



Lausanne III at Cape Town 2010: God's Global Church on Mission

By Gary Fujino

They sing a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation.

(Rev. 5:9, NRSV)

Take 4200 "participants" from the global Protestant church¹, representing 198 countries, countless denominations, mission agencies and "strains" of evangelical Christianity, put them together for eight days in one of the most racially, culturally, geographically, and socio-economically diverse cities on the planet, and what do you get? The third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (LCWE) held in Cape Town, South Africa, from October 16th to 24th, 2010. This was a groundbreaking convocation and, historically, the most representative gathering of the church ever—not only theologians and academicians but missionaries and mission leaders, lay persons, media, arts, business, medical, relief and social justice groups were also represented. What results from Lausanne III will likely shape the paths of world mission for the next few decades, perhaps even for the 21st century itself. Michael Oh, president of Christ Bible Seminary in Nagoya, and head of the Younger Leaders

Movement for Lausanne said, "I believe Cape Town 2010 will be remembered as an historic moment in the modern history of the church." I would tend to agree and the passage of time and the pursuant movement of God's global church over the next years will reveal the verity of our present confidence!

Where to begin? "Breathtaking" is the singular word I would use to describe the Congress. In Japanese, the term is *iki wo nomu youna* (lit., "like drinking in breath") and that it was. One could not help but drink in the luminescent atmosphere of African beauty, warmth and hospitality, the true joyfulness and humility apparent in worship and interpersonal relationships, the fascinating backgrounds of those attending, as well as the scope, the strength and the variety of God's global church on mission. Long ago, Swiss neo-orthodox theologian Emil Bruner exclaimed, "the church exists by mission as a fire exists by burning." The flame of the Spirit was readily felt in Cape Town and the press of God's mission on human activity, the *missio dei*, as it is called, was one of the major themes at Lausanne III, "God is on the move." This was actualized through performing arts and media of Hollywood or Broadway quality, by incredibly varied

music in a plethora of languages and arrangements, with proclamation and Bible study, in "multiplex" lectures and in "dialogue session" interactive seminars, even through optional day trip tours to do mission on our "off day." One could not help but have one's breath taken away by the intensity of the schedule from 8:30 a.m. until 9:15 p.m., every day, and the weighty issues tackled, such as reaching the unreached; human trafficking; poverty; HIV/AIDS; biblical illiteracy *in mission practice*; racial and geo-political reconciliation needs within the church; bold and selfless witness despite war, genocide, and great suffering; emerging crises in discipleship for youth and women globally; as well as the willingness of so many to die for the name of Christ, to name but a few! Drinking all that in, breathing such an atmosphere day in and day out, overwhelming as it was, truly gave pause. Breathtaking, to be sure.

Person-to-person interaction at Cape Town was like a gigantic, sprawling, live, human "Internet" with constant "clicking" and "flipping of pages" between people. Standing in line for a meal, sitting on a tour bus, grabbing an elevator, or "randomly" being in worship, any and all of these could lead to a "divine appointment," a chance to net-



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work, a new friend to meet. Groups formed spontaneously. There would constantly be spur of the moment “encounters,” “chance meetings,” yet they would turn out to be quite purposeful. Remember, all of us were constantly navigating in and out through more than 4000 people all the time! Standing in line for supper I bumped into Phil and Anda Foxwell from Tokyo. Sitting on a tour bus, I sat beside a young woman named Jena Lee Nardela, Executive Director of Blood:Water Mission, the humanitarian arm of the Jars of Clay singing group (www.bloodwatermission.com). Jena leads a staff of eleven and has raised 1-2 million dollars a year for the past seven years in helping to drill 900 wells for safe drinking water throughout Africa. She is 28 years old. Riding an elevator I met a man who lives ten miles from where my daughter, Ruth, goes to college in South Carolina. During worship one night, I sat down early at an empty table. Hearing English being spoken behind me, I turned around to meet an adult MK (“missionary kid”) from Brazil, from my same mission, who is a mutual acquaintance to someone in Sao Paolo I had been trying to get in touch with! Another day, I was looking for a seat in the front of the auditorium when I bumped into a friend whom

I hadn’t seen in 23 years! Even going to the restroom (!) or walking to and from the Cape Town International Convention Center (CTICC), brought new “divine encounters.” A true sense of mutuality and fellow-

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ship pervaded our time at Lausanne III.

