Pucker Up

Roderick Ripamonti 23 May 2017



I love that God has placed something different into every culture which, when offered back to Him in surrendered lives, reflects the unique personality and flavour He has blessed that culture with.

During my recent time at Estacao337 church in Sao Paulo, I saw that God has put some precious gifts into this amazing group of Brazilian saints. Their worship times are so special. The holiness of God seems to linger so closely – it's more about Him and a grateful bride of Christ than about individuals having a personal time of reflection. Their ministry times are...well, try and picture it: a group of 4 or 5 people surround a saint and pour their hearts and tears out over that person for a good 15 minutes, not wanting that person to leave without every possible blessing. It's beautiful, unreserved love.

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One of my favourite observations was the way that Brazilians are eager to show their brothers and sisters that they love them. For me growing up in a more reserved Manx and British culture, in my experience, we tend to understate our affections. In my part of the world, 'You're alright mate' is a gushing compliment you would reserve for special occasions, while 'Chuffed to see you' is borderline awkward, and 'I'm going to miss you' needs to be followed up with 'You little rat' or a similar backhanded insult to be taken as sincere. There, hugs, kisses on the cheek and

pats on the back are meted out generously, like the England football team gifting goals to everyone at a World Cup.

The way of our Brazilian partner church has inspired me, namely the open and unreserved display of love to people. I'm convicted that I can do better in this. In my context on the Isle of Man, kissing on the cheek may not be the answer, but I can find some way of communicating to a person that they belong, and are loved and important when they walk into a room.

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Maybe the answer for me is simply to start with eye contact and a smile – whatever the case, I'm committed to praying into it until I find the best way. It's not about the culture of any particular nation, it's about an aspect of the kingdom culture – welcoming someone like Jesus would: '…therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God'. (Romans 15:7)

Pucker up, Isle of Man. **(I am definitely kidding)**.