



2018 Johannesburg Scholars' Consultation Report

SCHOLARS CONSULTATION, EMPOWERED21 MAY 14-15, 2018, JOHANNESBURG

"Proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Only Savior in The Power of The Holy Spirit
to The Challenges of Today's World."

INTRODUCTION:

The 2018 Empowered 21 Scholars' Consultation (SC) was held in Johannesburg prior to the African Congress. The following members served in the organizing team:

- Michael Rakes (Global Council Liaison to Scholars Consultation)
- Wonsuk Ma (Organizer), Oral Roberts University, U.S.A.
- Emmanuel Anim (Organizer), Pentecost Theological Seminary, Ghana
- Mark Roberts (Organizer), Oral Roberts University, U.S.A.
- Kristin Towles (Logistic Support), Empowered21, U.S.A.

This year's Consultation was centered on eleven presentations responding to the SC theme: "Proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Only Savior in The Power of The Holy Spirit to The Challenges of Today's World." (The theme description is appended).

In fulfillment of the purpose for regional meetings,

- six studies explored specifically African issues in applied theology,
- while one focused on Spirit-empowered witness in Asia and
- another on ministry among refugees in Greece and Germany.
- Three studies responded to the theme from these perspectives:
 - the New Testament's response to pluralism,
 - the second-century church's reception of the longer ending of Mark, and
 - an historical-theological exploration of the heretical doctrine of universalism from Church Fathers through the early twenty-first century.
- In addition, two studies were added for the inclusion in the book project.

The schedule of presentations with full titles (with the links to the texts) and scholar names accompanies this report. They appear also on ORU's Digital Showcase from this landing page: <http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/e21scholars/2018/>

MONDAY, MAY 14:

Scholars' Consultation Chair Dr. Wonsuk Ma opened the day by inviting greetings from International Co-Chair of Empowered21 Dr. William Wilson, who summarized the Empowered 21 initiative and the place of scholars' participation from the beginning. He envisioned scholars' work as driving more deeply the stakes of the Spirit-empowered movement's embrace of truth, giving the movement security and stability even as it grows. Others who greeted the Consultation included Empowered 21 Executive Director Ossie Mills and Africa Region Co-Chair Rev. Frank Chikane (with Apostle Opoku Onyinah subsequently). Dr. Michael Rakes, Global Council Liaison to the Scholars' Consultation, concluded this launching of the Consultation with a devotional message, and we prayed.



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The presenting scholars, together with African scholars attending as guests, grew to fifteen through the day. The scholar in Oxford, UK, participated remotely throughout both days through the live-streaming of the Consultation with Zoom.

Scholars presented Studies 1 through 3 in the morning, about 30 minutes per study, with about 15 minutes per study in questions and discussion. Most presentations used PowerPoint along with delivery of their studies. After participants enjoyed lunch together, scholars presented Studies 4 through 7 at the same pace. The day concluded with supper together, and it was clear that the group had begun to gel as a team of scholars focused on serving the needs of the churches.

TUESDAY, MAY 15:

The Consultation began with a scholar's presenting Study 8 remotely, from Oxford, UK, through two-way live streaming using Zoom. Without this technology, the Consultation would have lacked his study. New participants joined, including a local UNISA professor of Christian education and an American crusade evangelist attending the Congress. The morning concluded with Studies 9 through 11, received with questions and pertinent discussion.

After lunch, as has become the custom of these Consultations, interested scholars (more than half) visited a nearby sister institution. This year it was Rhema Bible College, where they met and visited with administrative staff and the Dean/Academic Head, Dr. Jean Botha. In the meeting, Dr. Ma encouraged scholars to use such opportunities to forge links promoting shared ministries of teaching and education. It concluded in prayer for God's blessing and provision for Dr. Botha and the college. Scholars noted with concern that none of the RBC personnel they met knew E21 was meeting in Joburg.

