

May 2016  
Volume 5 / Issue 3



Lausanne  
Global Analysis

# Executive Summary

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

## **The Spread of Anti-conversion Laws from India: A threat to the religious freedom of minorities**

Tehmina Arora

In spite of a rich tradition and legal framework supportive of freedom of conscience and the right to practise, profess, and propagate the religion of one's choice, religious minorities in India find themselves frequent victims of religiously motivated violence.

In its annual report for 2015, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) noted that since the 2014 general elections in India, religious minority communities have been subject to 'derogatory comments by politicians linked to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)' and 'numerous violent attacks and forced conversions by Hindu nationalist groups'.

One of the primary causes of violence against the minority Christian population is the making of allegations of conversions by force and allurement. While there are numerous such incidents that come to light each year, there is very little evidence to show that Christians have engaged in coercive practices to gain new converts.

In spite of the absence of credible data to support laws restricting religious conversions in India, there are voices within the government which have called for a national law. Similar laws have been enacted at the state or province level in Odisha (previously known as Orissa) in 1967, Madhya Pradesh (1968), Arunachal Pradesh (1978), Gujarat (2003), and Himachal Pradesh (2006). Euphemistically titled 'Freedom of Religion Act', they are commonly known as anti-conversions laws.

These laws are very similar in content, and claim to prohibit conversions by force, fraud, and inducement or allurement. They carry penal provisions and punishments.

Reports from the various minority communities and human rights agencies reveal that these laws foster hostility against religious minority communities. In several states, prosecutions have been launched under the Freedom of Religion Acts against members of the minority Christian community. There have also been frequent attacks against the community by members of right-wing Hindu groups on the pretext of 'forcible' conversions.

In spite of the effect of these provisions, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar have also enacted similar laws, with Nepal going so far as to include them in the recently adopted constitution. A similar proposal was introduced in Sri Lanka, but was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2004. While Pakistan does not have anti-conversion laws, laws pertaining to blasphemy have a very similar effect on persons converting to religions other than Islam.

Analysis of these laws reveals that, far from promoting or protecting religious freedom, they have served to undermine the religious freedom guarantees under the Indian constitution and international law and the covenants to which India is a signatory.

Primarily motivated by a religious ideology, the anti-conversions laws fail to achieve the very purpose for which they have been enacted. On the contrary, they provide an opportunity for divisive forces to target the constitutionally protected rights of minority groups and pose a serious threat to the free practice and propagation of religious beliefs.

Furthermore, the laws fail to account for the agency of converts and treat them instead as passive recipients of external (and seemingly unwanted) pressures from 'predatory' convertors. They tend to treat all religious conversions as suspect and liable to investigation and prosecution.

The introduction of similar provisions in the other South Asian legal systems is a disturbing trend and requires the attention of the international community, as they stand in direct contrast to the rights and liberties guaranteed under international law.

This unchecked spreading of anti-conversions laws will affect the safety and security of local Christians wherever it occurs, as has been in the case in India.

## Climate Change after Paris: What it means for the evangelical church

Ed Brown

The *United Nations' 21st Conference of the Parties*, commonly known as COP 21, produced one of the most important international agreements ever. Some 197 nations agreed unanimously in December 2015 to take concrete steps to reverse centuries of damage to God's creation and the Earth's climate system by reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and the other greenhouse gases.

The unanimous adoption of what has become known as the *Paris Agreement* was almost miraculous. Having planned to call for policies and plans that would limit future temperature increases to 2.0 degrees C above pre-industrial levels, delegates instead opted for a lower target.

Most surprising of all, the final Paris Agreement is based not on economics or business concerns or political realities, but rather on a genuine concern for the poor of the world who are most at risk. In a world marked by partisan rancor and often greedy self-interest, COP 21 produced the opposite—a document that expresses an almost biblical call for righteousness, compassion, and justice.

One of the major factors was that faith communities generally and evangelical Christians in particular made their presence known and their voices heard at COP 21. *The Lausanne Creation Care Network* (LCCN) is a primary umbrella for evangelicals around the world working in the area of environment or creation care. LCCN played a crucial organizing role to bring a broad evangelical partnership to COP 21. Bishop Efraim Tendero, Secretary General of the WEA, was the public face of this coalition and worked tirelessly to communicate the moral and spiritual aspects of climate change.

