

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2025

LEADERSHIP AS DISCIPLESHIP



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7 CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES IMPACTING THE CHURCH IN ASIA AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Rev. Bambang Budijanto, Ph.D. (Indonesia)

General Secretary/CEO of the Asia Evangelical Alliance
Chairman, Board of Trustees, Bilangan Research Center

The landscape of the church and mission in Asia has undergone significant shifts in the past 20 years, and we continue to move into uncharted territory. The Asian church needs leaders with new competencies and approaches to navigate this fast-changing landscape.

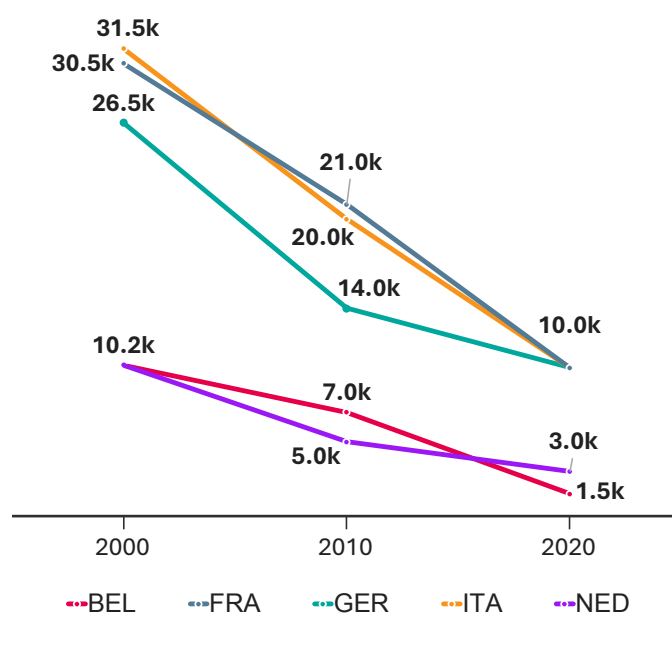
Theological seminaries, Bible colleges and other leadership training centers are asking themselves whether the leaders they are producing will meet the future needs of the Asian church in these turbulent times.

The first responsibility of a leader is to identify the (new) reality. At least 7 emerging aspects of this new reality have impacted and will continue to significantly impact the Asian church and its mission in the next few years.



1. The sharp decline in the number of mission workers from traditional mission sending countries.

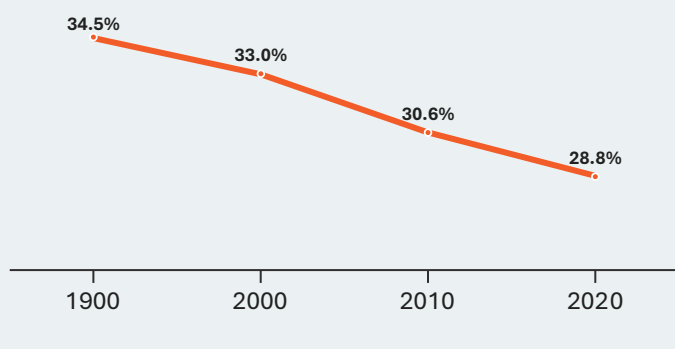
Past Super Power in Global Mission:
DECLINING



COUNTRY	2000	2010	2020
BELGIUM	10,200	7,000	1,500
FRANCE	30,500	21,000	10,000
GERMANY	26,500	14,000	10,000
ITALY	31,500	20,000	10,000
NETHERLANDS	10,200	5,000	3,000

2. The steady decline of Christian market-share globally.

Changing Market Share of Global Christianity



3. The significant increase in migrant workers across Asia.

New Diaspora Landscape

1. In 2000, there were an estimated **20 million Asian migrant workers worldwide**.
2. In 2010, **53 millions**
3. In 2020, **69 millions**, more than half reside in Asian countries



4. The significant increase of the “unaffiliated”.

Religiously unaffiliated populations grew substantially in 35 countries especially among the young

Number of countries where each religious category's share of the population change by at least 5 percentage points, 2010-2020

	Grew by at least 5 pct. pts.	Shrank by at least 5 pct. pts.
Religiously unaffiliated	35	0
Muslims	3	2
Christians	1	40
Buddhists	0	1
Hindus	0	0
Jews	0	0
Other religions	0	1

5. Geopolitical volatility

- Asian wars and their impacts on family and children—in Gaza, Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, and Iran.
- Increasing religious restrictions and hostility against Christianity, especially in China and India.
- The raise of conservative hardliners in many countries, potentially shifting international political and economic alliances or coalitions.

6. The widening generation gaps inside and outside the church.

- The Gen Z protests against Asia's political elite. Gen Z has arisen loudly in Asia and is reshaping the socio-political context in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Timor Leste, and Mongolia.
- Gen Z and Gen Alpha's perspective on current expressions of Christian spirituality and religiosity.
- Gen Z perspectives on marriage, families, and other social issues such as LGBTQ have significant implication on society and the church.

7. Social media, AI, and technology

- The role of social media in ideological polarization and political mobilization, and its contribution in broadening the space for people's political engagement.
- AI's impacts on the economy, education, healthcare, ethics and other issues are massive and yet to be fully realized.

