

# Bonner Querschnitte

*Bonn Profiles – Press Reports*

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## **BQ 328 – No. 42/2014**

### **The World's Religions meet in the Vatican to discuss Commitment to traditional Marriage**

#### **Evangelicals support the Vatican in its Commitment to traditional Marriage**

(Bonn, 21.11.2014) The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has conducted a three-day colloquium on the “Complementarity of Man and Woman” in cooperation with three pontifical councils (Pontifical Council for the Family, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity). Speakers from 23 countries and almost all larger religions invoked the model of lifelong marriage between the two sexes and children. The colloquium took place in the facilities of the Pope Paul VI Audience Hall within the Vatican. The colloquium had already been planned prior to the announcement of the synod on the topic of the family.

The Pope opened the colloquium with an address in which he noted that it is neither conservative nor progressive to advocate long-term marriage between the two sexes as the best place for children. The family is, after all, simply the family and not a political plaything. “Children have a right to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for their development and emotional maturity,” the Pope said.

Representatives from not only all the large, well known world religions, such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, but also representatives from regional religions in India and Japan, including Sikhs, Jainists, and Shintoists and extending to Latter Day Saints (Mormons) in the USA were speakers together with Christians from many denominations. They underscored the importance of family built upon lifelong marriage between the two sexes.

“It became clear – and that was the intention of the entire thing – that the large majority of humanity still retains the ideal of the classical family consisting of a father and a mother and children where the father and the mother remain together for life,”



Rick Warren during his plenary speech



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declared the Chairman of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, Thomas Schirmmacher.

As Schirmmacher noted in his contribution to the Scholars' Panel, the closer cooperation between the Pontifical Council for the Family and WEA family experts, which was only agreed upon two weeks prior, was finding expression at the colloquium. Schirmmacher pointed out that it was particularly encouraging that the focus rested upon the positive promotion of lifelong marriage as an investment in children and not in condemning others. The topic of same-sex "marriage" was only seldom addressed, and when it was addressed, it occurred in a restrained manner. The topic of divorce, on the other hand, was addressed much more frequently. However, the context was actually more of a matter of bolstering people to meet the challenge of the differences between the sexes in order to have a deep, lifelong relationship and achieve happiness through that relationship.

Schirmmacher's words were as follows: "The largest contingent of plenary speakers, apart from the moderating cardinals and archbishops, came from all five continents and from the Catholic Church and Evangelicals within and outside of the World Evangelical Alliance. Of note were the American pastor Rick Warren, the leading Anglican Archbishop of Nigeria, Nicholas Okoh, the former Bishop of Rochester and WEA advisor on questions relating to the Islamic world, Michael Nazir-Ali and Dr.



Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller and Thomas Schirmmacher

Russell D. Moore, President of The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and Jaqueline Cooke-Rivers, an African-American university professor hailing from a Pentacostal church. Additionally, there were other Protestants from the conservative end of the spectrum, for instance the head of Brüderhof, Johann Christoph Arnold. Understandably, representation from the spectrum of liberal Protestantism was missing."

Schirmmacher thanked Cardinal Müller for the good cooperation. He also held talks with five members of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. The Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, the main organizer of the colloquium, is

the theological commission of the Vatican and thereby the counterpart of the WEA's Theological Commission. Schirmmacher also emphasized that it was gratifying and completely in the spirit of Evangelicals that representatives of non-Christian religions were dealt with respectfully and courteously without any hint of syncretism. Cardinal Müller noted clearly that even at the beginning of the lunch there would be no common prayer for the religions.

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- [Photo 1](#): Rick Warren during his plenary speech
- [Photo 2](#): Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller and Thomas Schirrmacher

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