

The Korean Church and WCC, WEA, & Lausanne Movements (Part 3)

From Personal Experiences of Prof. Bong-Rin Ro

The 10th WCC General Assembly will be held in Busan, Korea in October 30-November 8, 2013. There have been extensive debates between the churches that support and oppose WCC. A theological debate was planned on October 8, 2012 in Seoul between Dr. Duk-Sung Choi (Director of Church History Research Center in Busan) of the opposition, and Dr. Hyung-Kee Lee (honorary professor of church history at Presbyterian Seminary-Jang Shin) of the supporting side. However, Dr. Lee decided not to participate in the debate due to pressure from his denomination (Tong-Hap).

In the first part of this article, the author laid out some historical events and development of WCC, especially as they impacted the churches in Pacific/Asiatic region. In the second part of the article, the author continued to delineate these development as well as that of the WEA Movement.

In this concluding part, the author will finish the analysis on the Asian Lausanne Movement and express some personal desires for the Korean Church.

IV. Lausanne Movement

Rev. Billy Graham and his Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in cooperation with Rev. John Stott of the Anglican Church of England started the Lausanne movement. From the 1950s Billy Graham began to conduct his massive evangelistic crusades not only in America but also around the world. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade at the Yoido Plaza in Seoul in 1973 drew over a million people at one place which had never happened before in the history of the Christian church.

Billy Graham started his weekly Sunday radio program, "The Hour of Decision" (1950), published "Christianity Today" magazine (1956) which sur-

passed the ecumenical magazine "Christian Century." He established Fuller Theological Seminary (1947) to produce evangelical pastors. He organized and financed several huge international congresses and evangelism conferences: Berlin Congress (1966), Lausanne Congress I (1974), LCWE Pattaya Conference in Thailand (1980), Lausanne Congress II in Manila (1989), and Amsterdam 2000 (10,000 participants).

Billy Graham became the forerunner of world evangelism and missions for over 50 years until his retirement. The author attended all international congresses except the Berlin Congress, and had the privilege of meeting many international church leaders.

The Lausanne movement combined the evangeli-



cal churches within WEA and WCC for the purpose of promoting evangelism and world missions. However, unlike WEA, the Lausanne movement does not have the grass-roots organizational structure in each country, continent, and the world. Each Lausanne congress was organized by the Ad Hoc Committee of worldwide evangelical leaders. The Lausanne III which was successfully held in Cape Town in South Africa in October 2010 with 4,000 participants was a joint effort between the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE) and WEA. After the Lausanne III, LCWE appointed several Regional Directors to continue the ministry of the Lausanne movement.²⁰

The Asian Lausanne movement began with the First Asia Lausanne Congress which was held in Singapore in 1978 with 280 participants from 25 countries. The Asia Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (ALCOWE) was soon organized. The author was also involved with ALCOWE by being a member of the Steering Committee along with Dr. Isabelo Magalit (Philippines), Rev. and Canon James Wong (Singapore), Dr. John Chong Nahm Cho (Korea), and Rev. David Chen (Taiwan).

V. Three Personal Desires for the Korean Church

1. The Korean church leaders who belong to WCC should not try to minimize the past mistake of promoting the TEF theology of “Contextualization” that promoted “Salvation Today” theology and religious pluralism through WCC leaders but acknowledge honestly the mistakes of the past history of WCC. By looking at the fruits, we can understand the roots of the problems.

The Korean Preparation Committee for the 10th WCC General Assembly that met in Busan on Jan. 13, 2012 decided to provide approximately \$5 million (51 billion Won) for the General Assembly. This amount will come from different denominations: Presbyterian Church (Tong Hap-\$800,000), Methodist Church (\$600,000), Assembly of God (\$500,000), Presbyterian Church (Baek Suk-\$300,000), Presby-

terian Church ROK (\$300,000), Anglican Church (\$100,000), Korean government (\$2 million), and the Financial Committee (\$500,000). (These US dollar amounts are the approximate figures due to the exchange rates.)²¹ WCC is expecting more financial contributions from the financially able Korean churches while the contributions from Western churches are shrinking.

