

WEA Theological News



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John Stott – Man of Complementarity

By Thomas Schirmacher

Executive Chair of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance

John Stott, the main author of the theological preamble of the constitution of the World Evangelical Alliance, is now seeing Jesus, who was the focus of his life in all he did, said and wrote. What is thought to be his best book, *The Cross of Christ* (1986), really was and is his best book and a legacy to all evangelicals: Only if the Cross of Jesus stays our centre, can we achieve unity.

For me John Stott is a role model per se for all evangelical theologians, male and female, whom the Theological Commission tries to serve, as he was an impressive master of complementarity and never was willing to emphasize an important thing at the expense of another important things. Let me state some of those complementarities by comparing John Stott to Paul – something he surely would have very much disliked!

Like Paul he was a pastor, a missionary and a great theologian at the same time. His academic theology was always aimed at the body of Christ, not his academic colleagues.

Like Paul he was a master thinker and systematic writer, trying to fill the whole faith into one short book (here Romans, there *Basic Christianity*, 1958), and yet he never wrote in an abstruse way to impress academics, but so that the whole church could benefit.

Like Paul he was willing to strive for the gospel and was a man of clear words – see his book *Christ the Controversialist* (1970). And yet he was a man of peace, a bridge-builder, someone listening to other opinions very thoroughly and trying to understand them. Through his involvement in WEA and the Lausanne Movement he brought evangelicals and evangelical theologians together on a larger scale than ever before, but not by having no standpoint or by bypassing theological discussion or biblical exegesis, but in the middle of theological debate. He was convinced that unity would not come from less good theology, but from more open studying of the Bible together across all lines.

Like Paul he was as local as he was global. He managed to write, speak and travel to the world, while being totally dedicated to personal counselling, to his local congregation and the mentoring of those close to him.

Like Paul he became world famous, and yet stayed the humble servant, that never understood how Jesus could use him in such a way.

Like Paul he became prominent in politics and the secular world and stood before kings and Caesars, eg preaching to the Queen and being counted among the 100 most influential people by *Time* magazine in 2005. And yet he never was absorbed by this worldly influence, but preaching the gospel stayed his obsession.

Like Paul he was a master of the old and brilliant in what needed to be changed and invented anew. He never wanted to conform the old rugged cross to the modern age, but to defend the faith once for all given to the church, and yet he was open to adapt the Christian faith to ever changing situations on all continents up to his old age. As a young man, his evangelical gospel looked very old to some, as an old man his ideas looked younger than of many people 60 years younger.

Like Paul, he was convinced, that preaching the gospel is the beginning of everything, but at the same time furthered works of compassion to the needy worldwide. He saw everything through the glasses of the gospel, knowing that only the cross can overcome the sins of pride, racism, mammon, hatred, sexual abuse etc., and yet at the same time got many people to get engaged against those social evils.

I hope that the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance can maintain these high standards for the future and carry on Stott's theological heritage into the future of the evangelical movement.

Read and subscribe to our quarterly journal - *Evangelical Review of Theology*— turn to page 4 for more details

Promoting Biblical Truth by Networking Theologians

Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World Publication of Recommendations for Conduct

(Geneva / Bonn, June 29, 2011) ‘Today represents an historic moment in our shared Christian witness,’ claimed Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. For the first time in history the World Council of Churches, representatives of the Vatican, and the World Evangelical Alliance have issued a joint document.

‘Mission belongs to the very being of the church.’ These words stand at the beginning of the document that was delivered in a public ceremony celebrated at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva on June 28, 2011. Representatives of the above named church organizations worked more than five years in a series of larger and smaller conferences to come up with a document stating what it means to bear testimony to and pass on the Christian faith in the multi-religious world of the 21st century.

The result is a document reflecting classical foundations for Christian witness and followed by principles and recommendations. Cardinal Tauran called upon those present with the following words: ‘We Christians have the duty to proclaim our faith without any compromise . . . We are not teachers giving lessons about God. We are messengers of salvation brought to us by Christ’s death and resurrection, who is still living today.’

Geoff Tunnicliffe, the Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), pointed out that all four major concerns which the WEA have defended since its founding in

1846 play a leading role in the document presented. These main concerns are: 1. Christian Unity, 2. Human Rights, 3. World evangelism, and 4. Religious freedom.

