

THE THIRD LAUSANNE CONGRESS ON WORLD EVANGELIZATION

CHRIST OUR RECONCILER

G O S P E L • C H U R C H • W O R L D

EDITED BY JULIA E. M. CAMERON

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THE LAUSANNE MOVEMENT

The Lausanne Movement was founded following the 1974 Congress on World Evangelization, held in Lausanne, Switzerland. This Congress was convened by the evangelist Billy Graham.

Lausanne is a network of evangelical leaders, thinkers and reflective practitioners. Its purpose is to strengthen the church for world evangelization. To this end, it serves the body of Christ as a *catalyst* for engaging major issues by:

- ***Connecting and convening evangelical leaders*** (in Christian ministry, and in the secular professions) for focused discussion, prayer and strategic action on issues which impact the church and God's world;
- ***Communicating ideas and strategy*** by, for example, publishing books and occasional papers (hard copy and online), and using social media and targeted communication to inform, persuade and stimulate ideas and action;
- ***Hosting discussion and resource sharing*** through the online Lausanne Global Conversation, which provides a forum for ideas and strategy on mission and evangelization.

The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (Cape Town 2010) brought together more than 4,000 participants from 198 countries. *The Cape Town Commitment*, issuing from this Congress, stands in the historic line of *The Lausanne Covenant* (1974) and *The Manila Manifesto* (1989). It opens with a Confession of Faith, framed

in the language of covenantal love, followed by a Call to Action. Its Call to Action reflects the voices of all who participated in Congress discussions, in a genuine desire to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. *The Cape Town Commitment* forms the basis for Lausanne's priorities.

The Lausanne Movement is anchored by its Theology Working Group, originally established under the leadership of John Stott, who served as chief architect of *The Lausanne Covenant*. In addition, it has Working Groups on Strategy, Intercession and Communications.

'The spirit of Lausanne'

The phrase 'the spirit of Lausanne' arose out of the 1974 Congress. It captures the Movement's ideals: dedication to prayer, and to the study of God's Word; a desire to work in unity and partnership; a clear reflection of the hope of the gospel; and humility in service.

To learn more, and to join the Lausanne Global Conversation on mission and evangelization, go to www.lausanne.org or email info@lausanne.org.

FOREWORD

Christ our Reconciler has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. We, his church on earth, bear a glorious task and a serious responsibility. His command to make disciples of all nations has never been rescinded; it is this command which gave rise to The Lausanne Movement following the 1974 Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, and remains its lifeblood.

In every generation we need to understand our times, as the men of Issachar understood theirs.¹ Only through the dedicated hard work of studying Scripture, and studying the world around us, will we, like those men from Issachar, 'know what to do'.

John Stott loved to remind us that Christ gave gifts to the church to *share*. He referred to The Lausanne Movement rather beautifully as 'an exchange of gifts'. We offer this book as a gift from the church on all continents to the church in your nation. May it be a means of enriching one another in our grasp of Scripture, and in our love of Christ.

The purpose of The Third Lausanne Congress was to strengthen the church for world evangelization. To this end we were joined on-site by participants from 198 nations, selected from local churches, agencies, national and international movements, and including senior leaders in the public arenas. Through our GlobaLink we were able to extend our discussions; we had over 600 registered remote sites in some ninety countries. We received interactive responses from GlobaLink, and from television and radio programmes created on-site, through our blogger network, and from

news reports filed by nearly a hundred reporters and crew. Our aim? To discern what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches now, and the outcome of our work is contained in *The Cape Town Commitment*. I would urge you, your church, your student fellowship on campus, your Christian fellowship at the office or in the lab, to study it carefully before God, and to find your place in its outworking.²

All good planning needs a clear grasp of where we are now, and of where we want to be. More than that, it needs a shrewd sense of external factors which bear on our plans, and the right people to take those plans forward. In this regard, we do not forget our brothers and sisters in lands where there is persecution, and for whom any forward planning for the gospel is very costly. We trust this book will engage with all aspects of planning, and stimulate robust discussion among leaders of churches and agencies. We trust too that its principles will serve ‘the church at large’: Christians in the workplace, in fields of government, business, academia, industry, medicine and the media. In offering this volume, we have no vaunted ideas of ourselves; we work simply as servants.

I want to express gratitude to Blair Carlson, Congress Director, who served for many years with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. I also want to thank Ramez Atallah, Director of the Bible Society of Egypt, who chaired the Programme Committee, his co-chair Mark Marlowe (USA), and Grace Mathews (India) who served as Programme Director. They were assisted by a fine team in building a programme and a speaker list which drew some of the best evangelical thinkers and most courageous practitioners from the global church. We can offer only a limited selection of the programme in a single volume; you will find much more on the website.

