

WEEK OF  
PRAYER

  
EUROPEAN EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE



# ONWARD WITH THE GREAT COMMISSION

Celebrating **50 Years** of the  
Lausanne Covenant

**14-21 January 2024**



This year's Week of Prayer material was coordinated by the Theology and Dialogue Commission of the Italian Evangelical Alliance.

# International Week of Prayer 2024

## Invitation

*'Rejoice in the Lord always', the apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians. Also, 'Let your gentleness be known to all people!' Indeed, there is a lot to rejoice about. The gospel is being proclaimed and demonstrated nearly everywhere in the world. Does that mean that we don't have things to lament and to worry about?*

*O yes, we can be worried about many things also. The decline of the Church in Europe; polarisation that is growing in our societies; climate change; the continuous influx of refugees; moral decline, etc. How can we just rejoice?*

*Paul's answer is clear: the Lord is near – meaning we are never alone in this world! When Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission, He promised them that He would be with them to the end of the world. It also means: He is coming! He is not far anymore. His Kingdom will break through.*

*Therefore, he continues, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7).*

*Indeed! Evangelicals are Good News People, and we readily share the message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone and yearn to make disciples of all nations. That is why they are also prayer-warriors. 50 years of the Lausanne movement within the evangelical family have taught us that we cannot be witnesses of Jesus Christ without the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Let us join hands locally, nationally, regionally, continentally to pray that that power will keep us close to the Lord, help us to always rejoice in what God is doing in us and through us and to continue making holistic disciples that live Jesus-shaped lives. Not until we have finished the task, but until Jesus comes back.*

*Many Blessings,*

*Connie Main Duarte*



Connie Main Duarte & Jan Wessels

EEA General Secretaries



## Graphic Note

The pictures are the courtesy of the Billy Graham Center Archives, downloaded via the [Lausanne Movement website here](#).

From left to right, top to bottom, photo 1: (l-r) Bishop Festo Kivengere, Bishop A. Jack Dain, Billy Graham, Warwick Olsen and Paul Little answer questions during a press conference at the International Congress on World Evangelisation, July 17, 1974; photo 2: “The Signing of the Covenant: Bishop A. Jack Dain and Billy Graham add the initial signatures to The Lausanne Covenant at the First Congress, July 25, 1974”; photo 3: “The First Congress Begins: Participants arrive for the International Congress on World Evangelisation (Lausanne 74) at the Palais de Beaulieu in Lausanne, Switzerland; photo 4: “Plenary Session: TIME Magazine calls Lausanne 1974 ‘a formidable forum, possibly the widest-ranging meeting of Christians ever held’. Here, participants listen to a speaker at one of the plenary sessions in the large assembly hall. photo 5: Individuals in booths at the back of the hall translated each plenary session at Lausanne into the six official languages of the congress, German, Indonesian, Japanese, French, Spanish, Chinese; central image: Lausanne 1974 Logo.

# Onward with the Great Commission

## Celebrating 50 Years of the Lausanne Covenant

In the evangelical world, Lausanne evokes a Congress for World Evangelization (1974) which changed the life of contemporary evangelicalism. It was attended by 2700 people from more than 150 countries who gave life to a conference of historical importance as it was a meeting point and a relaunch of evangelicals from all over the world. Lausanne also evokes a “movement” that developed and continued in numerous conferences, documents and in two subsequent congresses (Manila 1989 and Cape Town 2010), while the fourth Lausanne congress is scheduled for 2024, in Seoul (Korea). Finally, Lausanne speaks of a “spirit” marked by a holistic and collaborative vision of mission.

One of the fruits of the Lausanne Congress was the Lausanne Covenant, a declaration of evangelical faith which has become a point of reference for the mission of evangelical believers in the world. 50 years later, this International Week of Prayer of the European Evangelical Alliance gives us the opportunity to reconsider the Covenant, wanting to fuel the movement of fidelity to the Gospel and the passion for mission. With the same "spirit" of humility and contrition that characterized Lausanne, we want to pray and commit ourselves to being together on a mission to respond to the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus, revisiting the articles that make up the Lausanne Covenant.

The text of the Lausanne Covenant is here: <https://lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant#cov> .

