

TC involvement in 16th ICETE Consultation, Antalya, Turkey

Dr C Rosalee Velloso Ewell, Executive Director of the TC served as a participant and workshop leader in the Triennial Consultation of ICETE (International Council of Evangelical Theological Education), held in Antalya, Turkey in November. Bishop Ef Tendero, General Secretary of the WEA was also present at the international gathering. The theme of the meeting was 'Engaged and effective: The impact of theological education.'

Dr Velloso Ewell was asked to present on how the churches view theological education and how the connections between church and seminary can be strengthened. Using scriptural narratives from the book of Nehemiah, the letters of Paul, and Luke 24, the workshop served to engage participants in discussions about (i) discernment and listening - what are the challenges the churches are facing now? What are the challenges in the future?; (ii) character formation - is the seminary forming disciples who are passionate about Jesus and serving God's kingdom?; (iii) leadership training that is both loving and humble, that asks where would Jesus be and with whom, and shapes students in such ways that they can then guide their churches to see the work of the Spirit among them.

The ICETE gathering was also a time of fellowship and networking, where many evangelical institutions are able to connect, converse and learn from other institutions and people from around the world.

Plenary sessions at the Consultation were taken by Dr Chris Wright (Langham Partnership), Dr Rupen Das (Tyndale University, Toronto, Canada), Dr Bernhard Ott (European Evangelical Accrediting Association), Dr Paul Penley and others. The closing address was by Dr David Baer (Overseas Council). Workshop session covered topics assessing church-based theological education, on-line learning, oral learning and the use of technology.

ICETE is a global community, sponsored by nine regional associations of theological schools, to enable international interaction and collaboration among all those concerned for the enhancement of evangelical theological education worldwide. The International Director is Rev Dr Riad Kassis. For more information, visit <http://www.icete-edu.org/>



Dr C Rosalee Velloso Ewell

WEA in Consultation on Discrimination and Persecution

The WEA and its Theological Commission were involved in a gathering in which for the first time in modern history, every stream of global Christianity was present. Held at Tirana, Albania from 1-5 November, it was a consultation sponsored by the Global Christian Forum (GCF), on the theme, 'Discrimination, Persecution, Martyrdom: Following Christ Together.' The focus was on listening to churches and people experiencing these challenges especially in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, and learning how to support them.

The GCF is global body which brings together Christian churches and organizations from all the major streams of world Christianity. It is an open space where all Christians can meet to nurture unity by fostering mutual respect and understanding as well as by addressing together common challenges. GCF was supported in organising the consultation by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), the World Council of Churches (WCC), Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Roman Catholic Church), the Pentecostal World Fellowship.

Bp Efraim Tendero, Secretary General of the WEA, said in his remarks to participants, 'As Christians, we follow a Lord who was crucified as a criminal. The good news that Jesus brought was a threat both to civil and religious powers of his day, so it should come as no surprise to us that persecution will likely follow for those who follow Jesus. And yet... we come together because the gospel also says NO to persecution. Despite the differences that separate some of our communities of faith, the current crises around the world demand that together we collaborate for those who suffer persecution and martyrdom.'

Discrimination, persecution, martyrdom (cont. on page 2)

Promoting Biblical Truth by Networking Theologians

New Set of Statements on Bioethics & Biotechnology

A new [online collection of church and ecumenical statements on bioethics and biotechnology](http://www.globethics.net) has been launched by the global ethics network Globethics.net (www.globethics.net), developed in collaboration with the World Council of Churches. The collection contains more than 250 documents from ecumenical organizations, and Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions, covering issues such as stem cell research, cloning and organ transplants, and are classified by theme and by organization or institution. The impetus for the collection came from a meeting of a WCC working group on genetic engineering, Dr Martin Robra, special advisor to the WCC general secretary. Research was undertaken by Dr Gary Vachicouras, a biologist and theologian, then a lecturer at the Orthodox Centre of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Switzerland, who now works for the Hardt Foundation, Geneva. The collection has been further developed and placed online by Globethics.net staff, including the development of a detailed classification tree by institution and theme.

