

## Increase Association, leader in church-based training, now linked to WEA Global Theology

The Increase Association, a key player in church-based theological training in much of the world, has become the newest member of the World Evangelical Alliance's Global Theology Department.

Increase exists to connect and strengthen church-based training movements across Asia and beyond. Its vision is 'to see churches equipping all their members so that many millions are discipled and empowered for mission, ministry and leadership in their context'.

Increase's 30 core participant organizations, stretching from the Arab world to East Asia, Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region and from Russia through Central Asia to India, serve around 50,000 learners. Most of them use a training methodology called TEE — which traditionally stands for Theological Education by Extension but is more dynamically explained as *Tools to Equip and Empower* local church members for mission and ministry.



A new TEE course, Ministry to Teens, at its virtual launch by Mongolia TEE, 23 June 2021

Increase participant organizations have seen God use TEE effectively to build his church in both rural and urban contexts, and despite situations of poverty, persecution and migration. You can find out how by reading the book *TEE in Asia: Empowering Churches, Equipping Disciples*, available at <https://langhamliterature.org/books/tee-in-asia>.

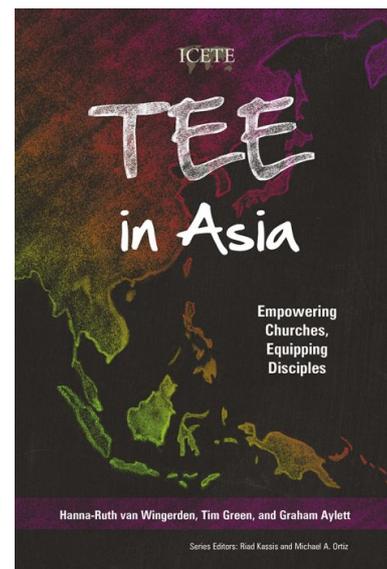
Church-based TEE is in-context, situated learning composed of three components: repeated cycles of *personal study*, *group meetings* led by a facilitator, and *practical application* for transformative learning. Increase helps to share good practices for church-based TEE. It has worked closely with the Asia Theological Association to develop TEE-friendly accreditation standards and is working on quality assurance frameworks for programmes that do not lead to academic qualifications.

In 2017, Increase began pioneering a programme to train a new generation of TEE course writers, emphasizing the need for learning objectives that relate to the whole person in community before God. A dozen new courses are being prepared by the first cohort of writing teams. A cohort of Russian writers is in training now, and the face-to-face workshops are being re-worked as online modules.

As a voice for TEE globally, Increase is in close contact with the All Africa TEE Association and with TEE colleagues in the Americas through TEE curriculum provider SEAN International.

Increase is planning a second book, *TEE for the Twenty-first Century: Tools to Equip and Empower God's People for His Mission*, which will also be part of the Langham Global Library. This new book will rigorously examine the theological, educational and missiological foundations of TEE and what church-based TEE can offer in today's world.

For more about Increase and the relevance of TEE in your context, visit [www.increaseassociation.org](http://www.increaseassociation.org) or email [increaseassociationoffice@gmail.com](mailto:increaseassociationoffice@gmail.com).



## ICETE sets dialogue between formal and non-formal theological education

The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) will hold a ‘hybrid consultation’ on 16–18 November 2021 on how formal and non-formal theological education might build trusted relationships and meaningful collaboration to prepare shepherds worldwide for the church’s mission.

This ‘HC-21’ will include a small group of regional representatives gathering in Rome, as well as hundreds of online participants around the world. The session formats will vary amongst panelist discussions, breakout room conversations, local watch parties, and TED-type talks.

HC-21 will focus on listening and identifying problems rather than finding solutions. Moving towards solutions will be the theme of a subsequent in-person consultation in November 2022.

Register to join us online at <https://worldea.org/yourls/tn503a>. The fee is \$30 for all 9 sessions and is per connection, not per person—we encourage you to participate with friends and colleagues! Registration also includes a one-year membership to the ICETE Academy, where all consultation materials (including links to join the sessions) will be available. This small fee will help offset the costs involved with the consultation and will also provide scholarship assistance for the 2022 consultation.

How important is it for formal and non-formal theological education to work together to serve the church? Is it even possible? Take this survey and let us know your thoughts: <https://worldea.org/yourls/tn503b>

## Schirmmacher addresses Catholic-Evangelical relations

On 15 May 2021, WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirmmacher addressed a global dialogue of Evangelical Charismatic and Catholic Charismatic Christians on the topic of ‘Catholics and Evangelicals and Their Future Relations’. Pope Francis addressed the virtual event shortly after Schirmmacher’s message.

