

WEA Theological News



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<http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/>



TC Chairman Reflects on the Public Impact of Faith

Looking back on the last three months, I am amazed how evangelical theology more and more becomes part of public life. Three of us visited the Vatican for two days (and nights) discussing the code of ethics for mission. The theologians we met ranged from very conservative to very liberal, a much broader spectrum than WEA (or even WCC!).

In New York and Vienna, I fought the proposition against 'Defamation of religion' proposed by the Muslim states in the UN and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) together with the official representatives of the Vatican to UN and OSCE. A lot of theology is involved here!

In Nepal I had the chance to hear reports from evangelical leaders as well as the Catholic archbishop about two years of religious freedom in the country. The first Asian TEE conference in 25 years was a remarkable experience. I also lectured at the State University in Kathmandu on 'fundamentalism' with hundreds of Hindu students listening. At the same time studying and seeing a temple with a 'living goddess' of seven years of age was a shocking experience, reminding me of Acts 17 and the need to preach the one and only living God and Creator!

In Bern, the capital of Switzerland, I spoke at the jubilee conference of Micah Challenge. My task was to present the theological foundations of the Micah Challenge, with high representatives of the government in the audience. In Austria I spoke over three days to 200 pastors on Islam and Christianity. The discussions really led into the heart of our theology! On the International Day for the Persecuted Church (IDOP) I preached in a church and afterwards spoke on the topic together with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief. This is the first time ever someone holding this position spoke in an evangelical church or honoured IDOP with his presence.

All this shows that theology starts in private in reading Scripture and in prayer, yet it lives in the local church and by one person witnessing to another. However it ranges beyond this up into the international fellowship between all of us and has ever new ways of being presented in public affairs. Even if we wanted to stay in our warm ivory tower, the world more and more is calling for us theologians to present our views in public and to be in the middle of the market place! This means that there is a great need for seminaries, churches, and missions in the WEA family to take seriously the development of individual faith, study and learning and the application of our convictions in the broadest possible arenas of the world.

Developments in Inter-Church Fellowship Involving Evangelicals

The Global Christian Forum (GCF) reports that in November 2010, seventy participants from mainline, evangelical and Pentecostal churches met at the Yoido Full Gospel Church, Seoul, Korea for a regional Global Christian Forum. Sharing their faith stories and reflecting on Christian unity, they agreed on the need to clarify the meaning of ecumenism, discussed interreligious dialogue and cooperation and looked at the possibilities for the GCF movement in Asia. The full text of the document issued by the meeting is available on request from gcforum@sunrise.ch

In other recent developments, GCF also reported that forty Latin American and Caribbean representatives from all branches of the church met in Costa Rica in the same month, with the theme, 'United in Jesus Christ so that Latin America may believe.' Following up on an earlier meeting in Chile in 2007, this session shared community journeys in the face of social problems and justice issues. Several papers discussed important aspects of the religious and social context. There have also been significant advances in Europe with a Nordic and Baltic area gathering taking place in September 2010. For more information, www.globalchristianforum.org

(Source: GCF newsletter December 2010)

Promoting Biblical Truth by Networking Theologians

Evangelical Training Database Continues to Expand

The Evangelical Training Database is a free searchable online database at www.trainforChrist.org with information on evangelical pastoral, theological and missionary training courses world-wide. The goal is that people everywhere can more easily find the training they need to serve the Lord. It is available in English, Spanish and Portuguese. Any evangelical association can have its own free search-page in which members of that association are pre-selected in the search criteria.

The aim is that there be one database with information on all evangelical courses world-wide which can be accessed through many interfaces in different languages. Searches can be carried out by subject category, keyword, academic level, country and region, and evangelical association.

The database is now open for all evangelical institutions to register as Training Providers, without charge on the website at www.trainforChrist.org.

The organisers explain, 'After choosing one's language, please click on 'Training Provider Registration'. During the process of registration please note the evangelical associations to which your institution belongs so that searches specifying these will identify your courses. You will receive a password by e-mail through which you will be able to post details of your courses, which you will be able to modify at any time.'

'It is important to register the courses as without this your institution will not be found in the searches. There is no charge or advertising. We hope that you will take advantage of this service which is offered as a sacrifice to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The database is led by Ian Benson, who has extensive missionary experience in Latin America. He is associated with the International Missionary Training Network and the World Evangelical Alliance Missions Commission.

The database is one of the operations of the Missionary Training Service (www.missionarytraining.org) which also conducts training courses, and produced printed and other materials.

Peace Studies offered in Asia

The Asia Graduate School of Theology which is part of the Asia Theological Association has announced the availability of a new program in Peace Studies.

In a recent statement, the sponsors explain, 'To work through the emotions and issues of conflict, ministry leaders need deep biblical insight, strong Spirit-led hearts, effective practical tools, and culturally sensitive wisdom. This kind of training is available in the newly expanded Peace Studies program of AGST-Philippines. Forged in partnership with Peacemaker Ministries (www.peacemaker.net) and hosted by the International Graduate School of Leadership (Manila), the innovative joint degree format offers three exit points: the Th.M., the D.Min., or the Ph.D. in Peace Studies.'

