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The Whole Church Taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World: The Vision of Lausanne

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by

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Thank you so much, Dr. Lim, for that warm welcome. Welcome to all. It is great to be here. Some of you, possibly, I met this morning in the chapel service at the Assemblies of God headquarters, I don't know, but it is good to be here and to be where my dear brother and colleague, Ivan Satyavrata, was only quite recently. He is a very dear friend, he and his wife, Sheila, and their boys. As Dr. Lim said, I taught Ivan when he was doing his BD in the Union Biblical Seminary in Pune in the 1980s. Even then, he was clearly a student of great promise and ability, and he has gone on to prove that in his various leadership roles since that time. So, it is a lovely link to have with India, with Ivan, with the Langham Partnership, and also the Assemblies of God. I was brought up Irish Presbyterian, went to a Methodist school, worshipped with The Brethren when I was in Cambridge and, finally, I ended up being ordained in the Anglican Church of England. So, I am quite mixed up, but I have very many good friends in the Assemblies. In fact, I don't think I have ever met somebody in the Assemblies of God that I didn't like. That is more than most of you can say, I suppose [*laughter*].

John Stott is Anglican; the Langham Partnership is multi-denominational. It serves churches from a huge spectrum, and, indeed, in some of our preaching seminars that I will be talking about a little bit later, we have had pastors from Pentecostals and then all the usual in the middle—Baptist, Methodist, and Anglican—right to a number from Roman Catholic, as well. In Myanmar that happens, and the great thing was that even from, as it were, opposite ends of the ecumenical spectrum, they were there because they wanted to think about how to preach the Bible better. That must be a good thing.

I would also like to begin by bringing greetings from John Stott. I know that he will have been praying for us today, because he knows I am here, and he prays regularly for me. John is now eighty-nine years old; we are very much hoping that he will make it through to his ninetieth birthday, which would be wonderful. He is a very resilient gentleman, although he is now very elderly and very frail. He can't really stand and walk much. He gets around in a wheelchair most of the time and finds it difficult to read and write, which is also very sad. But his mind is still fairly clear and he is very well looked after and has plenty of visitors. He

would certainly want me to bring you greetings this afternoon.

Now, Dr. Klaus asked me to share with you about the Lausanne and Langham connection, partly on the basis of my article from the October 2009 issue of *Christianity Today*. As the first of twelve articles by a number of scholars around the world, mostly from the majority world, it addresses some of the key issues the church around the world is having to face in advance of the Lausanne Congress in Cape Town October this year. *Christianity Today* entered into a kind of relationship with Lausanne and said, “Let’s have a global conversation in which we put up these twelve articles and then on the *Christianity Today* Web site, get people to discuss and respond to the issues raised. I was invited to do the opening article and chose to write in relation to the whole gospel, the whole Church, to the whole world for the reason I will explain in just a moment. So, that is the background to this afternoon’s session.

Dr. Klaus and Dr. Lim also suggested it might be a good idea just to spend a couple of minutes filling people in a little bit about what Lausanne is and where it comes from because it really is a world-wide movement. It is not necessarily well-known all over the world, especially in countries like the United States where there is already a strong church and mission movement and where people can, in many ways, be self-contained—that is probably not quite the right word, but you know what I mean, in terms of their mission interests—and haven’t a need, in a sense, for something like Lausanne in the way that other parts of the world might have. Its roots really go back to the personal friendship between Dr. Billy Graham and Dr. John Stott, which flourished during the 1950s and 1960s, when they were both engaged in evangelism: Dr. Graham with his great

crusades through those years and John Stott in university evangelism, mainly in North America, Australia, and Britain. They came together to host a congress for world evangelization. It was really called by Billy Graham, but John Stott being a very personal friend, provided a great deal of the theological and pastoral leadership and used his friendship with many people from the majority world, although it wasn’t called that back in those days. It was probably still called the “third world” or the “developing world.”

So, a congress was held in 1974—The Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (LCWE). Now Lausanne is simply a city in Switzerland, but because at that congress they produced a statement or the Lausanne Covenant, the word “Lausanne” stuck, as it were, and became a kind of defining brand name for the movement which began at that point. It continued for quite a long time just being called the Lausanne Committee and World Evangelization even though it was anything but a committee—it was a world-wide sort of people in a movement, and it is now officially known as the Lausanne Movement. It produced that covenant, which I have a copy of here, but you can also read it on the Web site as well, if you want. I would recommend that you go to that Web site (lausanne.org), where you will find out a great deal about the movement and that covenant. The Lausanne Covenant was really a document which sought to unite evangelicals all over the world to a commitment to world evangelization in the broader sense of that term and rather than try to define every point of doctrine—all the things that evangelicals can disagree over (you know, our doctrines of baptism and the millennium, church order, and whatever else there might be) to try to provide something which would enable us to unite in the great

cause of the mission of God to the world—world evangelism. That is what it has remained.

