

Freedom, Justice & Urban Mission TC Executive Secretary Reports

At the end of 2012 Dr Rosalee Velloso Ewell travelled to Nigeria for a collaborative week of work with the Freedom and Justice Commission of the Baptist World Alliance, the Nigerian Baptist Convention, and the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution of Nigeria. Her work included lectures and workshops on mission and inter-faith dialogue, conflict-resolution, and an exposition of the document "Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct". She also visited sites of church bombings in the north and participated in meetings with government officials in Kaduna State, Jos and Abuja. The WEA-TC hopes to continue its work in Nigeria to include Christians of various traditions and to work for peace and stability amidst the violence.

In January the TC co-sponsored the first Summit of the International Society for Urban Mission, in Bangkok, Thailand. Dr. Velloso Ewell gave one of the keynote addresses and helped facilitate the working group "Witness in Multi-Faith Cities" along with TC colleague, John Baxter-Brown. The findings and papers of the Summit will be published in the next ISUM Journal and some might also be available in future editions of ERT. John Baxter-Brown also served as moderator for the working group and led a session on "Evangelism through the eyes of Jesus".

Dr Velloso Ewell comments, 'The ISUM Summit was unique in two respects: first, there was a splendid mix of "seasoned" theologians and mission leaders alongside younger scholars and activists, all willing to learn together and from one another; second, there was a clear sense that serious biblical engagement and Christian witness cannot be separated - theology and missiology go hand-in-hand. If one is weakened then so is the other.'

She added, 'The gathering also recognized the complexity and diversity of urban mission and the need for the church to be incarnate in such varying contexts. The city is not neutral - it changes people, it affects the way we relate to one another, it affects our understanding of church, it affects our notions of security and dependence on God. Whether through Christian hospitality in the form of a cafe on the edge of a slum or through children's programmes at a community centre, urban missions has to be focused on Jesus and on the ways in which following him changes the dynamics of where we live and how we live as Christian neighbors and witnesses to those who do not share the same faith.'

Further information about the Summit can be found at: <http://newurbanworld.org/summit/>.



Rosalee with members of the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution of Nigeria and the Nigerian Baptist Convention, Abuja, Nigeria, December 2012

TC Chair comments on the Papal Election

See page 4

Also inside:

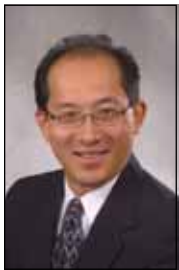
- * New role for theologian
- * Book on suffering
- * Leadership
- * Early African Christianity

WEA Commissions Publish Book on Persecution

The three core commissions of World Evangelical Alliance, the Mission Commission, the Theological Commission and the Religious Liberty Commission, have jointly published another a major book project. Under the leadership of the Mission Commission they gathered world class essays from all continents around the topic of discrimination and persecution of Christians, of suffering and martyrdom for the faith. The book *Sorrow & Blood: Christian Mission in Contexts of Suffering, Persecution, and Martyrdom* is written by 62 authors from 23 countries. Paul Marshall, one of the world's leading experts on the violation of religious freedom says:

Sorrow and Blood shows that we cannot properly conceive of mission apart from suffering and persecution, and its sixty authors consider every dimension of their relation. In no other book can we find such careful biblical and theological discussion combined with history, a range of case studies, and nuanced discussions of countries and trends in the modern world. To this it adds information and advice on training and preparation, and guides to a range of resources. Anyone involved in mission, or studying mission, will profit immensely from this excellent book.

WEA put up its own website for the book (<http://www.sorrowandblood.com/>). The Secretary General of WEA, Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe, launched the book at the Religious Freedom Roundtable in Washington D.C. and gave the first copy to Scott Felipe, Deputy Director for Policy and Research at the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). Dr Tunnicliffe says, 'Sorrow and Blood is a powerful and comprehensive global study of persecution and suffering. Every follower of Christ who wants to be informed and inspired should read this book. It should be required reading for pastors, missionaries, activists, or any other Christian who wants to engage biblically in a complex world where millions of fellow believers are under great pressure or persecution for their faith.'



New Role for Prominent Theologian

Dr Amos Yong, regarded as one of the most prolific and creative Pentecostal theologians, has been promoted to Dean of the School of Divinity at Regent University, Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA. Yong holds a PhD from Boston University and has published numerous books including *Spirit of Love: a Trinitarian Theology of Grace* (Baylor 2012); *Pneumatology and the Christian-Buddhist Dialogue* (Brill, 2012), and *The Bible, Disability and the Church* (Eerdmans, 2011). He has also published a large number of articles, some of which have appeared in our journal, *Evangelical Review of Theology* (see April 2011, April 2009, Jan 2008). His interests include global Pentecostalism, political theology, and theology of religions.