The international Board overseeing the development of the Congress drew on the wisdom of good friends who prayed for us. I think, for example, of Dr Billy Graham, founder of The Lausanne Movement; of John Stott, who served as Honorary Chair until his death in 2011; and of the late James Hudson Taylor III, whose knowledge of the Chinese church was second to none; of Prof Samuel Escobar and Dr René Padilla from Latin America, names

synonymous with Lausanne since the 1974 Congress; and of Archbishop Henry Luke Orombi from Uganda, who served as Honorary Chair of the Africa Host Committee.

My purpose is not to list names, for that would fill many pages. It is to reflect the global nature of the Congress, and in so doing to express something of the burden we now feel, as recipients and stewards of rich gifts brought to the table by Christian leaders from many nations.

The apostle Paul had a passionate plea: that those in the church grow up into ‘the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ’. May this book be a small contribution to that growth.

S. Douglas Birdsall
Executive Chair, The Lausanne Movement
Boston, Massachusetts
January 2012

 INTERVARSITY PRESS

DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSION IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Os Guinness (UK) and David Wells (USA)

‘Globalization’ brings the greatest opportunities for mission, as well as the greatest challenges for discipleship, the church has faced since the first century. Never has the vision of ‘the whole gospel for the whole world through the whole church’ been closer and yet more contested.

The double-edged strength of the church

We are no longer who we were before we came to Christ, but we are not yet what we will be when Christ returns. This bracing call to tension lies at the heart of our faith. Individually and collectively, we are to live in the world in a stance of both ‘yes’ and ‘no’; affirmation and antithesis; of being ‘against the world/for the world’; in it but not of it.

This tension tests the church in every generation. When preserved, the transforming power of the Christian faith in culture has been immense, for the Christian faith is unashamedly world affirming. It has a peerless record in contributing to education, philanthropy, social reforms, medicine, the rise of science, the emergence of democracy and human rights. It has built schools, hospitals, universities, orphanages and other beneficial institutions. Yet, at the same time, it is also world denying, insisting on the place of prophets as well as priests, on sacrifice as well as fulfilment. It must expose and oppose the world wherever its attitudes and actions are against the commands of God and the interests of humanity.

The temptation has always been to relax this tension from one side or the other. Sometimes Christians have been so much in the world that they have lost their relevance to the kingdom of God. At other times, they have become so ‘not of the world’ that they have lost their relevance in society and have become of no earthly use.

Either way, such unfaithfulness means that the church grows weak. Unfaithfulness in the direction of worldliness is worse than weak. It brings the shadow of God's judgment.

Preserving this tension carries an inescapable implication: Christian faithfulness in any generation requires a clear-eyed understanding of the world of its day.

While the Bible uses the word 'world' of creation, our focus here is on its other use, its designation of fallen human life in its rebellion against God and his truth. Here 'world' becomes negative (e.g. 1 John 2:15–17; 5:18–19). We must understand the world if we are

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to witness, for communication always presupposes understanding of context. And we must understand it if we are to be aware of the danger of worldliness, for we can only avoid what we can accurately understand.

The Third Lausanne Congress meets 100 years after the great world missionary conference in Edinburgh in 1910. Since then, Edinburgh's missionary vision has been gloriously vindicated.

The Christian faith is global today in a way that was not true 100 years ago. Nevertheless, there was a tragic blind spot in its vision. It failed to recognize its own captivity to the powerful delusions of European 'Christendom', delusions which led to two world wars and much self-induced secularization. We today are no more omniscient than were they, but we must endeavour to be more self-critical through understanding our world and our own place in it.

Coming to terms with 'globalization'

What then is 'the world' of our day? Beyond any question, its single, strongest expression is globalization. This is the process by which human interconnectedness has expanded to a truly global level. Many people, such as the writers of *The Economist* magazine, attribute globalization to the spread of market capitalism, and use

the word only as a synonym for this expansion. But this is self-interested as well as wrong. Globalization is a multidimensional process, and the decisive driver in its present expansion is not capitalism but information technology. At the centre of the current wave of globalization are ‘the triple S-forces’ of speed (with the capacity for instant communication), scope (the capacity to communicate to the entire world) and simultaneity (the capacity to communicate to everywhere at the same time). Together, these forces have led to the acceleration, compression and intensification of human life on earth in the global world.

