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Daily News Brief



LAUSANNE Younger Leaders Gathering

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ISSUE 1

YLG-06: A “Window on the World”

by Laurie Fortunak

After two days of travel and months of preparation, Deangelo Lopez and Jonatan Garcia, both of Cuba, arrived at the Lausanne Younger Leaders Gathering (YLG-06) late Saturday evening. Both are members of Los Pinos Nuevos, the only denomination born in Cuba. Both are also among the nearly five hundred younger leaders from 110 nations attending this year’s Gathering in Port Dickson, Malaysia.

“I am here to receive more training to evangelize, disciple and to lead small groups in Cuba,” said Garcia, national director of the youth and junior department of the Los Pinos Nuevos.

“This is my first time out of my country,” said Lopez, a youth and lay leader in his church. “However, when I got here I felt at home. These are my brothers and sisters. I hope to return to my country with a renewed vision of my work.”

For more than a year and a half members of the planning, selection, administration/support and operations teams



for the Lausanne YLG-06 worked as a “virtual team” from all areas of the world to hand-pick participants from eight regions of the world who would attend the conference. To represent the activity of the gospel being spread around the world, two-thirds of the participants are from the global South (including Asia, Latin America, Africa and parts of the Middle East); the other one-third are from the global North.

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Priorities in World Evangelization

by Paul Esbleman

As we pursue the task of world evangelization, we must identify the major priorities that will be integral to ensuring that all the peoples of the world will have the opportunity to hear the gospel, in their “heart” language, near where they live, with access to a healthy, indigenous church to help them grow in faith.

The Lausanne Strategy Working Group (SWG) meets twice a year to gather and process research and seek God’s will as to what priorities should be at the top of the church’s agenda if we are to see disciples made in all nations. Like the men of Issachar in the Old Testament, we seek to know the times and to provide strategic leadership for the people of God.

The SWG has identified 14 major priorities for the church in the early 21st century. Two of these will be printed in each edition of the YLG Daily News Brief. As you read these priorities, please consider how you, as

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Lausanne: A Congress, a Covenant, a Committee

by Judd Birdsall

The story of Lausanne begins with Billy Graham. A powerful preacher with a magnetic and magnanimous personality, Graham quickly rose to prominence in the 1940s and 50s to become America's foremost evangelist. As he began preaching internationally, Graham developed a passion to "unite all evangelicals in the common task of the total evangelization of the world."

In 1966 the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, in partnership with America's *Christianity Today* magazine, spon-



1974 Lausanne Congress

sored the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin, Germany. The Congress brought together 1,200 delegates from over 100 countries and inspired a number of follow-up conferences in places such as Singapore and Bogotá.

Just a few years later, Graham perceived the need for a larger, more diverse congress to reframe the Christian mission in a world rife with social, political, economic and religious upheaval. He shared this idea with 100 Christian leaders around the world, and the response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

A globally representative Planning Committee was established in 1971 and a field office was opened in Lausanne, Switzerland. Organizers went to great lengths to ensure that the Congress

achieved an unprecedented diversity of nationalities, ethnicities, ages, occupations and denominational affiliations.

The Congress

In July 1974, some 2,700 participants and guests from over 150 nations gathered in the Swiss Alps for ten days of discussion, fellowship, worship and prayer. *TIME* magazine described the Lausanne Congress as "a formidable forum, possibly the widest-ranging meeting of Christians ever held."

The Congress schedule was filled with memorable speeches from some of the world's most respected Christian leaders, including Billy Graham, Samuel Escobar, Malcolm Muggeridge, and John Stott. Ralph Winter's plenary address was hailed as "one of the milestone events in missiology." In contradistinction to those

calling for a moratorium on foreign missions, Winter argued that, because thousands of "unreached people groups" remained without a single Christian witness, cross-cultural evangelization remained the primary task for the church.

The Covenant

A crowning accomplishment of the Congress was the Lausanne Covenant. Drafted in large part by a committee chaired by John Stott, the Covenant is a stirring articulation of Christian conviction and mission. On the last day of the Congress, the Covenant was signed by Billy Graham and Bishop Jack Dain and subsequently affirmed by an overwhelming majority of the participants. To this day, the Lausanne Covenant serves as a

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YLG Profile: Michael Oh

Location: Nagoya, Japan

Ministry: Christ Bible Seminary

Ministry Challenges: a highly-regimented and collectivist culture and an insular, survivalist church

Ministry Opportunity: greater spiritual openness among youth



I'm a member of the YLG Program Planning Team. I first heard about this event while attending the Lausanne 2004 Forum in Pattaya, Thailand where I met

Paul Stanley, the program chairman for the event. There I asked (begged) Paul to allow me to participate.

