

The Cape Town Commitment - A Declaration of Belief and a Call to Action

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The Cape Town Commitment is a two-part document. Part 1 is "What We Believe." It was put together by a group of theologians from around the world. Part 2 is expected to be finished by December. It will be a call to action arising from the listening process at the Congress.

The Cape Town Commitment

PREAMBLE

As members of the worldwide church of Jesus Christ, we joyfully affirm our commitment to the living God and his saving purposes through the Lord Jesus Christ. For his sake we renew our commitment to the vision and goals of the Lausanne Movement.

This means two things:

First, we remain committed to the task of bearing worldwide witness to Jesus Christ and all his teaching. The First Lausanne Congress (1974) was convened for the task of world evangelization. Among its major gifts to the world church were: The Lausanne Covenant; a new awareness of the number of unreached people groups; and a fresh discovery of the holistic nature of the biblical gospel and of Christian mission. The Second Lausanne Congress, in Manila (1989), gave birth to more than 300 strategic partnerships in world evangelization, including many that involved co-operation between nations in all parts of the globe.

And second, we remain committed to the primary documents of the Movement ? The Lausanne Covenant (1974), and The Manila Manifesto (1989). These documents clearly express core truths of the biblical gospel and apply them to our practical mission in ways that are still relevant and challenging. We confess that we have not been faithful to commitments made in those documents. But we commend them and stand by them, as we seek to discern how we must express and apply the eternal truth of the gospel in the ever-changing world of our own generation.

THE REALITIES OF CHANGE

Almost everything about the way we live, think and relate to one another is changing at an accelerating pace. For good or ill, we feel the impact of globalization, the digital revolution, and the changing balance of economic and political power in the world. Some of the things we face cause us grief and anxiety -- global poverty, war, disease, the ecological crisis and climate change. But one great change in our world is a cause for rejoicing ? and that is the growth of the global church of Christ.

The fact that the Third Lausanne Congress has taken place in Africa is proof of this. At least three quarters of all the world's Christians now live in the continents of the global south and east. The composition of our Cape Town Congress reflects this enormous shift in world Christianity in the century since the Edinburgh missionary conference in 1910. We rejoice in the amazing growth of the church in Africa, and we rejoice that our African sisters and brothers in Christ hosted this Congress. We must respond in Christian mission to the realities of our own generation. We must also learn from that mixture of wisdom and error that we inherit from previous generations. We honour the past and we engage with the future.

UNCHANGED REALITIES

But in our changing world, some things remain unchanged. These great truths provide the biblical rational for our missional engagement. Human beings are lost. The underlying human predicament remains as the Bible describes it: we stand under the just judgment of God in our sin and rebellion, and without Christ we are without hope. The gospel is good news. The gospel is not a concept that needs fresh ideas, but a story that needs fresh telling. It is the unchanged story of what God has done to save the world, supremely in the historical events of the life, death, resurrection, and reign of Jesus Christ. In Christ there is hope. The church's mission goes on. The mission of God continues to the ends of the earth and to the end of the world. The day will come when the kingdoms of the world will become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ and God will dwell with his redeemed humanity in the new creation. Until that day, the church's participation in God's mission continues, in joyful urgency, and with fresh and exciting opportunities in every generation including our own.

THE PASSION OF OUR LOVE

This Statement is framed in the language of love. Love is the language of covenant. The biblical covenants, old and new, are the expression of God's redeeming love and grace reaching out to lost humanity and spoiled creation. They call for our love in return. Our love shows itself in trust, obedience and passionate commitment to our covenant Lord. The Lausanne Covenant defined evangelization as "the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world". That is still our passion. So we renew that covenant by affirming again: Our love for the whole gospel, as God's glorious good news in Christ, for every dimension of his creation, for it has all been ravaged by sin and evil. Our love for the whole church, as God's people, redeemed by Christ from every nation on earth and every age of history, to share God's mission in this age and glorify him forever in the age to come. Our love for the whole world, so far from God but so close to his heart, the world that God so loved that he gave his only Son for its salvation.

In the grip of that three-fold love, we commit ourselves afresh to be the whole church, to believe, obey, and share the whole gospel, and to go to the whole world to make disciples of all nations.

PART ONE

FOR THE LORD WE LOVE: OUR COMMITMENT OF FAITH

1. WE LOVE BECAUSE GOD FIRST LOVED US
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10. WE LOVE THE MISSION OF GOD
1. WE LOVE BECAUSE GOD FIRST LOVED US

The mission of God flows from the love of God. The mission of God's people flows from our love for God and for all that God loves. World evangelization is the outflow of God's love to us and through us. We affirm the primacy of God's grace and we then respond to that grace by faith, demonstrated through the obedience of love. We love because God first loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.¹

a) Love for God and love for neighbour constitute the first and greatest commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and the first named fruit of the Spirit. Love is the evidence that we are born again; the assurance that we know God; and the proof that God dwells within us. Love is the new commandment of Christ, who told his disciples that only as they obeyed this commandment would their mission be visible and believable. Christian love for one another is how the unseen God, who made himself visible through his incarnate Son, goes on making himself visible to the world. Love was among the first things that Paul observed and commended among new believers, along with faith and hope. But love is the greatest, for love never ends.²

b) Such love is not weak or sentimental. The love of God himself is covenantally faithful, committed, self-giving, sacrificial, strong, and holy. Since God is love, love permeates his whole being and all his actions, his justice as well as his compassion. God's love extends over all his creation. We are commanded to love in ways that reflect the love of God in all those same dimensions. That is what it means to walk in the way of the Lord.³

c) So in framing our convictions and our commitments in terms of love, we are taking up the most basic and demanding biblical challenge of all: to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, to love our neighbour (including the foreigner and the enemy) as ourselves, to love one another as God in Christ has loved us, and to love the world with the love of the One who gave his only Son that the world through him might be saved.⁴

d) Such love is the gift of God poured out in our hearts, but it is also the command of God requiring the obedience of our wills. Such love means to be like Christ himself: robust in endurance, yet gentle in humility; tough in resisting evil, yet tender in compassion for the suffering; courageous in suffering and faithful even unto death. Such love was modelled by Christ on earth and is monitored by the risen Christ in glory.⁵

