



World Evangelical Alliance  
Theological Commission

# WEA Theological News

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## Theological Commission Makes Progress in Seoul

The WEA Theological Commission held its annual planning and strategy meeting in South Korea Sept 27–30, 2005. Considerable progress was made on several issues of importance during the crowded schedule which included visits by TC members to eight different seminaries in Seoul and other Korean cities for lectures. The visit concluded with their participation in the Third International Conference on Evangelical Theology, Sept 30–Oct 1 (see page 3).

The 2005 session was facilitated greatly by the generosity and friendly assistance of the co-sponsors of the Conference which were the Korea Evangelical Theological Society and Sungkyul University. Local arrangements were headed by TC member, Dr Kim, Jae Sung who has recently concluded a term of service on the faculty of Hapdong Theological Seminary and is now a pastor of a church in USA. Due to visa problems, he was unable to attend but was able to maintain his organisational leadership electronically.

The 2005 meeting of the Theological Commission was held in the light of improved conditions within the World Evangelical Alliance following on from its Orlando Summit in May 2005. The Executive Chair, Dr Rolf Hille, reported on the more optimistic outlook which now existed. Agencies such as the TCs Rapid Response Unit would now be able to serve the needs of the WEA constituency more adequately, although it was agreed that more resources were still needed to

bring this operation up to full functioning level.

The TC brought to a conclusion a period of restructuring by finalising a new set of By-Laws. This development was assisted greatly by the new arrangements for the leadership and organisation of the World Evangelical Alliance which had taken place in the preceding year. The new TC By-Laws allow for an extension of the membership of the Commission to include national and regional Theological Commissions, the primary constituency of the TC, as well as individuals and bodies such as seminaries, theological

associations, churches and missions who are interested in the work of the TC and wish to support it. Full details of this new scheme will be finalised soon and publicised. In the meantime, those interested in membership are invited to contact the TC Australia Office (contact details elsewhere in this newsletter).

After the successful conclusion of earlier study programs, including the Task Force on Theological Education, the TC also advanced plans for more efforts. It decided to continue with plans for a consultation on the relation of the the Jewish people and the Christian Gospel, and to investigate further ways in which the TC could provide theological reflection on Integral Mission being promoted by the Micah Network. The TC endorsed continued good relationships with the Lausanne Theology Working Group as it reforms itself under the leadership of Dr Chris Wright.

Another major project concluded at the 2005 meeting was the recommendation to the WEA for the updating of the Statement of Faith. This project had been remitted to the TC some time ago and in separate meetings and over a number of sessions, the work continued. In the latter stages, it was carried out in association with similar moves by the Evangelical Alliance of the United Kingdom to revise its Statement, a process which is about to be concluded. The TCs recommendation will be passed to the WEA for its processing.

Ways of assisting evangelicals living and witnessing in the context of other Christian groups were also advanced with decisions to develop study and reflection programs on Roman Catholicism and the Orthodox faith. Assistance will be provided to National Evangelical Fellowships who are considering their relationship to the Seventh Day Adventist church through a study program.

At its 2005 Korea meeting the TC examined ways in which it could fill the vacancies in its membership from Africa and Latin America, especially in relation to communication and financial issues. Steps were taken to hold meetings in these two areas in coming years in order to foster fellowship and networking. Financial support and budgeting remain critical for the TC which needs considerable additional funding if its plans for the future are to be fully implemented.



**Promoting Biblical Truth by Networking Theologians**

## The Future of Evangelical Theology and its Missionary Challenges in the Church of the 21st Century

Dr Rolf Hille, Executive Chair of the WEA Theological Commission, delivered the keynote address to the Third International Conference on Evangelical Theology held at Sungkyul University, Anyang, Korea, Sept 30-Oct 12, 2005. He spoke on the future of evangelical theology and its missionary challenges.

He said, "Theology both influences the development of the Evangelical movement and is also dependent on the development of Evangelicalism at the same time. Evangelicalism is primarily an evangelistic and missionary movement within the worldwide Christian Church. I believe Evangelical theology has a future only in as far as it serves its missionary task. Evangelical theology has a presence because mission is in God's time. Within the framework of Biblical salvation, mission is on God's agenda for this period of time. The Christian Church is created by the Holy Spirit through the word of the risen Lord. He, in His authority, has put mission at the top of His agenda. The future of Evangelical theology is not guaranteed by any academic standard or by any human thinkers, but only by the promises of the Lord Himself."