Lausanne is not an organization, strictly speaking; it does have a leadership and directors and deputy directors and so on around the world, but it is not like the World Evangelical Alliance, an international body of delegated membership with all the indigenous evangelical alliances around the world having representatives in the WEA. In that sense, Lausanne is not a representative or a delegated movement. It is simply a movement and a spirit of those who want to be committed to the Lausanne Covenant and to the task of world evangelization. The present executive chairman of Lausanne is Doug Birdsall, who some of you may know. He teaches in Boston at Gordon-Conwell. The international director is Lindsey Brown, who is Welsh. He is from the UK and has been also very involved with the IFES student movement over the years.

The way in which Doug Birdsall describes Lausanne is more or less as follows—and I am really following his lead in this. He says, “It is fundamentally a platform or a forum. It is a meeting place for people who have a commitment to world evangelization whether they are churches or agencies or individuals, special interest groups, people with a desire for one particular people, or a category of people. Whatever it may be, if you are committed to the great task of world mission then Lausanne provides a forum—a meeting place, a place to talk. But second, people don’t just talk. They also get engaged in research, study, the production of publications to do with all the different varieties of world evangelism.”

I brought up the Lausanne Web site just so I could read to you very quickly some of the special interest groups and what are called

Lausanne Occasional Papers. All of these documents are available on their Web site. So, for example, they have had consultations over the years on Muslim Evangelism, Refugees, Chinese People, Jewish People, large cities, nominal Christians among Roman Catholics, new religious movements, Marxist, (that’s a bit old now—don’t know if there are many of them around anymore), Hindus, Buddhists, and then all the regions of the world, the Orthodox, and other special interest groups which have arisen in more recent years such as Children at Risk, The Persecuted Church, Ministry among People with Disabilities, The Transformation of Cities, Marketplace Ministry, Business As Mission, Prayer and Evangelism, Redeeming the Arts and Culture, Media and Technology, Reaching the Youth, Empowering Women, Oral Learners (the whole culture of orality), Diaspora Peoples, International Students, Jewish Evangelism, Senior Advisors, Ecology and Mission, and so on. There is a whole range of things available on the Web site which you can check out—lots of publications (leaflets, booklets, books) around these various subjects.

So, it is a platform, it is research and publication, and also motivates through partnerships. One of the things that happened as a result of the Lausanne Congress in 1974 and then the second Lausanne Congress in Manila in 1989 was that literally hundreds of partnerships between people and organizations and church in different parts of the world decided they could do better things together than working apart. So, that is what Lausanne is. It is very diverse. There are representatives all over the world. One has to say that the last heyday of Lausanne was really in the 1980s—between 1974 and 1989. Lausanne, through the leadership of John Stott and others, was producing a great

deal of work, a lot of consultations going on. Through the 1990s, Lausanne became a little bit more dormant, partly overshadowed by the decade of evangelism in the 1990s by the 80-2000 Movement and groups like that who were mobilizing for mission toward the new millennium. But, in the early 2000s, Doug Birdsall took over as the executive chairman and hosted a consultation in 2004 in Katia, Thailand. Since then, over the last five or six years, Lausanne has been on the revitalization track with the appointment of regional directors and the revitalization of the Theology Working Group, which I was asked to chair and initially very reluctantly did take on. I wouldn't say that John Stott twisted my arm—that is not his way—but he certainly looked me in the eyes and said, “Yes, I think you should do that!” It was rather difficult to say no. So, there is the Theology Working Group, but there is a strategy working group, prayer mobilization working group, communication working group, business, government, education and medicine working group, and so on. Different special interest groups working together in that way.

I do recommend that you visit their Web site: Lausanne.org. I also recommend that you go to the *Christianity Today* Web site and look for the global conversation and see some of these issues that are being raised through these articles. There was mine and another one by an African scholar on the prosperity gospel, a more recent one on what partnership and mission means, and so on.

Well, that by way of introduction and background to Lausanne is the Lausanne Movement for World Evangelization. We might immediately ask, “Well, we are all in favor of that, just like we are all in favor of motherhood and apple pie, as the American expression goes; all evangelicals are in favor of evangelization, but what exactly is it?