The online collection can be accessed at: www.globethics.net/web/church-statements-on-bioethics It is part of the Globethics.net [Global Digital Library on Ethics](http://www.globethics.net/global-digital-library-on-ethics), and is also available to users of the [Global Digital Library on Theology and Ecumenism](http://www.globethics.net/global-digital-library-on-theology-and-ecumenism), a joint project of Globethics.net and the WCC with other organizations. Globethics.net is a global network promoting reflection and action on ethics, with a head office in Geneva, and which offers access to a large number of resources on ethics, especially through its online ethics library.

Discrimination, persecution, martyrdom (cont. From Page 1)



Dr Godfrey Yogarajah

WCC General Secretary, Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, said, 'An increasing number of churches and Christians go through different types of darkness at this moment of our history as one humanity. I have become deeply saddened by the harsh realities, the violence and the suffering of so many people because of tensions and conflicts in our time.'

Speaking from personal experience about the persecution of Christians and other religious communities in Asia, and particularly her home country Pakistan, Dr Farhana Anthony Nazir, an academic and theologian teaching at the Gujranwala Theological Seminary, said that 'Christians in Pakistan are not alone in their quest for justice, as there are other communities who share a sense of vulnerability.' She expressed her hope that by addressing these issues with support from the global churches it should be possible to ensure

equal rights for all.

The Executive Chair of the WEA Theological Commission, Dr Thomas Schirrmacher and the Dr Godfrey Yogarajah, Director of the WEA Religious Liberty Commission presented a detailed paper on 'The Biblical Basis for Human Rights and Religious Freedom.' Part of the 18 page statement says, 'The Bible thus measures the justice of a country by its protection of the weak. Not only the condition of the wealthy or the ruling class, but also the condition of the simple citizens is to be considered. Not only the condition of the State Church is significant, but also the condition of the smaller Christian groups. Not only the condition of the judges with money and power to defend their rights, is important, but also the condition of the poor, the widows and the orphans in court.' (For the full paper, visit the [WEA website](http://www.wea.org))

Bp Efraim Tenderso said that the WEA would 'do whatever possible to help and train our people to overcome prejudices against other Christian traditions and not to confuse things from the past with present realities. We want to state very clearly, that we want to continue the work that started with this consultation. The four bodies need to work together and all Christian churches worldwide have to work together ongoingly in matters of discrimination, persecution and martyrdom, which includes going beyond the surface to address some of the hard problems among us.' Bp Tenderso announced that the WEA would appoint evangelical ambassadors to other Christian communities with an emphasis on religious freedom, both to improve relations with them overcoming suspicion from history and to cooperate in reacting to discrimination and persecution together (eg in dealing with the governments). The WEA would ask its Religious Liberty Commission and especially the International Institute for Religious to cooperate even more with non-evangelical Christians and churches and their research and educational organizations and would be glad if the other bodies would reciprocate.

The final statement of the Consultation pointed out that the country where the event was held 'was declared by its constitution to be an atheist state in 1967, and now has flourishing churches in a framework of religious freedom even though some discrimination may remain.' It went on to say, 'As we follow Christ, Christians can be exposed to any form of persecution, suffering and martyrdom, because the sinful world is against the Gospel of salvation. But from earliest times Christians experienced the hope and reality of the Resurrection through walking the way of the Cross. Together we follow Christ as we "hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:6) for all.' It added, 'We acknowledge that solidarity among Christian churches is needed to strengthen Christian witness in the face of discrimination, persecution, and martyrdom. In the 21st century, we need to urgently strengthen the solidarity of all Christians, following up on what has been accomplished with insight and discernment from this Consultation. We repent of having at times persecuted each other and other religious communities in history, and ask forgiveness from each other and pray for new ways of following Christ together.'

See page 4 for some further extracts from the 10 point statement, and for the full document, visit the [WEA website](http://www.wea.org).