Questions for Reflection

- In view of these landscape changes, do the Asian churches require a different kind of leaders, and will conventional theological seminaries in Asia be able to produce these leaders?
- Questions have often been raised regarding the relevance of leadership formation as provided by today's conventional theological seminaries. At the same time, some theological schools, as one of the main production lines in producing church leaders, have been reflecting on what kind of leaders will be needed 10 years from now. Are we producing the leaders we need?
- Enrollment at theological seminaries globally and in Asia has been steadily declining. Is this decline related to the landscape changes described above? Or are we entering another shift, to meeting the church's leadership needs largely in ways other than conventional theological seminaries?
- It would be helpful to reflect, by way of comparison, on the journey and trajectory of theological seminaries in the West, so as to help us consider the desired trajectory of Asia's theological seminaries. Should Asia consider a different path in developing church leaders through our theological institutions?
- What will it take to enable theological seminaries and other ministry training centers in Asia to transform themselves into effective church leadership development engines, producing leaders who will lead the church to prevail in the new landscape? ■

LEADING THE PHILIPPINE CHURCH TO **INTENTIONAL DISCIPLEMAKING**



Bishop Dr. Noel A. Pantoja, D.Min
(Philippines)

National Director - CEO,
Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC)

The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) launched its Decade of Disciplemaking in 2023, marking a pivotal moment for the church in the Philippines. This initiative aims to revitalize churches by fostering a paradigm shift from mere activities and programs to intentional disciplemaking, ultimately leading to healthy and multiplying churches.

Representing 90 denominations and over 55,000 churches, PCEC's National Disciplemaking Campaign seeks to return to the roots of the church and Jesus' original intent to make disciples. This movement is grounded in a unified biblical understanding of what it means to be a disciple, to practice discipleship, and to engage in disciplemaking.

The Need for a Discipleship Revolution

The rapid growth of the church in the Philippines, while a testament to God's faithfulness, has also highlighted the urgent need for intentional discipleship. Many churches have drifted from their core mission, prioritizing programs, entertainment, and social engagement over the transformative

work of making disciples. This drift dilutes the Gospel's power and risks turning the church into a stagnant institution rather than a vibrant, Christ-centered organism.

To address this situation, PCEC emphasizes a discipleship revolution—a radical return to the foundational principles established by Jesus in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). This revolution calls believers to embrace their identity as disciples and to actively fulfill the mandate to make disciples of all nations.

The Process of Disciplemaking

PCEC's National Disciplemaking Campaign (NDC) is unfolding in a structured process designed to equip churches and pastors for this transformative work:

- 1. NDC 101 conferences.** These conferences, held across all regions, encourage pastors and churches to recommit to disciplemaking as their central mission.
- 2. Clinics.** These sessions help churches evaluate their current practices and transition toward intentional disciplemaking.



Progress of Church Growth in the Philippines

	1970	2000	2012	2017	2024
CHURCHES (Evangelical/ Protestants)	5,000	51,300	66,000	72,000	94,000
	Dawn 2000 Movement				
PERCENT Believers	1.8%	8.9%	9.5%	10.3%	13%
NUMBERS of Believers	600,000	7.2 M	9.5 M	10.4 M	14.3 M

- 3. **Mentoring groups.** Pastors are organized into groups for mutual encouragement, learning, and dreaming together, fostering a collaborative environment for growth.
- 4. **Summits.** Annual gatherings celebrate victories and sharpen the focus on discipling, ensuring sustained momentum.

The Essence of Discipling

Discipling is not a program or a series of classes; it is a way of life that reflects Christ in every aspect. Lifestyle discipleship calls believers to embody Christ’s teachings, becoming living testimonies of His love and grace. This transformation extends beyond individuals to families, communities, and society at large. The church, as the body of Christ, is called to be a transformative agent—salt and light—bringing hope, healing, and restoration to a broken world.

The Path to Church Health and Multiplication

Discipling is the only sustainable way to revive the church and nurture it to health and multiplication. As disciples make disciples, the church experiences exponential growth—not just in numbers but in depth and impact. This multiplication is rooted in the understanding that every believer is a potential discipler. When the church embraces this model, it creates a culture of discipleship that extends beyond its walls and into the surrounding community. In the Philippines, this approach is particularly vital for sustaining the church’s growth and ensuring its long-term impact.

The Role of Every Believer

The discipleship revolution underscores the truth that every believer is called to be a discipler. It invites churches to shift from passive attendance to active engagement,

empowering every member to participate in the Great Commission. This involves creating pathways for spiritual growth, mentorship, and accountability, ensuring that each believer is not only growing in their relationship with Christ but also actively making disciples.

Observable Outcomes

To date, over 15,000 churches have shifted to intentional discipling, with visible demonstrations of Christ-like lives among disciples. This shift has led to growth and multiplication in outreach, church planting, and missions work, both in the Philippines and among Filipino communities worldwide. The emphasis on discipling has redefined the church's mission, making it clear that discipling is every person's walk of following Christ and that discipling is the main work of the church and every disciple.

A Call to Action

The discipling revolution is a passionate call for the church to embrace its mission to make disciples. It invites believers to return to the roots of Christianity, where every believer is empowered to live out their faith and share the gospel. This journey requires commitment, intentionality, and reliance on the Holy Spirit. As the church heeds this call, it can expect to see revitalization, not just in numbers but in its capacity to be a beacon of hope and transformation in society.

Conclusion

The PCEC's Decade of Discipling is a transformative movement that seeks to align the church with Jesus' original intent. By prioritizing intentional discipling, the church can reclaim its identity as a living organism that reflects the heart of Christ. This shift is essential for ensuring the health and multiplication of churches in the Philippines and beyond. As believers rise to this challenge, they fulfill the Great Commission with fervor and dedication, knowing that the future of the church depends on their willingness to embrace this radical shift. PCEC's leadership has laid a strong foundation for this movement, inspiring churches to become healthy, discipling, and multiplying communities. ■



The emphasis on discipling has redefined the church's mission, making it clear that discipling is every person's walk of following Christ and that discipling is the main work of the church and every disciple.

REPORT:
WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE
14TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
SEOUL, 27-31 OCTOBER 2025

Disciple-Making at the Heart of Global Evangelical Gathering in Seoul

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) General Assembly, held from October 27 to 31 in Seoul, South Korea, brought together 850 evangelical leaders from 124 countries in a landmark gathering centered on renewing the church's disciple-making mission. Under the theme "The Gospel for Everyone by 2033," participants explored how to proclaim and live out the good news more faithfully amid today's cultural and generational shifts.



