

January 2015  
Volume 4 / Issue 1



Lausanne  
Global Analysis

# Executive Summary

Read the full issue at [www.lausanne.org/analysis](http://www.lausanne.org/analysis).

## 'All of Me': Engaging a world of poverty and injustice

Steve Haas

*This is an edited version of a Chapel talk given at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (South Hamilton, Massachusetts, USA) on 2 April 2014.*

Historically our evangelical community sought the welfare of our neighbors, even when it required great sacrifice. Outsiders knew that our Christian fellowship was built for the benefit of the non-member. We took seriously the implications of Jesus's ministry to the poor: dispensing biblical justice to the at-risk; creating whole institutions focused on those who were distressed and downtrodden, in prison, or insecure.

However, in the first part of the twentieth century, evangelicals associated the innovations of justice with a liberal brand of Protestantism that we thought put too much emphasis on human progress. We felt that personal faith and evangelism were in danger of being lost when put beside a spirituality that put weight on the reformation of sinful structures in society. Eventually, we could not help but place them in juxtaposition. And so evangelicals largely dropped social engagement, in what has been called the Great Reversal.

This had unintended consequences as churches split over the theological shift, and in many places, our witness to the world was compromised. The deeds of our belief became de-linked from our words and faith commitments, and the result was an incomplete witness to the world. We are still dealing with the unintended consequences of that one-sided gospel.

It was ill-conceived theology that launched the ships of the Spanish Inquisition and the legions of religious purifiers known as the Crusaders. Evangelism by the sword makes it hard to have conversations with Muslims or other unbelievers aware of this history. Even in the last century, amidst the horrors of apartheid in South Africa, many who voted to restrict the rights of the blacks were pillars in their church communities.

These consequences happen when we are tied to a particular theology that supersedes our call to love. What is your theology? It is not stale coursework in which if you gain enough of it you are guaranteed to get a book-lined office and mix with nice moral people. That is not what theology is or does.

The gospel that infuses the body of Christ is about the restoration of broken relationships. It is broken relationships that make poverty possible. Poverty is a broken relationship with God, with my neighbor, with the earth, and the broken places inside me.

Despite a history of mind-numbing theological dysfunction, the hallmark values of love, repentance, reconciliation, and passionate engagement still remain. In the last 25 years we have seen evangelicals beginning to integrate personal faith and social action in ways that help people better understand who Jesus is. Stories are being told of reversing the Great Reversal and the demonstration of the holistic nature of the gospel message.

This change in attitude has already begun to show itself—witness the evangelical church's nearly complete change of heart on the issue of HIV and AIDS. The AIDS infection rate, the death rate, abject poverty, human trafficking, and malaria are being impacted because the church is beginning to arise.

What about Palestine? As peacemakers we have been tasked by a justice agenda of love and sacrifice. I truly believe we can be pro-Palestinian, pro-Israeli, and pro-justice because we are adamantly pro-Jesus. We have arrived at a point in history in which this question could not be more pertinent.

It is a *kairos* moment for the church, and you are the ones who will lead us into it. What is your theology of social engagement, of the proclamation of the gospel as it deals with issues and places like AIDS or Palestine? Make it your life's work to respond to these questions, because our theology is going to force you to give an answer.

## Religious Freedom in Malaysia: The church's engagement for justice and equity in the public arena

Eugene Yapp

Recent events in Malaysia have raised controversies over religious freedom and fundamental liberties to new heights. The unexpected raid on the Bible Society at the beginning of last year once again pushed the *Allah/Alkitab* (Malay Bible that contains the word *Allah*) issue to the forefront, following the Court of Appeal's decision in the *Catholic Herald* case in October 2013 that use of the word *Allah* is not integral and essential to the Christian faith.

The decision last year by the Federal Court to not grant leave to the Catholic Church to appeal has left important questions pertaining to freedom of religion unanswered. Following this decision, Christians in the country are now expected to practise their faith in a way that avoids confusing and offending Muslim sensitivities, thus relegating other religions and their practices to the private domain away from the reaches of Islam.