Other resources:

John Stott, *An Exposition and a Commentary on the Lausanne Covenant*: <https://lausanne.org/content/lop/lop-3>

M.S. Dahle, L. Dahle, K. Jørgensen (edd.), *The Lausanne Movement. A Range of Perspectives* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 2014).

This year's material of the International Week of Prayer was coordinated by the Theology and Dialogue Commission of the Italian Evangelical Alliance. It contains a meditation on the articles of the Lausanne Covenant, topics of prayer and confession. Together, let us pray and celebrate the 50 years of the Lausanne Covenant, moving “Onward with the Great Commission!”

## Recommendations for Hosting a WOP Prayer Meeting

Many local churches in Europe take this Week of Prayer as an opportunity to organise joint prayer meetings, which we would like to encourage. Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind when you plan:

1. Please make sure that ALL evangelical churches are invited and included in your prayer gatherings. Make an extra effort to also reach out to the migrant churches.  
Do you have Roma churches that you could invite?  
Including everyone will make your unity richer and more diverse.
2. Going to several locations will add to your experience, so don't forget about the smaller towns and communities.  
Each place is different and adds colour to your unity.
3. How can you express the vast diversity in your country in a practical way?  
Being open to others, making room for different communities adds surprising perspectives to unity.
4. Is your event relevant and appealing to youth? We encourage you to allow youth to participate and even help you plan and prepare. Unity across generations is essential for the Church.
5. Be creative when planning your prayer meeting. Make sure it is relevant and appealing, and double check that prayer occupies the bulk of time.
6. We urge you to keep a gender balance. Have both men and women working together to create a programme that will help express diversity.
7. Consider the future. Imagine seeing this event grow throughout the years. How can you create this year's prayer event that will draw people back and bring their friends with them?

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## DAY 1: Celebrating the Triune God (art.1)

### BIBLE READING

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)

### THE TRINITARIAN FAITH

Like the creeds of the ancient church faithful to the Word of God, the Covenant of Lausanne begins with an article summarizing mission as the plan of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Lausanne does not give voice to a new religious movement, but to the biblical, apostolic, and historical faith of Christianity: once and forever handed down to the saints (Jude 1:11) and rooted in the Trinitarian profession of faith. The commitment to the mission is organically linked to the common confession in God the Father, Creator of heaven and earth, in God the Son incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, true man and true God, Saviour and Lord of the world, in God the Holy Spirit who gives life, sustains, and regenerates it. Far from being just an "activity" detached from commitments of faith, mission is an integral part of the Christian faith which recognizes that God is the One who has revealed himself in Sacred Scripture. If mission does not arise from here, it may result in a desire for religious dynamism or a humanitarian project, but it is not the Christian mission.

### THE MISSION NOURISHED BY THE TRINITARIAN FAITH

How is the mission that arises from the Trinitarian faith expressed? First, it is a faithful and obedient response to God's mission for the world. Before being missionaries, God is the missionary; he is the Father who loved the world so much that he gave his Son so that whoever believes may belong to his people through the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, whoever believes in him cannot fail to respond to his mission except in a missionary way. God's mission precedes, activates, and directs our mission. Second, mission is a personal response, but always connected to God's people. There are no "freelancers" in the mission or people acting in isolation: we are all responding to God's mission as members of a family, and we do so as part of a people. Just as the mission of the Son is not solitary without the knowledge of the Father and the Holy Spirit, so the mission of the church, nourished by the Trinitarian faith, is always a collective, ecclesial action in which all believers participate as belonging to the one people of God.

### THANKSGIVING

Thank you, Triune God, for being the missionary God who precedes, directs, and supports our mission, correcting it if it goes in the wrong direction. Thank you that you are the ultimate guarantor of the mission.

## CONFESSION

We ask your forgiveness for the times we neglected the call to respond to the missionary God due to lukewarm, intermittent, and listless commitment, or when moved by the desire to "do" without recognizing our dependence on the Triune God.

## REQUESTS

May our mission not be "anonymous" but bear the sign of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That in a world where so many have a "mission", ours may honour and obey You, so that people may believe in Jesus Christ and be saved.