The Gospel

FOR EVERYONE BY 2033 (Eph 2:13-18)
World Evangelical Alliance General Assembly

SEOUL 27-31 OCT. 2025

WEA, SOC and AEA welcome
the delegates at the Opening
Ceremony





The Opening Ceremony

Throughout the week, plenary sessions and panels emphasized that authentic discipleship begins in the home and within relationships, emphasizing the importance of “presence” in a world that is marked by superficial digital connections. Speakers from across continents shared stories of how believers are called to model Christ’s character in everyday life, which is essential for a relevant and effective witness of the gospel today.

A panel on disciple-making also called for a return to family-centered faith formation as the foundation of church growth. Participating in the panel, AEA’s Gwen De Rozario shared insights from Asian contexts and highlighted the importance of discipleship within families. “As we talk about the gospel for everyone, this must include everyone in our home,” she emphasized.

The assembly also marked important leadership transitions. Rev. Botrus Mansour of Israel was inaugurated as the WEA’s new Secretary General. He outlined his vision for the WEA to strengthen unity and mission within the global evangelical family.

Another highlight was the election of AEA’s chair, Godfrey Yogarajah, to head the newly elected International Council. His election was welcomed as recognition of Asia’s growing leadership within world evangelicalism.

Yogarajah highlighted the urgency of the gospel amid global challenges and opportunities. “We gather at a time when the world is facing significant challenges—the suffering, the marginalized, the rise of persecution, the urgency of the gospel in changing cultures, as well as the opportunities created by technology and global connections,” he said.



The newly elected Chairman of the WEA International Council, Godfrey Yogarajah led the prayer for the new Secretary General, Advocate Botrus Mansour from Israel.



Chairmen and General Secretaries of National Evangelical Alliances in Asia



GA's Participants from Asia, a strong and committed leaders to fulfill the Great Commission in Asia and beyond

We are grateful for the exceptional hospitality and generosity of Sarang Church and the Korean church more broadly in hosting this General Assembly. We pray that their work may bring greater and lasting unity among the Korean churches, through which the Lord can revive the church in Korea for another significant wave of impact in fulfilling the Great Commission in Asia and beyond. ■

REFLECTION

The Man Who Made God Regret

The Ten Mistakes of Saul
in 1 Samuel 15:10–31



ILLUSTRATION: RAWPIXEL, AI-GENERATED



Rev. Dr. Eu Hong Seng (Malaysia)
Chairman, National Evangelical
Christian Fellowship Malaysia

As a young teenager, I didn't enjoy the "snakes and ladders" game. You could be up high one moment and near rock bottom the next, all due to a single serpent bite. The ladders all appeared too elusive. The game was too erratic to be fun.

In real life and the spiritual world, there are serpents amidst ladders. Because of character flaws, one can trip up in the last lap of life.

The people of Israel wanted a monarch, so Saul became the "top dog." It was not because this was part of the sovereign Lord's divine design. This ought to humble us. However, we have this propensity to forget how we got to the top once we reach the summit.

Many leaders, pastors, and workers forget how easy it is to slip. Though we may have been chosen and promoted, unless we cultivate humility and the fear of God, we will miss out on the promises of richness, honour, and life (Proverbs 22:4).

Prior to the battle with the Amalekites, Saul had already "missed it"—he was impatient and didn't respect boundaries. Because Samuel was delayed in arriving, Saul took it upon himself to offer the burnt offerings, angering God. Thus, Samuel proclaimed, "Now your kingdom shall not continue" (1 Samuel 13:14). With no sign of repentance, Saul took a rash oath in chapter 14, which led Jonathan to lament, "My father

has troubled the land" (1 Samuel 14:29).

Saul failed again in 1 Samuel 15:10–31, this time in carrying out the mandate to punish the Amalekites. This passage details for us Saul's ten mistakes that made God regret choosing him.

The LORD groaned, "I greatly regret ..." (1 Samuel 15:11). Instead of receiving the anticipated "well done" spoken over our lives, how many have fallen through the cracks in ministry and, accordingly, have caused God regret?

First, God said of Saul, "He has turned back from following Me" (v. 11). This is perhaps the most common summary judgement we are guilty of nowadays. At the memorial service of Charlie Kirk, his wife encouraged all to "return to prayer, read the Bible again, and attend church every Sunday." When these basics are neglected, we have turned back from following God. It's that simple.

Second, Saul “has not performed My commandments.” A lifestyle of reading the Bible and attending church but not doing His work in daily life characterises 80 percent of His people. The pride of life, the lust of the eyes, and the lust of the flesh have entangled us. Today, His church has ignored the mission assigned to us (see v. 18) and I can hear God asking the same question: “Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD?” (1 Samuel 15:19).

Third, we see Samuel the prophet grieved (1 Samuel 15:11). We thank God for the many emerging workers and new churches planted. But underlying these, many seniors have been grieved by the disrespectful casting aside of spiritual fathers.

Fourth, Saul “set up a monument for himself” (v. 12b). There is room for setting up personal YouTube channels, writing books, and drawing up promotional materials, but there is a line we should not cross, where we begin promoting ourselves as if we desire to be even more famous and well-known than our Saviour Jesus.

Fifth, Saul proclaimed, “I have performed the commandment of the Lord” (v. 13). Nobody is more blind than the man who has good eyesight but cannot see.

Sixth mistake: Saul disobeyed the clear and direct instruction given to him personally to deal with the Amalekites. However, when confronted, he was quick to blame the people: “the people spared” (v. 15); “the people took” (v. 21). When the church is not growing, when the prayer meeting is in a dismal state—is it the fault of “the people”? This could well be true, but even

in that case, are the leaders absolved?

