

# Singapore 87 Update



## Extending the Kingdom of God

If the Kingdom of God is mentioned 121 times in the first three gospels alone, asks Peter Kuzmic, "then why do we evangelicals have so much difficulty speaking about the Kingdom of God?"

Kuzmic, director of a theological college in Yugoslavia, is giving the Bible expositions at the morning sessions this week. His topic, "Servants of the King," will include talks on what it means to be servants of the Kingdom (Tuesday), and the return of the King as the hope and consummation of the Kingdom (Wednesday). Monday he spoke about entry into the Kingdom – the task of calling people to enter.

During Sunday's exposition, which was given during the Pentecost Sunday worship service, Kuzmic, who is also chairman of the theological commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship and involved in church-planting in Yugoslavia, used as his text the first eight verses of Acts, which, he pointed out, bring together the Great Commission, Pentecost,

and the task of world evangelization.

The Kingdom of God is "absolutely central to the teachings of Jesus," he said. "The cause for which Jesus came, died, and rose again is best expressed in the phrase 'the Kingdom of God.'"

The term "Kingdom" is sometimes a problem to those who favor democracy, Kuzmic said. Christian speech uses phrases like "becoming a Christian" rather than "entering the Kingdom." We often relegate "Kingdom" to the future. But Jesus began and ended his ministry on earth talking about the Kingdom of God. "We cannot understand him unless we understand what he meant by the Kingdom of God."

The term "Kingdom" has been abused, Kuzmic noted, suggesting this has caused some of our reticence. It has at times been used to denote a social order or refer to a time in the future.

Describing what the Kingdom is not, Kuzmic said there are two extremes

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## On the Cutting Edge of World Evangelization

The theme of the second week of Singapore 87 shifted to "The Leader on the Cutting Edge" of world evangelization Sunday after sessions during the first week focused on "The Leader as Risk Taker."

Throughout the first week, speakers emphasized that younger Christian leaders need to be braced for great risks and even suffering in furthering the gospel.

Don Posterski of Canada, for example, pointed out that research done before Singapore 87 indicated that most younger Christians today are more interested in developing relationships with friends than they are in commitment to a mission. "They don't want to join a cause, or to be leaders. They just want to be with their small group of friends and live with a "shopping list" of "things" they want out of life.

Clive Calver of England stressed that leaders be ready to take the lead out of safe "spiritual pacifism" into spiritual warfare. Ajith Fernando of Sri Lanka called leaders into a fellowship in Christ's sufferings for the sake of the gospel.

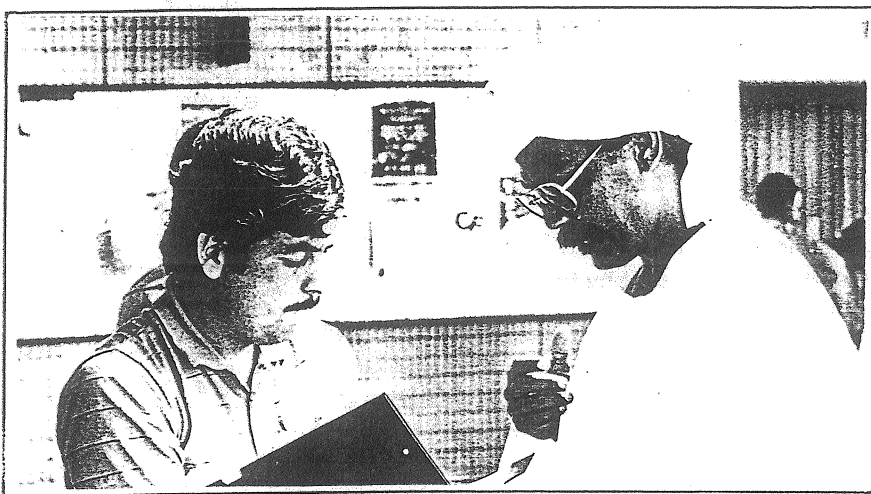
Sessions during the second week of Singapore 87 focus on "The Leader on the Cutting Edge." Speakers this week will emphasize the need for younger leaders to work together for world evangelization. Various dimensions of the task will be explored such as reaching the unreached peoples, world class cities, the oppressed and the self-sufficient.

## Relationships

Coming together around the theme of world evangelization leads not only to friendships, but to meaningful relationships with world-changing

ramifications.

One participant commented, "The friendships I've made here made the conference worthwhile."



## Singapore 87 Almost Cancelled

Five weeks ago, the planning committee for Singapore 87 seriously considered cancelling the conference because of finances, chairman Brian Stiller told participants Friday.

"We came very close to cancelling the conference because we didn't have enough money," said Stiller. "It was a very crucial moment."