The key issue for the Korean Church is to direct the future course of the WCC movement. The Presbyterian Church (Tong Hap) and other evangelical churches within WCC have a very important responsibility of how to lead WCC in the 21st century in order to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. For the 10th WCC General Assembly in Busan in 2013, the Korean Church must pray and find ways to input evangelical influences of the Korean Church into the future WCC movement.

2. The evangelical leaders in Korea who want to maintain relationship with WEA should not devote their primary efforts on the anti-WCC movement and the 10th WCC General Assembly in Busan but rather on the unity of Christians. They must cease internal divisions among themselves and develop “The Unity of the Korean Church” movement. The present schismatic divisions in the Korean Council of Churches (two in Korea and three in Hawaii) and many internal dissensions among church leaders within different denominations have created deep dissatisfaction in the minds of many Christians. God has to work in the hearts of church leaders.

The strong evangelical denominations in Korea (Presbyterian Church - Hap Tong) which are associated with WEA also have the main responsibility of leading the WEA movement in the future. With the support of Western evangelical churches Korean evangelicals must work together among themselves and with the leaders of the Third World for world evangelization.

3. Christianity in Europe and North America which has led the WCC and WEA movements for the last 60 years has been declining under the influence of materialism, secularism, humanism, and moral decadence. The pendulum of Christianity has shifted from the West to the Third World. Dr. Elijah J.F. Kim,



who was a Korean missionary in the Philippines, wrote a book, “The Rise of the Global South,” which deals extensively with the decline of Western Christianity and the Rise of Majority World (Third World) Christianity.

The Atlas of Global Christianity mentions that in 1910 Christianity in the West represented 80.9%, but in 2010 the Christian population in the Northern Hemisphere shrank to 37.9%. This means that more than 60% of 2 billion Christian population in the world today resides in the Southern Hemisphere. In other words, the future leadership of world Christianity will not reside in the Western Church but in the churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.²²

The rapid church growth has been taking place in China, Korea, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, etc in Asia. The Christian population in Africa south of the Sahara desert represents over 50%. The world-wide Anglican communion has at least 77 million members under 400 dioceses, and Nigeria in West Africa alone has 20 million Anglican members. There are more Anglican believers in the Third World than the Anglican members in the United Kingdom, United States, and Canada combined.²³

In Latin America where the Roman Catholicism is dominant, the rapid church growth among the Pentecostal denominations has been widely known. There are more Christian missionaries from the Third World than western missionaries. The Korean Church has sent out over 24,000 missionaries to 170 nations while the Indian Church has over 30,000 cross-cultural missionaries within the Indian subcontinent.

The time has come to the churches in Asia, Africa, and Latin America that are experiencing rapid church growth to lead the WCC, WEA, and Lausanne movements. One thing that the Korean Church must not forget for the preparation of two important WCC, WEA General Assemblies in 2013 and 2014 is to apply the principle of partnership by cooperating closely with the evangelical church leaders of other lands in order to provide leadership at these meetings. As the WCC leaders have kept their leadership in three areas (church organization, finance, and theological education), the Korean Church with its

financial strength and abundant personnel resources ought to work together with other evangelical leaders from the Third World as well as from the West in order to influence these three areas of the world-wide Protestant organizations.

Conclusion

The author taught Church History and Missions at seminaries in Singapore and Taiwan for 20 years and in Korea for 10 years (1990-2000). He is still teaching at Hawaii Theological Seminary. There is one important lesson which church history teaches. Any church or church movement which once flourished in one place is not guaranteed continual growth, because church growth takes place at one period and the decline follows at another period according to church history.

