



WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

Office of Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations

**Report of the World Evangelical Alliance to
CS/CWC, Rome, 11-13 October 2016**
by Bishop Efraim Tendero

Dear fellow servants of Christ leading the Christian World Communions,
Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus!

It has now been one and a half years since I took office as the Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). As valued friends and partners, I would like to inform you about some recent organizational changes that have occurred and new appointments that were made, some of them just two weeks ago. In order to first provide you with some context: The WEA has grown significantly over the last years and has added some two dozens of new initiatives, commissions and offices, but at the same time, it was noticeable that there is a need for some structural and organizational improvements in order for the WEA to become more efficient, sustainable long-term, and prepared for further growth. While I used the first several months mainly to listen and get to know the WEA better with its many parts, I have then spent a number of months this year working with the Executive Team, the International Council, the Regional General Secretaries and others on some structural adjustments to the organization. These have now been approved by the International Council and I am delighted to share about them with you.

Changes to the Executive Team Structure

The Executive Team previously consisted of the Secretary General / CEO, two Associate Secretary Generals with focus on Alliances and Networks, a Chief Operating Officer, and Directors for three departments. There was a perceived difference in the scope and relevance of these roles for the WEA. So far we had three 'generalists'. We now have given up a second level of associate Secretary Generals working on all topics and change to a structure, where the second level of leadership is directly responsible for a fixed portfolio of tasks and areas and is chosen because of their expertise, experience and leadership in there portfolio. With several of the new Associates, their new position just combines different offices and tasks, they had for quite some time already.

In the new Executive Team, the Secretary General / CEO will work together with seven leaders who each head up a department – four of them being programmatic and three operational. The adjusted titles will reflect the equality of the departments and leaders in their importance and relevance for the WEA as an organization.

You easily can see, that the four programmatic departments still reflect the four major pillars, on which the WEA was founded in London in 1846: (1) Theology & Religious Freedom, (2) Mission, (3) Public Engagement (eg at that time slavery, human trafficking) and (4) Unity, Prayer & Networking.

They are as follows:

(1) Associate Secretary General for Theological Concerns



Bishop Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher was just appointed to lead the newly created Theological Concerns department that includes WEA's Theological Commission, its Office of Intra-faith and Inter-faith Relations, religious freedom including solidarity with persecuted Christians, and theological formation. Thomas has served the WEA in various capacities for the last two decades, including in the areas of theology, religious liberty and human rights, and he will take on his new role starting October 1, 2016. Based in Bonn, Germany, Thomas can be reached at drthschirmmacher@worldea.org.

The Office of Intra-faith and Inter-faith Relations since the beginning of my term in 2015 has the task to establish liaisons to all other Christian World Communion. Prof. Thomas K. Johnson represents WEA to the Vatican and in principle we would like to establish a similar ongoing personal relation with every of the Christian World Communions, so that relations are not limited by the travel calendar of our top leadership.

(2) Associate Secretary General for Church in Community



Amanda Jackson was appointed to head up the newly created Church in Community department that will include evangelism & mission, training of pastors, women, youth, and global programs such as Bible engagement and intentional disciple-making. She will also continue to lead the Women's Commission until a successor is installed, but is already starting in her new role this month. Originally from Australia, Amanda is based in London, UK and can be reached at amanda@worldea.org.

(3) Associate Secretary General for Public Engagement



Commissioner Christine MacMillan – on loan from the Salvation Army – will continue to give leadership to the United Nations teams in New York and Geneva and head up the Global Human Trafficking Task Force and the Refugee Task Force. She is also overseeing WEA's work in social justice, peace & reconciliation and humanitarian response. She

is based in Toronto, Canada, and can be reached at christinem@worldea.org.

(4) Associate Secretary General for Alliance Development



Rev. Godfrey Yogarajah was newly appointed to head up the Alliance Development department. He will work closely with the Regional General Secretaries to work towards accomplishing WEA's mission of establishing and strengthening regional and national Evangelical Alliances around the world. Godfrey will continue to lead the Religious Liberty Commission until a successor is found, but will already begin his new role on October 1, 2016. One of his major tasks will be to integrate several national alliances or umbrella organizations of Evangelical church, which exist but are not yet members of a regional alliance and thus the World Evangelical Alliance. We hope to have a member alliance in most ever country within the next decade. Godfrey is based in Colombo, Sri Lanka and can be reached at godfrey@worldea.org.

Chief Operating Officer



Dr. Chris Chou has served as Chief Operating Officer for several years already. He is overseeing the financial, legal and administrative side of WEA as organization. Based in New York City, New York, Chris can be reached at cchou@worldea.org.

Chief Communications Officer



Timothy Goropevsek heads up WEA's communications department and oversees media relations, digital and social media, publications, IT and database. Originally from Switzerland, he now works at the recently inaugurated Evangelical Center in Dover, upstate New York. He can be reached at timothyg@worldea.org.

