



The **Lausanne** Committee for World Evangelization

The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World

Lausanne Movement II

International Congress for World Evangelization
(Lausanne 1974)



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International Congress for World Evangelization (Lausanne 1974) . . . In Context

World Congress on Evangelism
(Berlin 1966)

International Congress for
World Evangelization
(Lausanne 1974)

Conference on World
Evangelization
(Pattaya 1980)

International Congress for
World Evangelization II
(Manila 1989)

Forum for World
Evangelization
(Thailand 2004)



Lausanne 1974: Why the Congress?

- The Congress stood in the tradition of many movements of evangelism throughout the history of the church.
- The Congress convened as one body, obeying on Lord, facing one world, with one task.
- The Congress convened to re-emphasize those biblical concepts which are essential to evangelism.
- The Congress convened to consider honestly and carefully both the unevangelized world and the Church's resources to evangelize the world.

Billy Graham, "Why Lausanne?" *Let the Earth Hear His Voice*, pp. 25-32.



Lausanne 1974: Purpose and Focus

- Framed as a follow up to Berlin 1966, The Lausanne Consultation on World Evangelization was proposed by Billy Graham for the purpose of bringing together evangelicals who focused on evangelizing the world.
- Focus on evangelization—the whole task of the church—rather than evangelism—the proclamation of the Gospel.



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Lausanne 1974 Factoids

- Met in July 16-25 in Lausanne, Switzerland
- Over 2,700 participants from 150 nations
- Counting observers, media, and guests, over 4,000 people were present.
- About 50% were from majority world settings
- *TIME* commented: “a formidable forum, possibly the widest-ranging meeting of Christians ever held.”



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Lausanne 1974: Significant Results

- The Lausanne Covenant—used as a statement of faith by hundreds of organizations and institutions.
- Focused attention on a different approach to understanding the task of world evangelization through people groups and unreached peoples.
- The eventual formation (1976) of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.
- Served as a launching pad for notable evangelical alliances and movements at local, national, regional and international levels.
- Lausanne as a term was transformed from the name of a Swiss city to the name of an evangelical movement visible around the world.



The Lausanne Covenant

- The 3,000 word long Lausanne Covenant was agreed upon by more than 2,300 evangelicals during the 1974 International Congress to be more intentional about world evangelization.
- "Covenant" was chosen in preference to "Declaration" because the editors "were determined not just to declare something, but to do something, namely to commit ourselves to the task of world evangelization."*

*John Stott, 1975. *The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary* (<http://community.gospelcom.net/Brix?pageID=14323>).



Lausanne Covenant

- The Covenant emphasizes six major areas in fifteen points:
 - The authority of Scripture
 - The nature of evangelism
 - Christian social responsibility
 - The urgency of world missions
 - The problems of culture and
 - Spiritual warfare.
- It has been adopted as a statement of faith by more agencies, institutions and societies than any other document.



The Genius of the Covenant

To me the unrecognized genius of the Lausanne Covenant is that it makes cooperation essential. Let me put it this way: the Covenant, if it is accepted and followed, makes it inevitable that we start to have a Christian vision for where we are placed. That vision will include belonging to a church that is winning people to Christ and growing in numbers, character, understanding of the truth, internal and external relationships, and impact on the community. We will be supportive of those who are trying to clean up and operate the political units to which we belong. We will be active in caring about the relief and development of the poor in our neighborhood, and we will be contributing money and people for evangelistic and social purposes in other countries as yet unreached by the gospel.

Now if that is the vision, we cannot do it on our own. We need to cooperate with all other Christians in the same place.

Tom Houston, 1989. "Cooperation in Evangelism and the Lausanne Covenant." *Mission Frontiers* (Jan-Feb), p. 15.



Reactions to the Covenant

- In the final analysis, the greatest accomplishment of the Congress was to clarify the meaning and nature of the Christian mission. Over against an unbiblical isolation of the proclamation of the Gospel from the total mission of the Church, there emerged a concept of evangelism in which the proclamation was seen as inextricably connected with social responsibility, discipleship and church renewal. . . . the Lausanne meeting turned out to be an updating of the evangelical agenda, made possible by a renunciation of fierce pragmatism and a return to biblical theology. Evangelism remained intact, but was no longer understood as ecclesiocentric activism, but rather as God's means of placing the totality of life under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

C. Rene Padilla, 1976. "Introduction" In *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant*, p. 14.



Unreached Peoples

- At a Congress devoted to world evangelization, Ralph Winter asked perhaps the most stimulation question of the Congress, “What about the 2.7 billion who are still unreached?”
- Under Donald McGavran’s influence, strategists had started to divide the task into peoples rather than nations as geo-political units.
- The Missions Advanced Research and Communications Center (MARC) had prepared a *Directory of Unreached Peoples* for distribution at the Congress; it clearly demonstrated that the vast bulk of the people in the world were unreached and would not be reached given methods and strategies in use at that time.