We affirm that such comprehensive biblical love should be the defining identity and hallmark of disciples of Jesus. In response to the prayer and command of Jesus, we long that it should be so for us. Sadly we confess that too often it is not. So we re-commit ourselves afresh to make every effort to live, think, speak and behave in ways that express what it means to walk in love - love for God, love for one another and love for the world.

2. WE LOVE THE LIVING GOD

Our God whom we love reveals himself in the Bible as the one, eternal, living God who governs all things according to his sovereign will and for his saving purpose. In the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, God alone is the Creator, Ruler, Judge and Saviour of the world.⁶ So we love God with joyful thanks for our place in creation, with submission to his sovereign providence, with confidence in his justice, and with eternal praise for the salvation he accomplished for us.

a) We love God above all rivals. We are commanded to love and worship the living God alone. But like Old Testament Israel we allow our love for God to be adulterated by going after the gods of this world, the gods of the people around us.⁷ We fall into syncretism, enticed by the idols of greed, power and success, serving mammon rather than God. We accept dominant political and economic ideologies without biblical critique. We are tempted to compromise our belief in the uniqueness of Christ under the pressure of religious pluralism. Like Israel we need to hear the call of the prophets and of Jesus himself to repent, to forsake all such rivals, and to return to obedient love and worship

of God alone.

b) We love God with passion for his glory. The greatest motivation for our mission is the same as that which drives the mission of God himself ? that the one true living God should be known and glorified throughout his whole creation. That is God's ultimate goal and should be our greatest joy.

"If God desires every knee to bow to Jesus and every tongue to confess him, so should we. We should be 'jealous' (as Scripture sometimes puts it) for the honour of his name -- troubled when it remains unknown, hurt when it is ignored, indignant when it is blasphemed, and all the time anxious and determined that it shall be given the honour and glory which are due to it. The highest of all missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission (important as that is), nor love for sinners who are alienated and perishing (strong as that incentive is, especially when we contemplate the wrath of God) but rather zeal -- burning and passionate zeal ? for the glory of Jesus Christ. ? Before this supreme goal of the Christian mission, all unworthy motives wither and die."⁸ John Stott

It should be our greatest grief that in our world the living God is not glorified. The living God is denied in aggressive atheism. The one true God is replaced or distorted in the practice of world religions. Our Lord Jesus Christ is abused and misrepresented in some popular cultures. And the face of the God of biblical revelation is obscured by Christian nominalism, syncretism and hypocrisy.

Loving God in the midst of a world that rejects or distorts him, calls for bold but humble witness to our God; robust but gracious defence of the truth of the gospel of Christ, God's Son; and prayerful trust in the convicting and convincing work of his Holy Spirit. We commit ourselves to such witness, for if we claim to love God we must share God's greatest priority, which is that his name and his word should be exalted above all things.⁹

3. WE LOVE GOD THE FATHER

Through Jesus Christ, God's Son, - and through him alone as the way, the truth and the life - we come to know and love God as Father. As the Holy Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children, so we cry the words Jesus prayed, "Abba, Father", and we pray the prayer Jesus taught, "Our Father". Our love for Jesus, proved by obeying him, is met by the Father's love for us as the Father and the Son make their home in us, in mutual giving and receiving of love.¹⁰ This intimate relationship has deep biblical foundations.

a) We love God as the Father of his people. Old Testament Israel knew God as Father, as the one who brought them into existence, carried them and disciplined them, called for their obedience, longed for their love, and exercised compassionate forgiveness and patient enduring love.¹¹ All these remain true for us as God's people in Christ in our relationship with our Father God.

b) We love God as the Father, who so loved the world that he gave his only Son for our salvation. How great the Father's love for us that we should be called the children of God. How immeasurable the love of the Father who did not spare his only Son, but gave him up for us all. This love of the Father in giving the Son was mirrored by the self-giving love of the Son. There was complete harmony of will in the work of atonement that the Father and the Son accomplished at the cross, through the eternal Spirit. The Father loved the world and gave his Son; "the Son of God loved me and gave himself for me." This unity of Father and Son, so affirmed by Jesus himself, is echoed in Paul's most repeated greeting of "grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins?according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."¹²

c) We love God as the Father whose character we reflect and whose care we trust. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus repeatedly points to our heavenly Father as the model or focus for our action. We are to be peacemakers, as sons of God. We are to do good deeds, so that our Father receives the praise. We are to love our enemies in reflection of God's Fatherly love. We are to practise our giving, praying and fasting for our Father's eyes only. We are to forgive others as our Father forgives us. We

are to have no anxiety but trust in our Father's provision. With such behaviour flowing from Christian character, we do the will of our Father in heaven, within the kingdom of God.¹³

We confess that we have often neglected the truth of the Fatherhood of God and deprived ourselves of the riches of our relationship with him. We commit ourselves afresh to come to the Father through Jesus the Son; to receive and respond to his Fatherly love; to live in obedience under his Fatherly discipline; to reflect his Fatherly character in all our behaviour and attitudes; and to trust in his Fatherly provision in whatever circumstances he leads us.

