

THE FOURTH LAUSANNE CONGRESS

The Seoul Statement

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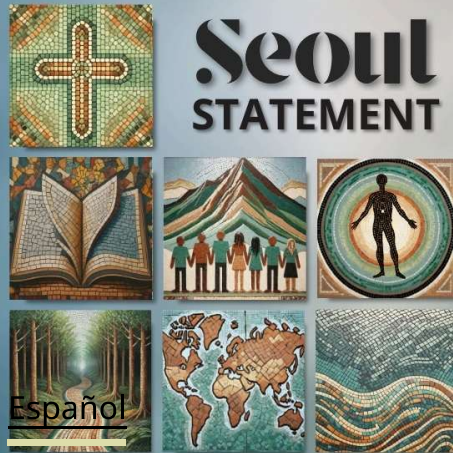
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[한국어](#)

[Português](#)

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[Español](#)



[← Back](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



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[Introducing the Seoul Statement](#)

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The Fourth Lausanne Congress held in Incheon, South Korea, marks the 50th anniversary of the birth of a remarkable movement committed to global mission. The First Lausanne Congress in 1974 brought together 2,700 church leaders from over 150 countries, who affirmed their shared conviction that the whole church must take the whole gospel to the whole world.

Following the First Congress, the global church did more to collaboratively accelerate worldwide evangelization than at any other period in history, resulting in unprecedented growth of the church, as millions in previously unreached regions embraced the gospel and experienced its transforming power.

We rejoice over what God has done through the church's commitment to the great apostolic priority of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ in order to bring salvation to people lost in sin. Even so, the task of evangelization remains urgent as billions remain outside the reach of the message of God's love and grace in Christ. Moreover, in the face of this expansive growth, the church in many parts of the world has struggled to effectively nurture the faith and discipleship of millions of first-generation Christians.

In the commission of the Lord Jesus to the apostles in Matthew 28:18-20, he made clear that the mandate given to the church—to “make disciples of all nations”—involved two equally important priorities: the *evangelistic task* of “baptising them into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,” and the *pastoral task* of “teaching them to obey all that [Christ] had commanded.”

Both these priorities are evident in the apostle Paul's mission strategy in the book of Acts and in his many epistles. He was passionate about reaching the lost with the message of salvation, and he was equally passionate about strengthening the faith of believers so that they lived lives worthy of the gospel and were able to oppose false teachings that threatened to undermine the truth of the gospel. As he summarises: “We *proclaim* him; *warning* everyone and *teaching* everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone perfect in Christ” (Colossians 1:28).

We regret that during the last 50 years of evangelistic harvest, the global church has not adequately provided the teaching necessary to help new believers develop a truly biblical



worldview. The church has often failed to nurture new believers to obey Christ's call to radical discipleship at home, at school, in the church, in our neighbourhoods, and in the marketplace. It has also struggled to equip its leaders to respond to trending social values and to distortions of the gospel, which have threatened to erode the sincere faith of Christians and to destroy the unity and fellowship of the church of the Lord Jesus. Consequently, we are alarmed by the rise of false teachings and pseudo-Christian lifestyles, leading numerous believers away from the essential values of the gospel.

For fifty years, the Lausanne Movement has been guided by the *Lausanne Covenant* (1974), the *Manila Manifesto* (1989), and the *Cape Town Commitment* (2010). The *Seoul Statement* of the Fourth Lausanne Congress fully affirms those earlier Congress documents and builds on their firm foundation by renewing our commitment to the centrality of the gospel (Section I) and to the faithful reading of Scripture (Section II). Only in this way can we meet the specific challenges that now face the global church (Sections III-VII) as we seek to bear faithful witness to our crucified and risen Lord—from everywhere, to everywhere, for the sake of generations to come.

Let the church declare and display Christ together!

I. The Gospel: The Story We Live and Tell

At the beginning of the ministry of Jesus he said, "The time has come. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The apostle Paul wrote: "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:17). This gospel is not a formula or set of religious ideas but rather a story that conveys good news and the power to transform lives. In the book of Acts, the apostles preached the gospel to diverse audiences, and we hear them tell a story. This is the reason that the apostles and countless Christians down the ages have embraced the gospel as the story we live and tell.

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"It is the 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 that the ending is in God's hands" [Cape Town Commitment, 2010]

1. In the beginning, God created the universe as a wondrous interdependence of spiritual and material reality, filled with meaning and mystery. All that God made was ordered and beautiful and good. God blessed all he made, that each part would exist for the flourishing of the whole. For every sphere—earth and sky and sea—God made creatures, giving them the breath of life and the ability to reproduce. As the culmination of creation, God made human beings, both male and female, in the image of God, enabling them to form relationships with himself and one another and giving them authority to care for his world.
2. The work and play of God's human creatures, their marriage and child-raising, their arts and industry and patterns of collective life were to be for the benefit of all, and for the glory of God. Blessing received was to become blessing shared between peoples, and blessing returned as worship.

God accomplished this awesome act of creation by his Word through his Spirit.

3. When God blessed human beings, he warned them that the ongoing flow of life would cease were they ever to seek independence from him. Since God alone is life, that choice would be death.
4. Adam and his wife Eve joined in the Satan-led rebellion and so sin and death entered the world. Commissioned to fill the earth with culturally diverse peoples united in the worship of God, humanity filled the earth with violence, fracturing the unity for which they were made. Exiled from God's holy presence and cut off from life, humans found themselves in bondage to self-will and enslaved to a meaningless existence.
5. But God is rich in mercy and love and would not abandon his sinful human creatures to their self-chosen bondage. Nor, as a just God, could he leave their rebellion unpunished. He set in motion his plan to rescue humanity from its helpless state through a coming Savior and to restore them as one holy people made up of all peoples united in worship.

6. To bless all the nations of the earth, God made a covenant with Abraham, promising to restore the blessing of his life-giving presence to one people within whom he would again unite all peoples in a relationship of mutual blessing. This people would become God's home, the new humanity for God's new creation.
7. In a preliminary way, God chose Abraham's descendants—a nation of twelve tribes, named after the twelve sons of Jacob. Formed to be a holy people, they were enslaved and oppressed under Pharaoh. God, however, did not forget his covenant. He brought his people out of slavery to declare his excellencies to all peoples. He brought them to Mount Sinai and spoke words with power to give life to those who kept them in their hearts, power to form a people who loved God with undivided hearts and loved one another from hearts alive with God's life.
8. But God's people rebelled against him. They chose death, rather than life. Had God not shown himself to be full of grace, the people would have perished. In his mercy, he ordained kingship so that Israel would live by God's rule. He sent prophets to interpret the words spoken at Sinai and to correct his people when they strayed from him. He sent sages and hymn-writers to sustain Israel in the way of life. Still God's people rebelled. Their kings and priests turned away from God and the people rejected the prophets. So, God sent them away from their land, condemning the nation to exile.
9. God, however, did not forget his covenant. Even as the prophets warned of national death, they prophesied that God would raise the nation to new life, as indeed he did when Israel returned from exile. But this dying and rising of the nation was only a foretaste of a dramatic escalation yet to come in God's dealings with a rebellious humanity—the restoration of God's rightful rule.

10. And then it came. God sent the prophet John to prepare for the imminent arrival of his appointed-king and to call the people to turn from their sin in order to live under God's rule. John baptised those who turned from their sin, but also spoke of a baptism yet to come: "The One who is coming after me will baptise you with fiery Spirit." That baptism of Spirit by the Lord Jesus Christ would form the promised people of peoples. Just as John had said, the Coming One came, but in the most unexpected way.

