

# Radical LifeLines

News from Radical Life Ministries



New land next to the church



Future Facilities: Centro De Educación Bíblica Del Pacifico

## Growing Forward

Over two thousand years ago, Jesus was born into poverty and raised by unassuming parents in an unimportant town.

### Mission

He never made a movie, recorded a sermon, wrote a book, uploaded a video on YouTube or had Instagram or a Facebook page. Despite these facts, today Jesus has millions of followers who believe He was miraculously born of a virgin, lived a perfect life, died on a cross and three days later, raised from the dead. His followers believe He fulfilled all of the prophecies concerning the Messiah and that He made possible the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. How did such a powerful movement begin?

First, Jesus knew His mission; He was sure of what he was sent to accomplish. After His baptism and temptation in the desert, Jesus immediately began His healing and teaching ministry. During this time, Jesus spent an entire afternoon in the region of Galilee, healing and casting out evil spirits. The next day, the people begged Him to stay, but Jesus maintained His focus and responded, "I must proclaim the good news of

the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent" (Luke 4:43). This was the first of many occasions He stated His mission. Jesus knew the mission would

*In a way, God is a team in Himself (Father, Son, Holy Spirit and They are One).*

take time and His time on earth was limited. He kept looking ahead to the next town. He knew what His mission was; He was sure of what He was sent to accomplish.

### Mission + Team

Second, Jesus chose a team to carry out the mission. After stating His mission, the next event recorded in all four gospels is the calling of the twelve disciples. Jesus could have easily carried out the mission by Himself. If He went on the mission alone He would have spared Himself the misunderstandings and immaturity at times of the disciples. No doubt, Jesus

was completely capable and could have accomplished the mission without the frustration of a team; however, He chose to have a team.

Think about how God uses teamwork for a minute. He can certainly do whatever He desires alone but prefers to work through teamwork. In a way, God is a team in Himself (Father, Son, Holy Spirit and They are One).

His plan of redemption for Planet Earth has always involved some sort of a team. In the garden of Eden, God chose a small team known as a family. As His plan developed, He chose Abraham and from him made a larger team. This team became known as the nation of Israel. God sent Jesus to be born into this nation to play a key part in His plan and have a unique position on the team. In fact, God's entire plan of redemption revolves around Jesus. He is the Creator, Owner, Head and Reason the team exists. He is the purpose of all of God's teamwork since before the creation of the universe. (John 1:1; Col. 1:15-20; Rev. 13:8) Therefore having these roles, Jesus is the only One who has the authority to define what the team does and does *not* do (mission) and how to do it (strategy).

*continued on page two*

### Mission + Team + Strategy

Jesus is above everyone and everything else, but He chose a team and called them to be His disciples. He then instructed the disciples to continue His mission to "... proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God" (Lk. 4:43) and gave them the strategy "Go therefore and make disciples..." (Mt. 28:18). The disciples obeyed Jesus, and soon they made a big team of disciples called *the church*. The church is basically Jesus' team that continues His mission, using His strategy. The strategy of making disciples is a process that takes the most precious resource in a person's life, time. Jesus knew His mission. Jesus chose a team to carry out His mission. He gave them a strategy to implement the mission. The mission would require time.

Several years ago, business expert Jim Collins wrote a popular book entitled "Good to Great." The research done to complete the book showed that all great companies had something in common: First they choose the correct people, then together they decided what the company would do. The author calls this the principle of "First Who, Then What." The book is thought-provoking and recognizes the importance of a strong team.

Of course, as a missionary and pastor, I'm always thinking about the church, so the idea in the book made me ask the question, "Could this principle be applied to the church?" *Yes and no. Yes*, most churches can decide *WHO* is on a ministry team, especially when the church has the ability to employ team members. But *no*, the church does not decide *WHAT* to do. The church belongs to Jesus, and He has already specifically defined the mission and

strategy of the church.

*Let's review...*

- 1) Jesus' mission is to proclaim the *Good News* of the kingdom of God.
- 2) Jesus chose a team (His church) to carry out His mission.
- 3) Jesus' strategy is to make disciples.
- 4) The making of disciples takes time.