Schirmmacher discussed seven possible ways in which the two streams of Christianity could relate to each other, from enemies to fellow believers. Without overlooking ongoing differences, he contended, ‘There cannot be any theological excuse for remaining in historic trench warfare.’ He instead described pathways to peaceful interaction, mutual understanding, and rewarding personal encounters.

‘There is no cheap way out here’, Schirmmacher stated. ‘Yes, the body of Christ cannot live without doctrine or without clear formulations of theological truth. But neither can we surrender our fundamental commitment to the goal of unity in faith. Our requirement to pursue Christian unity is itself a Christian doctrine.’

The full speech is available at <https://vkw.li/tn503ce>.

### JOURNALS AND NEWSLETTERS WITHIN THE GLOBAL THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Evangelical Review of Theology (quarterly)  
<https://theology.worldea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology/>

International Journal of Religious Freedom (semiannual)  
<https://iirf.eu/journal-books/ijrf/>

Islam and Christianity (English and German) (semiannual)  
<https://www.islaminstitut.de/en/category/publikationen/journal/>

Jahrbuch für Religionsfreiheit [Yearbook on Religious Freedom] (German) <https://www.iirf.eu/journal-books/german-yearbooks/>

Jahrbuch für Verfolgung und Diskriminierung von Christen [Yearbook on Persecution and Discrimination of Christians] (German) <https://www.iirf.eu/journal-books/german-yearbooks/>

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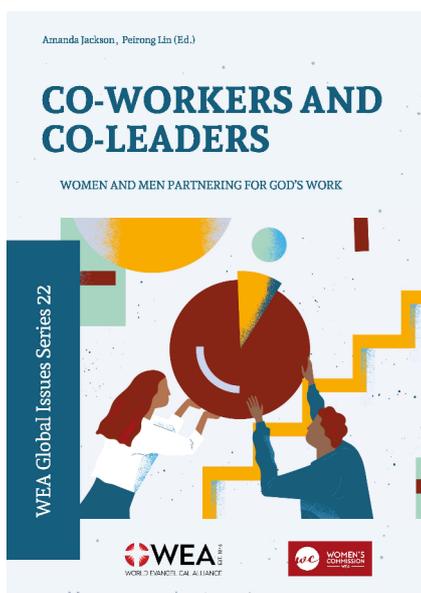
Theological News (quarterly)  
<https://theology.worldea.org/theological-news/>

Business & Ministry News (Business Coalition) (monthly)  
order from [business@worldea.org](mailto:business@worldea.org)

Bonn Profiles (twice a week)  
<https://www.bucer.org/resources/bonner-querschnitte.html>

Bonner Querschnitte (twice a week) (German)  
<https://www.bucer.de/ressourcen/bonner-querschnitte.html>

## New WEA book probes how to use both women's and men's gifts in mission



The WEA Global Issues Series has released *Co-Workers and Co-Leaders: Women and Men Partnering for God's Work*, edited by Amanda Jackson and Peirong Lin. The book explores God's strategy to use the gifting of men and women for more creative and effective mission. It contains contributions from evangelical Bible teachers and mission thinkers in 13 different nations and cultures.

Co-editor Jackson, who leads the WEA Women's Commission, explained, 'We wanted to explore how women and men can serve and lead together in healthy ways which are biblical and avoid the acrimony over women preaching and leading that we all know about, and which seems to have increased in recent years rather than subsiding.'

*Co-Workers and Co-Leaders* recommends various actions individuals and churches can take, at a pace that suits their context. It builds on the 'Call to All Christians', written by 60 women leaders in 2019 and endorsed by the WEA and the Lausanne Movement. Find the book at <https://vkw.li/coworkers>.

## Preventing religious abuse of power

Those who have power have the opportunity to shape and change others for the better. However, power always carries the danger of abusing and oppressing others. It becomes particularly harmful when this abuse is done in the name of God, is religiously justified and becomes embedded in the structure of groups, communities or organizations.

How to counter such abuse of power is the subject of a new book edited by Martina Kessler, part of a mediation centre established by the Evangelical Alliance in Germany.

