

The Basque Call

...

The Body of Christ is needed to help build the Basque Church



The Call



Go and make disciples of all **nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Jesus (Matthew 28: 19-20 - NIV)



WHAT IS A NATION?

A nation is a large body of **people** united by common descent, history, culture and language, inhabiting a particular country or territory. **God made people, not countries.**



The Basque Country / País Vasco / Pays Basque / Baskenland / شنكشپ لادالپ ... is a literal translation of “**Euskal Herria**” and is commonly used to define a geographical area. However, in Basque, “*herria*” has two meanings: “*country*” but also “*people*”.

The Basque nation is one of the oldest in Europe, divided by **politics and borders** yet united in **history, culture** and **language**. In order to make disciples of this nation, it is essential to understand all of these factors that make Basque people unique.

AN UNBELIEVING NATION

A hostile struggle for Basque independence from France and Spain has existed for centuries. Christianity has often been used to justify oppression against Basque people, from burning “witches” to outlawing the language. It is no surprise therefore to see a significant social departure from the state-imposed religion by a suspicious, resentful and even angry demographic. Furthermore, many Basques are quick to embrace anything but Christianity, with special attention given to mythology, new-age and pagan beliefs that are a tempting, fertile pasture for the spiritually inquisitive.



Basque street sign that says:
“We believe in Basque here” (i.e. not Christianity)



Banner in Elorrio: “We have won hell. We don’t need heaven”

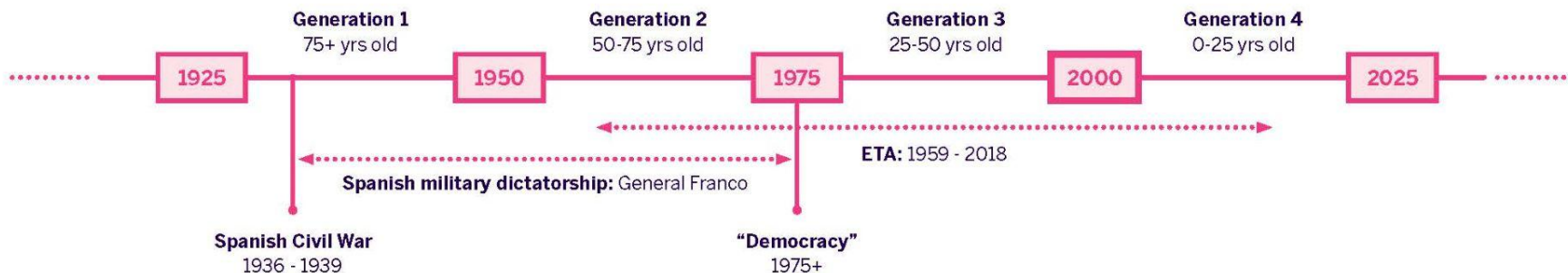


Feminist march in Bilbao: “We are the daughters of the witches you couldn’t burn. Our body, our land!”



A temporary bar (txosna) during festivals in Bilbao decorated as a **Vatican Butchers**, depicting Jesus and his body as pieces of meat.

EUSKAL HERRIA: THE BASQUE NATION



Generation 1 - 75+ yrs old

Lived through a Spanish military dictatorship under General Franco, who used Christianity (Catholicism) to justify oppressive actions. Going to Catholic mass and speaking Spanish (“Cristiano”) was obligatory. Basque language and culture were banned, institutions and political organisations abolished and people killed, tortured and imprisoned for their political beliefs. Faith is limited to attending mass.

Generation 2 - 50-75 yrs old

They also experienced dictatorship. Brought up Catholic many have now left the faith, perhaps only occasionally attending mass for funerals, weddings, confirmation, holy communion and infant baptisms. Saints days and Christian festivals are important, but more of a ritual or an excuse for a party. A “do as you are told” generation, upholds family values, customs and traditions. Many will speak Basque but not be able to read/write it.

Generation 3 - 25-50 yrs old

The anti-establishment, punk-rock, rebellious generation that enjoys doing the opposite to what their ancestors were forced to do. Largely rejectful, sceptical, cautious and apprehensive of the Church and Christian religion in all its forms. Pre-Christian Basque pagan roots are attractive, and many are politically vocal. Socialism is the new religion. They also lived through the fight between ETA and the Spanish and French states.

Generation 4 - 0-25 yrs old

Anything goes. Religion in schools is replaced by secularism, science, mindfulness, gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights and feminism. All young people should speak/ understand Basque but many resort to Spanish as it is the language of the media. Basque cultural traditions fight to survive alongside global trends and consumer-based fashions. History goes in one ear and out of the other.



Hiltzen garenean ez dau ezebez. Jaio aurretik bezala.

When we die there is nothing. Just like before we were born.

Gotzon (A good friend, photographer at our wedding and Joseba's colleague)



Esango balit nire semeak homosexuala edo ETAko kidea dela, ez litzaidake axolako.

Baina kristau bihurtu dela esango balit, albisterik txarrena izango zen.

If my son told me he was homosexual or a member of ETA, I wouldn't mind. But if he told me he had become a born-again Christian, that would be the worst news possible!

Gorka (Joseba's friend and previous colleague)



Ea dakigu gure haurra mutila ala neska den. Berak erabakiko dau.

We don't know if our new-born baby is a boy or a girl. They will decide.

