

Faith Report

Reconciling:

by Stan Long

One of the things that I appreciate about FCF is that, long before most of us were here, Pastor Craig and the early leaders organized things around six core values. These six Rs are Rejoicing, Reconciling, Restoring, Renewing, Reaching and Relying.

One of those Rs—Reconciliation—emerged from the “three Rs” of the philosophy of John Perkins, founder of the Christian Community Development Association. Early on in Faith’s founding, Craig and Maria, Bill Bolling, Arlette Lindsay, and others in the congregation embraced Dr. Perkins’ three principles.

During the very hot summer of 1980, just before FCF came into formal existence, I was serving on staff with InterVarsity at Morgan State University. Arlette Lindsay and Yvonne Harris were volunteer staff. In August, Arlette and I flew with several Morgan student leaders to a week-long InterVarsity Black Student Conference in Atlanta. Afterwards, we drove to Jackson, Mississippi to see, hear and experience Voice of Calvary Ministries, led by John Perkins,



Dr. John Perkins

who was becoming a hero to many young evangelicals who longed to see biblical change to the racial situation in America.

Several years later, as FCF sought to become a church centered on Perkins’ foundational principles, it became clear that reconciliation is TOUGH! As humans we tend to stay safely with what we understand and with people who understand us. Missions experts call this the “homogeneous unit principle,” which is a scholarly way of saying “Birds of a feather flock together.” I think that this axiom accurately describes our human nature. We prefer our own kind, hanging out with people who get our kind of jokes, eat our kind of food, like our kind of music, share our views on politics, sociology, etc. Unless we are very intentional, this very human instinct contradicts the John 13 vision of Jesus for believers to be a unified body. *“By this will all men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another.” John 13: 35.*

Over twenty years ago, the FCF leadership decided that if we were ever going to be a congregation that experienced authentic, heart-to-heart, reconciled relationships, our small group ministry would need to be re-shuffled periodically. We are currently in that process and everyone is being asked to specify which evening(s) of the week they can commit to a cove-

nant group. What makes a church like FCF a rich experience is the various diversities that we experience each week in our small groups, whether generational, racial, or socio-economic.

We believe that our Sunday worship experience initially stretches people’s preferences but after a while we become comfortable with “the FCF way.” It is only as we go deeper and get involved in the lives of people by eating their food, watching their babies, and praying with them through their fears and anxieties that we truly experience the reconciliation of the community. As we rub shoulders together in covenant group we begin to see and feel and say things like “I may not understand your family system or why you like that kind of food or why you raise your kids that way or why you clap on the wrong beat... but when your sister was sick and we prayed for you we all felt together the presence and unity of Christ in a powerful way.”

Sadly, there are few people in our city who experience these moments. Our world often majors on our differences. As we experience Christ in one another, however, we truly taste the unity for which Christ died. God wants to bless not only you, but others around you in the ministry of reconciliation. We stand side by side

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*United that the
world would
know*

*¹¹ Here there is not
Greek and Jew,
circumcised and
uncircumcised, bar-
barian, Scythian,
slave, or free; but
Christ is all, and in
all.
Col 3:11*

Reconciling—cont'd

in public worship each week and speak words of faith and hope.

We gather celebrating the reconciliation that Christ purchased for us at Calvary. But it doesn't become really real, or authentic, until we love one another in the face-to-face encounters that happen each week in covenant groups.

Footnote: The annual CCDA conference is being held in Indianapolis on October 12-16. It is always a wonderful time. If you want to have a more in-depth look at how Christians are continuing to address the many difficult matters of reconciliation and community outreach, why not consider attending with other FCF members this year. Go to www.cdda.org or talk to Andy DeVos, Blake and Leeza Scheidt, Emily Sipple or Carsten Vala if you would like more information. ♦

Youth Ministry Changes



We welcome Army Arnold back to FCF as Director of Youth Ministry. Army rejoined the FCF staff in July 2011. He has served FCF in a variety of ways over the past decade, including as interim music director, choir director, and interim youth director. Army has a Master of Divinity from Reformed Theological Seminary (Orlando) and serves as the Area Director for Young Life Baltimore Urban. He and his wife, Jan, have been married for over 25 years and have four children.

Blake Scheidt will continue as the Assistant Director of Youth Ministry working alongside Army and focusing on high school youth. Army will focus on middle school. ♦

FCF Annual Picnic

Come join us for fun, food and fellowship at the annual FCF picnic after the second service on Sunday, August 28 at Meadowood Park, off Falls Road, in Baltimore County. You must sign up if you wish to attend. The cost is \$5 per person up to a maximum of \$20 per family. Children under 5 years old attend free.

Please sign up and pay online or in the church lobby on Sundays. FCF will provide meat. Please bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share.

We also need volunteers for set up and clean up. Please see any member of the picnic committee (Jeff Beans, Emily Sipple, Joan Nelson and Dee Dee Race) if you are willing to help. ♦

Bits and Pieces

- Congratulations to new member Debra Roley Edwards who was presented to the church in July. Welcome Debra!
- Congratulations to Phil and Brittany Davis on the arrival of Jackson Kade on July 7!
- We welcome Amira Jaye Van Arendonk who was baptized into the family of God in July. Amira is the daughter of Kyle and Katie, and baby sister of Anika.
- Pastor Craig is having back surgery on August 23 and will be 'out of commission' for a few weeks. Please pray for successful surgery and healing.

CALENDAR

Aug. 10 No Faith Leadership Night

Aug. 28 FCF Picnic at Meadowood Park, 12:30-6 p.m.

Sep. 5 Office closed for Labor Day

Sep. 11 Ministry Fair