

WEA Theological News



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Honouring the Theological Achievements of Bible Translators

The German-language evangelical missiological society (Arbeitskreis für evangelikale Missiologie e. V.) (AFEM), has acknowledged the activities of Wycliffe Bible Translators and of Bible translators in general. The AFEM Chairman, Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirmacher, emphasized that Bible translators around the world deliver enormous theological achievements which are largely ignored by members of the theological guild. Additionally, indigenous Christians are themselves increasingly more actively involved. Bringing the Bible into a new language and culture demands not only great linguistic proficiency (and nowadays also computer proficiency). Theological ability and ample sensitivity are also required. The theological discipline of history of church and dogma should not only honour this as it applies to the past but also to the present.

At its annual conference in the Forum Wiedenest association, AFEM invited retired linguist and Bible translator, Prof. Dr. Ursula Wiesemann, as guest of honour. In recognition of her 55 years with Wycliffe Bible Translators, she was awarded a Chagall Bible. Her particular focus was putting oral languages into writing. Dr Schirmacher emphasized that Wiesemann contributed to the preservation of several languages and cultures in Latin America and Africa. Most well known is the example of the Kaingang Indians in Brazil. According to Dr Schirmacher, her work parallels the consequences of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible for Germany.

This year's George W. Peters Prize for special achievements in the promotion of missiology was given to linguist and theologian Eberhard Werner (Burbach, Westerwald) for his University of Wales dissertation published by the J. Kovac-Verlag with the title, *Bible Translation in Theory and Practice: A presentation of Its Interdisciplinary Nature using the Example of the Practice of Education*.

Austrian theologian Martin Podobri (Linz, Austria) received the 2012 George-W.-Peters-Promotional Grant for his final thesis at the Institute for Theology and Church Development, *Transformation in Austria*. A seminar of the same name developed the basis for a comprehensively understood missions approach in Austria for free churches.

Ethics of Mission in India

Christian leaders from all over India gathered at the Ecumenical Christian Centre in Whitefield, Bangalore February 29 - March 02, 2012 to draft a document on the ethics of Christian mission and evangelism in India. About 40 people, representing many streams of the Christian tradition met during three days to adapt the document, 'Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct.' The WEA Theological Commission co-sponsored the event along with other Christian organizations, including the Evangelical Fellowship of India.

During the meetings, which were moderated by TC's executive director, Dr. Rosalee Velloso Ewell and TC Working Group member, John Baxter-Brown, the participants discussed crucial issues for mission in India and the urgent need of genuine Christ-like evangelism. Questions such as the meaning of conversion within the Hindu context and how Christians can bear political witness in India were hotly debated. There was a sense that the Spirit of God was moving Christians in India towards reconciliation and inspiring all to stand firm and faithful in their witness to Christ. The gathering was historic in the way it brought together for the first time leaders of churches from widely differing backgrounds, but it was also historic in its potential to transform India for the sake of the gospel and therefore, also to transform the world.



Left to right: Mr. John Baxter-Brown, TC Working Group; Dr. P. Mohan Larbeer, BTESSC executive secretary; Most Rev. G. Devakadasham, moderator Church of South India; Dr. Rosalee Velloso Ewell, TC executive Director; Rev. Dr. Atul Aghamkar, Evangelical Fellowship of India

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

Promoting Biblical Truth by Networking Theologians

Memorial Service for Dr John Stott

Press release by the Evangelical Alliance of the United Kingdom

Hundreds packed out St Paul's Cathedral in the heart of the city of London on Friday to celebrate the life of John Stott - one of the 20th century's leading evangelical thinkers - who died in July, aged 90. Staff from the Evangelical Alliance, including General Director Steve Clifford, were among 2,000 people who joined Rev Stott's closest friends and colleagues, as well as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishop of London, at the memorial service. In a touching event including music from the All Souls Orchestra and tributes by Christians from across the globe, the congregation heard how many lives had been touched by the teaching, writing and friendship of the man affectionately known as 'Uncle John'.