Unreached Peoples

- However, the definition proposed for “peoples”—“a sufficiently large grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another”^{*}—did not result in clarity and even led to confusion.
- With Winter’s question and the MARC materials came the realization that we were far from completing the task of world evangelization.
- The reality that many people could not be reached using then current means, plus the advocacy of people group thinking, became the foundation for evangelistic strategies and discussion that continues to this day.



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Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE)

- The LCWE was formally organized in 1976 to continue the spirit of the Lausanne Consultation of 1974.
- It was comprised of volunteers and people seconded from mission and evangelistic organizations rather than full-time professionals.
- The leaders were networked together in a common commitment under the Lausanne Covenant to work with others in their areas of ministry to advance the gospel.



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LCWE Purpose

The purpose of the Lausanne Committee is to help motivate and mobilize Christians and churches everywhere to pray, plan, study, and work together for the evangelization of the world.

“. . . is not a power structure but a committee which acts as a catalyst, enabling but not directing.”*



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LCWE Objectives

- Biblical evangelization among all peoples, including those unreached people groups where the church has not yet taken root indigenously.
- Spiritual renewal as a foundation to world evangelization.
- Build networks of relationships and co-operation among those committed to evangelizing the world.
- Measure the progress of world evangelization so that prayer and other resources are effectively mobilized.



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Key Lausanne People

- Billy Graham: provided the impetus, the financing, and the status needed to pull people together
- John Stott: gave the theological framing for the Covenant and ongoing Lausanne deliberations
- Leighton Ford: gave the ongoing continuity of the Lausanne ideal and forged a movement
- Gottfried Osei-Mensah: brought a significant international voice to the movement



Significance of the Congress

- It reversed the attitude of the Church at large towards evangelization
- It provided a rallying point for evangelicals for their cooperation and united efforts.
- It produced a unique and historic document, the Lausanne Covenant.
- It opened up new ways of looking at the world yet to be reached.
- It gave an impetus for many conferences and consultations on issues related to the theology and practice of world evangelization.
- It helped the evangelicals to develop a broader and more balanced biblical view on issues in such areas as evangelism, culture, other religions, social responsibility and the Holy Spirit.
- It generated a greater awareness of the role of the Two-Thirds world Church.

Saphir Athyal, "Lausanne 74" World Evangelization Special Congress Edition (Summer 1989), p. 21.



Lausanne 1974 a Milestone

- Lausanne 1974 was a milestone in the history of evangelical missions. It was a forceful challenge in at least four points of missionary practice and reflection.
 - It brought to the evangelical agenda the concept of *holistic* mission, beyond the dualistic spiritualizations of postwar missionary practice.
 - It dared to propose *cooperation* in mission between churches and parachurches, mainline and evangelical, Pentecostal and Reformed, on the basis of the theological convictions and the missionary passion expressed in the Lausanne Covenant.
 - It registered the fact that in the post-imperial era in which we live, the missionary task as well as the theological one have now a *global* dimension, in which neither imperialism nor provincialism make sense.
 - Finally it encouraged evangelicals to open their eyes to the importance of facing seriously the *context* of mission, the social, ideological, and spiritual struggles that surround it and condition it.

Samuel Escobar, 1990. "From Lausanne 1974 to Manila 1989: The Pilgrimage of Urban Mission." *Urban Mission* 7:4 (October): 21.



Lausanne in Perspective

In the final analysis, the greatest accomplishment of the Congress was to clarify the meaning and nature of the Christian mission. Over against an unbiblical isolation of the proclamation of the Gospel from the total mission of the Church, there emerged a concept of evangelism in which the proclamation was seen as inextricably connected with social responsibility, discipleship and church renewal.