4. WE LOVE GOD THE SON

God commanded Israel to love the LORD God with exclusive loyalty. Likewise for us, loving the Lord Jesus Christ means that we steadfastly affirm that he alone is Saviour, Lord and God. The Bible teaches that Jesus performs the same sovereign actions as God alone. Christ is Creator of the universe, Ruler of history, Judge of all nations and Saviour of all who turn to God.¹⁴ He shares the identity of God in the divine equality and unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Just as God called Israel to love him in covenantal faith, obedience and servant-witness, we affirm our love for Jesus Christ by trusting in him, obeying him, and making him known.

a) We trust in Christ. We believe the testimony of the Gospels that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the one appointed and sent by God to fulfil the unique mission of Old Testament Israel, that is to bring the blessing of God's salvation to all nations, as God promised to Abraham. In the birth of Jesus, God took our human flesh and lived among us, fully God and fully human. In his life Jesus walked in perfect faithfulness and obedience to God. He announced and taught the kingdom of God, and modelled the way his disciples must live under God's reign. In his ministry and miracles, Jesus announced and demonstrated the victory of the kingdom of God over evil and evil powers. In his death on the cross, Jesus took our sin upon himself in our place, bearing its full cost, penalty and shame, defeated death and the powers of evil, and accomplished reconciliation and redemption of all creation. In his bodily resurrection, Jesus was vindicated and exalted by God and became the forerunner of redeemed humanity and restored creation. Since his ascension, Jesus is reigning as Lord over all history and creation. At his return, Jesus will execute God's judgment, destroy Satan, evil and death, and establish the universal reign of God.

b) We obey Christ. Jesus calls us to discipleship, to take up our cross and follow him in the path of self-denial, servanthood and obedience. "If you love me, keep my commandments," he said. "Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do the things I say?" We are called to live as Christ lived and to love as Christ loved. To profess Christ while ignoring his commands is dangerous folly. Jesus warns us that many who claim his name with spectacular and miraculous ministries will find themselves disowned by him as evildoers.¹⁵ We take heed to Christ's warning, for none of us is immune to such fearful danger.

c) We proclaim Christ. In Christ alone God has fully and finally revealed himself, and through Christ alone God has achieved salvation for the world. We therefore kneel as disciples at the feet of Jesus of Nazareth and say to him with Peter, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God," and with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Though we have not seen him, we love him. And we rejoice with hope as we long for the day of his return when we shall see him as he is. Until that day we join Peter and John in proclaiming that "there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."¹⁶

We commit ourselves afresh to bear witness to Jesus Christ and all his teaching, in all the world, knowing that we can bear such witness only if we are living in obedience to his teaching ourselves.

5. WE LOVE GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

We love the Holy Spirit within the unity of the Trinity, with God the Father who sends him, and with Jesus Christ to whom he bears witness. He is the missionary Spirit of the missionary Father and the

missionary Son, breathing life and power into God's missionary church. We love and pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit because without the witness of the Spirit to Christ our own witness is futile. Without the convicting work of the Spirit our preaching is in vain. Without the power of the Spirit, our mission is mere human effort. And without the fruit of the Spirit, our unattractive lives cannot reflect the beauty of the gospel.

a) In the Old Testament we see the Spirit of God active in creation, in works of liberation and justice, and in filling and empowering people for every kind of service. Spirit-filled prophets looked forward to the coming king and servant, whose Person and work would be endowed with God's Spirit, and to the coming age that would be marked by the outpouring of his Spirit, bringing new life and fresh obedience to the people of God.¹⁷

b) At Pentecost God poured out his Holy Spirit as promised by the prophets and by Jesus. The sanctifying Spirit produces his fruit in the lives of believers, and the first fruit is always love. The Spirit fills the church with his gifts and with power for mission and for the great variety of works of service. The Spirit enables us to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel, to discern the truth, to pray effectively and to prevail over the forces of darkness. The Spirit strengthens and comforts disciples who are persecuted or on trial for their witness to Christ.¹⁸

c) Our engagement in mission, then, is pointless and fruitless without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. This is true of mission in all its dimensions: evangelism, bearing witness to the truth, discipling, peace-making, social engagement, ethical transformation, caring for creation, overcoming evil powers, casting out demonic spirits, healing the sick, suffering and enduring under persecution. All we do in the name of Christ must be empowered by the Holy Spirit. The New Testament makes this clear in the life of the early church and the teaching of the apostles. It is being demonstrated today in the fruitfulness and growth of churches where Jesus' followers act confidently in the power of the Holy Spirit, with dependence and expectation.

There is no true or whole gospel, and no authentic biblical mission, without the Person, work and power of the Holy Spirit. We pray for a greater awakening to this biblical truth and for its experience to be reality in all parts of the worldwide body of Christ. However, we are aware of the many abuses that masquerade under the name of the Holy Spirit, the many ways in which (as the New Testament also exemplifies) all kinds of phenomena are practised and praised which bear the marks of other spirits, not the Holy Spirit. There is great need for more profound discernment, for clear warnings against delusion, for the exposure of fraudulent and self-serving manipulators who abuse spiritual power for their own ungodly enrichment. Above all there is a great need for sustained biblical teaching and preaching, soaked in humble prayer, that will equip ordinary believers to understand and rejoice in the true gospel and to recognize and reject false gospels.

