

# A sober celebration.

Here is a brief rundown of what happened at Ethne '06, a major global consultation on unreached peoples held in March. In our next issue, *Momentum* will feature a detailed report.

For five days in March, over 350 mission leaders from every continent came together at 'Ethne 06' to celebrate "Great Commission" progress, assess status and accelerate efforts to reach the least-reached peoples of the world. The meeting was a continuation of numerous global consultations on unreached peoples that have been held over the years, growing out of the AD 2000 & Beyond Movement, the Great Commission Roundtable, and Singapore '02.

Gathering in a SouthEast Asian country—which itself has many unreached people groups—the participants heard reports from Latin America, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, West and Central Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. While celebrating progress, participants were sobered by the reality of the world's least-reached. Twenty years ago, 25% of the world had no access to the Gospel; today, that figure has risen to 28 percent. Meanwhile, in 1900, Christianity represented 33% of the world—a figure that has not changed over the past century. Participants also spent significant time in prayer for each of the regions and then broke into four strategy tracks dealing with global issues.

The Harvest Linked Prayer Strategy track carried forward a global initiative to facilitate a year-long prayer campaign for the least-reached peoples of the world. Track participants will be providing resources for each of 12 world regions including DVDs, prayer guides, bulletin inserts, and more. Currently resources are in 16 languages with more planned.

The UPG Workers Track focused on challenges and issues related to recruiting, training, deploying, and caring for workers sent from every continent to the least-reached. Track participants will be focused on identifying resources, developing resources where none exist, and promoting those resources particularly to those who are unaware of them.

The Frontier Crisis Response Network focused on the increasing numbers of natural disasters and how best to equip the church to be prepared for response in areas where there is no viable church to lead the response. Track participants will be working together to create a global network that can help communication and collaboration in crisis situations. Maybe more significantly, this group will develop strategies which build toward long term ministry in that area.

The Holistic Gospel Movement Track will share information, conduct joint research projects, and hold collaborative training events to see more gospel planting movements

(also called church planting movements) that result in movements of consistently reproducing indigenous churches that seek to live out the whole gospel to the whole world.

On the last two days, a number of smaller workshops and seminars were held, on topics such as mobilization, communication, member care, and research.

On the final evening, the participants gathered for worship and to hear of exciting action steps put forward by each of the four strategy groups and by several of the workshops. Also, the Ethne06 Steering Committee was thrilled to announce that a general agreement has been reached (with details to be worked out before formal announcement) that another regional mission network would take the main lead in facilitating the next Ethne Steering Committee and next global "UPG-focused" meeting. In a closing commitment time, representatives from each of 12 regions, wearing their national dress served communion to the delegates and led a candle lighting ceremony. With many prayers, tears, and a general 'family' atmosphere, the delegates closed the meeting, renewed in their passion to reach the least-reached.

