

WEA's humanitarian response in Ukraine continues

The WEA's task force responding to the crisis in Ukraine has published a 'situation report' on its work through June. Referred to as TRUST (The Response—Ukraine Special Task Force), the effort, guided by Ukrainian evangelical leader Ruslan Maliuta, is coordinating the work of more than 20 evangelical denominations and networks in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

The total output of this network as of the end of June is estimated as including basic direct aid to over 593,800 people; evacuation of 346,000, including 1,500 children from 22 orphanages; and temporary accommodation assistance to at least 271,300 displaced persons.

Read the full situation report here: <https://worldidea.org/yourls/tn513a>. To donate to TRUST, go to <https://worldidea.org/ukrainecrisis>.

Ukraine Partnering Summit

Leaders of evangelical alliances and denominations from Ukraine, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova and the World Evangelical Alliance convened at a Ukraine Partnering Summit titled 'Today for Tomorrow' in Lviv, Ukraine on 28–29 June.

The purpose of the summit was to share lessons learned from the first months of the war, discern trends, and strengthen strategic collaboration to advance the gospel of God's kingdom in Europe and beyond. In a joint resolution affirmed by the gathered leaders, they recognized and celebrated the 'powerful support from the global evangelical community for Ukraine and neighboring countries, which has shown the power of Christian unity in intercessory prayer, generosity, and hospitality.'

Acknowledging that there is a long road ahead, summit participants are inviting their brothers and sisters around the world 'to persevere in prayer and to work closer together, bonding in Christ, to overcome the consequences of war and to empower local churches as they minister to people ... this joint effort will make the gospel of God's kingdom the foundation for the transformation of society.'

The summit was organized at the initiative of the Council of Evangelical Protestant Churches of Ukraine and was supported by the World Evangelical Alliance.

JOURNALS AND NEWSLETTERS WITHIN THE GLOBAL THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Evangelical Review of Theology (quarterly)

<https://theology.worldidea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology/>

Islam and Christianity (English & German) (semiannual)

<https://www.islaminstitut.de/en/category/publikationen/journal/>

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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Theological News (quarterly)

<https://theology.worldidea.org/theological-news/>

Bonn Profiles (twice a week)

<https://bonn-profiles.net/>

WEA RLC Religious Liberty Prayer News (monthly)

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

Business & Ministry News (Business Coalition) (monthly)

order from business@worldidea.org

Bonner Querschnitte (twice a week) (German)

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

WEA RLC Research and Analysis Report (periodic)

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

ICETE consultation in November

The International Council for Evangelical Theological Education (ICETE) has been the global hub for evangelical theological training for more than 40 years. Its vision is to ‘accelerate global connectedness to sharpen theological education worldwide until each church is fit to fulfill Christ’s mission.’

ICETE has been holding conversations by teleconference since last November on the relationship between formal and non-formal theological education. Now, an in-person gathering is scheduled for 14–18 November at Hotel Korumar in Izmir, Turkey, with the theme of ‘*Formal and Non-Formal Theological Education: Beyond Dialogue.*’

The purpose of this gathering is to discuss in greater depth how all forms of training might better work together for the sake of the global church’s mission. This will be a working consultation, with multiple tracks in the morning and workshops in the afternoon. Evenings will be times of worship and reflection.

For a further description of the conference, see this short video created by Michael A. Ortiz, ICETE’s International Director: <https://worlddea.org/yourls/tn513b>. More information and to register for the November event can be found here: <https://worlddea.org/yourls/tn513c>.

European Evangelical Alliance issues statement on antisemitism

On 26 April, the European Evangelical Alliance (EEA) issued a public statement of support for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, following a ceremony at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, Israel. The statement was read by EEA President Frank Hinkelmann and Vice President Connie Duarte, who is to become the EEA’s next Secretary General.

Immediately beforehand, representatives of the WEA and EEA, together with representatives of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), held a joint memorial ceremony. The EEA presented a wreath with the inscription ‘In reverence and deep shame, but with the promise of future solidarity—European Evangelical Alliance.’ The WEA’s wreath was laid by Secretary General Thomas Schirrmacher and International Council chairman Goodwill Shana.



Bishop Dr Thomas Schirrmacher and Rev Dr Goodwill Shana laying a wreath at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. © Yoni Reif

Duarte commented, ‘Holocaust remembrance is not about recollection, recall, or reporting the events surrounding the extermination of the Jews of Europe. No, it is about engaging in a testimony to the sanctity of the other human being and our infinite responsibility to and for the other human being. This testimony is rooted in the millennial teaching and testimony that comes to the world through the Jewish people.’