Basing his remarks on the Great Commission, Dr Hille said, "This text shows that all theological truth is personal truth which makes Jesus Christ tremendously different from all founders of religions or great philosophers of the past, whose mandate ended with their deaths. There is a significant contrast between such a closed situation and the living process involved between persons who act and react. Therefore, Evangelical theology must be aware that it has to deal not only with a great historical past, but with the living God who is present in the Spirit of the Risen Christ."

Dr Hille pointed out, "This reality of interaction between Christ and the theologian, in all theological thinking and writing, demands as one consequence that the theologian respects the glorious presence of his Lord. Theological reflection can be done only in the attitude of a humble servant who hears his Lord's voice and bows before Him." He added, "Paradoxically, this attitude of servanthood is the foundation of all theological self-awareness and every authoritative statement."

According to Dr Hille, the Great Commission emphasizes the evangelistic purposes of evangelical theology. This means that the foundation of all theology lies exclusively in the mandate to teach what the Risen Lord has given to His apostles.

This adherence to biblical teaching affects the practical profile of evangelical theology, as exemplified in the Reformational principles of sola scriptura and tota scriptura. Dr Hille emphasized that Biblical truth is very practical and all theological research must be validated by the spiritual relevance it has for the practice of godly living. The theoretical approach to theology leads to dangerous pitfalls. Every intellectual decision insulated from the grassroots problems of the Church, is, at best, inefficient and, at worst, extremely dangerous for God's people. A good theologian is one who struggles in a responsible position as teacher with all the temptations of his age and who searches for relevant, contemporary answers found in the Bible in close contact with his fellow disciples. The future of Evangelical theology lies in this indispensable combination of solid Biblical thinking regarding and understanding the meaning of salvation history and the capacity to apply this Biblical knowledge to different situations in the Church in a practical manner.

The full text of Dr Hille's address will be published in a future edition of *Evangelical Review of Theology*.

## ICETE Announces Plans for 2006 Consultation

The distinguished international scholar Philip Jenkins, author of the widely-acclaimed *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford, 2002), will be a principal speaker at the forthcoming ICETE International Consultation 2006. Jenkins will be addressing the Consultation theme: "Global Christianity and the Role of Theological Education" Also addressing crucial aspects of the Consultation theme in plenary sessions will be: Carver Yu, China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong; Chris Wright, Langham Partnership International; and Carlos Pinto, Seminario Biblico Palavra da Vida, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Additional participants in the Consultation programme will include, among others: Dieumeme Noelliste (Jamaica), Douglas Carew (Kenya) and Brian Stiller (Canada).

The Consultation will focus on the emerging global character of Christianity and the implications of this for theological education. Since by its nature theological education is meant to serve the church, the fact that the Christian community is now global necessarily affects the shaping of our theological education. The 2006 Consultation is designed to assist theological educators around the world in reflecting on the nature of this new framework, in addressing together its implications, and in understanding ourselves freshly within this context of service.

The Consultation will take place 7-11 August 2006 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. This consultation is intended for the ICETE constituency throughout the world. Available space will be limited, so priority will be given to representatives from ICETE affiliated schools. For more information, contact ICETE Consultation Directorate at Consultation2006@icete-edu.org

ICETE News September 2005



TC members meeting in Korea Sept 2005

### Read the TC Study Unit on Eschatology Publication

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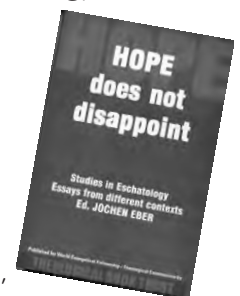
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## **Third International Conference on Evangelical Theology in Korea focuses on ‘The Task of Evangelical Theology for the Church of the 21st Century.’**

The WEA Theological Commission participated fully in the Third International Conference on Evangelical Theology in Korea held Sept 30–Oct 1, 2005. Several hundred people from the member institutions of the Korea Evangelical Theological Society joined in a packed program of about twenty sessions which studied the ‘The Task of Evangelical Theology for the Church of the 21st Century.’ The keynote address was given by the Executive Chair of the TC, Dr Rolf Hille (see page 2).

