

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Phone: +49 / 4106 / 804806; Fax: +49 / 4106 / 804807
E-Mail: bq@bucer.de; <http://www.bucer.org/bq.html>

Released for free complete or partial reproduction

BQ 172 – No. 18/2011

A new Page of History is Written

“Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct” published

(Geneva / Bonn, June 29, 2011) “Today represents an historic moment in our shared Christian witness,” claimed Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran, president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. For the first time in history the World Council of Churches, representatives of the Vatican, and the World Evangelical Alliance have issued a joint document.

“Mission belongs to the very being of the church.” These words stand at the beginning of the document that was delivered in a public ceremony celebrated at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in

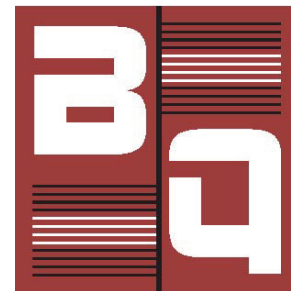


Plenum during the publication of the Recommendations for Conduct

Geneva yesterday. Representatives of the above named church organizations worked more than five years in a series of larger and smaller conferences to come up with a document stating what it means to bear testimony to and pass on the Christian faith in the multi-religious world of the 21st century. The result is a document reflecting classical foundations for Christian witness and followed by principles and recommendations.

Cardinal Tauran called upon those present with the following words: “We Christians have the duty to proclaim our faith without any compromise . . . We are not teachers giving lessons about God. We are messengers of salvation brought to us by Christ’s death and resurrection, who is still living today.”

Geoff Tunnicliffe, the Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), pointed out that all four major concerns which the WEA have defended since its founding in 1846 play a leading role in the document presented. These main concerns are: 1. Christian Unity, 2. Human Rights, 3. World evangelism, and 4. Religious freedom. The Secretary General of the WEA spoke of a “powerful document,” not least of all due to the fact that through the representatives of the various organizations 90% of the world’s Christians are represented. Mission is at the “heart of the Gospel,”



A joint platform for the following Bonn organizations on the basis of the Evangelical Alliance:

Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance
www.ead.de/akref

Culture and Science Publ.
www.vkwonline.de

Giving Hands – International Charity
www.gebende-haende.de

Help Worldwide – International Charity
www.hilfe-weltweit.org

Institute for Emergency Counselling, Terminal Care and Grief Counselling
www.bucer.de/ist

Institute for Prolife and Family Studies
www.bucer.de/lfw

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.islaminstitute.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary
www.bucer.de

Pro Mundis e. V.
www.thomasschirmmacher.net

Theological Commission of “Hope for Europe” (European Evangelical Alliance)
www.hfe.org

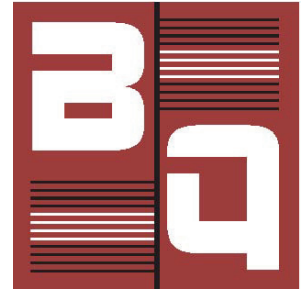
Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/

Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Text & Technology:
Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07
E-Mail: Titus.Vogt@bucer.de

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports



and without mission the church is dead. Christian witness should not only take place through words; rather, it should likewise take place through deeds.

Thomas Schirmmacher, who coordinated the efforts for the World Evangelical Alliance, made it clear that the document presented is in no way a compromise. Over the years there have been very skeptical voices from assorted directions which held a document with any substantial content regarding the topics of freedom of religion and mission as impossible to compose. In the end there are now distinct recommendations which, on the one hand, clearly bear witness to Jesus' mandate to his church. On the other hand, there are also limits highlighted with respect to mission tied to the biblical message and religious freedom and human rights are seen as the other side of the coin of mission.

[This is the short version of the news. In case you have more space available for printing, please use the following text as continuation.]

In this connection the text points out in its first foundational point that that it is not only a joy to give an account to others about one's own hope, but that rather this has to happen with "gentleness and respect" (with reference to 1 Peter 3:15). In the final point of the foundations it is reinforced that while Christians have the responsibility to bear witness to Jesus, "conversion is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit." According to Schirmmacher, this theologically excludes any thought about the possibility of a forced conversion. This places limits on Christian mission, not, for example, for political reasons but rather due to the fact that it is biblical.

Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata said in the subsequent press conference that the document is built upon two pillars: the first is Jesus' mandate to make the Gospel known, and the second is the dignity every person has by virtue of the creation.

Various representatives of the WEA expressed their delight in Geneva with respect to the contents of the recommendations and to the fact that these recommendations had been brought about at all. In comments made to *Bonner Querschnitte*, Prof. Thomas K. Johnson of the WEA's International Institute for Religious Freedom said, "The recommendations before us for a code of conduct contain the major themes which, for example, have been discussed and recommended in the International Journal of Religious Freedom."

Links:

- <http://www.worldevangelicals.org/news/article.htm?id=3578&cat=main>
- <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/news/news-management/eng/a/article/1634/christians-reach-broad-co.html>
- [http://www.pro-medienmagazin.de/gesellschaft.html?&news\[action\]=detail&news\[id\]=4163](http://www.pro-medienmagazin.de/gesellschaft.html?&news[action]=detail&news[id]=4163)

A joint platform for the following Bonn organizations on the basis of the Evangelical Alliance:

Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance
www.ead.de/akref

Culture and Science Publ.
www.vkwonline.de

Giving Hands – International Charity
www.gebende-haende.de

Help Worldwide – International Charity
www.hilfe-weltweit.org

Institute for Emergency Counselling, Terminal Care and Grief Counselling
www.bucer.de/ist

Institute for Prolife and Family Studies
www.bucer.de/lfw

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.islaminstitute.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary
www.bucer.de

Pro Mundis e. V.
www.thomasschirmmacher.net

Theological Commission of "Hope for Europe" (European Evangelical Alliance)
www.hfe.org

Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/

Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07
E-Mail: Titus.Vogt@bucer.de

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports



Downloads:

- Photo 1: Plenum, from left to right, © IIRF, Lutz Brée ([jpg](#)):
 - Archbishop Pier Luigi Celata (Sekretary, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID))
 - Jean-Louis Pierre Cardinal Tauran (President, PCID)
 - Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit (General Secretary, World Council of Churches)
 - Dr. Geoff Tunnicliffe (General Secretary, World Evangelical Alliance (WEA))
 - Monsignor Andrew Vissanu Thanya-Anan (Under Secretary, PCID)
 - Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirmmacher (Chairman, Theological Commission and Speaker for Human Rights, WEA)
- Photo 2: Representatives of the three organizations, from left: Cardinal Tauran, Dr. Tveit, Dr. Tunnicliffe, © IIRF, Lutz Brée ([jpg](#))
- Code of Conduct (English [[pdf](#)])
- Code of Conduct in the German translation ([doc](#))
- Comments by Geoff Tunnicliffe in Geneva ([pdf](#))
- Comments by Thomas Schirmmacher at a preconference in Toulouse (English [[pdf](#)] and German [[pdf](#)])

Released for free complete or partial reproduction

DOWNLOADS OF GRAPHICS AND OF COMMUNICATION

<http://www.bucer.org/bq.html>

SUBSCRIBING OR UNSUBSCRIBING BONN PROFILES

If you want to begin receiving or no longer wish to receive the Bonn Profiles, please send us an e-mail.

Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07
E-Mail: Titus.Vogt@bucer.de

A joint platform for the following Bonn organizations on the basis of the Evangelical Alliance:

Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance
www.ead.de/akref

Culture and Science Publ.
www.vkwonline.de

Giving Hands – International Charity
www.gebende-haende.de

Help Worldwide – International Charity
www.hilfe-weltweit.org

Institute for Emergency Counselling, Terminal Care and Grief Counselling
www.bucer.de/ist

Institute for Prolife and Family Studies
www.bucer.de/lfw

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.islaminstitute.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary
www.bucer.de

Pro Mundis e. V.
www.thomasschirmmacher.net

Theological Commission of "Hope for Europe" (European Evangelical Alliance)
www.hfe.org

Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/