



Date	November 10-13, 2015
Venue	Carmel Conference Center, Salem
Number of Participants	1,500 (Pastors - 1,256; women - 92; youth - 143)
Pastors Ordained	29

Introduction

Praise God for the opportunity to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the formation of NAIC (Non Denominational Association of Interdependent Churches). There was heavy rain on the conference days yet the pastors gathered were motivated through the word of the Lord and received abundant blessing from the Lord. There were 1,500 participants from all over India, Sri Lanka and Nepal who attended the conference. The new theme for the year, “Embracing the Vision” (Acts 26:19), was introduced at the conference. Enriched teachings and sermons from the subtopics of the theme were shared during the four-day conference. The following is an overview of the conference.

Inaugural Session

The conference officially started with welcoming all the regional and zonal coordinators representing areas of South Asia. After the formal introduction and welcome, President Samuel D. Stephens introduced the theme, “Embracing the Vision,” briefly and the reason for choosing the theme for 2016. He said the vision given by God should not be taken lightly and we must pursue it as it was by the Apostle Paul. As a special note, all the board members of IGL North America were special guests at the conference.

Rev. Joe Champion, one of the key leaders of the Association of Related Churches (ARC, a similar movement like NAIC in the United States), spoke at the inaugural session as a special guest and he motivated the pastors to carry on the vision. Rev. Joe taught from Joshua 5:12-15; 6:1-2 about “The Visionary Leader” — what made Joshua carry on the Lord’s vision with passion.

There was an inspirational session in the evening, where Rev. Jim Lyon, Chairman of IGLNA Board taught from Acts 26:12-19 on the life of the Apostle Paul. He clearly explained the backdrop against which Paul says, “I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.” The Lord makes the chosen people rise to the responsibility to share what we see and hear. God’s vision is to “liberate people from darkness to light” for which “our eyes must be opened.” This precious vision is the reason why Paul has gone down in history as one of the greatest apostles of Christianity.

Day 2

The second day of the conference started with an encouraging devotion from Rev. Travis Kunkel.

The remaining sessions of day two and three were broken into small groups until the evening session. Rev. Claude Robold and Rev. Josh Mauney gave wonderful teachings on leadership and strategic planning for the future of the ministry in the small groups. The second day Rev. Robold taught about the three stages of keeping a vision God has imparted to us: the birth, death and raising of a vision.

In the WWM organizers’ small group Mrs. Jan Robold, Mrs. Denise Kunkel and Mrs. Prathiba Stephens, the national leader of WWM, taught the women regarding the 2016 theme and women’s ministry in general.

In the Y21 youth leaders’ small group Rev. Steve Whitney and Rev. Ben Hedger taught on how to be a powerful

witness for the gospel in the church. Most of the youth had many questions, all of which were answered by the end of the session.

There were Vision 2000* sessions in the afternoons of the second and third days where the zonal coordinators had six presentations about their ministry goals and achievements. People praised God for the achievements made in the past year with the help of the Lord.

The second day also had a special session on International Cooperating Ministries. Mr. Sam Meyyar explained the usage of the “Mini Bible College” in their churches, a device with 215 hours of Bible teaching for the edification and continuing growth of believers. This course is designed for listeners to learn the major teachings of the Bible in four years. The pastors showed much interest in using the equipment and many applied to receive one for their congregation.

Everyone gathered back together for the remaining sessions in the main conference hall. Rev. Paul Wides and his team gave wonderful teachings on the call of God, the call to faithfulness and the call to obedience and sacrifice.

A special inspirational session followed the teachings where a few regions were recognized in North India and Nepal. The regional coordinators were given a flag and certificate confirming their involvement in the Vision 2000 movement.

The ordination service was held along with the inspirational meeting. There were 29 participants ordained as pastors on that day. Pastors were ordained based on the recommendation of the NAIC board members who visited their ministry places, confirmed their testimony and ordained them as pastors at the conference. Rev. Samuel D Stephens, the president of NAIC and Rev. Vasantharaj Albert, the Vice-President of NAIC were the key people involved in the ordination. There was a great joy on that day as Mr. Rajah Daniel Stephens, the son of Rev. Samuel D Stephens, was also ordained along with the rest of the pastors.