### Mission + Team + Strategy + Context

We have a clear mission and strategy, but before we get started, we must consider our context. The context people live in is made up of many different factors—history, geography, language, culture, economy, etc. In every context, there are challenges to making disciples and multiplying churches. Every place is unique, and every church is different. Some of the major challenges in our context to church growth and multiplication are:

- 1) **History** – Historically the great reformation of the church did not make it to Costa Rica. The reformers of Europe took the Bible to North America and the Spanish took the Catholic Church to Latin America. Let's just say the evangelism strategies were very different, and the views concerning the authority of God's word were very different. The role of the Bible historically in Latin American society has been vastly different than in North America. There are many results, but basically it boils down to this: in Latin America, there are far fewer churches, seminaries, schools, ministries, spiritual resources and Bible knowledge in general. In other words, there is a lack of spiritual infrastructure or in most cases, *none at all*.
- 2) **Families** – The families in Jaco are torn apart. There are very few families where both spouses are in the home. Most kids come from single parent homes.
- 3) **First Generation Believers** – Around 98% of the people in the church are first generation Christians. There are very few older people in the church to follow as



Praise God for 26 baptisms so far in 2018

examples in the faith. The average age in the church is very young (20 - 30 years old).

- 4) **Sexual Immorality** – Costa Rica is the world's second most popular destination in the world for sex tourism. Thailand is number one. Jacó Beach is the most visited destination in Costa Rica for this type of "tourism." This "industry" has too many side effects on a society to list here. But basically, it erodes people's concept of right and wrong and how they value and relate to one another. It makes this activity seem completely normal. It's very confusing for everyone and especially for children.
- 5) **High Cost Of Living** – Our congregation are hard working people. The many hours they spend working and low wages they earn is difficult. The minimum wage here is \$2.25 per hour, and the cost of living is around double that of the state of Florida. They do not have much free time to be discipled nor can they serve much at church.
- 6) **Lack Of Available Time** – The adults' busy work schedules allow very limited time for discipleship. The weekly church service is about an hour long, and those who participate in the small groups receive an additional hour of study. The children only get to attend the weekly worship service and children's church. The rest of the time during the week the children are in a very spiritually sick and corrupt community. (In a week's time, that's one



Thank you for giving! 56 kids at the Rancho Biblico received school supplies

hour being influenced at church versus 167 hours being influenced by the world).

7) **Geography** – Playa Jaco is located on the Pacific coast, almost two hours from the capital city, San Jose. Almost all of the spiritual infrastructure is located in San Jose (Seminaries, Christian Schools, study resources and supplies, Bibles, etc.)

## Mission + Team + Strategy + Context = Solution!

*The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the solution.* Staying focused on Jesus' mission of proclaiming the *Good News* of the kingdom and His strategy of making disciples that make disciples (and as a result, grow and multiply the church) *is the solution.* We are here to preach the Gospel and grow and multiply the church. Making disciples takes time, therefore we need to intentionally organize our time with people.

## The two-part plan to implement the strategy of making disciples...

**Part One...**We believe one way the church can organize more time to make disciples is to establish a Christian Academy For Children. The school would be a tool for the church to carry out God's strategy of making disciples. Kids are in school seven hours a day, five days a week, and that would give us **35 hours of discipleship time with the children!** The school would be a bilingual private Christian school with affordable prices and accredited by the Costa Rican ministry of education. The school would be focused on the children from the families of the church, but open to others. There are Christian schools in San Jose, but none on the Pacific coast; *we would be the first!*

**Part Two...**The New Testament is clear that churches need leadership. Therefore, churches need a plan to develop leaders. Basically, the plan to train leaders is like a intensified discipleship for those called to lead. The church is God's team, and every team needs leadership. In the past twelve years developing leaders in Costa Rica, we have sent several members of the congregation to San Jose to be trained at a seminary. However, we have learned that this is not the best model to train leaders in our context.

Seminaries are powerful tools for training church leaders in some contexts. Pamela and I are graduates of a traditional Bible College that we dearly love. Our years of formal study were wonderful. It was one of the best decisions of our life—in the context of the United States. As much we cherish the experience God allowed us to have during our time of training, we have learned (for many reasons) that model is not reproducible or sustainable in many other contexts around the world, including Playa Jaco.