When St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) worked in Tunisia, there were over 500 church dioceses (presbyteries) and thousands of churches throughout North Africa (Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco). But Islam which started in Saudi Arabia in 622 conquered the whole areas of North Africa and the Middle East by the end of the 7th century. Dr. Dwight L. Baker, who used to work in North America as a missionary, studied the history of the North African Church and discovered an amazing fact for the real causes for the disappearance of Christianity from this region. He says that the real causes for the disappearance of the church from North Africa were due to internal problems of the church more than external persecution from the Muslims.

He mentions five basic internal reasons: 1) The Christians neglected to translate the Bible into the languages of the native Berbers. 2) There was a wrong theological belief that salvation could be obtained by man's physical suffering. There was also a theological confusion on the doctrine of Christology. 3) There was spiritual bankruptcy in the lives of many Christians. 4) They lost the missionary vision of the Early Church. 5) Disputes and corruption existed among church leaders who emphasized external rituals of the church and neglected to apply indigenous principles for the Berbers.²⁴

Likewise, Western Christianity which once flourished and led the world church in the 19th and 20th Century is experiencing decline today. The churches in Europe that used to be the champion of the modern missionary movement in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are now sharply declined in their missionary activities. In fact, some European nations are receiving missionaries from North America and from Asia. ► To P. 5

Fifth Internet Mission Forum Sees Primacy in Mission



Group photo of representatives of sponsoring organizations.

More than 20 gospel agencies participated in the Fifth Internet Mission Forum at Irvine, California, August 24, 2013. The forum was sponsored by the Far East Broadcasting Company, Global Life Enrichment Center, Great Commission Center International, Overseas Campus Ministries, Jidutu-wiki.org, and Tianlu Ministries on the theme of “Social Media and Internet Mission.”

In his opening remarks and closing prayers, Rev. Thomas Wang expressed the hope that this forum may develop into a grand national coalition of internet mission to fulfill the Lord’s command to spread the gospel to the ends of the world.



Rev. Thomas Wang addressed the participants

The first speaker Rev. Edwin Su, Board Chairman of Oversea Campus Ministries, spoke on topic “Believer’s Responsibility in the Age of Social Media.” He pointed out that, in America, more than 160 million people have Facebook and

Twitter accounts, and in China more than 80 million use blogging. In 2012, Chinese people spent 17,000 billion hours on social media. Today, two third of world’s population remains outside of the Kingdom of God, which is about the same percentage as it was 200 years ago when the Church began sending out missionaries and spending loads of resources for world mission. It is time that we unite and explore this new technology for world mission.

Two other speakers: Brother D. J. Chuang spoke on “Social Media and the Church,” and Brother Richard Daniel spoke on “Social Media and Mission Agencies.”

Brother Chuang is a mission strategist and consultant for many churches and agencies. He suggested seven reasons why churches must actively utilized the internet: 1. It can expand the ministry; 2. It can broadly harness the strength of masses of people; 3. It is the major tool for people to socialize with each other; 4. People can deepen



Rev. Edwin Su spoke on “Our Responsibility in the Age of Social Media”.

their relationship through the ability of two-way internet communications; 5. People of different age group can use a common language to communicate with each other; 6. Its effect will last; 7. It is an efficient use of time and energy.



Brother D. J. Chuang spoke on "Social Media and the Church"

Brother Daniel is the Director of Chinese Ministry of Christian Vision Communication, responsible for setting the development strategy of their ministry in China and other Asian regions. The ministry was founded in 1988, engaged mainly in radio gospel broadcasting. At their height, they had 30 million listeners. With the advance of internet development, their monthly



Brother Richard Daniel spoke on "Social Media and Mission Agencies"

listeners decrease from 24,000 to less than 1,500. In seeking for God's will, they realize young unbeliever's attraction to the internet, and that most internet mission use written information to share the gospel. So they are now producing gospel video on the social media platform. They also set up a website yesHEis.com to provide a convenient tool of internet mission for Christians.