Saul had this almost unexplainable relationship with the people he led. He was not afraid to blame them, but he had a kind of anthropophobia; as he explained to Samuel, “I feared the people and obeyed their voice” (v. 24).

Saul’s seventh misstep was “pseudo-worship.” Here we have outright disobedience in sparing the enemies and keeping the best of the animals so that he could present the best to “sacrifice to the LORD” (v. 15). Nowadays, instead of sparing sheep, are we not stealing sheep so that we can enjoy “big-crowd, anointed worship”? We believe dark colours and dim lights help usher in the presence of God. Like Saul, we have our own ideas of what kind of worship pleases Him.

Eighth mistake: “I have sinned, yet honour me now” (v. 30). Yes, we all want to look good. What was Saul focused on? It’s intriguing that Saul worshipped in verse 31, but not Samuel. Perhaps the old prophet could not bring himself to do so in that phony setting.

Ninth blunder: Samuel himself had to take up the sword to kill Agag, the Amalekite king. Why was Saul not asked to do it? There will come a time when the opportunity to do what God has called you to do will be fulfilled by another.

Finally, in verses 34–35, Saul and Samuel parted ways, and “Samuel went no more to see Saul.” Perhaps the saddest day that can come upon the church or an individual is when all prophetic input ceases.

Finally, the passage states once again, “The LORD

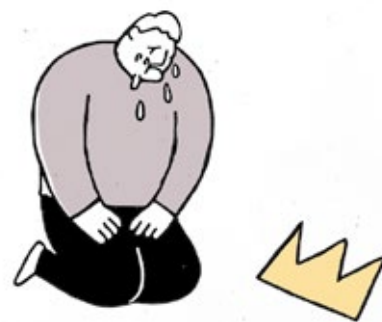


ILLUSTRATION: AI-GENERATED

regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel” (v. 34b).

Far too many people think all too little about living a life that is pleasing to God. Life is fraught with spiritual anacondas. Nobody can afford to be like Saul and “reject the word of the LORD” (1 Sam 15:26). The leaders equipped to survive the snakes-and-ladders terrain are those who are grounded in the Word.

We might be anointed and appointed. But we have not arrived. To be the bride prepared to welcome the Bridegroom, we must continue to put off and put on. Only the humble and those who fear the Lord realise that we are not exempt from making the same mistakes Saul did. It’s incumbent upon us to begin this journey of sanctification.

Yes, Saul begged, “Please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD” (v. 25). But Saul missed out on deep cleansing, on true repentance. Indeed, this passage contains the words sin, transgression, iniquity, idolatry, witchcraft, rebellion, and stubbornness. But mere words pleading for pardon are not sufficient.

Lest we are tempted to justify ourselves, the prophet Samuel chides us, “Be quiet!” (1 Samuel 15:16). Let us take the opportunity to be quiet before Him. May He guide us whilst mercy is still available, before He returns. ■

The Gen Z Protest in Nepal: A Call for Women's Leadership



Esther Rai (Nepal)

- Executive Director, Association for Theological Education Nepal (ATEN)
- Member of the AEA Executive Council

I recently heard someone say, “When trouble comes, God uses women.” This reminds me of Deborah in the Bible. God raised her up to lead Israel when the nation was in deep trouble. The Bible says that Deborah was the only female prophet and judge in Israel with spiritual authority and insight. Therefore, people from all over came to her for justice and guidance because there was no one else to lead them.

There are many other stories of women who rose to leadership in difficult times. Even in my own life, when I was 21 years old, I was appointed to lead an organization during a tough time. These stories remind me that when trouble comes, God indeed uses women.

On September 8, 2025, thousands of young people from Gen Z protested against corruption in Nepal. Tragically, some students in school uniforms were shot, and 19 young protesters lost their lives. The next day, demonstrations spread across the country. In anger and pain, young people set fire to the homes of political leaders, as well as government offices such as the Supreme Court, Tax Office, and Parliament House. Media buildings and large supermarkets were also damaged.

Within days, the Prime Minister and other top leaders resigned, leaving Nepal without leadership for two days. During this time, Gen Z turned to Nepal’s first female Chief Justice, Mrs. Sushila Karki, who had already retired, asking her to serve as interim Prime Minister. She accepted. For the first time in Nepal’s history, a woman became Prime Minister—a historic and hopeful moment.

Not everyone was pleased to see a 75-year-old person leading the country.

Honestly, I also wished to see a younger leader at first. But as I started reading Karki’s book, I discovered her honesty, courage, and integrity and began to see things differently. A question came to my mind. What if Sushila Karki had been a younger woman? Would Gen Z still have trusted her? Maybe not. And if there had been another strong male leader during Deborah’s time, would the Israelites still have trusted Deborah and sought her guidance and justice? Perhaps not.

If a woman becomes a leader only because no men are available, that does not mean much. But if a woman rises above many capable men to lead, that is truly great.



In Nepal, Gen Z proved that they could break the mindset that only men can lead. Although the law reserves 33% of government seats for women, about 67% of leadership positions are still held by men. I hope this moment inspires change in churches, schools, colleges, and other institutions where people still believe women cannot lead.

The impact would be powerful if churches, organizations, and theological colleges practiced legacy leadership—preparing and trusting the next generation. Sadly, many leaders hold on to their positions and hesitate to empower young people. Those who do receive leadership responsibilities at a young age often face doubt and criticism. If pastors, leaders, and teachers trusted young people instead of doubting their abilities, the church could raise a new generation of Esthers, Deborahs, and Davids—leaders who would stand for truth and transformation in the nation and the world. ■

REPORT FROM NEPAL NEPAL'S BELIEVERS HOLD FIRM IN TRYING TIMES



**Pastor Sher Bahadur A. C.
(Nepal)**

General Secretary, National
Churches Fellowship of Nepal

Warm greetings from Nepal! I write to share a brief update on the current situation in Nepal and the recent developments within NCFN.

