



ALCOE IV at Kuala Lumpur 1996

THIRD ASIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON EVANGELISM (ALCOE III)

November 23 - 28, 1992

On November 22 and 23, 1992, almost every flight into Jakarta, Indonesia brought people who, after their arrival, began hunting for a sign with the message "ALCOE III". These sign-seeking travellers were delegates to the Third Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelism who wanted to know how to reach their destination, the Wisma Kinasih Conference Centre in Bogor, West Java.

By the evening of November 23, 1992, one hundred and twenty delegates had arrived from thirteen Asian countries. As an official from the Indonesian Government's Department of Religion sounded the gong to start the conference, the airport scene took on a deeper spiritual meaning. The purpose of this conference sponsored by the Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation (ALCWE) also became clear: to take an accurate evaluative look at the Asian evangelisation scenario. The theme of the conference was equally clear: "Until All Asia Hears the Word of the Lord!" "But how?" was the burning question on every heart and mind.

The conference was planned and directed by an all-Asia team, including Conference Director Rev David Chan and Programme Director Canon James Wong, both of Singapore. The objectives of ALOE III were to consider the progress of the gospel in Asia, to grapple with the obstacles of evangelisation, and share ways of overcoming these obstacles. Much time was given to listening to God's Word and praying together. Spontaneous prayer meetings were conducted by the delegates to pray and intercede for the nations in Asia.

Dr Petrus Octavianus' welcome address queried the delegates, "What did Jesus see when He looked at Asia and at the world?" He pointed to three characteristics of Jesus' worldview: geographically inclusive, anthropocentric and evangelistic. "So our view, if it is like Jesus' view, must be inclusive." Dr John Cho of Korea, the Chairman

of ALCWE, in his opening address followed by reminding the gathering that "To reach the whole Asia takes the whole Asian Church working together." These addresses set the parameters for the deliberations and exchanges during the course of the conference.

Dr Saphir Athyal of Pune, India, who was one of the pioneers of ALCWE fifteen years ago, gave the history and background of the Asia Lausanne movement and its relationship with the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation. He reflected on the Indonesian State Philosophy - Panchshila. Asian evangelicals should reiterate belief in the One and Only God and like the motto at the bottom of the Indonesian national seal, proclaim our "Unity in Diversity".

Ajith Fernando of Colombo, Sri Lanka, developed this theme of partnership in evangelism from the Book of Acts, chapters four and five, ending with an exposition on the amazing life and ministry of Barnabas, the son of encouragement. An emphasis on partnership and knowing the model of Jesus were keynotes of the Third Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelism. "Individualism and competition are the enemies of partnership in evangelism," said Fernando.

Four workshops on contemporary pressing issues of Discipleship in Evangelism, Challenge of the New Age Movement, Witnessing to Christ in Post-Marxist Nations, and Emigration were conducted by Dr Daniel Park (Seoul, Korea), Rev Martin Alphonse (Madras, India), Dr Phun Xuan Ho (California, USA) and Rev Chan Hay Him (Hong Kong) respectively.

Each of the four evening speakers continued to build on the groundwork laid by those who preceded. Dr Sundo Kim of Seoul, Korea spoke of the foundations of Christian ministries and emphasised the imperative need for fruitfulness. Rev Caesar Conde's (Manila, Philippines) testimony and biblical sharing clearly showed the place and need for sacrifice and positive faith. "Never give up" was his resounding challenge.

In his briefing to the conference, Lausanne International Director, Tom Houston reminded the delegates that Asia represent the greatest challenge to world evangelisation. "Asia has twenty seven countries

out of forty five with populations that are still less than two percent Christian and in some cases, less than one percent Christian. Asia has the largest number of unreached peoples in the world. Asia has the highest number of restricted access countries. It has the largest number of persecuted Christians." "All these things are true," said Houston, "and yet no one is taking ownership for the task of reaching Asia with the gospel. That is why this conference, with the theme you have chosen, is deeply strategic."

Ajith Fernando reminded the conference that a spirit of partnership derives from an intimate walk with Jesus. He quoted the missionary martyred in China, John Stam : "You may take away everything from me, but don't take away the sweetness of talking and walking with the King of Glory."