There were some “notables” for the week, both positive and negative. Well known was the notable absence of 200+ mainland Chinese brothers and sisters from LCWE

III because of governmental restrictions. Not so well known, but very significant, was the spiritual warfare that Lausanne experienced in the form of a variety of Internet cyber-attacks, which were averted only because of round the clock prayer and God’s providential provision of two cyber-experts from India among the attendees. Notable also was the very positive reception of the Lausanne delegates by both CTICC staff and the surrounding Capetonian community. A strong, upbeat Christian witness was very apparent and appreciated by the city in which we met. Additionally, in an area of the world where crime is quite high, security excelled and few incidents were reported.

The programming of Lausanne III was modeled after the triennial Urbana student conference. By far, one of the highlights for almost everyone was what was called “table talk time.” In a conference of more than four thousand, over 700 tables of six were set up together in the same auditorium. This made a huge meeting “small” and “intimate.” We spent 25 percent of our time together, six at each table, the whole week. That made the morning Ephesians Bible study and the second morning plenary discussion time intimate, and easy to share in and personal-

ize. Many tablemates became fast friends, setting up Facebook groups, exchanging email addresses, and going out for meals or partaking in communion together, as our table did. Prayer and sharing from the heart were what “made” these table talk times into something more than a group exercise. I anticipate keeping up with my tablemates for a long time!

Even having now shared all this with you, some might still be thinking, why Lausanne? Or, why Lausanne again? And why Cape Town? Why now? Glad you asked! The answers below highlight why Cape Town 2010 was such an important convocation of world Christians.

First, a brief history. Lausanne gets its name from the village in Switzerland where the first Congress was held in 1974. This initial meeting, convened by Billy Graham, brought together world leaders representative of the evangelical Body of Christ at that time. Perhaps the most famous outcome of that Congress is the unreached people group concept presented by the late Ralph Winter, which has profoundly influenced mission strategy ever since. But more important was the Lausanne Covenant, chiefly written by John Stott of England. A little known fact is that Stott’s final draft of the Covenant was heavily influenced by input from Rene Padilla and Samuel Escobar of Peru. The Lausanne Covenant emphasized the need for the whole (holistic) gospel to be taken by the whole church to the whole world, and its principles have served to guide the global

evangelical church in its practice of mission for almost four decades.²

After 1974 and the first Lausanne, a second Congress was held



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in Manila in 1989. Many regional and smaller Lausanne-related meetings followed the first LCWE and also the second one. The most recent large-scale Lausanne event was the Forum for World Evangelization held in 2004 in Pattaya, Thailand. But there was a growing sense that another Congress needed to be held because, as an ailing 92 year young Billy Graham noted in a letter to the Cape Town crowd at the beginning of Lausanne III, “the issues facing today’s generation are radically different. That’s why I strongly support the need for a new congress in 2010.”

The vision for LCWE III was birthed in 2005 in the heart of Doug Birdsall, Executive Director of the Lausanne Movement. Doug is the former head of LIFE Ministries in Japan, now known as Asian Access, a Japan missionary veteran of twenty years. Under his leadership and commitment to the movement, Lausanne today has newly flourished, after a long period of ebb and flow. (In his early days with LCWE, Doug even mortgaged his house to help with finances when things were tight.) As one of the African delegates last October so

aply stated in publicly recognizing Doug’s contribution to the Lausanne Movement and Cape Town 2010, “God working through you brought the Church to Africa.”³

But why Cape Town? The location actually has a direct link to missions in general and to reaching the world in particular. More than two hundred years ago, William Carey, “the father of modern missions,” called the church of his age to convene

a world missionary conference in Cape Town, “the ends of the earth” at the time, for 1810. This vision never came to pass while he was alive. Carey’s dream was ahead of his time (though Edinburgh 1910 later accomplished much of what he had envisioned). But that hope really only came to complete fulfillment in October 2010. The fact that this third Lausanne Congress was held on the African continent also showed the maturity and readiness of the African church—on the tails of the soccer World Cup there in June-July of this year. South Africa proudly hosted both world events with great vigor and joy. The year 2010 marks the centenary of the epochal Edinburgh 1910 missionary conference. And the historical significance of Edinburgh 1910 for world missions of its day was the main inspiration behind holding Lausanne III in Cape Town in 2010—a hope that Cape Town 2010 will similarly positively impact world missions in our day.