After returning from visiting RBC, scholars met again to wrap up the Consultation. In the debriefing, scholars identified take-aways each found most valuable. Among those expressed were these:

- Insight for non-African scholars into issues African Spirit-empowered churches face
- Appreciation for the quality of heart-and-mind leadership African scholars exhibit in their presentations, stimulating confidence in the future of the churches
- Discovering the theme of the African conception of the Spirit-world through most presentations
- Acknowledging the advantage African scholars have of both the spiritual richness of African Christianity and the analytical strength of Western higher education; and desiring the blending of the two for the global Spirit-empowered movement.
- Appreciating the richness of the various viewpoints articulated well
- Appreciating the unique space this Consultation gives Spirit-empowered scholars to express their thinking and feelings with confidence they will be heard and received generously

For the present and future Consultations, these desires were voiced: that Consultations include . . .

- more women
- presentations engaging appropriately with other faiths
- establishing an E21 Global Network of Scholars to promote ongoing fruitful collaboration
- establishing an African continental network to continue functioning after this Consultation
- inviting scholars present to participate in future Consultations, including Guatemala City next year, remotely if necessary, using the best streaming tools we can.
- continuing use of ORU's Digital Showcase as the SC's ongoing online home, with expansion of its service to the SC.



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Dr. Ma invited scholars to consider collaborating on a significant research and writing project: an online global biography of Spirit-empowered leaders and scholars, etc.

He set the end of May as a deadline for all to have submitted complete drafts of their presentations and discussed the book project that will publish selected presentations.

APPRECIATIONS TO THE E21 GLOBAL COUNCIL

First from the organizing team, and then from all scholar participants, sincere appreciation goes to E21 Global Leadership for valuing the service Spirit-empowered scholarship can and desires to render the churches of the movement; also for expressing their value by scheduling and funding the annual Consultations.



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"Proclaiming Jesus Christ as the Only Savior in The Power of The Holy Spirit to The Challenges of Today's World"

Chosen through carefully surveying world leaders of the Spirit-Empowered Movement (hereafter "SEM"), this theme invites scholars in this movement (and others wishing to help) to help SEM members proclaim the distinctiveness of Jesus Christ as the only Way, Truth, and Life. As this consultation takes place in Africa and is jointly organized by the Empowered21 Global Office and the African host, the Consultation can offer to the world the gift of experiences, reflections, and lessons gained by African SEM. They will be joined by outsiders who can bring similar reflections but from different contexts.

Theme Description

The following description of the theme aims to inform E21 leaders of how the Consultation intends to approach the topic and to suggest to scholars how broadly the Consultation views the theme, so they may offer scholarship that aligns with it. Through this Consultation, E21 as a movement wishes to affirm Jesus Christ as the only Way, Truth, and Life. The Consultation also intends to be a space for mutual learning. Case studies are actively encouraged to bring lived-out experiences in specific socio-cultural contexts for deeper reflection. The studies would also identify challenges that are at work in each context. The result of the Consultation all participants seek is a deeper understanding of such issues to promote effective Spirit-empowered ministry.

Each study may include part or all of the following elements:

Affirmation of the Uniqueness of Christ as the Savior:

The biblical affirmation of Christ as the only Savior is the foundation for Christian life, discipleship, and witness, and this conviction is shared broadly throughout Christian confessional families. This shared foundation, however, is experienced by Spirit-empowered believers or churches in distinct ways. Two elements may be worthy of investigation. One is the role of religious expectations in the shaping and strengthening of one's belief. For example, in some parts of the world, healings, dreams, visions, and casting out demons are expected regularly, regardless of one's religion. In this context, a Christian believer would be more open to the work of the Holy Spirit than a sociocultural context where religions, including Christianity, do not carry such expectations. The second is one's religious experience. Healing often comes as the most common and life-changing experience. The question is how these and other unique features of Spirit-empowered life have contributed to the theological shaping of the uniqueness of Christ as the only Savior.

