

Don't blame it on human nature

By Bob Young

A comment in a recent Bible class started the conversation, "We really struggle with human nature. Our human nature keeps us from following God faithfully." The class conversation turned to how little sacrifice we (North American Christians) are willing to make in our Christian walk. But the class comments never escaped blaming our human nature.

Let me tell you about some Christians who have the same human nature we have.

→ In Timushan in Guatemala, I met brothers and sisters who had walked three hours (one way) to attend the area-wide worship service. There is no electricity in some of these little mountain town, there are few vehicles except the occasional pickup taxis that show up to provide transportation down the mountain.

→ In another part of Central America, the local church with a building that seats no more than 150 (crowded) is planning to start a 7 AM service on Sunday. The reason? They currently have three services (10 AM, 4 PM, 6:30 PM) and the attendance is nearing 400. All of the services have different members coming—the only ones attending more than one service are the elders and a few leaders. The church needs another time slot and there are not many options. The most interesting fact? The members are enthusiastic about the possibility because it means more souls.

→ In southern Colombia, I preached in a building that seats 25-30 at the maximum, but there were almost 50 present. About half of the attendance stood around the walls for 1 ½ hours for the worship and preaching.

→ In central Colombia, I worked with a church whose leaders took a day off of work to come to a Bible study and leadership training session. They did not get paid for the day off but their priority was to spend time with me while I was present. (And they are in significantly more tenuous financial situations than we are in the US.)

The problem is not human nature. The problem is the extent to which we North American Christians have bought into the culture—adopting the same expectations and desiring the same creature comforts. What I see is not a commentary on human nature—what I see is a commentary on Christians and churches that are not at all counter-cultural. We look like the world, we act like the world, we have adopted the value systems of the world, we talk about worldly things—and we wonder why we have so much trouble sharing the gospel!