Dr Yong said, 'I am following in the footsteps and attempting to build on the achievements of two remarkable deans – Vinson Synan and Michael Palmer – and pray that I will be able to continue and advance the initiatives and causes that they have begun. Michael Palmer will remain with the School of Divinity and I am privileged to be working with him and the incredible team of faculty and staff already assembled, toward the future that God has for us. Part of this future will involve, among many other things, envisioning the wider impact that the School of Divinity can have in the church, the academy, society, and the world.'

He will retain his position as J. Rodman Williams Professor of Systematic Theology at the University which was founded in 1977. Young was born in Malaysia and moved to USA a child when his parents took up a pastoral appointment in California. He studied later at a Western Evangelical Seminary. He was formerly Associate Professor of Theology at Bethel College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

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; 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.

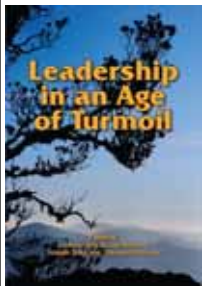
Early African Christianity Seminar in Nigeria

The Baptist Seminary of Nigeria in Ogbomosho, Oyo State, Nigeria hosted a visit by Dr. Michael Glerup and Rev. Dr. Joel Elowsky to conduct a seminar on early African Christianity for M.Div. and Graduate level students in January 2013. Drs. Glerup and Elowsky represent the Center for Early African Christianity (CEAC), which aims to encourage efforts to study, reassess and disseminate information about the establishment and growth of Christianity in Africa in the early centuries.

There were plans to conduct a seminar the previous year at the seminary which had scheduled lectures during their Winterim term. The geo-political scene however intruded on the seminar as the President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan, chose to end the government subsidy for petrol in the country, doubling the price of petrol overnight, so the seminar had to be cancelled. An invitation was extended for the CEAC team to make this visit in January. Dr Elowsky says, 'The students are enthusiastic and it is always a rewarding experience as we introduce them to early African Christianity.'

Dr Michael Glerup, Executive Director of NEAC also delivered lectures at the Nicaea Conference on early African Christianity in Heliopolis, Egypt on March 14-16.

The director of CEAC is Dr Thomas C. Oden who is well known for his project on the Ancient Christian (Bible) Commentaries. CEAC aims to make available the classic sources of early Christianity which exist in north Africa to equip 21st century Africans to become the leaders of 21st century Christianity, even as they were leaders of early Christianity.' CEAC may be contacted at 1300 Eagle Road, St. Davids, PA 19087 USA or <http://earlyafricanchristianity.com>



Leadership in an Age of Turmoil

*Edited by Julie Belding, Bruce Nicholls,
Joseph Shao and Theresa Roco-Lua*

Price: US\$10

<http://www.ataasia.com/books/leadership-age-turmoil>

Worldwide people are asking, 'Will the 21st Century be 'the Asian Century'?' The answer depends on the quality of well-trained leaders in society, in educational institutions, and in the churches. Asia is more than geography, it is a vibrant way of life. Asia is leading the world in globalization, in the public square of politics and social action, and in the marketplace of commerce and industry. Churches are multiplying but tragically thousands are without trained pastors. Asia and the Middle East also lead in extension education, in internet technology, and in the social media. At the same time radical religious movements are imprisoning whole communities in the cultures of the past, and are persecuting minority communities especially Christians.

These are some of the topics explored in this challenging book on Leadership in an Age of Turmoil. It is a must for all aspiring to become more effective leaders in their place of service. It grew out of papers originally given at the 40th anniversary celebrations of the Asia Theological Association in August 2010 in Hong Kong. ATA is now the largest network of theological institutions in Asia and the Middle East offering quality leadership at all academic levels. If you want to expand the frontiers of understanding of today's global world then read this book.

New Ways to Articulate the Faith

Theologian, S. Wesley Ariarajah, of Drew University, USA and former director of inter-religious dialogues for the World Council of Churches, has published a new book, *Your God, My God, Our God* in which he calls for new ways of articulating the central affirmations of the Christian faith in the light of the fact that 'our neighbours pray and believe differently from us.' In a news release, he said, 'The distinctiveness of his book lies in its "comprehensive attempt to rethink the Christian faith," taking the whole interlocking constellation of Christian doctrines together.' Discussion in the book is centred on doctrinal and theological formulations of Trinity, Christ, sin and salvation, as well as the putative 'non-negotiables' of the Christian theological tradition in its encounter with religious plurality today. Ariarajah says that it is necessary to 're-conceive the faith in ways that answer one's contemporary context.' The book is available at <http://www.isbs.com> (adapted from a WCC news release 22-28 Feb 2013)

