

WEA Theological News



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<http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/list/index.php?com=tc&id=5>

TC Executive Secretary Addresses Evangelism Conference

On 24 March, the World Council of Churches (WCC) Commission on World Mission and Evangelism pre-assembly event invoked renewed thinking and commitment on evangelism, disassociated from the forces of oppression, and grounded in humility and respect for all.

The event took place in Manila, Philippines addressed the topic “Water of life: Speaking the truth in love” while debating evangelism among other themes. More than 200 participants in the event contributed to the discussions and developed a draft of the proposed WCC statement on “mission and evangelism” to be presented at the WCC upcoming 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea in 2013.

“Too often evangelism has not been done in Christ’s way with the effect that it has not been the vehicle for conveying good news, but rather bad news through being joined with forces of imperialism and the oppression of the poor and the weak by the rich and the strong,” said Ronald Wallace, Presbyterian Church in Canada, in his presentation. “The evangelical gospel and the social gospel cannot be separated. They are two sides of the same coin,” he added.

Reflecting on the aspect of justice and peace in evangelism, and how churches can accomplish more and better evangelism, Dr Rosalee Velloso Ewell, a presenter from the World Evangelical Alliance, Birmingham said, “In the changing landscapes of our world, what we are calling for is evangelism from the belly of the beast.” She went on to say that “this is evangelism in all the fullness and richness of its theological and biblical roots. This is evangelism that is genuinely whole, that does not divorce justice from preaching, nor peace from worship, but rather sees their fulfilment completely and perfectly in Jesus of Nazareth.”

During the sessions, reflections on evangelism, conversions, religious freedom and church witness in changing landscapes were shared by Rev N. Oluyinka Olatunbosun, Aikaterini Pekridou, Rev. Eszter Dani and Rev. Dr Richard Daulay. Dr Rob Hay stressed in his concluding remarks the importance of contextualization of theologies for mission around the world. He also said that “We need to discern the relevance of the unchanging truth of God in the changing world in which we live. It is only by personal transforming encounter with Christ that God will affect the transformation of societies, communities and the world.”

Source: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/churches-seek-renewed-com.html>



Dr Rosalee Velloso Ewell speaking at WCC's Commission on World Mission and Evangelism



World Evangelical Alliance strategy meeting on how to better prepare pastors and missionaries in theological training for a full orbed answer to Islam in Theological Commission office in Bonn.

Left to right: Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali, Pakistan; Aiah Foday-Khabenje , General Secretary, Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA); Dr Thomas Schirmacher, TC of WEA; Gordon Showell-Rogers, Associate Secretary General of WEA; Dr Christine Schirmacher, Int. Institute of Islamic Studies of WEA; Dr Richard Howel, General Secretary, General Secretary, Asia Evangelical Alliance

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

Promoting Biblical Truth by Networking Theologians

Online Directory for Theological Institutions

A Global Theological Education Survey started by the Ecumenical Theological Education programme of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in partnership with other organizations is under way, and will result in the launch of a web based global directory of theological institutions. The directory will increase the exchange and dialogue among theological educators around the world. It builds on an existing online resource and will cover a much larger number of entries than previous efforts.

In a 29-30 April meeting at the Center for the Study of World Christianity, Boston, United States, major progress was reported on the [Global Theological Education Survey](#), which has been carried out by this institution and the Chicago based Institute for Cross-Cultural Theological Education in partnership with the WCC.

In the survey available in seven languages, theological educators and heads of theological institutions from diverse Christian denominations and cultural background all around the world are asked to fill in a questionnaire providing information on trends, challenges, accessibility and prospects of the theological education in their regions.

The targeted programmes and institutions in the survey range from divinity schools, theological seminaries and theological faculties at universities to regional theological education initiatives of mission and discipleship training programmes.

