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Theological Educators Affirmed and Enriched



Theological educators at ICETE's 2006 International Consultation heard the noted scholar of world Christianity, Professor Andrew Walls, state: "I can think of no more important ministry at this juncture than the one in which you are engaged."

The ICETE Consultation, held 7-11 August 2006 in Chiang Mai, Thailand, proved a remarkably enriching occasion for participants, offering unparalleled opportunities for mixing with professional peers from around the world. On every hand were repeated occasions for collaborative networking, for cross-pollination, and for exploring together a range of themes and opinions relating to current theological education globally.

This was the largest ICETE Consultation to date, and highly diverse. Participants came from: Angola, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Congo, England, Estonia, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Guatemala, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Scotland, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Trinidad, Ukraine, USA, and Zambia.

Global Themes, Global Leaders, Global Scholars



The 2006 ICETE Consultation was framed by a focus on the new reality that the Christian community is now global, and increasingly a global community manifesting a 'southern' tilt—with implications that will directly impact the future of evangelical theological education around the world. The gathering in Chiang Mai was graced by the presence of two academic authorities on world Christianity, and also by two key leaders of global evangelicalism. Professor Andrew Walls of Edinburgh University addressed the delegates on the theme: "Global Christianity, and the Role of Theological Education", while Professor Lamin Sanneh of Yale University spoke on: "Post-Western Christianity: Whose Christianity?" Accompanying them were presentations by leaders of the two primary structures of global evangelicalism today, Geoff Tunnicliffe, International Director of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), and Doug Birdsall, Executive Chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE). This unique foursome then engaged in the first of the Consultation's two impressive panels, interacting among themselves and with Consultation delegates on crucial implications raised by their presentations. Chairing the panel was Chris Wright, Director of John Stott's Langham Partnership International (LPI).



The second panel of the Consultation was formed to respond to the presentation by Chris Wright himself, on the challenging topic: "North/South Issues: Addressing the Global Divide." The panel featured the heads of five leading evangelical post-graduate institutions from across the majority world: Wilson Chow of China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong; Ashish Chrispal of South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS) in India; Douglas Carew of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology in Kenya; Dieumeme Noelliste of the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology in Jamaica; and Orbelina Eguizabal of the Seminario Teológico Centroamericano (SETECA) in Guatemala. The panel was chaired by David Baer, President

Addressing the noticeable imbalances between 'North' and 'South' in the world of evangelical theological education, Chris Wright urged that we should be sure to define disparity as God sees it. The materially rich 'North' needs to recognise its own spiritual impoverishment and decline. And in any mutual sharing of resources the Christian communities in the North need to be challenged, not with: "Take pity" on the South, but rather with: "Don't miss the party". Wright suggested that investing in majority world Christianity is a matter of survival for Christianity.

Complementing these contributions were plenary presentations by (among others) Carver Yu of China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong, who considered the question: "Whom Do We Serve? The Ecclesial Dimension"; and Carlos Pinto of the Seminário Bíblico Palavra da Vida in Brazil, who spoke on "Forming World Christians: Our Task?" (Copies of plenary addresses will appear on the ICETE website as they become available.) Also contributing to the rich diversity were morning Bible readings by Albert Ting of Singapore; Gordon Smith of Canada; Errol Joseph of Trinidad, and Abel Ndjerareou of Chad. All plenary sessions were led by ICETE's Chair, Dieumême Noelliste. Ralph Enlow, interim Executive Director of the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) in North America, wrapped up the entire event with a helpful overview of the Consultation findings and implications.

Celebration, New Leadership, ... and the Next Consultation



The ICETE Consultation included a celebratory banquet mid-week to commemorate ICETE's 25th anniversary. ICETE was established in 1980 at meetings held at High Leigh, England. The banquet featured a screen presentation on ICETE's quarter-

century history, recognition of various past ICETE leaders, and a charming programme by a local Christian ethnic choir.

On the final evening of the Consultation, ICETE's Chair, Dieumême Noelliste, announced the appointment of Paul Sanders as the new ICETE International Director. Sanders presently serves in Beirut, Lebanon, with the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary. He is also chair of EEAA, the ICETE member association for European evangelical theological schools. Previously Sanders was involved in church development and theological education in France for 25 years. He holds a doctorate from the Sorbonne in Paris in modern western history.

Dr Noelliste also announced that ICETE's next International Consultation for Theological Educators will be held in 2009, at a venue probably in Europe.

Consultation participants enjoyed access to a range of specialist workshops and issue groups each afternoon. Topics included: Expatriate Presence: Help or Hindrance of Indigenous Theological Education; the Role of Theological Education in the Context of Poverty; Interaction between

Western and Indigenous Patterns in Theological Education; Starting a Doctoral-Level Programme in the Majority World; Distance Education at Its Best and Worst; Managing the Tensions between Church and Academy; Winds of Change in International Accreditation; and International Partnerships in Theological Education.

Some two dozen participants stayed on after the Consultation to attend an ICETE-sponsored professional development workshop for academic deans and other academic officers.