The Secretary General of the WEA spoke of a ‘powerful document,’ not least of all due to the fact that through the representatives of the various organizations 90% of the world’s Christians are represented. Mission is at the ‘heart of the Gospel,’ and without mission the church is dead. Christian witness should not only take place through words; rather, it should likewise take place through deeds.

Thomas Schirrmacher, who coordinated the efforts for the World Evangelical Alliance, made it clear that the document presented is in no way a compromise. Over the years there have been very sceptical voices from assorted directions which held a document with any substantial content regarding the topics of freedom of religion and mission as impossible to compose. In the end there are now distinct recommendations which, on the one hand, clearly bear witness to Jesus’ mandate to his church. On the other hand, there are also limits highlighted with respect to mission tied to the biblical message and religious freedom and human rights are seen as the other side of the coin of mission.

The document may be viewed at this web address http://www.worldevangelicals.org/pdf/1106Christian_Witness_in_a_Multi-Religious_World.pdf

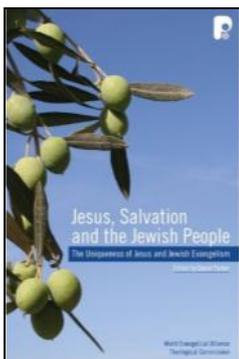
Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology Seeks Sustainability

The Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, located in Addis Ababa, is erecting a second building in the effort to become financially self-supporting. It opened a new six level building in 2009 and uses the top half, with the lower levels rented out. It intends to rent out the whole of this building when the second one is completed and so develop a reliable income stream.

A recent report stated, ‘This income generation is necessary for its future stability because the EGST salary burden will increase substantially as the percentage of Ethiopian faculty increases. Expatriate faculty salaries are paid through their own mission support and not by EGST, while Ethiopian faculty are paid directly by EGST. Currently about half of the faculty is Ethiopian and half expatriate. In order to insure stability of the faculty, the goal is to have 70% Ethiopian and 30% expatriate faculty. (Ethiopian faculty generally have longer tenure than expatriates.) Candidates now in Ph.D. programs abroad will return as full-time Ethiopian faculty upon completion of their studies. Grants, contributions and student fees will not be sufficient to cover the increased cost of salaries. Therefore, rental income from the entire Phase I building will be a dependable means of generating income, resulting in financial self-sustainability.

EGST was founded in 1997 by three church bodies and the first students enrolled in 1998. It is the only graduate level institution of its kind in the Horn of Africa and its graduates now serve many churches and other colleges.

(EGST Focus Summer 2011)



Jesus, Salvation and the Jewish People

Statement and Papers from Consultation on Jewish Evangelism

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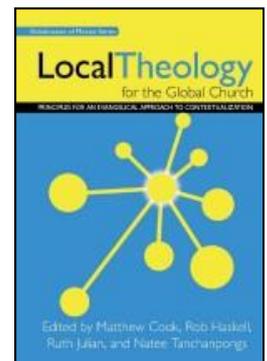
Editor: David Parker

Local Theology for the Global Church

Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization

Editors: Matthew Cook, Rob Haskell, Ruth Julian, and Natee Tanchanpongs

ISBN 9780878081110



Italian Evangelicals Honoured

Honorary Doctorate for Pietro Bolognesi

‘The fact that we are here to celebrate the *honoris causa* doctorate in theology to Pietro Bolognesi by the Faculté Jean Calvin of Aix-en-Provence is a reason for all Italian Evangelicals to thank God and to rejoice in His faithfulness.’ With these words, Leonardo De Chirico opened the ceremony that took place in Padova at IFED on June 4th with more than two hundred people attending. Thirty years ago, when Bolognesi began his theological work there was very little to support him: few theological books, few resources, little enthusiasm, a widespread suspicion towards Evangelicals serving the church as theologians.

In the *laudatio* Prof. Paul Wells, dean of the Faculté Jean Calvin, traced Bolognesi’s itinerary as a theologian: his concern has always been to be accountable to the written Word of God and to link the Evangelical faith to its historical roots. His theology has been characterized by the attempt to reflect a Biblical worldview which is able to confront secular thought and the Roman Catholic mindset. Bolognesi has been serving Reformed theology with a pastoral heart, apologetic fervor and historical awareness.