First and foremost, I thank God for His continual provision and grace in our daily lives and ministry. In September, Nepal recently experienced a significant political shift led by the Gen Z activists, resulting in a change of government and political leadership within just 28 hours. This movement, which lacked formal leadership or a defined political agenda, appears to have made history. It was a wakeup call to both national and global observers about the power and influence of the younger generation—even those who previously showed little interest in politics.

While the Generation Z activists' expectations have yet to be fully met, their collective action has caused concern among older political leaders, signaling that this generation can no longer be ignored. We believe that in time, these young people will be elected to leadership positions and will play a pivotal role not only in fighting corruption but also in building and developing a better Nepal.

Regarding the Christian community, we are currently experiencing relative peace. There is no major tension due to our faith at this time, though uncertainties remain about the future—particularly concerning religious freedom and the legal rights around conversion and evangelism. Some among the Gen Z movement are supportive of religious and political freedom, while others are more reserved in their views. We remain hopeful that the upcoming general elections will lead to a more just and open environment for all.

The recent upheaval led to the destruction of various government offices, political party headquarters, and business areas. However, local communities—including many churches—responded generously by participating in cleanup and rebuilding efforts. These acts of service have left a positive impression on government officials and the broader public, further demonstrating the valuable contribution of Christians during times of crisis.

On October 9, NCFN held a Special General Assembly at Beth Shalom Church, Putalisadak, Kathmandu. Whereas the Executive Board had initially planned to hold a regular annual General



1. PROVINCIAL YOUTH & WOMEN CONFERENCE
2. PICTURE OF GA, NCFN



We kindly request your prayers for the following:

- Peace and mutual understanding between Gen Z and the major political parties, enabling a smooth general election on March 5, 2026.
- The emergence of a capable government with a clear vision to rebuild what has been damaged.
- Greater freedom for Christians and other minority groups.
- A peaceful resolution to all unrest and revolutionary activities.
- The successful completion of NCFN's General Assembly and the formation of a visionary new board.
- Stronger relationships and strategic partnerships with NCS and other alliances.
- Continued safety and protection for all Christian leaders and churches across Nepal.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Assembly and board election this year, that event has been postponed to April 6–7, 2026 due to the current political climate and financial challenges.

During the Special Assembly, the budget and ministry plans for the new fiscal year were approved, and an Election Commission of seven members was formed to oversee the upcoming board election for the next three-year term. After Nepal's general election has taken place, we anticipate a smooth transition to a new NCFN leadership team as well.

Additionally, the Executive Board has decided to reevaluate the 10-point agreement with NCS (signed in 2018), and this matter will be revisited after the new leadership is in place. Youth and Women's Commissions, along with the provincial bodies, continue to work actively according to their respective plans and objectives.

Evangelical Leadership in Indonesia: **Responding to the Challenges of Our Time**



Rev. Dr. Daniel Ronda (Indonesia)

General Secretary,
Fellowship of Evangelical Churches and
Institutions in Indonesia

Leading Amid the Tides of Change

Indonesia is moving through a season of rapid transformation economically, politically, culturally, and spiritually. Urbanization, digital technology, and the shifting values of younger generations have created a world in constant motion. In the midst of this acceleration, the church is called to rediscover its mission and to ask again what it means to be faithful to the gospel in such an age.

For the evangelical community, leadership has never been merely about administration or church management. It is, above all, a sacred calling to guide God's people to live faithfully in the light of Jesus Christ amid the complexities of modern society. Evangelical leadership must remain deeply rooted in the authority of Scripture, centered on the mission of Christ, and must bear fruit through the transformation of communities and nations.

The Struggles of a Faithful Leadership

Indonesia's diversity, including its multitude of ethnicities, religions, and cultures, makes it

both a fertile field for ministry and a demanding context for Christian leadership. Many pastors and church leaders today are navigating pressures both within and beyond the church.

Religious freedom in Indonesia, though constitutionally protected and increasingly supported through government efforts toward religious moderation, still faces challenges. In some regions, congregations struggle to obtain permits for worship buildings. Acts of intolerance and identity-based politics continue to test the church's witness. In these tensions, evangelical leaders are called to embody wisdom and courage, standing firm in faith without succumbing to fear or resentment.

Another source of tension is the fragmentation of the body of Christ. Evangelicals in Indonesia are known for their strong theology and missionary zeal, yet unity across denominations remains fragile. Leadership that fosters genuine collaboration and fellowship beyond institutional and doctrinal boundaries is greatly needed. Only in such unity can the church truly bear a compelling witness to the nation.

Younger generations, especially Generation Z, observe closely and critique sharply. They question leaders who flaunt wealth and status, and they long for authenticity, humility, and transparency.



PHOTO BY: HENDY WILLIAM SINO / VECTEEZY

The era of social media has exposed another form of crisis: the erosion of integrity among some leaders. Younger generations, especially Generation Z, observe closely and critique sharply. They question leaders who flaunt wealth and status, and they long for authenticity, humility, and transparency. The gospel loses credibility when leadership becomes a stage for self-promotion rather than a platform for ministry. The church must once again look to Christ, the humble servant, as its model of leadership.

Meanwhile, the digital revolution and generational shifts are reshaping how people experience faith. Young Indonesians are not drawn to mere ritual or grandeur but to authenticity and relationship. They yearn for leaders who listen, understand, and guide with empathy. This moment challenges evangelical leaders to adapt and use technology creatively while preserving spiritual depth and relational warmth.

Finally, the nation's social wounds such as poverty, corruption, injustice, and environmental decay continue to cry out for

a prophetic response. Evangelical leadership cannot remain confined within church walls. It must speak and act in the public square, proclaiming the hope of the gospel through deeds of compassion and justice. To lead in Indonesia today is to bring the light of Christ into the darkest corners of the nation's pain.