This would imply that religious space for non-Muslim faiths is now reduced and that they should never be prominent in public life. In Malaysia, as in much of Asia, religion has a dominant role in community and nation building. Thus every religion should have its say about the common good in society, recognising that Malaysia is a plural and multi-religious society.

The Court of Appeal, as well as saying that the use of the word *Allah* is not essential and integral to Christianity, went on to state that such religious practices are not a fundamental right but a privilege. This implies that only religious practices that are an essential and integral part of the religion are protected under the constitution.

For any religious group to live freely and have a vibrant witness for the good of communities and the public life of the nation, freedom of religion must necessarily extend to all faiths and protect the practices of all religions. Anything less will ultimately lead to greater social tension and hostility.

Freedom of religion is a fundamental human liberty that is divinely mandated and cannot be construed as a privilege given by another religious group or by the governing authorities. Such a truth is foundational and the Christian must uphold this truth all the time.

The church must strengthen herself at this crossroads for our nation. The quest for a plural society and democratic way of life is an urgent priority in nation building. This requires Christians and all citizens alike to seek a country informed by a very different narrative—a secular polity governed by the rule of law and fundamental democratic principles rather than a religious state run by a religious bureaucracy.

Evangelical churches appear in times past to have neglected such an enterprise due to the truncated worldview that it is not within the mission of the church to be engaged on socio-political-religious issues within the public arena. Consequently, priority and focus have often been given to evangelism, church growth, social-community concerns, and cross-cultural missions rather than developing a more holistic and robust social-public theology. This is certainly true for the church in Malaysia, but thankfully current events have served to awaken it to the danger. Its experience might serve as a positive example for churches in other Muslim-majority countries to pursue a strategic engagement for justice and equity in law and policy notwithstanding the difficulties and the prospect of state sanctions.

As the one universal church and the one body of Christ, the global church could certainly offer informed prayers for Christians in Muslim-majority countries to continue faithfully on this quest for a pluralist democracy with the key agenda of religious freedom. Beyond prayers, the global church could share resources and ideas with churches in Muslim-majority countries. Defining the future and destiny of any nation in conformity with the kingdom of God demands collaborative efforts and sustained strategic partnership.

## Integrity, the Lausanne Movement, and a Malaysian Daniel

David Bennett

Malaysia has a modern-day Daniel—a man renowned for his integrity, appointed to a high position in a government that is predominantly Muslim. Senator Datuk Paul Low serves as one of only two Christian non-political appointee Ministers in a cabinet of 32. His portfolio is Minister for Integrity, Governance and Human Rights. He says: ‘We must bring righteousness to government . . . People want a clean government.’

Datuk Paul Low served as a presenter and participant at a workshop in Hong Kong in September 2014 for one of the newest of the 36 issue networks of the Lausanne Movement, focusing on integrity. *The Cape Town Commitment* says: ‘We cannot build the kingdom of the God of truth on foundations of dishonesty . . . Let us strive for a culture of full integrity and transparency. We will choose to walk in the light and truth of God, for the Lord tests the heart and is pleased with integrity.’

For 40 years the Lausanne Movement has been calling the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world—to leave no one and nothing out. The call to personal integrity is about bringing the whole of life into alignment with the person, the teaching, and the example of Jesus Christ.

Jesus was full of grace and truth. He was the embodiment of the fullness of God’s character. As followers of Jesus we are called to be full of grace and truth. To have integrity is to be consistent, to be complete, to be free from corruption, in both grace and truth. And that kind of life is good news to those who encounter us. When people start to live lives of integrity, full of grace and truth, they serve the common good.

This provides the common ground for Lausanne’s Global Integrity Network with other networks and movements in society as a whole working toward integrity and against corruption. In obeying and serving Jesus Christ as Lord in every dimension of life, in being embodiments of the grace and truth expressed fully only in Jesus Christ, but awakened by his Holy Spirit’s operation in us as well, we become agents for the common good.

Integrity prepares the way for us to speak the more complete good news about God’s revelation in Jesus Christ. A focus on integrity addresses what may be the greatest hindrance to world evangelization—that is, the lack of integrity in the church. Hypocrisy is so destructive to the witness of the church. If our lives do not express integrity, people will not believe or welcome our message. If people do not feel they can trust what we will do or say, if they are not assured that we are working for the common good, or for their personal good, they will not take seriously what we say about anything else—including the good news of Jesus Christ.