*Leonardo De Chirico*

*Theology & Dialogue Commission of the Italian Evangelical Alliance*



## DAY 2: Entrusting and Submitting to the Word of God (art.2)

### BIBLE READING

"I have kept your word in my heart so as not to sin against you" (Psalm 119:11); "Your testimonies are my inheritance forever, they are the joy of my heart" (Psalm 119:111).

We live in a society that pushes people towards self-realization and success at all costs. As a consequence, people are driven to rely only on themselves and not want to submit to any judgment, because their thoughts and will become the only beacon that guides their actions. The Christian today must therefore be careful not to be dragged by the dominant culture and consider how important it is, instead, to entrust and submit to the Word of God. Luther could say: "I am bound by the Scriptures and my conscience is captive to the Word of God"; and what about us? Why must we trust and submit to God's Word?

The Lausanne Covenant gives voice to the evangelical faith of all times. First, we must recognize that the Word of God is a wonderful love letter that God has left for man to know him: it is the supreme source of God's revelation. It is the ultimate authority in matters of faith and life and is the only sure support for our life. Furthermore, the Word of God is the source of our salvation. In fact, James said: "He willed to give birth to us according to his will through the word of truth" (James 1:18).

In addition, the Word of God protects us against temptation, and we receive the best example from Jesus himself who, when tempted by the devil, answered with the words: "It is written!" Psalm 119:11 exhorts us to keep the Word in our hearts so as not to sin, and in verse 111 of the same psalm we are told that the Word of God is our heritage and our joy.

We are therefore exhorted to humble ourselves before the Word of God knowing that it is a challenging thing to do. Sometimes our life is so hard that we become difficult to teach. Secondly, we have the challenge of our flesh which does not want to listen obediently to Scripture and, instead, wants to submit it to itself. As Christians, we are exhorted to approach this precious Word with an attitude of meekness, carving out a time alone with God where, as disciples, our heart may be taught (Isaiah 50:4), purified and made ready to receive this word which, implanted in the heart, becomes productive and can save our souls, renewing our minds (James 1:21; Romans 12:2).

But how do we show that this Word is important to us? By becoming "doers" of the Word. In fact, James always exhorts us not to make the testimony we receive from Scripture an illusory satisfaction (James 1:22) but, by acting according to its precious guidance, we will be strengthened in the truth by persevering in the Word. Likewise, as church leaders, when firmly anchored to this sure Word, we will be able to exhort according to sound doctrine and be able to convince those who contradict it (Titus 1:9).

As beloved children of God, we want to find our joy in the Word, we want to meditate on it day and night, we want to love it with all our heart. We receive this Word with submission, with a willingness to listen and obey. We too will be able to say with Luther: Here I am! God help me! Amen.

## THANKSGIVING

Thank you, Lord, for having inspired your written Word, for having preserved it and made it circulate throughout the world so that it may be the light that illuminates the path of faith. Thank you for Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh, confirming the written Word.

## CONFESSION

Forgive us, Lord, when we put our word before your Word.

Forgive our conformism to the many words of the world and our rebellion against your Word.

## REQUESTS

If we recognize how precious this Word is, we ask God to remove our sin, and remove the wax that clogs our ears and prevents us from hearing the truth.

May we be humble and meek in listening to the Word, and courageous in obedience.



*Dario De Crescenzo & Cristian Careddu*

*Italian Theological Academy*

## DAY 3: Jesus Christ, the One and Only (art. 3)

### BIBLE READING

"In no one else is salvation; for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Whatever one may think, we live in a world marked by religion. The Lausanne Covenant states that everyone has "some kind of knowledge of God," and the Apostle Peter speaks of "salvation." It is therefore false to imagine that man is alien to God. Rather, he has a certain knowledge of God which, rather than being translated into worship, is suffocated. We delude ourselves that we can handle it on our own. But the question remains in all its weight: how can one be saved?

### TRAGICALLY LOST

Whatever rescue we have in mind, we are lost people. Perdition means being under the righteous wrath of the revealed God and being powerless to find a solution out of it. Between those who have broken the covenant and God there is an unbridgeable abyss for man. Whatever fix you can imagine appears insufficient. A chasm remains between human adjustments and salvation. We need a real solution. A totally different relationship is needed between God and man with respect to the illusion of being able to leverage presumed human capabilities. The lost need a Saviour. Human fixes get us nowhere. Jesus Christ is unique. Even if the widespread tendency is to kneel before everyone, and remain standing before the One, the drama of human perdition remains.

