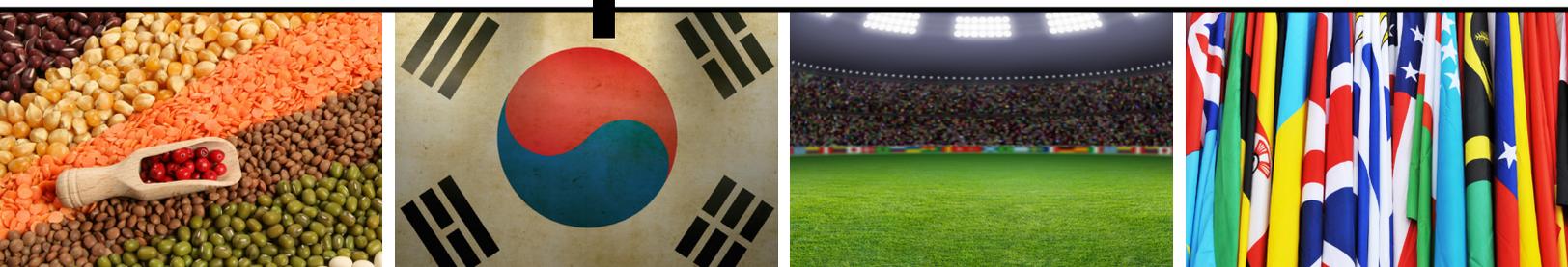


# 5 | 2014



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Lausanne  
**GLOBAL ANALYSIS**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## FOOD SECURITY AND ITS ROLE IN TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Ravi Jayakaran*

Food security is generally not seen readily as either an issue that determines response to the gospel or one that determines the health of a community. However, both health and response to the gospel have strong relations to food security.

Food security plays a significant role in transformational development, especially long-term sustainable transformation. The holistic integrated development programs of many Christian development agencies today have developed so well that livelihood and food security are taking their rightful place in giving traction to their programs. If we are to move towards achieving the Millennium Development Goal of halving global poverty, we need to consider food security.

Christian development agencies can use creative ‘food for work’ programs to ensure that food is available in an area, so that the community does not migrate away to other areas in search of food. The program can also be used to leverage long-term availability of food by using the ‘food for work’ part of the program to create community assets such as roads and ponds.

Food aid that is not used positively to bring traction to the local economy and stimulate local grain production will make the community passive and dependent on external aid. Ultimately, access to food will become the victim. It is easy for well-meaning but poorly directed Christian development agencies to do more harm than good—including for the gospel—through their development work.

In a normal community, food security is closely tied to asset creation. Surplus food produced by individuals and families is used for selling and purchasing assets. Assets are a means of saving. Asset creation from surplus food available, to be liquidated later in times of crisis, represents an integral part of food security. Organizations working with communities to help them become food secure must cater for this in their programming.

Ensuring food security means also bringing gender equality, because providing adequate food for the family requires it to be equally distributed.

It is not surprising that household food security status and response to the gospel are correlated. Households that are below the poverty line have great struggles. The debilitating impact of abject poverty is like a continued oppression on multiple fronts and can crush the spirit, make people lose hope and turn to desperate measures for coping and surviving. This is the group that is constantly in search of a Savior.

The gospel, which is integral and holistic, is both the proclamation and demonstration of the good news to the poor and needy. For us as Christians, it is a call to integral mission that ensures that we proclaim and demonstrate the good news in all that we do. The author’s organisation MAP International has in recent times started increasing its church engagement portfolio to get more churches into partnerships of integral mission in communities in the developing world.

God has helped them to develop new tools and strategies, particularly to help churches and their congregations to engage meaningfully in bringing transformational development through building household-level food security. They are happy to share this information with LGA readers and also partner with those with a heart for integral mission.

## WCC GENERAL ASSEMBLY AFTERMATH: OVERCOMING KOREAN CHURCH DIVISIONS AND ENCOURAGING COOPERATION AMONG EVANGELICALS GLOBALLY

*Bong Rin Ro*

The 10th World Council of Churches General Assembly (WCC GA) was held in Busan, Korea, 20 October – 8 November 2013. The Korean Preparation Committee had the support of the 2.8 million strong WCC ecumenically aligned Tong Hap Presbyterian Church of Korea denomination.

As early as 2011, conservative evangelical churches and denominations in Korea began to oppose the WCC GA.

Mass demonstrations against the WCC GA occurred in Seoul and Busan, criticizing the WCC's liberal theology. Leading the opposition was the Hap Tong Presbyterian Church of Korea, considered the largest conservative Presbyterian denomination with 3 million members.

The Korean church is one of the most theologically conservative in the world. However, some Korean evangelical leaders choose to stay within the more 'liberal' Tong Hap denomination to provide a positive evangelical influence within the WCC family. By contrast, the more conservative Hap Tong denomination would consider any engagement with WCC liberals compromising. Despite this environment, the WCC selected Korea to host the WCC GA, in part because of the increasing importance of the church in the Global South, particularly Asia where rapid church growth has been taking place.

