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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Lausanne  
**GLOBAL ANALYSIS**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2012

## WHERE NEXT FOR THE ARAB SPRING?

*David Taylor*

Revolutionary change in the Arab core of the Islamic world will inevitably have ripple effects through the rest of it. If democracy can take root there, it is possible anywhere.

Tackling acute socio-economic problems will be a big test for Islamist parties in power. If they fail to deliver, they will be discredited. What follows could be chaos, greater poverty and perhaps a coup, rather than an orderly transition to government by elected secular parties.

Traditional Islamist impulses over political power and treatment of minorities will be hard to resist. However, minorities, who understandably feel they were better protected by Mubarak-style strongmen, were in reality poorly served by them. Christians can play a key role if they shed the 'bunker' mentality and engage in the new political space, however dispiriting the immediate prospects.

The young, educated revolutionaries were a minority in largely deeply conservative, pious and patriarchal societies, whose traditional sectarian mindset is still uncondusive to sustainable electoral politics. For that to change, and to prevent people from being exploited by populist extremists or military men offering security, long-term help is needed to reduce poverty and illiteracy. Training in political engagement to build national citizenship identities also offers Christians opportunities to help.

All political ideologies so far tried have failed in the Arab world, which seems to have a yearning for a 'strongman'. Perhaps this despairing and fearful mindset, which is a form of idolatry, provides new opportunities for the gospel in uncertain times. God seems to be stirring the region, both through these upheavals and the growth of BMB churches. Perhaps he is also allowing Islamists to take power and fail, in order to show that Islamist ideology is not the solution. The key therefore might be to seek to discern how God is at work in the region and the part he wants each of us to play.

## CHOOSING TO BE SALT AND LIGHT

*Arpit Waghmare*

This article explores financial corruption with reference to Indian churches and auxiliary Christian organisations. It also explores attempts being made to address the issue with particular reference to the Operation Nehemiah Movement facilitated by Transition Network in collaboration with The Lausanne Movement.

In India, there are often serious questions about the use of tithes and offerings by independent church pastors and leaders, but there is enough evidence that corruption exists in various forms in all categories of churches and parachurches. Despite this, there has been little effort by the church to address it until very recently.

For institutional change to occur, individuals must change first. There is an urgent need for a deep inward reflection and introspection within the church. It is necessary to create forums that facilitate this introspection among individuals in church leadership – introspection that leads to confession, renewal and revival. Furthermore, as a new generation of leaders is being trained, theological institutions need to create leaders with integrity and prepare them to counter the pressure to compromise.

There is also a need to address the structures and the systems of governance of the institutions, including documenting a common accepted financial code of conduct, and possibly an independent agency such as the ECFA, that facilitates adherence to such a code.

The first Operation Nehemiah event at Bangalore in September 2011 brought 51 top church leaders together to discuss the issue. While there were different nuances, there was hardly any disagreement that financial integrity within the church and its auxiliaries in India is a matter of concern. The responsiveness of these leaders to participating in the initiatives of Transition Network was encouraging. The Operation Nehemiah Declaration against Corruption (ONDAC) was one outcome.

The Lausanne Movement has a great opportunity to serve the Operation Nehemiah movement in India by sharing its intellectual resources with the movement and keeping the movement accountable to its commitments. Furthermore, given that the issue is a worldwide phenomenon, this movement could be used as a model to be replicated in different nations in culturally relevant forms.

## GOVERNING THE INTERNET & GRASPING ITS POTENTIAL

*Tom Harvey*

Governments are increasingly uneasy over the bewildering shift of social power and influence to individuals and dissident groups linked through the internet and various forms of social media. Russia, backed by China and India, has submitted proposals to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to empower the UN to monitor and regulate the internet. Regardless of the outcome, this is only the initial skirmish it what portends to be a drawn out battle with political, social, and religious implications.

The internet and social media create community -- and divide it along the lines of access to the technology and how to use it. Furthermore, because divisions run along cultural and national lines, Christians in many countries of the global south supporting censorship of the web and social media, while those in Western nations strongly defend the access to missions that the freedom of the web provides.

Social media and the internet represent a two-edged sword for Christians. They provide channels to communicate, convert, and disciple, especially in regions and with people cut off due to political or religious restrictions on missionary activity. But they also provide a virtual religious marketplace. Like many governments, evangelicals are often deeply concerned about the lack of censorship on the internet and the destabilising effect this has upon society and in particular the youth.

Further, the vehicle of the world-wide web for evangelicals is challenged when it comes to transformation of the whole person or discipleship that includes the social witness of the reign of God. Though the world-wide web and modern communication technology are at the leading edge of societal transformation, there seems to be little recognition or embrace of these aspects of the web by evangelicals.

In terms of evangelism and mission, perhaps Christian leaders need to broaden their appreciation of the web to effect social and political change. If the gospel is more than simply decisions of individuals for Christ, then a serious and informed engagement in holistic transformation through use of the internet and global communications is called for. There also needs to be reflection on the use of the internet and social media to form and mobilise groups of people to be the church that can exist both within and beyond national boundaries.

## PEOPLE AND THEIR RELIGIONS ON THE MOVE

*Gina Bellofatto*

As more people cross international borders, it becomes increasingly important to know who these migrants are and how their religious identities and practices influence the communities in which they settle. Two analyses of the religious profiles of international migrants have been published recently: one by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and the other by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. These reports are the first to consider all migrant groups worldwide and their religious affiliations.

Both reports found that Christians and Muslims together represent a disproportionate percentage in diaspora (roughly two thirds) compared to their global population as a whole (around 55%). Both studies also reported that Christians constitute a greater share of migrants (one in two) than they do the general population (one in three).

The movement of peoples worldwide necessitates a new outlook on the global Christian mission enterprise. Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists are increasingly the neighbours, colleagues and friends of Christians around the world, in the West in particular. These migrants have particular physical and spiritual needs, as they face new surroundings, cultures, and languages. This calls for a new, deeper level of engagement and assistance, including interacting with their religious beliefs.

Fostering a different approach to Christian mission can begin with more thorough education and training in world religions and the world's most pressing human needs, but crucially in Christian hospitality -- fostering friendships with adherents of other religions. Some 86% of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists worldwide do not personally know a Christian. The responsibility for engaging them is too large for the vocational missionary enterprise.

The whole church needs to work toward rekindling a love of hospitality, and, in doing so, to reach out to their neighbours. Since Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists increasingly are found living in traditionally 'Christian' lands, it has never been easier to fulfill the Biblical commands to know and love our neighbours or to make disciples of all nations.