The Heart of Evangelical Leadership

True evangelical leadership in Indonesia is not defined by titles or institutions, but by a deep spiritual conviction. It guards the truth of the gospel in a world that often blurs moral boundaries. It seeks unity rather than uniformity, building bridges across denominational divides for the sake of God's mission.

Such leadership follows the path of the Master who declared, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mark 10:45). The focus of evangelical leadership, therefore, is not self-preservation or institutional success, but the faithful witness of Christ's love in word and deed.



AI-GENERATED

The church's greatest investment is not in buildings or programs but in people—especially in forming young men and women who are wise, courageous, and filled with integrity.

At the same time, true leaders recognize the need to prepare the next generation. The church's greatest investment is not in buildings or programs but in people—especially in forming young men and women who are wise, courageous, and filled with integrity. Leaders must become mentors, shaping future “Josephs,” “Daniels,” and “Timothys” who will bring the gospel into every sphere of life, including the marketplace and public service.

Leadership that bears the mark of Christ also carries a prophetic voice. It dares to speak against corruption, injustice, and moral decay, yet it does so with grace and peace. The prophetic leader does not oppose others simply for opposition's sake but witnesses to God's kingdom breaking into the realities of the nation. In Indonesia, where prophetic voices are not always welcomed, even a small voice for truth still matters, especially when it speaks on behalf of the poor, the oppressed, and the voiceless.

The Cross at the Center

In the end, evangelical leadership in Indonesia must always return to the cross. The temptation to seek power, influence, or recognition is real, but the cross calls us to another way: the way of humility, sacrifice, and love. The theologian Kosuke Koyama once wrote that “there is no handle on the cross.” It cannot be carried comfortably. To lead in Asia, and particularly in Indonesia, is to take up a cross-shaped calling, to lead with wounds, to serve with compassion, and to guide with hope.

Only a heart broken by the love of Christ can produce the kind of leader the church and the nation need today—one who builds not with ambition but with faith; who speaks not for self-glory but for the glory of God; who leads not for power but for the sake of the gospel.

As the apostle Paul reminds us: “For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake” (2 Corinthians 4:5). ■



The Legacy of Colonialism on Understanding Cross-Cultural Mission



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International Lead Facilitator

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Today the negative effects of historic colonialism are still impacting the global church, specifically related to how the gospel and cross-cultural mission are understood.

Historically, whereas colonialism was an oppressive system whereby a dominant country subjugated another people for their own gain, the mission movement sought to operate separately from colonialism. Yet because missionaries often came from colonial power nations, the two were seen, and unfortunately often experienced, as dynamically connected.

This often made it difficult for the gospel to be grasped, understood and applied to the daily lives of the people being reached. The message of Christ and His Kingdom seemed irrelevant to the lives and issues local people were facing. We still face this problem in many unreached and unengaged cultural contexts today.

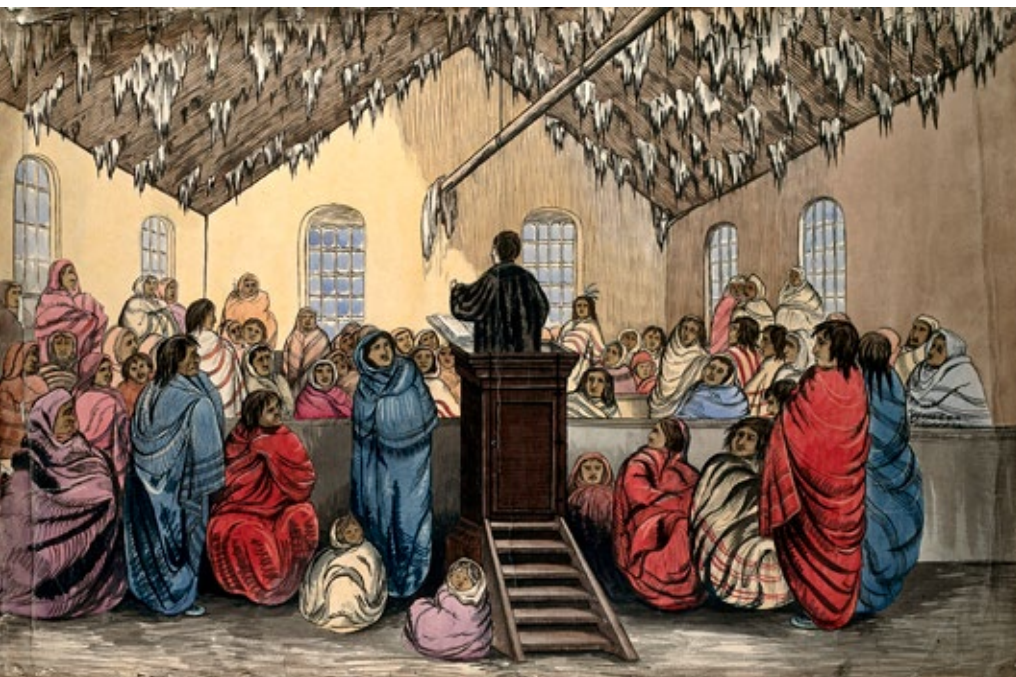
The most successful missionaries of the colonial era learned the importance of separating gospel truth from all Western cultural traits and pitfalls, allowing Jesus and His words to stand on their own amidst the God-given culture of the target people. They

encouraged new believers to express their new faith in uniquely cultural ways that were relevant to them.

These missionaries taught that although Jesus Christ and His unchanging Truth transcend culture, God always uses local believers in local contexts to express that truth. They expected new followers of Jesus, from the deep reservoir of their own cultural and even religious past, to interpret Christ in a culturally relevant way that enriched the total expression of the universal Christ.

