

Amsterdam 2000, a Conference on evangelism held July 29–August 6, drew 10,732 participants from 209 countries and territories. For many of those participants the trip to Amsterdam was arduous. Some traveled by dugout canoe, donkey or bicycle in order to reach the nearest airport. One man, from India, walked for two days, rode a bus for two more days and rode a train for four days—just to get to a city, where he then boarded an airplane to go to Amsterdam.



During the Conference, 7,000 of the participants stayed at Jaarbeurs, a large exposition center in Utrecht. Each morning these participants boarded trains for the 30-mile trip to the Conference, and each evening they returned on those trains. Stewards shepherded groups of participants—1,400 at a time—on the way to and from the train stations.



For One Simple Purpose . . .

They came from the great cities of the world: Buenos Aires, London, Los Angeles, Moscow, Nairobi, Nanjing, Sydney. They came from villages so small that the names don't appear on most maps.

They came—10,732 of them—from 209 countries and territories around the world.

They came together to focus on one simple purpose: to find new and more effective ways to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world.

Amsterdam 2000, held July 29–August 6 at the RAI International Exhibition & Congress Centre, in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, brought together evangelists, church leaders, theologians and strategists. For nine days participants heard plenary messages from 22 of the world's leading Christian speakers; attended seminars, workshops, national and regional strategy sessions; and joined in worship and prayer.

Strengthening Evangelists

The participants represented a wide range of ministries, including preaching, door-to-door evangelism, chaplaincy and church-planting, as well as ministries for youth, prisoners and orphans.

"My desire is that youths may be reached by the Word of God," said one participant from Kenya. "I came to Amsterdam so that I may get new strength and be equipped to uplift the youth so that they may have a new vision in this millennium."

A participant from India said, "I have come with the hope that I will find new strategies to communicate the Good News to the people in this



"Proclaiming
Christ
boldly
until He
comes."
BILLY GRAHAM


Amsterdam 2000



Jaarbeurs, set up as a temporary dormitory, became a global village for the nine days of the Conference.



crucial moment.”

And a participant from Fiji said, “I thank God that He has given me this opportunity, so that when I go back, I will be able to impart the knowledge that I have learned.”

Some participants made great sacrifices to raise the funds needed to attend the Conference. A man from Zambia decided, together with his wife, to sell their maize crop, which would have provided food for the family for a year. He said that they were trusting God to provide for their family’s needs—and God *did* provide: During the Conference, several people offered financial support to the family for a year or more.

Throughout the Conference three task groups—theologians, church leaders and strategists—met to develop a framework for evangelism and for carrying out the Great Commission of Christ.

Praying for the participants in their learning and planning were 100,000 people from around the world. They were part of an international prayer network that had begun more than a year prior to the Conference. According to Millie Dienert, Amsterdam 2000 prayer coordinator, people were praying that every participant be spiritually renewed to go back and work wherever God has placed them.

A Global Village

During the Conference, most of the participants lived at Jaarbeurs Congress Centre, an exposition center in Utrecht, 30 miles from Amsterdam. More than 10,000 square meters of carpet, 3,500 sets of bunk beds, 432 portable showers and 289 portable toilets were brought in to transform Jaarbeurs into a massive dormitory. With the arrival of 7,000 temporary residents, representing scores of nations and cultures, the miniworld of Amsterdam 2000 was indeed a global village.

Dining and medical facilities were available both at Jaarbeurs and at the RAI. The thrice-daily “feeding of the 10,000” not only was an impressive logistical feat, but it also was an opportunity for people to meet, to encourage one another and to build networks for ministry.

Practical Helps

For the participants who came from developing nations and whose

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The dining hall at the RAI seated 5,000 participants at a time. Mealtimes were an opportunity for participants to meet and befriend one another, and to exchange ideas.



Participants received a Conference notebook and a number of items to help them with ministry and with practical needs: a video with the “Jesus” film; an audiocassette with “The Story of Jesus”; a packet of Gospel tracts and a CD-ROM resource library. In addition, participants received a backpack containing two white shirts, a necktie and an audio CD with music and pastoral aids. Some participants also received 10 items of clothing for themselves and their families.

At registration one participant, after receiving his items, said, “I came here poor; now I am rich.”



FOR ONE SIMPLE PURPOSE . . .
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More than 100 interpreters provided simultaneous interpretation into 28 languages for Amsterdam 2000. Unlike consecutive interpretation, during which the speaker allows several seconds of lapsed time between phrases, simultaneous interpretation demands nearly instantaneous interpretation from the English language into the respective languages.