Kessler's book collects essays by various authors with leadership responsibility in evangelical churches and ministries. It deals with such issues as the limits and grey areas of exercised power, as well as which personality traits and life experiences favour the abuse of power and how Christian leaders can protect themselves from abusing the power they have been given.

The chairman of the Evangelical Alliance in Germany, Pastor Ekkehard Vetter, stated, 'The strength of the essays compiled in this book lies precisely in the fact that they also investigate the grey areas. What darkest recesses of personality and unresolved episodes in the lives of leaders are favourable to the encroaching use of power? Am I willing to learn as a leader? Do I seek constructive critical feedback? Am I part of a team that treats each other as equals?'

The book is currently available only in German. However, an article describing the mediation centre's work by Kessler and her husband Volker will appear in the August issue of the WEA's *Evangelical Review of Theology*.



## Spanish version of *Evangelical Review of Theology* launched

Beginning in spring 2022, the WEA intends to publish its theological journal in Spanish (as *Revista Evangélica de Teología*) as well as in English. Andrew Messmer will serve as editor. He is the academic dean of Seville Theological Seminary (Spain), associate professor at International Theological Faculty IBSTE (Spain), and affiliated researcher at Evangelical Theological Faculty (Belgium). Andrew has published on multiple topics including Old Testament, New Testament and historical theology. He has also written for and reviewed submissions to the *Evangelical Review of Theology*.

Spanish-language submissions or inquiries may be sent to Andrew at [amessmer@worlddea.org](mailto:amessmer@worlddea.org). RET may also publish some translations from the English-language version.

## Joel Edwards, influential UK leader, dies

The WEA mourns the loss of Joel Edwards, who was general director of the Evangelical Alliance in the United Kingdom for 11 years (1997–2008) as well as general secretary of the African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance. Edwards died of cancer on 30 June at age 70.

WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirmmacher commented, 'For decades, Joel was the conscience for WEA, ensuring that we would not forget the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the persecuted. His advice was sought after by many ministries within the WEA, many times unofficially just because of the breadth of his network, his networking abilities and his global knowledge, but often also in official senior advisor roles to our entities, such as the International Institute for Religious Freedom. More than that, I have lost a personal friend who often inspired me to think bigger.'

As the first black Pentecostal general director of the EA in the UK, Edwards not only deepened that organization's diversity but brought credibility and attention to evangelicals' role in the ecumenical and secular spheres. Through his desire for unity in Christ, he sought to close the gap between the right- and left-leaning constituencies of evangelicalism.



During his 11 years of service in this role, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from St Andrews University in 2007, received the title of honorary canon at St Paul's Cathedral and was appointed a commissioner for the UK Equalities and Human Rights Commission. The *Church Times* once called Edwards 'probably the most influential black Christian in the country'. He received the Langton Award for Community Service from the Archbishop of Canterbury 'for his unique contribution in uniting evangelical Christians across the UK in challenging global injustice'.

Edwards also served as international director of Micah Challenge, tackling issues of global poverty, and as a strategic adviser to Christian Solidarity Worldwide.

### THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO SUPPORT THE WEA GLOBAL THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT FINANCIALLY

- (1) Do a **bank transfer** to: World Evangelical Alliance • 181 Hutchinson Ave • Wingdale NY 12594 USA • Account#: 430 148 2727  
Routing: 026 013 673 • SWIFT: NRTHUS33XXX **OR:** WEA Business Coalition • IBAN: DE65 2005 0550 1363 1437 42  
BIC: HASPDEHHXXX • Hamburger Sparkasse, Ecke Adolphsplatz/Großer Burstah, 20457 Hamburg, Germany (*Include note of designation to Global Theology*)
- (2) Donate **online** or per **credit card** via <http://business.worlddea.org/contact>
- (3) Mail a **cheque** to World Evangelical Alliance • P.O. Box 7099 • Deerfield, IL 60015 USA (*Note designation to Global Theology*)

## WEA remembers Ken Gnanakan, global Christian education and environmental leader

A memorial service was held on June 19 for Dr. Ken Gnanakan, former General Secretary of the Asia Theological Association (1991–2001) and longtime contributor to the World Evangelical Alliance's work, who died suddenly on 9 May after preaching at an online service.

