

OPENING GREETINGS

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In our day, the world is growing smaller. Distances have been shortened. Highways, railways, and airlines take us long distances to great sports events, music festivals, and congresses in a few hours. By radio or TV we can be observers instantly to events which happen thousands of miles away. International games find millions of people joining the excitement simultaneously.

Never before has the world known such unparalleled exchange. However, in reality, this interaction is only an illusion. It is only a dream, a bubble. Its presence magnifies the discordancies, the distortions, the basic flaws from which the world's tensions stem. Instead of uniting, the technology which abolished distance and brought physical unity increases conflicts in geometric proportions in relation to the concentration of the people in large masses.

In such a time as this, when we are all so accessible to each other, when research and creativity have reached such peaks, one would expect that our intellectual achievements would overcome prejudices and passions. Instead, divisions and dissensions reign. Didn't Nietzsche announce in his strange prediction "a twentieth century in which a nationalism of animals with horns would demand the selection of virile virtues"?

We have already had experiences from which we have not learned, but rather collective self-destruction has been stimulated. One cannot get rid of the impression that many of the diplomatic colloquies are nothing less than elegant dances with the polite purpose of deferring the brutal shock which is stubbornly approaching.

Therefore we appreciate the calling which gathers you here, the will of one spirit and of one new heart, a fraternity based on the evangelical teaching.

Surely we could not fail to notice that the Gospel has served as pretext, as excuse, as alibi for many varied secular causes, for contestable confrontation, for partisan intransigences springing violently from one side or the other, heavier loaded with intolerance than the purely political options.

But we have also the certainty, that clinging to its essence, its purity, its simplicity of teaching, its concern for the welfare of others, its awareness of the relativity of human concepts, Christianity goes beyond ideological quarrels, interests, and partisan loyalties. It can unite men in a spirit of mutual respect, consideration, and love for our neighbor, even though he may be very different from ourselves.

It is in this hope that I bring greetings and best wishes to your meeting from the Federal Council.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON WORLD EVANGELIZATION

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Those who have been responsible for drawing up the program of this Congress have asked specifically that at this point in the opening service we should face the spiritual challenge and implications of our presence in this hall. We have come vast distances, we have incurred considerable expense — either ourselves or through the sacrificial generosity of others — and we are utilizing at least two weeks of valuable time.

Onlookers may well ask, "For what purpose?" In a few minutes we are going to take part in a solemn act of personal dedication and commitment. May I, however inadequately, try to suggest how we may make our presence at this Congress spiritually effective so that our act of dedication is more meaningful.

The Congress has from the outset been planned not as an isolated event, but as a working Congress involving a continuing process. This process began many months ago with the arrival of the first major papers, has continued and will continue during these days together and will reach forward to the days and months that lie ahead when we have returned to our homes and we seek to utilize the inspiration and insight which we have acquired.

May I first express a very genuine word of gratitude on behalf of the Congress committees for the magnificent response from participants to the circulated papers, for this has assured us of your deep involvement in the Congress. I would now plead for this same degree of involvement to continue during our days together here in Lausanne. You are here, most of you, as participants. You are not delegates. This word "participant" was chosen with great care for two major reasons. First, to avoid any suggestion that this was a legislative body of elected delegates. It is no such thing. Secondly, because if you are participants and you are true to your title, then you must participate. The Congress has no legislative mandate. It depends upon the spiritual, moral and personal influence of each individual participant. And the effectiveness of the Congress, under God, depends upon the deep personal participation of every participant and observer.

The Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians speaks of the vital subject of the growth of the Body of Christ. He points out here and elsewhere that this growth depends upon three vital facts. First, *a right relationship with the head of the Body*, that is Christ. Second, *a right relationship with the other members of the Body*, for he speaks of these members being fitly joined together. This, incidentally, Paul reminds us in the previous verse involves "speaking the truth in love" and I would plead that we would always seek to do this during our days together. The third vital truth, however, and the one that I want to emphasize at this moment is

the personal responsibility of each member of the Body for the growth of the Body. The authorized version speaks in that passage of "that which every joint supplieth." We each one are joints and parts in this Congress. The growth of the Body of Christ in these days as we consider the vital task of world evangelization will depend primarily not upon the Congress as a whole, but upon each and every one of us. We each one have a vital contribution to make and I would ask that you, by God's grace, will seek to be a true participant by making your own personal contribution to the Congress.