Lausanne Appoints New Theology Working Group Leader



The Lausanne Movement has appointed Dr. David Platt to serve as the new chair of the Lausanne Theology Working Group (LTWG). Executive Chair of the WEA Theological Commission, Dr Thomas Schirrmacher said, 'We congratulate Lausanne and Dr Platt, and we anticipate a fruitful relationship in the future!'

Dr. Platt is President of the International Mission Board (IMB), a US Baptist mission which supports 4,000 missionaries worldwide, many of whom he visited in recent years. He holds degrees in Journalism and Theology with a PhD from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where he also served as Dean of the Chapel and Assistant Professor of Expository Preaching and Apologetics. He has also served for eight years as the Senior Pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL, and founded the ministry, Radical, which supports churches in their mission and outreach.

Challenges of Fundamentalism in Theological Education Raised at Brazil consultation

For public theology, 'the essential and pressing task of the churches and theological education is to foster love, dialogue, forgiveness, reconciliation' says Prof. Dr Rudolf Von Sinner, moderator of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) commission on Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) and faculty member at Faculdades EST in São Leopoldo who delivered a keynote presentation at a consultation in São Leopoldo, Brazil, between 19 and 23 November. The presentation stressed the role of religion in the current global context. The event at Faculdades EST was the first part of a twin consultation and received contributions from international, intercultural and ecumenical perspectives on issues concerning 'Reformation and One World'. Partners will add insights from the consultation to the 500th anniversary celebrations of the Reformation in 2017.

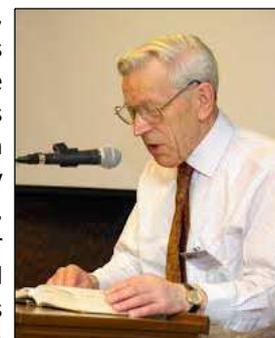
Prof. Dr Esther Mombo, from the St. Paul University, Kenya was another keynote speaker. She showed how the themes of Reformation, Education, and Transformation are 'an ongoing process not trapped in the historical milieu in which they happened.' Dr Ioan Sauca, associate general secretary of the WCC and director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland, noted the consultation is an important tool of the WCC's ETE programme. 'Theological education helps churches to prepare better community leaders, theologians and theological educators to become interpreters of the gospel in the world, and to build viable bridges of understanding between churches of different traditions and the fractured societies of contemporary times,' he said.

The second part of the twin consultation will take place in Halle, Germany, in May 2016. The initiative is promoted by Evangelisches Missionswerk (EMW), Brot für die Welt, Faculdades EST, Franckesche Stiftungen zu Halle and Martin Luther Universität Halle-Wittenberg, in cooperation with the WCC, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). Learn more about the twin consultation at www.r-e-t.net WCC's Ecumenical Theological Education programme.

Adapted from an article on the World Council of Churches [website](#).

Death of Prominent British NT Scholar

I. Howard Marshall, Professor Emeritus of New Testament Exegesis at the University of Aberdeen, died from cancer on 12 December, 2015 after a short illness. Professor Marshall, born 1934, was prominent in biblical and academic circles in Europe through his leadership of the Tyndale Fellowship, the British New Testament Society, the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians (FEET). He taught and supervised many generations of post-graduate students. His main research interests were Luke-Acts, the Pastoral and New Testament Theology. He authored many commentaries and such well known books as *Biblical Inspiration* (1982), *Beyond the Bible* (2004), *Aspects of the Atonement* (2007) and *A New Testament Theology* (2004); he was consulting editor for *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (1992). He held a PhD from the University of Aberdeen and a DD from Asbury. He will be remembered as much for his faith and personal qualities as for his scholarship. A former student, Dr Darrel Bock, said, 'If one writes about the life of a scholar, you can expect a list of his books and academic accomplishments. But what is that scholar like as a person? What mark did that leave? When I think of I. Howard Marshall, it is who he was that made him special, not just what he did.'



