EMPOWERED 21 EXECUTIVE CABINET

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EMPOWERED21: CONVERSATION PROCESS
IN PREPARATION FOR THE
GLOBAL CONGRESS ON HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Empowered21* was formed by the Commission on Holy Spirit Empowerment in the 21st Century, which is a broad Kingdom coalition facilitated by the International Center for Spiritual Renewal in partnership with Oral Roberts University. Three ongoing conversations were established through the Commission and included a leadership track, a scholar track and a next generation track. These groups incorporated leaders from around the world in addressing questions and solutions for the future of the Spirit-empowered movement. Their findings and conclusions became the framework for the program of the Empowered 21 Global Congress.

The Commission facilitated meetings between these three conversation groups at different times throughout 2009. These meetings took place on five continents globally and across the United States. The thoughts developed from these conversations helped shape Empowered 21: Global Congress on Holy Spirit Empowerment in the 21st Century that convened April 8-10, 2010 in Tulsa Oklahoma.

As a result of the Conversation process, the Commission anticipated that:

- Questions and solutions for the future of the Spirit-filled movement would be brought forward
- New, contemporary vocabulary would surface and be adopted
- Increased effectiveness in reaching and engaging new generations would be achieved
- Increased unity between traditional Spirit-empowered churches and emerging churches would be realized
- The continued growth of Spirit-empowered ministries would be encouraged
During the Conversation process, purposes and goals for the Global Congress on Holy Spirit Empowerment in the 21st Century were developed to:

- **Unite** together in an intergenerational gathering for the purpose of seeking a fresh empowering of the Holy Spirit for 21st century life

- **Discover** contemporary methods and vocabulary needed for engaging new generations in Spirit empowered living

- **Provide** a platform for discussion of issues facing the Spirit-empowered church today

- **Present** an opportunity for greater dialogue and cooperation between new emerging ministries and historic Spirit-empowered movements in hopes of greater Kingdom advancement and impact

- **Focus** the energy of ministry leaders, scholars and youth from the various streams of the Spirit-empowered church on the harvest and challenges before us

- **Witness** the convergence of the worldwide streams of the Spirit-empowered movement into a united river of blessing that will flood the earth

**GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS**

Over a 14 month period from December 2008 through January 2010, the Commission was able to conduct all three conversation tracks as originally planned to include:

- **540+ participants**
- **16 conversations**
- **Held on 5 continents**

**Involving leaders, scholars, and students from 54 nations**

During the process, conversations were conducted in three different languages: English, Spanish and French. Four different university campuses were utilized and students from over ten unique university and college campuses participated.

There were at least eight key themes that resonated consistently throughout the conversations held across the globe in understanding the heart of the Holy Spirit and the needs of the next generation of believers in Jesus Christ.
PROMINENT CONVERSATION THEMES

I. **Leadership Character** – a renewed call is being issued in the movement for leaders who are transparent, filled with integrity, authentic, real, pure, and cleansed. A sense of brokenness and repentance was experienced in every conversation during discussions about the leadership struggles of the past.

II. **Biblical Literacy** – general knowledge of the Bible and an understanding of the purpose of the Holy Spirit is greatly missing in many churches today, especially among new generations. There is a noticeable lack of teaching and preaching on the Holy Spirit, the gifts of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit and the baptism of the Holy Spirit in the movement.

III. **Need for Spiritual Fathers and Mothers** – a desperate need for role models and intergenerational unity is being experienced globally. New generations are crying for spiritual Fathers and Mothers who will stand beside them and empower them for service.

IV. **Resources** – the need for increased resources for ministry is acute in many parts of the world. Those harvest fields which seem to be ripest in the 21st Century are the most in need. New models for funding the advance of the gospel are rising in many regions and a new call for generosity among all is being issued globally.

V. **Education** – the need for ministerial training and higher education in the movement is significant. Every global conversation was punctuated with this need. The explosive growth being experienced must be supported by solid educational models.