The Paris Agreement lays the groundwork for a climate response in two important areas: *Mitigation* and *Adaptation*. It provides for a funding mechanism by which means developing nations which will bear the greatest burden of adaptation will be able to receive assistance from developed nations.

Paris is not the end, but one stop on a long journey. Imagine a train running at top speed through the countryside. Somewhere ahead of it is a curve that must be taken slowly; otherwise the train will leave the tracks. It will take many miles to slow this train down, and it should be decelerating now, rather than continuing to increase speed. Climate change is like that train. The curve is a point in time by which we must reduce global emissions to a safe level if we are to avoid catastrophe.

So how should we respond? The Lausanne/WEA Creation Care Network website has a good list of resources and a schedule of future events in the Lausanne Global Campaign for Creation Care and the Gospel, as well as the *Jamaica Call to Action*, a document we urge every evangelical to read, sign, and share.

More specifically, we would urge all to do the following:

- **Understand** that climate change and other threats to God's creation are real and serious problems, and that it is appropriate and necessary for Christians—individuals, congregations, ministries—to engage.
- **Live and work** according to the principles of good and godly stewardship and simple lifestyle (a concept that was endorsed in Lausanne Occasional Paper 20).
- **Hold our governments and political leaders accountable** for each of our countries' commitments to the Paris Agreement in whatever ways are possible in our various political contexts.
- **Connect with and support** the Lausanne/WEA Creation Care Network by writing to us at [creationcare@lausanne.org](mailto:creationcare@lausanne.org).

Climate change is without question one of the biggest challenges the human race has ever faced. However, let us not forget that we, as God's people, can face this as we face every other challenge, with confidence in the One to whom '*all authority in heaven and on earth*' has been given, and who has promised that He will be with us '*to the very end of the age*'.

## Movement Day and Lausanne: Increasing the impact of the gospel in cities globally

Mac Pier

In the fall of 2009 our team received research results on church planting that indicated that Christianity had grown from 1% to 3% of the population in Manhattan during the years 1989–2009. Of the churches surveyed, 39% had been started within the past decade.

The decision was made as the result of that research to launch the issues-focused *Movement Day* conference in September 2010. We had our first gathering for 800 city leaders from 34 states and 14 countries. God was stirring in the hearts of leaders to learn from one another and to share best practices.

Five years later in 2014, the research was updated to assess the progress and—to our surprise and delight—Christianity had grown to 5%.

Modern-day Manhattan is a hub of global influence for media, politics, art, fashion, and finance. During the 1970s and 1980s, it journeyed through a series of crises. Yet God was on the move. Two spiritual movements began simultaneously in the late 1980s in New York City—a prayer movement, which brought thousands of leaders and hundreds of churches together in united prayer, and a church planting movement that began with Dr Tim Keller establishing Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan.

The greatest demographic reality in human history is happening right now. Every hour there are 7,000 people moving into sizeable cities. A new San Francisco or Singapore is being birthed every month. The majority of the people in the world today are urban, poor (living on less than \$2 a day), and young (under 25 years of age).

Movement Day began as a one-day gathering to focus on three themes—the gospel, cities, and movement acceleration. Our convictions are simply: *cities shape culture, gospel movements shape cities, and leaders catalyze movements.*

Eight Movement Day gatherings have happened in the past five years. More than 11,000 leaders have participated from 360 cities worldwide. Movement Day comprises worship, prayer, vision casting to engage the city, and learning tracks organized around specific needs of cities. We want each track to answer three questions regarding these great needs: Where are we today (research)? Where do we want to be in ten years (vision)? How do we get there (strategy)?

*Movement Day Global Cities 2016* will take place in New York City on October 25–27, 2016, in collaboration with the Lausanne Movement, bringing together leaders from 100 cities globally.

The morning sessions will be organized around these themes:

- The glory and challenges of cities
- Millennials: The future of city movements
- Partnership: The strategy to impact cities

The afternoons will be divided into conversations such as: the arts in cities, the role of marketplace leaders, church planting, prayer and spiritual warfare, and the role of catalytic events in city movements.

There are some common themes in cities that we need to address together:

- **Millennials are leaving the church everywhere:** This is quite significant given that most spiritual movements are started by leaders under 28. Movement Day and urban mission are ways to engage younger leaders.
- **Social challenges are escalating rapidly:** Whether it be the refugee crisis, human trafficking, or the global moral crises, cities are the places where this is all concentrated.
- **City centers are radically under-churched:** There is a huge need to pray for the identification and planting of effective churches in the great global cities.