We believe God is teaching us to rediscover the simplicity of His mission to proclaim the Gospel and to make disciples. God gave both the mission and the strategy to the church. We are rediscovering that the model of training leaders in the book of Acts is *local churches training their own leaders, then sending those leaders to plant other local churches.* Also, we see established local churches receiving

trained leaders from other churches to help with leadership development. The model revolves around the local church. After all, Jesus said, "I will build My church and the gates of hell will

not prevail against it." All of the New Testament books were written to local churches. The ultimate responsibility of proclaiming the Gospel and making disciples falls on the church. *The church cannot delegate these tasks to any other group or organization.*

What we have been learning is the model of sending potential church leaders off to another city to receive training from a traditional seminary is not reproducible or sustainable in our context. The local church—in our context—must have a more simple and less expensive way to train leaders.

We believe the idea God is putting together is the local church would establish their own **Center For Leadership Studies** (Centro de Estudios Bíblicos del Pacífico). In other words the local church would have their own Bible Institute for training leaders. (*Think:* Moody Bible Church, Moody Bible Institute). The Bible Institute, like the Christian Academy, would be a tool for the church to make disciples.

The Institute would use an accredited study plan that allows the local church to develop their own leaders in partnership with The Antioch School Of Church Planting And Leadership Development. In our case, the church's future Christian Academy can easily share the facilities with the church's future Bible Institute. Everything is under the local church. It just seems more like a Biblical model and fits more with our context. After all, if the two disciple-making tools are tied to the church, it has a greater chance of success, considering that Jesus is building His church.



Workshop ministry moves to the new property



ing from a traditional seminary is not reproducible or sustainable in our context. The local church—in our context—must have a more simple and less expensive way to train leaders.

We believe the idea God is putting together is the local church would establish their own **Center**

**For Leadership Studies** (Centro de Estudios Bíblicos del Pacífico). In other words the local church would have their own Bible Institute for training leaders. (*Think:* Moody Bible Church, Moody Bible Institute). The Bible Institute, like the Christian Academy, would be a tool for the church to make disciples.

The Institute would use an accredited study plan that allows the local church to develop their own leaders in partnership with The Antioch School Of Church Planting And Leadership Development. In our case, the church's future Christian Academy can easily share the facilities with the church's future Bible Institute. Everything is under the local church. It just seems more like a Biblical model and fits more with our context. After all, if the two disciple-making tools are tied to the church, it has a greater chance of success, considering that Jesus is building His church.



Thank you for praying for the small group Bible studies

continued on page four

## Growing Forward *continued from page three*

### How can you help with this process?

#### 1) Pray

- *Pray for the team...* that God will bring the correct people to be part of the team who will establish the *Christian Academy For Children*.
- *Pray we will be approved for all construction permits.*
- *Pray for the church's small group Bible studies called "First Principles"...* that more people will participate and be firmly established in God's word, and that those who advance in these studies will begin new study groups and multiply, so that through these studies God will call some participants to the leadership of the church and others to begin new churches.

#### 2) Give

This year our goal is to complete Phase I of the development of the new land that includes: Fill dirt and construction site preparations, perimeter fencing, access road, main parking and new church entrance. Total cost for phase one: \$136,000 (for a detailed list of projected costs you may visit our website: [radicallifeministries.com](http://radicallifeministries.com))

## In Other News

### First Principles – Bible Studies

The church has three small Bible study groups located in different neighborhoods. We are seeing tremendous progress in the lives of those who participate. There are about thirty people who meet each week to study the Scriptures and pray for one another.

**Baptisms** This year to date, twenty-six people have made the decision to be baptized!

**Back to School** We praise God that, because of your generosity at the beginning of this year, we had the opportunity to equip fifty-seven children from the river community with school supplies!

**Workshop Ministry Update** We are thankful to announce the workshop ministry has been moved to the new property! At the original location, the workshop was basically made of tin and as a result, broken into on many occasions. Thanks to the generosity of a friend of the ministry, the workshop's new home is a secure steel shipping container. Because it's near the church, we also have security guards at night, security cameras and good lighting. This will be a game changer! Thank for so much for your prayers and support! May God bless you!



Pamela & David Knapp

### David Knapp

President/Founder

Radical Life Ministries

Support Address: **RADICAL LIFE MINISTRIES** | P.O. Box 1248 | Keystone Heights, FL 32656 | \*All gifts are tax deductible

Post Office Box 1248  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656



PRRST STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
MARIETTA, GA  
PERMIT #215