You may rightly ask, "How can I best fulfill all that is required of me as a participant?" and I would like to make a few practical suggestions.

First, in your own life, I would urge a deliberate discipline. Insure an adequate pattern of sleep. There will be every temptation to stay up late, talk with your friends, and the Congress itself with its own program will make very heavy physical demands upon you. The meal breaks will give you ample time for fellowship, so I would urge that you guard your sleep, remembering that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.

Two, I would urge that you maintain your own life of personal communion with God. It will be all too easy to let it slide during days when you are involved in so many meetings and there are so many corporate acts of prayer. These, however, do not replace your own walk with God and this will mean an earlier rising so that you can also enter into the corporate times of prayer with fellow participants in your hotels and dormitories.

Three, I would ask that you would seek to arrive at all sessions of the Congress slightly ahead of the time when they commence so that you can have that quiet moment of spiritual reflection as a preparation of heart and mind for all that follows. In this connection I would, however, point out that you need exercise and, where possible, I would suggest that you utilize the opportunities of walking to the Congress or walking through the Congress grounds after the meals.

Four, I would further plead that you would accept the disciplines of involvement in the whole of the program as far as this is physically possible. This will involve your meeting in the small groups such as the national strategy groups, and I would hope that you would each one feel that you are able to contribute in these groups. It would be profitable in this connection if each evening participants could read the papers which will be discussed the following day.

Five, throughout the Congress, I would urge you to be alert, looking for those lessons which the Holy Spirit has to teach you personally in the whole task of the fulfillment of world evangelization. Try constantly to be thinking of what action you and others associated with you can take for the achievement of the spiritual goals of the Congress in your own church and organization. Action should always be the goal of our thinking and discussion, while always recognizing our total dependence upon the Holy Spirit.

Six, finally, I would plead that we all recognize that Lausanne's impression of this World Congress on evangelization is going to be formulated not by the words we speak here in the Congress, but by the lives which we live in our hotels and dormitories, in the buses and trains, as we

buy our papers and stamps. It is my hope and prayer that each one of us will reflect something of the beauty of Jesus.

I have already made it clear that this is not a legislative Congress of delegates, but it is anticipated that the Holy Spirit will guide and lead us into ways and means of translating our vision, our hopes and our goals into concrete action.

A small group of those with special skills will be working from the outset on a Congress statement — it will probably take the form of a "Lausanne Covenant" which you will all be able to sign if you so wish. It is planned that draft copies of this statement will be prepared during the early days of the Congress and put into your hands, probably on Friday or Saturday so that you can make appropriate comments which can be returned and studied by the drafting committee before the printing of the final statement. This will be put into your hands on Wednesday evening for signature before you leave. This will have personal implications for each one of us as we commit ourselves afresh to our Lord in the task of world evangelization. The statement will also carry our message to the wider world.

It is anticipated that in several of the functional groups concerned with theological training, evangelism, cross-cultural missions, mass communications, relief and Christian aid, there may well come new initiatives for closer cooperation and coordination. We shall await with keen interest the reports which come to us from these areas and also from the regional groups at the end of the Congress.

Thus far, I have mainly dealt with the practical aspects of our involvement in the life of the Congress and I close by sharing this spiritual burden which lies upon my own heart. Our preparation and response is not only one of mind and of body, but it must be from the heart. Two of the early disciples said, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us in the way?" And I long that our hearts, here in Lausanne, may burn within us during these days as the risen Christ walks and talks with us in the way. There are four distinct emphases that have been laid upon my own heart which I can only share with you as we now move into the Congress.

The first is the basic need for what the Berlin Congress hymn called "the vision of a dying world." There must be a note of urgency in all that we do, not only because we are acting in direct response to our Lord's command, but because of the vastness of the task which confronts us and the shortage of the time.

Millions have never even heard — and we need to ponder whether we have been seized with the urgency of the task and the spiritual plight of the lost. Whenever our Lord saw men and women in all their need, we read that he was moved with compassion. One longs that we too may meet here with hearts that are touched with that same compassion. While serving in the Navy, I was introduced to the writings of Miss Amy Wilson Carmichael of Dohnavur and a story she told in one of her early books was one of the strong motivating influences which took me out of the Navy and sent me as a missionary to the India of which she wrote. I have never forgotten the words and the picture which she conjures in her writing.

