

178

 **WEA** EST. 1846
WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE
YEARS
ANNIVERSARY



MESSAGE FROM DR. BRIAN C. STILLER

In 1846, 800 church leaders met in London England to create what is now called the World Evangelical Alliance. Then, church leaders out of the UK, Europe, Asia, Africa and North America decided that denominational barriers needed to be removed, born out of a profound longing for fellowship. This was a time following William Wilberforce's influence in breaking government policy on slavery in the UK. Yet issues of slavery continued, matched by widespread child labour and in eastern Europe, the persecution of Christians. In that world, this Spirit-birthed movement was indeed historic. Nurtured on Jesus' prayer (see John 17), those that gathered agreed that his prayer – that we be one – was powerful enough to create bridges of fellowship and friendship. This grouping signaled to the world that there were Christians who believed the Bible to be true and were prepared to respond to the call of Jesus to go into all the world.

178 years later this global network has national alliances in 143 countries. The largest Christian global network, making up a quarter of the world's Christians, represents over 600 million Christians. As a global voice, it champions an historic and orthodox biblical theology. It represents, at the highest echelons of the global community a voice speaking for the persecuted. In the 143 countries where its national alliances serve, it gathers evangelicals in witness of Christ. In an increasingly world, its voice for justice and the needy finds ways in being the hands and feet of Christ in their respective worlds.

In short, our mission is to speak as a trusted voice, to assist evangelicals in their global and local witness and to connect members for common action in the furtherance of God's reign.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

In the past six decades the Evangelical community grew from 90 million (1960) to over 600 million today, the fastest growing religious community in world history. Given this reality, it matters then that Evangelicals connect and cooperate on issues of mutual concern.

So, for example, when martyrdom or persecution calls for a united stand, WEA signals to governments and media the existence of a rather world body. In countries where the Evangelical community may be small or under siege, there civil societies know they are part of a world community and that there is a visible world body which provides identity, lifting them from being seen as fringe to being members of a world body.

We also believe that good theology matters. In a world where a zigzag of ideas and religious theories can lead to all kinds of bazaar and unbiblical realities, WEA creates a place where able of scholars provide research and commentary to help us all in finding our way forward in active witness.

World missions is transforming the church witness. Today's migration of refugees, for example, has rerouted senders and receivers of the Gospel. Bible translations is putting the text into an increased number of languages and dialects. Creative forms of evangelism results in an explosion of growing Christian churches and communities. Missiologists are trained and experienced scholars and on-the-ground practitioners who enable us to learn best practices from each other.

In short, here is a summation of our vision and calling.

OUR MISSION

Fostering unity in Christ, strengthening identity, voice and platform for Gospel witness and discipleship.

OUR IDENTITY

As a global network of Evangelicals, our essentials are rooted in the triune God as revealed in the Scriptures; we follow Jesus' call to love God and to love our neighbour, we obey his prayer that we be one, and we act on his command to make disciples of all nations.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Being a voice of advocacy for the persecuted,
- Building effective Regional and National Evangelical Alliances,
- Nurturing ministries to work together in unity and fellowship,
- Raising up effective organizations in their calling.

These four strategies enable action, give mobility, and provide clarity, focused on Jesus Christ, empowered by the Spirit of God, committed to witness and discipleship.