And, how would you define it? One of the ways it was defined in the Lausanne Covenant was the expression that “evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.” This is a wonderfully ringing phrase, although not original to the Lausanne Covenant. It is actually a three-fold phrase that went right back to the 1950s and was certainly used by the World Council of Churches in 1961 when Willem Adolph Visser't Hooft a conservative Dutch theologian and the leader of the World Council of Churches, wrote these words: “The command to witness to Christ is given to every member of his church. It is a commission given to the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.” This is 1961. When the church recognizes that it exists for the world, there arises a passionate concern that the blessings of the gospel of Christ should be brought to every land and to every man and woman. These blessings include the alleviation of poverty, disease, and hunger, and the creating of a true fellowship that relieves the loneliness of modern mass society.

Christian evangelism, therefore, is a joyful privilege being sustained by the knowledge that all the world is the object of God's love and is, even now, under the lordship of Christ, which is stirring stuff echoed by the Lausanne Covenant. I think it would be fair, or it would not be unfair to say that the word “whole” in each of those expressions was being thought of in primarily quantitative terms. So, the whole church means every member—everybody in the church. The whole gospel means all the blessings of the gospel—whatever the gospel brings, and the whole world means every man and woman in the world to the end of the earth. The Theology Working Group has asked what each of those words really mean in biblical terms. What are we talking about when we

talk about the whole gospel, the whole church, or the whole world in more than quantitative or numerical terms?

Whole Gospel

There is a fair bit in this article about wholeness in terms of holistic understanding of the gospel as the combination of evangelism and social involvement. I want to say a bit about that, but I want to add to it something that is not in the *Christianity Today* article in your hands, but I will add it this afternoon. That is, the relationship between evangelism and teaching within the whole concept of discipling. Evangelization is not merely the proclamation of the gospel but the making of disciples—the Great Commission line three. Not only baptizing them but teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you—but first of all, evangelism and social involvement. Now this is a debate which has gone on in Lausanne circles ever since the Lausanne Covenant where the issue was raised. It was raised, partly, because of the influence of majority world younger evangelical leaders in Lausanne in 1974 because the concept of evangelism was being used primarily within the northern American and British concept. It was largely direct proclamation—the Word preached. Whether preached in crusades or in university missions or in personal evangelism of the local churches, or whatever it might be and a number of younger evangelical leaders at that time, people like Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar from Latin America stood up in the conference and said, “We believe this gospel, but this gospel has not only to be preached, but it must also be demonstrated and lived. It has to be made relevant to the contexts in which we live, which are contexts of poverty, oppression, and injustice some of which are part and parcel of the inequalities of the world in which

some of you evangelicals in the Northern part of the world actually live. You are actually happy to preach the gospel in our part of the world but you are not so happy to live it or to enable us to live it in terms of engagement with the world with its poverty, suffer, hunger, and the political injustice that goes along with that.”

That led to very interesting debates within the Lausanne movement of which the Lausanne Covenant itself gave expression. I felt that I should read to you one of the paragraphs in the Lausanne Covenant. There is a whole section on the nature of evangelism and then two sections later, the Church and Evangelism and Corporation and Evangelism, but in the middle of that, carefully nested is paragraph five, called Christian Social Responsibility. This is what it says:

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all people. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and

man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression, and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead. (Acts 17:26, 31; Gen. 18:25; Isa. 1:17; Psa. 45:7; Gen. 1:26-27; Jas. 3:9; Lev. 19:18; Luke 6:27, 35; Jas. 2:14-26; John 3:3, 5; Matt. 5:20; 6:33; 2 Cor. 3:18; Jas. 2:20).¹

Now that was that, but it led then, in the 1980s, to a series of consultations of which probably the best known was the Consultation of the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility (CRESR), as it became known in Grand Rapids in 1980—which produced a very lengthy document on this relationship. It was chaired by John Stott, and it brought together practitioners of evangelism and social ministry to bang their heads together until they reached some sort of theological agreement. It is a very good document to read. It is in the paper on the Web site.

More recently, people have moved from talking about holistic mission, as a means of describing the wholeness of the gospel, to talking about integral mission. I thought I was reading a much more recent document published by the Micah Network. The Micah Network was based on Micah 6:8 where God says, “The Lord has shown you what is good and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy and

walk humbly with your God.” The Micah Network binds together well over 100 organizations committed to integral mission. In their declaration on integral mission in 2001 they say: “Integral mission or holistic transformation is the proclamation and the demonstration of the Gospel.”² It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other; rather in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences, as we call people to love and to repentance in all areas of life, and our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world, we betray the Word of God, which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the Word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change, and structural change belong together as in the life of Jesus—being, doing, and saying are all at the heart of our integral tasks.

