

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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Requirements for the dialogue between Christians and Muslims

Study Day of Evangelical Groups in the Regional Church Baden

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(Bonn, 15.04.2019) It doesn't take much to get into conversation with Muslims. "All you need for a successful dialogue is a cup or two filled with tea. And through this hospitality we can make a vital political contribution to integration." These are words of the Associate Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance, Thomas Schirmmacher (Bonn), at a study day of the "Network of Protestant Christians in Baden" and the "Christ Movement Baden" on April 6th in Pforzheim. The occasion was the "Dialogue Paper Christians and Muslims" of the Protestant Regional Church in Baden. It is to be discussed until the end of 2019 and adopted in 2020.



Thomas Schirmmacher during his presentation © BQ/Warnecke

In a previous report, Schirmmacher had criticized that it ignored essential topics, such as the question of the salvation of the faithful. Christian concepts, such as God's mercy, would be uncritically transferred to Islam. At the study day he said that not only Christians with a relativistic understanding of truth are in dialogue with Muslims: "On a worldwide scale it is precisely those Christians who are convinced of the truth of their own faith who conduct the dialogue with Muslims most intensively."

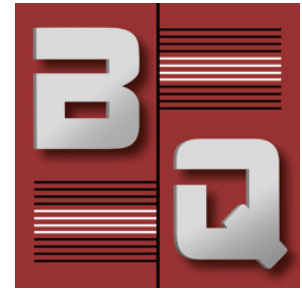
Why Muslims pray for Mohammed

Schirmmacher warned against leveling out existing doctrinal differences, even if terms were similar. The "DNA of the two religions" would differ fundamentally in many areas.

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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.com

Department of Theological Concerns of World Evangelical Alliance
www.worldevangelicals.org/pdf/TN-47-1-Jan-2018.pdf

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

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

International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) of the World Evangelical Alliance (International Headquarter, German Branch Tübingen, EU-Office Brüssel)
www.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary (Bonn, Linz, Zürich, Prague, Tirana, Istanbul, São Paulo, Delhi)
www.bucer.org

missiotop – Evangelical Forum for Missions, Cultures and Religions (German Evangelical Alliance)
www.missiotop.org

Office of Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations of the World Evangelical Alliance

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www.europeanea.org

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

UN Bonn liaison for inter-religious concerns of WEA

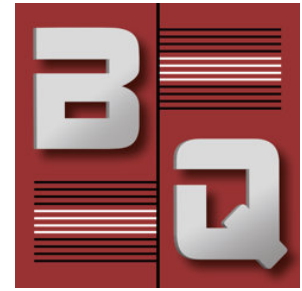
WEA Sustainability Center
www.wea-sc.org

World Evangelical Alliance – Office Bonn

SOS World (Brussels)
www.sosworld.be/page-daccueil/

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As an example he cited the image of God: The core of the Christian faith is the “greatest possible closeness to God” which one can imagine. For Muslims, on the other hand, the freedom of God and thus also the concern about a usurpation of God by believers is predominant. That God or his Spirit dwells in the heart of a person is unthinkable for a Muslim believer. The Christian idea of having a meal fellowship with God and Jesus in eternity is also extremely alien to Muslims. “Although Muslims imagine life after death as ‘paradise’, the closeness of God does not play a role.” Muslims pray five times a day for their prophet Mohammed, because even he could not know whether he would one day be with God.

Discussions lead to disputes

Tobias Schultz (Mosbach), the long-standing director of OM Germany, warned against engaging in theological discussions about the Trinity or the divinity of Jesus. The theologian and expert on Islam said that the framework of Islamic doctrine was so different that one could hardly make any progress by arguments alone. “Discussions about the teachings of the two religions almost inevitably result in debates; biblical stories, on the other hand, reach the heart and can bring about change therein.” He recommended telling stories from the Bible and reading them together: Stories from the Old Testament about creation, the Fall or the hope of salvation by the Messiah. Also miracle stories from the New Testament about the special authority of Jesus are well suited for this.

Downloads and Links:

- **Photo 1** and **photo 2**: Thomas Schirmmacher during his presentation © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 3**: Thomas Schirmmacher during his presentation (close-up) © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 4**: Thomas Schirmmacher (left) with Pastor Lothar Mößner, Chairman of the ChristusBewegung Baden (second from left), the hosting Pastor, Christian Gossweiler (in the middle), and Pastor Theo Breisacher (far right) from the Network of Protestant Christians in Baden © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 5**: Tobias Schultz, longtime director of Operation Mobilisation (OM) Germany and now working for the Arab world as well as in refugee work in Germany, during his presentation © BQ/Warnecke
- Flyer of the event ([pdf](#))

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