

# III | 2013



Lausanne  
**GLOBAL ANALYSIS**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **A LANDMARK ENCOUNTER: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACLF FOR THE CHURCH IN CHINA**

*Ezra Jin*

Some events only happen after an extraordinarily long wait — and during such a wait, many people persevere through failures and frustrations, praying in the midst of hardships and making great efforts to see things happen. The Asian Church Leaders Forum (ACLF) held in Seoul in June 2013, convened by Asia Lausanne (ALCOE) and hosted by Korea Lausanne, was such an event.

It seemed at first like any other international conference. However, for the representatives of the house churches in China, it was a conference of far-reaching significance. The deep sorrow felt by Chinese representatives at not being able to attend the Third Lausanne Congress at Cape Town in 2010 was greatly relieved.

When Chinese representatives were preparing to attend Cape Town 2010, they hoped to restore the fellowship and connection with the Global Church; to learn what churches throughout the world are doing about world mission and see how churches can all partner together; and to see different networks and different parts of the body in China become connected, be a witness together in Chinese society, and partner together in evangelisation and world mission.

ACLF basically fulfilled these purposes. It was a significant gathering of Christian leaders, including more than 100 representatives from churches in Mainland China — the traditional Chinese house church; rural networks; emerging urban house churches; Christian communities in education, culture, and business; and mission organisations in China. There were deep interactions and conversations with leaders from around the world about challenges pertaining to the urban church, theological education, witnessing in Chinese society, the 'Back to Jerusalem Movement' etc. ACLF also brought comfort and unity. Chinese representatives felt accepted and included by the global family.

During the past two years, the overseas Chinese church and the house church in China were estranged over the Cape Town 2010 controversies. However, ACLF

reduced this divide, strengthening everyone's determination to grow in mutual understanding, commitment, love, and prayer.

Furthermore, this gathering encouraged participants to move toward deeper unity and firmer commitment to each other. The 'Seoul Commitment' expresses their common aspiration.

The impact of ACLF will be felt in various areas, not least its '2030 vision', which provides a specific and clear direction for the church in China, mobilising resources and passion for world mission.

The global church should recognise that China still needs attention from the mission world. China is still the world's largest country that contains people who have not heard of the gospel, with many unreached people groups.

Furthermore, the Chinese church has experienced enormous challenges of urbanisation. Young people from the rural church are leaving. There is a shortage of pastoral leadership in the cities. The rise of heresy, tensions in church-state relations, and rampant materialism are among many daily challenges.

The global church should join with the church in China in shouldering this responsibility. The deepening exchanges between the global Church and the church in China should lead to a gradual building of deeper partnerships.

## **TURMOIL IN THE MIDDLE EAST: IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIANS THERE AND GLOBALLY**

*Wafik Wahba*

The eruption of revolts across the Middle East during the last two years reflects the region's dire socio-political situation, especially for the young and educated. It has unleashed a process of change that will take generations to play out.

The main beneficiary of this change was the Muslim Brotherhood. It held power in Egypt from July 2012 to July 2013. However, it quickly became clear that it lacked the capacity to govern. Over 15 million Egyptians

took to the streets, and the military took control of the country. Islamist rule collapsed in just one year.

The Islamist agenda has been exposed for what it is. Many moderate Muslims are questioning the validity of political Islam and calling for a secularised state system. During the last year, the number of secularists and even atheists has increased significantly in Egypt and in other countries in the region. Events in Egypt since June have created new positive relationships between Christians and Muslims, many of whom stood side by side against extremist Islamist policies, although in other parts of Egypt Christians and Christian property have face unprecedented levels of attack.

In the last twenty years there has been a significant surge in the number of Muslims coming to Christ. For centuries, it seemed that Muslim evangelism was impossible. However, the estimated 5 million Christians from a Muslim background today can be found in almost every country in the region. They face severe persecution for their faith. However, their perseverance and faithfulness are a remarkable witness to the gospel.

Middle Eastern Christianity has a long history of worship, fasting and prayer. Today, in the midst of turmoil and persecution, there is a renewed desire. Many Christians believe that it was the power of prayer that has exposed the source of corruption and injustice in the region

Middle Eastern Christians may well face further times of persecution. However, the church will be stronger and bolder in its witness. The prayer movement will spread to other Middle Eastern countries and will influence all denominations. There are new signs of Christian unity.

The global church needs to enable Christians around the world to be active in praying for and standing along their brothers and sisters, who for centuries have kept the lamp of faith burning amid so much turmoil and persecution. Churches outside the Middle East should consider active participation with Middle Eastern Churches, including joint ministry programmes, and joining in prayer and worship together. The global church will be richer through connecting with the long spirituality of the Middle Eastern church.

Above all, we need to trust in God's wisdom in reshaping the whole region and using the church for the furthering of his kingdom in the midst of the current chaos. The Lord who holds all power and authority in heaven and

on earth has promised to be with his church to the ends of the ages.

## **BUSINESS AS MISSION: BUILDING A MOVEMENT THAT CAN BRING LASTING SOCIETAL TRANSFORMATION**

*Mats Tunehag*

Business as Mission, BAM, is a new term but the underpinning concept is not. It is not a new discovery, but a rediscovery of biblical truths and practices.