Rev. Joe Champion closed with a word from Luke 24 to strengthen them in their ministry and vision. He spoke how Jesus loved to be in Bethany because it was a place of love, care and fellowship. Rev. Champion also said Jesus wants to send us into Bethany to enjoy His blessings so that we may embrace the vision of God.

Day 3

The third day of the conference began with a devotion from Rev. Paul Wides, connecting the theme of the conference to more scripture.

The rest of the day went much like the second day, breaking into small groups for leaders, women and youth until the evening. The evening teaching sessions were led by Rev. Paul Wides and his team on the call to co-mission with God, the call to persevere through any obstacles that come their way and the call to renewal and revival.

At the close of day three, Rev. Robold prayed for the new media studio and Mr. Alwin Benjamin who will coordinate the studio work. Afterward, Rev. Jim Lyon shared about the attitude needed to embrace the vision from Acts 9:1-15. He elaborated on three characteristics of Paul that helped him hold firm to the vision: he was God’s chosen vessel, he was called to preach to the Gentiles and he was called to suffer for Jesus’ name, which is an integral part of ministry.

The day ended with the fellowship taking part in the body and the blood of Christ. Everyone was reminded about how they are an extended family from across South Asia, which is the foretaste of heaven. The pastors and leaders were so excited about being a part of the body of Christ.

*Vision 2000 is a church planting movement initiated by India Gospel League in 1992 with 200 pastors who planned to reach every unreached village in India with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Today, thousands of pastors have joined this vision, meet regularly for fellowship and training, and have planted more than 80,000 churches.

Day 4

The final day of the conference started with a devotion from Rev. Jim Colledge. He taught from I Corinthians 6 on being a fragrant aroma to Christ and non-believers. God takes pleasure in us when we go with our call and vision.

There was one teaching session by Rev. Jim Lyon on the call to transform. When we embrace the vision given by the Lord that takes the nation and people into transformation. The pastors left the teaching with a goal of transformation in their own lives as well as the lives of those around them.

Rev. Benny briefly explained the nine essential elements for 21st century church growth. Later the participants from Sri Lanka were honored in the conference and a special prayer was offered on their behalf. The IGL devotional app was released and the president encouraged people to use the app for their personal spiritual growth.

The closing session was taught by Rev. Samuel D Stephens from Acts 26:1-19. He taught about how Paul's past (changing from persecutor to propagator of the gospel of Christ) lead to him embrace the vision. If we hold on to the vision given by the Lord we will never end up in confusion and failure. The vision of the NAIC is to "plant a church every year, plant a church in every unreached village;" we must embrace that vision to bring glory to the Lord Almighty.

Feedback

Pr. Joseph

"I am so thankful to NAIC for this wonderful conference. I was motivated to do greater ministry out of all the teaching sessions I received in the conference. Especially I was so moved in a way all the messages are related to one another. I was meditating the passages in Acts 20-28 for the past few months. I did not understand the purpose of Paul's Gentile ministries and the vision he got towards them. The evening sessions of the conference clarified all my doubts, it was an additional help to my personal meditations. I will be teaching the theme to my church to be deep rooted in the word of the Lord and the vision God has given us."

Mr. Arul

"I was involved in [youth] ministries for the past five years. I was involved in my church to develop the youths in the Lord. In the midst of heavy rain and difficulties we started to come to the conference. The conference made a turning point in my life especially hearing the testimonies of friends from North India and United States. I was motivated to carry on the youth ministry into the next level. The teachings and Y21 sessions shaped me to take the youth ministry throughout my region. I am planning to take the first step to reach out to the youth in our region. Please pray for my commitments and God's help on me."

Conclusion

The conference was a blessing to all the participants. Most of the pastors shared at the end that this conference different from conferences in years past. All the church planters, women, youth and leaders departed with great joy.