



**Increase Conference, held in Kathmandu Nepal, 4-8 October 2010**  
**'21<sup>st</sup> Century TEE in Asia: Challenges and Opportunities'**

## **Press Release**

Seventy-five Christian leaders, including sixty from more than twenty countries across Asia, met for an historic conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2010. These leaders are all involved in a form of church-based discipleship and ministry training known as TEE or Theological Education by Extension. The programs they represent included around 100,000 active students in Asia in 2009.

This extraordinary conference brought together people like Maria, who's recently been training tutors in the middle of Siberia; Nabil who prepares TEE courses used throughout the Middle East; Lee, who is reshaping a training program to equip tutors throughout India; Philip, running a programme in Papua New Guinea with over 700 students and Muratbek, from a Central Asian country torn by ethnic unrest.

The main aim was to provide further training for participants in key aspects of running a TEE programme. Prime time was given to three training tracks on 'Leading a national TEE programme', 'Training and supporting TEE tutors' and 'Developing TEE courses and curriculum'. Case studies, Special Interest Groups and Panel Discussions gave more opportunities for participants to learn together, and many significant conversations forged personal connections between different national TEE movements.

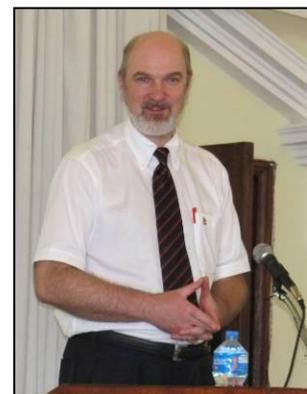
### ***Why a TEE conference at this time?***

In many areas of Asia, the church is experiencing tremendous growth. One example is Nepal itself, hermetically sealed against the gospel until around fifty years ago, but now with one of the fastest growing churches in Asia. This creates a huge challenge: how can the rapidly growing churches train enough leaders, and equip so many believers for effective service? Bible colleges are only able to train just a fraction of the leaders needed, and usually these few are drawn from the small minority who can leave their natural community to spend some years in intensive study. And it's not just church leaders who need to be equipped for effective service! All believers need help, in the face of the challenges of 21st Century Asia, to be salt and light, bringing transformation where they live.

Church leaders need resources that help them equip *all the saints* for the work of ministry. TEE is one such resource. It's not 'distance learning' for isolated individuals. Rather, it combines individual home study with local small group meetings and practical assignments in church and community, so providing a powerful learning combination of study, practice and reflection. So, TEE provides training that is accessible to believers where they are - not only in the big cities, but also in the remote areas of the countryside. It is directly applicable in the family, community, church and workplace, and affordable so that everyone can benefit from it.

### ***An address from the Chair of the WEA Theological Commission***

The conference was honoured by a visit from Dr Thomas Schirrmacher, the Chair of the WEA Theological Commission. He drew attention to the strategic relevance of TEE in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in three particular areas: first, that TEE has the potential to teach and train the huge numbers coming to faith; secondly, that TEE does not require a 'visible' Bible School and is therefore a practical and creative option for Christians living in situations of persecution, and thirdly, since TEE trains people in the challenging situations where they are, it helps train leaders who are equipped to lead through the challenges. This last point is especially important for Christian leaders living with different religious communities.





*Participants from TEE programmes in Papua New Guinea, the Arab world, Pakistan and Mongolia compare their experiences in adapting courses for their different cultural contexts.*

### **Participants encouraged**

Many participants said they felt a real sense of partnership of the TEE movements throughout Asia. New initiatives and new plans are starting to come from new and deeper friendships. There is a real sense of excitement about what the Lord will do with TEE. As the introduction to the Conference Statement puts it, 'Our vision is that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Lord would use the TEE movement in Asia powerfully to strengthen churches, helping them to multiply, equipping all believers to bring transformation in all areas of society for the growth of his kingdom and the glory of his name.'

The conference was organized by **Increase**, a group united by the desire to help train members and leaders of rapidly growing churches in the non-western world in the context of their daily life and ministry.

See [www.increaseaccess.net](http://www.increaseaccess.net)  
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