A decisive shift has taken place from the Industrial Revolution, centred on production and epitomized by the factory, to the Information Revolution, centred on communication and epitomized by the computer. There are both continuities and discontinuities with the past, and we must make our claims about the present with accuracy and humility.

The *first* task is to discern and so to make an accurate description of the realities of the world in which we find ourselves.

The *second* task is to assess and so to evaluate the pros and cons, the benefits and costs, of the world as a whole. And all must be assessed within the framework of the biblical worldview.

The *third* task is to engage and so to enter the world as disciples of Jesus, called to be salt and light, gratefully using the best of the world as gifts of God and vigilantly avoiding the worst of the world. Or, as the early church expressed it, we are to ‘plunder the Egyptian gold’, as the Lord told Israel to do, but we are never to set up ‘a golden calf’, as Israel was later judged for doing.

Easy to say, but these basic Christian tasks are harder than ever to do because of globalization. History is always more complex than we can understand, and it proceeds not by the simple influence of certain factors, but by their complicated interplay and through the ironies of their unintended consequences. Globalization only compounds our difficulty in understanding, for, by its very nature, globalization means that we who are finite now have to deal with the whole world, which is always far beyond our full comprehension.

And we are dealing with it when it is communicating and changing at an unprecedented speed. Indeed, it will have changed even before we have finished describing it.

Many of our best descriptions always require immediate reminders. *First*, globalization almost always involves two counter-vailing forces, and not simply one, for if the world is ‘universalizing’ in new ways, it is also ‘localizing’ in new ways (hence the new term ‘glocal’, to describe the impact of the global on the local and the local on the global). *Secondly*, in every new trend there are always winners and losers. Christians who honour their Master must never lose sight of the poor, the oppressed, and those left behind economically, especially those caught by the savage inequities of the globalized world. *Thirdly*, there are multiple modernities, or different ways of being modern. The old adage that ‘Globalization equals Westernization equals Americanization’ is both wrong and a dangerous conceit. Different cultures, with their own history and their own values, are adapting to the modern world in their own ways, and may say ‘no’ to what others consider ‘progress’.

The global faith par excellence

Globalization has special relevance for Christians because the Christian faith has always been a global faith. We look back not just to the Great Commission, but to the promise to Abraham that he would be the father of the faithful and a blessing to the whole world. The Christian church, in fact, is the most diverse community on earth, the most multi-ethnic, the most multicultural. The Bible is the most translated book in history. This is crucial to our global perspective, a supreme fact.

Grand transformations

Globalization is transforming almost every aspect of human life. All of these transformations have a bearing on discipleship and evangelism in one way or another. Some of the major transformations that require further exploration can be summarized briefly as follows:

- Our sense of *time*, in a world of ‘fast-life’. We are the first generation to live at a speed beyond our own human comprehension.
- Our sense of *place*, when space is ‘compressed’ and geography ‘abolished’. We can communicate anywhere in the world instantly, and travel anywhere within twenty-four hours.
- Our sense of *reality*, as more and more of life is ‘mediated’. The virtual replaces the natural, and face-to-face relationships give way to virtual interaction.
- Our notion of *identity*, as the fixed and enduring shifts to ‘the endlessly protean’. Numerous ‘identity movements’ offer collective identities for those suffering from the dislocation of traditional identities.
- Our experience of *families*, as binding social ties are melting down, traditional gender roles are challenged and replaced, and the dysfunctional becomes the normal.
- Our experience of *community*, as the face-to-face shifts to the virtual and the imagined.
- Our experience of *work*, as globalization makes job security fragile.
- The place of *religion* in modern life has often been eviscerated and has become a vague ‘spirituality’.
- The challenge of *other religions* and especially of ‘living with our deepest differences’ in the emerging ‘global public square’.
- The place of *politics*, as the ‘supra-national’ supersedes the national, and nation states are rivalled by many global actors.
- The challenge of working toward ‘*global governance* without a world government’.
- The task of *leadership* in an interconnected age, as leaders now grapple with ‘the whole world the whole time’.
- The nature of *knowledge*, as information explodes, generalism replaces specialization, and the internet becomes a ‘garbage can’ as well as a ‘goldmine’.
- The power of *consumerism*, and its transformation of human desire, its drive to ‘commodify’ everything, turning even

sex and relationships into saleable things, and its grand accumulation of debt and junk.