So the stakes are immensely high. The Global Integrity Network has an opportunity not only to build common ground with those who do not yet believe, and to prepare the way for the proclamation and further demonstration of the gospel, but also to rally the global church and its leaders, so that the church does not through its hypocrisy and its lack of integrity undermine or undo all that is being done to bear witness to the good news of Jesus throughout the world. People like Senator Datuk Paul Low of Malaysia are pointing the way.

## The UK Campaign to End Religious Illiteracy

Jenny Taylor

It is not often the UK government spends more than £300 million on a research project largely about religion. However, it did so quietly in 2009 when the *Research Council UK Global Uncertainties Programme* was launched, four years after four middle-class professionals who were also Muslim bombed the London Underground for religious reasons, shifting the social and political paradigm for good.

Its *Religion, Security and Global Uncertainties Report* was launched in Westminster on 6 January 2015. It sends a powerful signal to our rulers that things have changed—or as Tony Blair famously said after the 7/7 London bombings: ‘It is not business as usual.’

What did he—and what do we—mean by that?

Britain had been run as a ‘secular’ state for more than half a century. That ended on 7/7. Furthermore, *as regards religion, the state stands neutral* was the famous legal doctrine that governed disputes concerning ethnic religious requirements. Secularization was viewed by all as a process of inevitable religious decline. To be secular was to be progressive; to have no faith. You could do what you wanted in the privacy of your own home, but religion in the public domain was simply considered anachronistic. Before 9/11 and 7/7 changed all that, judges under European directives, were set on marginalising religion.

However, the secular space minorities inhabited and in which they were making great demands for extra—not just equal—rights, was won at great cost by Christians. Multiculturalism is the disastrous policy of state-funded group identity politics that undergirded UK social policy since the 1960s. It was based on a hard-edged, legally embedded view of a religion-defined ethnicity.

It was a law of diminishing returns. The hospitality and tolerance that group politics exploits is Christian. However, when such conviction is itself excluded or regarded as merely one among many equal and equally irrelevant religious opinions, the survival of the modern state itself is in jeopardy.

However, now, at last, commentators are fighting back. For example, Kate Cooper, Professor of Ancient History at Manchester University, contributes a startling piece to the *Religion, Security and Global Uncertainties Report* in which she locates the ideological underpinning for hospitable secularism in the writing of St Augustine.

When secularism begins to act like a religion itself, seeking to privilege itself at the expense of all others, including its parent religion, Christianity, the state begins to cannibalise society. *Business as usual* meant ignoring the facts of Europe’s own history and theology. It meant ignoring or being blind to the potency of theologies that could result in outrages on civilians, and as we are now seeing in Europe, the recruitment of suburban youth for holy war.

When religion was just an opinion, the intelligence services simply watched, without taking action, the development of a grievance theology among jihadis in Britain. State agencies recklessly arrogated to themselves permission to ignore what was happening—and people died.

This was religious illiteracy, and *Lapido Media Centre for Religious Literacy in World Affairs* has been mostly a lone voice—until now—campaigning to end it.

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## Lausanne Global Analysis

*Lausanne Global Analysis* seeks to deliver strategic and credible information and insight from an international network of evangelical analysts to equip influencers of global mission.

Editor's Note: The Lausanne Movement connects influencers and ideas for global mission, with a vision of the gospel for every person, an evangelical church for every people, Christ-like leaders for every church, and kingdom impact in every sphere of society. Our three foundational documents are The Lausanne Covenant, The Manila Manifesto, and The Cape Town Commitment.

The Lausanne Movement is a global network of individuals and ministries from a wide range of denominations, nationalities, theologies, and strategic perspectives that shares an evangelical faith and commitment to global mission. Articles in the *Lausanne Global Analysis* represent a diversity of viewpoints within the bounds of our foundational documents. The views and opinions expressed in these articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the personal viewpoints of Lausanne Movement leaders or networks.

Articles use either American or British English conventions, according to the author's preference.

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Further information about the Lausanne Movement may be found at [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

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