

PROCLAIMING THE WHOLE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE ASIA CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME ADDRESS

Rev. Chongnahm Cho Ph.D.

As the Chairman of the Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation, I declare the Third Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelism open. I welcome you to the Third Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelism in Indonesia. Brothers and Sisters, my co-workers in Christ, on behalf of the Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation, I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ our blessed Saviour.

As the Chairman I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the Evangelical Church leaders of Indonesia, especially the local organising committee for their cooperation to make it possible for us to have this conference at this beautiful place and site. There are many people who rendered their help in prayer, finance and through other means, to whom we want to express our thanks. I would also like to express my thanks to you who are taking time from your busy working schedules to participate in this conference. My appreciation also goes to Rev. David Chan the Conference Director, to Canon James Wong, the Programme Director, and those who have come as the speakers and workshop leaders, including the staff working for us with sacrifice.

In the year 1978 we had the first Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelism. It was the Asia Regional follow-up of the Lausanne I, the International Congress on World Evangelisation in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1974. At the first conference, 280 leaders from 25 Asian countries came and participated. Asian leaders acknowledged before God their failures and their partial obedience in reaching Asia with the saving gospel. Asian church leaders at the ALCOE I pledged themselves before God to "Together obey Christ for Asia's Harvest," which was the theme of the first conference. Ten years later we gathered again in Singapore for the Second Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelism. It was a working conference with about

100 participants from 14 Asian countries.' ALCOE II was uniquely Asian; the conference was financed entirely by Asia, and all of the plenary and workshop speakers were from Asia. The church leaders from Asia grappled with the implications of "Witnessing to Christ through the Local Church," which was the theme of the conference.

Three years ago, we had the Lausanne II, the Second International Congress on World Evangelisation in Manila, Philippines. It brought together 4,300 people from 170 countries. It was the largest gathering of evangelicals in church history. The world evangelical leaders again strongly confirmed the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the relevance of the whole gospel. The evangelical church leaders made a covenant before God to proclaim Christ until he comes, calling the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. Now the Third Asian Leaders Conference on Evangelism is calling the Asian church to proclaim the whole gospel to the whole of Asia until all Asia hears the word of the Lord. This is the theme of our ALCOE III.

I am so pleased to see many of the Asian church leaders at this conference, and I pray that we will enrich ourselves with fellowship in His love and the common call for evangelism. Let us pray together, study, and discuss how we can find a way to expedite our goal to reach the whole of Asia with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We sense and are glad that missionary changes have taken place in Asia since the last conference. At ALCOE II, several South East Asian countries were under oppression and no one could come to the conference from those areas. We prayed for them. Now we hear that these churches are open, and we rejoice to have amongst us representatives from those countries.

The churches in China are still growing. The world has changed. The communist countries in the old Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are wide open for the gospel. Now we concern ourselves about evangelism in the post-Marxist era rather about the power of Communism. The economic situation in Asia also experienced great change. The church in Asia has grown. Many churches in Asia are now becoming missionary sending churches. For example, the church in South Korea sends over 2500 missionaries to 105 nations. Sixty seven percent of those missionaries are engaged in cross cultural

missions. We began to send probably less than 100 missionaries in 1979. In the year 1987, at the time of ALCOE II, we sent about 1000 missionaries to 72 countries but now the number is over 2500 to 105 countries. This is rapid growth - 150 percent growth in 2 years. We hear many similar stories for other nations in Asia. This is a very encouraging sign. We praise God for it.

At the same time, we must not ignore the fact that difficulties still exist in some areas. Some Asian countries still experience a resurgence of traditional cultural values which often accompany the wider nationalistic revival of their cultural religions, e.g., North Korea. Because of these difficulties it is still difficult for foreign missionaries to enter into certain Asian countries. I plead with you to pray for these countries.

However, the most dangerous issue, as I see it, is within the church. Some heretical sects and movements, such as the New Age movement, grab the minds of people. Some theologians still tend to compromise Christian theology with other religions in the name of theological pluralism. Nominal Christians seem to increase in churches. These factors cause Christian zeal for evangelism to cool off. Another area of difficulty is cooperation for evangelism among evangelicals. We are well aware that to reach the whole Asia will take the whole of the Asian church working together. But how do you bring the evangelical bodies to Asia to cooperate more closely? How can we as the Asia Lausanne Committees for World Evangelisation work more effectively in the future? We need to disciple all believers in the church. We have to find a better way to work together with all evangelical bodies in Asia for the common goal to reach Asia with the whole Gospel. For we are the ones who believe in the authority and power of the Scriptures. We are the ones who underscore the Lausanne Covenant as the basis of our work and cooperation. Some particular ideas may come up and, if so, I ask you to discuss them in your group discussions and in the general sessions. We need to be aware of the newly rising heretical movements in Asia and the need to disciple Christians in churches. We have to find a better way of working together as evangelicals. These points will be placed as agenda items in your group discussions, in the plenary session, and

will be discussed seriously at the Full Committee of the Asia Lausanne Committee.

As we do evangelism, we have a great need to help the church to stand firmly on sound evangelical theology. Let us remind ourselves here of the spirit and the basic theology of the Lausanne Covenant. As the Lausanne Covenant declares, and the Manila Manifesto confirms, we too confirm that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world. "Salvation is found in no other, for there is no name under heaven given to man except Jesus by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) We strongly affirm the uniqueness, indispensability and centrality of Christ in an increasingly pluralistic world. We believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is still the good news for today. It is the good news of salvation, the establishment of his eternal kingdom, and his final victory over every thing which defies his purpose.

