

God's Infrastructure Plan

This is just as it was written in the scroll of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "A voice crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be leveled. The crooked will be made straight and the rough places made smooth. All humanity will see God's salvation.'" Luke 3:4-6

Here is God's plan: all humanity will see God's salvation. Here is how that will happen: we will work on the road. That's our job. Make it possible for God to get there; to be in the world, to be seen.

Fifteen years ago I went to Cuba on a trip that was not so much a mission trip as a goodwill visit, in support of the Christian movement happening in Cuba. One of my first memories was the drive from the airport to our host's house. Our plane had been late, the van was crowded, and the roads were terrible. Like so many things in Cuba, the roads, even and maybe especially the "main" roads, were crumbling. As I had the opportunity to travel more about the island, I also saw the mostly older model vehicles kept running, who knows how. Groups did not use buses, but repurposed military trucks, with people crowded standing up in the bed. All this being said, the Christian community in Cuba blew me away. House "churches" held worship *every evening*. The music was passionate, the preaching evangelical, the testimonies from mostly young people inspiring. The hard work of hospitality, making sure people could get places, be fed, be safe, help one another, the sharing of gifts, was tremendous. Every day these Christians were making a way for the Lord. There was all kinds of hope, love, and joy going on. Advent every day.

Just as any road will crumble when it is not attended to regularly, so too will our spiritual and discipleship practices. We have a tendency, especially in the holidays, to be concerned about our own personal experience, the extra seasonal giving notwithstanding.

This Sunday we will light an Advent candle of love and for Mary and Joseph, the holy family. Their courage and faithfulness made it physically possible for God to enter the world, for the Word to be made flesh. In each life, in every church, at all times, we have work to do on the road. We know what we have to do: welcome, share our faith, invite, visit, bring, feed, clothe, help, fill, smooth, defend, include, forgive. So ALL humanity will see God's salvation.

by Rev Karen Oehl

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