

Faith Report

Reaching: Global Missions

By Ananda Kumar

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Matthew 28:18-20

Speaking to his disciples, the resurrected Lord Jesus says *all* authority in *all* corners of the universe has been given to him. He is King of the universe, and his disciples are to proclaim this good news to all nations so that people may become subjects of his kingdom.

The proclamation of the kingship of Christ in the light of his resurrection and finished work on the cross is the *good news* we proclaim: freedom from the slavery of sin and Satan, and liberation from injustice and tyrannical rulers. Christ has been enthroned as King but his kingdom will not be fully realized until it is populated with people from all nations. The Great Commission is given to us, His church, and so we are compelled to do missions.

The gospel is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes. Proclamation of the gospel is not undertaken out of duty or

obligation but out of a personal experience of grace and mercy from Jesus, the ultimate Good Samaritan. The parable of the Good Samaritan is a holistic proclamation in word and deed demanding that we, out of compassion, serve even those whom we might consider undeserving.

As Jesus' disciples, we are ambassadors to bring an authoritative pronouncement from King Jesus. The nations believe Satan's lie, rejecting God's rule in favor of human rule which leads to oppression and corruption. The goal of missions is to make disciples of all nations, pointing them to the King of the universe. We seek to gently implore people to repent and turn to Christ and pay allegiance to him as Lord and King. This allegiance includes taking up the cross and following him, which paradoxically brings freedom, life and peace.

How can we take up this mission, and have the power to accomplish it? The resurrected Christ, the King, the Lord of heaven and earth says "*behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" Tim Chester, an author and leader in the Crowded House, an international church planting movement, says, "the pattern of New Testament discipleship is ... suffering followed by glory reflecting the pattern of the cross and resurrection." The church today tends to short circuit the order in

this pattern, just as it did during the lives of Christ's original disciples. Chester further elaborates the theology of the cross versus the theologies of glory:

Theologies of glory... seek to understand God primarily on the basis of human reason, creation, spiritual experience or miracles... By choosing to be known indirectly through the cross, God hides himself from the arrogant. To recognize God in the absence of God; to recognize victory in defeat; to recognize glory in shame requires faith. It creates an epistemology of sovereign grace so that no-one may boast before him; in which the foolish and weak shame the wise and strong.¹

We experience the resurrection power of the risen Lord so that we might live the life of the cross, fueled by the promise of our own resurrection. This resurrection hope makes for strong missions and strong discipleship. The outcome of this subversive movement of God is communities of light multiplying and expanding as disciples of Jesus until God may be all in all (1Cor.15:28). ♦

¹Tim Chester, *The Kingdom of God is at Hand: Eschatology and Missions*.

Ananda Kumar is an elder at FCF and chairman of the missions committee. He is married to Sahayini, who is currently doing a medical residency. They are both from Sri Lanka. *



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*United that the
world would
know*

*33 ...even as I try to
please everyone in every
way. For I am not
seeking my own good
but the good of many,
so that they may be
saved.
1 Cor. 10:33*

Introducing the New PLYP Learning Center Director



We welcome a familiar face as the new director of the Pen Lucy Youth Partnership (PLYP) Learning Center ! Elisa Campbell has been working part time as the church office administrative assistant since last November. After graduating from the University of Colorado at Boulder, she worked for Opera Colorado in the Education and Outreach Department for two years to bring arts programs (mainly musicals for students to see) into schools. See the December 2010 Faith Report for Elisa's full bio.

The Pen Lucy Action Network (PLAN) board has a strong desire to perfect the existing programs within PLAN, including the PLYP sports programs, and provide excellence to children in the community. Elisa is excited about this opportunity to participate in the revitalization of the LC and looks forward to helping update it with new computers and tutoring programs that compliment Maryland state standards. Her desire is that LC students will gain confidence and skills for their schoolwork.

Elisa also wants to ensure that the LC communicates its mission to local schools and the neighborhood, creating partnerships with school leaders and teachers who can then recommend the LC to parents and guardians. Welcome, Elisa! ♦

CALENDAR

- Mar. 4 Concert of Prayer 7.00 p.m.**
- Mar. 6 Discovery Welcome Luncheon**
- Mar. 9 Faith Leadership Night 7.00 p.m.**
- Mar. 12 PLYP Basketball Banquet**
- Apr. 1-3 Women's Retreat at Black Rock**

Bits and Pieces

- Several new members were presented to the church in February: Erik and Cindy Crown, Diane Ecklund, and Tim and Brianne Phillips. Charlie Crown was also baptized. Welcome everyone!
- Congratulations to Stephen Stake and Eileen Hill on their engagement. They are planning an August wedding.
- Becky McMillen, the BCS Development Associate, is leaving to become the Donor Stewardship Coordinator at the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Happily, we will still see Becky and husband Mark around at FCF. Thanks for all your hard work, Becky.
- We are glad that Eileen Hill, the former director of the Learning Center, is continuing to serve PLYP as a Learning Center supervisor. She takes the place of Blake Scheidt, who serves as PLYP sports director. More about what Blake is up to in the next Faith Report!

Farewell to the Shivelys

We are sorry to say farewell to Michael and Laurie Shively and their children, who are moving to Richmond, Virginia, at the end of March. Michael and Laurie first met at FCF and are facilitators of the He Knows My Name covenant group. Michael has served as an elder at FCF for several years and is one of our Sunday worship leaders. We are going to miss you Michael, Laurie, Elijah, Zachary and Emily. May God go with you as you start this new phase of your lives in Virginia. ♦

**A complete version of Ananda Kumar's original article on page 1 is available at the Welcome Table on Sundays.*