Here Am I, Send Me!

Euan MacRae 29 November 2023



In November 2023, Living Hope hosted a School of Leadership that brought together around 100 leaders from various European countries, South Africa and even Egypt. It was a transformative time of connecting, building friendships and experiencing the presence of Jesus together as He worked deeply in our hearts.

It stirred up memories of my first Four12 conference in Sunningdale, Cape Town, which was a game-changer for me. I couldn't help but notice the impact that the teaching and leadership modelled by Andrew Selley, the Four12 leaders and our partnering churches has had on our Living Hope leaders. It was incredible to hear them sharing wisdom and practical teaching that none of us really understood a decade ago.

During the School of Leadership, there was a palpable sense that what was being taught and imparted was essential to the health of the churches represented there, as statements like, "We need to learn how to build the church this way" were frequently heard throughout the three days of equipping.

Teaching into Church Leadership

The teaching was kicked off with a timely message from Chris Staples, called “Staying in the Race”, which explored the challenges of ministry and how to serve from a position of rest and health to enable us to complete the race set before us. Many leaders responded and received an impartation of the Holy Spirit to strengthen and refresh them.

Gustav Stander, the most recent addition to the eldership team in Isle of Man, shared a powerful testimony that outlined the importance of laying everything down for the advancement of the Gospel. The call to “go” wherever the Lord calls us was clear and strong, and the leaders responded en masse, following Isaiah’s example, “Here am I, send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

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Three years ago, a powerful prophetic word was spoken over the European leadership team in which the Lord had raised up mighty, mature oak trees (leaders) that would eventually be felled and used to fabricate boats that would sail to other nations to plant and raise new forests. There is a growing sense that the season of planting is drawing closer, and the School of Leadership certainly stirred a desire to expand God’s Kingdom into the nations.

The strength of our bonds and unity will be critical to our ability to advance, and Jonathan Stanfield shared powerfully on the need to “Contend for our Relationships and Partnerships”, providing a helpful set of tools to overcome fractures, divisions and separations in friendships.

Rousseau Moss focused on the essential characteristics of a team player, using the story of Shekaniah, who proved to be a champion of unity in his support of Ezra (Ezra 7-10). He explained how unity is often broken by small acts of disobedience, and there was a sense of deep conviction that came upon our leaders as he spoke, as the Lord wielded His sword on our hearts, addressing the hard, uncut areas.

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It was a joy to be joined by several leaders from the ARC church in London and Essex, UK. Ashley Gabriel addressed the essential need to raise leaders in God’s house, bringing crucial perspective on the common characteristics of effective leaders.

James Smeed addressed an area of ministry that is not often spoken about: “double-time” ministry. This describes those who are not employed by the church full-time, but who serve in both secular jobs and demanding leadership positions within our churches. He called for an even greater devotion while providing some great handles for a more streamlined approach to ministry for those who serve in this capacity.

I addressed the area of church discipline, which is often very difficult to facilitate effectively. Without a proper understanding of Jesus’ approach to discipline, it is hard to imagine the church being properly prepared for His return.

Adrian Porter helped us to understand the “Seven Marks of a Successful Sunday”, which was a wonderful reminder to follow the Spirit and not the plans of man.

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The conference closed with a key message from Jonathan Stanfield on the importance of building churches that look like the Kingdom of heaven, and how cultural habits could distance visitors from us. He explained that in his home nation of Northern Ireland, certain national flags could serve to isolate pockets of the community from other community groups. He used the statement “Don’t wrap the Gospel in your flag” to help us to think carefully about the habits of our own cultures that could separate us from people looking in. It was a thought-provoking end to a powerful three days of equipping.

Reflecting the Kingdom of Heaven

Another memorable part of this time was hosting three young men from London. None of us had the same skin colour or accent, but our hearts were deeply connected through the bond of the Spirit. For four days, my home was a more accurate reflection of the Kingdom, where different tribes and tongues had come together in friendship, unity and love. Each of us became a little bit more like Jesus and I now have three new brothers for life.