### A UNIQUE SOLUTION

In the first century of the church the exclusivism of the gospel was contradicted by various forms of syncretism. But the church continued to proclaim that "there is salvation in no one else" even in culturally relevant contexts steeped in other categories. Some ways of proclaiming the gospel might have changed, but this diversity converged into a single content and a single Saviour ("one Saviour and one Gospel"). Even today it seems necessary to be inclusive. The more inclusive you are, the more modern you are. Indeed, it is not even thought that it is necessary to be saved. But however different you may be, the question of sin remains ("All men and all women perish by sin"). We have all rejected the knowledge of God by stifling the truth. Praise God for providing a single and sufficient Saviour. So I want to bow before him right now, before the day everyone will have to do it. Today is a day of joy, then it will be a day of bitterness.

## THANKSGIVING

We are grateful to God because the biblical revelation does not hide the deepest predicaments of human existence and does not deceive us with self-importance.

We are grateful to God because the biblical revelation points to the need for real salvation and is not satisfied with partial rescues.

We are thankful to God that biblical revelation announces a fully sufficient Saviour and does not squander salvation in pseudo-salvations.

## CONFESSION

We humble ourselves because we don't always realize the drama of man's perdition before you.

We repent because we don't always see the tragedy of those who live outside the covenant with you.

We ask your forgiveness because we do not always dare to take a clear stand for the only Saviour Jesus Christ.

## REQUESTS

In your church, raise a greater awareness over the lostness of those outside the covenant and an authentic passion for proclaiming the gospel.

Train people to be able to proclaim the gospel in a culturally relevant way, through available channels.

Let other people recognize that between God and man the only mediator is the Lord Jesus.



*Pietro Bognesi*

*Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione*

## DAY 4: Sharing the Gospel Holistically (art. 4-5, 10-11)

### BIBLE READING

“The Lord God’s spirit is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim release for captives, and liberation for prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” (Isaiah 61:1-2, CEB)

The amazing grace, which saves and sanctifies us, introduces us to a new community of men and women who identify with the teachings and practice of the One they call 'Lord and Saviour': Jesus Christ. God also calls us to be his co-workers in proclaiming this Good News, to be his disciples on the journey of life. It is precisely on this journey that we can tell others of our life-changing encounter with the Risen One, demonstrating in the realness of discipleship the only alternative that reconciles us with God, our neighbour, and the whole of creation, free from self-reliance, selfishness, and commitments to a corrupt system of values.

Now, the joyful hope of the Kingdom announced by Jesus also provides us with a new perspective on how to approach the journey before us. Indeed, far from being an idle expectation, we are rather called to embody our Lord's principles of love and justice, living our vocation responsibly and engaging in the redemptive work of the One who makes "all things new" (Revelation 21:5). When we learn to be mindful of the needs around us, when we know how to be inclusive and welcoming, when we care about those who are relegated to the margins of society, then we can be sure that we are on the right side of history (Matthew 25:35-40).

In all this, God has given us the gift of creativity, so that we learn to communicate and be relevant to the time and place in which we live. In this dynamic relationship between Gospel and culture, it is good to remember how much the Scriptures encourage us to actively seek the renewal of our principles, without which we would inexorably end up conforming to our context. On the contrary, when the Spirit has the freedom to work in us, we are empowered to "examine everything carefully and hang on to what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21), to discern what is right and what is good, according to a deep change that results in new conduct (Romans 12:2).

What has been said so far leads us to consider how essential it is to “be ready to defend [our] hope" (1 Peter 3:15), encouraging men and women to prepare themselves responsibly for the work to which God has called them. All this requires a clear understanding of our faith, which must be grounded in Scripture and, at the same time, capable of recognising the historical and theological background of our traditions, applying reason, and considering our experience according to the guidance of the Spirit. Only in this perspective can we expect our communities to become capable of sharing the Gospel in a holistic way.

