

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PAD IN  
THE KINGDOM EXPANSION:  
ARE WE A UNIVERSITY OR  
A MILITARY ACADEMY?**

By Dr Sang-Bok David Kim<sup>1</sup>

Welcome to the PAD Congress!<sup>2</sup> I am delighted that all of you are finally here and thank God for your safe arrival. As of today, more than 250 presidents and academic deans of theological schools and missionary training institutions have registered from 56 countries around the world (more than 300 in attendance tonight), coming from all six continents, even from Fiji Island, Israel, Jordan, Poland, Equatorial Guinea, Cote D'ivoire, Guatemala, New Calderone, Norway, Republic Central, etc. To me this is just remarkable. Last April in London there was an international conference called in which 80 theologians gathered, sponsored by the Theological Commission of World Evangelical Fellowship; but I do not know of any other assembly which attracted 250 presidents and academic deans of theological institutions around the world. This is simply history. We are delighted. This tells me that our Lord has a special purpose set before us which we all need to discover during this consultation. We have many speakers lined up who will help us to renew our vision, strengthen our purpose, challenge us to evaluate our leadership, our school, curriculum, faculty, students and resources so that we may refocus our vision and mobilize all the training centers around the world for the most important task that we have received from our common Lord, namely, the fulfillment of His last Great Commission. There are so many things that distract us and divert our attention away from the main task unless we are once in a while brought before the Lord and His Word to adjust our vision for the original mandate. Otherwise, we can easily drift away from it. So I believe this is a good

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<sup>2</sup>PAD stands for Presidents and Academic Deans of theological and missionary training institutions around the world. PAD Congress was one of the ten tracks of GCOWE '97, which met in Pretoria, South Africa, from June 30 to July 5, 1997. It was one of the most exciting and momentous gatherings of Church leaders this century. This address was the keynote speech delivered at the opening session of the PAD Congress, July 1, 1997.

opportunity that we can be together and be encouraged so that we may share the same vision and network with one another to fulfill the same purpose for the Lord.

### **WE ARE DANGEROUS PEOPLE<sup>3</sup>**

Institutions rise and fall with their leaders. A church rises and falls with a pastor. As a pastor goes, so goes the church. As PAD goes, so go the schools. I remember a seminary which welcomed a new president.<sup>4</sup> He had a theologically liberal agenda up his sleeve which not too many people in the church were aware of. He began to bring in to his seminary professors with a theological persuasion similar to his. The churches and the school were embroiled in a major conflict over theological issues for some twenty years. By then, 95% of the faculty became liberal; and the denomination suffered greatly. After much suffering for many years, the president finally left the school with 95% of the faculty to establish another seminary across the street. What suffering, waste of time, energy and resources! What an unnecessary diversion from the main task of training faithful servants for the Lord. It all began with a president. As the president goes, so goes the school.

Do you remember how those great European universities began in an earlier era, how they had been organized to train the servants of Jesus Christ for His church? But what have they become today? Where are the great European churches today which used to be the bastions of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and extended the Kingdom of God around the world? Europe, which is experiencing the post-Christian era today and in a deep sleep in spite of the great history of Christian churches, is a definite warning to us younger churches as to which way not to go. What happened to the old Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Union, and others, those once great champions of the evangelical and missionary causes of Jesus Christ? Where are the Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh sevens, who once went out to take on the world for the Lord? Yes, there still remain the schools, their traction, their fame, and their scholarship. We still revere them with

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<sup>3</sup>"We are a dangerous people!" became a humorous slogan among the delegates during the conference. The words were spoken by Dr. Sang-Bok Kim during the introduction of PADs at the opening plenary service of GCOWE '97. The November 1997 issue of the *Trumpet* magazine carried an article "Dangerous People!" written by Paul Strand, pp. 45-46.

<sup>4</sup>Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976, 72-88.

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our utmost respect, but where is the spiritual power today which shook the world in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit? History is the teacher and guide for us today. According to information from the WEF Theological Commission, I understand we have 4,000 theological schools around the world,<sup>5</sup> of which approximately 10% are represented here at this PAD Congress. The future of the church is largely in our hands, I firmly believe. As you go, so goes your school. As your school goes, so goes the church of Jesus Christ. You are the president, and you are the academic dean. You are the leader. This is the first thing to remind ourselves.

