

Global Forum Sets Future Priorities

by Barry L. Callen

Leaders of the Church of God have gathered, grappled with big issues, and spoken with one voice about the future. It happened Friday, June 21 and Saturday, June 22 here in Anderson. Sixty-three countries were represented by delegates, with 170 observers gathered at this Global Forum. Participants prayed, learned, and planned together. They invested hours in a prayer summit, moving upward to God, inward for transformation, and outward toward ministry vision. The Forum's focus was biblical reconciliation, a theme developed in part with the wisdom of Dr. Curtiss DeYoung.

God has committed to Christians the ministry of reconciliation

(2 Cor 5:19). The Church of God movement has received a particular call to rekindle the fires of holiness and unity among all Christians. Reconciliation is God's agenda. Believers are to be bridge-builders, moving from received holiness to actual unity. Being new creatures in Christ (holiness) must be lived out as reconciling agents of peace and unity in a deeply divided world.

Forum participants spoke with inspiration. Said Ofelia Viray, of the Philippines, "Announcing the message of reconciliation is not enough. It requires a radical new way of thinking." Rainer Klinner, of Germany, said, "Jesus did not just speak about reconciliation—finally he laid down his life to make it happen!" Added Gilbert Lozano, of Brazil/Colombia, "Disunion and separation are the result of sin. The purpose of God in Christ is to integrate all of creation, undoing the destructive effects of sin."

Five big ideas emerged in the Forum. These are a roadmap for future ministry priorities:

1. Reconciliation must begin with us, be made a priority, and be personal.
2. Reconciliation requires fresh tools and leaders.
3. Reconciliation should focus on homes and families in crisis.
4. Reconciliation must minister to the numerous refugees around the world.
5. Reconciliation is needed among Christian bodies.

Each of these was elaborated with specific action steps designed to bring holiness of heart into a unity of reconciling action.

In a plenary session of the Global Gathering convened on Sunday by Dr. Ronald Duncan, this proposed roadmap of priority future action was shared. Great appreciation was expressed for the prophetic work of the Global Forum, and so was a determination that this reconciling work should be a priority agenda for the Church of God around the world. It's time to unite, love, and heal!

Left: Edward Nkansah

