

I'm Inspired by God's Use of Business Leaders Worldwide

For years I've been attending networking meetings in the body of Christ, but rarely has a meeting inspired me more than the one I'm attending today in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from where I'm filing this report.

There are about 100 business leaders here from all over the world who are talking about how to work together to advance the cause of Christ. It's the second meeting brought together by Global Kingdom Partners Network—an informal group you've probably never heard of. I'm here as a business leader. But I'm making many important connections, learning a lot and picking up a few stories that we'll report over the next few weeks.

Yesterday, we heard reports on the many world problems: the rise of Islam, increasing persecution of Christians, the onslaught of gay marriage, the declining influence of the church in the West. Have we heard that before? Yes. But here, there is also a sense of optimism. We heard reports the church is growing in many places, and we heard stories of businesspeople—many of them very wealthy—who are heading up bold initiatives to spread the gospel, influence society, help the poor and emphasize the importance of ethics.

During round-table discussions, the group here identified that corruption in government is one of the most difficult problems these Christian businessmen face. Graham Power from South Africa is heading an initiative he calls "Unashamedly Ethical," in which most of the attendees sign a pledge not to give or accept bribes or other forms of corruption. He even read a list of the countries with the most and least corruption. New Zealand was rated as the least corrupt, and Singapore second. Somalia was considered most corrupt—No. 182,

right behind North Korea. (Where was the United States on the list? It's rated the 24th least corrupt nation, given a score of 7.1 out of 10.)

There were stories especially from developing countries of how many of these very wealthy businesspeople see business as a ministry rather than a dichotomy we see in the West, where professional clergy do "ministry" while businesspeople do business and are merely seen as donors by ministry leaders.

The Global Kingdom Partners Network is the vision of Elias Dantas, an affable Brazilian who is now a part of Nyack College in New York. It began several years ago as almost a secretive meeting of megachurch pastors from around the world (including some from Muslim nations) to see how they could collaborate in spreading the gospel and encourage each other. The marketplace initiative (of which I'm a part) is a spinoff of the pastor's group. It is less secretive because what the businessmen do to fund the gospel and witness doesn't get the same sort of persecution from governments who may be hostile to Christians. Since I'm also a journalist, I've been aware that much of what I'm hearing is off the record.

I was invited to be one of 15 presenters to the group. We each brought with us a video (by way of introduction) that introduced ourselves and our families and told about our work. We made a few remarks and later served on a panel to answer questions.

If you'd like to see the six-minute video I showed about Charisma Media, you can [click here](#). As appropriate, I'll tell the stories and show the videos of the others who attended. Collectively, I've found the videos and presentations an interesting peek into the lives and influence of some people who are radically changing their worlds.

I was encouraged as I heard the stories and learned of ministries and outreaches in countries where I had little idea

of what is happening. Even in the Muslim nations, there were very good reports. It proves once again that the body of Christ is alive and well on planet Earth.

I believe it also shows the power of working together as believers—and, I might add, learning from each other and forming relationships. Some of the leaders are semi-retired and devoted almost full-time to ministry. Other younger leaders have become wildly successful in their 30s and are trying to find balance with family, ministry and business.

I haven't fully processed all I've seen and learned here. However, technology allows me to file this live report as the meeting continues. It will take me time to understand why I felt I should make this long trip to attend this meeting. I plan to use the long trip home to do this.

My vision is to reach the world with the gospel and to serve the church through the media. Of course, I can't begin to do it alone. This week I've made some great contacts—and my vision was expanded—for the important years ahead.

This is a very personal report about a meeting I attended that most of you can't relate to. But at whatever level we might be, each of us can experience some of what I'm experiencing here in Malaysia. In our own day-to-day lives, we can network with others, form friendships and learn from each other in a spirit of unity.

Please leave your comments. Did anything I said inspire you or make you think?

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