Through the Spirit of God, the Son of God, who is the eternal Word, became a human being in the womb of a virgin, Mary, as the beginning of God's new creation.


11. The restored rule of God foretold by the prophets began when John baptised Jesus. As Jesus came up from the water, a voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son." Like Israel, Jesus was tested in the wilderness, but he proved faithful and taught his followers to obey the words spoken to Israel at Sinai from the heart. He healed the sick and cleansed the defiled; he raised the dead and rescued the perishing; he cast out demons. In all these ways, he showed his power to restore blessing to people—a people cleansed from sin, saved from death, and freed from Satan's rule. Jesus declared that the time had come to renew God's blessing to the poor and humble in heart. The blessing he pronounced was not wealth or health but God's own life as the transforming power of new creation. The time had come for Jesus the Messiah to build his church. But this would require his voluntary, sacrificial death. This was because the offence of sin that stood between humanity and God had brought death to everyone.

12. When Jesus was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he died as our representative substitute, the God-sent Adam of the new creation. In Christ, God was taking the punishment for our sin onto himself. The one who has life in himself gave his life for the life of the world. He was condemned, while his ransomed people were freed—freed from slavery to sin to love and serve the Lord.

13. Though he poured out his life in death, Christ could not be defeated by death. God resurrected him and so proved him innocent and just. After he was raised, Jesus appeared to his disciples with a transformed body. This was a body his disciples could touch but death could not. The Father exalted the Son to reign with him until he subjected everything and everyone to Christ's rule. Then the Holy Spirit was sent to all who through repentance and faith participated in the renewal and reconciliation of all peoples in the one people of God. They received new life and power to bear witness to the good news of God's salvation among all peoples.

Therefore, anyone who is in Christ belongs to God's new creation formed by his Word through his Spirit.

14. God will complete his work of new creation when Christ returns to judge the living and the dead. Then all who are in Christ will share in his bodily resurrection, and the whole of God's creation will be transformed. His people will live under the rule of the Messiah as a unity of peoples whose distinct ways of living God's gift of eternal life are offered to God as worship. In this way, God's people will care for God's world in a community of blessing with God at the centre as the source of all that is good.
15. By faith, we take our place within Christ's church, the one people of the one God, the people of peoples of the triune God. By faith, we are baptised into Christ's death for the forgiveness of sins, raised to new life, and incorporated into the one body of Christ. By faith, we are declared righteous by the righteousness of the resurrected One. By faith, the church becomes the dwelling of God in Christ through his Spirit, and he, our never-ending source of life. By faith, we live under and for God's reign. By faith, we steward and care for God's creation and one another; work for his justice in our societies; and seek to live peaceable lives of faithful service. By faith, we live as those whom death cannot destroy because we are in Christ and have our life within the life of God.
16. As we gather in local churches, we live, rehearse, and remember the gospel, the true story of everything; we celebrate its gracious Author and his works in our worship; we clarify and distil its key moments in our doctrine; we teach God's people to obey by conforming their lives to its pattern and commands; we express its effects in our practice of love, justice, for-

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givenness, and reconciliation; we pray for its ends; we reflect its values in our individual and collective life. Through our presence, our practice, and our proclamation we tell the story of the gospel to the ends of the earth. All the while, with all creation, we groan for the consummation of new creation and cry, "Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

"O God, our Father, by your Son and through your Spirit, bring the fulness of new creation!"

II. The Bible: The Holy Scriptures We Read and Obey

A pillar of the Lausanne Movement from its inception has been an unwavering commitment to the Bible as God's authoritative word, the only rule of faith and practise for the church, its mission, and the Christian life. However, this high view of Scripture has not always produced the kind of faithful biblical interpretation that upholds the gospel and strengthens the mission of the church to make Christlike disciples. Worse, the often-conflicting interpretations threaten the church's effectiveness to bear witness to God's glory and gospel truth. Affirmations of a high view of Scripture therefore require a way of reading the Bible that is attentive to its historical, literary, and canonical contexts, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, and guided by the interpretive tradition of the church. The crucial affirmations about the Bible that the church needs most today concern not only the Bible's nature but its interpretation: how to read the Bible faithfully with the communion of saints of all times and places.

The Bible is God's word in human words.

17. We affirm that the Bible is God's word written, a divinely inspired, God-breathed collection of writings consisting of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments. Through a diversity of human authors and literary genres, the Bible forms a unified and coherent testimony to the story of God's electing a people for himself in Jesus Christ. The Bible is God's

self-revelation and therefore the church's Scripture: its authoritative, unerring, set-apart text that gathers and governs God's set-apart people. It is wholly true and trustworthy, and the supreme norm for the church's life. The same Spirit who inspired the Bible continues to illuminate it, communicating God's light and life, truth and grace.

The Bible's central message is the good news of the kingdom of God.

18. We affirm that the central message of Scripture is the gospel of the kingdom of God, the proclamation of Jesus' incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and return, which is the fulfilment of God's promise to bless all peoples through the seed of Abraham. Therefore, we read the whole of Scripture in accordance with and guided by this gospel. In the gospel, God offers the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Spirit, and eternal life to all who repent and believe in Jesus Christ. It is the good news that Jesus is building his church to serve God who is reconciling and renewing his creation, ridding it of sin and its effects, and so displaying his glory. This same gospel demands that we submit to Christ's authority, so that by faith in the gospel, we are transformed by the Spirit in our reading of the Bible. (Isa 52:7; Mark 1:14-15; Gen 12:1-3; 18:18-19; Gal 3:16, 19)

The Bible's purpose is the formation of disciples and the building up of the church.

19. We affirm that God speaks in the Bible for the purpose of generating and governing the people of God, the church. The Bible summons the faithful to conform to Christ, who is the image of God, and exhorts them to live lives worthy of the gospel. The Spirit works through the Bible to form the body of Christ, and the mind of Christ in the body of Christ. God uses Scripture to form the people of God, a people of peoples, who participate in his mission as communities that do his will on earth as it is in heaven. (Col 1:15; 3:10; Eph 4:24; Matt 6:10)

20. We affirm that to read and interpret Scripture faithfully, the church must read it in its historical, literary and canonical contexts. Reading in its historical context means attending to the world behind the text and the occasion of its composition. Reading in a literary context means paying close attention to the kind of literature it is and to the flow of words and ideas within the wider text. Reading in canonical context refers to reading each part in light of the whole of Scripture, Old and New Testaments together. Situating any biblical text in its proper historical and literary contexts is a necessary step for discovering its original meaning intended by its authors. Situating it in the canonical context enables the church to read it as the word of God and the unified narrative God has given to his people throughout history, culminating with the coming of Christ.

We read the Bible faithfully by being illuminated by the Holy Spirit.

21. We affirm that the Holy Spirit, who superintended the composition of the Scriptures, continues to guide the church in its interpretation of the Scriptures, as the church, in prayerful dependence, seeks the help of the Spirit. The Spirit's guidance is part of his active, ongoing presence in the church—the community of Bible hearers, readers, interpreters and doers—to empower and inform its commitment to declare and display Christ in the world. The Spirit provides internal testimony to the Scripture's authenticity, reliability, sufficiency and credibility. The Spirit enables the believer to understand and submit to the word and will of God. (2 Pet 1:21)

We read the Bible faithfully by remaining connected to tradition.