So those are some ways in which this has been expressed recently in some of the documents, but it is still an issue, it seems, in the Church. Some of us are getting rather tired of trying to address it. To me, sometimes, when people still want to affirm that one or the other is *the* thing or the *only* thing, or that which defines mission entirely, I sometimes ask myself what Bible they are reading because it seems to me that the whole gospel has to be drawn from the whole Bible.

If we include in our concept of biblical revelation what God was doing and saying and requiring of Old Testament Israel, then we find these economic, social, and political dimensions of the biblical faith of God’s people very clear. Century after century, the God of the Bible was passionately

concerned about social issues, political tyranny, economic exploitation, judicial corruption, and the suffering of the poor and the oppressed. So passionate was He that He gives whole racks of legislation to try to prevent such evils or to mitigate them when they happen. He sends prophets to condemn such evils and to point people in a better way. He inspires songs and psalms which cry out in protest about such evils and demand God's righteousness and justice to be done.

So, if that's part of God's revelation, we have to say, "Well, where has all that gone?" If we, then, want to move on to say that the only real missions we are called to is the proclamation of a personal individual gospel of salvation, it seems to suggest that somewhere between Malachi and Matthew it all changed—that all those realities, suffering, poverty, hunger, justice, exploitation, all those social evils are no longer of any interest to God—that they no longer spark His anger, that there is no longer interest in mission, but all God is interested in now is with getting souls to heaven. It seems that that is virtual Marcionism. It makes the God of the Bible virtually unrecognizable, if we exclude all that reality of Old Testament revelation from His character and His concerns. So, I find that kind of view of God unbiblical and, frankly, unbelievable. It is what I spend a fair bit of my life speaking about and teaching on Old Testament ethics. My book, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*, has been available for some years.

Now, at this point I do need to say, "Please don't misunderstand me." The trouble with so many evangelical Christians is that we are polar thinkers, and we go to one extreme or the other. If you are heard to be affirming something, you are assumed to be denying something else. So, to affirm the reality for

God's concern for the whole of human life is sometimes heard to be said that you don't believe in the importance of sin and salvation and the need for evangelism. That certainly is not what I am trying to say. The Bible, of course, tells us all about the spiritual reality—of sin, rebellion, lostness, and the Old Testament does it just as good as the NT. The prophet Isaiah talks about the sin of God's people and their need to come back to God, not just to come back to the land of Israel. So, of course, the biblical mandate for the evangelistic proclamation of God's redemptive accomplishment through the Lord Jesus Christ has to be right there at the very center of all we seek to do in our mission for the world. But even that word, "gospel," is an Old Testament word. It comes in the context of Isaiah 52 and Psalm 96 which is also a context which speaks about the good news of all that God is going to do for His people. So, the breath of the gospel, the need for salvation, as well as the liberation from all that oppresses, is fully biblical. To quote from my article,

The Bible as a whole shows us God's heart for His world. It shows us that God's heart goes out to the last, the least, and the lost—whether they are in those categories socially, culturally, economically, or spiritually. We can't really separate those because we are whole human beings. God's heart is for those who are dying in their sins, but also for those who are dying in this world of premature and preventable diseases or because of violence or disease and war. God cares about them, too. God is concerned in His heart for those who are without Christ, without God, without hope in the world. Yes! Also, for those who are without land, without homes, without family, without limbs, without all the things that we

count as blessings—even without water in some situations.³

So, the wholeness of God’s concern for His world is something I passionately believe and also passionately relate to the cross. One of the places in my book—I am not able to do it in this article, although I did it in an earlier *Christianity Today* article in 2007—is to say that the cross needs to be as central to our social involvement as it is to our evangelistic involvement. Because it was at the cross of Christ that God accomplished the totality of the saving work of God for His whole creation—not even just for human souls or for human society but for the totality of the created order. “All things in heaven and on earth,” says Paul in Colossians 1, “have been reconciled to God through the blood of Christ shed on the cross.” The Apostle Paul, although we see him as the great evangelistic church planting missionary, which he was, with this tremendous sense of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth and as far away as he could, wanted to go to Spain to preach the gospel there.

