

# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THOUGH PHYSICALLY ABSENT, CHINESE CHURCH LEADERS' EXEMPLARY RESPONSE PROFOUNDLY IMPACTS CAPE TOWN 2010 ATTENDEES; Congress Highlights 'God on the Move' in China and Offers Special and Symbolic Prayer Over Empty Chairs Reserved for Disallowed Chinese Brothers and Sisters**

**Cape Town, South Africa, 20 October 2010** – The first of nightly Cape Town 2010 overview presentations of the church in different parts of the world by continent on Monday highlighted the region of Asia, with a special focus on China.

Congress organizers had hoped to have several Chinese leaders among the 200 participants invited from that country share from the platform about what God is doing across China through the dynamism, breadth and vitality of the communities of Christians throughout the nation. However, like the Second Lausanne Congress in 1989, what would have been the second largest delegation from any country was disallowed by their government from attending the event, as many were stopped at passport control while attempting to depart for Cape Town.

And yet, though physically absent, Chinese church leaders were present in spirit and led by their exemplary response to their situation, reflecting the love and forgiveness of Christ that made a profound impact on all in attendance.

“The theme of this Congress is, ‘God in Christ reconciling the World to Himself,’” said Doug Birdsall, chair of The Lausanne Movement, from the platform Monday evening. “Our brothers and sisters who are a part of God’s reconciled and reconciling community in the great land of China were eager to rejoin the global church in sharing the mission of taking Jesus Christ to all the nations of the earth, and they were eager to be a blessing to their own nation.”

Mr. Birdsall noted that fellow Christian leaders representing the church around the world at the Cape Town 2010 Congress were similarly looking forward to developing friendships with their counterparts from China, particularly leaders from the continent of Africa, where the nation of China has made such significant attempts to invest in and develop other aspects of their interests here.

In the Gospel of Matthew 18:10-14, Jesus shares the Parable of the Lost Sheep, in which the shepherd of 100 sheep leaves the ninety-nine on the hill to go look for the one that wandered off. If he finds it, he is happier about that one than the ninety-nine that did not wander off.

Though each invitee to Cape Town 2010 is equally important and represents countless others unable to attend, an intentional emphasis was made early in the Congress to express the special place of honour for the brothers and sisters from China who are experiencing pressure and persecution as a result of these meetings.

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In lieu of their participation, the leader of the Chinese group from across China sent a note, confirming they had accepted their government's decision restricting travel to the Congress -- quietly and with hope. He thanked those in attendance for their prayers and assured prayers from their group for the meetings.

In addition, the note contained Scripture passages from brothers and sisters in China, which a Chinese woman participant read from the platform. These included Philippians 1:29, 'For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also suffer for Him.' Others focused on enduring hardships sorrowfully, but with rejoicing; being slow to anger; and experiencing comfort in the midst of pain, knowing they have not been denied the truth found in the Word of God.

The Chinese group also provided the words and the music for the song, "The Lord's Love for China," which they had hoped to perform, but was instead sung together by all attendees.

As in 1989 when Chinese invitees were disallowed from attending the Second Lausanne Congress in Manila, a Korean pastor and two Chinese leaders then led in special prayers for their Chinese brothers and sisters, as attendees rose and stood behind their empty chairs, symbolically gesturing that there are places at the table for each of them – and many more.

For more information and updates on Cape Town 2010, the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, go to [www.capetown2010.com](http://www.capetown2010.com) or [www.lausanne.org/conversation](http://www.lausanne.org/conversation).

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***Editor's note: For more information, or for media access to photographs, news releases and audio/ video clips, email [media@capetown2010.com](mailto:media@capetown2010.com), or go to [www.lausanne.org/news-releases](http://www.lausanne.org/news-releases)***