

Empowered21 Honors Six Ministry Legends From Asian Nations

Delegates from 50 nations are gathered this week for the “Wind and Fire,” 2017 Empowered21 Asia Congress at the Singapore EXPO.

One of the many highlights of the three-day event has been recognition of iconic spirit-empowered leaders from the Asian region. Starting Thursday morning, six honorees selected by the E21 Asian Cabinet, were introduced and given the opportunity to address the delegates with a message of power, hope, and encouragement.

“One of Empowered21’s imperatives is intergenerational blessing and impartation, which in this conference included honoring those who have advanced Spirit-empowered ministry around the globe,” stated E21 Global Co-chair and ORU President Dr. William M. Wilson. “Asia has produced stalwarts of the faith, and the six we honor this week represent some of the most influential and effective soldiers in the movement.”

The honorees come from six Asian nations where they have all left a legacy of kingdom service through church planting, pastoral leadership and evangelism. Collectively, the group has touched hundreds of millions of lives not only in Asia but around the globe.

Rev. Dr. Colton Wickramaratne has served as the chairman of the Assemblies of God of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) for over 25 years and is founding pastor of the People’s Church and Impetus Ministries Thrust. In his 67 years of ministry, Wickramaratne has challenged generations of young ministers to realize their fullest potential across the more than 100 countries where he has ministered.

Hailing from a small town in India, Rev. David Mohan began his ministry at the age of 21 and has pastored the New Life Assembly of God in Chennai for over 40 years, a congregation he founded which today has over 40,000 members. He simultaneously serves as the general superintendent of All India Assemblies, a network of more than 8,000 churches.

Pastor Dennis Balcombe has been an influential leader in China since he first travelled there in 1969. Within eight months of immersion in the Chinese culture, he was fluent enough in Cantonese and Mandarin to begin Revival Christian Church, a congregation, which has grown to over 1,000 members and where he still serves as senior pastor. He also leads Revival Chinese Ministries International and is widely known as one of the spiritual fathers of the Chinese house church movement.

Through the years, Prince Guneratnam has served in key international leadership posts, culminating in his current chairmanship of the historic Pentecostal World Fellowship. Senior pastor of Calvary Church in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Guneratnam was the first Malaysian general superintendent for the Assemblies of God in Malaysia. Calvary Church recently moved into their 600,000-sq. ft., 5,000-seat convention center, the largest Christian facility in Malaysia.

In his 50 years of ministry, Rev. Canon Dr. James Wong has stood out as an effective and influential leader from Singapore. He played a large role in the Charismatic renewal of the Anglican church of the 1970s. A gifted organizer, Wong was instrumental in spreading the fire of the Holy Spirit across Singapore through national conferences and renewal meetings.

Perhaps the most internationally-known of the six honorees is Pastor David Yonggi Cho, senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea.

Prior to his address to the delegates, Wilson and the Asia

Cabinet, including co-chairs Lawrence Khong and Niko Njotorahardjo, laid hands upon the legendary church leader and blessed Cho's continued ministry and legacy.

"Pastor Cho has been a strong influence in my life and ministry," said Khong. "He has blazed the trail before all of us, and it was a lifetime moment for this body to honor him publicly."

YFGC is currently the largest congregation in the world at 800,000 members. Spanning six decades, Dr. Cho's ministry has taken him to 71 countries, where he has conducted nearly 400 special meetings, spreading his message of hope to millions.

Ossie Mills, executive director of Empowered21, commented on the power of the moment as Cho accepted the honor.

"It was as if time stood still in the arena when this giant of the faith addressed the delegates; you could hear a pin drop." Mills stated. "Dr. Cho's influence has spanned decades and tonight it was clear he was exhorting young people to proclaim Pentecost for their generation." {eoa}