One pastor commented about the program, 'Our goal isn't to simply understand conflict, but to resolve it. I believe that's what differentiates this program from other peace study programs—you don't only study peace, you are equipped to be a peacemaker.'

An Academic Dean involved in the program said, 'The program becomes a life-formation process, not just classroom education! The mentoring aspect of the program is excellent.'

The Th.M. (33 sem. credits) is for trainers and teachers at the undergraduate or masters level. Applicants need at least an M.A. or equivalent with graduate level Bible/theology (12 sem. credits), practical ministry (12 sem. credits), and research courses (6 sem. credits).

The D.Min. (39 sem. credits) is for high level ministry leaders of the church, parachurch or NGO; and for trainer/educators who have an M.Div. degree or equivalent.

The Ph.D. (60 sem. credits) is for graduate level educators and high level practitioners who are thought leaders. Applicants need at least an M.A. (see details for Th.M.).

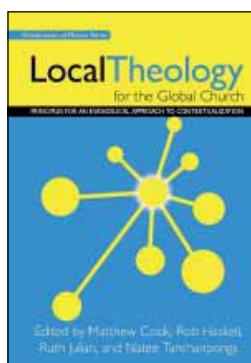
This is a non-residential modular program which offers three, week-long intensive courses a year. The first course is offered in May, repeated at locations in Asia and Africa. The second two courses are offered at IGSL in Manila, Philippines in late October.

More information and application forms are available from the IGSL website: www.glg-igsl.org Look for the DMin/ThM-PhD Peace Studies program. Also feel free to contact the joint program committee coordinator, Dr. Steve Hobson, Steve.Hobson.IGSL@gmail.com; or the AGST-Philippines Dean, Dr. Theresa Lua, agstphil@gmail.com.

Local Theology Text Book

Order now from William Carey Library

<http://missionbooks.org/williamcareylibrary>



Local Theology for the Global Church \$17.99 ISBN 9780878081110

Principles for an Evangelical Approach to Contextualization

Editors: Matthew Cook, Rob Haskell, Ruth Julian, and Natee Tanchanpongs

As the church in the global south continues to grow at a rapid pace, the question of how to develop local theologies becomes more and more urgent. This book charts a path forward through exegetical, theological and cultural analysis by scholars who are wrestling with the issues in their own situations around the globe. The contents were developed under the auspices of the World Evangelical Alliance Theological Commission at the Oxford contextualization.

Evangelical World Mourns Loss of Three Influential Theologians

Three theologians who have influenced generations of students have died recently in North America. They are Dr Donald G Bloesch, Emeritus Professor of Theology at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dr Vernon Grounds, Chancellor of Denver Seminary and Dr Clark Pinnock, formerly Professor of Systematic Theology at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Dr Donald G Bloesch, who was born in 1928 and died 24 August 2010, was not only the author of many insightful works, but was known as a voice of renewal in the United Church of Christ. The University tribute described him as 'revered' and the President, Jeffrey F. Bullock, said, 'Without question, Donald Bloesch was one of the most highly respected systematic theologians of the 20th century whose writing, lecturing, and mentorship strengthened the voice and thought of evangelical Christians around the world.'

Bloesch, who studied at Chicago Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago, served the seminary from 1957 to his retirement in 1992. He undertook further study at several European and British universities, including a time with Karl Barth.

Dr Bloesch was assisted in his research and editorial work by his wife, Dr Brenda Bloesch. His most recent seven volume series, 'Christian Foundations' completed in his retirement, was introduced by the title which typified his unique message, 'A Theology of Word and Spirit.' His list of works extends to more than fifty, including the well known two volume study, 'Essentials of Evangelical Theology' and his ethical study, 'Freedom for Obedience.'

Bloesch was not only an accomplished author but an effective teacher with a pastoral concern for his students. He was also a devout and humble believer with a generous and gracious spirit.

Dr Vernon Grounds, who died on Sept 12 at the age of 96, also lived throughout the period of contemporary evangelicalism and was one of its key influential personalities. He was known for his leadership of Denver Seminary, Colorado (formerly **Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary**) where he served as the first Dean 1951-55, and then as the second President until 1979. Upon his retirement he was honoured with the position of Chancellor which he treated as an active role.

However, his influence extended far beyond the seminary and through his writings and travelling, reached around the world. He studied at Rutgers and Drew and his academic interests included psychology (the topic of his doctoral dissertation), counselling, apologetics, social ethics. His most influential book was probably *Evangelicalism and Social Responsibility* (1969), a small volume which typified his understanding of the role of evangelicalism in the

world. He was a leading figure in an important band of people who contributed to the significant evangelical renaissance during that period.

When a bronze bust of Dr Grounds was unveiled at the Seminary in March 2009, interim President, Gordon MacDonald said that Dr Grounds had 'been a scholar unafraid to engage with thinking far beyond the pale of traditional Christian theology. He has been an inspirational leader, trusted by students, faculty and Seminary supporters because of his integrity and Christian character. He has been a pastor, a counsellor, a mentor and a professor. ... He has been a father to us all, for we have found in him all that one seeks in a father: encouragement, wisdom and guidance, grace, affection, thoughtfulness, and Godliness.'