- The proliferation of *ideologies*, and especially the new ideologies that are rampantly pro-globalist, such as neo-liberal capitalism, or rampantly anti-globalist, such as ‘post-colonialism’.
- Modern travel and the vast global tourist industry, which has spawned evils such as ‘sex tourism’, and modern *migration* and the ‘manufacture of waste people’, such as the millions who have been left homeless, identity-less, jobless, and stateless in refugee camps.
- Our sense of *generations*, when fast-life encourages ‘generational conceit’ and the myopia that cuts itself off from the wisdom of the elders and the past.
- Our attitude to *tradition and change*, when novelty and fashion trump wisdom, custom and ‘the habits of the heart’.
- The dominance of *worldwide emotions*, such as fear and the shameless pandering to fear-mongering and alarmism.
- The significance and scale of *globalized evil*, suffering, crime and oppression, and the multiple consequences for justice and compassion, supremely the global trafficking in sex, human body-parts and humans themselves.
- The exponential rise of *global side-effects*, and therefore of unintended consequences, unknown aftermaths.
- Our attitudes toward *the earth*, when degradation exposes its non-renewable fragility.
- The *prospects for the human race*, including the degradation of the earth, the potential destruction of the planet and extinction of the human species, and the question of a ‘post-human future’.

A proper description of these profound transformations is beyond the scope of this brief chapter. But such consequences must never be forgotten, for they define the world in which we live and in which we bear witness to our Lord. Our focus here is on two central areas: globalization and discipleship, and globalization and mission.

Christian discipleship in the global era

If globalization has both local and global dimensions, and if its benefits are also trailed by extraordinary shadows, then it is a challenge to Christian discipleship. How do we think about both the benefits and the costs as Christ's followers? And how do we think of this world that lives in our consciousness at both a macro and a micro level?

- The church, if it is true to its calling, will think globally, because otherwise it will be more *parochial* than its non-Christian neighbours and, worse, untrue to its gospel calling.
- Global consciousness tends to 'relativize' and therefore diminish all absolute truth claims, because the awareness of other religions and worldviews erodes the possibility that any one of them could actually be really true.
- Capitalism and technology are uniting to produce unparalleled abundance in developed countries. In these countries, paradoxically, people have never had so much to live with and yet so little to live for. Never have they experienced such abundance through cheaply produced goods from around the world, and yet never have depression, anxiety and loneliness been at higher levels. And all too often, Christians in these countries are not distinguished from non-Christians in how they think about the meaning of life and what constitutes the 'good life'. This consequence of globalization is now most obvious in the West, but it will become a challenge wherever the world is modernizing.
- In a world connected electronically and virtually, the trend is to diminish face-to-face human relationships and increase 'virtual relationships' and 'social networking'. Questions are even being raised in the West as to whether anyone needs to 'go' to church any more. But could the 'church' ever be merely an 'imagined community' that exists only in the ether?

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And how does this ‘mediated world’ impact discipleship patterned on the flesh-and-blood realities of the incarnation?

Christian mission in the global era

Increased opportunities for mission and evangelism are obvious and huge. Immigration has brought into our cities peoples from around

We can now spread the gospel in a way which is ‘freer, faster and farther’.

the world. With the destruction of traditions, the collapse of traditional certainties and the meltdown of traditional roles and allegiances, there is greater political liberty, greater social fluidity, greater religious diversity and greater psychological vulnerability than

ever before. As a result, human beings in the global era have been described as ‘conversion prone’, more open than ever to consider new faiths. So we can now spread the gospel in a way which is ‘freer, faster and farther’ than at any earlier time in the church’s history, and we must do so with faithfulness and integrity.

The following issues are examples of the challenges we must consider:

- *The political temptation:* At one extreme, more common in the West, the temptation is to see the Christian faith as the best way to defend the status quo and bolster cultures under stress. At the other, more common outside the West, it is to see the Christian faith as a variant of post-colonialism, justifying prejudice. At the same time, the pluralized world amplifies the fears surrounding the challenges of living with deep religious differences, so that religion is viewed as divisive, and evangelism as unwarranted ‘proselytization’. We need to remind ourselves that ‘the first thing to say about politics is that politics is not the first thing’.
- *Plausibility crisis:* Whenever the Christian faith is untrue to its own nature, it seems unlikely to outsiders that its gospel could be true.

