

Welcome to the JUNE 2011
FIRST FRUIT LEARNING CENTRE

*A place for the board and staff to stay informed and deepen their knowledge
on a range of relevant topics.*

The world is in a state of flux. Perhaps it always has been, but we are more globally affected by one another than ever. Some events are highly unpredictable and yet hugely impactful like the earthquake and tsunami in Japan. Some have underlying factors that are observable over long periods of time—such as the youth bulges in the Arab World—although the outcomes—e.g., political revolutions—are not easily predictable. And many have long-term consequences that are yet to be determined such as the remarkable ascension and hyper-dynamism of China. In this Learning Centre, we focus on three important regions that are either experiencing tremendous upheaval (Middle East, North Africa, Sudan and Cote D'Ivoire) or are doing everything in its might to prevent a similar fate (China). We also spotlight a key human rights issue—human trafficking—which is getting increased public attention. Finally, we look at predictions in philanthropy and a call to action from Lausanne III.

ARAB SPRING

The unrest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has captivated the attention (and concern) of the world. By the time you read this, the information we have provided may already be outdated as the protesters continue to grow in some areas while being bribed or harshly repressed in some cases. The resulting changes in the region may very well become one of the biggest stories of our generation. First we look at an interactive map and overview of the wave of protest ([\[NPR \]](#)). Next we read the accounts of Dexter Filkins, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, who offers a colorful and intimate look at the protests in Yemen ([\[New Yorker \]](#)). Finally, we look at the role of social media which outwitted authoritarianism in at least two countries ([\[Oxford Analytica \]](#)).

RELEVANT GLOBAL UNDERCURRENTS/TRENDS: Shifts in Identity, Destabilizing Youth Cohorts, Technology Moves Power to the Edges, Growth in Islam and Christianity

CHINA

Against the backdrop of the protest movement in MENA, the church in China is experiencing brutal repression from the government, particularly Shaowang Church in Beijing ([\[NPR \]](#), [\[CNN \]](#)). We stand in solidarity with Beijing church leaders who have called the global church to pray (*redacted joint statement by Beijing pastors*). We read one Chinese blogger's view on the possibility of a Chinese Jasmine Revolution ([\[Granite Studio blog \]](#)).

RELEVANT GLOBAL UNDERCURRENTS/TRENDS: Move Away from Single-State Dominance, Shifts in Identity

AFRICA'S TENSION BELT

In Sudan, divisions among factions in the South will complicate its nation-building process ([\[Oxford Analytica \]](#)). In Cote D'Ivoire, after months of unrest following presidential elections, former president Laurent Gbagbo was captured, and the process of trying to restore normality begins ([\[BBC \]](#)); we continue to pray for peace (*email redacted*). Finally, we include a study of the future global Muslim population, which is projected to grow to 2.2 billion by 2030 ([\[Pew Forum \]](#)).

RELEVANT GLOBAL UNDERCURRENTS/TRENDS: Growth in Islam and Christianity, Shifts in Identity

MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

Abolitionists of modern-day slavery—a human rights movement only a decade old in the US —got a huge boost when CNN announced its plans to launch the CNN Freedom Project to lend its global resources to raise awareness on the issue and highlight the growing efforts to stop the trade and exploitation of human beings ([\[CNN International \]](#)).

RELEVANT GLOBAL UNDERCURRENTS/TRENDS: Increase in Women and Children At-Risk

AVANT GARDE PHILANTHROPY

We enclose some predictions in philanthropy in the next decade ([\[SSIR \]](#), [\[National Center for Family Philanthropy \]](#)).

RELEVANT GLOBAL UNDERCURRENTS/TRENDS: Changing Philanthropy, Increase in Connectivity

CAPE TOWN COMMITMENT

Perhaps one of the enduring legacies of the Third Lausanne Congress might be the seminal document called the [Cape Town Commitment](#) —a confession of faith and a call to action. We have enclosed the summary document and have ordered bound copies of the full document that we will separately mail.

RELEVANT GLOBAL UNDERCURRENTS/TRENDS: Renewed Vision for Societal Relevance by Evangelicals and Pentecostals