

## TC Chair Presents Evangelical Case at Key Discussions

TC Chair, Dr Thomas Schirmmacher was a key contributor to a recent hearing in Geneva sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC) on the misuse of Pakistan's blasphemy laws. The public event urged the Pakistani government to 'take realistic and solid steps to stop abuse of the blasphemy law that are causing massive human rights violations.' 'Tinkering with procedural amendments has not delivered; it has failed to mitigate extremely sad consequences of a law that is inherently susceptible to abuse,' the group said.



In his statement to the audience, the head of the delegation of World Evangelical Alliance, Thomas Schirmmacher, thanked the World Council of Churches, and especially its General Secretary, Olav Fykse Tveit, and its Director of International Affairs, Dr Matthews George, for organising the event and for making the situation of Christians and other minorities in Pakistan a central public topic for many years already.

Schirmmacher stated that even though the fate of Christians, Ahmadiyas or Hindus comes to the attention of the global audience and media, actually the blasphemy cases in Pakistan and the discrimination of minorities have many Muslim victims. Thus WCC and WEA are not only fighting for their member churches, or for religious minorities only, but for every human in Pakistan.

Dr Schirmmacher also recently participated in a consultation on Christian-Muslim dialogue attended by WEA representatives, WCC and Christian World Communions. A report said that the main goal of the consultation was 'To seek mutual enrichment and commitment by providing space for churches and communions to share their initiatives, perspectives and specific theological resources for engaging with Muslims.' Dr Schirmmacher said that the WEA has a multilevel approach to mission—mission always has to go together with peace and respect the human dignity of others; witness must continue even in the face of martyrdom and persecution, where churches have to be strengthened and wherever possible political solutions have to be found; it is necessary to establish good personal relationship and hospitality, both between leaders and between Christian and Muslim neighbours; and the need to speak up on behalf of the religious liberty of all, including discriminated Muslims, as speaking up for religious freedom is not the same as making any claims about the truth of any particular religion.

## Call for Papers on 'Applied Trinitarianism'

The Theological Commission calling for papers and discussion for a theme issue of the *Evangelical Review of Theology* in 2014 on Applied Trinitarianism.'

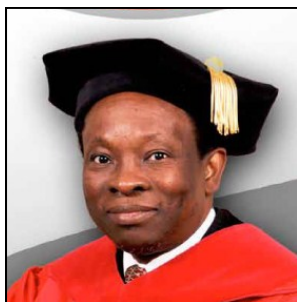
The church fathers thought many of their pastoral problems resulted from Christians interpreting their faith and the Bible inside the cognitive structures of the various secular worldviews of their cultures (with results such as docetism and Gnosticism); the clear articulation of the biblical doctrine of the Trinity was an attempt to provide a more fully developed cognitive structure in light of which to interpret and apply the biblical message in a balanced and complete manner.

Thomas K. Johnson claims we should now apply the Nicene doctrine of the Trinity as a diagnostic system for diagnosing the health and balance of individuals, churches, and Christian movements, as well as use it as a framework for cultural and ethical questions. (See [www.iirf.eu](http://www.iirf.eu); then click WEA Global Issues Series.)

For this purpose we now invite contributions for a theme issue of *ERT* in 2014. Essays should be 6,000 to 8,000 words, following the *ERT* guidelines. As we started the discussion in the US and have some potential contributions, we now especially invite contributors from other regions.

Articles and enquiries should be sent to [johnson.thomas.k@gmail.com](mailto:johnson.thomas.k@gmail.com).

## Africa Loses Outstanding Leader



Dr M Douglas Carew, Vice-Chancellor of the Africa International University ( AIU, formerly Nairobi Evangelical Graduates School of Theology NEGST) died on 8 Nov 2012 aged 56. Born in Sierra Leone, he studied at NEGST 1985-88 and later at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Illinois where he gained his PhD in 1998. He taught in his home country for five years and at NEGST for six years before becoming Vice-Chancellor, where he was instrumental in securing university status for this important school. A lengthy funeral service was held in Nairobi on 30 November.

Dr Carew was a respected leader of evangelical work in Africa, and was prominent in theological education where he was deeply involved in the Accrediting Council for Evangelical Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA) and International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE). In his tribute, International Director of ICETE Dr. Paul Sanders, ICETE International

Director, said,

‘Our brother’s impact went far beyond the borders of Kenya, to all of Africa and to the global entities of evangelical theological education. Douglas most recently was serving as Associate Director of ICETE, in addition to all of his other responsibilities in Africa and beyond. We were together in October this year in Nairobi. I then met again with him on Thursday afternoon, 8 November, for a meeting related to AIU's partnership with an Indianapolis church. We could all see that Douglas was struggling health wise, but we had no idea that the Lord would take him home that very night.’

