

## UNTIL ALL ASIA HEARS THE WORD OF THE LORD

*Rev. Dr. Petrus Octavianus*

Brother and sisters in Jesus Christ, the theme that has been given to ALCOE III is this: Until All Asia Hears the Word of the Lord. I believe that this theme is very important today, not only for Asia but for the whole world as well. I would like to read from the Bible before I share further from Mathew Chapter 10: 35-38.

“Jesus went about all the cities and the villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. And healing every sickness and every disease among the people but then he saw the multitude he was moved with compassion on them because they were fainted and scattered about as sheep having no shepherd. Then he said unto his disciples the harvest truly is plenty but the labours are few. We pray to the Lord of harvest that he will send for us therefore into his harvest. And when he had called unto him his 12 disciples he gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out and heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”

The theme of the conference **Until All Asia Hears the World of the Lord** has taken us into the wonderful challenge in front of us. We look at Asia from many perspectives. We see Asia with the differences in development in other areas. We can also see the richness and culture in diversity of the people of Asia. That Asia has the majority of the people in the world is something we all know. Today, Asia grows with rapid changes. Economically, Asia has a great opportunity. Twenty four years ago, in 1968, in Singapore, I gave a speech entitled, “Asia’s future and our response,” and at that time I said that this is a great opportunity for Asia. Then I spoke about how the Gospel has been brought into Asia. I had the thought that as the Gospel has been taken to all Europe, so it is our time for Asia. But in 1992, what I then shared is now a reality in many parts of Asia, and today Asia is a focus point for many. Many sociologists also study Asia for its sociology. Politicians look at Asia for its politics. World economists look at Asia for its economy.

So what should we see from our viewpoint as human in Asia?. How can Asia hear the gospel and how can Asia use it as an instrument of bringing the gospel to the world? For that purpose I asked you to read from Mathew Chapter 9:36-38, and chapter 10:11. If we really want to reach Asia we must use the Lord Jesus' way while he was on earth. In Mathew chapter 9 we see three main foci. It says that Jesus went into all the towns and villages. Jesus not only saw people, but he had his eye on geographical areas; he saw villages and town as well. Jesus' view can challenge us. For instance Jesus could fly from one country to another country in Asia and from one city to another. By being in each village and each town, his heart was filled with compassion with the needs of its people. So as Jesus looks at all areas, none of these areas or villages or towns would have been closed to Jesus. In other words, Jesus focused not only on villages and towns, but Jesus focussed on all areas. Jesus not only focussed the ministry on his own people, but he focussed on others as well. For instance, he personally witnessed to a Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus ministered to other cultures.

Christ even focussed on gentiles in his ministry. Even though the theme of our conference is "*Until all Asia hears the Word of the Lord,*" I believe that we not only focus on Asian countries, but we should look beyond Asia. Again I want to emphasise that even though our theme is for Asia to hear the word of God, we must also have a burden for other people beyond Asia.

During these last two years, great changes have happened in Asia. Look at Communism. It has been demolished in Asia and in Russia. We must also focus on North Korea and China in our mutual ministry. Seventy years ago we probably could not think of how to enter into Russia with the Gospel. Now we make all kinds of plans to invade Russia with the Gospel. I really praise the Lord that during my many years of ministry, I have had the opportunity to visit 56 countries. About two years ago I was in the Middle East. I saw that the work of the Lord was taking place in the Middle East. I saw that the Holy Spirit is at work in the Middle East. It is beyond what people could think. God has given us another chance to reach other countries with the Gospel because all countries are open to the Gospel. From our Asian perspective, we have seen that the world has received many Asian missionaries and Asian ministries.