Each of the TC members presented a paper to which responses were given by two Korean theologians. TC members also gave responses to papers presented by their hosts. The papers covered topics ranging from Well-being Syndrome in Korea and Korean Missions in a post-modern context to Glossolalia in Korea, Universalism in Evangelical theology, Bio-theology and a study of Romans 7. Some of these papers will appear in future issues of the TC journal, *Evangelical Review of Theology*.

The conference was held at Sungkyul University, Angyang City, a co-sponsor, which under the leadership of its president, Dr Kim, Sung-young, provided generously for the arrangements and in particular the comfort of TC members. In his welcome speech, Dr Kim said, “It is historically meaningful for Korea Evangelical Theological Society (KETS), which has led the theology of Korea over the last thirty years, to host this event in close cooperation with World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission (WEATC) and Sungkyul University. As we look back, we are aware that KETS has become fully internationalized by holding The First International Conference on Evangelical Theology in 2001. With the experience of holding the first conference with success, it is much more honourable for Sungkyul University to hold this third one with the assistance from related institutes. It must be the special blessing of God for Sungkyul University. I appreciate Jung Kyu-nam, the president of KETS, board members and thirty presidents of member universities for providing this meaningful event. My special thanks is also given to eminent theologians—ten from eight different nations—to deliver their own significant messages to us.”

Korea Evangelical Theological Society held its first joint meeting for reading of theological papers on April 15th to 17th, 1982. This meeting was held at Dogo Hot Spring, Chung Nam, South Korea. The current President is Dr Jung, Kyu-Nam, President, Kwangshin University, and Vice-Presidents are Dr. Kim, Eui-Won and Dr. Kim, Sung-Young. The General Secretary is Dr. Kim, Jae-Sung. Its website is <http://www.kets.or.kr/>

## **Evangelical Review of Theology seeking Bible Studies and papers on Pastoral Ministry**

The editor of *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Dr David Parker, is seeking papers on Pastoral Ministry for a future issue of the journal. He said, “In the early days of the journal, one whole section of each issue contained articles on this area, but we have neglected it of late. So I am looking for material of a biblical, theological and spiritual nature that reflects an evangelical perspective on pastoral ministry. I will leave the more practical “how to” articles to other forums. We aim to be a journal reflecting global evangelical scholarship for our international readership of theologians, missionaries, students, pastors, church leaders etc. In keeping with this aim, I am looking for material that reflects on aspects of the biblical principles of pastoral ministry as it is worked out in various contexts around the world. It needs to be theologically and spiritually robust and yet oriented to real issues of the day. I can use articles, Bible studies, and book reviews, and leads to potential writers and resources.”

Dr Parker also said that in each issue of the journal he wants to include a Bible study article. He explained, “This type of article looks at a specific passage of Scripture and engages in serious, but not necessarily specialised or technical, exegesis, interpreting it for our readers who are involved in leadership, study and ministry. These articles could well address some topic issue of interest but do so from an exegetical and expositional basis. These articles are typically shorter than the usual, say about 3500 words. They can be original or re-published (provided appropriate permissions are available).

Readers with ideas and possible papers are invited to contact Dr Parker on [wef-tc@pacific.net.au](mailto:wef-tc@pacific.net.au)

## **Asia-Pacific Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies**

The Asia Pacific Society for Interdisciplinary Studies has launched its journal, edited by Dr Tereso C. Casino, Associate Professor of Theology and Missiology at Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology, Seoul, Korea and formerly Dean of Asia Baptist Graduate Theological Seminary, Philippines. The initial volume includes ten articles, dealing with a variety of topics including biblical studies (Reader-Response approach to Jonah; Revelation 2-3 and Paul); hermeneutics (Ricoeur’s theory of text and interpretation); postmodernism and biblical interpretation); church history (the church in Korea; church growth movement) and religion (Freud’s understanding of religion; ancestor worship).