### A CONFESSION OF AN ACADEMIC DEAN<sup>6</sup>

Some years ago I had the opportunity to read a series of articles written by an academic dean turned senior pastor. He was a fine scholar who had spent most of his adult life in the seminary community, first as a professor and later as an academic dean. He had served as academic dean at least for the last ten years prior to his resignation. He gave up the seminary community and decided to become a pastor after much deliberation as he began to realize that the seminary he had come to know was drifting away from the churches. He observed that the seminary had practically nothing to do with training ministers for the church. I am speaking about the darkest decades in the United States in this century, the 1960s-1970s. According to his article, he said there are two kinds of professors in the seminary. One group of professors who were born with superior academic abilities, went straight through school systems all the way through college and seminary as honor students, and who had spent most of their lives buried under the books and enjoying every minute of it. Most of the time, their companions have been books, not people. They usually spent their time alone with the books in their hands and ideas in their heads. To them, ideas and books were more important

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<sup>5</sup>Bong Rin Ro, ed., *1994 World Directory of Theological Institutions*, WEF Theological Commission, 1994, 1.

<sup>6</sup>I do not have the specific information of the Christian newspaper, which carried the series of article written by the former dean turned pastor, but the article impressed me so much that I still vividly remember the contents of his writing, although it was more than twenty years ago. It cannot be generalized, but the substance is factual.

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than people. People were a burden to them. They became professors. Another group of professors are those who have failed in their pastorates in the church. Following their seminary education, they became ministers but nothing happened even after two or three years of hard work. Discouraged and desperate, they decided to leave the church and went to graduate schools and got their doctorates and came back to the seminary as professors. They went on to universities and studied subjects which have nothing to do with church or ministry, subjects like hieroglyphics or Egyptology or even linguistics and came back to seminaries with doctorates to teach in their specialty areas. They write on the subject of their interest and become experts in the field and well known for their journal articles and books. Their writings are often so technical that they are incomprehensible not only to most of the ordinary people but to the scholars themselves. They write for one another. The seminary students learn from these professors and they too become incomprehensible. The seminary is not for the church. The seminary becomes a mere playground of the scholars, by the scholars, and for the scholars themselves; and it becomes another research university where students come to get all sorts of academic degrees one after another. They have been too busy with their studies and had no time for prayers, meditation, spiritual development, in order to learn ministry skills, communication, interpersonal skills, and leadership--skills which are needed for ministry. There was such an academic dean who was so discouraged in the seminary that he quit the seminary and became a pastor. His experience may not be necessarily shared in our seminaries today. However, there is something to his confession for us to seriously consider.

There is a city, where I have been a few times, where people in the churches began to spread the word in the community that, if a pastor had a doctorate, they should not call him to be their pastor. They said that, when one pastor did not have his doctorate, he used to make house calls. After he had earned a doctorate, he asked his congregation to make an appointment with him at his office and he stopped making visits. He asked for a higher salary since he had a higher degree. However, he did not show any better spiritual influence even after the church paid his tuition and he spent most of his time studying instead of doing ministries for the congregation. No wonder they would spread such a warning to other congregations in the same

city after they had seen a few similar cases.

### **AN ACADEMIC DEAN CANNOT PRAY**

There was another academic dean, who was also vice-president at a well-known seminary. He was so famous that he also served as the president of the International Convention of the Christian Church (the Disciples of Christ). I read some of his writings and met him a few times. He wrote one article which was published in the *Pulpit* magazine. He wrote,

Consider the proclamation of my spiritual emancipation. To begin with, I have affirmed my liberation from puritanism . . . . I say "hell" and "damn" rather more often than is good for the vigor of my English style and enjoy a type of funny story which once was not told in polite company. . . . I must confess that my inner life lacks the sense of elation which characterized the earnest Christian. I have too many questions about the life of prayer in a world of science, especially in a world so conscious of psychology, to give myself unreservedly to the kind of devotion which ante-dated our present sophistication. I am also emancipated from biblicism . . . the old timers in our churches could give a chapter-and verse for everything we did and demanded a proof-text for every proposed innovation. The Bible was the infallible Word of God and all man had to do was obey. It is a far cry from this old cover-to-cover faith to the knowledge of the Bible which I share with others in the seminary community. The impact of natural science, of evolutionary thought, of historical criticism, of form criticism, of demythologizing, has left us with a Bible utterly unlike the Book our mothers read. . . . The old biblicism is washed up and I cannot seek to revive it. What now can I say? As I reflect on my situation, on my emancipation from every characteristic structure of thought in my spiritual heritage, I am shocked into the recognition that every one of the these structures has collapsed, at least potentially, and that I stand amid the ruins of every human possibility, even in religion . . . . All the old systems, securities, partial explanations are gone. My spiritual