Chief Development Officer

We are still looking for someone to fulfill the role of leading the development department.

Recent Departures and Appointments

We have recently said goodbye to Gordon Showell-Rogers and sent out an announcement that he is moving on to new opportunities serving the persecuted Church in a new project 'One We Stand' launched by one of our global partners. Furthermore, Dr. Wilf Gasser has stepped down from his role at the WEA as he felt that he would not be able to be fulfilled and work according to his God-given strengths by concentrating on one department of the newly structured team. But he will continue to serve in the wider Evangelical Alliance world in Switzerland, where is President of the Evangelical Alliance, and in the European region. We are very grateful for the valuable contributions that both of them have made to the WEA and wish them God's richest blessings in their new ventures.

Dr. David Boan was appointed as Director of Humanitarian Advocacy & Service. He has led the Humanitarian Disaster Institute at Wheaton College and has been working with us on disaster response for a longer time already. The new role will provide him with more opportunities to serve our Alliances in preparing for potential natural disaster situations and mobilize their constituency in a coordinated response with other churches. David lives in Wheaton, Illinois and can be reached at dboan@worlddea.org.

Prof. Dr. Johannes Reimer was appointed as Director of Peace & Reconciliation. He has been working with us as Commissioner for Peace & Reconciliation of the WEA to Russia/Ukraine since 2014 and brings extensive experience in the field. Adapting Micah Global's format of Teaching, Restoration, Assistance, Initiation, Networking, Johannes will equip regional and national Alliances in launching and strengthening peace building and reconciliation initiatives in their respective contexts. He is based in Germany and can be reached at johannes.reimer@worlddea.org.

And finally, you may have heard about the recent appointment of **Rev. David Ruiz** as the new Executive Director of the Mission Commission. He succeeds Dr. Bertil Ekström from Brazil who has served two full terms and has contributed immensely towards the growth of the MC. We look forward to David taking up his new role in January. David is based in Guatemala and can be reached at david@weamc.global.

Dr. Brian Stiller continues to serve as Global Ambassador visiting and ministering to our members and representing WEA on different occasions.

Any changes in the organizational structure will naturally raise some clarification questions here and there, so please do let us know if there is anything that you would like to ask. I look forward to continue to *advance the Good News of Jesus Christ and effect personal and community transformation for the glory of God* – together with all other Christian World Communions! Sincerely in Christ,



Bp Efraim M. Tendero
Secretary General / CEO World Evangelical Alliance

Two new and recent members of the GCF Committee

The membership of the GCF international committee revolves as positions change in its constituent churches and organisations. As well as farewelling some, (see 'Transitions', page 7) we welcome others. New faces at the GCF table, include:

- **His Eminence Mor Chrysostomos Mikhael Chamoun, the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch (Syria)**
- **Revd Canon Dr John Gibaut, Anglican (Canadian based in UK)**
- **Revd Christo Greyling, Senior Director Church & Faith partnerships for development, World Vision International. This is the first time WVI has been represented on the GCF Committee.**
- **Prof. Dr Thomas Schirrmacher, World Evangelical Alliance (Germany)**
- **Revd Dr Paul Gardner, World Council of Churches (Jamaica). Dr Gardiner joined the GCF Committee in 2015.**

Here we offer up two profiles of new members, and the remaining ones will be in the next edition of GCFNews.

Thomas Schirrmacher (Prof. Dr)

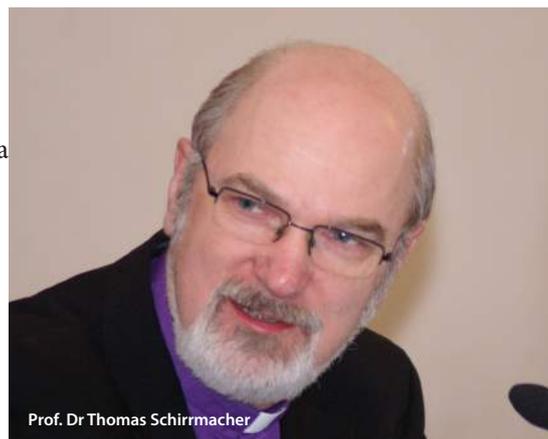
Representing the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), Dr Schirrmacher is executive chair of the WEA Theological Commission and WEA Ambassador for Human Rights. He serves also as the president of the International Council of the International Society for Human Rights.

As an academic, Dr Schirrmacher is professor of the sociology of religion at the State University of the West in Timisoara (Romania) and Distinguished Professor of Global Ethics and International Development in Meghalaya (India). He is also president of Martin Bucer European Theological Seminary and Research Institute with campuses in Berlin, Bielefeld, Bonn, Hamburg, Innsbruck, Linz, Pforzheim, Zurich, Prague and Istanbul, where he teaches ethics and comparative religions.