Many other expressions of appreciation for Dr Bolognesi’s work were received including academic and church authorities from Europe, Italy, Padova, USA, Scotland and the Vatican. Dr Bolognesi’s theology has served the cause of Evangelical unity but has always been critical of ecumenical tendencies which downplay Biblical doctrine. The fact that Roman Catholics top theologians wanted to honor him is a sign that Evangelical theology can maintain academic integrity without selling itself to ecumenically correct trends. If one bears in mind that Evangelicals in Italy has been long considered as a cult, the achievements of Pietro Bolognesi have been outstanding. The whole of the Evangelical church in the country greatly benefited from his service.

In his *lectio magistralis*, Pietro highlighted the task for theology to be ‘elenctic’. Exploring the Biblical meaning of ‘elenctic’ (i.e. aimed at convincing the sinner by showing the truth of Scripture), Bolognesi went on to expound the significance of ‘elenctic’ theology especially in Francis Turretin (1623-1687) and drawing some practical implications for today’s theology. Reformed theology always needs to be ‘elenctic’ and to rediscover its ‘elenctic’ mission.

At the end of the ceremony, a new book by Bolognesi was presented. It is a pioneering study on Reformed Orthodoxy, one the central cores of his research.



Asian Baptist Theological Educators’ Colloquium

Sixty eight theological educators and church leaders representing seventeen seminaries and churches from thirteen countries of the Asia-Pacific region gathered at Korea Baptist Theological University/ Seminary (KBTUS), Daejeon, South Korea for the 3rd Theological Colloquium of the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation on the theme ‘Church and Environment’ from 24 to 27 January, 2011.

In the light of the growing need for stewardship of the environment and creation, the colloquium discoursed and dialogued a theological framework for assessing and formulating environmental care as a Christian responsibility. One of the strategic outcomes of the Colloquium was to establish a network of Baptist seminaries in the Asia Pacific region. Towards this, the representatives from 17 participating seminaries presented an overview of their respective institutions - specially sharing their needs and visions. It is envisaged that the network would extend mutual help between seminaries and open opportunities to share the burden or the blessings with other seminaries based on their strength and their unique needs.

Narrating his experience one of the participants said, ‘During the Colloquium, a sense of camaraderie prevailed over the fellowship, and despite the fact that it was a serious theological and technical event, there were new friendships formed, new networks forged and new dreams and hopes cast. Each joined hand in this global fellowship to build and extend the Kingdom of God together in one ministry.’

At the closing service, the students from Torch Trinity Graduate School of Theology (TTGST) led in singing a Nepali worship song, acknowledging God as the creator and the Lord of all creation. The delegates joined in unison, declaring ‘Hallelujah.’

Dr. Miyon Chung, Chairperson of the APBF Theological Education was the key coordinator along with Dr. Timothy Lee of KBTUS. Students and Staff from TTGST and KBTUS assisted as volunteers.

The 700 word APBF Daejeon Declaration 2011 issued by the Colloquium which adopts seven commitments for action may be viewed in the June 2011 issue of APBF Digest on line at <http://www.apbf.info/apbf-digest.htm>

Source: APBD NEWS BUREAU

New Secretary for GCF

The Global Christian Fellowship has appointed a new Secretary to replace Mr. Hubert van Beek as of January 2012. He is Rev. Dr. Larry Miller who is being seconded for his new role from the Mennonite World Conference where he is currently the General Secretary. Larry Miller has been involved for many years in efforts toward closer relations among Christians. He participated in the GCF international gathering in Limuru in 2007 and has been a long-term supporter of the Forum process.

The next gathering of the GCF will take place Oct 4-8, 2011 at Manado, Sulawesi, Indonesia, with the theme, ‘Life Together in Jesus Christ: Empowered by the Holy Spirit.’ The TC will be represented by Dr Thomas Schirmacher and Dr Rosalee Ewell. Dr Kim Sang-Bok, President of WEA and of Asia Evangelical Alliance will be one of the key speakers.

