

## **Jewish Evangelism and the Lausanne Fourfold Vision**

**David W. Bennett, D.Min., Ph.D.**

*LCJE 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference*

*Toronto, Canada*

*Sunday 11 August 2019*

### *Billy Graham in Canada*

What a privilege it for Phyllis and me to join you for the 11<sup>th</sup> quadrennial meeting of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism—and in particular, to be here in Toronto. The renowned evangelist Billy Graham, the founder of the Lausanne Movement, preached 13 crusades in Canada. His first was held here in Toronto, in Maple Leaf Gardens, in 1955. The month-long campaign drew 356,000 people. As a seven-year-old child, I was one of them, attending with my family. A teenage friend of one of my older sisters was among the thousands who gave their lives to Jesus during those days, experiencing what it meant to become a new creation. And during that Crusade, George Beverly Shea, the Canadian-born bass-baritone gospel singer, first performed what became his signature song, “How Great Thou Art.”

### *The Growth of the Lausanne Movement*

In the following two decades, as the ministry of Billy Graham continued to expand around the world, profound upheavals were shaking the globe—politically, economically, socially and religiously. Billy Graham decided to convene a global congress to assess these changes, and to unite evangelical leaders for the task of world evangelization. So in July 1974, in Lausanne, Switzerland, 2400 participants from 140 nations gathered for the First International Congress on World Evangelization, which TIME magazine described as “a formidable forum, possibly the widest-ranging meeting of Christians ever held.”

Those 10 days of praying and planning led to a document called the Lausanne Covenant that defined the necessity and the goals of evangelism. It introduced the term “unreached people groups,” and it urged the necessity of both evangelism and social justice in mission.

In the years following, a number of consultations were convened, to explore in greater depth the issues introduced at the 1974 Congress, including one in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1980, on the theme of unreached people groups. Out of that came Lausanne Occasional Paper #7, entitled, “Christian Witness to the Jewish People,” as well as the birth of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism, which is the oldest Lausanne Issue Network.

There are now over 30 Issue Networks, focusing on various challenges and opportunities in global mission, as identified at the Third Lausanne Congress in Cape Town in 2010, and in the document that came from that, called *The Cape Town Commitment*. One of the Calls to Action in that document reads: “We continue,

therefore, strongly to affirm the need for the whole church to share the good news of Jesus as Messiah, Lord and Saviour with Jewish people” (CTC IIB 1A).

### **The Fourfold Vision of the Lausanne Movement**

The mission of the Lausanne Movement is to connect influencers and ideas for global mission, in light of a fourfold vision, expressed as: the gospel for every person, an evangelical church for every people, Christ-like leaders for every church, and kingdom impact in every sphere of society.

Where does Jewish Evangelism fit into this vision? As we launch into this week, with the theme of “Making All Things New,” I am praying that the Holy Spirit would ignite in each one of us four areas of renewed passion, in light of the fourfold Lausanne vision.

#### *The Gospel for Every Person*

First, in relationship to the gospel for every person. Everyone single individual needs the good news of Jesus. No one else can release us from the endless and futile treadmill of trying to be good enough to impress God, and earn our way into his favor. No one else can cover our shame with the robe of his spotless righteousness. No one else can bestow the gift of the Holy Spirit to live within us and to produce the fruits of love, joy and peace, or the power to overcome the dark powers that war against our souls. Only Jesus—by his sinless life, his atoning sacrifice, his victorious resurrection, and his present reign as Lord of all. Jesus is one of a kind. There is no one else like him.

The apostle Peter said to the crowds in Jerusalem, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, TNIV). Peter was a Jew, speaking to Jews. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Jesus was a Jew, speaking to Jews. The gospel is still for Jewish people as well as Gentiles. It is the same good news for all. In Romans 1:16, the apostle Paul wrote, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.”

Recently I read Avi Snyder’s book, *Jews Don’t Need Jesus... and Other Misconceptions*, in which he dismantles 17 arguments that Christians give for not sharing the good news of Jesus with their Jewish friends. I pray that this week will bring **new conviction that every Jewish person needs Jesus**. God doesn’t have a separate plan B for them or for anyone else.

