

Pentecostal Leaders Gather in Indonesia

Leaders at the Pentecostar World Conference say the global Christian movement can't be stopped

In July more than 300 delegations from across the globe ignored travel warnings issued by some governments and convened in Surabaya, Indonesia, for the 21st triennial Pentecostal World Conference (PWC), a global coalition of some of the world's most influential Pentecostal leaders.

Christians from 34 nations packed the sprawling 20,000-seat auditorium of Graha Bethany Church July 17-20 as speakers such as Foursquare President Jack Hayford, former Assemblies of God (AG) Assistant General Superintendent Charles Crabtree and Bishop Jerry Macklin, pastor of Glad Tidings Church of God in Christ in Hayward, Calif., addressed the crowd.

Bishop James Leggett, general superintendent of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church and PWC chairman, said the global Pentecostal movement doesn't belong to certain churches or denominations. "The fire of the Holy Spirit is now moving around the world. There is absolutely nothing that can bring this movement to an end," Leggett said. "Not even a clumsy leadership ... or criticism."

Hayford said divisions within the Pentecostal community were being healed.

"Competitiveness has long been known among the family of this movement," he said. "But somehow, the Spirit of the Lord is bringing the family back together again. The love of God brings unity."

Crabtree said brighter days lie ahead for the Spirit-filled movement. "It is just the right time for us to start celebrating the future of the Pentecostal movement," he said. "The triumphant God of Pentecost is alive, and He gives us everything we need to press forward."

To build a strong future, several leaders said churches must empower the next generation. "God thinks and moves generationally," said Brian Houston, president of the AG in Australia and pastor of 20,000-member Hillsong Church in Sydney. "... We must not try to pump new life into the ways of the fathers, but move forward toward the sons, moving from the predictable to the unpredictable."

Some leaders cautioned churches not to lose their Pentecostal identity or make the blessings of God self-centered. "Many in the church are too earthly minded and worldly, focusing on being fashionable, not spiritual," said Dag Heward-Mills, a medical doctor from Ghana and founder of Lighthouse Chapel International, a charismatic denomination with 400 branches in the U.S., Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia.

"We have many big churches with lots of money, but they are powerless to bear fruit. The message of suffering does not go well with the message of safety first. Sacrifice and suffering, however, release God's power. Jesus paid with His life. We must be willing to do the same."

In addition to sermons given by Christian leaders, including the host church's senior pastor, Abraham Alex Tanuseputra, three prominent Indonesian politicians—the city's mayor, the provincial governor and the nation's minister of religion—publicly thanked PWC for staging the event in their city and country.

Samuel Karwur in Surabaya, Indonesia