(gcforum@sunrise.ch GCF Newsletter June 2011)

Colloquium of European Evangelical Theologians from Neo-Latin Countries

A report by Leonardo De Chirico IFED – Padova (Italy) leonardo.dechirico@ifeditalia.org

Southern Europe is a sub-region characterized by the religious dominance of either Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy. No lasting Reformation took place and so there has never been a deep biblical renewal. Evangelicals are minority groups that have been struggling to survive for centuries, being identified as heretics or dangerous people. Although enjoying degrees of religious freedom, Southern Europe is still a region where religious liberty and equal opportunities for all religious groups are matters of concern. So, Evangelical theology needs to be particularly interested in these issues.

The minority situation has stirred Evangelical churches to be involved in church planting in vast areas of our countries. Traditional 'Christianity' and more recent secularism form together the great challenge that mission has to face. What an opportunity for Evangelical theology to be at the service of churches wishing to grow instead of being trapped in intramural debates!

Our region is also marked by growing opportunities to engage in public theology. Churches are slowly overcoming the 'ghetto' mentality and are becoming more interested in being salt and light in society. Evangelical theology needs to equip churches to develop biblically faithful and culturally appropriate means to promote gospel transformation in the public square.

The Mediterranean sea (*mare nostrum*, our sea) is one of the strategic places of global events: the North African revolutions, the migrant highways, the old Middle East quarrel, etc.— they all revolve around the Mediterranean Sea. What are the responsibility of a Southern European Evangelical theology that faces these trends face to face?

Gathering all these issues together was instrumental for convening an informal colloquium of Evangelical theologians from our region. A group of twelve men from various European countries (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy and Romania) met at IFED (Istituto di Formazione Evangelica e Documentazione) in Padova, Italy, June 2-4, 2011. The colloquium discussed issues impacting theology in southern Europe and neo-Latin countries. The conversation was characterized by the firm confidence in the power of the gospel to save people and transform society.

The major areas that were discussed are as follows:

Theological Leaders: Most people working in this area are multi-vocational theologians. Many are involved in pastoral ministries along with training. Many need to continue developing their entrepreneurial skills so to develop their programs. Normally we don't have professional, full-time theologians. Overall, this is a good opportunity to match reflection and action, even though it is difficult to maintain balance and to reach excellence.

Contextual Tendencies: Many theological works are designed and published outside of their host countries. For example Brazil publishes many American books for the Portuguese market. This produces a situation where few resources are presented and they are usually written for contexts outside of Europe.

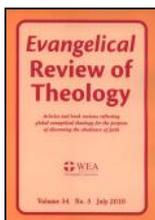
Churches are between two polarizing forces (Established religious institutions, i.e. Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy and Secularism). Many evangelical churches are presenting a third way wishing to be minorities that impact the whole of society.

Many churches are being impacted by multicultural evangelicalism. There are immigrants moving into their countries and cities. These churches are presenting new opportunities and challenges in the area of theological training and leadership.

Countries in southern Europe generally do not have a 'golden age' of revival (or reformation) to look back to like the northern European countries might have. While having some negative aspects (e.g. a lack of appreciation for the historical identity of evangelicalism), the absence of a 'golden age' frees our theological reflection from the danger of nostalgia and makes us aware of the problems around the notion of a 'Christian nation'.

Theological Education: We are witnessing to a shift from residential programs to extension/distance education formats, and from pastoral training to a more general Christian formation. Meanwhile, there is an ongoing need for the training of church planters.

We will explore the possibility of expanding the colloquium for further development and participation. For example, there is a need for developing a 'map' detailing the existing theological colleges along various categories such as denomination, level, number of students and accreditation. The group will be pleased to continue this discussion with collaboration with FEET which was represented at the colloquium by its President, Pierre Berthoud.



Evangelical Review of Theology

October 2011

The King James Bible

This issue features a lead article by Dr Brian Talbot (Scotland) on the history and significance of the King James Bible on its 400th anniversary. Another valuable article is on 'CH Spurgeon and Suffering.' We also present papers on 'The Gospels and cultural adaptation', the contribution of churches to leadership development, and a fascinating discussion of a 'a critical moral challenge to contemporary African Christianity' - talk about sex and sex organs! The issue concludes with a Bible study on 1 Kings 17.

For more information—contact tc@worldangelicals.org

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