6. WE LOVE GOD'S WORD

We love God's word in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, echoing the joyful delight of the Psalmist in the Torah, "I love your commands more than gold? Oh how I love your law." We receive the whole Bible as the word of God, inspired by God's Spirit, spoken and written through human authors. We submit to it as supremely and uniquely authoritative, governing our belief and our behaviour. We testify to the power of God's word to accomplish his purpose of salvation. We affirm that the Bible is the final written word of God, not surpassed by any further revelation, but we also rejoice that the Holy Spirit illumines the minds of God's people so that the Bible continues to speak God's truth in fresh ways to people in every culture.¹⁹

a) The Person the Bible reveals. We love the Bible as a bride loves her husband's letters, not for the paper they are, but for the person who speaks through them. The Bible gives us God's own revelation of his identity, character, purposes and actions. It is the primary witness to the Lord Jesus Christ. In reading it, we encounter him through his Spirit with great joy. Our love for the Bible is an expression of our love for God.

b) The story the Bible tells. The Bible tells the universal story of creation, fall, redemption in history, and new creation. This overarching narrative provides our coherent biblical worldview and shapes our theology. At the centre of this story are the climactic saving events of the cross and resurrection of Christ which constitute the heart of the gospel. It is this story (in the Old and New Testaments) that tells us who we are, what we are here for, and where we are going. This story of God's mission defines our identity, drives our mission, and assures us the ending is in God's hands. This story must shape the memory and hope of God's people and govern the content of their evangelistic witness, as it is passed on from generation to generation. We must make the Bible known by all means possible, for its message is for all people on earth. We recommit ourselves, therefore, to the ongoing task of translating, disseminating and teaching the scriptures in every culture and language, including those that are predominantly oral or non-literary.

c) The truth the Bible teaches. The whole Bible teaches us the whole counsel of God, the truth that God intends us to know. We submit to it as true and trustworthy in all it affirms, for it is the word of the God who cannot lie and will not fail. It is clear and sufficient in revealing the way of salvation. It is the foundation for exploring and understanding all dimensions of God's truth.

We live however, in a world full of lies and rejection of the truth. Many cultures display a dominant relativism that denies that any absolute truth exists or can be known. If we love the Bible, then we must rise to the defence of its truth claims. We must find fresh ways to articulate biblical authority in all cultures. We commit ourselves again to strive for the truth of God's revelation as part of our labour of love for God's word.

d) The life the Bible requires. "The word is in your mouth and in your heart so that you may obey it." Jesus and James call us to be doers of the word and not hearers only.²⁰ The Bible portrays a quality of life that should mark the believer and the community of believers. From Abraham, through Moses, the Psalmists, prophets and wisdom of Israel, from Jesus and the apostles, we learn that such a biblical lifestyle includes justice, compassion, humility, integrity, honesty, truthfulness, sexual chastity, generosity, kindness, self-denial, hospitality, peace-making, non-retaliation, doing good, forgiveness, joy, contentment and love ? all combined in lives of worship, praise and faithfulness to God.

We confess that we easily claim to love the Bible without loving the life it teaches ? the life of costly practical obedience to God through Christ. Yet "nothing commends the gospel more eloquently than a transformed life, and nothing brings it into disrepute so much as personal inconsistency. We are charged to behave in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ and even to 'adorn' it, enhancing its beauty by holy lives."²¹ For the sake of the gospel of Christ, therefore, we recommit ourselves to prove our love for God's word by believing and obeying it. There is no biblical mission without biblical living.

7. WE LOVE GOD'S WORLD

We share God's passion for his world, loving all that God has made, rejoicing in God's providence and justice throughout his creation, proclaiming the good news to all creation and all nations, and longing for the day when the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.²²

a) We love the world of God's creation. This love is not mere sentimental affection for nature (which the Bible nowhere commands), still less is it pantheistic worship of nature (which the Bible expressly forbids). Rather it is the logical outworking of our love for God by caring for what belongs to him. "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." The earth is the property of the God we claim to love and obey. We care for the earth, most simply, because it belongs to the one whom we call Lord.²³

The earth is created, sustained and redeemed by Christ.²⁴ We cannot claim to love God while abusing what belongs to Christ by right of creation, redemption and inheritance. We care for the earth and responsibly use its abundant resources, not according to the rationale of the secular world,

but for the Lord's sake. If Jesus is Lord of all the earth, we cannot separate our relationship to Christ from how we act in relation to the earth. For to proclaim the gospel that says "Jesus is Lord" is to proclaim the gospel that includes the earth, since Christ's Lordship is over all creation. Creation care is a thus a gospel issue within the Lordship of Christ.

Such love for God's creation demands that we repent of our part in the destruction, waste and pollution of the earth's resources and our collusion in the toxic idolatry of consumerism. Instead, we commit ourselves to urgent and prophetic ecological responsibility. We support Christians whose particular missional calling is to environmental advocacy and action and those committed to godly fulfilment of the mandate to provide for human needs from the abundance of God's creation. We remind ourselves that the Bible declares God's redemptive purpose for creation itself. Integral mission means discerning, proclaiming, and living out, the biblical truth that the gospel is God's good news, through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for individual persons, and for society, and for creation. All three are broken and suffering because of sin; all three are included in the redeeming love and mission of God; all three must be part of the comprehensive mission of God's people.

b) We love the world of nations and cultures. "From one man, God made all nations of humanity, to live on the whole face of the earth." Ethnic diversity is the gift of God in creation and will be preserved in the new creation, when it will be liberated from our fallen divisions and rivalry. Our love for all peoples reflects God's promise to bless all nations on earth and God's mission to create for himself a people drawn from every tribe, language, nation and people. We must love all that God has chosen to bless, which includes all cultures. Historically, Christian mission has been instrumental in protecting and preserving indigenous cultures and their languages. Godly love, however, also includes critical discernment, for all cultures show not only positive evidence of the image of God in human lives, but also the negative fingerprints of Satan and sin. We long to see the gospel embodied and embedded in all cultures, redeeming them from within so that they may display the glory of God and the radiant fullness of Christ. We look forward to the wealth, glory and splendour of all cultures being brought into the city of God ? redeemed and purged of all sin, enriching the new creation.²⁵

