

“A much-needed encouragement for orthodox Christians across the world to think together about what it means to be faithful to Christ in the face of the sexual revolution. A call to follow his example and be full of both grace and truth. A must read for you and I.”

Archbishop Laurent Mbanda, Rwanda

“A timely resource for faithful believers to address the increasingly sensitive issue that the global church is facing: the gender revolution. This book is a powerful reminder that we are all preachers of the message of reconciliation to bring all sinners to Christ. Soli deo gloria.”

Jaehoon Lee, Onnuri Church; Korean Lausanne Committee

“Wise, hopeful and Christ-honouring, this book will be of great comfort and practical help to those beguiled or betrayed by the lies of the sexual revolution, and those who walk alongside them as disciples of Christ.”

Archbishop Kanishka Raffel, Australia

“For Christians seeking a way forward that is true to Scripture and the way of Christ, this is an excellent introduction to key issues in the LGBTQ discussion. It is theologically reflective, pastorally sensitive and relevant cross-culturally. I commend it wholeheartedly.”

Bishop Hwa Yung, The Methodist Church, Malaysia

“This book is about more than sex and sexuality; it invites us to delight in God’s beautiful design and find ultimate satisfaction in Christ. I recommend this book to Christians of all backgrounds.”

Rev Dr Patrick Fung, OMF International

“Vaughan Roberts speaks not only with theological conviction of the authority of Scripture but also with authentic credibility as one who is openly resolved to submit his own sexuality to the lordship of Christ. Grace and truth also shine through his pastoral heart for those whose struggles are compounded by loneliness and a crushing lack of understanding in churches. May they find comfort and courage in these pages.”

Chris Wright, Langham Partnership

“A marvelous book for ‘such a time as this!’ Our generation is starving for this conversation. I believe Vaughan Roberts is the best voice on this crucial topic. He speaks to real people from life experience, bringing the truth of Scripture in an incredibly compassionate way.”

Sarah Breuel, Founder, Revive Europe

“A wonderful pastoral, biblical, and deeply human guide to one of the most complex issues of our time. With great courage, clarity, and yet profound compassion, *Full of Grace and Truth* offers a vision that is faithful to Scripture while remaining sensitive to the real struggles that many people face in the Church today regarding this topic.”

Archbishop Enrique J. Lago, Chile

“This book meets the crying need for a biblically grounded, bold, compassionate and holy response to the sexual revolution. It gives clear guidance and hope to those seeking to be faithful to God but faced with a confusing array of voices calling for their attention.”

Ajith Fernando, Youth for Christ, Sri Lanka

“Questions about human sexuality and gender are not only matters of frequent public controversy, but are often matters of deeply personal and hidden struggle. In this helpful book, Vaughan Roberts charts a path forward as he shares his own testimony of following Christ amidst temptations and struggles.”

Bishop Paul Donison, General Secretary, Gafcon

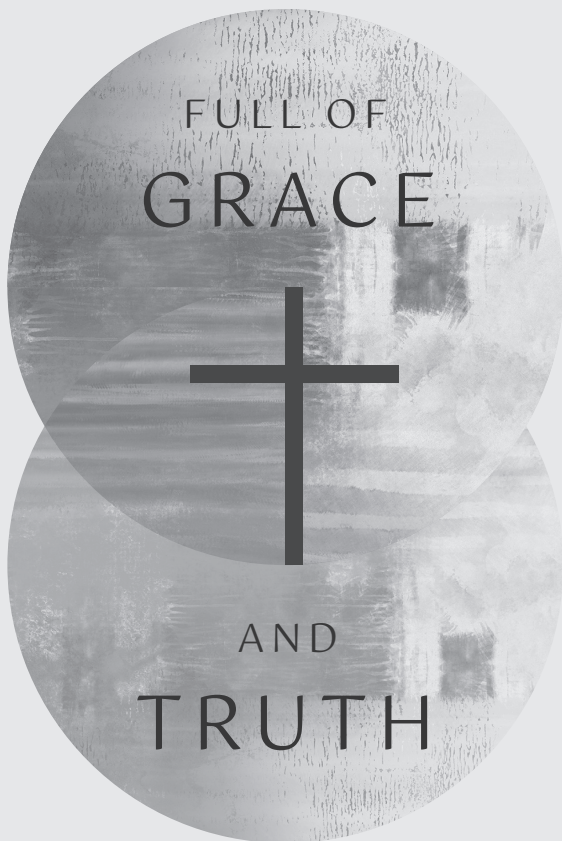
“Vaughan Roberts is a much-respected leader of immense courage and integrity. He has faithfully taught and pastored one of the largest churches in Oxford for 27 years. He addresses complex and challenging issues with the authentic voice of vulnerability and sensitivity.”