The second thing in these verses is that Jesus also focussed on the people. Jesus' mission is for the people's welfare. Jesus has compassion for all people and for all nations according to their countries' respective needs. As we speak of the world and the various areas in the world, we must also consider the needs of the person or of the people. Jesus had compassion towards those who are sick, those who are hungry, and those who are in distress because of natural calamities. Jesus gave food to 5000 people; Jesus surely had compassion upon the people. So the burden and the compassion for people has become the first target of the heart of Jesus Christ himself. The foundation, I believe, of our mission should not be different from the kind of compassion demonstrated by Jesus. We sense that Jesus transcends all human barriers; Jesus not only saw the spiritual need but also the physical need. For evangelicals, they should not only preach the gospel orally, but should try to also set up hospitals, for example, to help meet the physical needs of the people.

To reach the Asian people, we have to make use of all the ways that God has given to each one of us. That is why Jesus' view was on focussing on the heart and on the needs of the people. No wonder Jesus was ready to die for sinners. He suffered for those in poverty. For me, the secret of evangelism and of mission is to have compassion in our hearts, to be a compassionate people. True, we have opportunity to preach behind prepared pulpits, but I think it is more important to see the secret of reaching people on whom Jesus had compassion. Today young people are really suffering in many ways. Starting in 1967, young people have been corrupted by narcotics. Who can really help them? In other parts of the world poverty and suffering exist. That is why the evangelicals need a holistic ministry. And how should we really minister to the people in this world who believe in the worship of many idols.?

In Europe people are talking of the old traditional Asian religions that have crept into Europe. Looking at Amsterdam and at other big European cities, we see how these traditional religions of Asia have crept into their lives. Today the world experiences great difficulties; all need the compassionate heart of Jesus Christ. In Germany I visited places for the rehabilitation of those hooked on narcotics. These people live without any hope. Who can share the love of Jesus Christ with them in not we who have the love to give to these people? That

is why the compassion of Jesus Christ is actually the real movement that we need in our ministry. I believe that we are still in the line of spirituality if we have the compassion of Jesus Christ to share with people. If we miss this then we will turn back to traditionalism again, and we will miss the love and the compassion that Jesus shared during his time.

The third is to see the vision of Jesus evangelically. The verses tell us that he went everywhere, teaching in the synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. In one chapter we see three aspects of Jesus' goals in reaching people, and the most important of the three is to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom to the people. This is also our main goal. Today many developing countries have lost the message about the kingdom for the salvation of the people. We have to recall the message that man should not live by bread alone but by word of God that comes from God's mouth.

Speaking of evangelism, we must keep three things in mind. We have to share with people according to their needs. Number one is the message of salvation so that they will be saved through the blood of Jesus Christ. That is the main message. But in Mathew 10 verse 1, it says that Jesus also healed every kind of sickness and cast out all kinds on unclean spirits. So the oral preaching of the gospel today is insufficient and should be augmented by action and the power of the Lord himself.

Many years ago, as an evangelist travelling from one place to another, I thought that healing the sick is actually the responsibility of the Pentecostals. For me it was sufficient to just preach about salvation and repentance of sins. During these past 20 years, I see that this is not only for the Pentecostals but it is the command of Jesus Christ for all of us. Now, wherever I hold big crusades, I always ask to pray for the sick on the final night. I have seen many sick people healed in the name of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Without the power of the Holy Spirit and his anointing, this healing would not happen. Last Friday, as I was preaching at Kinabalu, I announced that tomorrow night there would be prayers for the sick. Many sick people were brought from the hospital and came into the meeting. Some were really possessed by evil spirits and caused problems, but they dropped to the floor. I prayed for one

woman in the name of Jesus who has the power in heaven and on earth. I commanded in the name of Jesus who has the power in heaven and on earth. I commanded in the name of the Lord Jesus that the evil spirits cast out in Jesus' name, and instantly the woman stood up. The people say the reality of the power of Jesus. We are honoured that the name of Jesus does not belong to a particular denomination but it belongs to the church of Jesus Christ.