Today, more than a century after the advances of colonialism, many of the countries where missionaries went during the colonial era (in Latin America, Africa, and Asia) have large Christian populations. The gospel has become “indigenized” or “naturalized” in many of these places.

This was achieved through the hard work of faithful and courageous indigenous ministry leaders who expressed and taught faith in Christ in uniquely African, Asian, and Latino cultural ways. These ways allowed the gospel to begin to be perceived as something indigenous, grown



Picture attribution: Red River Settlement, Canada: a Christian missionary preaching to native North Americans. Watercolour attributed to an unidentified person called 'The Empire Traveller', ca. 1860. Source: <https://wellcomecollection.org/works/eyeg9kc2/images?id=zwfusr5q>

from within, rather than as originating from the outside. These expressions of devoted life in Christ and understanding of Scripture are a gift to the global body of Christ.

As local culture and expression rightly influence faith, interpretation of Scripture, spiritual disciplines, and understandings of spiritual power as well as styles of dress, worship, prayer, hospitality and other general expressions of spirituality, this process has fostered true, dynamic faith in millions of Majority World believers. While we still have much farther to go, the global church has already come a long way in seeing the gospel take indigenous root and natural expression in many cultures.

Now, let's shift from discussing the historic progression of the gospel itself to the foundational mandate of Jesus to His global church regarding cross-cultural mission. How far have we progressed concerning an "indigenized" and "naturalized" understanding of cross-cultural mission in Majority World churches? Again, let's consider history.

During the colonial era, the mission movement globally was dominated by Westerners, which was appropriate at that time because most Christians lived in the West. They brought with them the concepts of "full-time missionaries," planting churches with full-time paid pastors, the need for church buildings, and many other outside trappings, in contrast with Jesus and the early church's zero-budget model of disciple multiplication through simple, culturally relevant churches. Additionally, they often brought a sense of cultural superiority instead

of celebrating who God had culturally made the target people to be. Paul's own example was exactly the opposite of this (1 Cor. 7:17–24; 9:19–23; Acts 19:8–10; 20:33–35).

Again, the contrast with today is powerful. Researchers tell us the center of gravity of global Christianity has shifted dramatically, such that now approximately two-thirds (69%) of all believers globally are in the Majority World. We rejoice at the encouraging implications of this change as the Holy Spirit awakens Majority World Christianity for cross-cultural mission.

Yet while the epicenter of the global church has shifted to the Majority World, the rate at which this part of the world is sending message-bearers out into the world is not commensurate with its population. The Western church is currently scattering 0.31 percent of its people into cross-cultural mission; the rate in the Majority World is 0.01 percent.

Due to these statistics, we must ask, "Has the concept of cross-cultural mission been 'indigenized' or 'naturalized,' finding localized cultural expression, from within the Majority

World church?” Doing so requires rethinking the historic Western example and traditional models of cross-cultural mission and reframing them through a biblical and Spirit-led cross-cultural mission approach.

Let’s grasp the current predicament. As explained above, cross-cultural mission initially came from the West. Over time, the gospel took indigenous root and it is today, in many places, functioning as a relevant, cultural expression of faith, free from Western constraints. Yet for the most part, the Majority World still sees cross-cultural mission as a Western responsibility. This calling has not yet been naturalized or enculturated within the Majority World church.

It is tragically common for committed believers in Majority World nations to have significant misunderstandings about cross-cultural mission. For example: “Global mission is for white people,” “Africans and Asians are receivers of ‘missionaries’ and cannot be senders,” or “Cross-cultural mission is for churches in affluent, wealthy nations who serve people in poor countries” (thereby placing the emphasis of mission on humanitarian work instead of the gospel). We often hear Majority World pastors say with tears in their eyes, “We love the Great Commission, but we are a poor church. How can we do cross-cultural mission?”

Why is this still the case? Each of these misunderstandings betrays an outlook steeped in a Western model of cross-cultural mission. When Africans, Asians and Latinos are mobilized for mission today, it is often through the lens of this historic, traditional model. Instead, it seems necessary to come alongside African, Asian and Latino churches to wrestle deeply with biblical and Spirit-led models of cross-cultural mission and integrate these into their own mission mobilization. The mobilization fruit will then be explosive and lasting.

Did Jesus only give wealthy, affluent churches with big budgets the Great Commission mandate (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15–18; Luke 24:46–49; John 20:19–23)? Of course not. He gave it to poor, Jewish fishermen who proceeded to “turn the world upside down” (Acts 17:6) through multiplying and reproducing disciples and simple churches everywhere they went, with very little money involved (Acts 8:4).

What, then, is the answer to our current predicament? Just as the gospel is meant to be rooted in a local cultural expression—blossoming from within, interpreted through the lens of a people’s cultural and religious past—that same people’s understanding of cross-cultural mission should also be so.

Holistic mission mobilization serves this process immensely. It encourages local churches and entire denominations in Majority World nations to put ongoing, consistent mobilization principles, tools and strategies within the life of their fellowships. This process enables their people to envision cross-cultural mission corporately over the long term while obeying the biblical and Spirit-led models of doing so, not merely reproducing traditional, Western-influenced models.

Let’s partner with the Spirit in pursuing holistic mobilization today toward the indigenizing and naturalizing of cross-cultural mission vision within every national church. Let’s work to overcome misunderstandings and false outlooks about cross-cultural mission by mobilizing the Majority World church to lay down traditional, Western models and instead take up and integrate biblical, Spirit-led models. ■

(Source: <https://www.globalmmi.net/the-legacy-of-colonialism-on-understanding-cross-cultural-mission>)

A REPORT ON THE IGNITE ASIA MISSIONS (I AM) CONFERENCE IN LAHORE, PAKISTAN, OCTOBER 9–11, 2025

IGNITING GOD'S LIGHT FROM PAKISTAN TO ASIA



Rev. Ujala Hans (Pakistan)
Member of
AEA Mission Commission



The city of Lahore became a beacon of light on October 9–11, 2025, as Christian leaders, pastors, marketplace professionals, and mission-minded believers gathered for the Ignite Asia Missions Conference. The three-day event brought together over 100 delegates from 17 cities across Pakistan, representing 60 churches and 10 mission organizations, all united by one vision—to ignite God’s light from Pakistan to the whole of Asia.