22. We affirm that evangelical (gospel-centred) interpretation of the Bible is not a recent development. It continues the long interpretive tradition that stretches back to the apostolic church. Faithful interpretation of Scripture belongs to the universal church and calls for a

We affirm the necessary and positive role of tradition which passes on a continuity of faithful reading from past generations who were led by the same Spirit and believed in the same gospel of Jesus Christ through the same Scriptures. For an evangelical approach to interpretation to be faithful, it must honour this tradition and let it be a Spirit-enabled guide in our reading of the Bible.

We read the Bible faithfully by being sensitive to local contexts.

23. We affirm the importance of cultural contexts for the faithful reading of the Bible.

Interpretation of the Bible never happens in a vacuum. Culture and language play an important role. Interpreting Scripture is challenging, because our presuppositions, personal experiences and culture exert a powerful and potentially distorting influence. Yet, local communities provide positive resources from within their respective contexts for deepening the overall understanding of Scripture. Each local church both represents the whole church in reading Scripture faithfully in and for its own context, and contributes from its local culture distinct insights that benefit the whole church.

We read the Bible faithfully by forming local churches into reading and listening cultures.

24. We call local churches to devote themselves to the public reading of Scripture and to form faithful Bible readers and listeners, as individuals, groups and worshipping communities. In forming such cultures, we must allow the word of God and the gospel it proclaims to shape our worldview and lives. We therefore affirm the need for the global collaboration of all members of Christ's body, and for attention to the ancient creeds, confessions and ecclesial traditions. Reading and listening in the communion of saints, guided by the Spirit, across space and time, serve to keep local communities anchored to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For the church to flourish in the coming decades, we must form ourselves into faithful Bible reading and listening communities that faithfully declare and display in many ways and places the one lordship of Christ.^[1] (Jude 3)

III. The Church: The People of God We Love and Build Up

The Lausanne Covenant (1974) declared, “World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world.” The Fourth Lausanne Congress (2024) has, as its theme, “Let the church declare and display Christ together.” Therefore, how we imagine the “church” matters greatly.

We recognise that the doctrine of the church has received little attention during these decades of extraordinary Christian expansion in the world, and there is little consensus about what the church is, its importance in the life of the Christian, and its relevance to our world. The resulting confusion has opened the way for aberrant forms of church that distort the values of Christ and his gospel. It has also increased disillusionment among baptised believers, leading them to distance themselves from the formal or institutional church. Christians today, especially first-generation believers, need a more comprehensive biblical understanding of the church—one that can inspire in them deep appreciation and loyalty as they, “conduct themselves in God’s household, the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

The church is the communion of God's people.

25. The ancient Apostles’ Creed professes our common faith in “the communion of saints.”

Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, the triune God is gathering and uniting his people as one *communion of saints* by the Holy Spirit. This fellowship with God and with our brothers and sisters in the church is not our doing; it is God’s gift. On the day of Pentecost, God revealed this unity as Jesus poured out from the Father the promised Holy Spirit upon his people. He sent them out to announce the good news and draw others into his new community, to be baptised as members of the Body of Christ, and to be indwelt by the Spirit as the Temple of God. Still today, the Lord Jesus continues to pour out the Holy Spirit upon the church and the Holy Spirit continues to glorify the Lord Jesus in and through the church. (1 Cor 12:27; 2 Cor 6:16)

26. All those who are united to Christ—through personal repentance, faith, and the grace of God—have him as their head and together form his body. Therefore, though we are saved as individuals, we are not saved alone, but together with one another. As disciples of Jesus, the Spirit incorporates us into Christ as members of his body, through faith in his shed blood. Christian baptism is a sign and seal of God's grace, a public declaration of our new allegiance to Christ and our new identification with his church. (1 Cor 12:13)


The church is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

27. With Christ's people through the centuries and around the world, we confess, in the words of the Nicene Creed, that the church is "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic."
28. In all the world and throughout history, the church is *one* people of God, *one* body of Christ and *one* temple of the Holy Spirit through *one* baptism by the Spirit, and the *one* Bride of Christ. Across time, space, culture, and language we are *one* church, united by Christ and his finished work, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and joined together in the love of God. (Eph 4:4-6; 2 Cor 11:2)
29. As the visible expression of Christ in the world, the church is called to Christlike *holiness*, displayed by our determination to live as those who have been set apart for God, and demonstrated by Christlike character and behaviour. (2 Tim 2:21; 1 Pet 1:14-16)
30. The church of Jesus Christ is *catholic* (universal and all-embracing), in that all who belong to Christ—irrespective of ethnicity, gender, region, status, or ability—belong equally within his new community, the church. Therefore, there is a place for every member because each part is needed to make up the wholeness of the church. There is a place for boys and girls, for women and men, for ministers and missionaries, for homemakers, educators, labourers, professionals, and marketplace leaders
31. In the church catholic, no human culture can claim preeminence. All human cultures must bow in submission before the God of all wisdom and as they do so, they each make their contribution to our understanding of Scripture and proclamation of the gospel. In this way, God unites us together to declare and display his glory in all our diversity. The local church is the only visible manifestation of the catholic church. It reveals the glory of God's temple,

32. This one, holy, catholic church is also *apostolic*. It began its public witness to the good news of Jesus Christ with the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and ever since has proclaimed the same message to all the world. Throughout history and in every place, the church is apostolic, standing in continuity with Christ's twelve apostles by holding fast to their teaching, once for all entrusted to God's people and handed down from generation to generation. Through the gift of this living and active word, God builds his church by giving us faith and new life, and so forms his church into the likeness of Christ. (Rom 10:17; 1 Pet 1:23; Jude 3)

The pilgrim church faces challenges from without and threats within.

33. The church has always faced crises. As our Lord said, in this world there will be many trials. As evidenced throughout history, God's faithful saints have faced and continue to face persecution and severe opposition, often risking their lives for the sake of the Lord they love. The church is built on the blood of the martyrs. Even so, the church's struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of darkness. The evil one conspires against the church of Christ, but as Jesus has promised, he continues to build his church and even the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it. (John 16:33; Eph 6:12; Matt 16:18; Rev 1:18)
34. The church carries the treasure of the gospel in "earthen vessels" in vulnerability and humility, not looking to point to itself but to the all-surpassing power of God. Therefore, it does not resist its opponents according to the powers or armaments of this world but perseveres through adversity and suffering by the power of God, fully armed with spiritual weapons of righteousness. Empires rise and fall but the church, sustained by its Lord, is called to remain steadfast and conduct itself as the household of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth. (2 Cor 4:7; John 18:36; 2 Cor 6:7; 1 Tim 3:14-16)
35. Yet, we are grieved that the church has not always stayed true to this calling. Scripture is clear that the greater risk to the church's vitality and the integrity of its message comes from within. It has all too often succumbed to the allure of political power, of cultural ap-

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proval and of the world's pleasures, abandoning its mandate to be God's prophetic witness in the world. In such instances the church becomes an instrument of oppression, complicit in acts of injustice, and loses its credibility in the world. These compromises are either consequences of, or causes for, the church moving away from biblical authority by distorting the Scriptures to satisfy mere worldly desires. The twin pillars of faithful belief and practice (orthodoxy and orthopraxy) erode as the church takes its eyes away from Christ and the cross. We lament these failures and sins of our past and repent from ways in which we continue to ignore the conviction of the Spirit and the instructions of our Lord. (1 Tim 4:16)

The church grows as it gathers for worship.

