

ICETE conference integrates formal, non-formal theological education

The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) held an historic conference at Izmir, Turkey on 14–18 November, as the culmination of a year of efforts to advance relations between formal and non-formal theological education for the benefit of the whole body of Christ.

The 'C-22' conference, attended by about 500 people, marked another step forward in ICETE's efforts to support a broader range of forms of theological education (TE) and to overcome polarization between formal and non-formal training providers.

ICETE International Director Michael A. Ortiz, in his opening remarks, emphasized ICETE's supporting role and addressed concerns that his organization might seek to exert control over non-formal TE. 'As long as I am leading ICETE, we will not seek to dictate anything to non-formal educators or anyone in the Majority World', he said. 'We are here to serve the church. For example, 91 percent of the people we surveyed during the past year said they supported having ICETE provide some space to consider quality assurance for non-formal TE. In response to the vast majority of you, we are providing that space here this week, with no strings attached.'



International Director Michael Ortiz addresses the ICETE conference's opening session. © ICETE

The core of the five-day program consisted of six working tracks: quality assurance, technology, online and distance competencies, collaboration to accelerate pastoral training, spiritual formation, and training the next generation.

Ortiz said the conference included considerable discussion of competency-based TE and of micro-credentialing—i.e. offering accreditation to smaller sizes or subsets of training programs rather than only to entire institutions or programs.

In the quality assurance working track, the roughly 70 participants drafted a set of proposed preliminary standards, which ICETE hopes will help even the most informal programs to implement self-assessment and improvement.

Ortiz believes the most lasting change from C-22 may develop from the spontaneous interactions that occurred among people who would not have crossed each other's paths previously. 'I saw hundreds of conversations taking place', he stated. 'I don't need to know what was said, but God does.'

Following are a few comments from participants:

- 'I think ICETE might truly be a transformative event for us as a organization. We've always been a North America-focused entity and we've never felt that we had a path or a plan forward for the Majority World. Being at ICETE, connecting with so many amazing individuals and

organizations has truly lit a fire in our hearts and also allowed us to put in place a number of ideas that could help us serve global Christianity in ways we have never done before.'

- 'This conference was not business as usual. It led us to look outside ourselves to explore new relationships, including with non-formal groups.'
- 'The consultation created an opportunity to meet people who we would never normally meet in person and to have meaningful conversations. Partnerships will result. I think that the gap between formal and non-formal TE has been reduced, and that attitudes between the two have definitely softened. Each side has a greater appreciation of the other. Competitiveness has been reduced.'

At the request of many non-formal sector leaders, ICETE has officially expanded its constitutional scope and governance structure (including its board, formerly composed solely of formal TE accrediting agencies) to encompass the entire spectrum of TE modalities.

Evangelism leader Samuel Chiang named WEA deputy secretary general

In December, the WEA announced the appointment of Taiwan native Samuel Chiang as its new Deputy Secretary General for Ministries. The appointment by the Secretary General followed a months-long search process that included the senior leaders in the WEA.

Chiang has already been active within the WEA as executive director of its Global Evangelism Network, which he will continue to lead. WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirmmacher said that Chiang's selection 'comes with the unanimous endorsement of his department head and the whole Senior Leadership Team who have gotten to know him over the past months.'

Schirmmacher added, 'Samuel comes with the gift of networking and a deep love for all cultures, languages, and especially oral cultures, as helping to launch Bible translation and facilitating the orality network of the Lausanne movement have covered quite some time of his life.'

Chiang began his professional career with the Ernst & Young accounting firm before graduating from Dallas Theological Seminary. He has been instrumental in co-founding 16 different companies in fields ranging from artificial insemination to artificial intelligence.

Certified in Systemic Team Coaching and also as a Lego Serious Play facilitator, Chiang focuses on caring generously to senior leadership teams and executives, coaching them in the areas of collaboration, leadership, negotiation, systemic processes and conflict management. He is also co-founder of the Global Centre for Giftedness.



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WEA introduces new Training Directory

by Ian Benson

The WEA has developed a new Training Directory (WEATD; www.etsi.org) designed to showcase all the training offered by members of national Evangelical Alliances, evangelical accrediting agencies and evangelical missionary alliances. The purpose is to help God's people find the type of training they need to serve the Lord and fulfil His purposes in the world.