I currently serve as president of Christ Bible Seminary in Nagoya, Japan. We're an evangelical, pedagogically progressive graduate seminary with a particular focus on reaching and training up young leaders in Japan and Asia. It's our hope and prayer that the Lord would do such a work in the nation of Japan that one day our seminary could train up hundreds of young missionaries to bring the gospel to the nations of the 10/40 window. I believe I am called to help mobilize the church around the world to respond to the hundreds of millions who have little or no access to the gospel. It is our duty, joy and privilege to work towards the great glory of God being known among all the tribes, languages, peoples and nations that he has made.

I'm happy to say that although I'm on the older side, I still qualify under the age parameters for YLG as a youthful 35 year old! As you'll see when you meet me in person, I still look like I'm 25.

Some people think I love studying because I've been in school for so long, but it's far from the truth. I do love learning, but the studying part I endure for the sake of receiving the training that I need to be effective in my ministry. I

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87 Profile: John Sagherian

In 1987 Lausanne convened a Conference of Young Leaders in Singapore. The Daily News Brief will feature four profiles of ministry leaders who attended that conference.

Ministry: Youth for Christ Lebanon

Personal Background: I am Armenian-Lebanese. My father was pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church, serving in Cyprus where I was born in 1947. In 1954 we came to Lebanon. My mom says I accepted Christ when I was 5. When I was 10 years old I “went forward” during a evangelistic meeting and my relationship with Christ has grown since then. I have two sisters and a brother who is now serving as a pastor in Pasadena, California, USA.

What were you doing at the time of the 1987 conference?

I was the National Director of Lebanon Youth For Christ (YFC). Lebanon was going through a civil war, yet we still could minister in schools and out, among teenagers.

Why did you attend the 1987 conference?

I was invited and felt privileged to attend. Lebanon was in its 12th year of civil war and we were all very tired. I needed a break and encouragement and I thought that the conference in Singapore would provide that. It did, I just

wish my wife Nancy could have come with me!

How did the 1987 conference impact you?

Other than the emotional break from the war in Lebanon, the conference introduced me to some new friends, who have remained friends and we’ve kept in touch up to today. The Bible study sessions, the experiences of other leaders and the small group interaction challenged me in my spiritual growth and commitment.

What are you doing currently?

I am still the National Director of Lebanon Youth For Christ, still living in Beirut (and still, unfortunately, experiencing war!). Now, there are three other full-time staff in addition to my wife and me, plus 12 volunteer staff. I’m more involved in leadership training, directing the staff and the work and fund-raising, and regularly speaking to high school students in school assemblies. I’m also the Regional Coordinator for YFC in the Middle East and North Africa Region,

with direct supervision of the new work in Egypt.

Have you stayed involved in Lausanne over the past 20 years?

I have stayed in touch with some of the friends from Singapore 87.

What are the keys to being a “successful” Christian leader?

God does not call us to be “successful,” just faithful: to him and to what he has called us to do; faithful in the use of what he has given us to work with; and to the opportunities he gives us. That means not giving up, not leaving one’s position to go to an easier place, to a “more fruitful” ministry. This means not quitting when things get tough. This means persistence and stick-to-it-tiveness.” And of course, the best way to lead in this is by example.

What role do you believe Lausanne can play?

Conferences that provide inspiring Bible-based speakers, practical workshops where ministry models can be presented and debated, and opportunities to network with other leaders. Relationships formed at conferences can last a lifetime and provide encouragement and resources. That’s how I was blessed by Lausanne I and II and Singapore 87. I think they are still valid reasons to bring people together. ☺

Priorities in World Evangelization
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a younger leader, will address them. Which objectives are close to your heart?

1. **To work toward the planting of churches in every remaining people group as we seek to evangelize and make disciples.** There are 639 groups over 100,000 in size—totaling 550 million people—that have virtually no access to the gospel. Some have no churches, no believers, no scripture and nobody

trying to reach them.

2. **To accelerate the launching of church-planting movements in the 10/40 Window and other needy areas,** in order to give closer geographical opportunity for discipleship, worship, and continuing evangelism. We need to find out where the church is not, and make a plan to go there. For the poorer areas of the world, the church must be within walking distance. ☺

This is the first in a seven part series.



YLG-06: A “Window on the World”

(cont. from pg. 1)



Nearly half of the participants at the YLG-06 were provided scholarship money to attend the conference.

The theme of the gathering, “Live and Lead like Jesus...Until,” represents the four verbs which reflect the hope of the YLG-06: *inspire, develop, inform* and *connect*. “We want to inspire them to love and live and lead like Jesus and to move the gospel,” said Paul Stanley, chairman of the YLG -06. “We want to develop them in their ministries, to inform them of the state of the gospel and to connect them with each other and with the mentors. Our first hope is that they would connect with each other and develop peer relationships that will last into the future.”

The YLG-06 will include workshops, plenary sessions, small group interaction and worship where participants can learn about evangelism and missions around the world and what their peers are doing to contribute to the cause of the gospel.