The committee had to borrow money to finance the conference, he said.

Instead of cancelling, the committee cut the budget from about US\$540,000 to \$423,000, asked each participant to raise funds to help cover their own costs, and established a scholarship program to generate income.

"We asked the participants to help raise a bit more because we felt one of the things that makes a person a leader is that they can lead others to support God's work," Stiller said.

Churches and individuals were urged to make a gift of US\$1,200 as a scholarship to finance a participant's travel to Singapore. The average plane ticket cost \$1,200.

"One of the global realities is the unequal distribution of money in the world," Stiller said. "Some participants are able to pay very little of their travel costs, while others are able to pay much of it."

Of the \$423,000 total budget, more than half, about \$240,000 goes to cover travel subsidies for participants from third world nations.

Stiller said the planning committee has tried to cut costs to the minimum. None of the staff is being paid a salary to work on the conference. Everything is being done by volunteers.

Meeting at the National University of Singapore has also helped cut costs. The average cost for meals and lodging for the participants is US\$20 per day. It would have cost two to three times that amount to meet in a hotel.

Stiller said that not a single participant had complained to him about the meeting facilities or about the un-airconditioned dormitory rooms, despite the heat in Singapore.

Since Stiller made the announcement Friday morning about the financial squeeze on the Singapore 87 budget, a number of participants have come forward with offers to help financially. A few have asked for more personal financial assistance, but most have wanted to give rather than receive, Stiller said.

"We felt it would be wrong not to be honest with you about our financial situation," Stiller said. "Holding the conference despite the lack of funds is a real act of faith. We just want you as participants to know that we have made every attempt possible to conserve every possible dollar," he said.



A Special, Open Discussion with Dr. John Stott : On Tuesday, 9 June, from 14:45-15:45, there will be an special session for any interested participant who would like to dialogue with Dr. Stott. Come with questions or just to listen.

Dr. Stott commented, "The emergence of young evangelical leaders is enormously important for world evangelization. I'm grateful to have a share in Singapore '87." The meeting will be held in Lecture Theatre 27.

## How Has Singapore 87 Influenced Your Life?

**Robert Solomon, Singapore:** "This meeting, with many kinds of ministries and viewpoints, has widened my perspective." A Methodist pastor and part-time Singapore Bible College lecturer who plans to join OMF in October, Robert has been impressed by the spirit of unity in diversity as found in the small group meetings, and by Ajith's morning expositions.

**Melba Maggay, the Philippines** has found the fellowship very supportive of the emphases of her ministry. She said, "I had always thought that I was a bit crazy. It is so easy to be seduced into being some kind of international big shot when actually your calling is in your own context."

**Ronnie Sigerlaki, Indonesia:** "The concept of training is new to me and will be valuable. In Asia, we have patriarchal system; older people tend to be reluctant to hand over the reins in case you make a mistake." Ronnie suggests it would be good if a team of conference speakers could go around to the regions.

**John Gichunga, Kenya:** "I liked the talk on the family—if the family crumbles, it takes the ground from below the feet. I liked the key note address about passing the torch in an orderly manner." John felt that the "drama" in the Saturday evening social programme dispelled the idea that the Christian life is boring. "We need entertainment and culture."

**Sam Rajshekhar, India:** "I am much encouraged by meeting younger leaders from different countries and have found the small groups very helpful." Sam spoke especially appreciatively of David Bryant's session on prayer. "We've had prayer meetings, but never like this."

**Truework Mesfit, Ethiopia** has worked for some time with Scripture Union in her country. She said "I find certain things discussed not an issue for me. But many things are very important. It is good to widen my view. For example, I usually turn to prayer for my own country. It is so good to be more internationally minded."

