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The Cape Town Commitment (CTC) is a masterful and comprehensive document, faithfully reflecting the proceedings of The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, which took place in Cape Town, South Africa (October 2010). It is impossible to capture the spirit of Lausanne III in a three-page summary, so this synopsis should be read in conjunction with the full CTC.

The CTC is rooted in the conviction that ‘we must respond in Christian mission to the realities of our own generation.’ The mission of the Church must take seriously both the unchanging nature of God’s word and the changing realities of our world. The CTC reflects the Lausanne call for the whole Church to take the whole gospel to the whole world; it is framed in the language of love – love for the whole gospel, the whole Church, and the whole world. The Commitment has two parts: a confession of faith and a call to action.

PART I – For the Lord we love: The Cape Town Confession of Faith

The opening sentences set the framework, ‘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.’

The first five points deal with our love for God himself. We love the living God, above all rivals and with a passion for his glory. We love the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. With respect to the Father, the CTC calls for a renewed appreciation of God’s fatherhood. Concerning the Son, it highlights our duty to trust, obey, and proclaim Christ. Of the Spirit, it says, ‘Our engagement in mission, then, is pointless and fruitless without the presence, guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. ... There is no true or whole gospel, and no authentic biblical mission, without the Person, work and power of the Holy Spirit.’

*The last five points cover our love for God’s Word, world, gospel, people, and missions. (a) We reaffirm our submission to the Bible as God’s final revelation, and affirm our love for the Person it reveals, the story it tells, the truth it teaches, and the life it requires (while admitting we often confess to love the Bible without loving the life it teaches, a life of costly practical discipleship). (b) We love God’s world, all that he has made and loves. This includes caring for creation, loving all peoples and valuing ethnic diversity, longing to see the gospel embedded in all cultures, loving the world’s poor and suffering people, and loving our neighbours as we love ourselves. It does not mean loving or being like ‘the world’ (i.e. worldliness). (c) We love the gospel – the story it tells, the assurance it gives, and the transformation it produces. (d) We love all God’s people, recognising that such love calls for unity, honesty, and solidarity. (e) We love the mission of God. ‘We are committed to world mission, because it is central to our understanding of God, the Bible, the Church, human history and the ultimate future. ... The Church exists to worship and glorify God for all eternity and to participate in the transforming mission of God within history. Our mission is wholly derived from God’s mission, addresses the whole of God’s creation, and is grounded at its centre in the redeeming victory of the cross.’ We are called to *integral mission*, which is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.*

PART II – For the world we serve: The Cape Town Call to Action

The call to action uses the six Congress themes, which are linked to the six expositions of Ephesians.

A. Bearing witness to the truth of Christ in a pluralistic, globalized world. The Congress affirmed belief in absolute truth, and particularly in Jesus Christ as *the Truth*. Christians, therefore, are called to be people of truth, to live and proclaim the truth. We must face the threat of postmodern relativistic pluralism with robust apologetics. We must

promote truth in the workplace and the global media. We must harness the arts for mission, promote authentically-Christian responses to emerging technologies, and actively engage the public arenas of government, business, and academia with biblical truth.

B. Building the peace of Christ in our divided and broken world. Christ has reconciled believers to God and to one another; the unity of God's people is both a fact and a mandate. The Church, therefore, has a responsibility to live out its reconciliation and to engage in biblical peace-making in the name of Christ. This includes bringing Christ's truth and peace to bear on racism and ethnic diversity, slavery and human trafficking, poverty, and minority groups such as people with disabilities. It also means our missional calling includes responsible stewardship of God's creation and its resources.

C. Living the love of Christ among people of other faiths. Our 'neighbours' include people of other faiths. We must learn to see them as neighbours and be neighbours to them. We seek to share the good news in *ethical evangelism*, and we reject unworthy proselytizing. We accept that our commission includes a willingness to suffer and die for Christ in reaching out to people of other faiths. We are called to embody and commend the gospel of grace in loving action, in all cultures. We need to respect 'diversity in discipleship', and encourage one another to exercise cultural discernment. We recognise global diaspora as strategic for evangelization: scattered peoples can be both recipients and agents of Christ's mission. While being willing to sacrifice our own rights for the sake of Christ, we commit to uphold and defend the human rights of others, including the right to religious freedom.

D. Discerning the will of Christ for world evangelization. Six key areas are identified as strategically important for the next decade: (a) unreached and unengaged people groups; (b) oral cultures; (c) Christ-centred leaders; (d) cities; (e) children; all with (f) prayer. The focus on Christian leaders is to prioritize discipleship and address the problems that arise from 'generations of reductionist evangelism'. Within this, key priorities are Bible translation, the preparation of oral story Bibles and other oral methodologies, as well as eradicating biblical illiteracy in the Church. Cities are home to four strategic groups: future leaders, migrant unreached peoples, culture shapers, and the poorest of the poor. All children are at risk; children represent both a mission field and a mission force.

E. Calling the Church of Christ back to humility, integrity and simplicity. The integrity of our mission in the world depends on our own integrity. The Congress called Christ-followers back to humble, sacrificial discipleship, simple living, and moral integrity. We need to be separate and distinct from the world (morally). Four 'idolatries' were singled out: disordered sexuality, power, success, and greed. Disciples of Christ must reject these. (The prosperity gospel is rejected under the banner of 'greed'.)

F. Partnering in the body of Christ for unity in mission. Paul teaches us that Christian unity is a creation of God, based on our reconciliation with God and with one another. We lament the divisiveness of our churches and organizations, because a divided Church has no message for a divided world. Our failure to live in reconciled unity is a major obstacle to authenticity and effectiveness in mission. We commit to *partnership* in global mission. No one ethnic group, nation or continent can claim the exclusive privilege of being the ones to complete the Great Commission. Two specific aspects of unity in mission are the partnership of women and men and the recognition of the missional nature of theological education.

Prepared by Kevin Smith from the South African Theological Seminary. This summary document is saturated with the actual language of the CTC, for which reason quotation marks are not used for every phrase lifted from the CTC. Only longer quotations and key phrases are marked by quotation marks. This document serves as a *précis* of the CTC. To read the full CTC, please go to www.lausanne.org/ctcommitment.