Key words arising from LCWE III include: humility; repentance; passion; proclamation; integral mission; prayer; the Holy Spirit;

transformation; continuation. John Piper prayed this before his sermon, “Lord, grant me self-forgetfulness and *humility*. Make your word clear and powerful for the glory of Christ.” It was humbling indeed to see world figures call for *repentance*, charging us to repent as they themselves had repented. The overall tone was for a setting aside of degrees, accomplishments and status to focus instead on our oneness in Christ, as a united Body, and the need for repentance and admission of our corporate sins as leaders. Chris Wright, a key Lausanne spokesman, went so far as to say that for us to even dwell on our titles, successes, wealth or popularity was sin. Repentance was also a key theme of the final 2½ hour Kenya Anglican Communion service that closed the congress.

Passion characterized almost everything whether the subject was human trafficking or bold witness; it showed even down to the way the “stewards,” volunteer helpers,

were constantly there to help and serve all of us participants.

Proclamation was clearly and forthrightly emphasized throughout from the platform; the need for the lost to come to Christ was unabashedly preached. But “*integral mission*” heralded a new word and a new way of describing the two-sided coin of evangelism and social action. In the past these two were split or ranked one above the other. Now the two are literally “integrated,” “it just is (this way),” as one of my new friends described the inseparable reality of witnessing through a changed life that impacts society.

Prayer was so much a part of Lausanne that I felt overwhelmed at times. We prayed for everything imaginable and yet there was much intimacy and depth to our cries. The presence and work of the *Holy Spirit* was so apparent and often verbally recognized during Lausanne III. I will never forget the thirty second prayer prayed by Donovan Case, “Father God, we pray that the wind of the Holy Spirit continues to blow across this Congress, blow, Wind, blow, to the whole world, to the ends of the earth, blow, Wind, blow.”

Transformation, the need for personal life change, as well as the mandate for us to impact our sur-



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roundings with the power of the gospel was the gift that many took home.

Finally, there was a persistent theme of *Continuation* of the momentum that Cape Town helped re-ignite in the Lausanne movement itself... for the possibility of a future Lausanne IV... for keeping “the spirit of Lausanne” alive in smaller regional meetings... for recruiting more younger leaders (especially from Japan)... for a desire to make an impact for mission because of Lausanne’s influence in one’s local context. The press to keep all of this going, to continue the Lausanne

movement, was very strong.

In closing, I would like to underline some of the “what’s next?” points, now that South Africa is behind us and Lausanne III has moved into the annals of history.

Most significant for me on the Japan front were some of the decisions that the Japan Lausanne Committee (JLC) made for their involvement from this point forward. Some of the things initiated by the JLC included:

- Adoption of an Internet forum in Japanese to share information with Lausanne III participants, with the desire to see the forum expand into other networks in Japan

- Invitation of Dr. Chris Wright, retiring head of the Lausanne Theology Working Group, to come to Japan in June 2012 for lectureships in Kanto and Kansai

- Translation of Dr. Wright’s seminal book, *The Mission of God*, into Japanese

- Inclusion of new members onto the current

JLC board, including JEMA president, Dale Little

- Convening regional Lausanne follow-up meetings in Japan to share about Cape Town 2010 (see sidebar)

- Translation of the Cape Town Commitment into Japanese (a large portion of it was translated and published in the Christian Shimbun newspaper) this past November (see sidebar)

All of these initiatives indicate a positive, forward moving emphasis by the Japan Lausanne Committee and was done in cooperation with the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA). This mirrors the pattern out-

side Japan where the International Lausanne Movement is partnering with the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) to foster increased mission awareness and participation by those in the church worldwide. May it be so for mission in Japan as well!