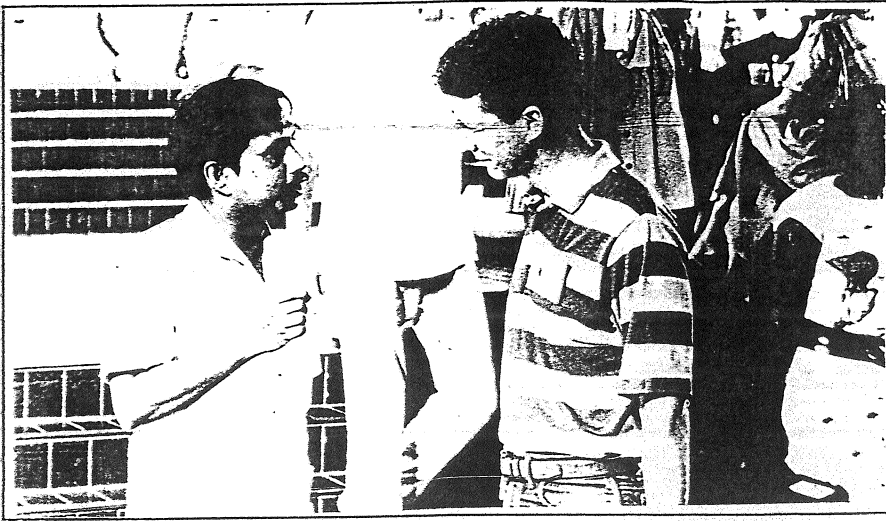
## Stott on Bible and Culture

"To get at the essence of revelation, seeking sensitively to transpose it into modern cultural terms, is not to be on the slippery slope toward liberalism," said Dr. John Stott at his workshop Tuesday on "Biblical Authority and Cultural Relativity."

The lecture room was filled to capacity as Stott explained some of the problems and issues that arise when trying to interpret the Scriptures for our day and age. He drew an illustration showing a 2000 year wedge that separates the biblical world from the modern one.

Stott discussed "blind spots" that have plagued the Christian Church over the years, including slavery, racism, and injustice. Participants talked about possible blind spots today, such as the role of women in the church and the nuclear arms race.

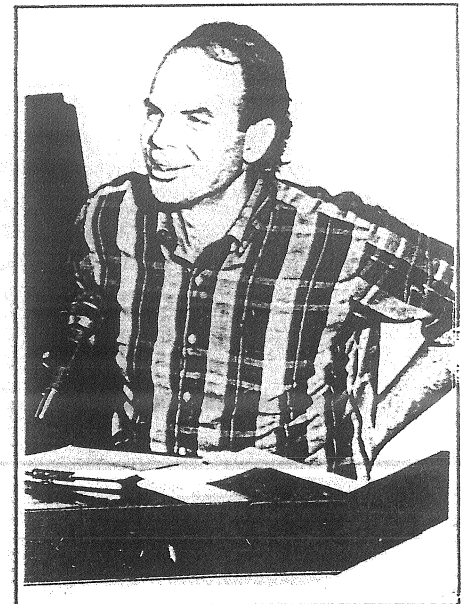
"The purpose of cultural transposition (of Scripture) is not disobedience, but meaningful, obedience," concluded Stott.



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of thought: some say the Kingdom comes by action, while others perceive it in terms of passive waiting.

Looking at the Kingdom from the biblical perspective gives us a better understanding of the concept, Kuzmic said, explaining that both the Hebrew and the Greek terms used for the word Kingdom do not refer to a territory to be governed, but are better translated as "reign" or "rule." We must also understand that the Kingdom is already established but is not consummated, Kuzmic said. "What Jesus has begun he will complete when he comes in power and glory." Kuzmic stressed that "we must constantly look in two directions: back to the foundation that has already been laid, and forward to the fulfilment of the Kingdom."



David Bryant leading the concert of prayer.

## News You Can Use

**Fuller Seminary Reunion!** Graduates, friends, and anyone interested in attending Fuller Seminary should plan to lunch together at Kent-Ridge Hall on Tuesday, 9 June. If you usually eat in Sheares or Raffles, make certain the steward knows you will be gone for lunch. See you there!

**London Bible College:** Calling all former students of the London Bible College—could we meet for MORNING BREAK on TUESDAY in front of LT 27.

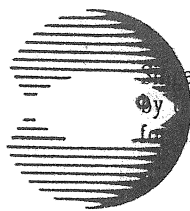
**Church Growth Movement:** Special Interest Group Network meeting for all involved in the church growth movement, Sheares Lounge, Tuesday, 15:00-16:00. For more info, see Jorg Knoblauch (W. Germany) or Doug Birdsall (USA).

**Calling All Crusaders!** Those that minister with Campus Crusade for Christ, Intl. will meet Monday at 15:00 outside LT 27.

I am looking for someone who will travel to South Korea and stay at the Guest House of ACTS (Asian Center for Theological Studies and Mission) right after the conference. Contact So Hyun Soo, Shin, from Korea in Kent Ridge Hall, A-515.

**Tapes of the Plenary Sessions:** Please pick up the tapes that have been ordered. More tapes may be ordered outside LT 27. Fill out one of the forms making clear your order and pick up your tapes the next day during the morning break time or 15 minutes prior to the evening celebration. The cost of the tapes is S\$3.00 or S\$4.00 depending on the length of the session. Sets of tapes can be ordered. Pay for the tapes in Singapore currency when you pick up the tapes.

**OM'ers:** Welcome to Operation Mobilisation and former OM'ers. You are invited to an OM reunion on Monday, the 8th of June at 14:00 at Sheares Hall.



Singapore '87 is sponsored by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

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