Dr Clark **Pinnock** died on Aug 15 at the age of 73. Having studied under Dr F. F. Bruce at Manchester University, and after spending time in Europe with Frances Schaeffer, his initial prominence came when he taught at New Orleans Baptist Seminary and later at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He was well known for his spirited defence of conservative theology and biblical infallibility (especially through a widely used book on the subject published in 1967). However his views began to change and after a period at Regent College, Vancouver and finally at McMaster, he moved from his earlier rationalist and Reformed theology to an Arminian position and began to explore inclusivist eschatology and 'open theism'. It was the latter which brought him into controversy with the Evangelical Theological Society which moved (unsuccessfully) to oust him. He also published works which were positive towards the charismatic and Pentecostal movements. Although many of earlier followers and students did not support his later theological pilgrimage, he was widely recognised for his theological ability and spiritual intensity and for his willingness to follow his convictions even they led him into new and often controversial positions.

All three of these theologians have made immense contributions to contemporary evangelicalism and their works will continued to be studied by new generations.

(Sources: http://blog.christianitytoday.com/ctliveblog/archives/2010/08/dr_donald_bloesch.html; <http://www.dbq.edu/news/news1.cfm?ID=469>; www.denverseminary.edu; nae.net/news-and-events; <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/november/24.50.html>; <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/augustweb-only/43-22.o.html?start=3>; <http://pilgrimpathways.wordpress.com/2010/08/16/r-i-p-clark-h-pinnock-03-feb-1937-to-15-aug-2010/>)

Lausanne Leader Reflects on Cape Town 2010

In a statement circulated to supporters, Doug Birdsall, Executive Chairman of the Lausanne Movement, said that ‘perhaps the most exciting meeting’ of the recent Congress on World Evangelization for him was the Younger Leaders group. Attendance far exceeded the 250 originally anticipated, reaching around 900. Mr Birdsall said ‘The vibrancy and enthusiasm in the room was electrifying’ and the participants continued in a lengthy session ‘keen to learn how they could be involved in the future of Lausanne.’ However, he said the ‘most surprising meeting’ was with official guests from other groups such as the Vatican, the Orthodox Churches and the World Council of Churches. He found that the official representatives were impressed with the ‘intellectual vigour of the discussions’, the personal stories of some of the speakers and the worship and fellowship which they said was ‘a source of personal and spiritual renewal.’



Douglas Birdsall

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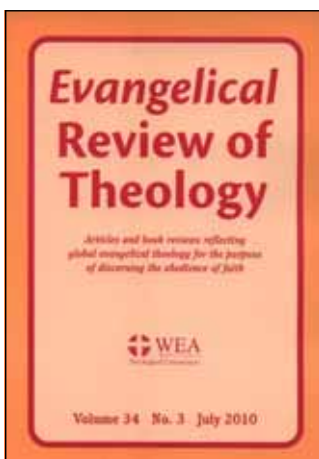
Other highlights of the week long congress held in South Africa 16-25 October 2010 noted by Birdsall included:

- A sense of wonder at God’s people coming together from nearly every country and corner of the earth
- Joy that the Majority World Church was the actual majority at CT2010!
- Global community of men and women who worked tirelessly to plan and serve CT2010.
- Powerful testimony by an 18-year-old North Korean girl which was unforgettable.
- The glory of the gospel expounded daily from the book of Ephesians.
- Miraculous provision of two friends from India who took just two hours to solve sophisticated cyber attacks on the congress websites.
- The unity of speakers whose presentations provided a ‘ringing endorsement for truth.’
- Significant impact of the Table Groups.
- Stories and images of ‘God on the Move’ in every region of the world.

Mr Birdsall also noted the ‘Beauty and vibrancy of worship as a global community, the pageantry of the Opening Celebration and the foretaste of heaven experienced in the holy and majestic celebration of the Lord’s Supper during the closing.’ He added, ‘Personally, the closing ceremonies were the most glorious experience of worship I have had anywhere and at any time.’

Amongst the key issues discussed at the conference, he observed ‘Creativity and growing energy’ on diaspora people, mega-cities, children and orality. There was also evident ‘an eagerness for a global Kingdom equilibrium.’ He noted that in the Global Executive Leadership Forum and the Government, Business and Academia Think Tank, there was ‘excitement as these leaders were finding one another and finding their voice in the work of world evangelization.’ At the Women’s Global Café, hundreds of women and men who share passion for the gospel and bearing witness to Christ were able to connect effectively with each other.

Mr Birdsall summed up his overall impressions: ‘The memories of Cape Town and the friendships started or renewed there will be with us for the rest of our lives. Treasuring those memories, we also nurture the dreams that God is birthing in our hearts and minds of moving from an “event experience” to the dynamism and unfolding impact of an ongoing Movement. And, that is already happening.’



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We invite articles, reviews and books for review for our quarterly TC journal.

Initial contact with ideas and proposals to

tc@worldevangelicals.org

This journal reflects global evangelical theology for the purpose of discerning the obedience of faith.

Detailed style guide available.

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