Paul was equally concerned about the poor. We forget that sometimes. He tells us in Galatians that when he was welcomed as an apostle into the fellowship of the Jerusalem apostles that they pleaded with him not to forget the poor. He says, “Which very thing I was very eager to do.” It seems that Paul spent several years of his missionary life actually engaged in the collection of money for the poor in Jerusalem. What he says about that collection for the poor and the necessity of giving generously to it occupies more text space in Paul’s letters than text about justification by faith. I am not kidding. I do not mean that it was any less important, I am just pointing out that that is often neglected. It takes part of a chapter in Romans 15, part of a chapter in 1

Corinthians, and two whole chapters in 2 Corinthians. In Romans 15, Paul actually says that at that point in his life, even though he knew that God wanted him to take the gospel beyond Rome to the very far ends—to the places where it had never been heard before—he was giving priority to take the collection that he got back to Jerusalem. So, in a sense, Paul put his evangelistic ministry to one side in order to take this collection to Jerusalem, and I don’t think that meant that he stopped being a missionary or that he was no longer involved in gospel work. He sees the wholeness of what God is doing.

So, this issue is one that I wish we could get beyond. I wish we could put it behind us and say, “To ask which is primary—evangelism or social action—in our Christian missionary engagement, is a bit like asking which is primary, breathing or drinking?” I mean, you have got to do both, and if you don’t do one or the other, you won’t stay alive very long. They are different, they are distinct; they are different bodily functions, but they are integrated within the single human living body. Here is what John Stott said on that: Polarization and specialization—there is a difference. I suggest the need for a three-fold recognition about evangelism and social action. A recognition that the two are partners in Christian mission—distinct but yet equal, neither is an excuse for the other or a cloak for the other, or a means to the other. Each exists in its own right as an expression of Christian love and both should be included in some degree in every local church’s program—a recognition that they are both every individual Christian’s responsibility. Every Christian is a witness and must take every opportunity that is given, and every Christian is also a servant and must respond to challenges to service without regarding them as merely occasions for evangelism. The existential situation will often assign

priorities to one or the other of the two. For example, the Good Samaritan's ministry to the brigand's victim was not to stuff tracts into his pockets, but to pour oil into his wounds, for that is what the situation demanded at that moment. Thirdly, a recognition that although both are part of the church's and the Christian's duties yet God calls different people to different ministries and endows them with appropriate gifts—this is a necessary deduction from the nature of the Church as Christ's body. Although we should resist polarization between evangelism and social action, we should not resist specialization. Everybody cannot do everything! Some are called to be evangelists, others to be social workers, others to be political activists. So, within each local church, which is the body of Christ in the locality, must be commitment to both evangelism and social action. There is a proper place for individual specialists and specialists groups.

Now, I need to move on because we have been talking about the whole gospel in relation to social issues and evangelism. I believe that is part of the DNA of Lausanne. I very much want to be part of the work of the Theology Working Group that will be reflected in the balance of the overall program of the Third Lausanne Congress which will take place in Cape Town in October 2010.

But there is another balance which I feel is important, too. I am glad to see it in the AG vision statement, that it is not only evangelization of the world but also the discipling of believers. That is the relationship between evangelism and teaching. In the Langham Partnership that I represent and will speak to a little further in a moment, I ask the question in some of our recent documents and publicity and leaflets, "Is there mission beyond evangelism?" It is

sort of one of those questions which is slightly rhetorical but leads to interesting thinking.

Is there mission beyond evangelism? Certainly Jesus thought so. He said, "Go into the world. I am the Lord. All authority is given to me, now you go and make disciples of all nations." How are you going to make disciples? Baptizing them in the name of the Father ... baptism presupposes evangelism. You can only baptize people who have heard the gospel and responded to it. And, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. That is how you make disciples. You bring them to faith and you teach them. Jesus spent three years teaching these disciples. It takes disciples to make disciples, but it is also something Paul clearly thought to be important. In the New Testament you read of many people who were engaged in what you might call mission beyond evangelism—the follow-up, training, discipling, teaching. My favorite one is Apollos. He is a wonderful cross-cultural missionary because he was converted in Africa; he seems to have become a believer in Alexandria, Egypt. He ended up in Asia Minor where he was better instructed in the faith by Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus where he learned the way of Jesus a little bit more clearly. Then he was sent as a missionary to Europe. So, he comes from Africa, goes to Asia, and ends up in Europe, and his mission and ministry was teaching. Acts 18, the end of the chapter, makes this clear.

So, there is the teaching job and then you have the job of someone like Timothy and Titus who Paul commissions for the task of doing the work of an evangelist. They took what Paul had taught them and taught it to other people who would be able to teach others—the teaching, the training, the

multiplication effect of the sound doctrine that Paul had given.