The WEATD is available at no charge to all training bodies which are part of the WEA network. For an institution to register on the WEATD, it must be a member of a WEA-related body. We believe that integrating training entities into the WEA sphere will strengthen evangelical work internationally.

Geoff Tunnicliffe gave his blessing to the WEATD project when he was Secretary General, and the WEA made the WEATD part of the Global Theology Department in 2021. The WEA Mission Commission previously integrated its *World Directory of Missionary Training Programmes* into the WEATD.

The WEATD also offers every national Evangelical Alliance and all WEA-related bodies their own training search pages (for an example, see www.eauk.etsi.org).

The WEATD has interfaces in 20 major languages. People looking for training can search by keyword, area of ministry (including all types of service, such as medicine, engineering, law and agriculture), cost, language of instruction, country and region, accreditation, academic level, and distance learning versus on-site options.

Every evangelical university, college and training provider can register and post information about its training programmes. If your institution has not yet registered, we encourage you do so. If you have already registered, please update your details and the programmes you offer as soon as possible. These entries are checked before they go live on the WEATD site.

If you would like to list more than one programme, the WEATD requests a modest annual subscription fee, which will help defray the costs of maintaining the Directory. Setting up a subscription through PayPal greatly helps us simplify the process of collecting payments. If you are interested in setting up a subscription, go to <https://evangelicaltrainingdirectory.org/public/us/subscription>.

Each institution also has a free unique microsite within the WEATD to give those searching for training more information. An example of these microsities can be found [here](#). You can also add logos to your microsite.

May God bless us all as we seek to train God's people worldwide with the resources that He has given us. Should you have any questions about the WEATD, contact Global Theology Department director Theresa Lua at theresalua@worlddea.org.

Evangelical Training Directory Officially endorsed by the World Evangelical Alliance 

English (UK & Int'l)

Search for Training

Select the appropriate options and click the 'SEARCH' button below

Type in any keyword

How do you want to serve God? (Click on one of the following)

All types of ministry
 Personal Life and Holiness
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 Prayer, Worship and Spiritual Gifts
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 Transforming Society (Leadership, Education, Government)
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Where do you want to train? In any country All Regions

Include international and distance learning programmes

Show accredited training only

Advanced Search

Please note that the accuracy of information on this website is the responsibility of the training providers. We check that all organisations are evangelical, but we cannot guarantee the content, quality or accreditation of any particular programme, or of any qualification. It is your responsibility to check all these details before starting any study. May the Lord guide and help you.

World evangelical leaders and their peers seek a voice at G20

by Kyle Wisdom, *International Institute for Religious Freedom*

Two weeks before global heads of state met in Bali for the G20 summit, another meeting took place, on 2–3 November, between religious leaders from around the world. The G20 Religion Forum, or R20, convened hundreds of leaders and scholars from Hindu, Buddhist, Shinto, Jewish, Muslim and Christian communities to discuss how religion can function as a source of global solutions rather than problems in the 21st century.

In acknowledgement of religion's important role in society, this first-ever R20 event was recognized as an official G20 engagement group. The R20 produced a communiqué, presented to G20 political leaders, that identified problems to which they can contribute. It stated:

'We, religious leaders from G20 Member States and elsewhere throughout the world, are deeply concerned by global challenges such as environmental degradation, natural and man-made disasters, poverty, unemployment, displaced persons, extremism, and terrorism. Effectively responding to these challenges has been rendered more difficult by rivalry between and among major powers and the resurgence of identity-based conflict worldwide, which threatens both domestic and international peace and security, as well as by the erosion of public commitment to ethical and spiritual values that are essential to the wellbeing of individuals and societies.'

An event such as this one, which brings together religious traditions to work for the common good, is a critical component of peaceful pluralism. In our diverse societies, it is unreasonable to expect everyone to look at the world in the same way, but that does not mean we cannot find important [areas of agreement](#). Any evangelical who has quibbles about collaborating with other religious traditions on matters related to the common good is failing to distinguish between political pluralism and theological pluralism.