Later in the week, a delegation of the EEA and its Jewish Dialogue Group met personally with Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who expressed his gratitude for the EEA’s action.

Galilean Movement begins drive to mobilize millions of “harvest workers”

In discussions of global disciple making, one of the most frequently quoted statements is this one from South African theologian Stephanes Sigemindus Loots: ‘Church planting is moving at the speed of a bullet train with leadership development following on a bicycle.’

The WEA-supported Galilean Movement is determined to accelerate the pace of developing competent, Christ-like ‘harvest workers’ to make disciples throughout the Majority World. Its biblical motivation comes from Matthew 9:35–38, where Jesus, seeing the crowds ‘like sheep without a shepherd,’ tells his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’

Past WEA Secretary General Efraim Tendero has been tapped to lead this startup initiative as its executive director. We asked him to talk about his calling and this new organization’s vision.

How did this come to be your calling?

I turned 65 in February. In the following month, I was commissioned as executive director of this movement. So for me, ‘retirement’ means putting on a new set of tires.

Disciple making has been a life passion for me. Matthew 9:35–38 was the passage God used to speak to me about changing my career ambitions from lawyer and politician to pastor. At Bible college, my first classes were taught by members of the Navigators, who emphasized disciple making. So the Galilean Movement is bringing me back to my original calling.

What is your main goal?

We are focusing not just on leadership development, but on developing ‘harvest workers’ who are becoming more like Christ. Our approach is consistent with Ephesians 4:11–13, which says that the primary role of church leaders is to equip all the saints for the work of ministry.

We have set a goal of equipping one million people annually to be Christ-like in terms of biblical knowledge and understanding of human life and culture, displaying the fruit of the Spirit in their lives, and possessing the competence and skills needed to be effective in biblical ministry.

Many people are already doing this. Why a new organization?

We need to catalyze collaboration. Many ministries are duplicating or even competing with each other. As we work together, we can accelerate the multiplication of harvest workers.

One strategy we plan to highlight is data gathering and management. We intend to identify, in each country, who is doing what and how national leaders can collaborate more fully. We also wish to improve cooperation between formal and non-formal training institutions (a task on which the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education, one of the Galilean Movement’s five founding organizations, is already working) to share proven practices and resources and increase everyone’s capacity.



Members of the Galilean Movement's Global Board at their inaugural meeting in Dorfweil, Germany. In front are WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirrmacher and Galilean Movement executive director Efraim Tendero and board chair Manfred Kohl.

Where is the Galilean Movement starting its work?

This year, we are starting with several Asian countries, including Australia because we believe that mobilization in Australia can help us reach the South Pacific. After that, we will move on to Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

What reactions have you received this far?

We have had very positive reactions from ministry organizations and potential funding partners. We're not trying to become a super-organization, but a catalyst serving many other entities.

Why now? What is creating the sense of urgency to organize globally in this way?

The WEA declared a Decade of Disciple Making beginning in 2020. The Galilean Movement is building on this initiative and will intentionally connect training institutions to churches so as to produce more laborers. Often, training institutions focus primarily on leadership development, but to complete the task of reaching the whole world, we need workers everywhere, not just church leaders.

I find it interesting that in Matthew 9:38, Jesus used the word *ekballō* rather than *apostellō* when he spoke of the need for people to be sent out into the harvest. *Ekballō* is the word used for casting out demons! The need is so great that Jesus had to say, 'Pray that the Lord of the harvest will kick people out of their comfort zone.' The urgency of the task requires drastic action, not just by professional ministers, but the equipping of every believer.

WEA delegation meets with UN head

WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirmmacher led a delegation of WEA leaders in a recent meeting with United Nations (UN) Secretary General António Guterres at the UN headquarters in New York. They discussed various topics including the war in Ukraine and the ensuing refugee crisis, issues surrounding freedom of religion and belief, and protecting the environment.

Guterres thanked the WEA for its long-term engagement in a wide area of topics and fields, stating that he had gotten to know the WEA more during his tenure as UN High Commissioner for Refugees. He urged the WEA to increase its engagement and encourage other like-minded faith actors to join the collaborative efforts at the grassroots level.