Such love for all peoples demands that we reject the evils of racism and ethnocentrism, and treat every ethnic and cultural group with dignity and respect, on the grounds of their value to God in creation and redemption.²⁶

Such love also demands that we seek to make the gospel known among every people and culture everywhere. No nation, Jew or Gentile, is exempt from the scope of the great commission. Evangelism is the outflow of hearts that are filled with the love of God for those who do not yet know him. We confess with shame that there are still very many peoples in the world who have never yet heard the message of God's love in Jesus Christ. We renew the commitment that has inspired the Lausanne Movement from its beginning, to use every means possible to reach all peoples with the gospel.

c) We love the world's poor and suffering. The Bible tells us that the Lord is loving toward all he has made, upholds the cause of the oppressed, loves the foreigner, feeds the hungry, sustains the fatherless and widow.²⁷ The Bible also shows that God wills to do these things through human beings committed to such action. God holds responsible especially those who are appointed to political or judicial leadership in society,²⁸ but all God's people are commanded - by the law and prophets, Psalms and Wisdom, Jesus and Paul, James and John - to reflect the love and justice of God in practical love and justice for the needy.²⁹

Such love for the poor demands that we not only love mercy and deeds of compassion, but also that we do justice through exposing and opposing all that oppresses and exploits the poor. "We must not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist."³⁰ We confess with shame that on this matter we fail to share God's passion, fail to embody God's love, fail to reflect God's character and fail to do God's will. We give ourselves afresh to the promotion of justice, including solidarity and advocacy on behalf of the marginalized and oppressed. We recognize such struggle against evil as a dimension of spiritual warfare that can only be waged through the victory of the cross and

resurrection, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and with constant prayer.

d) We love our neighbours as ourselves. Jesus called his disciples to obey this commandment as the second greatest in the law, but then he radically deepened the demand (from the same chapter), “love the foreigner as yourself” into “love your enemies”.³¹

Such love for our neighbours demands that we respond to all people out of the heart of the gospel, in obedience to Christ’s command and following Christ’s example. Such neighbour love embraces people of other faiths, and extends to those who hate us, slander and persecute us, and even kill us. Jesus taught us to respond to lies with truth, to those doing evil with acts of kindness, mercy and forgiveness, to violence and murder against his disciples with self-sacrifice, in order to draw people to him and to break the chain of evil. We emphatically reject the way of violence in the spread of the gospel, and renounce the temptation to retaliation and revenge against those who do us wrong. Such disobedience is incompatible with the example and teaching of Christ and the New Testament.³² At the same time, our loving duty towards our suffering neighbours requires us to seek justice on their behalf through proper appeal to legal and state authorities who function as God’s servants in punishing wrongdoers.³³

e) The world we do not love. The world of God’s good creation has become the world of human and satanic rebellion against God. We are commanded not to love that world of sinful desire, greed, and human pride. We confess with sorrow that exactly those marks of worldliness so often disfigure our Christian presence and deny our gospel witness.³⁴

We commit ourselves afresh not to flirt with the fallen world and its transient passions, but to love the whole world as God loves it. So we love the world in holy longing for the redemption and renewal of all creation and all cultures in Christ, the ingathering of God’s people from all nations to the ends of the earth, and the ending of all destruction, poverty, and enmity.

8. WE LOVE THE GOSPEL OF GOD

As disciples of Jesus, we are gospel people. The core of our identity is our passion for the biblical good news of the saving work of God through Jesus Christ. We are united by our experience of the grace of God in the gospel and by our motivation to make that gospel of grace known to the ends of the earth by every possible means.

a) We love the good news in a world of bad news. The gospel addresses the dire effects of human sin, failure and need. Human beings rebelled against God, rejected God’s authority and disobeyed God’s word. In this sinful state, we are alienated from God, from one another and from the created order. Sin deserves God’s condemnation. Those who refuse to repent and “do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ will be punished with eternal destruction and shut out from the presence of God.”³⁵ The effects of sin and the power of evil have corrupted every dimension of human personhood (spiritual, physical, intellectual and relational). They have permeated cultural, economic, social, political and religious life through all cultures and all generations of history. They have caused incalculable misery to the human race and damage to God’s creation. Against this bleak background, the biblical gospel is indeed very good news.

b) We love the story the gospel tells. The gospel announces as good news the historical events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. As the son of David, the promised Messiah King, Jesus is the one through whom alone God established his kingdom and acted for the salvation of the world, enabling all nations on earth to be blessed, as he promised Abraham. Paul defines the gospel in stating that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day, according the scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve.” The gospel declares that on the cross of Christ God took upon himself, in the person of his Son and in our place, the judgment our sin deserves. In the same great saving act, God won the decisive victory over Satan, death and all evil powers, liberated us from their power and fear, and ensured their eventual destruction. He accomplished the reconciliation of believers with God and one

another across all boundaries and enmities. Through the cross also God accomplished his purpose of the ultimate reconciliation of all creation, and in the bodily resurrection of Jesus has given us the first fruits of the new creation. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself."³⁶ How we love the gospel story!

c) We love the assurance the gospel brings. Solely through trusting in Christ alone, we are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit and are counted righteous in Christ before God. Being justified by faith we have peace with God and no longer face condemnation. We receive the forgiveness of our sins. We are born again into a living hope by sharing Christ's risen life. We are adopted as fellow heirs with Christ. We become citizens of God's covenant people, members of God's family and the place of God's dwelling. So by trusting in Christ, we have full assurance of salvation and eternal life, for our salvation ultimately depends, not on ourselves, but on the work of Christ and the promise of God. "Nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."³⁷ How we love the gospel's promise!