pride has departed. I wait alone, a naked, lonely, insecure man among three billion others on a small planet which may be doomed to demolition at any moment or may by great good fortune and the gracious providence of God survive for eons yet to come, spawning billions more like myself, with their own problems, their own insecurities, their own little selves on their hands. . . . I am only one of them, standing in icy loneliness and insecurity. . . . I see myself as a typical member of the contemporary seminary community, and I speak not of my own private spiritual condition but of the inward plight of the modern theological sophisticate, wherever he may be found.<sup>7</sup>

He further stated at another place that the rich have no need of the Gospel, but only the poor.<sup>8</sup> He explained that he has been in the seminary long enough to know that the way he feels is not his alone, but shared by most of his colleagues in his seminary community. He was a spiritually bankrupt man and led the seminary. He failed his students and the church. So PADs are dangerous people.

### **A SEMINARY INVITES A REVOLUTIONARY**

With one more story, I want to end this discussion. Following my graduation from STM studies at a seminary, I was looking for another seminary where I could go to study for a doctorate. So I visited a well-known seminary in a suburban town on the east coast of the USA. I attended a chapel service, in which a famous pastor from Detroit was trying to correct the misconception on Christ.<sup>9</sup> He was

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<sup>7</sup>Dr. Roland E. Osborn, vice-president and academic dean of Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana, *Pulpit*, November, 1960, quoted in an article titled "NCC and the Deity of Christ," an editorial, *The Lutheran News*, October 31, 1967, 9. Dr. Osborn also served as International Chairman of the Convention of Christian Churches (the Disciples of Christ). My first contact with him and his school was in 1969. One of the first students I met in the dorm room was a Canadian student, a second year M.Div. student, who majored in Chairman Mao Tse Tung of Red China. He had a life size portrait of Mao which he could always look up to when he lay down and rose up from his bed. In contrast, the hand-drawn portrait of Jesus posted on his wall said, "Wanted: Jesus of Nazareth, shaggy hair and bare foot, in his 30's, Reward: \$2,000."

<sup>8</sup>Robert E. Osborn, "Conversation at the Great Divine," a chapel message delivered at CTS on September 2, 1969, 3. The chapel was focusing on the draft dodging and burning of the draft cards by the college students and counseling them to do it. This was during the Vietnam War.

<sup>9</sup>The guest speaker was Rev. Albert B. Cleage from Detroit who was invited for a week-long

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trying to convince the students and the faculty that *Jesus Christ was a bastard born of an illegitimate relationship of a young Jewish girl with a German soldier who was a part of the Roman garrison stationed in Judea. Jesus was not a religious leader but a political revolutionary. His views had nothing to do with individual salvation but a political revolution. It was the apostle Paul who changed the political Jesus into a religious savior for personal salvation. So the speaker insisted that we must cut out the Pauline letters from the New Testament and replace them with our contemporary literature. He also insisted that anything white that moves on the street, referring to white people, must be machine-gunned down and exterminated and the Americans must stop their imperialistic adventures in Asia.*

The students shouted their approval of his message and applauded loudly at every opportunity they had during the impassioned, hate-filled speech. I could not believe what I was listening to in the chapel service. Somebody at the seminary made the decision to invite such a speaker. He was an honored guest speaker for the five-day special conference for the seminary students. Such a speaker could not have been invited to the seminary without the approval of a leader with the rank of president or academic dean. Following the chapel hour, I was surrounded by the students who rebuked me for raising issues with their invited guest speaker on the various points he was making. When I asked them if they had ever read the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, they told me they never did. These were times when some seminaries were spiritual cemeteries. Why? Such were they because of the uncertain leaders of such seminaries.