‘I focus today on Douglas' character as a leader, which influenced all he did in behalf of evangelical leadership development. Douglas' first name, as you know, was actually Moses. In many ways, Douglas was a Moses for AIU, for ACTEA and for global evangelical theological education. Most of all, what has always struck and inspired me about Douglas was his powerful gentleness as a leader. He was so gentle, yet so strong and resolute in his leadership. We celebrate today, with you, the leadership legacy of Dr. Moses Douglas Carew, with deepest gratitude to God for him.’ (<http://www.africainternational.edu/>)

## TC to Partner in Urban Mission Summit

TC Executive Secretary, Dr. Rosalee Velloso Ewell, will be one of the keynote speakers at the first annual International Society for Urban Mission (ISUM) Summit. It will be held January 26-29, 2013, in partnership with the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission and Micah Network, a WEA global partner. This year’s theme is ‘Integral Urban Mission’. Hosted at the Evangelical Church of Bangkok, the conference will be an interactive, participatory, four-day experience including hands-on, immersion opportunities and lectures, workshops and keynotes.

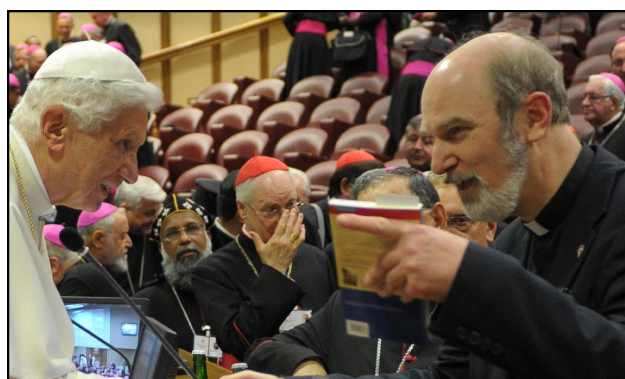
‘We are looking forward to meeting together to build trust, wisdom and be inspired to better engage our new urban world! Through this Summit, our hearts are to “seek the peace of the city” (Jeremiah 29:7) for our various urban cities scattered around South East Asia and the globe,’ ISUM writes.

Key practitioner themes, best practices, reflective prayer, active Bible studies, calls for collective action and case studies/story telling are some of the key features of the summit. Several of the speeches will also be used in the New Urban World journal. Other keynote speakers and participants include: Shane Claiborne (The Simple Way, Philadelphia); Dr. Ruth Callanta (Center for Community Transformation, Manila); Dr. Sonny Tha Nyan (General Secretary YMCA, Yangon); Dr. Ash Barker (Urban Neighbours of Hope, Bangkok); Wallace and Mary Kamau (Missions of Hope International, Nairobi); David Bussau (Founder, Opportunity International; President, Wholistic Transformation Resource Center, Manila) and Dr. Viv Grigg (International Director of MA in Transformational Urban Leadership - Azusa Pacific University)

The WEA encourages all national and regional alliances, along with partner organizations and evangelicals worldwide to get involved with ISUM and to share and learn from this important event. For more information, go to [www.newurbanworld.org/summit/](http://www.newurbanworld.org/summit/) or read the online brochure. Register for the summit at [www.newurbanworld.org/summit-registration/](http://www.newurbanworld.org/summit-registration/).

## Evangelism: The Hallmark of Evangelical Faith

On page 3 of this issue, we present the 1300 word statement, *Evangelism, the hallmark of evangelical faith*. This statement was drafted by the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance to encourage discussion in the lead up to the General assembly of WEA in Seoul 2014. It was read by the Secretary General of WEA, Geoff Tunnicliffe, to the Pope and the 250 delegates of the Vatican Synod at the 50th anniversary of Vatican II. The Synod was attended alternately by Geoff Tunnicliffe and Thomas Schirrmacher.



## Evangelism: The Hallmark of Evangelical Faith

Evangelism is the proclamation in word, deed and Christian character of the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross and through the resurrection. Evangelism lies at the core of the identity of being evangelical. We affirm that it is not possible to be truly evangelical without a radical commitment to world evangelisation; indeed, such a commitment is inherent to Christian identity itself. Evangelism is one of the three central characteristics of evangelicalism, based on the understanding that Jesus Christ is the unique Saviour of humanity and Lord of all creation and that the Scriptures are the ultimate authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

The WEA calls on all evangelicals and Christians worldwide to renew their commitment to holistic evangelism. By this we emphasize the connection between proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ in word and practicing it in our actions: both are necessary for the integrity of the gospel. Furthermore, personal conversion must result in the growth of Christian character and witness.