## THANKSGIVING

Our God, we adore you for your love and justice, for the amazing grace you have shown us in welcoming us into your holy people. We ask your forgiveness for all those times when we have let our pride and prejudices hinder our communion and stand in the way of a faithful witness to your Gospel. We thank You for the hope You have placed in our hearts, for the living and effective Word You have left us, and for the sure direction of Your Spirit. Help us to live the freedom you have given us with responsibility, as we are regenerated by your redemption and enabled to love you and our neighbour with our whole selves! Amen.

## REFLECTIONS

Evangelisation - How have I sought to make disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ? Have I been able to share his Gospel, rather than my personal beliefs?

Responsibility - Has my commitment to others been a witness to my living faith through works? Did my actions reflect the love and justice of the Kingdom of God?

Awareness - Have I allowed the Holy Spirit to lead me in discerning what needs to be changed in my way of life? How much have I invested in my discipleship training to be effective in taking part in God's mission?

## REQUESTS

For a renewed passion for evangelisation. Let us join God's mission!

For an ever-greater witness of love and justice, to see our neighbour with Jesus' compassionate eyes.

For all those who have a vocation, who wish to invest in their theological and ministerial training to serve the Kingdom of God.



*Matteo Ricciardi*

*European Nazarene College*

## DAY 5: Together in Mission (art. 5-6)

### BIBLE READING

"As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." (John 17:18)

In mission the role of the church is central. God has chosen to fulfil his mission through the mission of the church.

**There is no true evangelization without Christian integrity** (Art. 6). If there is no Christian integrity, i.e., harmony between saying and doing, preaching and action, proclamation and service, the church is a stumbling block to evangelization. The Gospel of Christ saves all life, breaks down the idols of the soul, of politics, and of the economy, transforms the heart, mind, hands, and culture, and invites us to reach out to our generation announcing that in Christ alone is salvation and victory over sin and death. Integrity also means that fidelity to the God of all and only Scripture is the beacon that must guide our evangelization.

**Evangelization is impossible without the unity of the body of Christ** and without collaborative actions (Articles 7-8). The first does not depend on us: it is Christ who has earned it and who keeps it in the Spirit. It is distinct from any human brotherhood because it is founded on the sacrifice of Christ and on the truth of his Word. Unity has already been given to us and must be shown in a concrete way so that the mandate entrusted to us is effective in reaching the "ends of the earth", not only geographically but also socially and culturally, and so that it is sustainable because it is carried out by sharing spiritual gifts and materials that the Father has given us.

**Evangelization is urgent and the mission field vast (art. 9)**. When Evangelical representatives met in Lausanne in 1974, radical historical and social changes were underway throughout the world. Not everything was clear and outlined, the trajectories of history and of nations were mostly unpredictable but one thing was certain and urgent: the evangelization of the world. Today we find ourselves once again at a turning point in the history of humanity: the environmental crisis is at its peak, climate change is giving rise to an increasing number of catastrophic events, new pandemics are spreading globally, political and cultural conflicts are multiplying and arriving at the gates of Europe, refugees have reached impressive numbers in every area of the planet, new technologies impose themselves with absolutely new ethical challenges, communication and information have lost credibility and the generation gap seems to have become an abyss. 50 years later, facing a similar scenario, there is no more urgent watchword and imperative than this to be pursued together: evangelize. Our mission is not only urgent, our mission field is vast because there is not an inch of the universe over

which Christ cannot claim his lordship. We are to take the gospel to all ends of the earth and to all corners of life.

## THANKSGIVING

We adore the Father who sent the Son into the world for the salvation of all people. We adore the Son who sends each of his own to announce the good news of the Gospel. We adore the Holy Spirit who by His power sends us to the whole world.

## CONFESSION

We ask forgiveness for our lives and those of our churches which have often been stumbling blocks to evangelism.

We ask forgiveness for the scandals, for our compromised lives and for not having behaved "worthy of the Gospel."

We ask forgiveness for having forgotten our vocation to be a holy people, a radically different community.

## REQUESTS

Let us pray to the Father in the name of the Son to fill this generation with the Holy Spirit, overflowing with zeal for proclaiming His Word, abundant in the knowledge of Him, in discernment and justice to understand and be present in the world.

We pray that the Lord will keep us in unity and love in Christ's sacrifice, so that the world will believe that you sent us.

