

Singapore 87

Update



Evangelicals Called to Evangelize the Oppressed

Bel Magalit of the Philippines and Caesar Molebatsi of South Africa issued a resounding call for evangelicals to take a stand for justice on behalf of the poor and oppressed during Monday night's session of Singapore 87, an international conference for younger church leaders.

"Reaching the oppressed is not an option for us," declared Molebatsi, general director of Youth Alive in Soweto, South Africa. "Most of the world is under some sort of oppression," he said. "It is one of the greatest things that demonstrates man's inhumanity to man." He added that oppression makes him angry personally, and that "it must grief God's heart."

Molebatsi declared that the teachings of Christ are clear: the church is to act on behalf of the helpless, the hopeless and the powerless in taking a stand against injustice and tyranny.

He warned that unless the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, which is sponsoring Singapore 87, deals with these issues of oppression and injustice, the movement will fade away and lose its power in the future.

Magalit, pastor of Diliman Bible Church in Manila, suggested six reasons why he felt evangelicals in the Philippines had been slow to become involved in the struggle for freedom and justice. First, conservatives are supposed to conserve, and it is not easy for conservatives by their nature to become involved in social change, he said. Furthermore, most evangelical churches in the Philippines are composed of middle class members who don't want to identify with the poor, even though 80 percent of the people live below the poverty level of US\$100 per month.

The third reason is that most Christians are trained by Western missionaries, who have a fear of the social gospel and liberation theology. Also, most evangelicals feel that the mission of the church is evangelism, not political and social reform and do not see the social dimensions of the gospel as a priority.

Megalit also claimed that there is a simplistic understanding and interpretation of Romans 13 which says that Christians must obey government leaders. They misinterpret the

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Reaching the Cities

The task of world evangelization cannot be accomplished without paying special attention to the unreached masses who people our big cities. "It is in the cultural, industrialized, modernized, sophisticated centers," continued Galo Vasquez, "that the most uncompassionate, violent, unjust events of life take place." In these cities more than sixty percent of the world's population will live by the year 2000.

Founder and director of Evangelistic Vision for Latin America, Vasquez reminded participants at Singapore 87 that God's concern, compassion, command, and cry for the city had not changed since biblical times. Protestant churches do not have a good record in urban outreach. The task needs laborers with a clear call to that specific ministry, an intimate knowledge of the city, trained teams, new strategies, and priority given to intercessory prayer.

The latter, suggested Vasquez, produced revivals and transformation of whole nations. "Your life can't be the same when you fly over your city or arrive in a new town and pray, 'God save this city! May Your name be proclaimed and glorified here !

Networking

by Stephen Hoke

All of us are here as a result of networking. Networking has emerged as not only a "mega-trend" of the 1980's, but also a key ministry strategy for most of us in our local contexts. Networking, however, is not a natural ability. Neither is it an identified spiritual gift. Rather it appears to be an acquired or highly developed skill. Some people do it more easily than others, but others become frustrated when they realize that they may not be as effective as others in this skill.

In the second Update, we talked about networking as bridge-building between people and organizations. To network means to build relationships that facilitate the transfer of information from point to point, person to person.

Most of us have been working at establishing networks in one form or another since we were children. We networked with the other children in our village or community as to what and when to play; we networked among our classmates at school when we needed help in our studies. In each of our families there is more or less an informal network of closer relatives with whom we communicate. Within this same family network, there are usually several parallel networks of information, finances, gossip, and relationships which provide us with intimate and up-to-date information.

But those informal, natural networks often are not adequate when attempting to communicate between cultures, across denominational lines, and within geographical regions of the world. Professional Christian workers uniting for world evangelization must have networks of information, resources, and prayer that circle the globe, not merely include family members.

International networking is neither natural or easy. It takes work and initiative. Here are a few steps to take in beginning to network:

1. Build effective, deep friendships that involve interaction and prayer. View networkers as partners, serving on the same team, with the same vision.

2. Pray for each other. Commit

yourself to prayer partnerships.

3. Work jointly on specific short-term projects.

4. Ask others how each of you might complement the other's strengths and gifts for a common task or goal.

Networking is an acquired or developed skill. It comes with time, practice, and the investment of your effort, time, and prayer. Here are some practical tips that can be applied to a variety of levels of networks--international, regional, national, or local.

*Have an attitude of Christian cooperation and acceptance.

*Explore common goals. Seek to understand the other's implementation of those goals.

*Be flexible. Be willing to change, adapt, to admit when someone has a better idea than you do.

*Pursue biblical principles of openness, co-laboring, servant leadership, on an individual level.

*Share through letters, literature, and visitors from outside.

