

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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BQ 794 – Nr. 17/2024

Re-Establishment of the Evangelical Alliance in the Kaliningrad region

Welcoming Letter by Thomas Paul Schirmmacher in Russian, German and English

(Bonn, 07.06.2024) On 16 and 17 February, the Russian Evangelical Alliance (REA) held a conference in Kaliningrad to address issues of pastoral care and to discuss the development prospects of the Alliance movement in this region.

One of the initiators of the development of a joint alliance between the leaders of evangelical churches in Russia was Ulrich Materne, who represented the German Evangelical Alliance for many years as its Eastern Europe representative. Together with Vladimir Ryaguzov, he visited Kaliningrad several times between 2002 and 2005 and motivated clergy everywhere to engage in interdenominational cooperation and dialogue at regional level. Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Adventists and Charismatics have been meeting regularly for many years for prayer and fellowship and have already organised many important joint public events in the Kaliningrad region. Joint ministry, dialogue and mutual respect are the most important basis for building alliance partnerships.

The President of the Russian Evangelical Alliance, Sergey E. Lavrenov, explained the aims of the REA and suggested that the creation of a regional alliance in the Kaliningrad region should begin step by step. Close co-operation between the churches is necessary and helpful for both spiritual and economic reasons.

In addition to the REA President and the REA General Secretary, Vitaly K. Vlassenko, the meeting was also attended by Professor Dr. Johannes Reimer, Head of the Public



Thomas Paul Schirmmacher visiting the Cathedral of Kaliningrad © IIRF/Schirmmacher

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Relations Department of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), who spoke about the history and current work of the WEA.

From a report by Johannes Reimer

From a report by Professor Johannes Reimer: “The Russian Evangelical Alliance (REA) has been reorganizing its structure in the country for two years. The huge country with 200 different ethnic groups and many autonomous national territories requires a multi-national and multi-regional federal structure. For this reason, alliances have been formed or are being formed in Moscow, Siberia, Tatarstan, the North Caucasus and elsewhere in recent years. One of these regional alliances is now also being organized in the exclave of Kaliningrad. With this goal in mind, a meeting of regional leaders of Christian churches and ministries took place from February 16–18 in Kaliningrad with the President of the REA Dr. Sergei E. Lavrenov, Tyumen and the Secretary General of the REA Vitaly K. Vlassenko, Moscow. The meeting was also attended by the Head of the Department of Public Engagement of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), Prof. Dr. Johannes Reimer, who presented the history of the Evangelical Alliance with special reference to East Prussia and explained how it works today. The proposal to establish a regional EA in Kaliningrad was well received and work has begun on formalizing the structures. The re-establishment of the Kaliningrad Evangelical Alliance is a timely phenomenon in many respects. The population that has settled in the region since 1945 has come from all corners of the large Soviet Union. ... Closer integration of the Kaliningrad Protestant Christians into the REA can only help the congregations to carry out their work even more intensively.”

From the greeting by Thomas Paul Schirmmacher

The letter by Thomas Paul Schirmmacher (see link below) was read in Russian during the meeting in Kaliningrad and received with much joy. In it, Schirmmacher states: “It gives me great joy that you are founding a regional Evangelical Alliance for the Kaliningrad Oblast within the Russian Evangelical Alliance.”

After elaborating on the history of the Evangelical Alliance in the region since 1846 he adds: “I also have a very personal connection to Kaliningrad. My great-great-great-great-grandfather Christian Schirmmacher (1758–1852) was born and buried in Königsberg. My great-great-great-great-grandfather Carl Friedrich Schirmmacher (1790–1827) was born in Königsberg and was buried in Danzig. Both were devout believers. Carl Friedrich wrote in his Bible:

‘My confession of faith: The Protestant Church has protested from the beginning and must continue to protest; but first, from a positive basis, namely, the unconditional faith in the free grace of God in Christ as it is revealed in the writings of Paul, Peter and John as an absolute form for all time; and secondly, it protests in the purely religious sphere, it protests only against that which in any way alters its basis of faith. Carl Friedrich Schirmmacher, born September 14, 1790 in Königsberg.’”

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Downloads and Links:

- **Photo:** Thomas Paul Schirmmacher visiting the Cathedral of Kaliningrad © IIRF/Schirmmacher
- The complete greeting by Thomas Paul Schirmmacher in Russian, German and English: https://thomasschirmmacher.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/BQ_WEA_Kaliningrad_DE_EN_RU.pdf

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