36. The Lord Jesus summons his church to gather together regularly to worship God the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit. By these gatherings, he invites us to grow in our intimacy and knowledge of him as the Scriptures are read and proclaimed, and to see, feel and taste his grace, in Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42).
37. As the one body of Christ and one temple of the Spirit, the church manifests its corporate identity primarily through its worship. In corporate worship, we are practising church and showing what it means to be the church. This means that worship is essentially a corporate event. Corporate worship, therefore, is not primarily about cultivating a personal relationship with God; it is the "royal priesthood" and "holy nation" proclaiming "the excellencies (praises) of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." (1 Pet 2:5, 9).
38. The church distinguishes itself as God's people through its worship of the triune God in word and sacrament. These two basic components of worship are marks which define the church. Worship, therefore, is not just one of many other church practices but the church's foundational practice. Worship is the ultimate end to which all our mission endeavours are directed. The work of mission will end when Jesus returns but worship will continue forever. So, we call on all churches to give greater attention to worship as a foundational practice and to make worship a more corporate experience through their preaching, prayers, and songs.
39. Properly ordered worship takes place under the authority and discipline of the local church. This is vital for the well-being of not only the individual believer but of the church as a

whole. So, we call upon all Christians to submit to the authority of a local church. Just as individuals grow because local churches grow in health and maturity, so too local churches grow because individuals grow in knowledge, intimacy, and accountability. (1 Cor 5:1-6:11; Heb 10:25)

40. Christ, as the head of the church, has placed gifts of ministry and service within his church, for the maturing of his people and for their upbuilding. A wide variety of Spirit-empowered gifts are distributed among the members of the church for the common good. The body of Christ grows as individual believers take responsibility to do the work of ministry and exercise their God-given gifts to serve their sisters and brothers with Christlike love. This ministry empowers all the people of God to honour Jesus Christ in the workplace, the marketplace, the home, the school, and the local community—wherever they are called to serve. They fulfil their various callings being fully assured that the Lord Jesus cares for his church, and constantly intercedes for its protection and well-being. (Rom 12:6-6; 1 Cor 12:4-11; Eph 4:7-16)

The church displays Christ in diverse yet faithful ways.

41. The church has been called to express its common life by forming local, counter-cultural communities in every society. Local churches vary in form: from small bands of believers meeting in secret, to house churches, to much larger congregations that gather in public view. The emergence of digital spaces has provided Christian believers yet another means to come together, prompting ongoing theological reflection on the nature and form of the local church.
42. Local churches throughout history and across the world display spectacular diversity in traditions and forms, which are shaped by the influence of their distinctive cultures and by the unique contextual challenges they face. Nevertheless, what such Christian communities have in common, and what makes them authentic manifestations of the body of Christ is their worship of the triune God in response to their shared faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ—the faith that Christ calls them to share with the world.

43. The church, therefore, is called to declare and display Christ together. The Great Commission summons all believers everywhere to participate in our Lord's will to make disciples of all peoples, by baptising those who believe in the gospel message and teaching them true obedience to Jesus Christ. In the power of his Word and Spirit, God sends us out into the world as a holy people to bear witness to the gospel before a watching world. We do this through our *Christ-filled presence*, our *Christ-centred proclamation*, and our *Christlike practice*. (Matthew 28:18-20)
44. Jesus urged his disciples to see the powerful influence of their *presence* in the world by describing them as "the salt of the earth" that must maintain its integrity and so never lose its potency. The apostle Paul explained how the gospel-inspired Christian is the very "aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing." This makes the presence of a Christian individual or community in any society—in families, neighbourhoods, schools, the workplace, or the public square—a cause for hope, as God uses his redeemed people to signal his favour and make known his nearness to a world long alienated from him. (Matt 1:23; 5:13; 2 Cor 2:15-16)
45. The Bible says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Therefore, the faithful *proclamation* of the good news of Jesus Christ is essential to the witness of the church, and for this task, the Lord has poured out the Holy Spirit to empower the members of the church for evangelism. By his Word and through his Spirit, the church displays God's saving power of the gospel and sends heralds to declare his gospel where Christ is not known. Through daily witness at home and at work, God continues to gather to himself people from every tribe and tongue, saving them through the atoning blood of Jesus and joining them as members of the body of Christ. (Rom 10:17)
46. The church also witnesses through its Christlike *practice*. Just as the world hears Christ in gospel proclamation, it can also see Christ through our love for one another and our neighbours, through how we care for his creation and do excellent work in our daily callings. Just as faith comes by hearing, faith is always accompanied by works. These works promote the common good, prioritise care for the poor and most vulnerable, and advance the cause of justice following the example of our Lord. (Matt 5:16; John 13:35; Eph 2:8-10; Luke 4:18-19)

47. Until that final day when Christ will come again, the church as the bride gathers in anticipation of her bridegroom's return, when the saints of past generations will also be raised to life. We therefore wait, longing for the consummation of the church's hope, when God himself will dwell with us, when we will know the Lord God Almighty—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and offer him eternal worship, giving glory to God “in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” (Rev 21:3; Eph 3:21)

IV. The Human Person: The Image of God Created and Restored

Today, the world is absorbed with the question, “What does it mean to be human?” This makes the Christian doctrine of the human person critically important. How we answer this question has profound implications for our witness in the world and our life in the church. It goes to the very heart of the great upheavals in the world with regard to issues such as identity, human sexuality, and the implications of advancing technologies. A sound doctrine of the human person is also vital for dealing with the growing phenomenon of leaders that claim supra-human powers and God-like authority within the church.

The image of God is the essence of being human.

48. Scripture teaches that human beings are uniquely created in God's image. This uniqueness includes stewardship roles and responsibilities in the world. The gift of image-bearing provides all human beings with inherent dignity, equality, and worth, regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, caste, age, physical and mental capacities, and socioeconomic and cultural contexts. The triune God created human beings to be relational, including personal relationships with God and the formation of communities. (Gen 1:26-28; 2:15)
49. Human beings are an integrated physical and spiritual unity, possessing a spiritual dimension that complements the physical. We therefore reject any privileging of body or spirit over and against the other.

50. We acknowledge that sin affects the degree to which human beings can fully reflect the image of God. Sin corrupts our inherent human nature and capacities, our relationships with others, and our human vocation in the world. Sin adversely influences people to treat other humans as objects, not as persons of intrinsic worth. At times even Christians have sinfully misinterpreted the image of God out of self-interest, to marginalise and dehumanise others.

The image of God is restored in Christ.

51. We affirm that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the image of God. By his incarnation, he became fully human as the second Adam. Unlike the first Adam, he lived a sinless life, and thus qualified to redeem humanity from sin and its alienation from God. As the preeminent and perfect image of God, Jesus Christ is the human ideal to which every believer is being transformed by the Holy Spirit. As we partake in God's nature, we are being conformed to Christ's likeness by grace. This Christlikeness is revealed in the renewing of our character, practice, desires, and aspirations, and at his Second Coming, in the transformation of our bodies into the likeness of Christ's resurrected body. (Col 1:15; Heb 1:1-3; John 1:1, 14; Phil 2:1-11; Eph 1:10; Rom 5:12-14; 1 Cor 15:45-49, 50-54)
52. The church is God's new humanity, created by Christ who reconciles believers to God and to each other. This new humanity is being transformed to bear the image of Christ, the one who defines true and full humanity. (Eph 2:14-16; Rom 8:9; Rom 12:1-2; 2 Cor 3:18)
53. As bearers of God's image, redeemed human beings are endowed with gifts and ministries in order to serve the common good of the church and bring glory to God in the world. Every Christian has been granted the privilege of participating in, and being an ambassador for, the kingdom of God through their various gifts and callings. However, all of these manifestations and practices are to be weighed against the apostolic witness to the gospel and Scripture so that no one is deceived by a false gospel or participates in the robbing of God's glory. (1 Cor 12:4-7; Rom 12:4-8; Eph 4:11-16; 1 Cor 1:4-8; 1 Pet 4:10-11; Matt 7:15-16; Gal 1:6-9 1 John 2:19; Jude 3-4)
54. We lament any false notions of the new humanity that contradict the Christlike ideal and grieve for Christian leadership that moves away from Christlikeness, as is evident in pros-

perity and fame-based ministries where some even make claims to possessing divinity. Christ's leadership example challenges such claims and the manipulation of others as a sign of spiritual authority. Life in the kingdom of God is characterised by humility, repentance, and reliance on God's grace. (Luke 9:23; Phil 2:8-11; 3:18-19; 1 Cor 15:9-10; 1 John 1:8-10)