- **The body of Christ is divided:** If division breeds atheism, the unity of the church is a critical element in fostering the aroma of belief in cities globally.

*Movement Day Global Cities* is an opportunity to gather to worship, learn, strategize, and collaborate for the increased impact of the gospel in cities globally. We want to accelerate the impact of leaders in cities around today's great challenges.

## The Ageing Church and Its Implications

Peter Brierley

The ageing problem is similar in most of the world, and for mostly the same reasons: people are living longer and the numbers born are too few to keep the balance level.

UN experts reckon that the Total Fertility Rate (TFR, the number of children an average woman may expect to have in a lifetime) will continue to fall in the majority of countries in the Majority World. Both the number of people with HIV/AIDS in different countries and the proportion of them receiving anti-retroviral treatment are increasing. Immigration is also of immense importance globally and demographically as a continuing trend.

All these worldwide trends are relevant for the church. The fertility rate is important since if fewer children are being born, that means fewer children present who could join the church; so to maintain numbers we would need an above-average proportion joining, which is not happening. The number with AIDS in the Western world is small and usually does not affect church numbers. Immigration on the other hand has a huge impact, especially as so many come from a Christian background and either join existing churches or start new ones.

One consequence of smaller numbers of children being born is that the proportion of older people increases, helped by the better standard and wider availability of improved health resources in many countries.

One obvious implication of the above is the age of retirement for ministers, elders, trustees, and others. Should the age be extended to be more in line with the age of congregations?

The impact of many older people will affect the church in a variety of ways. Some churches are already appointing a Minister for Older People. Are ministers in training being prepared to serve the needs of congregations where older people dominate?

Many Third Agers are grandparents. In what practical ways can Christian grandparents be more than just child-minders or child-entertainers in order to share Christian truth and values? Should the churches provide facilities especially for grandparents? Indeed this current generation in the Western world (whose parents often married in their mid-20s and started a family in their 20s) will not only see many grandparents, but also many great-grandparents.

Third Agers may be very committed to their church, but may become less able to give as much support as perhaps they used to. How can churches cope with dwindling financial resources?

The older people get, the less easy it is for them to travel to church, the doctor, or hospital. Can churches help by providing some kind of transport rota, even 'bussing' people to church? Numbers using Mobility Scooters may also increase; so churches will need space for access.

Proportionately more elderly go to church than other age groups, but there are yet many who do not go to church at all, and still need to be reached with the gospel. However, like any group of churchgoers, they need to be befriended and enabled to join in suitable church activities. When Jesus said, *'The fields are white, ready to harvest'*, that included those 65 and over!

## Editorial Advisory Board

**Naomi Frizzell**, *United States*  
visionSynergy  
Member of Lausanne Communications  
Working Group

**Mila Gomides**, *Brazil*  
Sepal

**Kwabena Asamoah Gyadu**, *Ghana*  
Trinity Theological Seminary

**Cathy Hine**, *Middle East, Australia*  
Interserve

**Darrell Jackson**, *UK, Australia*  
Morling College  
Chair of the Lausanne International  
Researchers' Network

**Paul Joshua**, *India*  
South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies  
Member of Lausanne Theology Working Group

**Benrilo Kikon**, *India, UK*  
Samvada Centre for Research Resources

**Atola Longkumer**, *India*  
South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies

**David Ro**, *China, United States*  
Regional Director for East Asia  
Lausanne Movement

**Kang San Tan**, *Malaysia*  
AsiaCMS  
Lausanne Catalyst for Buddhism

**Jennifer Taylor**, *UK*  
Lapido Media

---

### Editors

#### Editor

David Taylor  
International Affairs Analyst

#### Managing Editor

David Bennett  
Lausanne Movement

#### Contributing Editors

Thomas Harvey  
Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

Todd Johnson  
Center for the Study of Global Christianity  
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

### Publisher

Michael Young-Suk Oh  
Global Executive Director/CEO  
Lausanne Movement

### Communications Team

John Ruffin  
Creative Director

Andrew Brumme  
Director of Communications

Sarah Chang  
Coordinating Editor

Jay Hartwell  
Website Manager



## 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.

Inquiries regarding *Lausanne Global Analysis* may be addressed to [analysis@lausanne.org](mailto:analysis@lausanne.org).

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

Copyright © 2016 Lausanne Movement