Jerry An, Director of Chinese Ministry at FEBC encouraged the participants to look forward to the mission era of the Chinese Church. He cited a quote from a pastor in China, "For the next 30 years, we, by God's grace, anticipated China will become a mission-sending base for global mission. Hundreds and hundreds of missionaries will be sent by bible-believing churches in the cities." Jerry also reminded the participants that the cyber world is a vast mission field that we needed to put more efforts in.

Participating agencies and individuals also shared their efforts in internet mission and everyone agreed that internet is becoming a major tool for global outreach.

► From P.3 During the Korean War the Korean people suffered greatly, experienced hunger and cold in the winter, and received donations of food and clothes from America in order to survive from hunger, sickness and death. Christian martyrs such as Rev. Kee-Chul Choo and Rev. Yang-Won Son and many others in the Korean Church paved the way for the rapid "church growth explosion" in South Korea from 1960s to 1980s. Dr. Marlin Nelson and the author edited a book, "Korean Church Growth Explosion (1995)."²⁵ But this rapid church growth movement has disappeared today, and the Korean Church is facing a challenge of membership decline.

The WCC movement was rapidly developing its ministry in the world during the period of 1950-80, but has lost its vitality and is on the decline. The time has come for the Korean Church and other Third World Churches to rise up and to carry the torch of leadership in world Christianity for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Korean Church must remember once again the words of Jesus Christ and of the Apostle Paul:

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body, one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called -- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all." (Ephesians 4:3-6.)

Notes

20. Tim Stafford, "Teeming Diversity," *Christianity Today* (Dec 2010), pp.35-38.
Doug Birdsall, 2012-2013 *Lausanne Leadership Directory* (Boston: The Lausanne Movement, 2012), p.21.
21. "WCC General Assembly Preparation Committee Decides \$5 Million Budget," *Christian Leader* (2012), p.75.
22. Elijah Kim, *The Rise of the Global South*, pp.4-8
23. George F. Will, "Bishops Reject Their Church's Less-Divine Tendencies," *Star Bulletin* Newspaper in Honolulu, (Oct 19, 2008), E2.
24. Dwight L. Baker, "How a Whole Church Vanished", *Christianity Today* (Nov 25, 1966), pp.3-5.
25. Bong-Rin Ro & Marlin Nelson, eds. *Korean Church Growth Explosion* (Seoul: Word of Life Press, 1995), p.302.

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Symbolic Moment as Chinese Gather at the Asian Church Leaders Forum in Seoul

Lausanne Committee

The Chinese Church was barely represented at The Third Lausanne Congress in Cape Town in October 2010 as Chinese participants were unable to leave China. In 2011 plans were laid quietly for a special event for these Chinese church leaders, to be held elsewhere in East Asia. Over one hundred unregistered church leaders from mainland China arrived safely in Seoul for the Asian Church Leaders Forum, June 25-28, 2013, representing millions of Chinese believers.

The participation of the Chinese leaders in the 300-strong Asian Church Leaders Forum (ACLF) marked the first time since 1949 that such a group of Chinese Christian leaders had taken part in a multi-national gathering. It was a symbolic moment in church history. Speakers included Patrick Fung of OMF International; Daniel Bourdanne of IFES, Joshua Ting of CC-COWE, Thomas Wang of Great Commission Center, JaeHoon Lee of Onnuri Church and James Hudson Taylor IV, great-great-grandson of the British missionary pioneer to inland China.

Professor Liu Peng from the Chinese Academy of Social Science, spoke of Christianity's potential to win the heart of China. There is a need for China to update its outdated religious policies 'to adapt to a new modern era' he said, concluding 'Christianity is well suited to resolve China's current moral crisis'. The primary responsibility for seizing this opportunity lies with the Chinese church itself.

Beijing Pastor Daniel Li urged that the Chinese Church work and pray to see 20,000 missionaries sent out from China by 2030. 'Over the last 200 years, since the days of the earliest



Yung Wah, Chairman of Asian Lausanne Committee, with Jamie Taylor as interpreter.