55. We await the resurrection of the body and the consummation of the new creation, when the image and likeness of God in human beings will be fully renewed. Then, God's people will enjoy fullness of life and communion with God, with each other, and with all creation. (Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1-4)


The image of God and human sexuality

The Christian understanding of sexual identity

56. The biblical account of creation recognises that humans are created as sexual beings with clearly identifiable physical characteristics as male and female and relational characteristics as man and woman. The "sex" of an individual refers to the biological characteristics that distinguish male from female, whereas "gender" refers to the psychological, social, and cultural associations with being male or female. The Bible unambiguously affirms that human beings, both male and female, bear the image of God, representing the Creator in the care of his created earth. (Gen 1:26-28; 2:22-23)
57. We lament any distortion of sexuality. We reject the notion that individuals may determine their gender without regard to our createdness. Although biological sex and gender may be distinguished, they are inseparable. Maleness and femaleness are an inherent fact of human createdness—a fact to which cultures give expression in distinguishing between men and women. We also reject the notion of gender fluidity (the claim to fluctuating gender identity or gender expression, depending on situation and experience).
58. Throughout history, however, persons whose sex is not observably clear at birth (broadly designated today as intersex individuals) have faced significant psychological and social challenges. In the Scriptures God expresses his deep concern for eunuchs in their experience of alienation and pain, and has prepared a better future for those who put their trust

The Christian understanding of marriage and singleness

59. The first reference to marriage in the Bible indicates that marriage is God ordained and depicts marriage as the exclusive bond of one man and one woman. This results in a new entity that the Bible refers to as “one flesh.” We affirm, therefore, that according to God’s design, marriage is a unique and exclusive covenant-relationship between one man and one woman, who commit themselves to a lifelong physical and emotional union of mutual love and sharing. (Gen 2:24; Matt 19:4-6)
60. Furthermore, the biblical teaching is consistent that covenant marriage is the only legitimate context for sexual intercourse. Sex outside the bounds of marriage is declared to be a sinful violation of the Creator’s design and intent.
61. We lament all attempts in the church to define same-sex partnerships as biblically valid marriages. We grieve that some Christian denominations and local congregations have acquiesced to the demands of culture and claim to consecrate such relationships as marriages.
62. We affirm that marriage is intended by God to serve human flourishing by providing the necessary context for the nurture of succeeding generations. Faithful marriages allow for strong bonds of family life, appropriately delimiting freedom and creating the bounded and nurturing environment that enables children to thrive.
63. The biblical vision of marriage includes the fulfilment of the Creator’s mandate to procreate, and simultaneously provides companionship and pleasure for the couple. We are saddened that the pursuit of sexual freedom as a perceived personal and social good has downplayed the procreational aspect of marital sex, which has often led to the devaluing of children and the dramatic increase in abortions globally. (Gen 1:28; 2:18-25)
64. The Christian marriage is modelled on the relationship of Christ and the church, and therefore constitutes a unique means of witness to the outworking of the gospel, as the husband and wife fulfil their responsibilities to one another as disciples under the lordship of Jesus

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Christ. Therefore, Christians who choose to marry must invest the necessary effort to care for their marital relationship and for the upbringing of children who may be born to them or adopted by them. (Eph 5:22-31)

65. While marriage has been the assumed ideal for adults in all societies, and in marriage husband and wife complement each other, marriage is not an essential step to make a person complete. Both married and single persons are fully able to fulfil the Creator's will and bear witness to Jesus Christ. Each individual, created in the image of God, is a complete person with maximum potential within the context of other human relationships. The Lord Jesus, the ideal human, exemplified this truth about the life of singleness. The apostle Paul positively argued that singleness, whether circumstantial or vocational, offered the Christian unique opportunities to serve the cause of the kingdom of God in ways not possible for those who are married. (1 Cor 7:32-35)
66. We call all local churches to support both singles and married couples within the community of Christian believers through teaching, mentoring, and networks of mutual encouragement and practical support. Such a community witnesses to the power of the gospel by modelling the biblical values of deep friendships, love and faithfulness in marriage, the honouring of parents, and the dedicated nurture of children within the context of loyalty to the lordship of Jesus Christ, and to the glory of God.

The Christian understanding of same-sex sexual relations

67. Sexual intimacy between persons of the same sex is a phenomenon that is as old as human civilization, and the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, shows its awareness of such practices. On six occasions we find the explicit mention of same-sex sexual behaviour in the Bible. Because of the extraordinary importance of the subject for society and the church today, it is vital that Christians become familiar with all the references to same sex sexual intimacy in the Bible, and their meanings in context—Genesis 19:1-3; Leviticus 18:20; 20:13; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:9-11:

- The Old Testament refers to sex between persons of the same sex in the account of Genesis 19:1-3 where the life of Abraham and his family intersected with the culture of Sodom, which God had declared to be grievously wicked. Sodom's notoriety had been



due to multiple forms of social evils, including the attempted male-rape of Lot's guests by all the townsmen being highlighted in the narrative as evidence of the abysmal moral condition of the city. (Ezek 16:49-50; Gen 18:20-21; 19:1-13; Jude 7)

- In the apostolic witness of the New Testament, same-sex behaviour is referenced in Romans 1:18-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11, and 1 Timothy 1:9-11, against the backdrop of Greek and Roman culture. The historical record makes clear that sex between persons of the same sex was a well-known practice during this period, having been normalised, especially in the upper strata of society. In this context, it is striking that Paul places sex between persons of the same sex in the same category of sexual sin as fornication and adultery, and within a broader list of sins that included thieving, greed, drunkenness, slander, and swindling. In 1 Timothy 1:9-11, the list that proscribes same-sex behaviour includes patricide, murder, fornication, slave trading, and perjury. All who do such things are called lawbreakers, rebels, ungodly, sinful, unholy, and irreligious people.
- In 1 Corinthians 6:9, Paul coined a term to describe sex between men from two references in Leviticus 18:20 and 20:13. These texts state that sex between persons of the same sex violates God's standards for the Israelites who had been bound by their covenant to God.
- When Paul refers to sex between people of the same sex in Romans 1:24-27, he does so to express how humanity's rebellion against God has led to the rejection of his created order. As indications of humanity's total moral bankruptcy, he cites the widespread practice of idol worship and sexual immorality. With regards to sexual impurity, Paul specifically condemns sex between women and sex between men, which were clearly well-known practices in what was considered the sophisticated culture of the time.