“I love the fact that I will have difficulty communicating with my roommate, who speaks Spanish and Portuguese,” said Elizabeth Evans, who works in the communications office at the historic Park Street Church in Bos-

ton, Massachusetts, USA. “I am excited to learn about the other participants’ visions of missions around the world.”

Doug Birdsall, Executive Chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, attended the 1987 Lausanne Confer-

ence of Young Leaders in Singapore and remembers how that event impacted his view of the global church. “That gathering gave me a window on the world. Although I was doing my little thing in my part of the world, I realized I was part of something bigger,” Birdsall said.

His hope, and the hope of many

“We want to inspire them to love and live and lead like Jesus and to move the gospel.”

others involved in planning the YLG-06, is that this Gathering would serve that same purpose for the participants here in Malaysia. It is also hoped that the unity of the body of Christ would be reflected in a powerful way.

“It’s awe-inspiring that Jesus gave a command to share the gospel to twelve men and that this command has been carried out so significantly,” Birdsall said. “As evangelicals we think of the world in its totality. There’s something very powerful about Christians from around the world being in one room together. This gathering reflects the unity of the body very clearly.”

YLG Profile: Michael Oh

(cont. from pg. 2)

did my seminary work at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and pursued studies at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University.

My greatest joy is my family: my wife Pearl, who has been my best friend and ministry companion for the past 12 years, and my four daughters Hannah, Mikaela, Eowyn and Elliot.

I can’t think of a more exciting forum in the entire world than YLG! Our team has invested hundreds and hundreds of hours in meetings, prayer, planning, and footwork to prepare for this event—which we hope will not merely be a single event but a launching pad for movements around the world.

I want you all to know about not only the united commitment of our planning team but also the great love that we share for Christ and for each other. It’s been a great privilege for me to serve side by side with such a tremendous group of young leaders.

Along with Terry Cook and Marcell Steuernagel, I have been involved in helping to prepare and coordinate the small groups for YLG which we hope will be one of the greatest blessings you receive during the Gathering. We’ve recruited some wonderful mentors from around the world to lead these groups. Their role will be as wise, kind facilitators who will not dominate the time with their own thoughts but instead encourage the expression of your voices. These groups will be diverse, with representatives from around the world.

I’m so excited to see what the Lord will do during and after the YLG. Again it’s our great hope and expectation that the YLG will serve as a springboard for a true movement of God. We believe that if the Lord is with us and wills it, the YLG-06 will be a truly world-changing, historic event. ☺

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Lausanne: A Congress, a Covenant, a Committee

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basis for unity and a call to action for global evangelism.

The Committee

At Lausanne, organizers also received a strong mandate from participants to establish a Continuation Committee that would build on the momentum created at the Congress.

In 1975 the Continuation Committee held its first meeting in Mexico City. Committee members expressed a wide variety of viewpoints regarding the future of the movement. Some leaders pressed for a singular focus on evangelism, while others favored a more holistic approach. In the end, the Committee agreed to “further the total biblical mission of the church, recognizing that in this mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary.”

The Committee also expanded from 50 to 75 members to insure greater global representation, appointed energetic Ghanaian leader Gottfried Osei-Mensah as its first General Secretary, and renamed itself the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

The fledgling Committee was united by the Covenant and by what Billy Graham and others have called the “spirit of Lausanne.” According to Leighton Ford, the Committee’s first chairman, “the Lausanne spirit was a new and urgent commitment to world evangelization in all its aspects, a new attitude of cooperation in the task, and a new cultural sensitivity to the world to which we are called.”

Throughout its history, the Lausanne Committee has intentionally avoided building a large bureaucratic organization, and instead strived to be a dynamic catalytic force that propels a movement of like-minded missional Christians. Lausanne has provided an

international and interdenominational space for discussion, inspiration and collaboration.

Continuing Impact

Dozens of Lausanne-related global, regional and topical conferences have been convened all over the world. Global gatherings include the Conference on World Evangelization (Pattaya 1980), Conference of Young Leaders (Singapore 1987), Lausanne II (Manila 1989) and the Forum for World Evangelization (Pattaya 2004). Lausanne inspired a constellation of regional networks and topical conference such as the Asia Lausanne Committee on Evangelism (ALCOE), Chinese Coordination Center for World Evangelization (CCCOWE), three Nigerian congresses of world evangelization, and seven international conferences on Jewish evangelism.

Many Lausanne gatherings have produced landmark documents known as Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs). Most of the early LOPs focus on Christian witness to specific groups such as Hindus, Buddhists, refugees, Marxists, and nominal Christians. The 2004 Forum in Pattaya generated 31 LOPs on topics as varied as bioethics, business as mission, persecution and globalization.

Reflecting on the tremendous lasting and expanding impact of the original Lausanne Congress, John Stott writes, “Many a conference has resembled a fireworks display. It has made a loud noise and illumined the night sky for a few brief brilliant seconds... What is exciting about Lausanne, however, is that its fire continues to spark off other fires.” 

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