

Ubiquitous Women of Influence



Grace Hee

Executive Director of Women Commission
Asia Evangelical Alliance



Ubiquitous means “present, appearing, or found everywhere”. When this word is attached as an adjective to women, you know what it means. Women make up 50% of Asia, more than 60% in churches and is the thermostat of every family. Having the privilege of facilitating a group of powerful evangelical women leaders across Asia, I am more convinced than ever that God made women to be significant servant-leaders or helper-leaders or true leaders when it comes to passion. Women’s influence in all spheres of life are legendary, even as mindsets are changing about giving recognition to women in leadership, and history books are being rewritten.

In this past year, as Executive Director of Women Commission, we highlighted a few eye-opening issues for the Asian church that women have always intuitively known and have been attending to them quietly. In these unprecedented times, we felt they should be brought into the light of the church (1 John 1:5-7).

Firstly, the presence and plight of widows in the midst of our churches and communities. Marriage is a covenant for life between a husband and wife. But when one is gone, everything falls apart, from well-being, finances, roles, community responses and even reputation. When the women commission hosted the “Widows Connect” event, it brought much tears, comfort and camaraderie to the widows and the realization that they were not forgotten, and that the church does exhibit James 1:27 “Religion that God the Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress”

Secondly, the attention and patience needed to those suffering grief and sorrow due to life-altering losses in their lives. The COVID-19 pandemic exponentially increased losses. It would be safe to say that no one was spared - from loss of beloved family members, to friends, to colleagues, to jobs, to business, to church and family gatherings and to things that define us. All suffered a loss, and entered into grief. During the “Grief Care” seminar, experts advised us that this God-given emotion must be allowed to take its full course for restoration of the soul. In the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35, we see Jesus adeptly and sensitively attending to the grief of two disciples and later to Peter. Grief care requires the sensitivity of Jesus, and advises us not to judge a grieving person as “not being strong”.

Thirdly, within the safety and security of our homes, an insidious pandemic called domestic abuse lurks, made worse by the lockdowns of the last two years. What should alarm us most is that the church family is not spared. Anecdotal data reveals that domestic violence in christian homes may be consistent with the world’s trend especially in patriarchal communities. In these situations, homes are not safe havens but rather a place of fear and terror particularly for women and children. The AEA leadership bravely followed-up the women commission’s webinar on domestic abuse with an Asia-wide “Family Conflict and Domestic Abuse” survey. The survey has recently concluded and in this issue, some of the results are shared. It is our hope and fervent prayer that the survey will lift up the heads of church leaders and families to give

voice and begin to teach about the occurrence of domestic abuse in christian homes. Home and abuse must be mutually exclusive like oil and fire. A home must be the safest place on earth as depicted by the Lord for us in Psalm 91:1-2 "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust." Lastly, I continue to be amazed at the resilience of women in the face of resistance to their leadership potential. As readers, I pray we meditate on Genesis 1:27-28

"God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them (man and woman) and said to them (man and woman), "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over (together) ... " May we rise up in faith to accelerate the day when men and women sit around the same table of communion to make decisions on all matters of life, work and godliness, for the image and glory of the Father. Amen ■

