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EVANGELICALS AROUND THE WORLD

A GLOBAL HANDBOOK

FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Evangelicals Around the World
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FOREWORD TO A MASSIVE UNDERTAKING

It is no small challenge to define and outline the life and history of any of the three major Christian communities in the world. Evangelicals, who some estimate make up 600 million of Christians around the world, Roman Catholics who are estimated at 1.2 billion and the World Council of Churches (including Orthodox Churches) numbered at 550 million—are all varied in history and their make up.

Evangelicals Around the World: A Global Handbook for the 21st Century attempts to blaze a trail: to set out to provide definition as to who Evangelicals are.

Over the past decades many others have defined our particular community in its various forms. Our team decided it was time to provide our own definition.

As the Evangelical community has grown, especially in the past few decades, its influence in some places is significant, and in other countries and regions, Evangelical influence is much smaller.

This book is a beginning. It is an imperfect book for an imperfect community. Each of us will find articles or data with which we may not agree. There will be places, people, and events that you would have included that we did not.

As we outlined the book, we consulted far and wide. With our finite amount of space, we chose how much we could devote to various topics. Our team then asked scholars and practitioners around the world—those researchers and writers with specialized knowledge—to put their fingers to the keyboard. It was not a simple task to match the right writer with the best topic. Each writer presents his or her own understanding of what are often complex subjects, full of nuance and potential debate. You won't be surprised to learn that the editorial committee doesn't always agree with everything written. Such is the reality of a complex community. We stand by the integrity of the writer's scholarship, as they reflected on this wide and varied Christian community past, present, and future.

We invite you to join the journey as this edition inevitably leads into a second edition. Please send your thoughts, suggestions, and additions to handbook@worldea.org. These will be used for future considerations.

I'm grateful for my colleagues who served on the editorial team: Todd Johnson, as Associate Editor, Karen Stiller as Managing Editor, and Mark Hutchinson as Regions Editor. They poured their expertise and time into making this a reality. As well we are so thankful for others who served us at the very right times with their immense skills in writing, editing, and research: Debra Fieguth, Albert W. Hickman, and Rob Robotham. Please read through the list of contributing writers. Their time and effort made this a reality. Our heartfelt thanks to Alea Anderson and Frank Couch at Thomas Nelson for their hard work on this project.

On the following page we note our thanks to those people, foundations, churches, and agencies that provided the development funds to get this up and running. Your vision and support has made this a reality, and for you I again express my thanks.

This book is about a part of Christ's church that is growing in new and wonderful and at times troubling ways. I noted it is imperfect, wrestling with issues and challenges which inevitably face those who have the temerity to believe that Jesus Christ came to our world as God, dying and rising again so we might live eternally.

May you thrill to the stories, histories, and issues, knowing that the Spirit of God is leading, empowering, and pouring into his people the very life of our risen Lord.

When I am asked, "What is an Evangelical?" my answer is: "Enthusiastic Christians." That is, Christians who believe the Bible to be true, and that it is God's message of love and his plan for life, peace and reconciliation. We are a community of Christians who want the world to know this very good news story.

Brian C. Stiller, General Editor



A WARM THANK-YOU TO BENEFACTORS AND SPONSORS

We wish to express our thanks to those whose vision and generosity provided the development funds to make this first-of-its-kind publication a reality.

Benefactors

First, the editorial team expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation to benefactors who invested considerable funds right from the beginning of this vision. In explaining the importance of this handbook, these families and individuals saw how important this publication would be to the fostering of understanding among the Evangelical community and the wider Christian community and beyond. They also saw the value it would have within the media, providing a single source for articles, documentaries, and publications.

To these our friends and benefactors, on behalf of the World Evangelical Alliance, we offer our hearty, on-going thanks and appreciation.

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Our thanks go to you, the churches and organizations who saw the potential within this initiative to serve the body of Christ and provide information that often is obscure or hard to find. You understand the importance of others getting the facts straight. You are aware of how valuable it is for media to have information ready in the development of their material. As an editorial team and on behalf of our worldwide Christian community, we thank you for your vision and generosity.

Bakerview Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford, Canada

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Toronto Chinese Community Church, Toronto, Canada

World Vision Canada

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

By Brian C. Stiller

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) is the global association that serves six hundred million Evangelicals worldwide. In 1846 Christian leaders from ten countries met in London for the purpose of launching something entirely new: an organization that would express unity among Christians who belonged to different churches. On the basis of a statement of faith and with the vision of Jesus' prayer for the unity of believers recorded in John 17, the WEA¹ operated for more than one hundred years as an informal structure and platform for evangelical unity in prayer and action, holding regular conferences for fellowship and unity in different cities of Europe and in North America.

Two world wars decimated hopes for greater unity.

In 1951, some ninety-one men and women from twenty-one nations met in Holland as the International Convention of Evangelicals to envision the old Evangelical Alliance into a global fellowship. Renamed the World Evangelical Fellowship, it established this threefold purpose: the furtherance of the gospel, the defense and confirmation of the gospel, and fellowship in the gospel (Phil. 1). Since then, the WEA has grown worldwide, with its international office located in the United Kingdom, Singapore, the Philippines, and now the United States. David Howard, WEA's International Director from 1982–92 pointedly titled his book *The World Evangelical Fellowship: A Dream that Would Not Die*. A growing membership, new partnerships, and newly established initiatives and task forces are core to the work of the WEA in its task to serve its worldwide constituency.

Today the WEA is comprised of evangelical alliances in seven regions and 129 nations with 150 member organizations. WEA's specialized commissions, initiatives, and task forces, together with global partner organizations, engage in areas ranging from mission, theology and religious liberty, to social justice issues including human trafficking, poverty, peace building, creation care, and nuclear weapons disarmament.

The WEA's mission is threefold:

- Representing over six hundred million Evangelicals worldwide, the WEA as a voice, speaks through its national alliances and regional offices. On the global stage the WEA speaks for the wider evangelical constituency to governments and media, raising awareness about religious liberty and human rights. The WEA serves to answer queries about Evangelicals and their vision and various ministries in the world from other religions, media, and students. Holding consultative status at the Economic and Social Council

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1. The WEA was called the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) until 2002 when its name was changed to the World Evangelical Alliance.

(ECOSOC), the WEA is also present at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. Working together with its regional and national alliances and partner organizations, the WEA submits national human rights reports and engages in issues such as refugee crises, small arms disarmament, and conflict resolution.

- The WEA equips its regional and national Evangelical Alliances to serve their communities through leadership and advocacy training, regular research and analysis reports on religious liberty situations, and theological, missiological, and practical books and publications that address critical issues that matter for the church today.
- The WEA serves as a platform to connect globally minded organizations with regional and national alliances to foster partnerships and collaboration. It seeks to bring people together to address those challenges that go beyond single countries and organizations and deliver practical outcomes to issues that are faced daily by pastors and leaders in local churches and communities worldwide.

Led by and inspired by Jesus' call to unity (John 17), the WEA's overall vision and call is to foster understanding and faith among its membership, so that the witness of Jesus Christ and Savior and Lord resonates throughout the world.

"The world Evangelical family has expanded significantly during this last century, and this we receive as a gift from God. As we move into the future, let's keep in mind that our significance and faithfulness to our call depends on the willingness to stress and recover the principles of this journey: solus Christus, sola gratia, sola scriptura, sola fide. It is all an effort to say Soli Deo Gloria."

**—Dr. Valdir Steuernagel, Pastor, Comunidade do Redentor, Brazilian Lutheran Church;
Coordinator of the Evangelical Alliance of Brazil, World Vision International Theologian at Large**