#### *An Evangelical Church for Every People*

The first point of the Lausanne vision is “the gospel for every person.” The second point is “an evangelical church for every people.” In this context the word “evangelical” is used in its historical sense, designating churches where Jesus is honored

as Savior and Lord, where the Bible is taught as the authoritative Word of God, and where the mission to make disciples of all nations is taken seriously.

As we know, the word “nations” in Matthew 28:19, where Jesus commands his followers to “make disciples of all nations,” doesn’t mean the sort of political units with borders and central governments that we think about today, like the nearly 200 sovereign states recognized by the United Nations. No, the word *ethne* refers to people united by kinship, culture and common traditions. These are the social and ethnic units with which people identify, as “our kind of people,” and by which they distinguish between insiders and outsiders.

Every kind of people, no matter how we define them, or how they self-identify themselves, need a community of Jesus followers, that is, a church, where they can feel that they belong, which is close enough for them to participate in weekly or even daily fellowship, which communicates and prays and sings and reads Scripture in a language that speaks to their heart.

The body of Jewish people around the world is incredibly diverse. A recent newsletter from Jews for Jesus identified three new challenges in Jewish evangelism: serving the ultra-Orthodox, reaching Jewish-Gentile couples and families, and reaching people looking for meaning along what is called the hummus trail, that is, the travel route through India most frequented by Israelis. What sort of Jesus communities would be able to speak the language of, and reach out in love toward, each of these different groups of Jewish people?

I pray that this week would spark **new strategies for reaching the full spectrum of Jewish people** found on different continents, speaking different languages, found in different socio-economic strata, and coming from different places in their faith, or no-faith, journey.

#### *Christ-like Leaders for Every Church*

The third point of the Lausanne vision is “Christ-like leaders for every church.” That is, leaders who lead like Jesus. Demonstrating humility and integrity. Showing courage as well as compassion. Respecting women. Taking children seriously. Exposing hypocrisy. Praying fervently. Embracing and being at home with the whole of Scripture. Following the path of the cross in self-emptying love. Taking up the basin and towel to do what no one else is willing to do.

One of the aspects of the Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism that impresses me most was the decision a few years ago by the CEO’s of ministries engaging in Jewish evangelism to start meeting every two years with one another, to build bridges of fellowship and friendship, to break down distrust and competitiveness, and to lay foundations for cooperation and collaboration.

All too often Christian leaders are like James and John, elbowing their way in, even if indirectly through their mother, to get the places of honor at Jesus' right or left hand—or like the other ten disciples, grumbling and complaining against James and John because they thought of it first (Matthew 20:20-28). Jesus had to rebuke his disciples strongly on more than one occasion for attitudes like this, which even broke out during the Last Supper (Luke 22:24-27)—after Jesus had already demonstrated humility and servanthood so graphically by washing their feet (John 13:1-17).

During that Last Supper Jesus appealed to his disciples to love one another as he had loved them (John 13:34,35). And later that same night he prayed that all of his disciples would be one, as the Father and the Son are one, and that they would be perfected in unity, so that the world would know that God sent Jesus, and that God loved them (John 17:20-23).

Where there is pride, there will be division. If there is to be unity and collaboration, there must be humility, servanthood, love, a basin and a towel, a cross.

I remember a few years ago being in a meeting with Michael Oh, the CEO of the Lausanne Movement, along with a few leaders from two other global movements. And I recall the appeal he made to us to “leave our egos and our logos at the door.” We need to create safe spaces where leaders can be simply brothers and sisters at the foot of the cross, with the one agenda of lifting up the name of Jesus, and advancing his reputation and his kingdom purposes. I trust that the meetings this week will be that kind of safe space.

In I Corinthians 12:18 the apostle Paul says that no part of the body can say to any other part of the body, “I don't need you.” As individuals, we need one another. And as organizations and ministries we need one another. We are better together. There are so many areas where our impact would be greater if we were to collaborate rather than to compete. But to find that place of synergy with one another, we must enter with the spirit of Jesus—in humility and in love.

But even though some CEO's and senior leaders may have learned this already, the lesson needs to be **re-learned** by every generation, and every emerging organization, by men and by women, and by leaders from every corner of the world.

So I commend you for the sacrifices you have made to come together to meet like this, and for doing it eleven times over four decades. Through this kind of gathering, you are saying, “I need you. I believe we are better together.”