[\(Link\)](#)

DISCRIMINATION, PERSECUTION, MARTYRDOM: FOLLOWING CHRIST TOGETHER

Global Consultation 1 - 5 November 2015 Tirana, Albania

CONSULTATION MESSAGE (excerpts)

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

4. We have come together because discrimination, persecution and martyrdom among Christians and people of other faiths in the contemporary world are growing due to a complex variety of factors in different realities and contexts.

5. As we follow Christ, Christians can be exposed to any form of persecution, suffering and martyrdom, because the sinful world is against the Gospel of salvation. But from earliest times Christians experienced the hope and reality of the Resurrection through walking the way of the Cross. Together we follow Christ as we “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Matthew 5:6) for all.

6. The life of the Church for centuries has been a constant witness in two ways: the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, and the testimony through the shedding of the martyr’s blood. The 21st century is full of moving stories of faithful people who have paid for their dedication to Christ through suffering, torture and execution. Christian martyrs unite us in ways we can hardly imagine.

7. We acknowledge that solidarity among Christian churches is needed to strengthen Christian witness in the face of discrimination, persecution, and martyrdom. In the 21st century, we need to urgently strengthen the solidarity of all Christians, following up on what has been accomplished with insight and discernment from this Consultation.

8. We repent of having at times persecuted each other and other religious communities in history, and ask forgiveness from each other and pray for new ways of following Christ together. In communion with Christ we commit ourselves:

(a) To listen more to the experiences of Christians, Churches, and of all those who are discriminated against and persecuted, and deepen our engagement with suffering communities.

(b) To pray more for Churches, Christians, and for all those suffering discrimination and persecution, as well as for the transformation of those who discriminate and persecute.

(c) To speak up more with respect and dignity, with a clear and strong voice together, on behalf of those who are suffering.

(d) To do more in mutual understanding to find effective ways of solidarity and support for healing, reconciliation, and for the religious freedom of all oppressed and persecuted people.

9. Listening to the experience of those going through challenging times, praying and discerning together ways of following Christ in these harsh realities, the Consultation calls on:

(a) All Christians to include more prominently in their daily prayers those who are discriminated against, persecuted, and suffering for the fulfilment of God’s Kingdom.

(b) All Christian organisations on regional, national and local levels from various traditions to learn, pray and work together in their localities for the persecuted to ensure they are better supported.

(c) All Churches to engage more in dialogue and co-operation with other faith communities, and be “as wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16) by remaining vigilant, watchful and fearless in the face of discrimination and persecution.

(d) All persecutors who discriminate against and oppress Christians and violate human rights to cease their abuse, and to affirm the right of all human beings to life and dignity.

(e) All governments to respect and protect the freedom of religion and belief of all people as a fundamental human right. We also appeal to governments and international organisations to respect and protect Christians and all other people of goodwill from threats and violence committed in the name of religion. In addition, we ask them to work for peace and reconciliation, to seek the settlement of on-going conflicts, and to stop the flow of arms, especially to violators of human rights.

(f) All media to report in an appropriate and unbiased way on violations of religious freedom, including the discrimination and persecution of Christians as well as of other faith communities.

(g) All educational institutions to develop opportunities and tools to teach young people in particular about human rights, religious tolerance, healing of memories and hostilities of the past, and peaceful means of conflict resolution and reconciliation.

(h) All people of goodwill to work for justice, peace and development, knowing that poverty and disrespect of human dignity are major contributing factors to violence.

May God the Father who created us equal by His grace, strengthen our efforts to overcome all forms of discrimination and persecution. May His Holy Spirit guide us in solidarity with all those who seek peace and reconciliation. May He heal the wounds of the persecuted and grant us hope as we look forward to the glorious coming of our Lord Jesus Christ who will make all things new.

Full text: http://www.bucer.de/fileadmin/dateien/Dokumente/BQs/BQ300ff/BQ385/DPM_Message_English.pdf

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Executive Director: Dr Rosalee Velloso Ewell
Vice-Chair: Dr James Nkansah-Obrempong
Editor: Dr David Parker

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Address for News and Subscriptions: WEA Theological News, Friedrichstr. 38,
53111 Bonn, Germany

Email: chair_tc@worlddea.org