When I preached at Lahore in Pakistan, many people with evil spirits were present. Many people were chained down to the floor. When I prayed in the name of Lord Jesus, his power was present and many became healed. They told me later that 39 witch doctors that had come to the meeting were all laid down. I said that there is power in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the name of Jesus Christ they were delivered from the power of Satan. Earlier this month I preached in Okinawa in Japan. Okinawa is full of the power of darkness. I sensed the power of Satan and I prayed in the name of Jesus Christ. So in preaching the gospel today we have to face the challenge of the power of darkness. We have to prove to them that the power in the name of the Lord Jesus is more powerful than the power of Satan. So no longer the Pentecostals nor the evangelicals, but all should have the power in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes we limit the power of the Holy Spirit in our ministry. Even I sense that myself. But God healed me from certain illnesses. And God proved to me how to really deliver Christians from the many kinds of darkness in areas that do not belong to Christians. That is why the preaching of the Gospel is really a spiritual war. I also sense great changes in the world today. And because of the global outlook, the world seems too small for us. Through television we see what really is happening in the continent of Asia, and we see that this war is actually against all systems that are working Christianity. So we have to be more aware that we are neither against people nor human beings, but against all systems of this world. Because of that we have to make use of all systems, even the technological, to reach people around us. To reach out to Asian people, we do not need to be there personally, but we can be present through satellites and through television. In 1972 I tried to go into China (I failed), because there are about 2 million Chinese Indonesians who live there and use the Indonesian language.

Pray to the Lord that He gives me the manner to preach to the people and to these Chinese Indonesians or Indonesian Chinese over there. Eventually God gave me the opportunity of broadcasting by radio my message from Guam into China. Six years ago, one of our brothers, who is attending this conference, went into China and received news that 300 Chinese have been born again or have received salvation because of the radio programme. They have been baptised in water. So it is true that to reach out to the people in Asia, we have to use all the equipment that God has permitted. In the area of medical equipment great developments already are taking place.

Last year there was a meeting in Tokyo. I was asked to speak about the areas where Christ's missions is still higher than the mission of technology. Many people thought that our present high technology is sufficient to reach people. But I have witnessed that the power and the mission of the Lord Jesus is still higher than any high-tech development. So brothers and sister in the Lord Jesus, Asia is expecting the gospel of Jesus Christ and the world really needs the gospel of Jesus Christ. All need Christ, but there is a part of the society that we tend to forget. These are the people who are in the political level, in high levels of the Government. I believe, that we in Asia really have to penetrate this level with the gospel of Jesus Christ - and Asian Christians should see the power of Jesus Christ and His salvation. Of course, we have to start by praying for our nation and for its people. Our prayer should mention those names that are in high levels. We really have to pray fervently for every one of them, so that they will not close the movement of preaching the gospel in these countries.

I also believe that it is important for us to have communication with these people in high levels. By 1978 we had started praying for opening the doors of high level people, and we prayed earnestly for each and every one of those in the Government. I praise the Lord that during these ten years, God had given me the opportunity to minister to these people in high levels of the Government and also many professionals. Every minister of the government that I personally meet, I pray with him and share from the Bible. Initially, they did not understand and felt strange, but gradually they were open to the gospel. But that should be done fervently and with prayers.

Remember, these levels of society must not be forgotten. So if we speak of Asians to be evangelised, these levels of the society must also be in our prayers.

On the 21st August 1991, I had the opportunity to speak in the Senate building of Australia. There I spoke to many Senators. The Indonesian Ambassador Mr. Sergian, asked me how this happened and how I could come to share the gospel? I said that it was God's way for me to share the Word of God with them. I also have had frequent opportunities to speak and share with the senators and the governors in the United States, but also in other countries, as well as in my own country. I realise that we have to be brave enough to preach the gospel to any level of our society. I believe that the power of the Holy Spirit is much higher than any power here on earth. If we truly depend on the power of the Holy Spirit, then I believe, we will receive God's wisdom to overcome anything. So we need speak to all levels of the society in Asia; there should not be one single person forgotten in the preaching of the gospel.

And now in Indonesia we need to speak about areas of transmigration because these areas are being newly opened in our country. People have transmigrated from one area, from one culture to another and to other areas in our country. These societies should receive our attention as well. If we do really pay attention to these kinds of people, it will be changed. From my perspective, I can see that all levels of the society, from the very lowest to the very highest, need the gospel of the Lord Jesus.

