

## INTRODUCTION TO COVENANT

*John Stott*

The Lausanne Covenant is a very solemn personal commitment. It commits us to concrete and sacrificial action. It can be signed with integrity only after careful thought and prayer. Some of you may need longer in which to consider it and will send in your signed card within the next few days after you've left. Others may not feel able to sign it at all. Each of us must make his own conscientious decision before God and each who signs it signs not in any representative capacity but as an individual member of the body of Christ. Nevertheless, it expresses, so far as we have been able to secure, the consensus of the Congress. It is, therefore, now my privilege to invite you, indeed to encourage you, if the Holy Spirit so directs your conscience, to add your signature to the Lausanne Covenant which binds us to pray together, to plan together, to work together for the evangelization of the whole world. And first, Dr. Billy Graham as honorary chairman of the Congress and Bishop Jack Dain as chairman of the planning committee, who have themselves reached a conscientious decision in this matter, will affix their signatures to the Covenant.

In that same spirit, we now invite those of you who have your Covenants with you and who wish to, to sign and we will maintain silence for one minute for this purpose.

I would now pray in the closing words of the Covenant in the conclusion that God may help us, each one, by his grace and for his glory to be faithful to this, our Covenant. Amen. Alleluia.

## THE LAUSANNE COVENANT

### *Introduction*

We, members of the Church of Jesus Christ, from more than 150 nations, participants in the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, praise God for his great salvation and rejoice in the fellowship he has given us with himself and with each other. We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization. We believe the Gospel is God's good news for the whole world, and we are determined by his grace to obey Christ's commission to proclaim it to all mankind and to make disciples of every nation. We desire, therefore, to affirm our faith and our resolve, and to make public our covenant.

### *1. The Purpose of God*

We affirm our belief in the one eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the glory of his name. We confess with shame that we have often denied our calling and failed in our mission, by becoming conformed to the world or by withdrawing from it. Yet we rejoice that even when borne by earthen vessels the Gospel is still a precious treasure. To the task of making that treasure known in the power of the Holy Spirit we desire to dedicate ourselves anew.

(Isa. 40:28; Matt. 28:19; Eph. 1:11; Acts 15:14; John 17:6, 18; Eph. 4:12; I Cor. 5:10; Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 4:7)

### *2. The Authority and Power of The Bible*

We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written Word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God's Word to accomplish his purpose of salvation. The message of the Bible is addressed to all mankind. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God.

(II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:21; John 10:35; Isa. 55:11; I Cor. 1:21; Rom. 1:16; Matt. 5:17,18; Jude 3; Eph. 1:17,18; 3:10,18)

### *3. The Uniqueness and Universality of Christ*

We affirm that there is only one Savior and only one Gospel, although there is a wide diversity of evangelistic approaches. We recognize that all men have some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature. But we deny that this can save, for men suppress the truth by