

Lausanne And Gender

Author: Jane Crane

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Category: Men & Women

Welcome to this blog on the topic of empowering women and men to use their gifts together in advancing the Gospel. I thought the best way to begin would be to provide a history of Lausanne and gender as recorded in its formal documents.

The following was published in a compendium of Lausanne Occasional Papers that came out of a Lausanne gathering in Pattaya, Thailand, in 2004. It looks back to the beginning of Lausanne's documents with the Lausanne Covenant in 1979, addresses the Manila Manifesto of 1989, and includes a statement that came out of Pattaya. I look forward to hearing your comments and dialoging with you on this topic.

Preface from "Empowering Women and Men to Use Their Gifts Together in Advancing the Gospel," Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 53.

After two years of research, the Lausanne Committee identified 31 roadblocks to world evangelism, one of which was the need to empower men and women to utilize their gifts together for the Gospel. This discussion was a natural progression. Through the Lausanne movement's major worldwide gatherings over the last 30 years, the topic of gender has been addressed in increasing depth.

The historic Lausanne Covenant of 1979, signed by many leaders and translated into over 20 languages, cites gender under the topic of social responsibility. It states that we should share God's concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of injustice. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited.

The Manila Manifesto, produced 10 years later in 1989, addresses gender issues in more specificity in two of its 21 "Affirmations":

Affirmation # 13: "We affirm that we who claim to be members of the Body of Christ must transcend within our fellowship the barriers of race, gender and class."

Affirmation # 14: "We affirm that the gifts of the Spirit are distributed to all God's people, women and men, and that their partnership in evangelization must be welcomed for the common good."

Further, The Manila Manifesto stated that women "must be given opportunities to exercise their gifts" and called for suitable training for both men and women. The Manifesto deplored "the failures in Christian consistency," including "sexual discrimination," and affirmed that "co-operation in evangelism is indispensable," with "both sexes working together."

As the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization drew to a close, "Summary Affirmations" were released with this powerful statement on gender: "In this Forum we have experienced the partnership of men and women working together. We call on the church around the world to work towards full partnership of men and women in the work of world evangelization by maximizing the gifts of all."

This Occasional Paper, written by the 2004 Forum's Issue Group 24, "Empowering Men and Women to Utilize Their Gifts Together for the Gospel," addresses the foundations for men and women in ministry-partnerships. Our Occasional Paper begins with a Declaration made to the entire Lausanne 2004 Forum in Thailand. We have also proposed action steps to engage the spiritual gifts

of women and men in service to Christ. Finally, we offer research papers that provide a biblical, theological, historical, sociological, and missiological basis for empowering men and women's shared ministry.

We anticipate additional strategies will emerge as Christians around the globe continue to recognise the importance of engaging the gifts of women and men who work in full partnership in advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ. A New Vision, A New Heart, A Renewed Call (Volume Two): Lausanne Occasional Papers from the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization hosted by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization in Pattaya, Thailand, September 29 - October 5, 2004, David Claydon, Ed., Published by William Carey Library, © 2005 Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, Volume Two, p. 635-6. Copies of Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 53, "Empowering Men and Women to Use Their Gifts Together in Advancing the Gospel," may be obtained from www.equalitydepot.com