We pray that the Spirit gives us wisdom and intelligence to collaborate locally and globally for the evangelization of our cities and of the whole world.



*Lucia Stelluti*

*Vice-President of the Italian Evangelical Alliance*



## DAY 6: The Cost of Discipleship and Mission (art. 12-13)

### BIBLE READING

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

### DISCIPLESHIP

The Lausanne Covenant in art. 12 refers to the spiritual warfare that involves us all, to the tactics that the devil uses inside and outside the church to distance us from the Truth, to the risk that we all run of manipulating others for our own personal gain and therefore, to the need to wear the armour of God to watch with discernment for the safeguarding of the gospel. The Church must be in the world but the world must not be in the Church. Article 13, on the other hand, presents us with the cost that Christians are often forced to pay in those countries that deprive them of their religious freedom, and invites others to support them in prayer without being intimidated. We want to fight against injustice and remain faithful to the gospel whatever the cost. Up until now we have been speaking of discipleship from the point of view of the mentor, the Master or the one who makes other disciples. In reality, the term discipleship refers to one's condition as a disciple. This implies a double responsibility: towards others and towards oneself. Furthermore, the root of disciple is the same as the word discipline, from the Latin "discere", to learn! Following Jesus implies a renunciation of oneself and an exercise of discipline to fulfil the will of the One who called us.

### DISCIPLESHIP AND MISSION

The words of the Matthew 28 passage are nothing more than the passing of the baton to us who have decided to follow the Master and are the essence of the meaning of mission. Once the baton has been grasped, the athlete (disciple) must look forward to reach the goal and it is certainly not a walk in the park. Along the way (Mission) there are obstacles that risk making us fall and it is there that we can make a difference by putting into practice all the spiritual exercises (discipline) that give us the strength to continue the journey. We must be equipped, vigilant, determined, circumspect, faithful, and not allow ourselves to be distracted by the "shortcuts" which could lead us astray and prevent us from passing the baton to those who are waiting for us on the track. Too often we have seen "athletes" use performance-enhancing drugs (false gospel, manipulation, scriptural distortion) for their own personal triumph. We are aware that along the way some find it more difficult and apparently remain behind (tortured, imprisoned) and we want to work for their liberation by continuing the journey with trust in Jesus, the Disciple and Master par excellence who has promised never to leave us.

## THANKSGIVING

For all the Lord's disciples, so that they are aware of their double responsibility (teaching and practicing) without giving in to compromises in the face of the difficulties they encounter along the way.

## CONFESSION

Forgive us Lord, for all the times we've lost sight of the goal, for the times we felt tired and looked for shortcuts without putting our trust in you.

## REQUESTS

For all the brothers and sisters who are persecuted because of their fidelity to the Gospel: Lord, protect them, free them, and give them the strength to face challenges by continuing to glorify your name.

For the rulers of nations, so that they may guarantee freedom of thought and conscience and the freedom to practice and propagate religion according to God's will, as also expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



*Carine Franca*

*Central District of the Italian Evangelical Alliance*

## DAY 7: Patient Perseverance (art. 14-15)

### BIBLE READING

"And first the gospel must be preached among all the nations." (Mark 13:10)

The church is waiting for the glorious return of its Lord, but it does not wait passively, it waits in action and expectation. There is an urgency that transpires in the words of the evangelist: "the gospel must", it is necessary, it is indispensable that before the great day the gospel be preached to all peoples. This is an immense work, which cannot be accomplished with our poor means, with our miserable words or our human insufficiency. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who can make a single believer and the church as a whole a host of credible, effective and convincing witnesses (Acts 1:8).

In the Lausanne Covenant we read that "The Father sent his Spirit to bear witness to the Son; without this testimony our own testimony is useless". This is true, because it is the Holy Spirit who instils this urgency into our hearts: "the Gospel must be preached". It is not something that can be postponed until tomorrow, in the illusion that tomorrow will be easier than today. Today is the day of salvation. The great evangelist Dwight Lyman Moody had begun preaching to his congregation a series of six sermons on the life of Jesus. On Sunday, October 8, 1871, he completed the fifth sermon as he left the church with this question: "What then shall I do with Jesus called Christ?" (Matthew 27:22). Then he concluded by telling them: "I would like you to take this text home with you and turn it over in your mind during the week; next Saturday we will come to Calvary and to the cross, and we will decide what to do with Jesus of Nazareth". That same night a devastating fire destroyed much of the city of Chicago, Moody's church, and his home, leaving hundreds dead and 100,000 homeless. From that day forward, every message he preached would end with a plea for salvation.