d) We love the transformation the gospel produces. The gospel is God's life-transforming power at work in the world. "It is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes."³⁸ Faith alone is the means by which the blessings and assurance of the gospel are received. Saving faith however never remains alone, but necessarily shows itself in obedience. Christian obedience is "faith expressing itself through love."³⁹ We are not saved by good works, but having been saved by grace alone we are "created in Christ Jesus to do good works."⁴⁰ "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."⁴¹ Paul saw the ethical transformation that the gospel produces as the work of God's grace ? grace which achieved our salvation at Christ's first coming, and grace that teaches us to live ethically in the light of his second coming.⁴² For Paul, "obeying the gospel" meant both trusting in grace, and then being taught by grace.⁴³ Paul's missional goal was to bring about "the obedience of faith" among all nations.⁴⁴ This strongly covenantal language recalls Abraham. Abraham believed God's promise, which was credited to him as righteousness, and then obeyed God's command in demonstration of his faith. "By faith Abraham obeyed."⁴⁵ Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ are the first acts of obedience the gospel calls for; ongoing obedience to God's commands is the way of life that gospel faith enables, through the sanctifying Holy Spirit.⁴⁶ Obedience is thus the living proof of saving faith and the living fruit of it. Obedience is also the test of our love for Jesus. "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me."⁴⁷ "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands."⁴⁸ How we love the gospel's power!

9. WE LOVE THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The people of God are those from all ages and all nations whom God in Christ has loved, chosen, called, saved and sanctified as a people for his own possession, to share in the glory of Christ as citizens of the new creation. As those, then, whom God has loved from eternity to eternity and throughout all our turbulent and rebellious history, we are commanded to love one another. For "since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another," and thereby "be imitators of God and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us." Love for one another in the family of God is not merely a desirable option but an inescapable command. Such love is the first evidence of obedience to the gospel, and a potent engine of world mission.⁴⁹

a) Love calls for Unity. Jesus' command that his disciples should love one another is linked to his prayer that they should be one. Both the command and the prayer are missional ? "that the world may know you are my disciples", and that "the world may know that you [the Father] sent me".⁵⁰ A most powerfully convincing mark of the truth of the gospel is when Christian believers are united in love across the barriers of the world's inveterate divisions - barriers of race, colour, social class, economic privilege or political alignment. However, few things so destroy our testimony as when Christians mirror and amplify the very same divisions among themselves.

We confess that we have not laid aside all that divides us. Among such barriers, we are deeply troubled by the scandalous extremes of material inequality within the global body of Christ. This inequality denies Paul's instruction and ambition that there should be mutuality and sufficiency for

all.⁵¹ We condemn the competitiveness and rivalry that sometimes poison even our zeal for mission. We deplore the imbalance of resources available for mission in different parts of the world church. We urgently seek a new global equilibrium rooted in profound mutual love and humble partnership within the body of Christ across all continents. And we seek this not only in order to love one another in more than words alone, but also for the sake of the name of Christ and the mission of God in all the world.

b) Love calls for Honesty. Love speaks truth with grace. No one loved God's people more than the prophets of Israel and Jesus himself. Yet no one confronted them more honestly with the truth of their failure, idolatry and rebellion against their covenant Lord. And in doing so, they called God's people to repent, so that they could be forgiven and restored to the service of God's mission. The same voice of prophetic love must be heard today, for the same reason.

Such loving honesty pleads that we must come back in repentance to the godly ways of humility, integrity and sacrificial simplicity. We must renounce the idolatries of arrogance, manipulated success, and consumerist greed, which seduce so many of us and our leaders. Our love for the church of God aches with grief over the ugliness among us that so disfigures the face of our dear Lord Jesus Christ and hides his beauty from the world? the world that so desperately needs to be drawn to him.

c) Love calls for Solidarity. Loving one another includes especially caring for those who are persecuted and in prison for their faith and witness. If one part of the body suffers, all parts suffer with it. We are all, like John, "companions in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus".⁵²

We confess that we have not always shown such loving solidarity with our persecuted sisters and brothers, being more concerned for our own safety. We commit ourselves to share in the suffering of members of the body of Christ throughout the world, through information, prayer, advocacy, and other means of support. We see such sharing, however, not merely as an exercise of pity, but longing also to learn what the suffering church can teach and give to those parts of Christ's body that are not suffering in the same way. We are warned that the church that feels itself at ease in its wealth and self sufficiency may, like Laodicea, be the church that Jesus sees as the most blind to its own poverty, and from which he himself feels a stranger outside the door.⁵³

Jesus calls all his disciples together to be one family among the nations, a reconciled fellowship in which all sinful barriers are broken down through his reconciling grace. This church is a community of grace, obedience and love in the communion of the Holy Spirit, in which the glorious attributes of God and gracious characteristics of Christ are reflected and God's multi-coloured wisdom is displayed. As the most vivid present expression of the kingdom of God the church is the community of the reconciled who no longer live for themselves, but for the Saviour who loved them and gave himself for them.

