

The Gospel Truth: “The truth shall set you free”

1. Introduction: The Gospel Truth as central to the vision of the Forum

- Focus on *the vision* of the Forum – “identify, unite, mentor and resource” evangelical leaders in European contexts characterized by “crisis of truth”
- Focus on *John 8:32* – truth, Scripture and discipleship as key elements at the Forum
- Focus on *The Gospel Truth* – Jesus as “The Way, The Truth and The Life” (John 14:6) as the defining centre at the Forum
- Focus on *a holistic view of truth* – combining ‘pre-modern’, ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ perspectives when faced with “crisis of truth”

2. The Gospel Truth – what do we mean?

- “Jesus Christ is the truth of the universe. Because Jesus *is* truth, truth in Christ is (i) personal as well as propositional; (ii) universal as well as contextual; (iii) ultimate as well as present.” (*The Cape Town Commitment*)
 - *Personal truth*: Christ offers us an intimate personal relationship with God our Father because of Christ’s atoning death.
 - *Propositional truth*: Christ offers us the authoritative Word of God as “a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105)
- As people of the Gospel Truth, we need to continuously *affirm* this Truth, *proclaim* it and *live* by it.

3. The Gospel Truth – changes and transforms people, nations and cultures

- The Gospel of Christ *changes people* – through justification, forgiveness, eternal life (Rom 1:16)
 - The Reformation heritage: We affirm ‘Scripture alone’, ‘Christ alone’, ‘faith alone’
- The Gospel Truth *changes nations* – through the fruits of the Gospel
 - Case studies: Hans Nielsen Hauge (Norway) and William Wilberforce (UK)
- We are *transformed* by the Gospel Truth – as individuals and as Christian communities. Therefore we are *called to transform* our cultures (cf. def. of ‘calling’)

4. The Gospel Truth – is a consistent and coherent worldview

- We live in *pluralistic contexts* of competing secular and religious worldviews

- The Reformation heritage: We affirm the clarity of *Scripture* ('the written Word') and the centrality of *Christ* ('the living Word')
- The biblical panoramic worldview makes sense as *a consistent and coherent story*
 - The story of God's salvation is the basis for the biblical worldview
 - We affirm the Christian mind – as relevant also in today's secular world (i.e. the academy, the business, the media and the government)
 - Case study: Engaging the media
- We need to *communicate* the Christian faith in *the context* of a holistic biblical worldview
 - The need for 'worldview evangelism'
 - The need for 'worldview preaching'

5. The Gospel Truth – corresponds to reality

- We live in pluralistic contexts of *competing truth-claims* – where we can affirm (1) other beliefs as 'half-truths' and (2) God as Creator, Sustainer and Lord as an ontological reality (cf. Acts 17)
- Our belief in Christ is based on *the fact of the Resurrection* (1 Cor. 15)
 - We affirm the credibility of Christ and the Gospel, therefore: 'Hope'
 - Case study: Facing death – a personal story
- We can *apply the biblical view of humanity* to our everyday lives in today's world.
 - We affirm its explanatory power ('created', 'fallen', 'redeemed', 'called to serve', 'with hope'); therefore: 'Meaning'
 - Case study: Personal identity – a key contemporary issue

6. Conclusion: The Gospel Truth "shall set you free"

- *A reflection:* It is the Lord Himself who transforms us through His Truth...
- *A challenge:* Are we willing to stand up for God's Gospel Truth – over against modern positivism, postmodern relativism and pluralistic syncretism?
- *A prayer:* "Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." (Ps. 25:5)

Lars Dahle

www.larsdahle.no

<http://www.lausanne.org/ctcommitment>