“This is the first systematic research project on trends and needs for theological education and ministerial formation since 1910,” said Dr Dietrich Werner, coordinator of the WCC Ecumenical Theological Education programme. Results from this project will be presented at the 10th Assembly of the WCC at Busan, Ko-

rea in 2013, said Werner.

“One of the highlights of this research project is the creation of a web based directory of theological institutions. This will have a significant impact on creating effective exchange of information and academic resources among the theological educators at an international level,” he added.

Werner also shared reflections on the context and need for this project in his lecture on [Theological education in the changing context of world Christianity](#) for the Overseas Ministries Study Center in the USA.

The invitation to respond to the global survey on theological education project has been extended and is still open for participation. Following a sufficient number of responses, the new digital directory will be accessed through the [Global Digital Library for Theology and Ecumenism \(GlobeTheoLib\)](#) and the [World Christian Database](#).

According to Werner and the two other key organizers of this project, Dr Todd Johnson of the [Center for the Study of Global Christianity](#) at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston, Dr David Esterline from the [Institute for Cross Cultural Theological Education](#) in Chicago, this project responds to the vital needs of the theological education in World Christianity in the 21st century.

Respondants to the survey will receive both access to the GlobeTheoLib and to a summary evaluation of the research project at the beginning of 2013

(Source: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/online-directory-for-theo.html>)

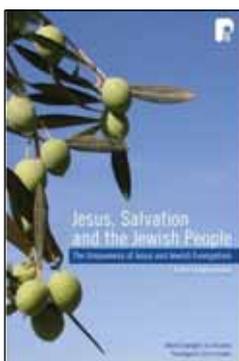
Plea for Nigeria at Human Rights Council, Geneva

Yakubu Joseph, research coordinator of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF), participated in a panel meeting organized by Jubilee Campaign USA at the 19th Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva on 7 March 2012.

In his presentation, Yakubu Joseph lamented about what he referred to as the disjuncture between aspiration and reality as far as the status of freedom of religion in Nigeria is concerned. Noting that despite the fact that Nigeria has acceded to numerous international legal instruments that provide for the protection of religious freedom, the country's records of religious liberty violations is appalling. Joseph argued that the present spate of sectarian violence led by the islamist sect Boko Haram is an overlay on what has been endemic religious intolerance in Nigerian multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. Religious minorities are often vulnera-

ble and marginalized, and subjected to structural and systemic injustice. This hardly gets the attention of the media. Besides these hostile treatments, which have become part of the daily lives of religious minorities, the toll that the recent sectarian violence takes on the lives of Nigerians is quite alarming. While this has caught the attention of the international community and the media because of the scale of the destructions, the debilitating impacts on the victims are long lasting, and in some cases permanent, without state and non-state actors concerned providing long-term rehabilitative supports to the victims.

Joseph reminded the group that although many of the displaced persons are not in camp setting due to the practice of Christian solidarity in suffering, they are still in great need of support and protection against further violations.



Jesus, Salvation and the Jewish People

Statement and Papers from Consultation on Jewish Evangelism

ISBN 978-1-84227-669-3

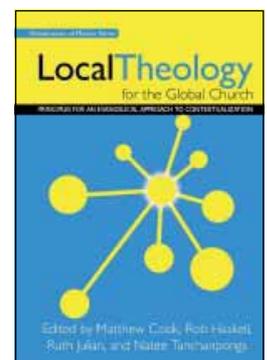
Editor: David Parker

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



Langham Partnership meets with Theologians from Francophone Africa

By Mateso Akou

From March 9th to 12th, 2012 about 40 leaders, most of them from French-speaking Africa, met in Nairobi (Kenya) for a theological consultation was organized by Langham Partnership International (LPI), with the participation of other potential partners including the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA). The consultation sought to define the kind of partnership between churches, para-church organizations and theological institutions from Francophone Africa and LPI, in relation to its programmes. Theologians from Francophone Africa were given the platform to freely share the challenges they are going through. These challenges range from political, socio-economical, moral, educational, and even religious contexts. The church in most parts of the region is affected by disunity, syncretism, and the high speed of the spread of a gospel different to the true gospel.

