



COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

Connection

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

by **Jeremy Kiner, Co-Director**

Recently I and co-director Aaron Powell had the chance to visit with a local homeless man. On our way to see the man, the catchy 80's song, "Should I stay or should I go?" played through my mind. Admittedly, I was emotionally conflicted. I toiled over this man's obvious need for immediate help, yet his seemingly blatant reluctance to give up a gruesome, self-destructive habit - alcoholism.

Should I stay or should I go? Given the man's track record, I couldn't help but wonder if my time and effort was even worth it. Was it likely to garner any positive, lasting change? Would our assistance only enable him? Should I cast my pearls before swine? Does not a man reap what he sows?

All of these questions tempted me to stay home and let this man deal with the consequences of his own poor decision-making. For a moment, I felt like the story of the Prodigal Son gave me some acceptable justification for staying. Didn't the father stay back even when his boy faced incredible adversity? Wouldn't it be more appropriate to just tell the homeless man to find a good church when he was good and ready for a life change?

Of course, I knew that this was not what the Lord was speaking in His Word nor in my heart.

Immediately, I began to think about the story of the Gerasene demoniac, the man who, too, was "homeless," living in the caves, bound and tormented by spiritual darkness. Why did Jesus choose to engage this man? Why did he have compassion on him? Why was he compelled to heal him?

In a lot of ways, the homeless man I was about to visit reminded me of the story of the demoniac. Not that he was demon-possessed or thrashing about like a mad man, but because of the obvious torment, bondage, and lack of control in his life.

I have to wonder how many in our community are bound by similar predicaments as the demoniac? How many lives in our community are ravaged by the effects of addiction, depression, or abuse? How many in our community are paralyzed by fear and incapable of making their way to a church pew on their own? Will we stay put and wait for them or will we go after them? Will we embrace whatever inconvenience, awkwardness, or discomfort for the sake of reaching one?

If nothing else, I want to challenge our churches and pastors this month to pray and fast like never before for those in our community who are hopeless and spiritually imprisoned. Should we stay or should we go? Let us seek wisdom, patience, and discernment from the Holy Spirit to know when and how to respond to every situation. To know when to withhold, when to give, when to be silent, when to speak, when to stay, and when to go boldly. Truly, only God knows the inner state of any man, yet He equips us and empowers us through His Spirit to effectively carry out His mission to seek and to save.

Isaiah 49:9 (NLT)

I will say to the prisoners, 'Come out in freedom,' and to those in darkness, 'Come into the light.'

Catch the rest of this story in next month's newsletter!

PAY IT FORWARD CAFE

Big Thanks to Cuyahoga Valley Church and the Cupach's!

Without the support and collaboration of people like Sharon and Mark Cupach from Cuyahoga Valley Church, Pay It Forward Cafe would not be possible. Sharon is the woman's ministry director at CVC. Sharon and Mark's commitment to serve and their passion to minister to the community is nothing short of inspiring. The Cupach's have generously committed to providing food for one Saturday each month for the next six months.



Would your church like to commit to a monthly or quarterly meal? Or just come to observe? If so, please email us at contact@comamb.org or call Dona Kiner at 216-200-7030 for more details. Together we can achieve more!

Did you Know?

There are 40-50 homeless or displaced students in the Parma City School District.
*Data provided by the PCSD.

How can your church help address this problem?



James 2:14-16 (NLT)

What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

We would like to spotlight your ministry or outreach!

Please tell us about how you are serving your community!