Nicky Gumbel, Founder, Alpha International

“A call to countercultural Christian sexuality. It is a challenge to faithfully preach a biblical sexual ethic while offering grace, compassion and hope to those who falter. It is also a call to all Christians, to live a life in keeping with God’s good design for sex and gender even when it clashes with the convictions of our sexualised permissive culture.”

Patricia Weerakoon, author, *The Gender Revolution*

VAUGHAN ROBERTS



The gospel and sexuality
in the global church

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Foreword

Sex and human sexuality are things we hardly talk about openly in my African context. Years ago, it was taboo, especially for young people, to utter any word related to these topics or even to ask questions at home, at school or in church. Hence silence or secret whispers were the norm. The HIV and AIDs pandemic awakened us out of that mindset, but questions remained as to how to respond to ever-changing sexual revolution and realities, not only in western contexts but at our very doorsteps. How do we, as followers of Jesus, remain faithful to biblical truth and at the same time exercise grace towards others on these matters? Beyond silence on the one hand and strict legislation on the other – be it within church or by

governments – boundaries between grace and truth remain blurred in our response.


In this short book, rightly called *Full of Grace and Truth: The Gospel and Sexuality in the Global Church*, Vaughan has done remarkably well in providing sound biblically balanced guidance on rather complex issues. How the gospel relates to human sexuality and various responses and attitudes towards others has made the subject such a “hot potato” that many prefer to be silent on. In addressing this subject, Vaughan has affirmed that Scripture must be the interpreter of culture, perspectives and preferences. Given the silence or even the fear of speaking openly about this within the church, this book is a timely resource for more deliberate reflection, teaching and conversation on how Scripture must guide our response and attitude, especially towards others, not as either being full of grace *or* truth, but with both grace *and* truth in our relationships and witness.

With the aim of providing “an accessible starting point for readers who want an introduction to the Bible’s perspective on sexuality”, Vaughan has, on the one hand, not shied away from addressing liberal tendencies that tend to marginalise biblical

truth in the name of grace to accommodate almost any or all views of human sexuality. On the other hand, he has not shied away from addressing tendencies of conservatives who, in commitment to biblical truth, affirm or impose strict Christian morality, especially towards others, to the point of legislation or stereotyping.

I find the stories he has included helpful to illustrate how difficult or challenging the journey has been, and continues to be, for many people. Regardless of our context or experience, I commend this book to us wholeheartedly, not least because Vaughan's call for us to delight in God's design for human sexuality, to be humble and compassionate, as well as to embrace Christ's revolution, is essential for the times we live in. I wish all churches and fellowship groups would use this book and the discussion questions included as a resource for study and conversation.

Femi B. Adeleye
Institute for Christian Impact
Ghana,
July 2025



Introduction

In 2024, I was asked to speak at the Fourth Lausanne Congress in South Korea. Since its foundation under the leadership of Billy Graham and John Stott, the Lausanne Movement has convened four great global conferences: in Lausanne (1974), Manila (1988), Cape Town (2010) and Seoul (2024). It was a privilege to stand before over 5,000 evangelical leaders from 202 countries, but it was also hugely daunting, not least because of the subject I had been given: “Identity and Sexuality”.¹

There is surely no more sensitive topic than sexuality. It is, of course, deeply personal. We all bring our own emotions and experiences to any treatment of the subject and, however careful a speaker is, it is inevitable that some raw

nerves will be touched. The subject is also highly contentious. The sexual revolution of recent decades has led to a rejection of traditional understandings of morality throughout the West and, increasingly, all over the world, especially in younger generations. This in turn has resulted in conflict between traditionalists and progressives, both in society as a whole and within churches. But the conflict goes wider still: it is also seen among those who are united in holding firmly to the Bible's teaching on sex and marriage, as it has always been understood by Christians down the ages, and yet have very different instincts about how to uphold, express and apply this doctrine pastorally, apologetically and politically within the church and the world.

A cross-cultural approach

These differences of perspective, which exist within every individual Christian culture, become more pronounced in cross-cultural settings, as was very evident at the Congress in Seoul. The paragraphs on sexuality, sex and marriage in the statement, which was published in advance of the gathering, were condemned for being both too conservative and too liberal. On the day

of my address, local Christian protesters held banners outside the convention centre urging delegates to “shout out to LGBTQ to repent”, while others inside were lamenting what they felt was a weakening of the pastoral tone of the statement, after changes had been made in response to criticism.²

Given this background, you can imagine my trepidation as I pondered what to say. The challenge was made harder by the strict time limit I had been given for the talk of just 15 minutes. It seemed like an impossible task as, over a period of weeks, I produced and rejected draft after draft. What could I possibly say that gave the appropriate challenge and encouragement for everyone present, given the huge range of cultural contexts represented? And how could I make a useful contribution to such an important and sensitive topic in so short a time? But as the preparation process continued, I came to believe that these constraints, although challenging, brought some significant benefits.

The central section of this book contains my address in Seoul, almost exactly as I gave it. I hope its brevity will make it an accessible starting point for readers who want an introduction to the

Bible's perspective on sexuality, as well as helping those who are very familiar with this territory to refocus on the essential principles.