Langham Partnership International recognized the need to work closely with local people and organisations to train and develop preachers and trainers who are committed and faithful to relevant biblical preaching. There was also a need to make indigenous theological textbooks in French available to assist pastors and theological students. The Langham Partnership International also saw the need to assist Francophone Africa in the developing and strengthening capacity in theological education in the region.

The Association of Evangelicals in Africa through its Theology Taskforce welcomed the initiative which, according to many, was timely, pledging at the same time its undivided cooperation in reinforcing and making sure the work of LPI among the Evangelicals in Francophone in Africa bears lasting fruit, to the glory of the Owner of the harvest.



Hopeful Start for Theology Task Force in Africa but More Help Needed

The newly appointed Executive Coordinator of the Theology Taskforce in Africa, Mr Mateso Akou (see April 2012 TN) reports a promising commencement to his ministry. As well as the Langham conference (see left panel), he has participated in a Regional Conference in Burkina Faso. This was organized by Window 4/14 Movement, for Francophone Africa, involving at least 300 delegates, most of them from Francophone Africa. It was a challenge for the church in Africa to consider investing more Children's Ministry and the Youth with the aim of seeing national transformation.

Another important engagement was an Easter seminar at Narok, Kenya, one of the main towns in Maasailand. Amongst the many topics, one of the most vital focuses on "Preachers of a different Gospel." Mr Akou said, "As elsewhere in the country and the continent of Africa, pulpits in many local churches in Maasailand have started sending forth a strange Gospel. As Evangelicals we should give this a serious consideration."

While the first quarter of work has been encouraging with good financial support, Mr Akou has urgently called for more prayer and support for the future. Many plans have been made for the future, but they are all dependant on funding. Some of the future plans include efforts to develop integrity and effectiveness of Christian leaders in Kenya (July), a conference on national development in Madagascar (August), a focus on pastoral calling (August), and theological education (September).

Mr Akou may be contacted at mateso@aeafrica.org and invites responses with prayer, finances and suggestions for the work of the AEA Theology Taskforce.

Asian Theological Educators meet for Consultation on Scripture

Asia Theological Association met in Kuala Lumpur June 18-22 for a consultation on Scripture with the theme, "Authority, Meaning and Mission in the Asian Context." One theme was covered each day—first the authority and inspiration of Scripture, then hermeneutics and finally the role of Scripture in the coming of Christ's kingdom on earth. A large number of papers were submitted in advance and discussions took place amongst the one hundred participants on the topics covered which ranged from social ethics, spirituality, child theology, worship, and detailed exegesis.

The consultation is being arranged by ATA Senior Advisor, Dr Bruce Nicholls of New Zealand, who expects the papers to be printed as a text book on Scripture for Asian churches and seminaries.

Writing in a recent ATA newsletter, Dr Nicholls said,

"ATA must consider giving renewed priority to research and development. R & D is a priority with every progressive

and successful company and organization and it must also be with ATA. ATA needs to give leadership in Asia and the Middle East through its members and its consultations, with a focus on biblical theology and applied theology. The findings of this research will be shared through our publications and at consultations."

He went on to suggest that ATA needed to revisit its theological convictions in relation to various cultural contexts, and widen the horizons of its theological education vision. It must build strong working relationships with compatible mission agencies and in the process rebuild its organisational structures. Another important need was to work for reconciliation, greater involvement in the public square in relation to Christian-Muslim relationships.

Dr Nicholls has recently also been appointed as a Senior Advisor to the WEA Theological Commission

Source: ATA News Jan-Mar 2012 <http://www.ataasia.com>

Bear with?

