

WEA, WCC and Vatican launch historic joint document on ethics of Christian Mission

June 28, 2011

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Vatican's Pontifical Council on Inter-religious Dialogue (PCID) have released an historic document on the ethics of Christian mission – *Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*. This historic document is in part a response to criticisms levelled at Christians by some religious communities in what they perceived to be a use of unethical methods. In some case these objections have led to anti-conversion laws and violence. The three main world Christian bodies have responded with this document that not only identifies the biblical call to evangelism but outlines the ethical mandates related to the Gospel.

The document was launched on June 28, 2011, by Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe, Secretary General of the WEA, Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the WCC, and Cardinal Tauran of the PCID, at the headquarters of the WCC in Geneva, Switzerland.

This historic document is the result of a five-year collaboration of the WEA, WCC and the Vatican who together represent over 90 percent of the world's total Christian population. This is the first document of its kind in the history of the Church.

There are three main parts to the *Recommendations for Conduct*. The first, "The Basis for Christian Mission," lays out the biblical foundations for mission; it asserts that Jesus Christ is the example for Christians in witnessing to others; it outlines the church's participation in God's mission.

The second section, "Principles," outlines 12 principles Christians are called to follow in witnessing of Christ in a manner consistent with the Gospel. These include: acting in God's love; living with integrity, compassion and humility; rejecting any form of violence; and offering respect to all people.

The text concludes with six recommendations to all Christians, church bodies, mission organisations and agencies. These recommendations are: study the document; build respect and trust with people of all religions; strengthen religious identity and faith while at the same time deepening knowledge and understanding of different religions; advocate justice and respect for the common good; call on governments and representatives to ensure religious freedom for all people; pray for the well-being of neighbors, recognizing prayer is integral to the Christian life and of Christian mission.

Geoff Tunnicliffe, Secretary General of the WEA as world representative for evangelicals noted, "In some places dynamic public witness to Jesus Christ has been

accompanied by misunderstanding and tension. This document is a valuable resource for church and ministry leaders for reflection and practice on how to best witness in ways faithful to the call of Christ and in line with the life and spirit of Jesus.”

The WEA has been a major contributor both to the process and writing of the document. It endorses its use among evangelicals and Christians worldwide. The WEA will translate the document into a number of languages which will be distributed to the national, regional and local alliances, as well as to seminaries, universities and colleges worldwide.

The WEA calls evangelicals everywhere to study the document and examine how it can be applied and adapted to particular needs and in many contexts. It is the hope of the WEA leadership that this document will stir up desire for greater Christian mission and evangelism in obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let the *Recommendations for Conduct* be a continuing reminder of the importance to live as Jesus called us to live.

Click [here](#) to view Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe's speech.

Click [here](#) to view Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World document.

The World Evangelical Alliance is made up of 128 national evangelical alliances located in 7 regions and 104 associate member organizations and global networks. The WEA is the world's largest association of evangelical Christians serving a constituency of 600 million people. The WEA is a voice to governments, media, and other faith communities and holds consultative status at the United Nations.