Opening the service, Canon Mark Oakley of St Paul's said: "We come to this cathedral church today to give thanks for the life of a humble and faithful servant of Jesus Christ. We remember with joy and thanksgiving John Robert Walmsley Stott, a minister of the gospel, beloved pastor, Bible scholar, mentor and friend.

"His simple life of study and prayer, preaching, writing and discipling, helped shape the face of a 20th century evangelical faith in Britain and around the world. He was valiant for truth, even when that was unfashionable, and single-minded as he laboured to fulfil the Lord's call upon his life. John eschewed public accolades and ecclesiastical preferment and would be embarrassed by any service that dwelt on him or his achievements rather than pointing to his Saviour, crucified, risen and ascended."

Reflecting on the service, Steve Clifford said: "John Stott lived his life simply as a follower of Christ. The celebration at St Paul's Cathedral gathered the Christian community from right around the world. We may never know the full impact of his life through his writing and preaching but when the history of evangelicalism in the past century has been written, John Stott will be recognised as a giant of the faith."

Born in 1921 in London, John Stott was a member of All Souls Church, Langham Place, all his life. Among his most celebrated writings were *Basic Christianity* and *The Radical Disciple*. He served as one of the Queen's Chaplains and was awarded a CBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours list in 2005 - the same year he was named in Time magazine's top 100 most influential people. Despite his accolades and influence, those who knew him described his humility and his dedication to seeing Jesus glorified above all else - both in the Church and society as a whole.

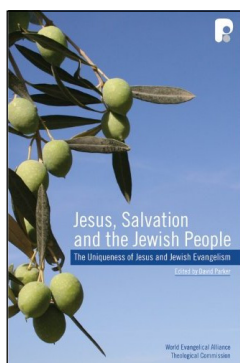
Rene Padilla, founder of The Kairos Centre, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, said: "There is no exaggeration... in my saying that the aspect of John's legacy that I treasure more than anything else is his Christian character. He was a man who could say with the apostle Paul, without any hesitation: 'Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ'. I am not surprised that the very last book John wrote was *The Radical Disciple*. That is what he was: a radical disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, a disciple who in his character and lifestyle embodied God's purpose for human life."



Stott Memorial Service (Photo: T Schirmmacher)

Paying tribute, Geoff Tunnicliffe, secretary general of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), said: "Although many of the 600 million evangelical Christians may never have heard of John Stott, almost without exception they will have been unconsciously influenced through what they or their pastors have read from his pen. The whole of the leadership of the WEA acknowledges with great thankfulness to God the legacy that John Stott has left behind to encourage and guide us."

Thomas Schirmmacher, Chair of the Theological Commission of WEA added: "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."



Jesus, Salvation and the Jewish People

Statement and Papers from Consultation on Jewish Evangelism

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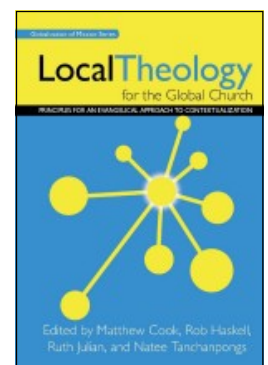
Editor: David Parker

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



New Book on Racism



The WEA Global Issues series has launched a new title, *Racism*, which is written by Thomas Schirmacher, Executive Chair of the Theological Commission, and Richard Howell, General Secretary of the Asia Evangelical Alliance. The book also contains an supplementary essay on caste in India.

Dealing with questions such as whether some races are more intelligent than others, and the intolerance and violence associated with race, the book claims that racism is not only wrong theologically, and

against the dignity of humans, scientifically there is no evidence in favour of dividing humans into different races. "Biologically speaking all humans belong to one race. E.g., when you need a blood transfusion, you should not look for a blood donor from your 'race', but someone with the same blood group transcending all 'races'."

Dr Richard Howell resides in India, and was formerly principal of the Allahabad Bible Seminary, after which he served as General Secretary of Evangelical Fellowship of India. He also is a member of the Global Christian Forum Committee.