Most treatments of this subject have a specific cultural context in view which inevitably, and rightly, governs the selection and presentation of the material. I am well aware that we can never be completely free of our particular cultural glasses, and I certainly do not claim to have achieved this but, with the help of friends from very different cultural contexts to mine, I have sought to expound and apply the Bible's teaching to a global audience.

My experiences, both within the Lausanne Movement and the global Anglican Church, to which I belong, have convinced me of the great value of a cross-cultural approach. Our personalities and cultural backgrounds, in varied Christian communities and wider societies, give each of us different perspectives and instincts, which can both help and hinder our responses to issues of sexuality. We are often quick to see the blind spots of others, without recognising our own. Conversation with Christians from other cultural contexts, who share our commitment to biblical orthodoxy and yet have

some very different perspectives to ours, can be mutually beneficial in providing much needed encouragement and challenge.

Precious people

My primary ministry is as a pastor. As I prepared to speak at the Lausanne Congress, I had in the forefront of my mind those who have opened up to me about their personal struggles. Too often their experiences have revealed significant failings in churches across the world which, far from helping, have only added to their burdens. I had wanted to put some of their stories in my address, but time constraints prevented me. By including them here, I hope to remind us that any discussion of sexuality has a huge impact on the lives of countless precious people such as these. I have changed their names and some minor details to preserve anonymity.

Joseph had been looking at pornography since his early teens. He knew it was wrong and tried to stop, but never managed for long. Over the years he had often thought he should talk to someone at church, but shame held him back. Everyone else seemed so godly that he could not imagine any of them would understand, so he kept quiet.

It was only after his wife saw some images on his phone that he was forced to speak to a friend at church. By that time his sin had become so deeply entrenched that it was very hard to address. It could have been so different if the culture in the church had made it easier for him to talk earlier.

Naomi is a young woman who had recently come to Christian faith. When she discovered I was a pastor, she began to enquire about my views on various issues. “What about sex and sexuality?” she asked. When I told her I believed the Bible taught that the place for sex was within the marriage of a man and a woman, she said, almost under her breath as if she was admitting a dangerous secret, “I think that too.” She then told me that she was fairly sure the pastors in her church also had the same understanding, but she was not certain, as they never taught on these issues. “They don’t want to put anyone off from coming to Christ, or cause division in the church, so they keep quiet,” she said. The result was, she told me, that the members of the church, who were mostly young, were just confused. They received no guidance from their leaders on one of the most significant areas they were all having to grapple with.

Phoebe was visibly shaking as she told me of her experience of same-sex attraction. She had not shared this with anyone before, so it was a huge moment for her. Such matters were never mentioned in her culture, except in strong denunciations of the sins of the godless. It did not occur to her pastor that any true Christian could experience a struggle in this area. Phoebe was seeking to live a godly life, but her isolation made the challenge so much harder. “I feel so lonely,” she said. She lives in Africa, but I have heard many similar stories from all over the world, including in conservative western contexts.

Kate was crying as she described how her family had been torn apart. Unbeknown to her mother or siblings, her father had been struggling for many years with the desire to dress and present as a woman. When he had shared this with his pastor, he had received nothing but affirmation and encouragement to embrace his “true self”. Soon afterwards, to the great distress of his wife and children, he adopted a female name and identity. Through her tears, Kate said, “I have lost my dad.”

Jethro had never wanted to tell anyone about his struggles with sexuality, least of all any

member of his church, but the sense of shame and guilt became unbearable, so he blurted something out to his youth leader. Days later, the senior pastor called Jethro to a meeting and told him that if he truly trusted in the Lord, he would be delivered. The pastor then prayed over him, claiming God's power to release him from the oppression of demons. That was it. There was no attempt to listen to him and understand his experience; no word of encouragement; no follow up whatsoever. The conversation was never referred to again. Jethro felt more desperate than before, not least because he experienced no change to his desires and temptations.

I could tell countless similar stories. Many church leaders have been intimidated by changes in cultural attitudes into adapting their teaching or staying silent, so as not to cause offence. Others have held firmly to the Bible's teaching, but have failed to connect pastorally with the real lives of many in their congregations and in the world. Because shame prevents many Christians being open and honest, often pastors lack understanding of the struggles of those in their congregation. This lack of connection is heightened by differences between generations, with younger people being

shaped from an early age by what they experience online as much as by the traditional attitudes of their homes and churches.

It is urgent that we help one another across the global church to learn how to respond appropriately to the sexual revolution which continues to sweep across the world. This will help us better serve everyone, both Christians and non-Christians. For some of us the chief challenge is to grow in pastoral understanding and sensitivity. For others, it is to hold firmly to God's truth and resist false teaching. It was with this dual challenge in mind that I stepped onto the platform to give my address at the Lausanne Congress.