During his contribution to the memorial service, WEA Secretary General Bishop Dr. Thomas Schirmacher thanked the Christians in India for their valuable contribution to the global Church. He shared that he got to know Ken as a young scholar in 1986 and had worked together with him closely ever since, even until this year. 'He leaves a legacy within the WEA through several of our ministries, which were inspired by him decades ago', Schirmacher said. Watch the tribute video at <https://worlddea.org/yourls/tn503c>. The recording of the service 'Remembering Ken Gnanakan: A Thanksgiving and Celebration' is available at <https://worlddea.org/yourls/tn503d>.

A native of India, Gnanakan had a wide-ranging impact on theological education, environmental concern, and Christian thinking across Asia. He was a member of the WEA Theological Commission for 26 years (1983–2009), serving as vice chair for most of those years.

Gnanakan's role in the environmental sector was particularly innovative. He pioneered the use of waste plastics to surface roads in India and collaborated with European ecologists to develop a model eco-toilet for slums. He also initiated the Programme for Environmental Awareness in Schools, which networked hundreds of Indian schools for environmental action. The WEA published his book *Responsible Stewardship of God's Creation* in 2004.

Gnanakan was also an accomplished pop musician. In the 1960s, he was part of a prominent band referred to as 'the Indian Beatles'.

In 1979, Gnanakan and his wife Prema founded the ACTS Institute, a vocational training school designed to impart both practical skills and spiritual values to young people in Bangalore, India. This undertaking grew into a group of over a dozen entities, known as the ACTS Group of Institutions, that engage in educational, environmental, and social entrepreneurship activities.

Gnanakan also founded and chaired the International Council of Higher Education (ICHE), formed in 1997 to address issues facing Christian higher education globally. 'He was a culture-influencer, pouring his life into celebrating the creation of God and the life we share through his creativity, music, philosophy, and educational leadership', said Kevin Mannoia, the ICHE's current president. 'His commitment to family and His Lord were evident in the tireless work of strengthening higher education with Christian principles through the schools he started in India, the accreditation efforts he led in Asia, and the global network we share together in the ICHE.'

Kuki Rokhum, director of training and mobilization for the Evangelical Fellowship of India Commission on Relief (EFICOR), recalled the unique power of Gnanakan's unassuming speaking style. At a conference on stewardship of creation, she recalled, 'While other speakers eloquently spoke about climate change and the science, he just stood there and chatted with us from the lectern. This is who he was—a simple humble man for whom stewardship of God's world was a part of his being.'



Ken Gnanakan (middle) and his wife Prema together with WEA Secretary General Bp. Dr. Thomas Schirmacher

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‘He would often tell me that he would listen to what the others were saying and then would speak. He spoke so deeply from his experience and passion that it often did not require endless hours preparing. He spoke with his very life through who he was, how he lived, how he related to others and the world around him. My impression of him is that caring for the world was not a reaction to the things happening around the world, the climate crises or any other crises but a response of love and a daily act of worship to God who created everything.’

Dave Bookless of A Rocha (the Lausanne Movement’s creation care arm), who knew Gnanakan for nearly 40 years, described him as a ‘global pioneer of creation care’, adding, ‘Ken was truly a giant in terms of Christian leadership and in letting the Lordship of Jesus Christ influence every area of his life. History will show his influence, particularly in helping evangelicals recover creation care to its rightful place in the mission of God’s people.’

Ken Gnanakan is survived by his wife and two children, both of whom are continuing his legacy at ACTS Group: Santosh (CEO) and Anupa (director of education).

## A tribute to C. René Padilla (1932–2021)

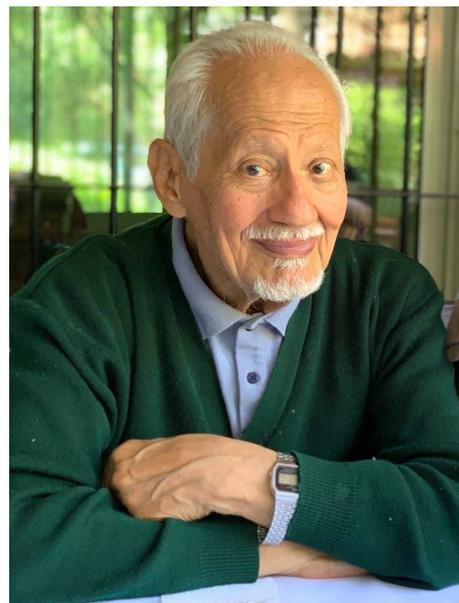
The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) mourns the passing of Ecuadorian pastor, teacher, theologian and missiologist C. René Padilla, who died on 27 April. Padilla is widely recognized as one of the most influential voices in global evangelicalism over the last 50 years.