The WEA delegation with the Secretary General of the Muslim World League. © WEA/Martin Warnecke



The WEA delegation with the host, the Chairman of the Executive Council of Nahdlatul Ulama. © WEA/Martin Warnecke



WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirmmacher with the Coptic Archbishop of London and the Head and Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. © WEA/ Martin Warnecke



Schirmmacher thanks the Anglican Archbishop of Nigeria for his speech on the persecution of Christians in his country. © WEA/Martin Warnecke

At the R20, a delegation from the World Evangelical Alliance actively and thoughtfully engaged in collaboration for the common good. In his message at the opening session, WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirmmacher highlighted ways in which evangelicals have worked for the good of all. Schirmmacher explained the challenge of moral grounding in liberal democracies by quoting German judge Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde: 'The liberal, secular state lives on the basis of presuppositions which it cannot itself guarantee.' Schirmmacher explained, 'What [Böckenförde] meant is that a state can proclaim and enforce a law that says murder is wrong, but the non-ideological state has no morally binding basis for explaining why such a law is right.'

Schirmmacher cited three issues on which the WEA prominently worked with others to achieve social change—the anti-slavery movement, international religious freedom, and ending child labour during the industrial revolution—without compromising evangelical priorities. 'Of course, we evangelicals talk about knowing God by faith in Jesus, but what we say about people and society can be shared by those who have different convictions about the divine. That is why our WEA team has participated in the movement to promote shared civilizational values from its [beginning in Jakarta](#), in 2019', Schirmmacher said.

Thomas K. Johnson, the WEA's Special Envoy to the Vatican and Humanitarian Islam, [described the importance of strengthening shared values](#). 'I propose', Johnson said, 'that we think in terms of a shared table for the articulation of civilization-building ethical values, as a way to overcome the disease of a clash of civilizations. We can think in terms of four legs supporting a table of shared moral values.' Johnson's four legs are the universal law of humanity, respect for human dignity, protecting foundational human goods, and the practice of virtue.

R20 exhibited an encouraging new alliance that could help to bridge the gaping ideological divisions between streams of Islam. The world's largest Muslim organization, Indonesia-based Nahdlatul Ulama—which openly endorses pluralism and religious tolerance—convened R20 in partnership with Saudi Arabia's Muslim World League.



Thomas K. Johnson's speech was presented live across Indonesia and beyond. © WEA/Martin Warnecke

On this world stage, evangelicals were welcome as important partners. As Johnson affirmed, ‘Distinguishing between political pluralism and theological pluralism allows evangelicals to hold fast to our convictions while also working with others for the common good.’

For more on the R20 summit, see this article by [Mary Ann Glendon in First Things](#) and [Peter Berkowitz’s message, reprinted in Real Clear Politics](#).

Mission leaders initiate ‘95 Theses’ for today’s church

by Rei Crizaldo, WEA Theological Commission

The global church needs a new reformation! This was the rallying cry of the Jakarta 2022 Consultation, hosted on 26–29 October by the Global Mission Council (GMC).

In his plenary address, James Edwards of Whitworth University, USA expressed the gathering’s aspiration: ‘The Reformation of the 16th century was an unfinished reformation, as are perhaps all reforms of the church. It remains for the church of the 21st century to commit itself to the unaddressed and unfinished reforms.’ (Edwards’ message will be published in the February issue of the *Evangelical Review of Theology*.)

As for what reforms are needed, GMC general secretary Gabriel Barau of Nigeria highlighted renewing the church’s approach to evangelism, mission and witness, now that the preponderance of mission activity is carried out by Majority World Christians. Barau stated, ‘The first Reformation was theological, driving the church to the knowledge of God and His truth, while the second reformation is missiological, driving the church to share the truth of his love to the world.’

To achieve this reformation of mission at a global scope, the GMC is facilitating the writing of a new set of ‘95 Theses’, to be written not by one person as Luther did but by mission leaders, with careful attention to Asia, Africa and Latin America. Obed Alvarez of Peru, chairman of Jakarta 2022, remarked, ‘The first Reformation was not imposed, it was only proposed. Today, the new global reformation is doing the same. We are making a proposal to the evangelical church to consider our new 95 theses for today.’ He also reminded the participants to ensure broad global participation in the process. Alvarez said, ‘Luther’s reformation took decades to develop. The Westminster Confession, published in 1647, took 28 years to finish. We are going to take all the time we need.’

The sessions and workshops provide a snapshot of the variety of missiological issues the new 95 Theses will address: The Global Missionary Church in the Context of War (led by Wagih Abdelmassih); Ministry to Oral Learners (Greg Kelly); The Current Status of the Unreached People (Kevin Higgins); Gender Fluidity, LGBT, and the Global Church (Noel Anderson); and Making Disciples in a New Generation (Lalano Badoy, Jr.).