Donations to Theological Commission in US now Tax-deductible

US citizens can now make tax-deductible donations specifically to the Theological Commission. Donations need to be forwarded to the World Evangelical Alliance marked as for the Theological Commission. Donors will receive a 501(c)(3) receipt from the WEA which is tax deductible in the US. Checks mail all checks to: World Evangelical Alliance Church Street Station P.O. Box 3402 New York NY 10008-3402 U.S.A. The checks should be made out to World Evangelical Alliance and the appeal code for Theological Commission is **TCGEN**. Or just write "Theological Commission General". Online, follow the link: <https://wea24194.thankyou4caring.org/makeagift> Select the amount in US\$ and then from the dropdown menu select WEA-TC

TC Chair Comments on the Papal Election

Dr Thomas Schirrmacher, chair of WEA Theological Commission who accompanied WEA CEO, Dr Geoff Tunnicliffe to the Papal Inauguration, comments on the election of the new Pope.

By its decision to elect a non-European, the Catholic Church has clearly accepted and given prominence to the fact that the centre of gravity of world Christianity has shifted to the global south. Although popes from Poland and Germany were already a step away from Italy, the new step is away from Europe nearly entirely, to the regions where the masses of Christians live. 'Nearly', because the Pope is of Italian decent and earned his theological doctorate in Germany.

It is astonishing that a 'bishop of the poor' has been selected, who as a Jesuit would have been expected to be a closet liberal among the cardinals; however, the selection of his papal name indicates that his vow of poverty has programmatic significance. At the Catholic synod meetings last year I got to know him as a modest, humble, and friendly man who uses public transportation and goes without a palace or chauffeur. Even before the conclave he lived in a very modest place for priests in Rome (where I have stayed overnight too) rather than at a better hotel. These are difficult times for all those in the Curia who have tolerated dirty church finances.

We have to expect that the new Pope, perhaps along with Cardinal Turkson from Ghana, who leads the Vatican Commission 'Justitia et Pax' (Justice and Peace), will get more strongly involved in social questions. I expect a closer cooperation with evangelicals here.

The election of a relatively old man, who is only a little younger than Cardinal Ratzinger was at the time of his election, may mean that he is a transitional figure, though he seems to be healthier than Benedict XVI was at the time of his election. But – God willing – he has a decade to solve the ongoing problems in the curia itself.

It must have been self-consciously that a pope who never lived in the Vatican was elected. He has been involved in several high ranking roles in the Curia, but none that made him part of the establishment. This will make resolution of the problems of the Curia both easier and more difficult. One will have to wait eagerly for the selection of his Secretary of State and whether the man chosen is willing to clean up the problems left over by Benedict who felt too old to do this task himself.

We hope that the new Pope will have a greater understanding of evangelicals, since they come so predominantly from the global south. There have been some tensions between evangelicals and Catholics in Latin America, but in Argentina the new Pope has neither been known as someone who concentrates on the needed theological discussions, but nor does he describe evangelicals as 'sectarian.' As an archbishop he spoke at evangelical meetings and saw a commonality between all Christians in opposition to secularism.

We can hope for the continuation of truly fair and honest theological discussions of both our differences and commonalities. Some questions will get a bit more difficult compared to Pope Benedict. For example, coming from Latin America, Mary will play a much greater role than under Benedict. One will have to wait to see where the debate over his time under Argentinian dictatorship goes, which the secular media surely will try to sensationalize. But having a pope who does not see evangelicals as a problem first of all but as partners in preaching Jesus is good news for us.

As I accompany our Secretary General Geoff Tunnicliffe to the Pope's inauguration, we will probably know very soon what direction will be taken. I trust from experience that our CEO takes the lead to establish a warm relationship of the three large Christian world bodies on the one side and a clear, direct, fair and open minded theological stand for evangelical distinctives on the other side.

Evangelical Review of Theology April 2013: 'Spiritual Leadership'



This issue begins with an excerpt from Andrey Puzynin's account of evangelicalism in Russia focusing on Lord Radstock and the St Petersburg revival; Sas Conradie's interesting reassessment of David Livingstone's vision for African Christianity follows; then Perry Shaw offers an insightful reflection on the missional-ecclesial leadership vision of the early church. Hank Voss gives a practical yet well-grounded outline of five essential practices for theological exegesis. The final two articles are an analysis of the Bible in our post-modern world by Billy Kristano and an adventurous evaluation of spiritual transformation by Benson Igboin—a truly global collection of articles!

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