Third, there are writers. Do you know who wrote the letter to the Romans? Actually, it was Tertius. In Romans 16:22 it says, “I, Tertius, the writer of this letter.” Tertius was presumed to be a trained scribe—writing was a specialist’s skill. I’m not saying that Paul couldn’t write; of course he could. But with your arms chained up it would be very difficult. So, he needed Tertius to write his letters. Peter speaks about Silas in 1 Peter, and says, “By the help of Silas, a faithful brother, I have written this letter to you.” So there were writers who were able to communicate the apostolic message. So, you get the gospels eventually being produced.

Teaching, training, and writing are all mission beyond evangelism, and Paul would not tolerate the idea that any one of these was more important than the other. That is what 1 Corinthians is about, isn’t it? I am a follower of Paul, or I am a follower of Apollos, or whatever it might be. So Paul says, “What sort of talk is that?” Who is Paul? Who is Apollos? I planted the church, Apollos watered it, but it was God who made it grow. So, the task of teaching and training in our phrase, theological education, all of that work is a legitimate part of the mission of Christ’s church.

That is why I like to speak about the Langham Partnership as a mission organization even though we are not an evangelistic and church planting organization; nevertheless, we are engaged in biblical mission beyond evangelism. The Langham Partnership in the United States is called John Stott Ministries. It was founded by John Stott in the 1969-1970; he started trusts and funds to support the giving of Christian literature to pastors in the majority world and to enable scholars to be trained, to

do their Ph.D. and then go back and teach. This was all in the 1970s when John Stott was really in his prime—in his mid-fifties and very much in the leadership of the world Evangelical movement. So, he started this ministry. They were called Langham, simply because that was the street on which his church is—All Soul’s Church, Langham Place, London. It is the church where I belong—a lovely church. So he named his trust after the street on which his church was located. He wouldn’t call it by his own name. In fact, when the American branch of the Langham Partnership decided to call themselves John Stott Ministries, John Stott was not fast pleased at all. In fact, he refuses to use the name. He says, “The ministry that bears some resemblance to my name” because he doesn’t want it advertized. In the States, that is who it is—johnstott.org.

It is a very simple logic. John said, “We know that God wants His Church to grow up”—i.e., to grow bigger. So, we should be committed to depth of maturity in the Church. Second, we know that God’s people grow through God’s Word. If they have God’s Word, they will mature; if they don’t, they won’t! Third, God’s Word comes to people through biblical preaching and teaching—not exclusively, because people can read the Bible for themselves. Well, yes, they can if they are literate, if they can afford a Bible, and if the Bible has been translated into their own language, which for many millions of Christians around the world one of those three things isn’t true. So, the only way to be fed with God’s Word is if they meet for worship and somebody preaches.

So, John Stott said the logical question to ask, then, is, “What can we do to raise the standard of biblical preaching and teaching?” So the various ministries which he founded and which are now combined

within the Langham Partnership International are first of all, *Langham Preaching*, which is trying to establish movements for biblical preaching. We are now operating in about fifty different countries of the world and generating national movements indigenously owned and run with international facilitation and help. *Langham Literature*, which not only provides books for libraries, theological institutions, scholars, pastors, and students, but is increasingly involved in the facilitation of evangelical Christian writers—in their own language—and editors who are important people, and publishers, because if you get a book written, it has to be written, it has to be edited, it has to be published. So, you have to have every link in that chain viable for that to happen. Then third, *Langham Scholars*, which is providing Ph.D. support for people to do their doctorate in Biblical Theological Studies and then return to their home country and teach in seminary. So, those are the three ministries: from grass roots' preaching, training, to high-level doctoral leaders in strategic positions in seminaries. That is all part of the wholeness of the gospel mission work which John Stott was committed to. It strikes me as wonderfully alliterative, but you have Lausanne and Langham, but also very biblical in the sense of John Stott and Billy Graham combining in this way—passion for evangelism and passion for church nurturing and teaching. With Lausanne's major focus on evangelization and Langham with its major focus on discipling, teaching, and training, they both contribute to a part of the wholeness of the gospel.

Whole Church

That was the main part of what I wanted to say. You can read it in the article. There are two additional dimensions which are there,

and I will quickly skim through them. As well as the wholeness of the gospel, there is the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world. In my article, what I say is that the minimal thing this does for us is that it reminds us that the church ought to be missional. In other words, the very reason for the existence of God's people on earth is to be the agents of God's mission—to bring the knowledge of God and the gospel of God to the whole of God's creation—to the ends of the earth. That is what we are here for.