However, there have been many other seminaries where students were properly trained and sent out into the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Word of God in their hand in contrast to those referred to earlier. Presidents and academic deans such as you have been leading the evangelical institutions of theology and missions around the world and have come all the way to South Africa in order to renew our commitment to world evangelization.

## A UNIVERSITY OR A

## MILITARY ACADEMY?

Leith Anderson made an insightful observation about current theological education in his book *A Church for the 21st Century*:

Much theological education is based on the "academy model" of classical European universities. Students are trained to be scholars. They are given the tools for research and analysis, and then are trained to be theoretical theologians. Certainly there is a need for such specialized training. Without careful scholarship the Christian church would probably repeat the heresies of earlier eras within a generation. The rub comes when graduates face the realities of parish ministry. There is little time for the more leisurely life of scholarship. People aren't asking for academic alternatives; they are expecting practical answers to life's problems. Too often the pastor is like an emergency-room physician trained in genetic research but surrounded by patients with gunshot wounds.<sup>10</sup>

I, for one, concur with his statement. I have been a professor of Bible and theology for almost thirty years and served at a few schools in various administrative capacities. I have served as pastor of churches, small as well as large, for almost thirty years. I also served for several years as a mission executive. Today, as senior pastor of a church in Korea and president of a theological seminary, I have a concern about the theological and missionary training institutions. I share the same concern as Anderson (also John Frame).<sup>11</sup> I am asking questions: What do we perceive our schools to be? Are we a university for research or a military academy for spiritual warfare or a medical school which trains doctors for patients with gunshot wounds? For whom does the bell toll? Do seminaries exist for churches, or churches for seminaries? Do seminary and faculty exist for students, or student for faculty? Probably, my questions may be inadequate and creating an unnecessary dichotomy. However, the questions must be asked to refocus our goals, to sharpen our vision for our schools. Unless we presidents and academic deans ask such questions in a fresh way before the opening of the 21st century, and we simply carry on what we are used to doing,

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<sup>10</sup>Leith Anderson, *The Church for the 21st Century*, Minneapolis: Bethany, 1992, 75.

<sup>11</sup>Dr. John Frame of Westminster Theological Seminary in the West Coast shares similar concerns.



our Lord's last command may never be completely fulfilled. Our earnest desire is to obey the Lord in the most effective way possible in as much as it depends on us.

Often we have seen students arriving at our schools with fire for the Lord in their hearts. Then, we also have seen students leaving our schools with their degrees after a few years of extensive academic drills with cold, burned-out hearts, some of them not even knowing what to do with their lives. And we hear about their successes and their failures, their struggles and agonies in their ministries. Of course, that's the way it is, nothing unusual about that. Yes, nothing usual!

We can't provide them with everything they need for their ministries. But can we at least set them in a right direction for their lives? Can we give them the focus of their ministries? The ultimate purpose of their ministries?

Are we trying to reproduce scholars like ourselves, or trying to produce spiritual leaders who will make a difference for the Lord and the world, such as the Apostle Paul, Augustine, Calvin, Luther, Wesley, William Carey, Livingston, Spurgeon, Moody, George Brainard, Luis Bush, George Verwer, Clyde Cook, Bob Coleman, Bong Rin Ro, Tokunboh Adeyemo, Rodrigo Tano.

Current demands on pastors focus on leadership, communication, administration, and interpersonal relationships. These skills often were not learned at seminary. Perhaps we should ask, "Can these skills be learned in a school?" New formats are now developing in which churches and schools work together in training clergy; schools emphasize theory while churches emphasize practice. Internships and "field education" are being added to the curriculum. The student then implements theory in a practical setting of a church under the guidance and supervision of one with experience.<sup>12</sup> Tokunboh Adeyemo well said in his morning devotion when he stated that we are to produce "the doers of the Word."<sup>13</sup> Are we trying to reproduce Christian leaders or scholars? Obviously, this is not an either/or option because we need excellent scholars who will articulate Christian truths and make them into a comprehensive, coherent and consistent system of truth.

