

Context for The Nanning Covenant

Ten years later, In August of 2002, the Global Leadership Team would meet in Nanning, China. The events leading up to this gathering had been troubling. There had been a sense, shared by Loren Cunningham a year earlier at our Global Leadership Team meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, that the mission was drifting from the vision and values that God had given us. Deviations from God's covenantal call which seemed minor at first were having profound impact on our lives and ministries. We were starting to act more like a corporation in which we defined our own destiny rather than a missions movement committed to walk in the inheritance the Lord had established for us. Relationships had been affected. Fruitfulness was compromised. A time of missional re- alignment was needed.

But all was not lost. In July, at a prayer meeting held in the Cunninghams' home convened by

the Innovations for Transformation Centre, Loren sensed, "We have hit the rock!" This phrase referred to the indelible image he had witnessed as a 7-year-old boy when he visited the massive Niagara Falls on the border between the USA and Canada with his parents. He saw a barge, wedged against a large rock right at the edge of the 167-foot drop-off, and heard the story of two men who, 24 years earlier, had found themselves adrift on a barge on the Niagara River. It seemed like the rushing water of the rapids was taking them to certain death as they approached the pounding falls. They began to pray in desperation. People along the river banks did likewise. It seemed like a hopeless situation. And then, just before the barge went over the falls, they hit a rock! The boat stuck there on the rock, on the very brink of disaster until rescuers were able to save the men.

Fresh from this experience when Loren felt the Lord spoke that "YWAM has hit the rock," he spent three weeks in Australia in route to Nanning: weeks of prayer and fasting. There the Lord gave him a teaching on Spiritual Eldership referred to as the "Tripod Message." It affirmed that if we were to remain an apostolic missionary movement we needed to emphasize the interplay of the individual's freedom in the Spirit to hear and obey God in a co-creative way, together with the role of spiritual eldership committed to advancing God's missional purposes, all held together by healthy, loving relationships under the Lordship of Jesus and guided by the Word of the Lord. This teaching, referred to as "the Tripod

Message” or “Spiritual Eldership,” was the key, opening message of the gathering in Nanning, laying a foundation for all that would follow.

The meetings would also be marked by the departure of Mercy Ships from the YWAM family of ministries (re-aligning our values), the adoption of the 4k framework (re-aligning our vision), and the selection of John Dawson as the next president of YWAM (re-aligning our relationships). The resulting document strongly underscored the two initial themes of our foundational covenant of the waves:

First of all, it was “a call ... for a renewed apostolic anointing” in the mission because we “deeply desire God’s blessings for a new surge of apostolic pioneering.” This heart cry for Spirit- led, missional innovation affirmed our core commitment to champion young people, stating that we would “encourage the newest to the oldest YWAMers to seek to know and obey His voice in the freedom of the Spirit, and to release them into the fullness of the promises of God.”

Secondly, the call to the alls and everys was intentionally very strong, in this covenant. Not only was 4k embraced with its focus on going where we are not, but the document concluded, “we declare to God this day to be available at all times and in all places to His call and purpose in this 21st century, to be all that we can be and do all that we can do to fulfill his Great Commission here and everywhere.”

THE NANNING COVENANT

YWAM Global Leadership Team Declaration, 30 August 2002, Nanning, China Gathered under Almighty God in this great land of China we purpose to renew our commitment to the Lordship of Jesus to fulfill His call to YWAM to all nations and peoples of the world. We call unto His Holy Spirit, through whom we can do all things, for a renewed apostolic anointing.

We reaffirm our commitment to the words of the Lord that we call our Foundational Values, as well as His vision for YWAM of evangelism, training and mercy ministries.

We resolve with the Lord to follow Him into the vision of Project 4K as our next challenge as a mission, and deeply desire His blessings for a new surge of apostolic pioneering.

We agree with His word to us to encourage the newest to the oldest YWAMers to seek to know and obey His voice in the freedom of the Spirit, and to release them into the fullness of the promises of God.

We joyfully submit our personal ministries and the corporate ministries we lead to the spiritual eldership of the Global Leadership Team and the appropriate elderships at all levels under the GLT.

We choose afresh to be transparent and open in our relationships with each other, and to give fresh emphasis in our mission to God's Word as our compass and plumbline for daily living.

We renew our commitment to our responsibilities as elders to serve and encourage those under our care with love, as loving servants, respecting their dignity and value as His children, and giving godly coaching for them to be released to fulfill the fresh new words from the Lord.

We commit to serve our leaders by submitting major leadership appointments, new visions or changes of directions, policies and practices in the ministries we lead, supporting and encouraging a spiritual environment of trust, unity, love and peace within YWAM, that we may enjoy the complete fellowship God intends for us within our YWAM relationships.

Therefore, we declare to God this day to be available at all times and in all places to His call and purpose in this 21st century, to be all that we can be and do all that we can do to fulfill His Great Commission here and everywhere.

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord ..." Psalm 19:14 (NASB).

Signed this day 30 August 2002, Nanning, China

Signature

Date