Our first God-given mandate is the creation mandate, Genesis 1-3: we are to be creative and create good things, for ourselves and others, being good stewards of all things entrusted to us — even in the physical arena. This includes being creative in business — to create wealth. Wealth creation is a godly talent. As Christians we often focus more on wealth distribution, but there is no wealth to distribute unless it has been created.

God calls and equips some people to business. We need to affirm and encourage business people to exercise their calling with professionalism, excellence and integrity. BAM is a growing global movement of Christians in the marketplace seeking to serve God and the common good through business.

There is a global shortfall of about 1.8 billion good formal jobs. Many people live and work in the insecure, informal job sector. Most people hope for a formal job, but many have little or no prospect of finding one. BAM is about societal transformation, which implies building the formal economy. The backbone of developed countries is small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). SMEs also drive job creation in developing countries. Societal transformation implies good and lasting change.

The BAM movement is still small (a minority), but vision and values are increasingly shared across the globe. The first global think tank on BAM (2003 – 2004) and the Lausanne paper on BAM (2004) helped catalyze a common global understanding of the concept. We are aiming at a positive impact economically, socially, environmentally and spiritually, leading to holistic transformation of people and societies — to the greater glory of God. We are especially concerned about the world's poorest and the least evangelized peoples.

The 2nd global think tank process (2011 - 2013) has increased the connections, building a global BAM movement, establishing a shared vision, developing

common values, and facilitating a global network of BAM practitioners and other key leaders in the overall BAM eco-system.

Without critical mass of sizeable BAM businesses, SMEs and beyond, we cannot see transformation at a macro level — on cities, cultures and nations. Critical mass, in the BAM movement, is yet to come, although promising indicators are emerging in some countries and areas.

BAM is an intergenerational issue, like other movements of societal transformation. We want to set a stage and serve our generation in such a way that it will be a blessing for many generations to come. The modern BAM movement is still young. We want to build a movement that can bring good and lasting transformation. We embrace the promise that God will bless us so we can be a blessing — in and through business — in our generation and for many generations to come.

### **STEWARDSHIP AND JUSTICE: A CHALLENGE FOR CHRISTIAN CONSUMERS**

*Carrie Ngangnang*

Our homes, workplaces, shops and markets are full of items made from around the world. However, we do not often consider the individuals behind the making of what we buy. Because our world is global, we have an opportunity to care for others across borders through our everyday shopping, simply by being aware of the conditions in which they work and by making purchases that help those behind our products.

For example, with the increase in demand over the past 15 years for electronics products, such as cell phones and computers, the need for coltan, the mineral used to make these devices, has increased dramatically. However, the largest mine of coltan is in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). With such a high demand for coltan, militia groups have been fighting for control of this highly valued resource for years.

Tithing a tenth of our income to God is one way to express gratitude and acknowledgment that all we have are blessings from him. However, we often do not consider how we spend the remaining 90% — which is also a stewardship issue.

The Cape Town Commitment puts it this way, “We support Christians whose particular missional calling is to environmental advocacy and action, as well as those committed to godly fulfillment of the mandate to provide

for human welfare and needs by exercising responsible dominion and stewardship.”

Organisations such as Trade as One and Food for the Hungry encourage consumers to spend in a way that extends compassion across borders. Followers of Jesus can participate in restoration work throughout the world and the redemption of land and people by making purchases that seek to care for others globally.

Additionally, there are practical steps consumers can take to help to slow the demand for coltan and help protect the Congolese people from unnecessary suffering, such as only buying new electronics goods when necessary and encouraging leading electronics companies to be vigilant in their purchasing of coltan.

Jesus is the hope of the world. He uses his Church to spread his good news of life and love for all of his creation. As his Church, we can participate in God’s plan for justice in an unjust world, simply by making purchases that care for others.

### **CHRISTIAN FAITH AND CURRENT IDEOLOGICAL TRENDS IN CHINA: THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE ‘OXFORD CONSENSUS’**

*Thomas Harvey*

In August 2013 in Oxford, England, the 6th Annual Forum for Chinese Theology on ‘Christian Faith & Ideological Trends in Contemporary China’ brought together a significant group of Christian, Confucian, Leftist and Liberal Scholars from China and around the globe. It produced two notable outcomes.

Firstly, the Oxford Consensus 2013 commits them to work together in mutual respect and shared concern to address the various challenges facing China and the world. They agreed that academic engagement at the highest level could nurture deeper understanding and greater appreciation of each other’s positions and concerns regarding the various issues raised during the conference.

Secondly, the conference served notice of the relevance of global Christianity when it engages secular academic scholars to address issues impacting civil society. This unique gathering brought together Christian and non-Christian scholars to address the issues surrounding current ideological trends in China and produced relevant and insightful engagement across academic disciplines.

This conference represents an important step towards understanding the relationship between Christian faith, ideology and civil society. It also created significant connections between leading Christian and non-Christian academics and institutional leaders from China and the West.

Though not without risk, it was novel and fruitful to bring together Christian and non-Christian Chinese and Western scholars in a joint conference to air views

on Christianity and ideology in China. The favourable reception this approach received from non-Christian delegates should suggest ways going forward to foster understanding, appreciation and even some amelioration of tension between Christianity and its religious and secular critics. It provided an alternative way forward for informed faith and secular perspectives to address the question of Christian faith in China outside traditional religious institutional frameworks that are too often fraught with bureaucratic and diplomatic hindrances.