Miss Carmichael, lying in her bed and hearing the constant clanging of the temple bells, saw in her mind a vivid picture. At her feet a precipice

broke sheer down into space. Flowing over the precipice were streams of people from every direction. All were totally blind and they made straight for the precipice edge. Some screamed as they suddenly realized themselves falling. Others went quietly without a sound.

Along the edge of the precipice, there were a few sentries set at intervals, but the intervals were far too great to be effective. The people fell in their blindness unwarned, and the grass around them seemed blood red.

Then she saw, as it were, in the background a group of people sitting in a lovely garden beneath the trees and they were making chains of little flowers — daisy chains. They seemed occasionally disturbed by the piercing cries. When one of their number wanted to go and help, they held him back and said, "Why get so excited? You must wait for a definite call. You haven't finished your daisy chains." One girl stood alone at the edge of the precipice waving people back — her parents' call reminded her that furlough was due, but no one was sent to fill her gap and over the precipice flowed a veritable waterfall of humanity. And then the people in the garden sang a hymn.

And then came the sound of a million broken hearts crying out in one full drop — one sob — and a horror of darkness was upon me, for I knew what it was — the cry of blood.

I heard the voice of the Lord, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood calls out unto me from the ground." So wrote Miss Carmichael.

The vision of a dying world. This is something that must be in our minds and hearts as we together face the whole task of world evangelization. Are we prepared to ask God to give us in these days such a vision of a dying world?

My next three points of emphasis are all found in the short but remarkable account of the birth of the missionary movement as recorded in the 13th chapter of Acts. I find much food for thought as I note what happened in the church at Antioch when this very significant missionary outreach took place in the early church. There were three component parts in that happening.

The first — as at Pentecost itself, was *the divine activity of the Holy Spirit*. Verse 2, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the *Holy Spirit* said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

Verse 4, "So they, being sent by *the Holy Spirit* went down to Seleucia." Note, it was *the Holy Spirit* who spoke to the Church. It was *the Holy Spirit* who called Barnabas and Saul. It was *the Holy Spirit* who sent Barnabas and Saul.

I thank God for every insight, every lesson, every example, every statistic that will better enable us to achieve our God-given task more effectively. But I say without hesitation, these alone will not suffice. We, as the church at Antioch, must above all else hear the voice of the Spirit.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

We, like Barnabas and Saul, need to be both called and sent by that same Holy Spirit as we personally become involved in varying ways and

in varying degrees in this task of evangelization. The sovereignty of the Holy Spirit in every heart and life, in every church and organization, is the paramount need of the hour.

Secondly, there was right in the heart of that remarkable incident *worship and prayer*. "While they were worshipping the Lord, the Holy Spirit said . . ." "After fasting and *prayer*, they sent them off." This first missionary church was a church in which worship and prayer were absolute essentials. Can we seek personally and corporately over these ten days to emulate the church at Antioch and seek to be found in that spirit of worship and prayer? Can I specifically suggest that you, each one, seek to pray with at least one other person daily?

Thirdly, and finally, there was one further factor present which the divine author of Scripture has not only included but repeated twice in the space of two verses.

Verse 2. "While they ministered to the Lord *and fasted*. . ."

Verse 3. "*After fasting* and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off . . ."

I believe firmly that at certain times and under certain circumstances, fasting has a legitimate place in the life of the believer.

But here, I am much more concerned with the spiritual principle which is illustrated, namely *sacrifice*. The church at Antioch meant business. They were prepared to go without that to which they were legitimately entitled, be it leisure or food or recreation, in the interest of the Gospel. The first missionary church was characterized by sacrifice and every missionary church since has, in some measure, carried the same authenticating marks.

Do we imagine for one moment that we can come here and share in a Congress on world evangelization and ever be quite the same again? The sovereign operation of the Holy Spirit in our lives over these days may and almost certainly will involve unexpected and costly demands. What price am I, what price are you, prepared to pay? Do you recall the words of Thomas when he said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, I will not believe"? There is a sense in which the world is saying the same thing. Is there the equivalent of the print of the nails in my hands, in yours, or are our hands soft and clean because they have never grappled with sin and suffering? Our task of world evangelization is nothing less than spiritual warfare as we seek, under God, to turn man from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God. It was our Lord who, confronted with just such a situation, said, "This kind goeth not out, but by prayer and fasting."