Dr Thomas Schirmacher is professor of ethics at Martin Bucer European Theological Seminary and Research Institutes (Bonn, Zurich, Innsbruck, Prague, Istanbul), as well as professor of the sociology of religion at the State University of the West in Timisoara in Romania. He is spokesperson for human rights of the World Evangelical Alliance and director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo). Dr Schirmacher and Dr G Tunnicliffe, CEO of the WEA, are the editors of the Global Issues series. The book is available for download at <http://www.iirf.eu/index.php?id=257> (ISBN 978-3-86269-035-0)

Dr Zenas E Gerig

Dr. Zenas E. Gerig, aged 84, passed away Wednesday, September 14, 2011. He was born February 27, 1927, on a farm near Spencerville, Indiana. After high school he went on to earn a B.A. from Ft. Wayne Bible College, a Master of Divinity from New York Theological Seminary, a Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Education from Indiana University. He was married to his "brown-eyed sweet—heart," Esther Lehman, June 12, 1952 and was ordained as a minister in 1954 by the Missionary Church.

Zenas, with his wife Esther, served 43 years in Jamaica with the Overseas Board of the Missionary Church Inc., first as a pastor, then as an educator establishing the bachelor level Jamaica Theological Seminary and then the masters level Graduate School of Theology. He also founded and served with multiple Jamaican, Caribbean, and international organisations involving Christian higher education and accreditation.

The Caribbean owes a great debt to Esther and Zenas for their labour of love among us.

(Reprinted from EAC News, Dec 2011)

WEA Appoints Francophone Coordinator

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) has announced the appointment of Stéphane Lauzet to serve the WEA's French speaking national Evangelical Alliances and Fellowships and the wider francophone world. Stéphane's appointment will help to increase the connections between French-speaking evangelicals globally and strengthen the regional Evangelical Alliances. His role will bring the cultural and spiritual riches of the francophone world to the wider global community.

Stéphane brings immense experience to this new role as WEA Francophone Ambassador, which will equip and empower French-speaking Alliances. He was General Secretary of the National Alliance in France for 16 years and played a very key support role in the European Evangelical Alliance. He possesses incredible working knowledge from both the national and regional levels.

WEA is the most comprehensive and representative Evangelical body in the world today. Established in 1846, it is a movement of growing influence in the early 21st century, equipping, connecting and speaking on behalf of its global constituency. WEA serves 129 national Evangelical Alliances, 110 associate member alliances, 7 global regions, totaling over 600 million evangelical Christians, uniting all to transform the nations.

WEA is deeply grateful for Stéphane's willingness to step out by faith into this significant and new role for WEA and global evangelicals. WEA commends him to your prayers and support.

Theology Taskforce Coordinator for Africa

The AEA Secretariat is pleased announce the appointment of Mr. Mateso Akou as the Executive Coordinator of the Theology Taskforce with effect from January, 2012. In the spirit of AEA's repositioning following the strategic review and planning, the Theology Taskforce has been set up as a working group to motivate theological reflection and assist the work of the Church in Africa with sound biblical and theological resources.

Mr. Akou is a Congolese national (DR Congo) and arrived to Nairobi, Kenya in pursuit of Theological Education. He holds a Master of Divinity and a Master of Theology, both from the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology where he currently holds a part-time teaching position in Systematic Theology.

Mr. Akou has vast experience in education and church ministry. His first and second degrees from the National University of Zaire are in Education. He worked as a teacher (5 years) and as Headmaster (4 years) in secondary school before embarking on his studies and career in theology. On graduation from NEGST he served as Evangelist, Trainer and Director of Training Department in DIGUNA Mission (Kenya) for about sixteen years. He also provided part-time Chaplaincy in Kenyatta National Hospital (Nairobi) and Mount Sinai Hospital (Ongata Rongai)

Christianity has a New Address and Look

By Kim Cain GCF (adapted from *Evangelical Association of the Caribbean News* Dec 2011 8:8)

The story of Christianity as a worldwide faith is being written before our eyes", declared Dr. Dana Robert of Boston University School of Theology as she addressed a group of world church leaders on the fundamental realignment of Christian faith around the globe. "Christianity has undergone one of the greatest demographic and cultural shifts in its 2000 year history," Robert said. She was speaking to the Global Christian Forum (GCF) at Manado, Indonesia, which in itself reflects changing patterns of Church engagement.