Finally, I would like to acknowledge that I believe whatever lasting change will come out of Lausanne III must begin at a personal level, with me. I recognize that I am now accountable because I went. I was sent to Cape Town under invitation of the JLC and through my mission but the knowledge and responsibility of whatever positive “ripple effects” might eventually result from this historic congress must begin on a personal, individual level. All I know is that if I claim to be transformed by my participation in Lausanne III (and I do!), yet I do not demonstrate a changed life and mission because of it, then my going was in vain and I will be found a hypocrite, with a ministry unchanged. May it never be! As I said above, time will tell. Down the road, please test me and ask me; watch me! Jesus said, “you will know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7: 16). May the “yield,” the fruit of Lausanne III in Gary Fujino be a transformed life that seeks to transform his world under a sovereign Lord who Himself is solely and perpetually about the business of transformation, in Him and for His kingdom. **Amen.** JH

Notes

1. Lausanne III also had invited observers present from the World Council of Churches, the Vatican and the Greek Orthodox Communion.
2. The Lausanne Covenant is available on the internet in 16 different languages at this URL address: <http://www.lausanne.org/covenant>. Read it for yourself and discover how many things you believe and practice have been influenced by this historic document of the contemporary evangelical church.
3. Photos, videos, speeches, documents, position papers, background information and more on Lausanne III and the 2010 Cape Town event can all be openly accessed by anyone via the internet at: <http://www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010>

“The Cape Town Commitment— A Declaration of Belief and a Call to Action”

The original Lausanne Covenant was written corporately by 2700 delegates from 150 countries in 1974, with John Stott as its chief architect. The Covenant has been used as a guiding instrument for fulfilling the church’s mission to take “the whole gospel to the whole world by the whole church.” In 1989, the Manila Manifesto followed as “an elaboration” of the Lausanne Covenant, with a special emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit and the urgent need to finish the task of world mission before the end of the twentieth century.

In 2010, the Cape Town Commitment, while humbly affirming these documents of yesteryear, also provides a fresh new glimpse at the possibilities for mission in the third millennium. Intentionally using “we love” statements instead of the more traditional “we declare,” the Cape Town Commitment is framed in the language of love; love is the language of covenant. The biblical covenants, old and new, are the expression of God’s redeeming love and grace reaching out to lost humanity and spoiled creation. They call for our love in return. Our love shows itself in trust, obedience and passionate commitment to our covenant Lord. (Preamble, “*The Passion Of Our Love*”).

Following the preamble, the Cape Town Commitment is divided into ten articles, dealing with specific aspects of mission and how the love of God affects all that:

1. We love because God first loved us
2. We love the living God
3. We love God the Father
4. We love God the Son
5. We love God the Holy Spirit
6. We love God’s Word
7. We love God’s World
8. We love the Gospel of God
9. We love the People of God
10. We love the Mission of God

Everything in the Commitment is framed, in elegant prose, around the key theme of “for the Lord we love: our commitment of faith.” The first paragraph of the first article sets down the deep theological and missiological

reasoning behind this theme of love as it relates to the *missio dei*, God’s missionary activity in our world:

The mission of God flows from the love of God. The mission of God’s people flows from our love for God and for all that God loves. World evangelization is the outflow of God’s love to us and through us. We affirm the primacy of God’s grace and we then respond to that grace by faith, demonstrated through the obedience of love. We love because God first loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

This is but a small taste of Part I, the first installment of the Cape Town Commitment.

Part II will be released in either late 2010 or early 2011 and will be comprised of issues and initiatives proposed in the Advance Papers for Lausanne III, which were addressed in plenary and multiplex sessions in Cape Town with topics as diverse as globalization, ethnicity, scattered peoples or “diaspora,” urban mission, arts, media, technology and faith; sexuality and gender issues, and many, many more topics. Part II of the Cape Town Commitment will reflect interaction by the global church on these issues and will have had the benefit of months of interaction, before, during and after Lausanne III, with a truly diverse cohort of voices—both ordinary and famous—speaking into these weighty matters of worldwide significance for mission. Look for Part II to be released on the Internet or to be announced through major Christian publications around the time that you read this article in the Winter 2010 edition of the print version of the Japan Harvest.

Part I of The Cape Town Commitment, which was quoted above, is available online at this URL: <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/11544>

Check out The Cape Town Commitment for yourself to see some of the biblical and theological underpinnings which guided Lausanne III at Cape Town, South Africa, last October! Check out the Cape Town 2010 homepage as well for a virtual view of what happened in South Africa! JH