

# They're Lost

I lived in Silicon Valley for a few years. So I used to drive up to San Francisco fairly often. San Francisco is famous for having lots of one way streets and lots of “No Left Turn”s, (they drive on the right). It's easy now with GPS and Sat Nav, but back then maps were on paper, and getting somewhere in San Francisco was not easy. You would get to your street and suddenly realise it was no left turn. So you have to go another block or two before you could turn left. But then to get back to where you needed to be you need to turn left again... so again another few blocks... and again... and... again. And then you would find that you are on the right street, but now you are too far the wrong way from where you needed to be. But it's a one way street, so you have to go another 8 block loop to work your way back down the street...

This was such a problem in those days that there was a local expression, “You can't get there from here.”

If God's way was to be attractational then Yeshua would never have had to leave heaven. Almost by definition heaven is a very attractive place. When God said, “Go”, Yeshua could have just said, “No need. This place is so attractive they will come here.”

But of course, we can't get there. As far as we know, “You can't get there from here”. We don't know the way. We've been going around in circles, the wrong way up one way streets, following what we thought was the right way only to find it's no left turn and we have to go around again. Even if we wanted to go there, we're so hopelessly lost. And we don't even have a map.

And that is the point isn't it. We're lost. Lost. Get it? If you're lost then you don't know the way home. No matter how attractive home is, you don't know how to get there. Even if you want to go there, you can't.

Yeshua had to come and get us. He had to find us and lead us back home. Just like a shepherd with a lost sheep. He has to go and find it. Lost things don't usually find their way home unless someone goes out looking for them.

And that is the case with those around us who are lost too. They're lost. We can make our church attractive, but even then, they are still lost. They still won't know how to get here. As far as they know, they can't get here from there. We need to go and find them and lead them back home.

A generation ago, (at least where I live), the lost were still pretty close to home. They had more “wandered away” than they were “truly lost”. Even as non Christians they had probably grown up with Sunday school. And they knew that God was there, and they knew who Yeshua was. But they had just wandered off for differing reasons. So all that was often needed was a gentle push in the right direction and they could find their way home. Quite often a simple tract or a short conversation, or one sermon from an evangelist would be all it took to get them back on the right path. In those days, (really not long ago at all), churches could get away with being attractational. I still don't think it was the right way to be, but it still kind of worked in the short term. (Of course, in the long term it led to the problems we have today...)

But today. The lost are really lost. They have no understanding of who Yeshua is. They often have very little concept of God, even of any god. They have grown up in a godless atheistic society and been told they are just another animal.

Attractational won't work. They're lost. They need someone to go and find them. They need someone to show them the way. They are so lost they don't even realise they're lost. They have forgotten that there is a home, let alone where it is or how to get there.

They don't need churches which are attractive. They need churches which are missional. Churches which are functioning as a body where every member does its part, which are mission focused, and who are sending people out to find those who are lost. Who tell them about God, and about who Yeshua is, and who lead them home, where people will love them, and teach them, and build them up to become part of that body. People who give them a purpose, and who remind them of their value to God, who has made them in his own image, and who loves them so much that he sent his own son to sacrifice himself to become the way for them to be reconciled with him.

Why aren't they coming to your church? It's not because it isn't attractive enough. It's because they're lost. They need you to go and find them.