Dear friends, God has called us for the evangelism of Asia Until All Asia Hears the Word of the Lord. Let me also add that the whole gospel must be witnessed not only in word but also in deed and power. For this all Christian people must be diligent in their prayer.

In closing, remember the Great Commission that Jesus Christ has given to us, by saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them everything that I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age." (Matt. 28: 18-20)

Dear friends, pay attention to Jesus, the Christ who gave his commission. Here the authority of Christ endorses His great commission. The Greek word for authority *exousia* means an absolute power and also the right to use that power. Remember, it is the Lord who has all authority in heaven and on earth. He has authority over nations to whom he sends us. Therefore, we do not need to fear secular power. Take these words seriously as you face fear, difficulty and persecution. He is Lord over these nations to whom he has sent us. It is our Lord who has all authority in heaven and in those places where evil principalities and powers still operate. But, by his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ disarmed those principalities and powers

making a public spectacle of them as Paul says in 2 Corinthians Chapter 2 verse 14. Therefore the authority he claimed on earth also will be recognised in the world to come. As we obey his commission, nothing we do for the Lord in evangelism will be lost.

So as Paul said, "Therefore my dear brothers, stand firm, let nothing move you. Always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord. Because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain". (1 Cor.15:58) Christ has authority directly over us; we must obey his command. Jesus Christ did not keep that power for himself; he gave that power to the disciples, the authority to preach. He has given us the authority to heal. He has given us the authority to cast out the demons. More than that, Christ Jesus also assures us of his presence. He said, "Lo ! I am with you always till the close of the age." (Matt. 28:20) This was in the context of giving the great commission.

Miracles will also follow if we evangelize as was shown in the early days of the Church. As evangelical theologians we should be greatly encouraged to realize that evangelism involves power encounters. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the principalities and against the powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual host of wickedness in heavenly places." (Eph.6:12) We must be empowered and filled with the Holy Spirit to be effective evangelists and to do powerful evangelism.

St. Paul, the great evangelist, says in Ephesians 5:18, "But be filled with the spirit." As I meditated on these words, I became excited. To engage in evangelism, you and I must be filled with the Holy Spirit. People often think that only evangelists need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not the theologians, not the laymen. But here Paul says we must be filled with the Holy Spirit. A friend who was a pastor of a large church, knowing that I was in Korea, asked me to come and preach one night. He said, "I will call you back in five minutes and then you can give me the text of the sermon." He called and I said, "The topic of the sermon tonight is, Be filled with the Holy Spirit." And he said, "Dr. Cho, I am in a hurry, don't joke with me." I told him that I was not and that I would preach on this topic. I firmly believe that all must be filled with the Holy Spirit. I

pray that you take this seriously in this conference especially when you lay your needs before the Lord.

Another thought about being filled: this word is in the passive voice. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is not something we achieve. It is a gift that God gives to us. Being filled in the Spirit is not only in the passive voice, but it is also in the present tense. You and I must be filled with the Holy Spirit continually. We cannot say, "Oh yes, just a month ago I was filled with the Holy Spirit." We must be filled continuously. We believe in the whole gospel. Evangelism is engaging in power encounters. We understand that the first word Christ Jesus gave his disciples was this: "Wait until you will be endowed with the power on high." He foretold about the Holy Spirit's coming. Dear friends and co-workers, I pray that you listen earnestly to the word of St. Paul, "But be filled with the Spirit." (Eph.5:18)

Pray that all of us who are serious about evangelism may be filled with the Holy Spirit at this conference. Remember when the disciples gathered and prayed, they were filled with the Spirit, then the word was proclaimed boldly (Acts 4:30,31) May this happen among us.

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ASIA LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON EVANGELISM : ALCOE III

Dr Saphir Athyal

This is a leadership conference. Now someone will ask why Asia leadership conference? Why don't we say Asia Servanthood Conference? We do not wish to presume ourselves as being the leaders of Asia, but desire to see ourselves as active leaders or servants of Christ, servant leaders who strive hard to reflect Christ in our evangelism activities. This is the whole aim of a conference of this sort.

The first Asian conference was held in 1978, the second one was held in 1987, and this is the third conference. We have a very long history. Some of the leaders who were involved from the beginning in ALCOE and ALCWE were Akira Hatori from Japan, Soon Chi Kan, the very venerated leader from Korea, Philip Teng a great man of the Chinese world, Bishop Chandu Ray who was the Coordinator for South Asia and Pacific Congress in Singapore, Ben Wati from South Asia. A few of us, such as John Cho, James Wong, and myself were youngsters at that time. We have a long history, linked up, to an extent, with the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation.

I want to make a clarification because a lot of questions have come up. The Lausanne Committee, which is an International Committee, is made up of about 80 people. It has one department called the Asia Region Committee. This Committee usually meets during the business session of the Lausanne Committee much like our ad-hoc sub-groups such as for North East Asia, South East Asia, South Asia and so forth. But the question persists in the relationship between Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation and that of the Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation. These are two different entities. The Lausanne movement from the beginning organised, in different parts of the world, committees and fellowships in the name of or under the umbrella name of Lausanne. For example, we have a North American Lausanne Committee that has broader objectives and whose scope is also broader than that of the Lausanne Committee.