Schirmmacher applauded the UN for elevating its cooperative efforts with faith-based organizations. He cited the UN Environment Program as the first UN branch that did not subsume religious groups within the broader category of "non-state actors" but highlighted them as important partners in identifying and implementing global solutions. Schirmmacher was invited to speak on behalf of faith groups when the UN Environment Program celebrated its 50th anniversary in Nairobi, Kenya last March.

The meeting was the first in-person encounter between the two Secretaries General since Schirmmacher's appointment in March 2021. The WEA delegation also included John Girgis, Permanent Representative to the UN in New York; Matthias Boehning, Director of WEA's Sustainability Center at the UN in Bonn; and Rebecca Goropevsek, Coordinator of WEA's Children Network.



WEA Secretary General Bishop Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher (left) with UN Secretary General Mr. António Guterres at the UN headquarters in New York © WEA/Martin Warnecke

How faith leaders can impact global finance

WEA Secretary General Thomas Schirrmacher presented nine proposals for action at the annual Faith-Based Investment Conference held by the Geneva Agape Foundation. This year's conference, co-hosted by FaithInvest, the World Council of Churches and the WEA's Business Coalition, highlighted the role of faith leaders in shaping global finance and the economy.

'The world's major faiths, especially the Christian traditions, have a vital role to play in changing the way in which assets generally and investment in particular can create a more just and sustainable world,' said Timo Plutschinski, Director of the WEA Business Coalition.

The nine proposals for action are as follows:

1. If we as religious leaders and faith organizations fail to speak about finance and the economy, we are ignoring an important part of human life and reality and such ignoring means we fail to influence major decision makers.

2. Finance and the economy are so powerful and so interwoven with politics, science, and even religion that not addressing these areas actually means not fully or properly addressing politics, science, or religion at all.

3. How can one speak up on hunger, creation care, children's and women's rights, or any of the 17 United Nations sustainability goals (SGs) if one leaves finance out?

4. There are global actors in the financial and economic realm who, by themselves, are larger and more powerful than most national governments.

5. Leaders in the financial world often look to religious leaders for ethical, moral, and spiritual guidance, and we should be equipped to provide it. Many of our adherents ask for similar guidance, as everyone has some financial-related concerns, regardless of whether their net worth is very large or very small.

6. Global religions and their leaders can often speak independently and across national borders and politics and are thus able to interact effectively with global finance actors.

7. Religious leaders do not need to run for election, and, in many cases, their jobs and financial support are not directly dependent on their popularity. Thus, they can more easily speak up without being punished or threatened with loss of their positions. If they do not speak up on important issues in finance and the economy, who else should do it—and what a betrayal of having such vital roles on behalf of our communities?

8. Religious leaders and faith actors can be misguided or even act immorally, but for the most part, they have the integrity and the moral-spiritual framework to live in a way that models how they believe all of society should live, including the area of finance.

9. The Christian belief that salvation and personal spiritual renewal can overcome corruption (i.e. the misuse of power for private gain) is a theological concept with far-reaching consequences for finance and the economy, as it recognizes the problems of greed and envy and also recognizes that the solution to these problems lies in people's hearts, not just in how a government is structured.

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- (2) Donate online or per credit card via <http://business.worldea.org/contact>
- (3) Send a cheque to WEA Business Coalition, Achter de Weiden 47, 22869 Schenefeld, Germany

Swiss Evangelical Alliance recalls rich history on 175th birthday

On 7 May, the Swiss Evangelical Alliance (SEA)—one of the first national bodies formed after the founding of the World Evangelical Alliance in London one year earlier—celebrated 175 years in existence by taking more than 200 participants on a journey through time from 1847 to the present.

The event included an ‘appearance’ by Henry Dunant, founder of the International Red Cross, who was general secretary of the Evangelical Alliance’s Geneva branch during the 1850s. Rev. Norbert Valley, former President of the Réseau Evangélique Suisse (the French-speaking branch of the SEA), performed the role of Dunant, reminding the audience of the importance of combining the sharing of our faith with relevant social engagement.

Switzerland has been a strategic contributor to the global evangelical movement in many ways. In 1974, it hosted the historic conference on evangelism convened by Billy Graham and John Stott, which gave birth to the Lausanne Movement. WEA secretary general Thomas Schirrmacher thanked the SEA for its generous support of the WEA’s Geneva office over the past 10 years.



Rev. Norbert Valley took the audience on a journey back to the mid-19th century as Henry Dunant. © Goropevsek/WEA

WEA THEOLOGICAL NEWS

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