We are called to preach to all levels of our society. If we follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ as he worked the world geographically, we will also be successful. So the focus is for Asia and beyond the fields of Asia. There is not a single part of the world that we can forget, but all countries should be included in our mission. When I sent missionaries to Africa, people asked why I would send to Africa while Indonesia still needs work. Jesus gave the commission not only for Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, but also for all the other parts of the world. If we dare to get into other countries, into other parts of the world, then the Lord himself will bless our own country. But I am really very glad, and even boastful, of what God has been doing in South Korea and Japan. Last July I was invited to speak at

## PARTNERSHIP IN EVANGELISM - I INTRODUCTION

*Ajith Fernando*

Korean for World Missions in Chicago, USA. A Korea for World Mission. So Korea steps forward. About 4,000 people gathered together to reach out with the gospel to the entire world. No wonder I could see why Korea has been blessed by the Lord. Not only that, Korean Christians have entered into other parts of the world. We in Indonesia, are behind Korea and Japan, but we have been moving; we have entered into the five continents of this world.

I would like to share one wonderful thing with you; economically Indonesia is far behind Korea and Japan, but all the missionaries that have been sent from Indonesia have been sponsored financially by Indonesia itself. One hundred percent financed by Indonesia itself. And the Indonesian team has been moved to see the mission at work in the world today.

Second, if we were still in the purpose of the love of Jesus Christ in sharing or preaching the Gospel then we are still in line with the mission, and we are in this movement in Asia. All big changes happening in Asia have opened ways for us to penetrate Asia and the world with the Gospel. Finally, we need the power and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Because preaching the gospel is actually a great war; we have come to realise that we are facing the power of darkness and the power of old religions in Asia. No wonder that we are in need of the reality of Jesus' power in our ministry. Even I sense more and more that we need to hold hands in Asia to reach our own people in Asia. So let us realise the three views of Jesus' ministry.

Geographically, there is not a single area that Jesus has forgotten, so our heart and our prayer should be for every area in Asia and for other parts of the world. We need Christ's compassion in our hearts and to share it with people. For that purpose we need the anointing of the power of the Holy Spirit. For the gospel saves sinners; and the gospel liberates those who are in illness. The gospel also liberates those who are in the power of Satan, for Jesus says, "All power has been given to me in heaven and on earth by the Father." And with this power we preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Few themes are as important for the church today as that of partnership in evangelism. There are many reasons for this. Let me mention three. Firstly, it is biblical. The Bible does not view the Kingdom of God as consisting of individual units which are independent of others, but as members of a body which are interdependent on and partners of others. This is particularly necessary to emphasize today as people all over the world are arriving at a consensus that, if an economy is to be healthy and grow, free enterprise competition is the way to go. The individualistic, risk-taking entrepreneur is the modern-day hero. It is, therefore, easy for Christians to think that, in the church too, individualism and competition are necessary for growth and health. But these are enemies of biblical ministry, which follows the philosophy of partnership. Secondly, Biblical partnership results in greater and deeper fruits for the Kingdom. It is time consuming and taxing to achieve, and this is pragmatic age which is enamoured by quick results. Therefore many Christians are not willing to persevere in order to make it work. But Jesus was clear in his teaching that a prerequisite for the world to believe was for believers to be one. Thirdly, there are numerous challenges facing the Church which makes partnership necessary and helpful. Some of these challenges will be seen as we go on. There are many, many things that can be said about partnership. In this series of four studies from Acts we will examine just a few lessons on partnership from the early church.

The first two studies will look at some foundational principles essential for partnership from Acts Chapters 4 and 5. Today we think of partnership between churches, between organizations, between groups in different countries. We can call this macro-partnership. But in Christianity we learn about macro-relationships from micro-relationships. This is why Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:5, "If anyone does not know how to manage his own his own family, how can he take care of God's church." We can extend this principle further and