Uniquely, the gathering has brought together leaders from all major church traditions, all theological perspectives and major world communions including the Anglican Communion, the World Council of Churches, the World Evangelical Alliance, the Pentecostal World Fellowship and representatives of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for promotion of Christian Unity.

In a statistical analysis of the changing demographics and practices of global Christianity, Mr. Peter Crossing of the Centre for the Study of Global Christianity, told the GCF that a century ago (1910) 66% of the world's Christians lived in Europe, but today it accounts for only 26% of the world's Christian population. He said the Global North (defined as Europe and North America) contained over 80% of all Christians in 1910, falling to under 40% by 2010. In 1910 less than 2% of all Christian lived in Africa but by 2010 this had skyrocketed to 20% of world Christianity.

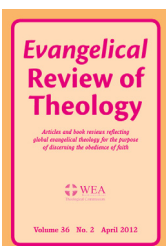
Crossing, who is a researcher for the *Atlas of Global Christianity*, said that whilst the overall number of Christian's globally had remained fairly constant over the last one hundred years there had been "dramatic change in the centre of gravity of global Christianity." A century ago the statistical 'centre of gravity' for Christianity was near Madrid, but "in 2010 the statistical centre had shifted to somewhere just south of Timbuktu in Mali. This 100 year shift is the most dramatic in Christian history," says Crossing. But one thing has not changed and that is where the financial resources reside. "Finances are still firmly in the (global) North; 60% of Christians live in the South, but they have only 17% of Christian income," Crossing said.

Another presenter, Dr. Sang-Bok David Kim, of the World Evangelical Alliance, told the GCF, that the huge changes in the church internationally meant "Christianity is no longer a 'white man's' religion. Christians are now everywhere." Looking at comparative numbers Kim said Christianity was still the world's largest faith grouping with 32.9% of the global population followed by Islam at 22.9%. "Muslims are increasing faster than Christians, not so much from conversions, but due rather to their higher birth rate (1.9%, Christians 1.2%)", he said.

Although the Global North has declined in numbers overall Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic communities continue to grow there, as well as in Africa, Latin America and Asia, Kim said. Kim noted one of the most "astonishing success stories" has been the work of Evangelical missions since World War II and the subsequent growth of indigenous Evangelical movements globally. Evangelicals numbered 82 million (2.9%) in 1960 and they have reached 546 million in 2010 (7.9%), he said.

Reflecting on the changes, Dr. Robert said they raise critical questions for all churches: "Contemporary Christians are focusing on mission for multiple purposes—both to recover tradition and to recover from tradition. "Conversations about mission and witness have become an urgent agenda for declining mainline Christians ... as they struggle to reframe their identity in a global marketplace. At the same time, adherents of new ministries often see their witness as a recovery of primitive Christianity that challenges the older denominations," Robert said that "Today's urgent need for Christian unity does not look like the 1950s and 1960s, when self-satisfied Protestant leaders pushed for organic unity at the expense of diversity of witness. The growth that characterises world Christianity today means that unity will be taken seriously only where mission is taken seriously,"

That mission however is varied. Kim noted that "reevangelisation" is the prime task of many churches such as in the Russian Orthodox, which was "concentrating more on evangelisation of the 80% nominal Orthodox Christians" rather than concerns of proselytism of the 1990's. And Crossing said statistics showed there was over 1.136 billion hours of evangelism across the globe per year: "Enough evangelism for every person to hear a one hour presentation of the gospel every other day all year long", but "it was mostly directed at other Christians!"



Evangelical Review of Theology

April 2012

Spiritual Disciplines and the Gospel

This is the important theme of the April 2012 issue which begins with a survey article by Beverly Vos and continues with an in-depth presentation by J J Davis proposing a new theological model for pastoral ministry. JP Danaher gives a "gospel perspective" on evil while T K Johnson identifies "law and Gospel" as the key to the Reformation. R Pruitt analyses Post-Liberal Theology while Andrew Sloane completes this issue with an innovative theological rationale for "advocacy"

For more information—contact chair_tc@worldidea.org

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