

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Phone: +49 4106 804806 · Fax: +49 4106 804807

Email: bq@bucer.de · <http://www.bucer.de/bq.html>

Released for free complete or partial reproduction.

BQ 590 – No. 26/2019

“In the matter of religious freedom Europe owes much to the Evangelical Alliance.”

(Bonn, 05.08.2019) “Speak freely! Confess freely!” This was the motto under which around 100 Christian lawyers met at the 2019 Federal Conference of “Christ und Jurist” [“Christian and Jurist”] (German Christian Legal Society).

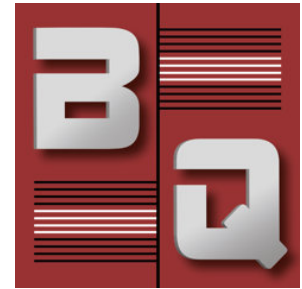
At the annual meeting the launch of the freshly printed brochure ‘*Speak freely! Rightly speaking about the Gospel*’ took place. This guidebook was contrived jointly by the German Evangelical Alliance, “Christ und Jurist” and ADF International. Astrid Bittner and Mark Bittner, attorneys at law, who had contributed a large part of the contents to the first draft, Hartmut Steeb and Dr. Reinhardt Schink, the old and new general secretaries of the German Evangelical Alliance, as well as Thomas Schirmacher, associate general secretaries of the World Evangelical Alliance, who had contributed to the brochure and explained in an introduction what the brochure is intended for, were interviewed for the launch.

In his lecture “Why Christian truth claim and religious freedom go hand in hand” Schirmacher argued that mission is deeply embedded in the essence of the church. But the mission mandate, correctly understood, presupposes the recognition of freedom to decide for or against the faith. Schirmacher referred to the 2011 statement ‘*Christian Witness in a Multi-religious World*’ published by the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and the World Evangelical Alliance. Schirmacher called this document a plea for religious freedom and an “official closing document for the Constantinian era”, that is, the end of the era in which the major churches tried to convert people to faith with the help of the state.

Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 4106 804806
Fax: +49 4106 804807
Email: 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.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 (IIS) of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.islaminstute.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

Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance
www.europeanea.org

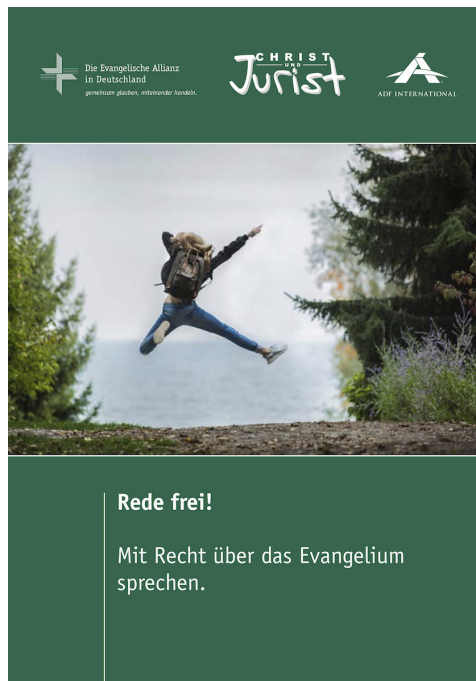
Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.worldevangelicals.org/tc/

UN Bonn liaison for inter-religious concerns of WEA

WEA Sustainability Center
www.wea-sc.org

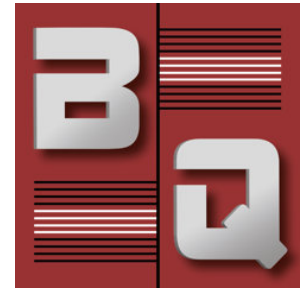
World Evangelical Alliance – Office Bonn

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



Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports



“In the matter of religious freedom Europe owes much to the Evangelical Alliance”, Schirmmacher continued. When the Evangelical Alliance was founded, its aim was to proclaim the Gospel uniformly. The flip side at that time was the acceptance of religious freedom. Schirmmacher stresses its continued validity: “We must grant the other person complete freedom to decide for or against it.” This advocacy of religious freedom in 1846 had not yet been an accepted political concept, and for many still was something unheard of. “The Catholic Church was then at the peak of the rejection of religious freedom. In a way, Europe owes thanks to the Evangelical Alliance to this day.”

But mission is the original theme of the church par excellence. “Take mission away from the church, and nothing will remain”, Schirmmacher said. God himself was basically “the first missionary”, because he had already pointed Adam and Eve to the Last Judgement. According to the theologian, the most successful missionary in history was the Holy Spirit. “Not Paul, not Billy Graham, not even Pope Francis.” Moreover, every Christian is virtually obliged to pass on the message of Jesus, Schirmmacher added. For him one of the most beautiful metaphor for mission is: One beggar tells the other where to get something to eat. Both beggars are on the same level and no one questions the other’s dignity.