68. All the biblical references to sex between persons of the same sex lead us to the inescapable conclusion that God considers such acts as a violation of his intention for sex and a distortion of the Creator's good design, and therefore, sinful. However, the gospel assures us that those who have, by ignorance or knowingly, given into temptation and sinned, will find forgiveness and restoration of fellowship with God through confession, repentance, and trust in Christ.

69. We recognise that a number of people, both within and outside the church, experience same-sex attraction, and that for some, this is the only or dominant attraction. The biblical

insistence that Christians must resist temptation and so maintain sexual holiness, in both desire and behaviour, applies equally to heterosexually attracted individuals as it does to same-sex attracted persons. We acknowledge, however, that Christians who are same-sex attracted face challenges even in Christian communities. We repent of our lack of love towards our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

70. We urge Christian leaders and local churches to recognise within our communities the presence of believers who experience same-sex attraction, and to support them in their discipleship by pastoral care and by developing healthy communities of love and friendship.^[2]

V. Discipleship: Our Calling to Holiness and Mission

In his mercy, God has worked through the Lausanne Movement over the past half century to catalyse evangelism to unreached peoples and communities around the world and to inculcate a sense of social concern in the face of injustice, oppression, and discrimination. These dual emphases have often been held together within the concept of “integral mission,” but integral mission has not always fully integrated the command of our Lord to be disciples and his commission to make disciples. As a result, despite our claim to be followers of our crucified Lord, we have often failed to live in keeping with the holy pattern of life he gave to us and to teach others to do the same. The result has been a steady stream of reports of financial mismanagement, of sexual misconduct and abuse, of abuse of power among leaders, of efforts to cover-up these failures while ignoring the pain of those who have suffered because of them, and of spiritual anaemia and immaturity in evangelical churches around the world. We grieve these failings; we lament our sin; we humbly repent and confess our profound need for the ongoing grace of the gospel to produce in us the holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb 12:14). We therefore commit ourselves to the following affirmations.

71. We affirm that to be a disciple is to be formed in the pattern of life that conforms to the good news of Christ's incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension by which God in his love has saved his people from their sins and, through the outpouring of the Spirit by the ascended Christ, graciously granted them the power to live under his holy and righteous rule. As a result, mission is properly aimed toward the formation of disciples whose love for God and love for others are united in an undivided heart. This outcome is properly understood as the work of God to write his law in human hearts—a work that enables us to live as God's one, holy covenant people made up of all peoples who continue the work of Jesus, the Servant of the Lord, to bring life and light to the world. As the embodiment of this divine achievement, the local church is both the means and the end of mission pursued in this way. (Jer 31:31-34; Matt 22:36-40)

Our Lord Jesus commands us to be disciples and commissions us to make disciples.


72. We affirm that the mission of God's people is to fulfil the commission that the Lord Jesus gave to his disciples—to make disciples through the announcement of what God has achieved in sending his Son into a rebellious and broken world. Those charged with the task of announcing God's good news to all peoples must themselves live as disciples and understand that the proper aim of our mission is the transformation of those who hear and believe the good news to live as disciples who obey all that the Lord taught. Through this transformation of individuals, God achieves his mission to restore humanity through the gospel into the image of Christ and, with it, to renew and restore all creation. The fulfilment of God's purpose to renew humanity is the local church, the manifestation of the heavenly gathering of God's people of every time and place, from every nation and people. As such, the formative power of the gospel has both individuals and the local church as its object. The formation of mature disciples is inextricably bound up with the growth and maturity of

We cannot make disciples without announcing the good news and cannot be disciples without a deep engagement with a broken world.

73. We affirm that those formed as disciples, both individually and corporately, will invariably find themselves deeply engaged with a world broken by injustice and sin in their families, neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces, and societies. Our task in mission, therefore, is not simply one of announcing a message in order to secure professions of Christian faith. Rather, our evangelistic task is to announce the message of a crucified Messiah as we live lives that accord with that message with the aim of seeing others formed in this same pattern of life. The pursuit of righteousness in our personal lives, our homes, our churches, and in the societies in which we live can no more be separated from the announcement of the gospel than being a disciple can be separated from making disciples.

As disciples, we experience transformation as both an initial and ongoing experience of the gospel grace.

74. We affirm that a disciple is a person whose life has been transformed by the gospel. This transformation begins when we repent of our sin and believe the good news. However, like seed planted in good soil, the good news does not bring the fullness of transformation or bear the fruit of transformation all at once. Rather, this transformation takes place gradually over the course of a lifetime in which the increase of holiness and love demonstrates the reality of the gospel's transforming power. Both the initial experience of transformation and its ongoing realisation are the work of God's Spirit by grace through faith to unite believers to the life of Christ and to one another within the body of Christ.



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Local churches play a vital role in our formation as disciples by ministering the means of grace in the gospel and experiencing its transforming power in their corporate life.

75. We affirm that a local church grows and matures as it seeks to ensure that its corporate life reflects the pattern of life that conforms to the message of Christ crucified. Churches do so through the proclamation of the gospel; through regular rehearsing of the gospel in baptism and the Lord's Table; and by gratefully responding to the gospel in prayer and praise. Within the church, individual believers learn to conduct themselves as citizens of heaven who live lives worthy of that citizenship by mediating the grace conveyed to them by the Spirit to their fellow believers. Within the church, individual marriages are conformed to the loving union between Christ and his people. Within the church, individual families are strengthened in the way of the Lord by life within the household of faith. In this way, both the church and its members are built up in the most holy faith, conformed to the image of Christ by the Spirit, and encouraged to live lives of holiness, faith, and the purifying hope of our Lord's return. Prepared by the ministry of the gospel within the church and prompted by the compassionate example of Christ, we learn to see the whole of life as worship, to seek the good of those outside the church, and to work for the restoration of wholeness to the world in all we do. (Eph 2:19; Phil 3:20; 1 Thess 2:12; Jude 20; 1 John 3:3)

Local churches also play a vital role in providing accountability and modelling healthy patterns of leadership and governance for ministry leaders, missionaries, and ministry partners.

76. We call ministry leaders and missionaries to remain in vital fellowship with and accountability to local churches. While this is true of all disciples, those called to forms of ministry outside of their local churches must remain vitally connected to the life of Christ within the church and reflect the ongoing work of God's Spirit within a local church. In his providence, the Lord has raised up ministries and mission partnerships to collaborate with the local church to sharpen and equip his people to be and make disciples. We affirm the importance of these ministries but also the importance of maintaining a clear focus on and connection to the local church as the embodiment of the new humanity that God is forming in


Christ. Such ministries honour Christ when they draw on the instruction given to local churches in Scripture for their patterns and principles of accountability, transparency, and oversight. In doing so, they will adopt structures of plural leadership and governance that preserve the location of spiritual authority in the gospel rather than any single individual.^[3] (Acts 6:1-6; 15:1-35; 20:17-38)

VI. The Family of Nations: The Peoples in Conflicts We See and Serve for Peace

The people of Christ must be known as a people of peace, because the gospel we proclaim brings peace between God and individuals, between individuals, and between peoples. God's purpose is to see diverse peoples flourish as they share their gifts and the earth's resources in just and generous ways. We thank God for many examples of Christian communities and individuals who have embodied the Bible's consistent call to be at peace and to make peace in a world ridden with conflict. We honour them as those who champion the peace of Christ even at the risk to their own reputations and lives. And yet the church has not always honoured the peace of Christ as a defining quality of its existence in the world. There are historical examples of the church's involvement, whether explicit or tacit, in activities and enterprises that espouse violence and promote war. These amount to the scandalising of the gospel it proclaims. What does Christ desire from his church, a people made up of all peoples, called to declare and display Christ in a world torn by conflict?