For more information, contact the editor on [drterry63@ttgst.ac.kr](mailto:drterry63@ttgst.ac.kr)

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## **Concerns for Pastoral Training**

A conference took place recently in the Philippines addressing issues of pastoral training in areas of the world where the church is growing rapidly. The event was being spearheaded by the Trainers of Pastors International Coalition (TOPIC) and Ramesh Richard Evangelism and Church Health (RREACH). Leaders from around the world gathered in Manila in late September in an effort to reduce the number of pastors in need of training in developing economies around the world. Dr Ramesh Richard says there is great need for pastoral training in developing nations. “For example, there are parts of Africa where pastors are preaching that you climb trees in order to meet Jesus, because Zaccheus did that. I even heard of a pastor in Nepal who did not know that Jesus is coming back because they’re semiliterate—70 to 80 percent of pastors in Nepal are semiliterate and therefore can’t read their Bibles.” The program of the conference, included Christian leaders from around the world who shared their experiences and plans for pastoral training efforts in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Agape Press on Crosswalk Religion Today Summaries, September 20, 2005

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# Verbum

## World Christianity and the Renewal of Theology in the 21st Century:

### Evangelical & Pentecostal Opportunities & Challenges

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The changing face of Christianity as it continues to expand southward and eastward means that the Church will continue to encounter new challenges, even as she is also given new opportunities. From a theological perspective, three sets of challenges and opportunities can be readily identified:

First, there is **globalization** which describes the processes by which the world's interdependence is being made manifest. A nation's politics affect not only its own citizens, but has international ramifications. A global economy now dictates how workers and consumers interact. Environmental neglect in one time and place produces drastic consequences for others later on.

As a missionary movement intent on taking the gospel to the ends of the earth, evangelicals have always been globally aware. But they have tended not to focus on questions related to politics, economics, science, technology, and the environment but these matters cannot now be ignored. Further, a rereading of Scripture from the perspective of globalization has illuminated the interwoven fabric of life in the Hebraic worldview. So it is clear that the promise of the Spirit in the prophets brought with it a revitalization of Israel's economy, a healing of Israel's relationship with the nations, and a rejuvenation of her physical topography, among other results. Hence while the challenge for evangelical theology today is the development of a multi- and inter-disciplinary hermeneutic that can make sense of our world's complexities, the opportunity is also before us to announce and enact the good news of Jesus Christ in fresh and compelling ways.

Next **pluralism**, which as a descriptive notion, has always been a feature of creation. The kind of pluralism we are encountering today, however, is epistemological, existential, and socio-political. Immigration, the internet, the ideology of tolerance essential for democratic societies, and other factors have combined to raise questions of whether or not absolute truth can be attained from particular perspectives; of whether we can successfully negotiate the kinds of anxieties that arise in encountering difference, otherness, and strangeness; and of whether truly peaceful and just societies can be possible if multi-ethnically, multiculturally, and multireligiously constituted

While the strength of evangelical theology has been its emphasis on the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ, its weakness, arguably, has been in recognizing, understanding, and communicating that one gospel in many different ways. The challenge in our pluralistic world is not only to grant the perspectival character of all knowledge, but also to engage the theological task in conversation with the many ethnicities, cultures, and even religious traditions which shape the dynamics of our life. Yet this challenge now presents new opportunities for evangelical theology: to mine the resources of the various ethnic, cultural, and wisdom traditions of the world in order to announce more confidently and sensitively the good news. After all, the ambiguities, messiness, and diversities of history are not foreign to the divine life but have been caught up in the incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth and in the pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit.

The last but certainly not the least of the challenges and opportunities of today is that the signs and wonders of the original Day of Pentecost have also been replayed in the **Pentecostal and charismatic forms** of Christianity that have flourished more recently. By the mid-20th century, Pentecostalism was heralded as the third force in Christendom, followed later by missiologists calling the 20th century the century of Pentecostal-charismatic missions. Yet the explosive growth of Pentecostal-charismatic churches worldwide has also brought with it all of the challenges historically associated with enthusiastic movements: religious fervour, often at the expense of orthodoxy, along with emphases on miracles, charismatic gifts, and the supernatural that are often incredulous.

But there are new opportunities for evangelical theology. Dialogical opportunities are now available with scholars of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements who come from both within and without those communities. New PhD programs in these areas at Amsterdam and Regent University, for example, are producing sophisticated scholarship that will both challenge the status quo and further the theological conversation.

In light of these developments, evangelical and Pentecostal theologians have much to anticipate, and a great deal of work to do.

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Contributions from readers of ideas and articles (750 words) are warmly welcomed.

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