

Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF) is Committing to Transform World 2020 Challenges

By Dr. Arto Hämäläinen

Connected to the 23rd Pentecostal World Conference (PWC) which was held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at the end of August the World Missions Commission (WMC) of PWF had organized a World Missions Forum for Pentecostal Mission leaders.

The main speaker in that was Dr. Luis Bush, Servant of Transform World 2020 network. As the head of the Church, Jesus is considered CEO. Luis' presentation was the basis for the Pentecostal reflection of the seven Transform challenges.

Dr. Jim Bennett from USA responded to the ideological challenge followed by the case

study about the media as a means reaching Arabs by Harun Ibrahim, mission director from Keymedia, Finland. Dr. Bennett was showing that Pentecostals are increasingly interested in developing approaches toward the Islamic context. Mr. Ibrahim reported about millions of Arabs responding to the Christian TV-programs especially through internet.

Pastor Matthew Ling from Malaysia explained what Family Challenge is about and how it aims to transform the church and family in impacting the world. Pentecostals in many places have been open for 4/14 challenge.

Poverty and justice challenge were presented by Dr. Beth Grant from India/USA and pastor Hector Buitrago from Colombia. Dr Beth Grant stated that the global Pentecostal church must seek to be a catalyst for transformation on two simultaneous levels: 1) Holistic transformation for vulnerable individuals (including orphans) in our communities and nations, and 2) Transformation of systems in which orphans are embedded to reflect God's kingdom and values (vs. those of exploitation and greed). Pastor Hector Buitrago, the Gen. Superintendent of Assemblies of God Pentecostal Church in Colombia gave an example of the paradigm shift which he felt is needed in many churches. In his AG church they were used to think that social work is only done if the means are coming from outside. The church was concentrated only to evangelism. Surrounded by big social challenges they slowly started rethinking their theology and praxis understanding the holistic nature of the missions. That has led to both spiritual and practical transformation in Colombian communities.

Concerning the religious liberty aspect in the justice challenge Dr. Brian Stiller from Canada told about his journey as Pentecostal with traditionally little emphasis on social justice matters to growing awareness of that kind of theology in the Bible. Dr. Stiller is observing that in the Pentecostal theology is a bent towards



concern for justice. “It is consistent with our vision of the kingdom of Christ that we engage in matters of broad societal justice. I would argue that Pentecostals are uniquely informed and experienced in bringing the message of biblical justice to our communities of Christians.” Dr. Stiller’s presentation (Click to download: <http://www.transform-world.net/newsletters/2013/PentecostalsTodaybyBrianStiller.pdf>) was followed by the case study concerning the Iranian Christians.

In Christ’s Missional Challenge the Executive Director of AG World Missions in USA, Dr. Greg Mundis informed about the change in the mission strategy which had led to focus more and more to the unreached people groups in Pentecostal missions.

In the Celebration Challenge pastor Michael Dissanayke from Sri Lanka and Pastor David Mohan from India gave the Pentecostal reflection. Pastor Dissanayeke is the prayer coordinator of World Assemblies of God Fellowship, and he invited all Pentecostals to join the prayer network. Pastor Mohan, who is pastor of the church with almost 50 000 members in Chennai, emphasized the Pentecostal power which is received by the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

During the conference which was gathering of around 4000 people from 69 nations the world missions theme was strongly present. The three workshops were titled “Reach”, “Rally”, and “Release”.



Dr. Ivan Satyavrata from Kolkata, India and Dr. Delonn Rance from USA were emphasizing the need of a good Biblical theology in reaching. Mission Director Brad Walz from Argentina/USA, Pastor Dominic Yeo from Singapore and Dr. Chadwick Mohan from India reflected the “Rally” theme after the introduction of Dr. Arto Hämäläinen from Finland. Pastor Yeo and Dr. Mohan opened avenues to the special challenges the Asian context is bringing into the missions e.g. in publishing statistics. Brad Walz who is chairman of the

World Missions Commission of the World Assemblies of God (WAGF) reported of the growth of the mission vision among the WAGF churches. There are now in average 3.5 churches behind one missionary (in Finland 1/missionary), and about half of the national churches have a special mission department. In the "Release" workshop moderated by Rev. Takashi Yoshida from Japan Rev. Mike Waldner from India/USA presented latest statistics about the unreached people groups especially in South Asia. People knowing the current development with growing numbers of believers among Iranians informed about the revival which is one of the biggest in our time.

The WMC/PWF planned the whole world missions program for PWC. PWF is the largest Pentecostal body in the world including globally different type of Pentecostals. It is representing about 57 million people. The chairman of PWF is Dr. Prince Guneratnam from Malaysia, the host of the 23rd PWC. The chairman of WMC/PWF is Dr. Arto Hämäläinen from Finland. The PWC is organized every third year. The next will take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 2016.