10. WE LOVE THE MISSION OF GOD

We are committed to world mission, because it is central to our understanding of God, the Bible, the church, human history and the ultimate future. The whole Bible reveals the mission of God to bring all things in heaven and earth into unity under Christ, reconciling them through the blood of his cross, to the praise of God's glory and grace. In fulfilling his mission, God will transform the creation broken by sin and evil into the new creation in which there is no more sin or curse. God will fulfil his promise to Abraham to bless all nations on the earth, through the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah, the seed of Abraham. God will transform the fractured world of nations that are scattered under the judgment of God into the new humanity that will be redeemed by the blood of Christ from every tribe, nation, tongue and language, and will be gathered to worship our God and Saviour. God will destroy the reign of death, corruption and violence when Christ returns to establish his eternal reign of life, justice and peace. Then God, Immanuel, will dwell with us, and the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he will reign forever and ever.⁵⁴

a) Our participation in God's mission. God calls his people to share his mission. The church from all nations stands in continuity through the Messiah Jesus with God's people in the Old Testament. With them we have been called through Abraham and commissioned to be a blessing and a light to the nations. With them, we are to be shaped and taught through the law and the prophets to be a community of holiness, compassion and justice in a world of sin and suffering. We have been redeemed through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to what God has done in Christ. The church exists to worship and glorify God for all eternity and to participate in the transforming mission of God within history. Our mission is wholly derived from God's mission, addresses the whole of God's creation, and is grounded at its centre in the redeeming victory of the cross. This is the people to whom we belong, whose faith we confess and whose mission we share.⁵⁵

b) The cost of our mission. Jesus modelled what he taught, that the greatest love is to lay down one's life for one's friends.⁵⁶ He said of himself and his disciples that: "unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."⁵⁷ Most of us will not be called to lay down our lives for love of Christ, but suffering is a mode of our missionary engagement as witnesses to Christ, as it was for his apostles and the prophets of the Old Testament. ⁵⁸ Being willing to suffer is an acid test for the genuineness of our mission. God can use suffering, persecution and martyrdom to advance his mission. "Martyrdom is a form of witness which Christ has promised especially to honor."⁵⁹

c) The integrity of our mission. The source of all our mission is what God has done in Christ for the redemption of the whole world, as revealed in the Bible. Our evangelistic task is to make that good news known to all nations. The context of all our mission is the world in which we live, the world of sin, suffering, injustice, and creational disorder, into which God sends us to love and serve for Christ's sake. All our mission must therefore reflect the integration of evangelism and committed engagement in the world, both being ordered and driven by the whole biblical revelation of the gospel of God.

"Evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God? The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service in the world? 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 humankind, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ? The salvation we proclaim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead."⁶⁰

"Integral mission is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. 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 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."⁶¹

We commit ourselves to the integral and dynamic exercise of all dimensions of mission to which God calls his church. God commands us to make known to all nations the truth of God's revelation and the gospel of God's saving grace through Jesus Christ, calling all people to repentance, faith, baptism and obedient discipleship. God commands us to reflect his own character through compassionate care for the needy, and to demonstrate the values and the power of the kingdom of God in striving for justice and peace and in caring for God's creation.

In response to God's boundless love for us in Christ, and out of our overflowing love for him, we rededicate ourselves, with the help of the Holy Spirit, fully to obey all that God commands, with self-denying humility, joy and courage. We renew this covenant with the Lord we love because he first loved us.

FOR THE WORLD WE SERVE: OUR COMMITMENT TO ACTION

PART TWO

This second part of The Cape Town Commitment will include specific calls and resolutions generated by the Congress and its GlobalLink participants.

The completed two-part declaration will be published by the end of November. It will be available in eight Congress languages, as a free download, on the Lausanne website at www.lausanne.org and on the World Evangelical Alliance website at www.worldevangelicals.org. The final version may be used in print or digital form by any agency or church. No permission is required. Please include copyright: The Lausanne Movement.

In addition, it will be published from late January 2011 in The Didasko Files series and available at bulk discount for churches.

Go to www.lausanne.org/books for details of distributors, and www.didaskofiles.com to view the format of this edition, and for publishing rights.

Cape Town

October 2010

Sinclair Ferguson (UK/USA) Chairman

Rose Dowsett (UK)

Ajith Fernando (Sri Lanka)

Atef Gendy (Egypt)

Manfred Grellert (Brazil)

Peter Kuzmic (Croatia/USA)

Archbishop Peter Jensen (Australia)

Esther Mombo (Kenya)

Victor Nakah (Zimbabwe)

Las Newman (Jamaica)

John Piper (USA)

Yusufu Turaki (Nigeria)

Chris Wright (UK) Chief Recorder

Carver Yu (Hong Kong)

Senior representatives from the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), and from the Congress Programme Committee, the Communications Working Group and the Strategy Working Group were in attendance.

Chris Wright was invited by this group to bring the statement to completion, working with a smaller

team. To this team of Rose Dowsett, Ajith Fernando, Victor Nakah and Las Newman were added Valdir Steuernagel (Brazil), Rosalee Velloso Ewell (Brazil), Greg Parsons (USA) and Tormod Engelsviken (Norway).

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1 Gal. 5:6; Jn. 14:21; 1 Jn. 4:9, 19

2 Matt. 22:37-40; Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:22;

1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Jn. 3:14; 4:7-21; Jn. 13:34-35;

Jn. 1:18 + 1 Jn. 4:12; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Cor. 13:8, 13

3 Deut. 7:7-9; Hos. 2:19-20; 11:1; Ps. 103;

145:9, 13, 17; Gal. 2:20; Deut. 10:12-19

4 Deut. 6:4-5; Matt. 22:37; Lev. 19:18, 34;

Matt. 5:43-45; Jn. 15:12; Eph. 4:32; Jn. 3:16-17

5 Rom. 5:5; 2 Cor. 5:14; Rev. 2:4

6 Deut. 4:35, 39; Ps. 33:6-9; Jer. 10:10-12;

Deut. 10:14; Isa. 40:22-24; Ps. 33:10-11, 13-15;

Ps. 96:10-13; Ps. 36:6; Isa. 45:22

7 Deut. 4 and 6

8 John Stott, The Message of Romans, The

Bible Speaks Today (Leicester and Downers

Grove: Intervarsity Press), 53

9 Ps. 138:2

10 Jn. 14:6; Rom. 8:14-15; Matt. 6:9; Jn. 14:21-

23

11 Deut. 32:6, 18; 1:31; 8:5; Isa. 1:2; Mal. 1:6; Jer.

3:4, 19; 31:9; Hos. 11:2; Ps. 103:13; Isa. 63:16;

64:8-9

12 Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 3:1; Rom. 8:32; Heb. 9:14; Gal.