Now, after the WCC GA, the Korean church will most likely be more divided than ever, with the rift between Tong Hap and Hap Tong likely to deepen. Furthermore, it was announced on 11 February that the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) General Assembly due to be held in Korea in October has been postponed. The WEA statement cited 'internal differences among the evangelical community' in Korea.

The WCC GA has shown that the center of gravity of the ecumenical movement has shifted from declining Western Christendom to the growing churches of the Global South. Liberal leaders within the WCC have maintained control in the areas of church administration, finance, and seminary education. Evangelical leaders from Asia, Africa, and Latin America now need to increase their spiritual influence in these three areas within WCC.

The role of The Lausanne Movement (LCWE) will become increasingly important. The LCWE can help bring unity among the evangelical churches within WEA and the evangelical leaders within WCC who are dissatisfied with WCC theology and practices.

Evangelical leaders in LCWE can work closely with WEA in order to bring cooperation among the evangelical churches around the world. The past three Lausanne Congresses are good examples of gatherings that bring together all the evangelical church leaders around the world, within and outside WCC, to discuss the task of world evangelization.

One way is to work closely with WEA-related churches through WEA Commissions. Such cooperation will gain

the support of grassroots churches and church leaders that are associated with different national evangelical alliances and fellowships.

Evangelical leaders in LCWE can also open their doors to evangelical pastors and churches within WCC, because most churches within the ecumenical movement in Asia, Africa, and Latin America are theologically conservative and are looking for evangelical cooperation.

The key task for evangelical churches, whether or not they are affiliated to WCC, is to work together for the cause of the Great Commission. The whole church must take the whole gospel to the whole world.

### **SPORTS MINISTRY AND EVANGELISM: HOW AN INCARNATIONAL AND SERVICE EMPHASIS UNDERPINS EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM**

*J Stuart Weir*

No reasonable person can deny the importance of sport in the modern world. The FIFA Football World Cup takes place in Brazil in June-July this year. The 2010 World Cup was shown on TV in every country and territory on earth, with 46.4% of the global population watching at least part of it.

Sports ministry broadly falls into two categories—ministry to sport and ministry through sport.

Ministry to sport means serving sport in the name of Jesus; sports chaplaincy is a good example of this. This is helping the (often) elite sports person to practise their sport Christianly as well bringing church to them when competition stops them getting to a Sunday service.

Ministry through sport is seeing sport as an evangelistic opportunity. This might involve running sports events with an evangelistic purpose or distributing leaflets or video material with a gospel message in the language of sport, often using the testimony of high-profile Christian athletes.

In recent years, Christians have seen the potential of a major event in their country or city as an opportunity for service and witness. This type of ministry began in the 1990s and has grown significantly over the years, particularly at the Olympics and football World Cups.

The chaplaincy programme at the 2012 London Olympics was arguably the most comprehensive ever conducted

at an Olympic Games. This was an excellent example of servant-hearted Christians working with the Olympic organizing committee to add value to the event. This shows how an attitude of servant-hearted support for the organizing committee of a major sports event is often appreciated and can build bridges between the Christian community and the sports administrators.

The incarnational model emphasis of sports ministry, where Christians enter the world of sportspeople, reflects the Pauline emphasis in I Corinthians 9:19-23 with a playing, participating, and supporting level of involvement that requires a huge commitment in terms of time, vulnerability, and intentionality in relationships. This is a lesson for other spheres of evangelism that can sometimes emphasise a programme/event/'come to us' approach.

Being open to supporting an incarnational approach in evangelism, and in envisioning, equipping, and supporting any sportspeople in the congregation to be the church's evangelists to their sports friends and local sports club, can be an effective strategy to help the church engage with its local sports community.

Another lesson applicable to other spheres of evangelism is that the serving emphasis within sports evangelism can break down many barriers and open up doors for other evangelism opportunities. Such an approach may not yield short-term results but the long-term favour that emerges (e.g., through sports chaplaincy) can lead to real growth of influence for the gospel.

Churches should also be open to serve in the community in and through sport, for example, in providing volunteers, coaches, pastoral care, or a meeting place for a local sports club, school, or college. There should also be a conscious decision to value and prioritise disability sport more than has happened up to this point.

## **NATIONALISM AND EVANGELICAL MISSION: ISSUES FOR EVANGELICAL LEADERS**

*Darrell Jackson*

Nationalist and patriotic sentiments frequently cause headaches for Christian leaders and pose particular challenges for the church or mission agency leader responsible for managing multi-national teams. This simple observation requires us to understand the scope and significance of nationalism in the context of global mission.

While populist parties stir up fears, the churches often struggle to express a clear kingdom perspective. In some instances the churches find themselves, wittingly or unwittingly, portrayed as patriotic allies in the struggle to stem the influx of non-Christian immigrants.

