Bridge Builders Needed

9 July 2019



Part of the vision of Four12 is to be a movement that reflects God's heart in building a cross-cultural kingdom. Cross-cultural church life reflects God's heart for the kingdom: every nation, tribe and tongue worshipping God in unity (Revelation 7:9).

The recently held "**Four12 Training Cape Flats**" from the 21st to the 23rd of June 2019 was a culmination of the work God has been doing in and through Four12 in the Cape Flats. The training time was a gathering of saints and leaders, with over 90 saints from Joshua Generation Church present, as well as over 200 saints from other churches in the area, and 25 or so church leaders from the Cape Flats looking into Four12. The goal of the time was building long-term relationships and partnerships.

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To those unfamiliar with Cape Town, the words 'Cape Flats' may conjure pictures of an affluent suburb filled with several blocks of contemporary high rise apartments. This picture is far from the hard reality on the ground. The Cape Flats is a region on the outskirts of Cape Town, covering and including a vast number of townships, shantytowns and informal settlements. Rampant crime, gang violence and poverty are a part of daily life. Just this last weekend, it was reported 13 people were killed in gang-related violence.1 The statistic is shocking, but instead of filling us with fear, should remind us of the urgency of the need of the gospel in this area.

The actual training time was held in Phillipi, with the organisers of this time ensuring (as much as is humanly possible) that all those attending were well informed as to exercising care and wisdom when travelling in the area and attending the training. Many of us attending (including myself), come from suburbs, contexts and realities that are vastly different and far more 'comfortable' – yet before God, 'In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, maleand female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ.' (Galatians 3:28 MSG). In pursuing this common relationship with Jesus, we crossed physical boundaries to be united as one with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

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Even in the physical, building bridges takes a lot of work and preparation – many builders and workers are required. As Mike Fast (one of the leaders specifically involved with the Four12 ministry across the Cape Flats region, and who happens to be a 'foreigner' in South Africa himself, i.e. he is living out cross-cultural ministry and life daily) says, 'Through Four12, there's a unique grace and gift that God is giving to us as churches – and that is the gift of partnership.' As saints and partners in Christ, over the weekend, we had the opportunity to be a part of building cross-cultural kingdom partnerships. We prayed together, ate together, danced together and fellowshipped together. On Sunday, over 100 saints from Joshua Generation Church went to support churches in the Cape Flats areas.

Cross-cultural kingdom living not only reflects God's heart for His bride, but also benefits us all in learning from other cultures and languages. Our own culture and way of doing 'things' may limit us, but learning from other cultures gives us a chance to grow in God.

> There are ongoing training and outreach opportunities available…be a part of overcoming cultural barriers, because Jesus calls us to!

As shared by Mike Fast, in building cross-culturally, we are to go against prevailing culture in 3 main ways:

1. The prevailing culture in South Africa and the world seeks to maintain social, economic and racial **divisions**. We are to challenge this by crossing these divisions and **intentionally building cross-culturally**.

2. The prevailing culture in the Cape Flats region and townships therein is that there is a **clear**

demarcation between saints and leaders. The heart of God is **for all saints to partner in building God's church** and doing work and ministry. All of us can be a part of this work.

3. The prevailing western culture of independence encourages **self-reliance**. We are to follow the New Testament model of **interdependent churches working and partnering together** to advance God's kingdom.

There are ongoing training and outreach opportunities available where you can be a part of overcoming cultural barriers, because Jesus calls us to!