VI. **Contextualization** – the Eastern hemisphere may have different needs than the Western hemisphere. This necessitates a leadership that is native to the area of the world being served. Scholarship, local church models, evangelism strategies, etc., all require fresh and increased contextualization in the 21st century.

VII. **Transition of Leadership** – compared to the 20th century, the role of trend setting leadership for the church that was primarily flowing from the United States is transitioning. Significant leadership influence has risen from other parts of the world, specifically from Asian and African ministries.

VIII. **Rise of Islam** – Islam continues to represent a great challenge to the spreading of the Gospel and the growth of Christianity. Increased persecution and pressure are now being experienced by Spirit-empowered believers who are aggressive in their evangelism on this frontier. Europe, the United States and other areas of the west are now grappling with this issue in new ways.
CONVERSATION COMMENTS

These themes and areas of focus are demonstrated through this sampling of conversation comments:

Leadership Character

“Regarding fruit, we identified both good and spoiled fruit. Legalism, titles, heavy-handed leadership were bad and ‘Do as I do’ leadership, authenticity, character, and community were good. Legalism, politics, and rituals were to be stopped. To be started were diversity, ethnicity, experiential preaching and engagement. To be continued were simple grace and forgiveness.”

Next Generation Conversation

“What will draw our generation is discipleship, servant leadership, intimacy, compassion, and selflessness. We want to see people engaging in community, worship, small groups, and missions.”

Next Generation Conversation

“The world is looking for role models in leadership. If leaders step up to the plate and become effective leaders they could have a much greater impact on the world.”

African Conversation, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo

“Demonstrate for them (the youth) what a Spirit-filled life looks like.”

African Conversation, Lagos, Nigeria

“Lifestyle example is a good teacher. Do not be hypocritical, be real.”

European Conversation, Kniebis, Germany

“We need leaders that model truth and genuineness.”

Asian Conversation, Hong Kong, China

“Influence by being models for Young People in everything. Love and accept them. Teach them to pray. Teach them to be disciples of Christ.”

European Conversation, Kniebis, Germany

Biblical Literacy

“There needs to be a clear explanation of the Word of God.”

Scholars Conversation

“Focus on Biblical fidelity, literacy, and intimacy with the Holy Spirit.”

Leadership Conversation

“We must return to the Bible as a source of inspiration and ethical model. Often many of the alternatives and contemporary religious practices are anti-biblical.”

South American Conversation, Santiago, Chile

“Creatively preach the Word of God to the youth.”

African Conversation, Lagos, Nigeria

“Teach them to know the person, the work and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”

European Conversation, Kniebis, Germany
Lack of Spiritual Fathers & Mothers

One way to help the next generation is to: “Mentor them and help them find their ‘calling’.”

Scholars Conversation

“There is hunger for formal and informal learning and mentorship – we are aware of our lack of knowledge – but, not just for the sake of learning, but also for action. True Holy Spirit empowerment must extend beyond knowledge and experience into social justice, the arts, and contemporary forms of evangelism and discipleship. They recognize dysfunctional aspects of their culture that can be used for good, such as brokenness. They are real, raw, and hate anything ‘fake.’ They want to live and give their all for something real.”

Next Generation Conversation

“The brokenness of this generation is overwhelming, but there is a keen awareness that the Holy Spirit is using a broken vessel to pour out His glory. A hunger for deep spirituality offers a unique opportunity at this time in history.”

Next Generation Conversation

“Young people torn between being faithful to Jesus and their non-Christian friends. Will they win the world, or will the world win them?”

European Conversation, Kniebis, Germany

“There is a lack of spiritual fathers. Even though the church needs younger leaders, the older leaders are not sufficiently developing younger leaders to continue the work of the ministry.”

Asian Conversation, Hong Kong, China

“Inherited leadership limits the rise of new generation leadership. Young people are demanding greater participation and leadership.”