(from left to right) Mark Bittner, Astrid Bittner, Thomas Schirmmacher, Hartmut Steeb, Martin Franke © BQ/Warnecke

Documentation: Thomas Schirmmacher on the website of “Christ und Jurist”

For lawyers of all denominations and disciplines to unite and interchange ideas is not only important in order to learn how the sometimes stressful life in the legal world can be reconciled with other needs in life, such as family, friends, leisure, church, or social and political commitment, but also for their further progress by way of joint expert discussions.

Law is constantly evolving, both globally and locally. Only if committed people are constantly on the ball here are they able to help shape the future in this area for the benefit of all. Often, however, everyday legal life does not leave much room for pondering fundamental issues.

Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 4106 804806
Fax: +49 4106 804807
Email: 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.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.islam institute.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

Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance
www.europeanea.org

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

UN Bonn liaison for inter-religious concerns of WEA

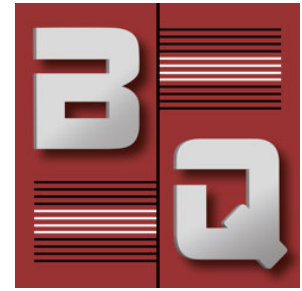
WEA Sustainability Center
www.wea-sc.org

World Evangelical Alliance – Office Bonn

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

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports



But if Christians want to help shape our society in democratic interaction, this must also include the legal world. Here it is important to create a platform in which one can first jointly struggle for “justice” and then introduce the achievements into society.

A Christian contribution to human rights issues is not made once and for all, but the worldwide human rights network is constantly being developed, often wisely (such as the latest human right at UN level, the right to drinking water), but sometimes also dubiously (as in my opinion the demand for a right to abortion without at least weighing the human rights of the unborn against it).



Thomas Schirmmacher at his lecture at “Christ und Jurist” © BQ/Warnecke

Therefore, if lawyers are unable to discuss fundamental issues from time to time, the only thing, if any, left to us is activism. However, as important as it is to stand up for human rights, religious freedom and justice in everyday life and politics, it is equally important to rethink and improve the background layer of fundamental legal considerations and decisions.

I therefore wish for the congress “Christ und Jurist e.V.” many participants under the topic “justice”, lots of joy in conversation and learning, lots of profit for the personal shaping of life, but also that it succeeds in contributing to the deep desire of all to implement “justice” in our world.

Downloads and Links:

- Introduction by Thomas Schirmmacher ([pdf](#))
- Cover of the brochure ([jpg](#))
- Brochure ‚Rede frei!‘ [‘Speak freely!’] ([pdf](#))
- **Photo 1** and **Photo 2**: Thomas Schirmmacher at his lecture at “Christ und Jurist” © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 3** (from left to right): Mark Bittner, Astrid Bittner, Thomas Schirmmacher, Hartmut Steeb, Martin Franke © BQ/Warnecke
- **Photo 4**: Launch of the brochure ‚Rede Frei!‘ [‘Speak freely!’] © BQ/Warnecke

Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 4106 804806
Fax: +49 4106 804807
Email: 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.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.islam institute.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

Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance
www.europeanea.org

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

UN Bonn liaison for inter-religious concerns of WEA

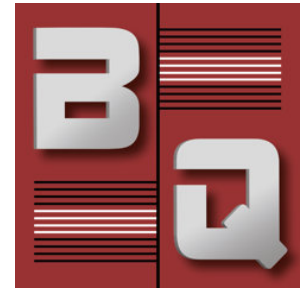
WEA Sustainability Center
www.wea-sc.org

World Evangelical Alliance – Office Bonn

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

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports



- Greeting by Thomas Schirmmacher:
<http://christ-jurist.de/cms/index.php/grussworte/grusswort-schirmmacher>
- Thomas Schirmmacher, Darf ein Christ vor Gericht gehen, MBS-Texte 7:
<https://www.thomasschirmmacher.info/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/mbstexte007.pdf>
- Thomas Schirmmacher, May Christians Go to Court (book):
<https://iirf.eu/journal-books/global-issues-series/may-a-christian-go-to-court/>
- Reports on the meeting (in German):
 - <https://www.christ-jurist.de/cms/index.php/bundestagung-2019/nachbericht>
 - <https://www.pro-medienmagazin.de/gesellschaft/gesellschaft/2019/05/25/bundestagung-christ-und-jurist-toleranz-ist-nicht-akzeptanz/>
 - <https://www.idea.de/glaube/detail/orientierungshilfe-zur-glaubensfreiheit-veroeffentlicht-109325.html>

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 (IIS) 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

Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance
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/

Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau
Phone: +49 4106 804806
Fax: +49 4106 804807
Email: Titus.Vogt@bucer.de