We affirm God's purpose in Christ to reconcile all peoples through the gospel in a world full of conflict.

77. The Lausanne Movement has played a key role in encouraging mission to "unreached peoples" in recognition of the need for individuals of every culturally distinct people to hear the good news of God's saving rule over all peoples and, hence, over all people. We pray for the day when states ("nations" in the modern sense) that actively seek to prevent those they govern from hearing the good news and that persecute those who hear and believe will cease doing so. We pray this not only for the sake of the individuals but of the peoples of

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which they are a part. Central to God's purposes through the gospel is the reconciliation of all peoples in Christ in a relationship marked by mutual blessing. We affirm that this purpose of God can only be achieved as the hearts of individuals are transformed and filled with love for those whose cultural identity differs from their own.

78. We rejoice together over the many situations in the world where severe conflict has waned and estranged communities have received the opportunity for reconciliation and restoration of harmony. Some examples are the conflict in Northern Ireland, apartheid in South Africa, the Rwandan genocide, and the Sri Lankan civil war, among other conflicts around the world. We celebrate that in some of these settings God used churches, Christian organizations, and individual Christians to champion the cause of peace, whether as frontline peacemakers between conflicting parties or through negotiation, influence, and intercession in the background of the conflict.
79. We are deeply saddened to note that several new armed conflicts and wars—inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and international—have erupted in every region of the world. From over one hundred current armed conflicts in the world, the regions of the Middle East and Africa have seen the highest concentration. At this point in time, the Russia-Ukraine war and the war in Gaza have received the most media attention, yet severe conflicts, such as those in Syria, Myanmar, Sudan, and Ethiopia, are hardly mentioned. We also acknowledge the “forgotten wars” around the world, especially the one on the Korean peninsula. Though they remain out of public view, they are seen by God. We grieve the tragic loss of life these wars exact and the massive destruction to societies, which deny future generations their opportunity to flourish.

We repent of our failures to condemn and restrain violence by remaining silent, by promoting nationalism, or by unjustly supporting conflicts through deficient theological justification.

80. We condemn those who use their influence in world affairs to promote avoidable conflicts and wars, merely to further their economic and political interests. We are saddened by the immense suffering their actions have caused. We believe that they will be held accountable before God on the day of judgement.

81. We call all Christians to serve the vulnerable in contexts of war by pooling our resources



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and supporting the relief efforts of churches and humanitarian organisations that are situated near conflict zones. We also commit to serve as peacemakers, by supporting negotiations aimed at ending conflicts and by calling for justice and reparation for the innocent victims of violence.

82. Christians at various times in history have not only promoted violence and war but also remained silent in the face of such atrocities rather than speaking with prophetic integrity and courage. This is captured in the *Cape Town Commitment*:

We acknowledge with grief and shame the complicity of Christians in some of the most destructive contexts of ethnic violence and oppression, and the lamentable silence of large parts of the church when such conflicts take place. Such contexts include the history and legacy of racism and black slavery; the holocaust against Jews; apartheid; 'ethnic cleansing'; inter-Christian sectarian violence; decimation of indigenous populations; political and ethnic violence; Palestinian suffering; caste oppression and tribal genocide.

83. We echo the *Cape Town Commitment* in calling "for repentance for the many times Christians have been complicit in such evils by silence, apathy or presumed neutrality, or *by providing defective theological justification for these.*" Much of this defective theological justification arises from a failure to distinguish between the "nations" of Scripture and modern "nation-states" and from a failure to think biblically about nationality. In Scripture, nations were culturally distinct peoples whose identities were shaped by historical attachment to loosely defined territory, the worship of a god (or gods) whose rule over a people was exercised through a king. By contrast, "nation-states" (or "nations" in the modern sense) are governments that administer internationally recognized political sovereignty by means of constitutionally ordered institutions and laws, over territories with clearly demarcated borders and the individuals and peoples who live within them. Most modern nation-states govern multiple peoples, that is, groups within their borders who do not derive their collective identity from nationality alone but from ethnicity, race, country of origin, and the many other forms of collective identity that enrich the modern world. In terms of identity, these culturally distinct groups are often closer to the peoples that formed the "nations" of Scripture than to modern states. We affirm that every modern state is accountable to the divine demand for

84. It is critically important that Christians think clearly about biblical peoples when they (e.g. Israelites, Egyptians, Syrians) are associated by name, history, geography, or ancestry with modern nation-states (e.g. Israel, Egypt, Syria) and the peoples who live under the political sovereignty of these states (Jews, Palestinians, Arabs, Copts, Druze, Armenians, Kurds, and many more). God is fulfilling his promises to all these peoples—both Jews and Gentiles—through the good news of Jesus, the Messiah. In the Middle East, and elsewhere, Christian leaders must work to correct theological errors that provide ideological justification for unjust violence against innocent civilians or seek to legitimise violations of international humanitarian law.
85. We lament that some Christians have looked to the state rather than the gospel as the key means for bringing about God's intentions for the world. This takes an especially regrettable form when wed to nationalism—here defined as the belief that every state should have a single, national culture and no other—or ethnonationalism—which is the belief that every ethnic group should have its own state. This is a great evil in our world. We lament that many Christians have been sadly complicit in it, as well as in the claims of ethnic and racial supremacy it fosters. Against this, we assert that no modern state is able to claim or will ever be able to claim to be the special agent of God's saving rule.

We commit to pray and serve peoples in conflict in the world so that the gospel of Jesus Christ might bring true peace to all peoples.

86. As we gather for this historic congress in Incheon, South Korea, we commit to pray for the peace and light of Christ to reign over the Korean peninsula and its people, who were forcibly divided into the politically separated countries of North Korea and South Korea. This wrongful separation and the death and trauma of millions of civilians is known as the Forgotten War. Despite the ceasefire of 1953, the conflict remains unresolved and instability continues to this day in a vicious cycle of rapprochement followed by escalating tensions. Nonetheless, we continue to pray that one day Korea and the Korean people will be one.

87. We call all Christians everywhere to intercede on behalf of those who face the horrors of war and conflict, to pray for the persecuted church, and to labour for peace among the peoples and nations of the world. As Christ's peacemakers, we must build Christian communities that exemplify the peace of Christ and promote a culture of peace as a crucial outworking of our faith in and proclamation of the gospel. In this way, we declare and display Christ together in a world deeply wounded by conflicts.

VII. Technology: The Accelerating Innovation We Discern and Steward

Technology has always been with us. However, the speed at which all technologies are advancing today is unprecedented. As always, such rapid changes to human potential and human behaviour raise moral and ethical concerns in terms of their impact on society and on the planet. Several modern innovations lend themselves to the merging of humans with technology, or the creation of immersive environments in which humans may become subjected to technology's domination. These potentialities arise from areas such as genetic engineering, cloning, biotechnology, mind-uploading, digital media, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence. The Christian worldview informs our responses to and stewardship of these technological advancements. Biblical wisdom is vital to enable the church to be discerning and definitive about the moral and ethical implications of emerging technologies, even as it embraces and stewards the fruit of God-given human creativity and innovation, including in ways that accelerate evangelism and discipleship.

88. "Technology" refers not only to the tools that help enhance human ability and productivity but also to the knowledge and processes of invention and innovation, and even to cultures shaped by technological development and usage. We affirm that technological innovation is an expression of the image of God because human creativity reflects the creativity of God. God created human beings to be technological, that is, to reshape the world so as to promote human flourishing and to care for his creation. As a reflection of God's image, technology is integral to the work and vocations that the Creator has called all human beings to engage in. In this sense, technological activity is not only about solving particular problems or overcoming human limitations, but more importantly about obeying God's mandate to care for others and the world, and to glorify the Creator by our creative abilities.