Participant Samuel Kebreab of Ethiopia remarked, ‘This meeting is historic in that mission leaders from many nations came together to ask what are the 95 theses for the global mission enterprise today. I feel we have unleashed a compelling agenda that will dominate mission conversations for the coming decade or two.’ Agung Chalden, a young seminary student from Indonesia, commented, ‘I got a lot of information from the event, which includes the duty not only to convey the gospel but to guide people to the right path, especially those who are LGBTQ+. We must not forget that the great message contained in Matthew 28:19 is not just to preach but to introduce people to who God is and bring them to the truth.’

The GMC is an outgrowth of the conference 13 years ago that produced the [Tokyo 2010 Declaration](#), to which the WEA is a signatory.

WEA focuses on creation care at COP27 and COP15

by Janet Epp Buckingham, WEA Director of Global Advocacy

The [WEA Sustainability Center](#) participated in recent United Nations Conferences of the Parties to two UN environmental treaties. Matthias Boehning, co-director of the center and WEA permanent representative to the UN in Bonn, brought an evangelical perspective on creation care to the COP27 climate change conference at Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November. Chris Elisara, the center's other co-director, and I represented the WEA at COP15 (on biodiversity) in Montreal, Canada, in December.

The WEA has long been concerned for promoting creation care, both within churches and in advocacy. The Bible starts with God creating the world and everything in it and calling it good. Humans were created to care for creation, and we continue to carry that responsibility (see 2 Chron 36:21). The WEA created its Sustainability Center to (a) inspire and empower followers of Christ to exercise leadership at all levels of sustainability efforts and (b) equip churches and congregations around the world to implement creation care on a daily basis. We seek to provide a strong, legitimate and unified voice in global debates on sustainability.

Boehning felt disappointed by the results of COP27. Here is his analysis:

While the decision to establish a global Loss and Damage Fund was a historic victory of COP27 in the unanimous opinion of government representatives from all over the world as well as the participating observers, unfortunately little progress was made in other areas.

First and foremost is the urgent need for decisive action against the further increase in CO₂ emissions. The text of the final declaration does not contain a clear commitment to reduce CO₂ emissions globally from 2025 onwards (the latest scientific reports call for precisely this in order to be able to maintain the target of a maximum of 1.5° C of global warming at all), nor does it contain any further concretization of the goal of globally phasing down coal formulated at COP26 in Glasgow.

Similarly, the text lacks a clear commitment to phasing out all fossil fuels or strong formulations on the choice of acceptable forms of energy in the further development of countries worldwide.

The outcomes of COP15 were more positive. Under the auspices of the UN, representatives from 188 governments gathered in Canada for two weeks and adopted a framework that outlines four goals and 23 targets for achievement by 2030, such as putting 30 percent of the planet under protection.

Elisara assessed the outcomes of COP15 as follows:

We celebrate the achievement of the new Framework and thank the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for including us in this formative step. The CBD process to get this global agreement was long and arduous because the issues it was focusing on are complex morally, ethically, scientifically and technically. They relate to life and interdependence of every creature on earth, including human life, culture, society and economics. Furthermore, the CBD took a fully inclusive approach, which welcomed all voices, including those of faith-based organizations like the WEA.

Boehning offered this advice to evangelical Christians regarding creation care:

We should all internalize on a deep heart level that our current models of economic activity, production and consumption can no longer continue in this way. Faith, science, and communal, socially charitable action with other people for other people are three possible approaches to this realization.

In the next step, many ask themselves: What do my small actions contribute to improving the situation? But besides the fact that many individual climate-friendly actions add up globally, this question misses the point. For when we understand deep down that our global model of living is

in disarray, we act differently out of conviction and advocate for the necessary change in our political decisions, our purchasing choices and our lifestyle choices.