My prayer this week is that there would be a **new eagerness to collaborate, with humility, as Christ-like servant leaders.**

*Kingdom Impact in Every Sphere of Society*

The fourth point of the Lausanne vision is kingdom impact in every sphere of society. Just six weeks ago, I returned from the Lausanne Global Workplace Forum in Manila. Nearly 700 gathered in person, with an additional 200 present virtually, from a total of 110 nations. The purpose of that gathering was to energize, equip and engage the global church for an accelerated emphasis on the incredible potential that God's people have to be the hands and feet of Jesus, as well as the voice of Jesus, in and through their daily work.

There are so many places that a pastor, or Bible school teacher, or missionary cannot gain access. But a workplace follower of Jesus can. There are so many countries in the world where it is impossible to go on a missionary visa or a religious worker's visa, but one can go as business person, or as a diplomat, or as a skilled professional, or even as a maid.

Recently I attended the 50<sup>th</sup> reunion for the graduating class at my university, which describes itself as a university polarized around science. One of its labs designed the guidance system that took the first men to the moon 50 years ago. Back then I was majoring in life sciences, preparing for medical school. But in my senior year, God suddenly and surprisingly redirected me to pastoral ministry.

As Phyllis and I mingled with students and professors, and toured various departments on campus, I was reminded of the huge variety of vocations and people to whom I would typically have no access as a pastor, and where the percentage of believers tends to be very small. I was also struck by what a high percentage of my classmates were Jewish. Even today, 9% of that university's graduates are Jewish. It is listed in Hillel's College Guide as among the top 60 in Jewish population.

During the reunion I had several opportunities to talk about my faith, and about the relationship between faith and work, often as a result of answering the question of how on earth I ended up in my current work today. But how much I wish that as an undergraduate I had been more active in sharing my faith—and I started to wonder whether even today I might find more ways to leverage that science and technology background to build relationships with fellow-alumni and others who work in sectors of society that may have less exposure to followers of Jesus.

If we are to have kingdom impact in every sphere of society, we need followers of Jesus who have a vision for those spheres, and access to those spheres. We need to mobilize followers of Jesus to connect with Jewish people in those spheres. Think particularly of the areas that are so influential in shaping our culture. Some speak of the seven spheres, or mountains, of our society—first articulated by Bill Bright of Campus Crusade, and Loren Cunningham, the founder of Youth with a Mission, in 1975, the year after the first Lausanne Congress. These seven facets of society that must be transformed are Religion, Family, Education, Government, Media, Arts and Entertainment, and Business. Jewish people are found in all seven of these spheres. And

followers of Jesus who work in these seven spheres have access to, and can have influence with, co-workers who are Jewish.

So I am also praying that this week would stimulate **new vision for energizing, equipping and engaging Jewish as well as Gentile believers in every sphere of society**, to bless and to reach Jewish people on every one of the seven mountains. Jewish evangelism isn't just about mobilizing and equipping pastors and missionaries. It is about helping believers to see that their work and their workplace is a calling from God, a means of loving their neighbor, and a means for advancing the kingdom purposes of God, in anticipation of the day foretold in Revelation 21:5, where the one seated on the throne says, "I am making everything new."

What do you long for God to do during this week together? What new things are you asking God for, in your own life, and in the life of this network?

As we focus together this week on the God who makes all things new, here is what I am asking for. I am praying that our time together will bring:

- **New conviction** that every Jewish person needs Jesus
- **New strategies** for reaching the full spectrum of Jewish people
- **New eagerness to collaborate**, with humility, as Christ-like servant leaders, and
- **New vision** for engaging believers and blessing Jewish people in every sphere of society, and in particular, through the workplace

Let's each take a moment to pray silently that God will prepare our hearts for this week:

- Pray for renewed conviction that every Jewish person needs to discover Jesus as the way, the truth and the life
- Pray for Spirit-led creativity to identify new strategies for reaching Jewish people, and for forming various communities of Jesus followers that are accessible to different kinds of Jewish people
- Pray for humility and love toward each person we encounter this week, and for ability to find new ways to collaborate with one another as servant leaders
- Pray for a new vision for the workplace, and for Jewish people in the workplace, in order to see kingdom impact in every sphere of society