We need to develop networks among world Christians that are



international in breadth, reciprocal in expectation, intra-denominational and intra-organizational, participatory, and multi-dimensional. Our webs of relationships need to be undergirded with a theological understanding of how ministry takes place, not rest solely on principles of group dynamics and information exchange. Networks must capture the vision of world evangelization and facilitate practical ways for God's people to work together across national and cultural borders.

What Has Singapore 87 Meant to You?

Theba John: Ajith's messages were a great blessing to me. Singapore 87 broadened my view of the many ministries in world evangelization, such as urban evangelism. I have learned how we can work together in prayer for each other. Even if we don't share the same specific burden, we are still united in our concern for world evangelization.

Abraham Sesay, Sierra Leone: Singapore 87 has changed my whole life. It has helped me to see that I'm not the only one that God is using, even in my small locality. I have also seen my need to study God's world more definitely and how I need to make adequate time for my devotional life.

John Piper, U.S.A.: The conference has made me love my wife more and made me determined to be a better husband. It has re-affirmed the "sameness" that exists in the world-- sameness of issues, of struggles. It has led me to be more committed of reaching my city of Minneapolis. And it has made me want to preach like Ajith!

Sunita Noronha, India: Singapore 87 has given me a total picture of the Christian life and of the totality of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here they have dealt with some issues to which I had closed my mind. It has challenged me. Meeting people from around the world who have a similar vision has broadened me. I no longer feel like a frog in a well.

Rolf Hille, West Germany: I've been encouraged to see how the risen Lord is working among so many people and cultural backgrounds.

Teodoufo Pajaron, the Philippines: As a leader often feeding others, it was nice to be fed. The morning sessions were the highlight for me.

Murray Stiller, Canada: I learned about leadership. I saw different styles of leadership, leadership of different cultures, leadership of different people.



Heard at the Workshops...

John Stott on Biblical Authority and Cultural Relativity:

"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. The purpose of cultural transposition is not disobedience, but meaningful obedience."

Brian Stiller on Leading with the Pen:

"When you put words on paper, there's no body language. Writing, in the long term, will have more influence than any of your sermons."

Ramesh Richard on Reaching Intellectuals:

Christianity's most convincing credential is still the life of the Christian. Inconsistency between belief and behaviour is a universal phenomenon, but the lesser the gap, the more attractive the life."

Terry Winter on Fundraising:

"Accuracy and honesty is the bottom line in fundraising."

Clive Calver on Sexual Temptation:

"My ministry is not more important than my family. My partner comes first. God can find someone else to do the work."

Self-sufficient Difficult to Reach

Perhaps the most difficult people to reach with the gospel are the self-sufficient. That was the message of "Reaching the Self-sufficient," a plenary session presentation at Singapore 87.

The self-sufficient are "people who have a problem receiving the gospel because of adequacy in their lives," said Susan Perlman, assistant to the executive director of Jews for Jesus. The self-sufficient are normally professionals (e.g., scientists, technocrats, lawyers, doctors) or members of the intelligentsia and aristocracy (depending on the country). They are men and women who are upwardly mobile or who already have attained positions of power and respect.

Some of the challenges of reaching the self-sufficient were dramatized in two skits, written by Perlman, based on the parable of the rich young ruler and the parable of the rich fool.

"We've tried to reach the self-sufficient by being nice to people," said Perlman, "That's been the general

approach to evangelism. We tell the potential convert, 'Accept Jesus and you will be happy . . . prosperous . . . literate.' But the Bible's approach to the self-sufficient person is, 'Repent, for tomorrow you will die!'" The self-sufficient insulate themselves from the idea of death with prosperity and comforts, according to Perlman.

Dr. Ravi Zacharias, international evangelist and president of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, said that the self-sufficient define themselves by what they do or do not do. Zacharias is known for his ministry to intellectuals.

"We are not disembodied spirits floating around in a concrete world," said Zacharias, urging his audience to make the gospel relevant to the marketplace "beyond the stained glass windows of our churches. We must meet them in their territory."

"If the world of self-sufficiency forces us into silence," Zacharias concluded, "we will not change them -- they will have changed us."



Oppressed, Continued from page 1.

passage by believing you must obey no matter how corrupt the government might be. Finally, there has been too much dependence upon Western financial support. "Dependence upon foreign funds has the effect of prophetic laryngitis. Even an ungrateful dog does not bite the hand that feeds it."

Molebatsi offered six principles evangelicals should follow in dealing with the issue of justice for the oppressed.

First, there must be a clear commitment to justice which must be clearly seen by the oppressed.