Dr. Lim was kind enough to say that after the *Mission of God* book, I have written another one called *The Mission of God's People* to be published by Zondervan in August. The question that it is asking is, "Who are we and what are we here for?" This is a slightly more popular level book than the *Mission of God*, but it is looking at the question from the angle of God's people, the church, but not the church post-Pentecost—because I hope you don't think that the Church was born on the Day of Pentecost, but that the people of God stretch right back to Abraham. It focuses on what we learn from the whole of the Bible as the reasons why God has put us here on earth. So, the Church, to quote from another doctrinal statement, this time on Tear Fund (a British evangelical relief and development agency), "The Church stands in continuity with God's people in the Old Testament, called through Abraham to be a light to the nations, shaped and taught through the Law and the Prophets to be a community of holiness, compassion, and justice and redeemed through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Church exists to worship and glorify God for all eternity." We will do that for all eternity even when this life is over, but we are also commissioned by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to participate in the transforming mission of God within history.

We are historical people committed to mission and history even though we know the day will come when in the new creation that dimension of our mission will be finished. There will be no more evangelization in the new creation. So, I am not sure what all you evangelists will be doing, rather thin pickings in the new creation I should think. But, we will serve a purpose; we will have a mission to glorify God, to worship Him, to enjoy Him as we were created to do.

So, the church is missional, and that phrase, “missional church” which has come rather into vogue lately, filled some of my friends with a little bit of amusement. One of my Danish friends on the Theology Working Group, a man called Birger Nygaard, says that when he hears this expression “missional church” it sounds like the expression, “female woman.” What else is a woman? You know? It is sort of tautology. He says, “If it ain’t missional, it ain’t church.” By definition, the Church exists for the sake of God’s purpose in the world. So, maybe that phrase, at the very least, does that for us. But it does more, I think, the whole Church reminds us that we are to be a whole people in the wholeness of being reconciled sinners—that is a community of those who are reconciled to God and who are reconciled to one another in whom the unity of God’s people is already being demonstrated—unity of race and culture, neither Jew nor Greeks, slave or free, male or female and so on, as Paul puts it.

The Church is meant to be the demonstration of the gospel not just a bearer of the gospel. One of the problems that a few of us have with that Lausanne phrase that world evangelization is the whole Church taking the whole gospel to the whole world is that it makes the Church sound like just a message, just a vessel, a bucket, in

which the gospel gets carried, and it doesn’t really matter whether it is a polished up bucket or just a clay jar because the Church is the postman delivering the message whereas in the Bible *the people of God, the Church, is itself the proof of the gospel*. Here is a community which demonstrates the reality of the gospel in the way it lives and the way it relates to one another. The article says a little bit about that.

When the Church exists as we do, with so much disunity, corruption, syncretism, and ideological captivity to the culture that surrounds us, we are, in fact, an embarrassment to the gospel and a scandal. The Lausanne Covenant uses the language of being a stumbling block—that where the Church does not shine with the ethical light of being God’s people we are a stumbling block.

So, there is the whole Church in that sense and also the whole Church in a global sense because it is the whole world Church. Here in the west and the north part of the church, I hope we are all aware that we are now very much on the margins of world Christianity. We are very much peripheral to world Christianity now. At the maximum, 25 percent of all world Christians live in North America and Europe. At least 75-80 percent of the world church now is in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. So, we need to hear what God is saying and doing in those places. We need the wholeness of the church in mission.

Now in the Lausanne Congress in Cape Town, some of these issues will be coming up again. This phrase, “Whole church, whole gospel, whole world,” is being used as a kind of template for the congress for some of its themes and on different days some of these things are being expressed. The congress has six themes. The key words

on each day are truth, reconciliation, world faiths, evangelistic priorities, integrity, and partnership. So, on Day 1, the issue is Making the Case for the Truth of Christ in a Pluralistic World. Day 2 is reconciliation—Building the Peace of Christ in a Divided and Broken World. Day 3 is World Faiths—Bearing Witness to the Love of Christ among People of Other Faiths. Day 4 is Evangelistic Priority—Discerning the Will of Christ for Twenty-first Century Evangelization. Day 5, this is the plenary session I have been asked to be responsible for. It is a huge, challenging, daunting responsibility that I am really scared of. I would ask your prayers for. The issue is integrity, and the sub-theme is calling the Church of Christ back to humility, integrity, and simplicity as against the idolatries of pride and manipulation, and greed. Day 6 is Partnership—Partnering in the Body of Christ toward a New Global Equilibrium. Those are some of the major themes the conference is looking at in relation to the whole gospel and the whole church.