- *The downsides of the age of communication:* We communicate with great ease, but we are also liable to succumb to the pitfalls of modern communication: the entertainment mode, the soundbite style, the sensationalist claims, the common appeal to feelings alone, the ‘inflation’ of ideas, the corruption of sources. To the extent that Christians use modern media uncritically, to that same extent they reduce the gospel to being one more sales pitch among many.
- *The lethal effect of secularization:* ‘Man does not live by bread alone,’ Jesus said, but thanks to the brilliance and power of modern insights and techniques, no generation has come closer to the illusion of being able to do so. This illusion extends to the ability to grow churches and conduct effective outreach on the strength of human ingenuity alone. Churches grow, with very little need of God’s truth or his grace. Secularism has produced, even among Christians, those who live as ‘functional atheists’. The Christian mission is then driven only by statistics, demographics and the ‘can-do’ spirit.
- *The Midas touch of consumerism:* In a world where capitalism has produced consumerism, marketing and branding become essential. In this atmosphere, the gospel easily degenerates into just another product. At best, the result is shallow evangelism and deficient discipleship. At worst, it is unfaithfulness to the gospel. Related to this is the gospel preaching which appeals to the wrong, consumerist desires. Among the most flagrant offenders here is the ‘health-and-wealth gospel’, now exported from the USA and Europe to the Global South. The effects are disastrous to the gospel and cruel to the poor.
- *The idol of chronological timeliness:* In a ‘fast-life’ world, we care less about the past, more about our ‘instant, total-information’ present, and most of all about the future. But this mindset is suffused with fatal idolatries: the seductions of ‘relevance’, the siren call to ceaseless innovation and the appeal of unceasing novelty. The old maxim still holds true: ‘He who marries the spirit of the age soon becomes a widower.’

- *Confusing or biding the gospel*: If the gospel has sometimes been shorn of its accompanying social responsibilities, it has equally been confused by others with being only social responsibility. We cannot be vocal about injustice while being hesitant about the scandal of the cross and the saving power of Christ's substitutionary death.
- *Contributing rather than complaining*: In our globalized world which has produced shadows and injustices, not to mention fears and uncertainties, people are crying out for hope and practical solutions. Among many issues on which evangelicals

We cannot be vocal about injustice while hesitant about the scandal of the cross.

have both the biblical resources and experience to speak constructively is the issue of civility in the emerging 'global public square'. Whereas some Western Christians are now widely attacked as being part of the problem of religion and public life, the proper championing of freedom of conscience and religious liberty for

people of all faiths would make us part of the answer – not only for our own good, but for the wider good and the shalom of humanity. The Lausanne Movement could lead at this point.

Serving God in our generation

We must face both the opportunities and the challenges of globalization as the united people of God, not simply those from this generation or that, this part of the world or that.

We must avoid the peril of two equal and opposite forms of the worldliness of power. On the one hand, we must not confuse the spread of the gospel with the spread of Western power, and on the other, we must not confuse a prophetic stand against Western power with the premises and prejudices of anti-Western 'post-colonialism'. With Western power in visible decline, there is less excuse for the first confusion than at Edinburgh, though the economic and cultural power of the West may well outlast its political

and military dominance. In many parts of the world, the current temptation is to fall for the opposite confusion introduced by post-colonialism. But this would divide Christian against Christian in the name of suspicion, envy and resentment. And it would also divide the church along such lines as the West versus 'the rest', the Global North against the Global South, or the churches of the more-developed world against the churches of the less-developed world. Extra-biblical definitions and boundaries like these were the very mistake that Edinburgh 1910 made. We must not make similar mistakes today.

We all thank God together for the abundant evidence of the spectacular growth of the churches in the Global South, with all their courage, passion and spiritual power. They put to shame the all-too-obvious contrast with the spiritual poverty of churches in the West. But at the same time, we must all be humbly aware that much of the Global South is not yet fully modernized and therefore not yet fully tested by the coming challenges and seductions of modernity (to which the Western church has fallen captive). That test is still to come.

Equally, we all openly acknowledge and grieve over the dire weakness and worldliness of much of the church in the West and its profound need for revival and reformation. Yet its sorry condition can stand as a helpful warning to all the churches elsewhere in the world: do not do as Western churches have done over the past 200 years – falling captive to the spirit and systems of the modern world. Thus, all the global churches can join hands in prayer with Western churches in this hour of their greatest challenge.

Then the global churches around the whole world can be true partners and join forces to face the task of recovering a faith with such integrity and effectiveness that it can prevail over the challenges of the advanced modern world, and so do honour to our Lord and bring his good news to the world.

*David F. Wells is Distinguished Senior Research Professor at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. www.gordonconwell.edu
(See p. 38 for Os Guinness's biographical details.)*