A Vision Born from the RUN Strategy

The conference was the outcome of the RUN Strategy (Recognize, Unity and Nurture), a mission initiative launched through the AEA Mission Commission’s (AEA MC) Mission Acceleration Thrust. RUN was presented at the Asia Evangelical Leadership Forum, held in Seoul, South Korea, on June 11–14.

Since 2022, the I AM Ignite Asia Mission Forum, also initiated by the AEA MC, has hosted two online forums. Pakistan had the privilege of hosting the first in-person conference, marking a historic moment for the region. The focus was not only to mobilize the church but also to train leaders to pray, evangelize, and disciple unreached people groups within Pakistan and beyond.

A Gathering of Diverse Leaders

Participants were invited through their local pastors and represented every generation—from young adults in their twenties to senior leaders above age seventy. Delegates came from all provinces, many of them traveling long distances—from Karachi, Hyderabad, Quetta, Sukkur, Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Peshawar, Islamabad, and across Punjab—to be part of this movement.

Their enthusiasm, commitment, and hunger for mission were evident throughout the conference, inspiring organizers and fellow participants alike.



Day 1 A Call to Mission

The conference opened with a warm welcome by Rev. Ujala Hans, followed by Bishop Irfan Jamil's opening prayer and devotional message. Greetings from Rev. Barnabas Moon and other AEA MC leaders were shared via video, setting a tone of unity and collaboration across Asia.

The keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. Brad Roderick (USA), associate professor of missions at Trinity Anglican Seminary and a veteran missionary with over 20 years of experience in South Asia, laid the biblical foundation of missions. His sessions provided both scriptural insight and practical tools for reaching one's neighbors with the gospel.

Pastor Ghazala Shafique, Pakistan's first female Christian apologist, led a powerful session addressing frequently asked questions such as "Has the Bible changed?" and "Do Christians believe in three gods?" She equipped participants with practical ways to engage in meaningful conversations with wisdom and grace.

In the afternoon, Zain Nensey shared his experiences on understanding the majority mindset, followed by ministry presentations from across Pakistan—including Assemblies of God church KPK, Christian Prayer Ministry Church Pakistan & Pakistan Bible Society. The day closed with united prayer for Pakistan and all Asian nations.

Day 2 Facing the Challenges of Mission

The second day began with another inspiring teaching by Roderick, followed by a challenging and insightful session led by Imran Gill, former Director of OM and current FNI Director. Gill spoke on the internal and external challenges to mission in Pakistan, highlighting that internal issues—such as fear, lack of leadership, and absence of mission priority—can be more detrimental than external opposition.

AEA MC Pakistan team leading worship





I AM Conference Delegates Group Picture



Later, Rev. Ujala Hans presented the vision and goals of AEA MC, and Mr. Sharoon Sarfraz shared about the Evangelical Alliance Pakistan's ministry and vision. A practical workshop helped participants evaluate how to make their churches more missional using SWOT analysis.

The afternoon included presentations from Pastor Samuel Paul of the Language Recording Institute Ministry and Pastor Victor Masih, who shared how 10 new churches have been planted among unreached groups in Sindh province through the Pakistan Discipleship Ministry Network. The day concluded with a special prayer session for the AEA MC leadership team and coordinators across Asia.

Day 3 Learning from Testimonies of Faith

The final day began with a special time of prayer for Rev. Ujala Hans, asking for God's continued guidance as she leads the mission movement in Pakistan.

The highlight of the day was a plenary session led by Rev. Ujala, featuring testimonies from New Believer (MBB) pastors and leaders who shared their powerful discipleship journeys. Their courage and sacrifices deeply moved the audience, offering living examples of faith under persecution and the cost of following Christ.

The closing ceremony included the presentation of plaques and certificates of appreciation prepared by the AEA MC. Thanksgiving prayers and benedictions from Rev. Dr. Joseph C. Lal, Pastor Victor Masih, and Pastor Safeer Qadir were followed by joyful worship and a celebratory holy dance.

The Fire Continues to Burn

Though the conference has ended, the impact continues to spread. Delegates have returned to their cities with renewed vision and passion to share the gospel daily. The AEA MC Pakistan team is planning follow-up online meetings and smaller regional gatherings to sustain the movement throughout the year.

"The fire ignited during this conference cannot be extinguished," said Rev. Ujala Hans, National Coordinator of AEA MC Pakistan. "We are committed to training and empowering leaders across the nation to fulfill the Great Commission."

The team invites all believers to pray and partner with AEA MC Pakistan in this ongoing mission to reach the unreached and disciple the nations.

We especially wish to acknowledge IMO, Assemblies of God Church KPK, and Tech Planting for their invaluable support and partnership in the I AM conference. ■

The Asia Evangelical Alliance *congratulates*



GODFREY YOGARAJAH

*On his appointment and
commissioning as the new*

**Chairman of the
World Evangelical Alliance**



BOTRUS MANSOUR

*On his appointment and
commissioning as the new*

**Secretary General of the
World Evangelical Alliance**

GRATULATION



ASIA CHURCH & MISSION CONFERENCE 2026

**DISCIPLE
OR DIE 3.0**

Lord, I stand in awe of Your deeds.
Revive Your work in these years.
—Habakkuk 3:2

DISCIPLE OR DIE 3.0

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2026

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Metro Manila, Philippines

For more information contact: event@asiaaea.org

ACMC2026

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