Sin adversely influences the use and development of technology.

89. We affirm that sin influences all aspects of human activity and so the influence of sin mars not just the use of technology but, in some cases, the innovation itself. We therefore acknowledge that the development and use of technology may hinder human flourishing and care of the natural world in ways that are not immediately obvious. For this reason, technological innovation often gives rise to deep and unsettling anxieties, to misplaced dependence and focus, to harmful manipulation of human fears, to a false sense of security, or to dehumanising manifestations. Because of sin's influence, technology often becomes idolatrous by worship of the created thing rather than the Creator. (Rom 1:25)

90. Many recent innovations have made technology much more manifest in our lives, in society and in the church. Because technology has the capacity to become our immersive environment, it easily distracts us from the fact that we "live and move and have our being" in God. The development and application of all technologies are motivated and shaped by values, many of which run counter to the biblical admonition to actively focus on what is true, noble, and praiseworthy. (Acts 17:28; Phil 4:8)

91. We acknowledge that media technologies have increased the ease with which people may be deceived. We lament the fact that in their use of these technologies Christians have not always “renounced secret and shameful ways” or resisted the temptation to deceive their audience or to distort the message of the gospel for personal gain. Instead, Christians must place people first and truthfully share their stories, witnessing to the power of the gospel in their lives. It is essential that such use of media and communication technologies be underpinned by the truthfulness found in the very gospel being shared. (2 Cor 4:2)
92. We recognise that many Christians, especially the young, are addicted to social and digital media and are in effect being “discipled” by them because of the disproportionate amount of time spent using such technologies. We also acknowledge that, while digital technologies have often been adapted for church growth and evangelistic purposes, efforts to do the same for discipleship have lagged behind. We therefore call all churches and leaders to engage technologies of the digital age for disciple-making. We call for faithful presence in digital spaces, faithful contextualization through connected devices, faithful teaching of digital literacy, and faithful practice of hospitality for forming healthy usage habits.

Christians must discern technologies that are motivated by the idea that neither nature nor human nature should be allowed to limit human freedom.

93. We call Christians to discern carefully genetic technologies, which are based on increasing human power to reshape the very building blocks of the physical human person and life, and which give rise to very real questions about their ethical use and long-term implications. The potential of genetic therapies to address complex medical conditions is immense, but with this technological application come significant questions: Are we reduced to being the product of our genes? What are the implications of inheritable genetic modifications? How much of our humanity is linked to genetic combinations and what are the implications if we reshape ourselves away from that? These raise additional ethical questions about our

94. We also call Christians to discern artificial intelligence technologies, which confront us in different but not less significant ways. The development of digital systems that appear to reason, behave, and act in ways that we would consider distinctly human raises questions regarding the uniqueness of human creativity and rationality. Artificial intelligence raises other questions: Will it become an existential threat to humanity and the wider world? What will its effects be in the workplace and for human work? And how will governments and other actors use it in surveillance and security contexts? As innovation in artificial intelligence accelerates, we call for Christians, especially those who work in this industry, to engage both in the development and use of this technology that honours the Creator and human createdness by promoting safe, equitable, and dignifying applications.

Christians are called to faithfully steward technology.

95. We call all Christians to pursue technological innovation and use with love, justice, and faithfulness, both before God and toward others. We recognise that technology shapes the environments in which humans live, play, relate, and work, as well as how Christians fellowship with one another, pray, read Scripture, grow in faith and character, worship God, and share the gospel. Therefore, Christian development and use of technology must seek the welfare of our neighbours and enemies, promote human flourishing and dignity, having fixed our eyes more fully on the future that awaits us in the new heavens and the new earth. (Mic 6:8; Luke 10:25-37; Gen 9:6; Jas 3:9; Gen 1:31; Rev 21:1-8)
96. As digital technology is negotiated and adapted within church communities today, we see existing church life practices shaped by it along with new church practices emerging from it. Recognizing that digital technology is not monolithic, the church must use its discernment to judge when, how, and where different technologies should be adopted with the focus always on how the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed and honoured in their use. We therefore call Christians and churches to explore and adapt digital technologies for the worship of God, the bridging of divides, the shaping of Christ-honouring culture, and the work of Christian discipleship.

97. Finally, we applaud the church's evangelistic drive that has led to increasing technological adaptation and unprecedented opportunities for sharing the gospel. We delight that technology has extended the reach of the gospel into many regions of the world that have previously been inaccessible, hastened the work of Bible translation, and facilitated the movement and ministry of God's people around the world. We pray that gospel-motivated, faithful stewardship of technology will help a new generation to follow and bear witness to Christ in our increasingly technological world.^[4]

Conclusion

We gather in Incheon, South Korea for the Fourth Lausanne Congress with a high and holy purpose—the mission entrusted to us by Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord of all. In the gospel, God is calling all people everywhere to turn from their sins and receive his gift of new life through the forgiveness of sins. Through the gospel, God is building his church, accomplishing his purpose to form one, holy people, made up of all peoples, reconciled to himself and to one another in Christ. By the gospel, we become disciples of the Lord Jesus and delight in the freedom of living under his saving rule. By the gospel, we make disciples and teach them to obey Christ's commandments. This is our calling and cause. In our pursuit of it, we gladly return to God what he has entrusted to us—our gifts, our resources, our energy, our lives. We humbly profess that any fruit from our labour will be an achievement of his grace.

We listen to our Lord, speaking to us through the Scriptures and calling us to follow him in the way of the cross by the power of the Spirit. We hear him call us to live our lives within the story that culminates in the good news of Christ's death and resurrection and to give our lives so that all may know he is Lord of all. To that end, we hear him call us to be faithful interpreters of his authoritative word. We hear him call us to a renewed commitment to the local church as the only visible manifestation of the church of Christ, the people of peoples formed through faith in Christ from every place and time. We hear him call us to faithfulness in the face of challenges new and old to the faith of the apostles, passed down to us from one generation to the next by men and women whose lives bore witness to its truth. To follow Christ, we follow them.

We return to our places of service in every corner of the world with a renewed commitment to love as he has loved us, to lay aside selfish ambition, to work in gospel partnership, and to grow daily in prayerful dependence on his Spirit and the knowledge of his will, his ways, and his word. So that we may declare with one voice the excellencies of the One who alone is the hope and light of the world. So that we may display with one heart the holiness and love of the One who gave himself for sinners. *So that we, the church, may declare and display Christ together!*

“Help us, O God, we pray, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

Endnotes

1. See the Lausanne Occasional Paper 74, “Do You Understand What You Are Reading? Toward a Faithful Evangelical Hermeneutic of Scripture,” <https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/do-you-understand-what-you-are-reading-toward-a-faithful-evangelical-hermeneutic-of-scripture>. ↑
2. See the Lausanne Occasional Paper 77, “A Theology of the Human Person,” <https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/a-theology-of-the-human-person>. ↑
3. See the Lausanne Occasional Paper 75, “The Formation of Disciples *for* Mission and the Formation of Disciples *as* Mission,” <https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/the-formation-of-disciples-for-mission-and-the-formation-of-disciples-as-mission>. ↑
4. See the Lausanne Occasional Paper 76, “Christian Faith and Technology,” <https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/christian-faith-and-technology>. ↑

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