

Dear Family,

When Jesus said, “. . . go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .”, do you think he meant you? As in, ‘you should go . . .’?

And, if not specifically ‘you’, then did he not mean collectively ‘you’, as in all of you, or, perhaps, ‘all of you there in the church . . .’?

What do you think? Is this charge to us specifically? Is it our commission?

And what about that ‘all nations’ business? Do you think Jesus was serious? That we should go and make disciples of *all* nations? If so, one wonders, how do we do that?

Truly, in Matthew 28 where we find Jesus speaking these words, he is speaking directly to his disciples - eleven men, to be precise. And he was completely serious. He gave a charge to go, to make disciples, to baptize, and to teach - not just around the neighborhood, but to all nations. Wow! Can you imagine? Must have seemed daunting. It seems daunting now. But, let’s not forget, Jesus also offered the ultimate resource, for Jesus said, “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Now tell me, how might the church at Central play a role in this very commission? Seems the time is right. The congregation is on a good footing: a sound preacher brings lessons regularly from the pulpit, elders are in place shepherding the flock, additional deacons are being sought to serve in specific ministries, members are positive and upbeat, anxious to serve. Things are good. Even the bills are being paid. So, I ask you, what better time could there be to engage for the Lord?

We are a blessed people. You know that. We’re deeply loved by our God – the time is right, we simply *MUST* share.

As is often the case, God makes opportunities available. An international opportunity has come our way here at Central, and it’s time for us to look at this seriously.

Are we ready to go to work on the world stage?

Regarding the entirety of the world - that is, ‘all nations’ - the United States ranks third in population. With more than 300 million souls living here, it’s actually a distant third behind two other countries: China and India. The two leaders are neck-in-neck, each with about four times as many souls as the United States. China still leads, though perhaps not for long, at 1.3 billion souls. India is on its heels, predicted to overtake China in 2030. Today, they stand at about 1.2 billion souls. That’s billion – with a ‘B’.

India is where an opportunity is calling our name.

In the few minutes it takes to read through this, about 300 more souls will come into being in India. It's growing that fast. And at the present distribution of religions, of those 300, about seven (7) will become Christians. That's right, just seven, if even that many. In the United States, for a similar 300 random people, 236 would become Christians. See why we're considered a Christian nation? Big difference, huh?

Well, in spite of India NOT being a Christian nation, the Lord's church actually has some bright spots on the Indian landscape. Brother Roy Knight has visited here at Central a few times and has shared news of how the Chennai Church of Christ and the Arise Shine Church of Christ Mission (ASCOCM) are faring there. In spite of a vast, overwhelming, and sometimes rather hostile opposing majority, good things are happening: souls are being saved, churches are being established, food is being distributed to the hungry, orphans are being cared for, women are being empowered to make a living, mothers are being attended to safely have their babies – all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is spreading His blessings there through His men and women, through members of His church – just like He intends. How cool is that!

In March of 2012 - yes, next month - Central has been asked to participate in helping train the next generation of preachers and teachers serving in the southeastern city of Chennai. Chennai has about 7.5 million souls – so they need a lot of preachers. A three -day seminar is planned to provide some teaching, and we've been asked to help by providing a presenter. Five hundred (500) are planning to attend this gathering – it's a true thirsting for the Living Water that God's Word has to offer.

Want to go? My son, Nick, and I are planning to go. I will be one of three presenters at the aforementioned seminar, while Nick will be one of two documenting the work there in pictures and video. About 10 days are planned for being in India. Following the seminar, we will visit other churches about the city and rural churches in the region. Also, an island will be visited that was nearly wiped out by a tsunami a few years ago and then brought back to life by God's grace, aided by the members of the nearby Church of Christ in Chennai, who stepped up to bring rescue. It is some good stuff.

While in India, I will be looking at the work there as a possible spot for the Central family to get involved in. Stay tuned, for on Feb 19, I'm borrowing the pulpit from Jason (thanks, Jason!) and will bring the lesson, planning to speak specifically on India and of how we, as a congregation, just might get involved there – and even how you, as an individual, might help.

In the meantime, pray. Bring forth that particularly powerful privilege that God not only allows, but also encourages. Pray for India. Have you ever done that? Specifically, I mean. Start praying for the 1.2 billion people who live on the exact opposite side of our world, in ways we can't even remotely imagine, and who – if anybody does - need God. Quite frankly, it's the least we can do. So, let's start there, as we start taking the good news of Jesus Christ to all nations.

Your brother,

*Mitch Holman*