The challenge of moving into the twenty-first century has

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>13</sup>Dr. Tokunboh Adeyemo is the president of World Evangelical Fellowship and was one of the speakers at the PAD Congress.

prompted an examination of current styles of leadership in the world and the types of societies they produce. Historically, this has been typical when people anticipate moving from one century into a new one.<sup>14</sup> Sooner or later the clergy-preparation process boils down to an issue of leadership. Leadership means the ability to command a following. Leaders have the ability to produce attendance at meetings and are defined as conveners of teams or groups.

Leaders are made from the gifts God gives--the spiritual gifts, the personality, the talents, and the temperament. It is erroneous, therefore, to think that seminaries are able to create leaders. Seminaries can polish leaders; leaders can be identified, improved on, and perfected. But no human seems to have discovered how to make leaders. Even if we could make leaders, chances are that the process would be too expensive. Is it not better stewardship of kingdom resources to start with the people who by and large already have raw leadership?

The most practical approach for seminaries is not to let anybody in who does not already know how to lead. What if no one were allowed access to ordination-track theology who had not already demonstrated the leadership necessary to grow and build a community of faith? If this were allowed, our institutions of higher learning would be educating only champions because they'd be picking the right people to start with--even if this new perspective meant that theological institutions had to downsize to 20% of their current enrollments.<sup>15</sup>

We need to run our schools almost like military academies or medical schools, not so much like universities. We must produce leaders, not just scholars. Although we need some scholars, there are not enough leaders. This requires a fresh look at our curriculum. Along with the traditional academic courses, we must train our students to develop the qualities necessary to be leaders--conviction, integrity, character, leadership, communication, administration, interpersonal relationships, and spirituality.

It is easier to give a theological education to a leader than it is to take a scholar and transform him or her into a leader. If a church's staff is to be effectively used in building a growing, healthy church,

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<sup>14</sup>Ron Boehme, *Leadership for the 21st Century*, YWAM, Seattle: Frontline Communication, 1989, 2.

<sup>15</sup>Carl F. George with Warren Bird, *The Coming Church Revolution*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Revell, 1994, 298-99.

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there must be leaders and leader-producers, whether or not they are scholars. The best of both worlds, of course, is to have leaders who are enrolling in seminary and Bible colleges to gain the kinds of theological insights that leaders need, to hone their leadership skills, and to learn how to help others more effectively--not just to sort out their own personal issues.

Moving toward personal maturity and being a leader are not necessarily the same thing. Likewise, having a God-given compassion for others is wonderful; but it does not necessarily make someone a leader. The sequence that guarantees great fruitfulness is for someone to be recognized within the culture of a church, and then to give that person theological instruction. That is the intent of many denominations and movements, but it is not always their practice.

## CHANGE OR EXTINCTION

As the church confronts the rapid and complex transformations that are ushering Western society into the twenty-first century, many established churches and organizations find themselves teetering between ineffectiveness and extinction. The reality is that they must change to meet the challenges of the present and upcoming generations, and they must do so quickly. But the problem is that many lay leaders and pastors do not know how to guide their churches into the kind of changes that will make their churches relevant and effective. They need to deal directly with how to change and what to change.<sup>16</sup>

## THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF OUR OFFICE

The presidents have many things to do, such as administration, fund raising, expansion, public relations, and representation! A Yale president said to the parents, "If I don't spend two hours every day to dream for Yale, you may fire me." What will please our God most? Mastering Greek syntax or Hebrew exegesis, thorough knowledge of the Bible, perfect recitation of modern theology, publishing books, speaking at great Christian conferences? What will please our God most? I believe that God is most pleased when sinners come to Christ

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<sup>16</sup>Anderson, *A Church For The 21st Century*, jacket.

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and are converted to live to glorify Him forever. "You shall call His name Jesus. He shall save His people from their sin" (Matt 1:21). "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt 18:11). "Go ye, therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe to do whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt 28:19). "As the Father sent me, so send I you" (John 20:21). "Follow me; I will make you fishers of men" (Matt 4:19). Dr. Win Arn, Institute of American Church Growth, warned us, "We do everything but catching fish."<sup>17</sup> Reaching the lost here and abroad is our ultimate goal for glorifying His name. We must train our students to be the best fishers of men. Evangelism and missions must not be one of several disciplines, but the central concern for all academic exercises.

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<sup>17</sup>Win Arn, *The Pastor's Church Growth Handbook*, vol. 2, Church Growth Press, 1982, 13.