

Mission Lab: Listening to God, seeing blue speckles

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Something I have been realizing the past few weeks is that God speaks back. I don't just speak hoping the Lord will work, but I am talking to my Lord who cares, hears and answers. My team and I have been taking intentional time to listen and hear what the Holy Spirit has to say and who he wants us to engage with.

Recently, my team and I sat in silence for five minutes listening. The Lord brought blue speckles to my mind. I thought, "What? God, how are you going to use that?" As we went about our day—all the while searching for blue speckles—we began to engage in coffee evangelism in the afternoon. As we sat at the table about to leave, my friend looked out the window and exclaimed: "Blue speckles! Her scarf has blue speckles!" We saw a Muslim woman with a blue speckled hijab (headscarf) walking into the grocery store below.



We raced down to the grocery store, but Satan clearly wanted to hinder us. The police officer at the door of the grocery store stopped my friends and me, saying that the three of us could not enter with our backpacks. Just the day before, about eight of us had entered with our backpacks with no opposition. So, one of us stayed with the backpacks while the other two rushed in. We speed-walked as we seemed to search the entire store. We did not find the woman in the headscarf until we were headed back to the entrance. She was buying fish. My friend and I stood near pretending to compare the prices of the fish—even though neither of us really like fish!

Eventually, we asked her which kind of fish she liked the best, and that began our conversation with the woman from Iraq. She was so kind and gracious towards us, she even extended an invitation for us to come into her home. We left the grocery store with a plan to call her the next morning to set up a time.

The next morning, I called. No answer. I ended up leaving a voice message. I called again a few hours later. No answer. By this time, I started to get nervous that this meeting would not happen. I called for a third time later in the afternoon while at the same time my entire team was praying that she would answer and be open to meeting. She answered. It was hard to understand, since she is not fluent in English and I don't really know any Arabic, but I got the idea that she might be too busy. All at once, the conversation shifted, and she said that she wanted us to come at 6:30 p.m. that day. What a miracle!

I have met few people as hospitable as our hosts were that day. We talked with our new friend from Iraq and her husband for almost two hours, but it seemed that the time flew by. It was such a wonderful time. During the whole time that we were talking, I was praying God would open a bridge in the conversation for me to bring up the gospel, because I did not want to force it. I prayed that the couple would ask questions.

Randomly, the husband asked us, "Are you happy?" This was a perfect bridge. I went on to ask if I could share what changed my life and brought me the greatest joy. They wanted to hear, so I shared the gospel with them. That was probably the first time that they had ever heard the gospel message. They responded with interest and respect. We can celebrate that they heard the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Because my partner and I were leaving town, we wanted to connect our new friend with someone who lived there long term. Although nobody was available to come and meet the Iraqi couple before we left, my friend and I

decided to go and see them one last time. We called the number, but a recording said that it was out of service. On faith, we ended up going to the apartment complex, hoping they would be there so we could say goodbye. They were overjoyed to see us and welcomed us with open arms and lots of food. The whole time, I was praying for God to open a door for them to get connected with Christians who lived in that city. Toward the end of the conversation, we learned our new friend from Iraqw wanted to learn and improve her English. There are Christians in the city who teach English as a way to share the gospel. So, we were able to exchange numbers and connect them with people whou could continue to show them the love of Jesus. It is evident that God sees, loves and wants connection with this couple from Iraq.

Oddly enough, that headscarf that drew our attention actually had a leopard print on it, not blue speckles. It just looked like it had blue speckles from afar. It made me think of Phillip in the Bible. God told him to go to Gaza. He never got to Gaza, but he had to be going that direction to get to the Ethiopian eunuch in the chariot. It was not about the destination but the person God was guiding him to. It was never about the blue speckles but about the woman God was guiding us to meet.

Madison Bundy, a student at Midwestern State University, has been serving in an Oklahoma City ministry to refugees with Mission Lab. Go Now Missions developed Mission Lab for students whose travel options were restricted due to the COVID-19, providing them opportunities to serve locally or regionally.