Nationalists, above all else, issue a call to difference in the face of homogenizing forces that are global in nature. In resisting globalisation, most nationalisms use alternative narratives that are mythological, such as 'frontier' myths and 'sacred origin' myths.

The Lausanne Movement's commitment to a vision of the one worldwide body of Christ, fuelled by passion and enthusiasm, is entirely appropriate and wholly commensurate with a vision of the kingdom of God. Yet, it has to balance constantly the national interests and agendas of evangelical groupings with the global agendas urged upon it by the movement's leaders.

Mission teams currently located in various parts of the world will have members from competing nations, for example, Russia and Ukraine currently. The wise team leader prepares for heated discussions within the team as fault-lines converge around patriotic or nationalistic feelings.

The vital national interests of any one country may be rarely reported by the media of other countries; yet it is necessary for the astute cross-cultural Christian worker to be constantly alert to the spectre of nationalism raising its ugly head and threatening to undermine credible witness.

Of course, the curse of nationalism for the faithful follower of Jesus Christ is seen in the extent to which Christianity is mobilised as a unifying source of national identity over and against others. Responsible and astute media commentators will recognise that impact of religion on public and political conversation.

Evangelicals may choose on occasion to express solidarity with their government, and it is not always wrong to do so. However, it is not possible to work with an account of nation and nationhood if this means a moral partiality or politics of superiority that would deny to others the same human rights as those of its members.

This perspective reflects a biblical theology of the nations that portrays them as the pinnacle of God's creative acts (Gen 10:32); laments their incredible hubris (Gen 11:4); declares them to be at the centre of God's

missionary purposes (Gen 12:2-3); gathers all nations into the body of Christ (Rev 7:9); yet still concludes with an eschatological picture of the nations in submission and under judgement (Rev 19:15). Christian identity and allegiance can only ever be to Christ. All other forms of loyalty are temporal and will pass away, finally exposed as worthless by the Judge of every tribe and every nation.

We need to repent of any partiality or superiority that we instinctively feel or demonstrate toward co-workers or those among whom we work; to work hard at identifying potential sources of nationalist tensions within our own ministry and mission teams; and to be prepared to offer training to teams sent into areas where they are likely to encounter nationalist tensions.

### **CHRIST AT THE CHECKPOINT: AN EVANGELICAL SHIFT IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT**

*Munther Isaac and Alice Su*

More than 600 delegates from across the world gathered in Bethlehem in March for Christ at the Checkpoint (CATC) 2014, the third such conference that aims to ask 'What Would Jesus Do?' in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Bethlehem Bible College organized the conference, inviting speakers from a wide theological and political range to discuss how evangelical Christians should respond to one of the most politicized conflicts of our time.

Christians have long been among the strongest supporters of Israeli policies, especially in the United States. However, CATC and its attendant controversies highlighted the fact that evangelicals are taking in more and more of the Palestinian narrative and theological perspective, and are seeking a more balanced take on the conflict.

The conference theme was 'Your Kingdom Come', which meant something different for each attending group, from Palestinian Christians to Messianic Jews, Mennonites to Reformed evangelicals and dispensationalists. The main theological division lay between Christian Zionists, who believe that Jewish return to the Holy Land fulfils biblical prophecy and thus demands Christian

commitment to political support for Israel, and those who believe otherwise.

Yet diversity was an asset to CATC, said Bishara Awad, founder of Bethlehem Bible College. Despite their wide-ranging theological beliefs, CATC attendees united in their commitment to peace.

Recognition of different narratives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is key to reconciliation, the conference heard. The gospel calls for Christians to love their enemies by seeing them as neighbours, brothers, and friends. Reconciliation also requires loving one's neighbour despite eschatological differences.

Political complexity must not stop evangelicals from pursuing the peace that burns in the heart of God. The suffering, grief, and despair of Christians, Muslims, and Jews in the region are an affront to humanity and to our God, the conference heard. Eschatological disagreement should not impact Christians' commitment to resist injustice and love even those who hurt us.

Who is my neighbour? Who is my enemy? These questions guided discussions of not only Israel and Palestine, but also Christianity amid political turmoil and rising Islamism in the Middle East. The answers were consistent: everyone is my neighbour and no one is my enemy. Speakers called not for resistance or retaliation, but embrace.

Palestinian Christians founded and currently lead the Bethlehem Bible College, which organized CATC. They were the clearest speakers against the Israeli occupation. The difference between their narrative and the mainstream Palestinian one, however, was their call for ending occupation not by conquering the 'other' or by violent means, but by caring for the other.

CATC sought to 'challenge evangelicals to take responsibility to help resolve the conflicts in Israel-Palestine by engaging with the teaching of Jesus on the kingdom of God'. The time has come for followers of Jesus to take their calling to be peacemakers seriously and engage positively in this part of the world. If more Christians begin to develop this attitude, then we will see the hope that is desperately needed in the Middle East.