Christians must also keep a very

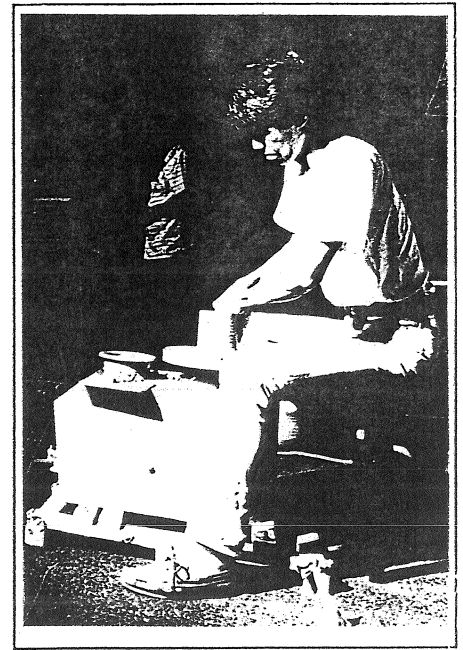
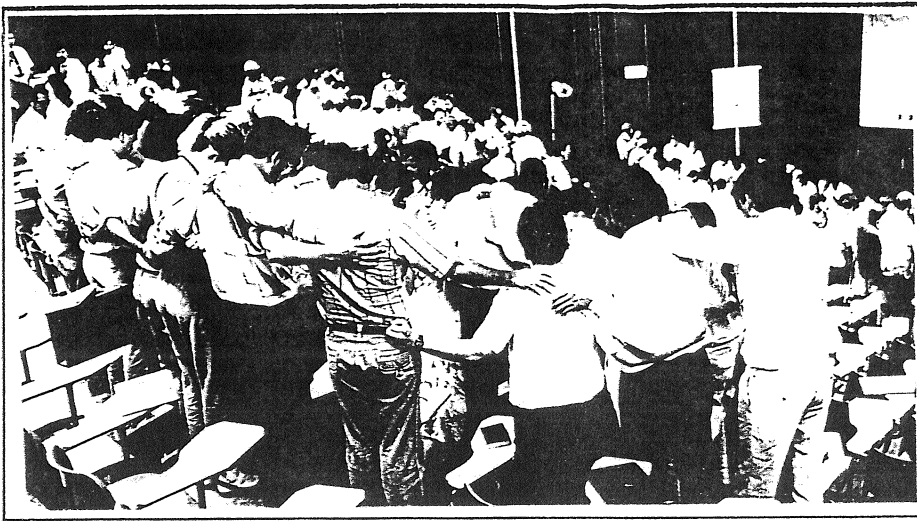
high value on the people they are called to serve. "We must never dehumanize God's creation," he said.

Third, Christians must not change the message during a crisis, because they will have no message when the crisis is over.

Fourth, evangelicals need to identify personally with the poor, not the middle or upper classes.

Fifth, Molebatsi urged that evangelicals engage in social analysis in order to help take a clear biblical stand on social issues.

Finally, Molebatsi said that no matter what you do, always know who your master is. And for a



Departure

Departure Procedure: Before leaving, every participant must return several things to the conference steward in your dormitory: your room key, extra bedding, facecloths, clothes hangers, clothes pins, unused soap powder, and mosquito coils.

Pack: Allow time to pack your belongings well before your departure time.

Getting to the Airport: If you filled out a departure slip, a ride to the airport has been arranged for you. Most participants are leaving at times which make it possible for several to ride together to the airport, even though they may be leaving on different flights.

Here's how to find out the time of your ride to the airport:

Check the posted departure times in each dormitory. You will find your flight's departure time; then take note of the departure time of the ride which is planned to get you to that flight.

Things not to do regarding your departure:

Do not plan to take an earlier or later bus than the one planned for you. Some rides are full.

Do not make your own travel plans without advising us. Tell the steward if you will not be using the provided transportation.

Do not take your room key with you.

Do not be late for your ride.

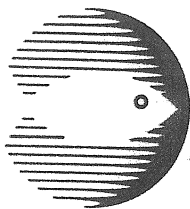
You may have plenty of time. Others on your bus may be trying to arrive in time for flights which leave much earlier. Consider other participants and be prompt.

Do not expect the conference to provide for you if for some you miss your ride. We'll try to serve you, but there are simply no funds for late taxi rides.

At the Airport: Every passenger departing Singapore must pay a S\$12.00 departure tax.

Tapes: Be sure to pick up any tapes you have ordered.

Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) has videotaped a feature on the conference. It may be that in future they will videotape some features of the innovative things going on in world evangelization. If you would like to be involved, please contact Mary Jo Beck, giving a concise overview of your ministry, a brief personal testimony, and an explanation of your contact with the Lausanne movement. Write to Mary Jo Beck, at LCWE, 5950 Fairview Rd., III Fairview Plaza Suite 202, Charlotte, NC 28210 USA.



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