A review of *The Intolerance of Tolerance* by D.A. Carson (IVP, 200 pages. £12.99 ISBN 978 1 844 744 053)

By Timothy Laurence, London Chairman, Lawyers' Christian Fellowship <http://www.e-n.org.uk/>

Reproduced with permission from *Evangelicals Now* May 2012 page 25

This book is a 'must' for Christian leaders - especially those who hear that line all the time. Not because of its author—though Carson is always worth reading. It is a 'must' because of the staggering importance of its subject and because few evangelical scholars have Carson's competence to tackle it. 'Staggering' is actually one of Carson's own repeated words to describe what he's observing in Western culture. It is not just that we are destroying our freedoms, but that this self-destruction is now celebrated, and it is the one thing that no one must criticise. What is it? Tolerance.

Anyone familiar with Don Carson's writing knows that he is not an alarmist and does not make foolish generalisations. Instead, he carefully traces historical patterns, makes nuanced distinctions and engages with leading social commentators in the secular world. And yet he's still staggered by what he sees: how the championing of vacuous democracy is leading to democracy's demise; how the privatisation of religion is curbing the freedom of religion, and how that results in losing civil freedoms generally; how a mistaken moral high ground is removing morality from public life. And this hurts everyone.

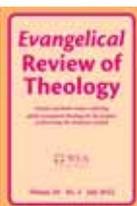
Carson begins by making a distinction between what he calls the 'old' and the 'new' tolerance. From there his thesis is simple: the 'new tolerance' is intrinsically intolerant. It is therefore self-contradictory and self-destructive—and so is any public square built upon it. And yet, he argues, having rejected almost everything else, the 'new tolerance' is the only absolute 'good' the West now values.

The 'old' tolerance is seen in the conviction that everyone has the right to express differing views, especially when we disagree with them or find them offensive. This, he says, comes from a conviction that truth and goodness can be known and should be pursued by discussion and argument, and that Jesus himself will return to put wrong to right. The 'old tolerance' is a good thing and has come in large part from the influence of Christianity within Western heritage as the Reformation gradually led to a clearer distinction between the roles of church and state, expression and coercion.

The 'new tolerance', however, is the belief that one should not disagree with another view, but should accept everything (and hence nothing). Its flaw is that it cannot tolerate any view that is intolerant of it. To do so would be to tolerate intolerance; but not to do so would be intolerant! Therefore this 'new tolerance' is a self-contradiction. While claiming to be value-neutral, it inevitably becomes the tool of bullying selfish interests, and Christianity itself is targeted most frequently.

Much of this book echoes the content of Carson's earlier work, *Christ and Culture Revisited*, but applies it to the specific area of the public square. In places the book requires careful attention. It is flooded with good quotations and contemporary examples (including many from the UK), which makes it authoritative, notably up-to-date and a tremendous resource. It also makes the book slightly repetitive, as the topic is addressed from a number of complementary angles.

But this is why it is a 'must'. If Carson's book is full of repeated examples, our contemporary lives are filled with them all the more—and yet ordinary Christians rarely notice what they are or understand what is happening. Christian leaders are in a unique position to serve their people by engaging with Carson's book and repeating the content even more simply to equip disciples to understand and engage lovingly with the world around them. The need is great and much is at stake. Carson's conclusion gives ten practical applications for how to do it—including the social priority of truth and evangelism. But if Christian leaders don't engage with this book it is unlikely that other Christians will deal adequately with its staggeringly important message, which affects all our lives and how we love our neighbours and stand for the gospel.



Evangelical Review of Theology

July 2012 The Renewal of the Church

A classic article from our files introduces the theme of this issue—one written by renowned Dutch theologian, Klass Runia in 1989. It is followed by Ron Man's interesting "Lessons from Global Worship" and a fresh look at "The Salvation of the Unevangelised" by Terrance Tiessen, using the lens of covenants. The final two articles range wider—Christine Schirrmacher examines death, dying and salvation in Islam and Christianity showing that "They are not all martyrs", while Clinton Stockwell surveys fundamentalism in Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

For more information—contact chair_tc@worlddea.org

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