Whole World

So, finally, there is the whole world. Not just in the geographical sense, though that is important. One of the great passions of the Strategy Working Group and people like Paul Eshemann, whom I greatly respect, is that they are consumed by this staggering scandalous fact that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, although the Church has grown exponentially in terms of sheer numbers, the proportion of the world's population still living without the knowledge of the gospel is roughly the same as it was 100 years ago, i.e., about two-thirds. In other words, the Christian proportional world population is still only about a third. So, there are still millions of people who have never heard the name of Jesus—never received any portion of God's

Word in their own language. These are realities that we have to be concerned about. I am grateful that there are people in the Lausanne Movement who are thinking and working and eating and drinking and sleeping these issues of where is Christ not yet known and worshipped? Why not, and how can we seek to make Him known and worshipped there? Certainly that would be one of the themes of Lausanne. The point is, of course, that we need to recognize that while the gospel is to go to the ends of the earth, the ends of the earth nowadays may as well be your next door neighbor. In other words, we need to recognize that “the ends of the earth” has never been merely geographical. It is not purely faraway places that we think of as the mission field. The reality is that *mission is from everywhere to everywhere*; therefore we need to recognize that there are people in our midst who have not yet heard the truth of the gospel in a way they can respond to. So, the wholeness of the world in that sense, but also the whole world in the sense of the world systems, ideologies, religions, globalization—the world we are living in today, as we all keep saying, is different than the world we grew up in.

What are the global realities that the gospel needs to face and address? What about the earth itself? This is a concern that has increased in terms of ecological interest, environmental concern, which was not there in the same way in 1974, but is certainly there now. We need to recognize that the Bible does not begin with Genesis 3 and end at Revelation 20, as most evangelicals seem to think. In other words, they know we've got a sin problem, because we have read the story of the Fall; we know there is a final judgment in Revelation 20, and we know that Jesus comes in the middle to save us from the sin problem and to get us through the day of judgment; but we forget that

Genesis 1 and 2 is God's creation of a good world for His own glory, and that Revelation 21 and 22 is the whole creation being redeemed and restored to be the dwelling place of God, where He will live with His redeemed humanity forever. So, we lack, often in our evangelical understanding of mission, the beginning and the end of the Bible because we haven't got a concern for God's creation and God's new creation. That, I think, too, is part of the wholeness of the gospel and the wholeness of the world.

Then, there is business and the marketplace, violence, war, terrorism, suffering, need, refugees, migration, technology, the public square, human trafficking, and all sorts of issues that are there in our world. I am grateful to God that, although as John Stott says, "Everybody cannot do everything; there is somebody who is doing something about all of these issues." One of the great things about Lausanne is that it is a kind of public forum—it brings together people with all these passions and all these special interests and gives them a place where they can speak and to communicate and draw support and understanding for what God is doing.

So, I finish there just by asking you to please pray for us. I am not in the top leadership of

the Lausanne Movement. I am just the chair of the Theology Working Group, although because of that I get consulted about some of the program issues. But, please pray for Cape Town. It is coming in 2010. It is marvelous that Lausanne is going to Africa where world Christianity is exploding. Pray especially for the leaders of the Lausanne Movement, if I may mention them: Doug Birdsall; Lindsey Brown; and the chairman of the Program Committee—Ramez Atallah—an Egyptian who is the head of the Egyptian Bible Society. So pray for Cape Town and Lausanne and also, would you please pray for Langham and the work that I do at John Stott Ministries and my involvement not just in Lausanne but in many other ways around the world in mission beyond evangelism? Do pray for our Brother John Stott. I would love to go back and tell him that our friends at the Assemblies of God here in the States are remembering him in prayer. He is a dear, dear brother and very frail now. He doesn't give the impression of being very much longer for this world, but the Lord will take him in His own good time. But, still, pray for us. He is still very much a figure head, a focal point of a kind of holistic, integral, balanced biblical Christianity, which certainly is what warms my heart and continues to do so today.

¹"Lausanne Covenant," The Lausanne Movement, <http://www.lausanne.org/covenant> (accessed June 25, 2010).

²"Integral Mission," Micah Network, <http://www.micahnetwork.org/en/integral-mission> (accessed June 21, 2010).

³Christopher J. H. Wright, "Whole Gospel, Whole Church, Whole World," Christianity Today, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/globalconversation/october2009/index.html> (accessed June 25, 2010).