Challenges Arising from Social Contexts, both Global and Local:

The second part identifies, from the contemporary context, challenges to the proclamation of the uniqueness of Christ as the only Savior. Some challenges are universal while others are only local. The former would include the threats of religious pluralism, increasing secularism, universalism, liberal theology, and postmodernity. The latter would include specific political, sociocultural, economic, and religious elements. This part emphasizes identifying and elaborating key challenges and their effect on society and the church, particularly on its proclamation of Christ as the only Savior.



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Work of the Holy Spirit Manifested in the Ministry of SEM:

This third part brings the first two discussions together and explores how Spirit-empowered communities communicate, demonstrate, and live out Spirit-empowered faith in real-life situations. The role of the Holy Spirit will be important in his empowerment through the exercise of gifts (both “natural” and “supernatural”). Whether the study is theoretical or empirical (such as a case study), the question to be asked is: “How are the Spirit-empowered communities responding to the challenges identified in the second section, both global (e.g., pluralistic tendencies) and local (e.g., traditional religions)?” For the latter, the issue of syncretism may merit attention when the community engages with traditional religions. Another question may follow: “What difference does this Spirit-empowered approach make, both to the authentic witness to Christ as the only Savior and also to other churches in the area?”



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Schedule: Empowered 21 Johannesburg Scholars' Consultation, May 14–15, 2018		
When?	What?	Who?
May 14 (Monday)		
9:00-9:30a	<i>Welcome, Greeting from Host, Prayer</i> W. Wilson, M. Rakes, F. Chikane, O. Mills, O. Onyinah	Wonsuk Ma
9:45-10:30a	Study 1: "Universalism: The Christian Debate on Salvation for All"	Michael McClymond
10:30-11:00a	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
11:00-11:45a	Study 2: "The Uniqueness of Jesus in African Culture: An African Pentecostal Perspective"	Emmanuel Anim
11:45a-12:30p	Study 3: "Christian Ministry to Refugees in the Contrasting Settings of Greece and Germany"	John Paul Thompson
12:30-2:00p	<i>Lunch</i>	
2:00-2:45p	Study 4: "Witnessing Jesus Christ as the Only Savior through the Power of the Holy Spirit: Asian Experiences"	Julie Ma
2:45-3:30p	Study 5: "Fresh Fire, Fresh Wind: Stories of Young African Pentecostals Engaging Secularism in Europe."	Harvey Kwiyani
3:30-4:00p	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
4:00-4:45p	Study 6: "And these signs shall follow...Authenticity and Authentication of the gospel in the Early Church"	Clayton Coombs
4:45-5:30p	Study 7: "Integrating Christianity in the Traditional Religious Milieu: The South African Experience"	Dela Quampah
6:00-7:30p	<i>Dinner</i>	
May 15 (Tuesday)		
8:30-9:00a	<i>Prayer and Devotion</i>	
9:00-9:45a	Study 8: "Fear of Black Magic and the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Witnessing to Christ: A Personal Journey in Burundi"	Emmanuel Ndikumana Presented via Zoom from Oxford, UK
9:45-10:30a	Study 9: "Towards Effective Engagement of the African Spirit World"	Christian Tsekpoe
10:30-10:00a	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
11:00-11:45a	Study 10: "Only Jesus? How the New Testament Answers Hellenistic (and Contemporary) Pluralism"	Mark E Roberts
11:45-12:30	Study 11: "Christ The Savior or Christ the Crook? Lessons from Malawian Pentecostal Interactions in the Political Sphere from 1994 to 2014"	Andrew Mkwaila
12:30-1:00	<i>Wrap-up and Prayer</i>	
1:00-2:00 p	<i>Lunch</i>	
2:00-4:00 p	<i>Visiting Sister Institution: Rhema Bible College</i>	
4:00-5:30 p	<i>Wrap up, debrief, discuss E21 Global Scholars' Network and Pentecostal-Charismatic Biography project; concluding prayer</i>	
6:00-7:30 p	<i>Dinner</i>	