

BUILDING THE PEACE OF CHRIST IN OUR DIVIDED AND BROKEN WORLD

"We need to understand and build upon our past."

The theme of the second full day of the Cape Town 2010 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation focused on mobilising resources for world Evangelisation. The Christian Church is the largest, most diverse and most international movement ever seen in history. When we consider the vast resources available to the church worldwide then it is clear that the potential is enormous. Yet plainly most of this potential is not being realised. With all the buildings, vehicles, printing presses, radio stations, websites, publications, computers, manpower and money available the Church of Jesus Christ should be having a far greater impact on culture and world events than it is.

Over the last 50 years, there has been tremendous church growth globally, particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, these Kingdom successes have been largely achieved despite the fact that Christians, on average, are giving less than 2% of their total income to the church, and the average church is giving much less than 10% of its income to missions and evangelism. If we could increase and focus Christian giving for the fulfillment of the Great Commission, we would literally see the world transformed. It is a fact that most church members are not giving much of their time, talents or treasure towards the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission to make disciples of all nations and to teach obedience to all things that He has commanded.

God promised that all the families of the nations of the earth would be blessed through the seed of Abraham (Genesis 18:18). The church must bless the nations. We need to recognise that the Biblical term for nations is *ethne* (from where we get our word ethnic). Biblically, what we often call a nation is a country, composed of many nations. There are 220 countries in the world, but over 9,000 ethno-linguistic people groups. The Great Commission is not fulfilled by sending a missionary to a geographic country. The Great Commission requires making disciples of every ethno-linguistic people group on the earth. We have given too little thought to the significance of the nations in the mission of God.

The Environmental Crisis, the Gospel and Christian Witness

Informal and unregulated human settlements are threatening national sustainable development. Deforestation and pollution is leading to a global environmental crisis. We need to understand the issues and the need for an effective Biblical response. The Biblical doctrines of Creation and stewardship require us to care for the earth and all of God's Creation, to improve the environment and to protect it.

As a result of rampant deforestation, deserts are expanding and droughts are increasing, leading to a global food crisis.

Poverty and Wealth: Responding through the Global and Local Church

Poverty and violence seem to go together. The poor are easily manipulated by political extremists. We need to identify the root issues surrounding poverty and productivity. We need to rediscover and teach our people the Christian work ethic. Christians must actually demonstrate God's love for the world, and not just talk about it.

Justice is essential. Accountability is vital to end the cycle of injustice, violence and slavery. We need to confront the curse of cowardice. The church's silence and inactivity during the Rwandan genocide is just one of many examples of the sins of omission. Christians cannot be bystanders while evil flourishes. Christians must boldly stand up and speak out on the issues of our day. We need to stand with the suffering church.

Worldwide over 400 million Christians are suffering persecution by state or authorities. In Vietnam, Christians are suffering imprisonment and torture under a communist, totalitarian regime. In the Islamic Republic of Uzbekistan in the previous Soviet Union, churches are required to be registered, but almost all Christian applications are refused.

Political oppression, religious persecution and opposition are not only from Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Communism, but also by pagan darkness. Frequently drunkards and heathen vent their hatred for Christ on local believers. We must remember the persecuted. (Hebrew 13:3).

The Congress focused on the role of the church in the ministry of Reconciliation – Reconciliation of men and women with God's Creation, Reconciliation between people of different economic status and Reconciliation between people of different ethnic and racial backgrounds.

"Jesus made peace by doing justice, by restoring right relationships."

In an afternoon session, a panel of environmental leaders from 5 continents focused on the role of the church in the global environmental crisis. Panelists challenged participants to consider the doctrine of Creation, to remember God's Creation Mandate to care for the earth and to consider how deforestation is negatively impacting the poor.

"We have a mandate from God to be keepers, tenders and stewards of God's Creation."

Antoine Rutayisire, Dean of the Anglican Cathedral of Kigali, Rwanda, said: *"I come from a broken nation, but a nation that is healing. I grew up wounded. I grew up angry. I grew up full of bitterness and hatred. But the Cross of Jesus Christ has made the difference in my life."*

A Palestinian Christian and Israeli Messianic Jew talked about the power of reconciliation in their lives: *"As a Palestinian, it's very difficult to reach out to my enemy, but as a Christian Palestinian, I have the ability to do that, because Jesus gives me the eyes to see them as He sees me. Jesus gives me the confidence to go against my society. He gives me the power to embrace them."*

Daniel Sered, Director of Jews for Jesus in Israel, said: *"The only hope for peace in the Middle East is truly Jesus."*

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