Functioning in a Latin American context marked by the emergence of revolutionary strains of liberation theology, Padilla developed beginning in the 1950s the paradigm known as integral or holistic mission, which asserted the centrality of pursuing social justice within evangelical theology.

Padilla’s daughter, Ruth Padilla DeBorst, noted that ‘the answers articulated by people in other latitudes did not satisfy’ her father’s vision for a Christian faith relevant to the most urgent issues on his continent. Instead, working with colleagues Samuel Escobar and Pedro Arana, he worked ‘to generate a theology from and for the Latin American context, a theology that would respond holistically from the Gospel to the pressing realities around them’.

Padilla founded or influenced the social-justice engagement of numerous prominent evangelical organizations, including the International Fellowship for Mission as Transformation (INFEMIT), the Lausanne Movement, Micah Global, and Tearfund.

Former Director of Micah Global Sheryl Haw described Padilla as ‘a visionary leader who shared that if the local church believed that Jesus Christ is the Lord of everyone and everything, and then lived out that truth in their daily lives, transformation would be evident in all aspects of life. René’s teaching, life example and friendship has been catalyst for Micah Global’s ministry and service. He has impacted my life and I am deeply honored to have known him.’



WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirrmacher recalled his interaction with Padilla at the Lausanne Movement’s Cape Town conference in 2010: ‘For me, it felt as if I was talking to the church fathers! René shaped the thinking of many in my generation. At a time when evangelicalism was still dominated by rich Western countries, he paved the way for the church in poorer countries—a church often discriminated against and suppressed yet not falling into a victim mindset, but rather wanting to transform the world for Jesus. René taught us that the church does not exist to fit nicely into a rich world, but always keeps an element of a counterculture. He helped us to understand that the evil patterns present in this world are not just individual, private sins and shortcomings but include structural injustices as well. And most importantly, he not only formulated an ambitious agenda regarding whether we are really living up to God’s will as described in Scripture, but he lived it out

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himself. We thank René for willingly taking the heat over decades of discussions, and we thank the Holy Spirit for planting René's vision into the heart of many.'

Escobar, probably Padilla's closest colleague, described him as 'a theologian who responded to his time', noting that they were confronting a Latin America torn by revolutions and guerrilla warfare and then, as their influence expanded globally, coming alongside Asian and African churches still emerging from the colonial period. 'Only by understanding the historical moment and the decision to face it creatively can we understand the Lausanne Covenant and the response to it', Escobar stated.

'René Padilla courageously challenged core assumptions of a global evangelical church disproportionately influenced by industrial Western values and a fragmented and polarized missions enterprise', said Jay Matenga, executive director of the WEA's Mission Commission. 'His prophetic challenges will awaken visions for a better world for generations to come. There is no turning back on integral mission now—our awareness has been awakened.'

Added former Mission Commission executive director David Ruiz, 'René Padilla went beyond our boundaries when he spoke about this new, emerging paradigm from Latin America at the Lausanne Congress in 1974 and provoked, along with his friend Samuel Escobar, a change of direction of the global church and global mission from there. But beyond the theologian and thinker, he was a humble man, a good friend who inspired me in my journey with his personal remarks, challenges and friendship.'

Toward the end of his life, Padilla served for over a decade as managing editor of his masterpiece, the *Comentario Bíblico Contemporáneo* (Contemporary Bible Commentary), published in 2019 with contributions from more than 100 authors. 'It was a huge undertaking and we faced many obstacles and challenges, but through it all, René's grace and humble nature were guides for all of us', said Rosalee Velloso Ewell, executive director of the WEA Theological Commission, who was New Testament editor for the project. 'This unique volume was the product of René's dream and prayers. May we all learn to dream big and to trust in God for such dreams as René did.'

Padilla was active within the WEA for over 40 years. His daughter, DeBorst, continues his legacy as a frequent WEA representative in global engagements.

## WEA THEOLOGICAL NEWS

WEA Theological News is published quarterly by the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Global Theology Department led by Theresa Lua, located in Manila.

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## WEA GLOBAL THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

### Global Theology Entities:

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- International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE)
- Re-forma (Untrained Pastors Training)
- Increase (Church-Based Training)
- Society of Christian Scholars
- International Institute for Islamic Studies (IIIS)
- Evangelical Training Directory