British pioneer Robert Morrison, some 20,000 missionaries have served in China.' There was, he said, 'a gospel debt to pay off'.

Japanese Bible Expositor Dr Eiko Takamizawa from Torch Trinity University, Seoul, brought tears to many eyes with a powerful message of gospel reconciliation between Japan, Korea and China. The worship team, drawn from these three nations, demonstrated a clear and poignant sense of unity.

The Cape Town Commitment, issuing from The Third Lausanne Congress, has circulated widely in China. It expresses what the Congress discerned the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church. On behalf of all those present at the Congress, Lausanne leaders have urged local and national churches to discern their place in its outworking. As a means of response, Pastor Ezra Jing of Beijing Zion Church led the Chinese in drafting and signing the 'Seoul Commitment'. This calls the church in China to commit to loving the gospel of Christ; maintaining unity of the Spirit; working together wherever possible with the global church; and raising up younger leaders to take up the baton for world evangelization. Some 200 of the most gifted Chinese leaders under the age of 35 are being mentored, many of whom will participate in a global gathering of younger leaders planned for 2015.



Kenya: Last April, 98 denomination and church planting networks leaders representing 15,000 churches throughout East Africa gathered for a historic meeting to deal with key issues facing their churches. Among many things, they committed the 4th Sunday in June as "Gospel Sunday." Each of the churches presented clearly the gospel message and called for repentance. Many churches reported unusually high attendance and much spiritual fruit. In one church, the preaching Bishop was involved in a traffic accident the night before. By God's grace and protection, he was released from hospital on Sunday morning and 112 people received Christ.

<Global Advance, www.globaladvance.org, 7/1/13>

Digital Outreach: Since its start of digital media platform last October, the Jesus Film has been viewed by over 10 million people, and over 100,000 people have downloaded the Jesus Film App on their smartphone. This is like sending out 100,000 mobile missionaries into the world that are equipped to share the gospel in their heart language. Jesus Film has 1,100 language versions and the media platform holds over 64,000 evangelistic films and videos.

<JESUS Film Project, www.jesusteam.org, 7/2/13>

Papua New Guinea: The Siawi people came to Christ in 1992. In 2009 they got New Testament books like Romans and Ephesians in their heart language and grew much deeper spiritually. Four years later, they are getting the whole New Testament. Work is underway on Exodus and Jonah. And plans are made to produce them in waterproof books. Because it rains almost everyday and everything molds and mildews. Paper is eaten by cockroaches and termites. A plastic-based paper will be used.

<New Tribe Mission, www.ntm.org, 7/10/13>

Ivory Coast: A rebellion in 2002 tore the nation as northern Muslims felt politically biased. Thousands were killed. Fighting ended in 2004 with a buffer zone placed between north and south. Through it all the church has struggled. The population is 40% Islamic, 34% Christians, and 25% ethnic religions. Many churches are smaller than 10 year ago. There have been open evangelistic campaigns in recent months and many have come to Christ. An agency is helping with pastoral training conferences.

<Global Advance, www.globaladvance.org, 7/5/13>

Mongolia: A short-term mission team from Siberia, Russia came to conduct school without walls seminars at two locations with about 50 students. And they teamed up with 20 local Christians to hold five Bible camps. 450 children attended. Many came to Christ, including one translator. All the mission team members have been trained by the Russian

Ministries School Without Walls. This training program trains 2,300 students every month for various areas. The director of the agency expressed a concern of lack of male leadership.

<Russian Ministries, russian-ministries.org, 7/29/13>

Southeast Asia: There is a worm that enters the human brain and causes seizures. It is a disease called NCC epilepsy, and is the leading cause of epilepsy death in the developing world. Irrigating vegetables with contaminated water, eating infected pork, and direct contact with disease carriers result in infection. Most NCC infection occurs in Latin America, China, parts of Africa and SE Asia, including India and Nepal. It can only be controlled and eradicated by improving living and sanitary conditions. An agency is building and promoting household toilets with its partners, thus reducing infection rates and improving general health.

