others. There are decisions to make about the children of immigrants who remain separated from their parents. Another angry, and probably frightened, police officer's actions are recorded on a cell phone. And all of us will be impacted in some way by the higher tariffs on imported goods.

But, the most compelling story is the rescue of those boys. I like what that says about our world. We disagree about a lot of things, but we all agree that we should fight for the lives of those children. That outcome is worthy of our best efforts, and we can be unified by a shared goal.

I'm ready for Christians to be unified again. There are a lot of debates among us that remain unresolved because we each have our own opinions of right and wrong and our own values based on personal comfort and security. Jesus knew that would happen to us so, as he waited for the soldiers to come and arrest him, he prayed that his disciples would be unified. His prayer was preserved in Scripture so that we would understand how that unity is possible. Jesus prayed to God, saying, "I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me" (John 17:23).

A disciple of Christ will impact a lot of people in a lot of different circumstances. But we have one message that will always unify us and dignify Jesus. Jesus called it the gospel message, the good news that is for everyone. When we are one with

Jesus like he was one with God, we will show the world that God so loved every person, he sent his Son so they could be saved (John 3:16). People need to know how much they are loved by their Creator.

I imagine those boys are going to be amazed at the interest the world has taken in their lives. Two weeks ago, only a small number of people knew their names and cared about their lives. Now, an entire world wants to know more about them. But, two years from now, who will continue to care? I imagine those divers who risked their lives for those boys and many of the reporters who camped at that cave will still care. The families and their friends will still care. And God will love them in the coming years, as much as he loves them today.

There is a popular Pinterest quote by Dr. Frank Hayden that says, “I cannot make a difference in the world, but I can make a world of difference in a few people’s lives.” Jesus taught the same lesson when he said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). It is easy to feel powerless when we focus on the big picture. Most of us will never have a national impact with our lives, but Jesus said all of us would have an impact as his disciple—if we follow his lead.

Those boys will remain the focus of world news until reporters have exhausted the story. Soon, another story will become the most compelling news in the world. But Jesus walked this planet more than two thousand years ago, and he is still impacting the world *every day*. Jesus has disciples who are still his followers. Individually, we aren’t changing the world, but each of us is making a world of difference to some.

If you are one with Jesus, your life will impact someone else today for a kingdom purpose. How do I know that? Because Jesus said, “For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Matthew 10:20). When you are one with Christ, then Jesus will say something through you today, and his words always have an impact.

It is easy to be unified when we all share the same desired outcome. Everyone you meet today is going to heaven or to their death. That is the outcome that should unify and guide our lives today. Disciples are one with Jesus and share his

priorities. Jesus said, "In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

You might not impact the world today, but you will impact heaven, forever. I think we can all agree with the importance of that outcome.