As with all Christian traditions, there have been times when mistakes have been made and evangelicals have struggled to link the proclamation of the gospel with acts of justice and peace. Yet in our history there have been many strong voices and lives that exemplify the holistic nature of evangelism. People such as Wesley, Wilberforce, Shaftesbury, Lester, Bediako, Kitamori, Adeyemo, Stott, Escobar and Padilla have all shown deep personal commitment to social action and individual transformation.

For evangelicals the search continues for precise theological terminology to unite the proclamation and the social implications of the Gospel. The biblical narratives in Mark 5 offer us a way forwards, a lens through which we can overcome the unhelpful dichotomy between proclamation and action, and a way to call us all back to holistic evangelism and to the word of God.

Mark presents the reader with three snapshots of Jesus' ministry. The author takes some care to record the context in which the different stories occur, what Jesus did and, in particular, the impact Jesus had and the people's reaction to him. We can draw some inferences from these three narratives about the nature and the breadth of the Gospel. In the first snapshot Jesus encounters a demon-possessed man in the region of Gerasene and delivers him from this affliction, resulting in the man being found 'clothed and in his right mind' (Mark 5:15). The following two stories are intertwined: Jesus is on his way to the house of Jairus, a local religious leader, when he encounters a woman who had suffered from a long illness. While Jesus is busy healing the woman, Jairus' daughter dies. The final snapshot is of Jesus restoring her back to life.

Two themes emerge from this chapter: (1) the authority and the power of Jesus and (2) the breadth of the gospel. First we see that Jesus has power over evil; he has power over disease and illness, and he has power over death itself, hinting towards his own forthcoming resurrection. The early church recognised the importance of acknowledging Jesus' power and authority in the first Christian creed: *Jesus is Lord!* It is an assertion that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, holds ultimate power and authority over all things. It is also a call to all Jesus' followers to accept the Gospel as the ultimate narrative on which to base doctrine, theology and practise. Secondly, the text shows that the Gospel extends to all of creation: it is for men and women caught up in evil, for people who are suffering from illness and disease, and for children and their parents. The breadth of the gospel is for those excluded from the community (the demon-possessed man), for those within who are also outcasts (the woman), and also for those in positions of power and influence (Jairus). No one is exempt from the need of God's free and saving grace. Transformation is for all.

Mark's writing has an immediacy about it that tends to be subtler in the other Gospel writers. It is relatively easy to imagine the cries of the demon possessed man, the rattle of chains, the squeals of 2000 pigs, and the mourning cries over a dead child. But Mark gives us also details about the response of the people to Jesus. Some are fearful, others angry, some are amazed, others cannot but help tell their stories of what Jesus has done, some laugh and mock. The question posed to all whom Jesus encounters is: how will you respond? The question for evangelicals – and all who claim the name of Christ – is: what will you do, personally and corporately, to further the cause of worldwide holistic evangelism? A church that is not evangelistic is failing in its response to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is a missionary Spirit; thus evangelism should arise spontaneously from a Spirit-filled church. A church that is not a missionary church is contradicting itself and quenching the Spirit. Worldwide evangelization will become a realistic possibility only when the Spirit renews the Church in truth and wisdom, faith, holiness, love and power. We therefore call upon all Christians to pray for such a visitation of the sovereign Spirit of God that all his fruit may appear in all his people and that all his gifts may enrich the body of Christ. Only then will the whole church become a fit instrument in his hands, that the whole earth may hear his voice. (*The Lausanne Covenant*, §14)

As we celebrate the evangelistic example of Jesus himself and seek to learn from it, we remember again that all who claim to be followers of Jesus must proclaim both his authority – Jesus is Lord! – and the breadth of his grace and reach. This is the fullness of mission, this is holistic evangelisation and we must prioritise it as Jesus did. "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father."

We evangelicals are learning how to do evangelism in the way of Jesus – how to proclaim that salvation comes from our God and the implications of this proclamation for the transformation of society. We are also learning that truly biblical evangelism demands that the divisions amongst Christians be overcome. As Jesus states in his prayer in John 17, the witness of the disciples is hindered if they are not one in heart and mind. The joint document of the Roman Catholic Church, the World Evangelical Alliance and the World Council of Churches, *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*, is a wonderful reminder of the importance and the mandate for evangelism. It is a deeply significant document that begins and ends with the word "mission."