2:20; Gal. 1:4-5

13 Matt. 5:9, 16, 43-48; 6:4, 6, 14-15, 18, 25-

32; 7:21-23

14 Jn. 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:4-6; Heb. 1:2; Col. 1:15-17;
Ps. 110:1; Mk. 14:61-64; Eph. 1:20-23; Rev. 1:5;
3:14; 5:9-10; Rom. 2:16; 2 Thess. 1:5-10; 2 Cor.
5:10; Rom. 14:9-12; Matt. 1:21; Lk. 2:30; Acts.
4:12; 15:11; Rom. 10:9; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 2:10; 5:9;
7:25; Rev. 7:10

15 Lk. 6:46; 1 Jn. 2:3-6; Matt. 7:21-23

16 Matt. 16:16; Jn. 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:8; 1 Jn. 3:1-3;
Acts 4:12

17 Gen. 1:1-2; Ps. 104:27-30; Job 33:4; Ex.
35:30-36:1; Jdg. 3:10; 6:34; 13:25; Num. 11:16-
17, 29; Isa. 63:11-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Mic. 3:8;
Neh. 9:20, 30; Zech. 7:7-12; Isa. 11:1-5; 42:1-7;
61:1-3; 32:15-18; Ezek. 36:25-27; 37:1-14; Joel
2:28-32

18 Acts 2; Gal. 5:22-23; 1 Pet. 1:2; Eph. 4:3-
6; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Jn. 20:21-22; 14:16-17, 25-
26; 16:12-15; Rom. 8:26-27; Eph. 6:10-18;
Matt.10:17-20; Lk. 21:15

19 Ps. 119:47, 97; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21
20 Deut. 30:14; Matt. 7:21-27; Lk. 6:46;
Jas. 1:22-24

21 Manila Manifesto Paragraph 7; Tit. 2:9-10

22 Ps. 145:9, 13, 17; Ps. 104:27-30; Ps. 50:6;
Mk. 16:15; Col. 1:23; Matt. 28:17-20; Hab. 2:14

23 Ps. 24:1; Deut. 10:14

24 Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:2-3

25 Acts 17:26; Deut. 32:8; Gen. 10:31-32; 12:3;
Rev. 7:9-10; Rev. 21:24-27

26 Acts 10:35; 14:17; 17:27

27 Pss. 145:9, 13, 17; 147:7-9; Deut. 10:17-18

28 Gen. 18:19; Ex. 23:6-9; Deut. 16:18-20; Job
29:7-17; Pss. 72:4, 12-14; 82; Prov. 31:4-9; Jer.
29 Ex. 22:21-27; Lev. 19:33-34; Deut. 10:18-
19; 15:7-11; Isa. 1:16-17; 58:6-9; Amos 5:11-15,
21-24; Ps. 112; Job 31:13-23; Prov. 14:31; 19:17;
29:7; Matt. 25:31-46; Lk. 14:12-14; Gal. 2:10;
2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15:25-27; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Jas.
1:27; 2:14-17; 1 Jn. 3:16-18.

30 Lausanne Covenant Paragraph 5

31 Lev.19:34; Matt. 5:43-4

32 Matt. 5:38-39; Lk. 6:27-29; 23:34; Rom.
12:17-21; 1 Pet. 3:18-23; 4:12-16

33 Rom. 13:4

34 1 Jn. 2:15-17
22:1-3; Dan. 4:27

35 Gen. 3; 2 Thess. 1:9

36 Mk. 1:1, 14-15; Rom. 1:1-4; Rom. 4; 1 Cor.
15:3-5; 1 Pet. 2:24; Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15;
Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 1:20; 2 Cor. 5:19

37 Rom. 4; Phil. 3:1-11; Rom. 5:1-2; 8:1-4;
Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14; 1 Pet. 1:3; Gal. 3:26-4:7;
Eph. 2:19-22; Jn. 20:30-31; 1 Jn. 5:12-13;
Rom. 8:31-39

38 Rom. 1:16

39 Gal. 5:6

40 Eph. 2:10

41 Jas. 2:17

42 Tit. 2:11-14

43 Rom. 15:18-19; 16:19; 2 Cor. 9:13

44 Rom. 1:5; 16:26

45 Gen. 15:6; Gal. 6:6-9; Heb. 11:8;
Gen. 22:15-18; Jas. 2:20-24

46 Rom. 8:4

47 Jn. 14:21

48 1 Jn. 2:3

49 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 1 Jn. 4:11; Eph. 5:2;
1 Thes. 1:3; 4:9-10; Jn. 13:35

50 Jn. 13:34-35; 17:21

51 2 Cor. 8:13-15

52 Heb. 13:1-3; 1 Cor 12:26; Rev 1:9

53 Rev. 3:17-20

54 Eph. 1:9-10; Col. 1:20; Gen. 1-12; Rev. 21-22

55 1 Pet. 2:9-12

56 Jn. 15:13; 1 Jn. 3:16

57 Jn. 12:24-25

58 2 Cor. 12:9-10; 4:7-10

59 Manila Manifesto, §12

60 The Lausanne Covenant, paragraphs 4
and 5

61 The Micah Declaration on Integral Mission