The Lausanne meeting turned out to be an updating of the evangelical agenda, made possible by a renunciation of fierce pragmatism and a return to biblical theology. Evangelism remained intact, but was no longer understood as ecclesiocentric activism, but rather as God's means of placing the totality of life under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

C. Rene Padilla, "Introduction" *The New Face of Evangelicalism: An International Symposium on the Lausanne Covenant*, p. 14



Impact since 1974

- Major conferences held on every continent
- Numerous Lausanne-originated or -related groups formed:
 - Nigerian Congresses on World Evangelization
 - Chinese Congresses on World Evangelization
 - International Conferences on Jewish Evangelization
 - Asia Lausanne Conferences on Evangelism
 - International Researchers Conferences
 - Latin American Congresses on Evangelism (CLADE)
- Lausanne Covenant adopted by hundreds of organizations, fellowships and institutions



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From Lausanne 1974 . . .

Out of that [Lausanne] Congress grew the Lausanne movement—a fellowship of leaders from all parts of the world committed to further biblical evangelization. Out of the spirit of Lausanne, literally hundreds of evangelistic movements and organizations have been born. The movement has given birth to many other movements and this is why we still call it “Lausanne.”

Leighton Ford, “Proclaim Christ” in *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes*, p. 49.



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Journey of Lausanne Movement

The history of the event speaks for itself. The entire movement . . . put world evangelization decisively on the agenda of world Christianity and even set the tone of much that has been said about world evangelization in the last quarter of this century. The Lausanne movement was in tune with the Spirit and with its times. It has become one of the most representative points of reference of contemporary evangelicalism. Focusing on the need for opening windows to the world and facing the truths of modernity, it has attempted to understand the missionary task of the church in a world community that has become global.

Lausanne was a congress that became a movement, an event that became a symbol. As a congress, its purpose was to ask the worldwide church to embrace the task of evangelization in the context of a modern, growing, and increasingly unevangelized world. As a movement, Lausanne had to shape its identity and clearly define its goal: to maintain and expand the momentum for effective world evangelization.

Valdir R. Steuermagel. 1991. “Social Concern and Evangelization: The Journey of the Lausanne Movement.” *IBMR* 15:2 (April): 53-56.



Just What Is Lausanne?

- Little did we know then that "Lausanne" would become more than the name of a city.
- For the thousands of evangelical leaders who gathered there, Lausanne would become an event never to be forgotten.
 - It would become a Covenant, a 15-point document spelling out the theology and strategy of world evangelization which has been translated into scores of languages and today stands as a remarkable exposition of biblical evangelization.
 - Lausanne became a vision—the vision of completing the task of world evangelization through making disciples among all the unreached peoples of the world.
 - Lausanne became a committee—the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization—charged with the task of carrying on the vision of Lausanne and spreading information about what God is doing throughout the world.
 - The "Spirit of Lausanne" was understood as the spirit of cooperation in world evangelization, as evangelical believers from all regions and all ethnic groups prayed and planned and worked together.
- In a word, Lausanne has become a movement of the Spirit of God including all who are committed to the task of world evangelization in the spirit of Lausanne.

Leighton Ford, 1984. "The Lausanne Movement and the CCCOWE Movement." <http://www.cccowe.org>



Lausanne as a Movement

It is important to understand that Lausanne is a *movement*. It is not an organization of churches, it is not an organization which one "joins." It seeks to reach out and bring together Christians of like mind who have a strong desire to see the good news of Jesus Christ shared with their neighbors, their country and the whole world. It gains its strength by its singular purpose that every man and woman in the world should have an opportunity to say "yes" to Jesus Christ.

. . . The Lausanne movement allows Christians and churches to maintain their denominational distinctives, while bringing them together for the singular purpose of *world evangelization*.

The Lausanne Story: The Whole Church Taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World, p. 18.



The Lausanne “Spirit”

It is always difficult to express a mood in words. Yet “the spirit of Lausanne” was more tangible than are most spirits.

Its first element comes out in the phrase *we are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day*. For we are convinced that he is on the move, and we have been excited by the evidence laid before us in stories and statistics.

Secondly, we are *moved to penitence by our failures*. Several speakers voiced the hope that the Congress would be marked more by evangelical penitence than by evangelical triumphalism. “Triumphalism” is an attitude of self-confidence and self congratulation, which is never appropriate in God’s children. But the spirit of Lausanne was a spirit of humility and a spirit of penitence.

Thirdly, a sense of our past failures and of God’s present action leads inevitably to a purposeful look into the future: we are *challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization*, and the challenge has not fallen on deaf ears.