Ekaitz (Basque friend and brother of an ETA activist currently serving 40 years in prison)



The Heart of God - Luke 15: 20-24

20 So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

22 “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23** Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate.

The approach was to look, embrace the wayward son and celebrate his return.



The Challenge

No Basque Church - Who Will Answer the Call?

How does one pursue the Great Commission when the Basque people's experience with organized religion has been offensive, oppressive and unwelcoming?

How does one pursue the Great Commission to a people who ground their identity in their language? “Euskaldun” = one who has euskara

How does one pursue the Great Commission in Basque Country where there is no organized Basque speaking body of believers (church) to carry on the work?



Time For A Change: Traditional Missions Strategies Have Failed

The question is whether we are open to exploring why these strategies have failed:

1. The current strategies in play the past 50 years, evangelism and church planting, have been ineffective in establishing a Basque speaking church.
2. The mantra “Church planting is the best methodology of evangelism under the sun” still guides the minds of the leaders of the Christian movement.
3. Despite the fact that very few missionaries to Basque Country stay longer than 6 years, with very little fruit, we continue to plow money and people into ineffective strategies.
4. Turn the numbers any way you want, and you will still get the same results.”



Time For A Change: A Mindshift Is Needed

- We need to rethink the way we do cross-cultural missions.
- Jesus was a revolutionary. His strategy was so ingenious that it not only survived but thrived through the first three centuries after his death.
- Reengaging His way of thinking gives us the best chance to change culture.
- **It is establishing a new culture, a new way of thinking about an old idea.**



Time For A Change: Disciples-Making Disciples Focus

“Jesus didn’t say, “Go plant churches.” He said “Go make disciples.”... It is clear throughout history that *you don’t always get disciples when you plant churches; but if you make disciple-making disciples, you always get the church as Jesus intended it.*” - Roy Moran

So, in a culture where there are no Basque speaking churches, the culture has an identity in their language and the social network is so exclusive - the focus needs to be on making disciple-making disciples.

How do we go about making disciple-making disciples?



Time For A Change: Changing The Wine Skins

“We need to listen to Jesus. Jesus said, “Teach to obey!” Our disciple-making efforts should aim at obedience, not knowledge. We don’t need more teachers; we need more learning designers to build obedience-focused, accountable disciple-making experiences.

If we are going to invite people to the table to read the Bible and discover what God has to say about life, we need to provide the starting points in the Bible. We need to know the main obstacles that exist between the audience we are attempting to connect with and the Creator God.



Time For A Change: Acknowledge the Basque as a UPG

“An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance. The original Joshua Project editorial committee selected the criteria less than or equal to 2% Evangelical Christian and less than or equal to 5% Professing Christians.”

- The Joshua Project

The Basque evangelicals are less than 1% with no Basque speaking church.



Time For A Change: Establish Kingdom Outposts

Kingdom Outposts: Locations in Basque Country where the light of Kingdom living is to be seen and experienced. A place where Basque speakers are welcomed for who they are and find answers to their questions about being human, life's purpose, the Bible, Jesus and their Creator.

The Outposts have Basque believers who have been accepted by the community or workers who have assimilated into the Basque culture. They have the heart of God, pray for opportunities to engage with the persons of peace to discover a relationship with Jesus and the good news of the Kingdom which is passed on through their social network.

Growth from the Outposts would be the seed for an indigenous Basque church.



Time For A Change: Involving The Local Church - A Collaboration

A collaboration actively involves the local church by:

- Identifying a town where they want to see Jesus made known.
- Collaborating with the disciple making and church planting efforts in the Basque town.
- Sending people on short term and long term assignments to serve at the Outposts.
- Support the Outposts prayerfully, financially and practically.
- Provide opportunities for **Reverse Mission** to happen through the church.



Time For A Change: Involving The Local Church - Reverse Mission

Reverse Mission can also be described as “bringing the mission field home.”

One manner of developing relationships is to bring the mission field “home” literally. By importing the mission field to the homes of Christians, Basques are able to see, hear, and experience the gospel through the committed “love” of their Christian family.

When the mission field comes home, Basques aren't the only ones who see more clearly the Kingdom of Christ. The short-term mission family sees Christ at work through the call to host. They continue to see Christ at work as they pray for and engage with their new Basque family.



Time For A Change: Different Way, Different Results

Kingdom Outposts and Reverse Mission benefit each other.

- Relational Capital is increased through the exchange.
 - By hosting a Basque student in your home you become part of the extended Basque family. This allows you to enter their inner circle of family and friends to talk about significant things.
 - The Outpost gains a greater amount of respect and trust because of the exchange.
 - There will be an increased ability to discuss spiritual things and challenge seekers to follow Jesus..
- The local church and families gain a new perspective on faith and life.
 - A cross cultural experience forces a family to unpack what it means to be a witness for God.
 - The local church begins to understand and experience the meaning Acts 1:8.
 - Life long friendships will form with the teams on the ground and the Basque family.



The Body Of Christ - It Takes A Team To Fulfill The Dream

The church gathered locally.

The church scattered globally.

We need each other to fulfill the assignment to make disciple-making disciples.

We need to rely on the authority and power of God to use our efforts to further His Kingdom in Basque Country.



The Power Of God: The One With All Authority Is With Us And In Us

Matthew 28: 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my Witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”



Contact Us

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