In terms of his personal journey Dr Schirrmacher says that, coming from a very conservative evangelical background, "I would not even enter

Catholic or Pentecostal churches or mosques or temples. I never expected that I one day would:

- attend two Vatican synods,
- arrange contact between the World Council of Churches and the WEA,
- be called 'the Pope's most loved Protestant' by the German press and at the same time be labelled as



Prof. Dr Thomas Schirrmacher

'traitor of evangelical theology' and 'pathfinder of the anti-christ' on many 'last day' websites.

"My change came for several reasons, including my activities on behalf of persecuted churches.

"In 2005 we started the

International Institute for Religious Freedom and I found myself defending people of all religions, but also all churches and confessions. Here I was sitting and praying for protection for Christians, whom I still thought to be unbelievers.

"I was also changed though the joining of 'spiritual experience and friendship'. Theology followed later: strange for a professor of Systematic Theology. But still it's the truth.

"The years of diligent work around the globe changed my perception of the Catholic Church and the WCC and made me a champion of the goals that are now central to the GCF"

Schirrmacher says it was not by chance that he was involved in the GCF global initiative, 'Discrimination, Persecution, Martyrdom: Following Christ Together' in Albania last year. "It was the peak of what I have been praying for a long time.

"This is what I told the media: 'The consultation is historic for two reasons: firstly, it was the first ever global meeting of any kind in which representatives of virtually all Christian confessions gathered around the topic and listened to witnesses from dozens of countries from all continents. And secondly, for the first time ever World Christianity apologised for having persecuted each other in history.'

"Both steps are a historic move, both for ecumenical relations between churches as well as for the larger fight for religious freedom worldwide."

Speaking about his first committee meeting in Moscow, he said, "The meeting proved to me, what I knew from other meetings already: here we do not avoid hot topics for the sake of peace, yet even they are discussed in a spirit of love. We deal

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with each other with respect, listen to each other, try to understand the questions and problems of each other.

“Moscow proved this to be the case. I believe, that we need the GCF

because of this much more than ever: here we can discuss things on a more informal level and not just formally as would be the case if it was at a structured global church level, and here we can bring Christian leaders

in a more informal way, whose bodies are not yet fully open to official ecumenical relations.

“If the GCF did not exist, we would have to start it today!” he said.

Paul Gardner (Revd Dr)

Originally a teacher, and with experience as a theological professor, Dr Gardner represents the World Council of Churches (WCC) on the GCF Committee since 2014.

He is a pastor of the Moravian Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands. Ordained at the age of 25, he is currently President of the Moravian Church in Jamaica and Cayman Islands with responsibilities for administration.

Dr Gardner, has served as President of the Moravian Church Worldwide (2009-2012). He has lectured on Pastoral Counselling and Comparative Religion at the United Theological College of the West Indies (2005-2010) and is the author of “Counselling Principles and Theory”, prepared for undergraduate students at the United Theological College of the West Indies.

Dr Gardner has had long and abiding involvement in ecumenical relations between churches: “I have been a member of the Central Committee of the WCC since 2006



Revd Dr Paul Gardner

and a Vice-Moderator of the 13th WCC Assembly Planning Committee. Currently, I am a member of the Executive Committee and the Finance Committee of the WCC. I was also the

president of the Jamaica Council of Churches.”

Of the most recent meeting of the GCF Committee, he said, ‘I believe the meeting in Moscow in February further demonstrated the important role that the GCF plays in the conversation about our common commitment and how we can work in a collaborative way to enhance the mission of our Lord.

“With the many challenges and experiences of the different streams of the Christian church, there remains the need for a common space where matters of the ‘faith’ can be discussed and greater understanding and tolerance can be achieved.

“This I believe will foster greater ecumenical relationships among the partners.”

Preparing a global conversation on ‘Mission and Proselytism’

Reflecting its calling to provide space for churches worldwide to “explore common challenges together”, the GCF Committee affirmed preparations for the next major initiative convened by the GCF, ‘Call to Mission and Perceptions of Proselytism: a Global Conversation’.

After a broad and lengthy explorative process during 2012-13, the international committee committed to convene global conversations on two challenges facing the world church today: ‘discrimination, persecution and martyrdom’ and ‘mission and proselytism’. For both conversations,

the Forum works closely with the Catholic Church (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity), the Pentecostal World Fellowship, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Alliance.

The first conversation concluded in November 2015 with the global consultation in Tirana, Albania, ‘Discrimination, Persecution, Martyrdom: Following Christ Together’ (see *GCFNews* Edition 01, 2016). The second conversation is now moving to centre stage.

A working group composed of representatives appointed by the five partners is preparing the ‘mission and

proselytism’ initiative. Present plans include a small global consultation on the theme (March 2017), a succinct statement on ‘Christian Witness in a World of Many Christian Churches and Communities’ (title subject to modification), and resources for reconciliation and healing of memories between churches who have experienced conflict as a result of different practices of mission.

The working group and the task groups responsible for each activity will meet in October in Rome, hosted by the Pontifical Council, to move the projects forward.