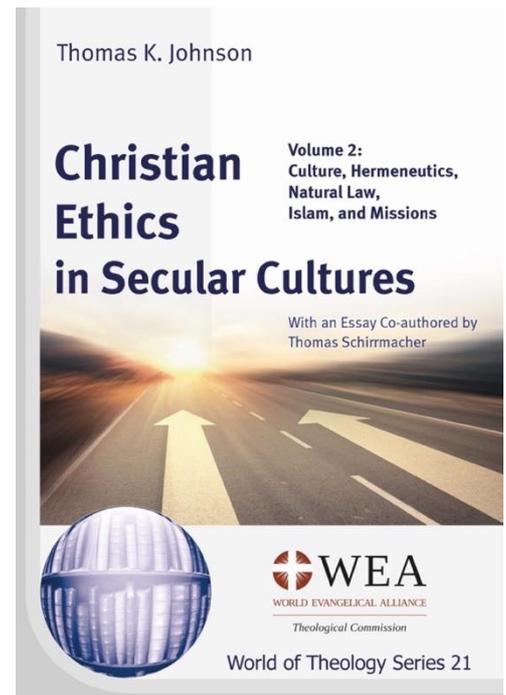
The gentle, yet relentless, starting point for this may be for us as believers to reflect deeply again and again on what it means to love God (the Creator God who has entrusted us with his precious gift of creation) and to love my neighbour (including my global neighbor who is suffering catastrophically from the effects of climate change in many parts of the world).

Christian Ethics in Secular Cultures, volume 2 now available

The WEA Theological Commission has published *Christian Ethics in Secular Cultures, volume 2: Culture, Hermeneutics, Natural Law, Islam, and Missions*, by WEA senior theological advisor Thomas K. Johnson. The 130-page book, [available as a free pdf download](#), examines the difficult questions of how to live as Christians in today's complex world.

In his preface, Johnson summarizes some of the many pressing cultural challenges we face today, which include 'decline of democracy, growth of authoritarianism, increasing religious persecution, globalization via the internet, astonishing growth of science and technology, growing sense of differences among cultures, increasing interaction with adherents of other religions, ideological extremes on the right and the left, propaganda disguised as news, horrible human rights abuses, immense environmental issues, constant racial problems in several continents, religious terrorism, anti-religious extremism, sexual chaos, greying populations, and a terrifying pandemic. [That is the nature of] our globe today. How should followers of Jesus respond?'

Johnson responds by systematically reviewing foundational moral questions. He starts with the Word of God's multi-faceted engagement with cultures, continues with a historical model for applying God's Word borrowed from Martin Luther and John Calvin, and also examines what we can learn from darker moments in Christian history.



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Jahrbuch für Verfolgung und Diskriminierung von Christen [Yearbook on Persecution and Discrimination of Christians]

<http://jahrbuch.iirf.global/>

International Journal of Religious Freedom (semiannual)

<https://ijrf.org/>

Jahrbuch für Religionsfreiheit [Yearbook on Religious Freedom]

<http://jahrbuch.iirf.global/>

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WEA RLC Religious Liberty Prayer News (monthly)

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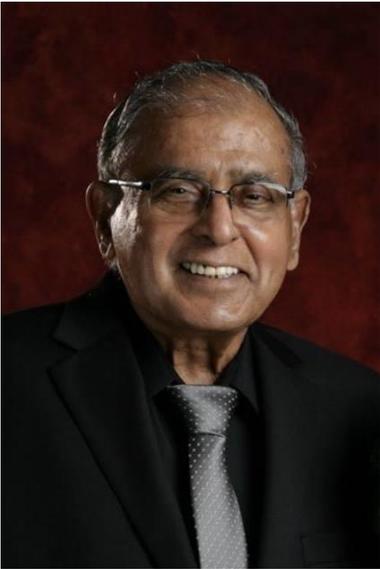
Bonner Querschnitte (twice a week) (German)

<https://bonner-querschnitte.de/>

WEA RLC Research and Analysis Report (periodic)

<https://worldidea.org/whoweare/newsletter-signup>

Remembering Francis Sunderaraj



Francis Sunderaraj, developer of the most popular Christian education program in India and a longtime leader in the WEA and Asia Evangelical Alliance, died in November at age 85.

Sunderaraj created his highly successful Sunday school curriculum while serving as secretary for Christian education at the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI). He held that position from 1978 to 1991 and was also EFI General Secretary from 1984 to 1996. From 1994 to 2001, he was General Secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia. Sunderaraj was also a longtime member of the International Council, the WEA's governing body.

WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirrmacher paid tribute to Sunderaraj for 'representing Asia's and India's passion for world mission in the best way possible. I could experience this myself already as a youngster when meeting him for the first time in India in 1986, together with the President of the WEA at that time, Theodore Williams, who was also from India. His Bible studies at several WEA General Assemblies proved his love for Holy Scripture and helped to shape my own way of preaching the gospel. He also always assured that the Methodist perspectives stayed a vital part of the overall mix of the worldwide evangelical movement.'

WEA THEOLOGICAL NEWS

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