"Come, Lord Jesus" is the cry of the church of all ages; "keep up the good work" is the echo that proceeds from his holy presence. To reach all peoples, before planning, before preparing strategies, before testing new methods of communication, let our prayer be the one that the Master has suggested to us, a prayer in His will, a prayer that has already been engraved in the pages of the Gospel, his yes, his Amen because "If you, then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke 11:13).

### THANKSGIVING

We thank the Lord Jesus for promising to come a second time. Our confidence is that God will make his kingdom perfect, and we eagerly await that day and the new heavens and new earth where his will and righteousness will reign forever. Meanwhile, we rededicate ourselves to the service of Christ and our neighbour in joyful submission to his authority over our whole life.

## CONFESSION

We ask forgiveness for the times we have lost hope of Christ's return and for falling into empty expectations of God's promises.

## REQUESTS

We pray for a visitation from the sovereign Spirit of God, that his fruit may appear in all his people. Only then will we see the whole church become an effective tool in his hands, to the point that the whole earth can hear his voice.



*Valerio Mungai*

*Elim Bible School*

## DAY 8: Onward with the Great Commission, from Lausanne 1974 to Seoul 2024

### BIBLE READING

"Having found a pearl of great value, he went away and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:46). "His master said to him: 'All right, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful in a few things, I will appoint you over many things; enter into the joy of your Lord'" (Matthew 25:31).

By comparing the parable of the pearl of great price with that of the talents, two simple conclusions can be drawn. First, that giving value to a precious pearl like the Gospel represents a simple fidelity ("faithful in a few things") quite similar to that expressed by the good and faithful servant. The more we understand the value and greatness of the Gospel, the easier it will be to place it at the centre of our lives and of all our projects. Furthermore, if a pearl like the Gospel is to be placed at the centre of the life of the believer and of the church, it cannot remain buried as a memory of the past, but will constitute the pivot of every activity, the spark of every occasion, the salt of every context.

The Lausanne Covenant is a significant reflection of the Gospel. It establishes an adequate response to the call of the missionary God, a clear submission to the Word of God, with the aim of proclaiming that "in no one else is salvation" if not in Christ Jesus. And if He is recognized both as "Lord" of our actions, and as the "Saviour" of our entire being, then we will want to pass on the baton of the Gospel, bringing it to all the ends of the earth and in all the spheres of life.

Realizing how precious the Lausanne Covenant is, it will be natural ("faithful in a few things") to place it at the centre of our spiritual life. But even here discernment, fidelity and perseverance are required of Evangelicals. Will we be good and faithful servants? Will we be able to embody the integral mission that the Covenant affirms?

By the grace of God, the trajectory followed up to now, with the Manila Manifesto (1989) and the Cape Town Commitment (2010) have testified to a certain fidelity, but our desire and our prayer, also in view of the next appointment in Seoul (2024), is that this spiritual heritage can continue in its entirety to the glory of God for the progress of the Church in the 21st century.

### THANKSGIVING

We thank the Lord for the gift of the Lausanne Covenant, certainly the most important evangelical document of the last century. We thank the Lord for the movement that has arisen from the Lausanne Congress, and for the declarations Manila and Cape Town produced subsequently. We thank God for the Evangelical Alliance which since 1846 has embodied the same spirit of evangelical cooperation.

## CONFESSION

We ask forgiveness for not having valued the gift of the Lausanne Covenant, out of short-sightedness or superficiality. We ask forgiveness for having forgotten or omitted some of its parts, interpreting the evangelical testimony without integrity.

## REQUESTS

Let us invoke the Lord for the congress in Seoul, asking that it be an occasion for renewed fidelity to the Gospel and a new missionary vigour.

We pray that the Lord will grant discernment, guidance, and wisdom to the whole Church and to global movements such as the Evangelical Alliance.



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