'Christian Witness' calls us all to ensure that we practice our evangelisation within the boundaries of the values of the reign of God, with integrity and love, as we care for men, women, children, and all creation, knowing that as we come to Jesus and plead with him for aid, as did Jairus, God willingly and freely gives it.

Jesus in chapter 5 of Mark's gospel, we are called to bring the good news to all: outcasts, women, men, children, the sick and needy, and the religious leaders. Not only are we called, but we are also enabled by the Father and the Son, through the Spirit, to carry out God's mission, such that a core characteristic of evangelicals is – and must always be – to let the whole earth hear the whole Gospel in word, deed and character.

## New President for Bethlehem Bible College



The Board of Bethlehem Bible College has appointed Rev. Jack Sara, previously Vice-President, as the new President of Bethlehem Bible College replacing Dr. Bishara Awad who is President Emeritus.

Jack graduated from Bethlehem Bible College in 1994 with a B.A. degree in Biblical Studies, and from the Alliance Biblical Seminary in Manila, Philippines in 1998 with a Master of Divinity degree in 1998. He is currently enrolled in a Doctor of Ministry distance program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston. He was senior pastor of the Christian Missionary Alliance Church in Jerusalem from 1999 until 2012, and has been a part time teacher at Bethlehem Bible College. Dr Awad will be travelling on behalf of the College and promoting its ministry of training church leaders.

Bethlehem Bible College was established in 1979. Its main campus is on Hebron Road, halfway between the Bethlehem checkpoint and Manger Square; it also operates the daughter Galilee Bible College in Nazareth. The colleges welcome visitors and financial and prayer support (<http://www.bethbc.org/>).

## International Baptist Seminary Relocates

The International Baptist Theological Seminary which has operated in Prague for several years will relocate to Amsterdam as an international Baptist studies and research centre with close ties to the Union of Baptist Churches in the Netherlands.

The move is a response by European Baptists to changing needs for theological education, costs of maintaining an aging campus in the Czech Republic and loss of donor support in a poor global economy.

The International Baptist Theological Seminary was established by Southern Baptist missionaries in 1948 at Ruschlikon, Switzerland, to help unite Baptists in Western Europe in the aftermath of two world wars. It relocated to Eastern Europe in 1997 amid financial struggles and changing educational needs for European Baptists after the end of the Cold War.

In recent years, the seminary's master's-level focus has duplicated degrees offered by national and regional Baptist seminaries that have arisen since the 1990s. In the new plan, seminaries supported by members of the 56 Baptist unions in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia that make up the European Baptist Federation will feed students into Ph.D. studies in Amsterdam.

IBTS will share space in a new Baptist House in Amsterdam with offices of the EBF, Dutch Baptist Union and Dutch Baptist Seminary, and will be an imbedded partner within Vrije University in Amsterdam (VU), a state university recognized for its theology faculty.

## On-Line Theological Library

More than 10,000 users have signed up for an on-line theological library supported by the World Council of Churches (WCC) that offers worldwide access free of charge to thousands of full text articles, dissertations and other documents covering theology and ecumenism. GlobeTheoLib, the Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism (<http://www.globethics.net/gtl>), was launched in September 2011 as a joint project of the WCC and Globethics.net, a Geneva-headquartered foundation promoting dialogue on ethical issues. GlobeTheoLib uses the electronic platform of Globethics.net, which started a Global Digital Library on Ethics in 2008. The web portal is multilingual. GlobeTheoLib aims to use new digital models of information exchange to create greater visibility for theological knowledge and insights from churches of the global South. [www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/online-theology-library-r.html](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/online-theology-library-r.html)

### Evangelical Review of Theology Jan 2013 'Contagious Generosity'



This is a special issue on 'contagious generosity' prepared in cooperation with Dr Sas Conradie, coordinator of the Lausanne/World Evangelical Alliance Global Generosity Network. Commencing with a chapter from a book on this topic, the articles in this issue show different facets and examples of how 'generous living' proposed as 'the most compelling and effective evangelism strategy' works out in theory and practice. There are articles which present the biblical foundations, ethical aspects, and practical outworking in terms of ethics and fundraising. There are some case studies which show this principles works in daily life. For more information—contact [chair\\_tc@worlddea.org](mailto:chair_tc@worlddea.org)

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