<Baptist Global Response, www.gobgr.org, 7/25/13>

USA: A survey showed the religious profile of immigrants in 2012 as: 61% Christian, 25% other religions and 14% unaffiliated among legal permanent residents; while among illegal immigrants they are 83%, 7% and 9%. Organizers of the largest Arab festival are taking a yearlong hiatus following 4 years of tensions between attendees and self-professed Christian evangelists. Fights have erupted over methods of street evangelism -- including carrying a pig's head on a pole. Arab Christian leaders in Dearborn, Michigan criticize such efforts by outside groups as ill-informed and counterproductive. One reason: most Arab Americans are Christians.

<Christianity Today, christianitytoday.com, July 13>

In 20 Years: The Seed Company launched in 1993 by Wycliffe set a goal to start 200 Bible translation projects in 10 years. Beginning with 10 projects, they were working with 208 languages after 10 years. Today, they are engaged with more than 900 groups. They have come a long way to fulfill the language portion of the Great Commission and bring all of God's Word to every tribe and nation.

<The Seed Company, www.theseedcompany.org, 7/2/13>

Russia: Muslims are growing at annual rate of 0.6%. Over 2 million are in Moscow. It is estimated there will be 18.6 millions in the nation by 2030. Christians are reaching out to them with a new tool, the Message of Glory New Testament which includes testimonies of Muslim-background Christians. The 1st printing of 10,000 copies was very well received. An agency is giving seminars also to train Christians effective ways to reach Muslims.

<Russian Ministries, russian-ministries.org, 7/9/13>

Mission to the Roma People

Prayer Meeting



The Roma People, popularly known as Gypsies, has been a mystery to much of the outside world. They have been dispersed all over the world for almost a thousand years. It is estimated there are 10,000,000 to 12,000,000 Roma people in Europe alone.

They are a unique people, by and large preserving their own culture. As a minority people, they have been neglected or even discriminated by their host countries. It is generally accepted that they originated from northern India and gradually migrated to West Asia, Turkey, Egypt, the Balkans and the entire Europe, then the Americas. As most of them live in the so-called Christian countries, they have been regarded as Christians and, to a large extent, their gospel needs have been neglected by the Church.

Three articles published by Melody J. Wachsmuth earlier this year caught the attention of some mission organizations. The articles are: 'God Among the Roma People' in the May issue of *Christianity Today*; 'Loving our "Unwanted" Neighbors' in the May-June issue of *Mission Frontiers*; and 'Separated peoples: The Roma as Prophetic Pilgrims in Eastern Europe' in the July issue of *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*.

GCCI staff was quite affected by these articles, would like to learn more about the needs

of the Roma People, and to seek God's will in initiating ministries among the Roma People in Eastern Europe. Thus, a prayer meeting was organized by GCCI Hong Kong office on September 17, 2013. About 30 people attended the prayer meeting. Most of them were pastors and mission committee members.

Dr. Sharon Chan, President of GCCI shared briefly with the group who the Roma peoples are, and their general situation in Europe with special focus on the population, education, employment and housing issues of the Roma peoples in Hungary, Serbia, and Macedonia. Rev. Sek-Wai Lo explained the gospel needs of these Roma peoples. Then, Rev. Samuel Cheng led the 45-minute prayer time. He encouraged everyone to pray privately for a few minutes, then in small groups, and, finally, corporate prayers led by denomination representatives. Some of the participants were moved into shedding tears by the needs of the Roma people. All attendees have promised to bring these concerns back to their churches, and encourage their congregations to pray for and support financially missions to the Roma people.

A group of four has decided to make a visit to the Roma people in Hungary, Serbia and Macedonia on November 5-15, 2013. Your prayer for this trip is much appreciated.