"I thank you, I thank you, I thank you!" exclaimed a man from Uganda who was seeking treatment for malaria at one of the seven medical clinics provided at Amsterdam 2000. "I just can't believe that you're willing to do this."

Another man needed a major dressing change for a wound. After receiving treatment, he asked, "What do I pay?" And when the nurse explained that the service was free, tears filled his eyes.

Other medical needs, from sprained ankles to ingrown toenails, were easily taken care of.

costs were subsidized by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Samaritan's Purse staffed a clothing distribution center where participants could choose 10 items of used clothing for themselves or for others.

Samaritan's Purse also provided medical care and conducted interviews with participants to determine how the organization might help in the participants' home countries.

Instruction and Inspiration

Billy Graham, who served as general chairman of Amsterdam 2000, was unable to attend the Conference due to outpatient medical treatment that he was receiving at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota; however, Mr. Graham delivered by video a challenge to participants to shine the light of Christ throughout the world (see outside back cover for an excerpt from his message). Earlier in the week, in Mr. Graham's absence, Franklin Graham read Mr. Graham's opening remarks to the participants.

Plenary sessions, dealing with practical topics ranging from "The Evangelist and the Bible" to "The Evangelist's Heart of Compassion," were interpreted simultaneously into 28 languages.

Seminars and workshops also were offered in several major languages. A key message emphasized throughout the Conference was that Christians have a responsibility to make their lives match their words. Ravi Zacharias said, "Why is it that a community that talks so much about supernatural transformation shows so little of that transformation? We will have to be men and women who embody the message that we are preaching, whose lives are faithful to the claims we are making."

Each plenary session included a time for reflection and prayer after the speaker's message: first came silent reflection, then came the din—a sustained roar—of thousands of believers praying aloud in small groups.

Unity in Worship

Amsterdam 2000 worship times were like a foretaste of heaven as people of nearly every nation and race, language and culture, raised their voices and hands in praise to God. Shouts of "Hallelujah!" rang out between songs.



"For the first time I have realized that God has so many people—they have different colors, different languages, different hairstyles, but in Him we are all one."

—Sham Kuar, Fiji

In the Amsterdam 2000 prayer room participants, stewards, staff, program personnel and task-force members created a steady murmur as they communicated with God.

"This is where the difference is being made—it's the hub," said one person who entered the prayer room. "This is the most important room at the Conference."



Each day participants prayed with fellow believers about their lives, their ministries and the world.



Special music at Amsterdam 2000 was provided by groups from six continents.

"As we prayed, it came to me that we all were praying for the same thing," said one participant after the Conference ended. "We were from many different cultures, many different backgrounds, from every part of the world that I could think of, and yet we all were there, single-minded, seeking the Lord."

Each evening outside the RAI, after the closing session, the participants seemed unable to contain their joy. As they waited for trains and buses, groups of people would begin to sing and dance in the afterglow of praise and celebration.

To Make Christ Known

The Conference provided participants with many practical ideas to take home and apply in their own evangelistic ministries.

A participant from Australia said, "I've attended as many workshops as I can, bought as many tapes as I can, taken notes at all the sessions. I want to apply what I know, where I live. I can't wait to get back to do that."

On the Conference's final evening Richard Bewes, rector of All Souls Church, Langham Place, in London, England, officiated a communion service that Mr. Bewes called "the most internationally representative Christian service of all time."

Then, following the nine days of learning, networking, fellowshiping and worshipping, 10,732 evangelists prepared to return to their homes.

They had come, individuals from 209 nations, because they have a passion to tell others about Jesus. They went out as one, equipped, empowered and rejuvenated for the task of making Christ known throughout the world.

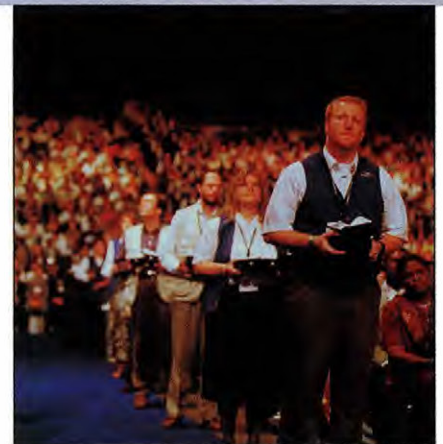
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"To preach to nonbelievers is one thing, but to hear an anointed speaker, a faithful servant of God, and to interpret simultaneously for key Christian leaders of Cambodia, is a great inspiration."

—Barnabas Mam, Cambodia



To take care of the many logistical details and to provide for participants' needs, nearly 700 people from 43 countries served as stewards at Amsterdam 2000. The stewards, paying their own expenses, served as volunteers at the Conference.