South American Conversation, Santiago, Chile

Challenges that are facing Spirit-empowered Christianity in East Africa include: “Lack of spiritual mentors/fathers.”

African Conversation, Nairobi, Kenya

“There is a lack of fathers to transmit values to the youth.”

African Conversation, Lagos, Nigeria

“God is moving us from a corporate mentality to a family mentality.”

Asian Conversation, Hong Kong, China

Resources

“Current church budgets are focused on children’s ministry and adult ministry. There is a gap in the amount spent on youth ministry. How do we bridge that gap?”

Asian Conversation, Hong Kong, China

A trend impacting the next generation: “Poverty, unemployment, and peer pressure.”

Asian Conversation, Hong Kong, China

“There is a huge gap between the people who own the resources and the people who are on the mission field.”

Asian Conversation, Hong Kong, China
**Education**

“Prospective ministers do not have the financial resources to pursue theological training.”
*African Conversation, Nairobi, Kenya*

A challenge facing the movement of the Spirit in Latin America is: “Educating the people of God in general.”
*South American Conversation, San Jose, Costa Rica*

**Contextualization**

“Filipino pastors are imitating the western model of doing church instead of formulating a model that is unique to the Philippines.”
*Asian Conversation, Hong Kong, China*

“Historically the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement was a rural movement among the poor. However, China has become urbanized and now has more educated people than in the past. The challenge is that the church is not equipped to communicate the power of the Holy Spirit to people in the urban societies.”
*Asian Conversation, Hong Kong, China*

“The movement has to be able to speak to the new generation, especially the well educated. It has to know how to speak to drugs, violence, brokenness, depression, and other problems affecting the young.”
*South American Conversation, Santiago, Chile*

**Transition of Leadership**

“In the past, we had to wait for external missionaries, but now we are equipped to travel to and evangelize our people.”
*African Conversation, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo*

“Current leadership cannot sustain the plans and move of God in Africa. We will need to form alliances with others.”
*African Conversation, Lagos, Nigeria*

“Many Churches are in transition and change. Good time to be involved in missions. Many immigrants come to Europe and bring their Faith along.”
*European Conversation, Kniebis, Germany*

**Rise of Islam**

“Islam and other cultures are here for evangelism.”
*Scholars Conversation*

“The Holy Spirit will help us to overcome these cultural barriers.”
*Scholars Conversation*

“There is a noticeable Islamic agenda. Being aware of this, the church can plan activities to combat such agenda.”
*African Conversation, Lagos, Nigeria*

“Muslims are aggressively and violently converting the society.”
*African Conversation, Lagos, Nigeria*

“Immigration, post-modernism, and the decline of the church have made the challenge of an aggressive Islam greater in Europe.”
*European Conversation, Kniebis, Germany*
PROPHETIC VISION

A final combined conversation meeting was held in Dallas, Texas in October, 2009. Dr. Jack Hayford led with a devotion. The devotional text, Isaiah 35: 1-3, was used as a reference point to a dream that

Dr. Hayford had a few days prior. He noted that in his dream the Lord was pulling him down, through a whirl of sand, into the dryness of this generation. While this was happening the Lord said, “There shall be streams in the desert and the desert shall blossom as a rose.”

Dr. Hayford further noted that, as in his dream, God is calling us to answer His call - to yield to a new surrender of ourselves to the cost of being “pulled” into the “dryness of a dying generation. If we will, the Holy Spirit will gush forth His “rivers of living water” through us - transmitting the rise of a new generation to generation flow of His mighty “streams” of life-giving power into the “desert” of the world’s present hour and need.

CONCLUSION

The Empowered21 Conversations elevated both concerns and hopes for the future of Spirit-empowered Christianity around the world. The challenges being faced are significant but the leaders now engaged are committed and determined.

New generations are rising whose desire to make a tangible difference in the world has never been greater. Their hunger for authentic spiritual power and their thirst for intergenerational connectivity position them to witness an increase in the unprecedented growth of this movement in the 21st Century. May it be so!