

Leading the World From Korea

What a global network of megachurch pastors can teach us

For more than three decades I've been reporting on the move of the Holy Spirit around the world. Much of what's going on is wonderful. The church is growing, people and churches are being revived, miracles are happening. These are what motivated me as a young journalist to start *Charisma*.

However, much of what is happening isn't wonderful. In the American church there's more scandal and divorce, while a few so-called leaders seem more interested in enjoying a Hollywood lifestyle than in having godly character. There's persecution around the world and culture wars at home. There's a growing threat of humanism and militant Islam around the when I'm tempted to get discouraged I am reminded that no matter how bad things may be, God is in control.

Watch videos from leaders who attended the meeting in Korea, [here](#).

This happened recently when I was invited to meet with a small group of Christian leaders in Seoul, South Korea. I'd never heard of their network, which consists mainly of several dozen megachurch pastors outside North America who meet for friendship, fellowship and to work together to fulfill the Great Commission. They have no website, and while they have a name, they're so low-key I won't use it here.

To be invited into the network, the churches (or networks of churches from a single church) had to have 20,000 members. Some were much higher. In Korea, 450,000; in Africa, a network with 250,000 members; in India, 80,000; in South America, 20,000.

This year, for the first time, they invited a few megachurch pastors from the U.S. They also invited CEOs of large

parachurch ministries such as Campus Crusade, The Navigators, Mercy Ships, Open Doors, Alpha and several others to talk about how we can work together. I was the only one specifically invited from media and was honored to be included.

Because the meeting was below the radar screen, it wasn't a "news event" to cover. Instead, I decided to write my opinion on the group and what I observed:

First, I came away encouraged at the state of the church worldwide. The pastors seemed full of vision. Even in countries with very difficult circumstances such as poverty in Africa or persecution in the Islamic world, they seemed to be encouraged.

I was impressed with the humility and character of those who attended. Instead of displaying huge egos as we have become accustomed to in the West, these leaders talked about their ministries with humility.

Dealing with Islam was the central theme of the meeting. Yet these pastors didn't seem alarmed by the threat of Islam, unlike many American pastors who are stunned when they discover there's a mosque in their town. They shared how thousands of Muslims are coming to Christ through signs and wonders, and through dreams and visions. One Arab pastor shared how his church is dealing with political unrest in his nation, adding that its churches "applaud the overthrow of the regime."

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Yet there are grave dangers and much persecution of Christians in the Islamic world. An Indonesian pastor shared how he and his wife learned to forgive the terrorists who planted a bomb in their car that exploded and left his wife without a leg.

An American attendee named Joshua Lingel has a vision to train the church in apologetics and Muslim ministry. He told us Muslims are trained in Islamic apologetics and most Christians don't know how to answer them. His ministry, i2, has amazing training materials and a success record in winning Muslims to Christ. Well-known Christian apologist Josh McDowell added that many American evangelicals leave the faith when confronted with anti-Christian ideas because they don't know what they believe.

Because of this extraordinary meeting I'm motivated to help American Christians understand their faith; to network more—none of us can do the job alone—to fulfill Christ's command to share the gospel and make disciples; and to pray for more visionary, humble leaders to lead the church through these difficult times. We Westerners have a lot we can learn if we would bother to listen.

Steve Strang is the founder and publisher of Charisma. To watch videos from leaders who attended the meeting in Korea, here.

