

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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Opening of the new Armenian Genocide Museum in Byblos

Schirmmacher brings greetings from the General Secretary of the WEA

(Bonn, 01.09.2015) On the occasion of the opening of the new Genocide Museum in Byblos, Lebanon and the official centennial commemoration of the Armenian genocide held by the Armenian Orthodox Church, the World Evangelical Alliance assured the gathering of patriarchs and leaders of churches from the Middle East that they can count on the solidarity and support of the WEA. In an appeal, signed by the General Secretary of the WEA, Bp. Efraim Tendero (The Philippines), and presented by Thomas Schirmmacher, the WEA challenged Christianity from the entire world to work together to prevent the complete expulsion of Christian churches from the areas where the very first Christian churches were planted. For this united purpose there needs to be a ground swell of prayer and public solidarity, along with the mobilization of political powers.



Thomas Schirmmacher bringing greetings from the WEA

The head of the Armenian Orthodox Church, Catholicos Aram I, proposed that the Armenian Genocide of a century ago set the stage for the situation of Christians across the Middle East today, a situation in which Christians are being “dramatically shaken.” Many believers have been able to give a clear witness to their faith “in life and in death.” He emphasized his confidence that the final authority belongs to “our common Lord, Jesus Christ,” and gave thanks for ecumenical solidarity, especially in prayer for the persecuted church.

The Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria, Theodoros II, used the example of an Armenian girl to demonstrate what it means to live a Christian life, shaped by forgiveness and love of neighbor, in the face of persecution and suppression.

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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

Giving Hands – International Charity

www.gebende-haende.de

Help Worldwide – International Charity

www.hilfe-weltweit.de

Institute for Pro-life and Family Studies

www.bucer.de/ifw

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance

www.islaminstitut.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance

www.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary

www.bucer.org

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/

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Ultimately, the response of Christians to the challenges they face in the Middle East must arise from the gospel.



Thomas Schirmmacher talking with Alecco Bezikian

its tremendous gratitude to Christians of other confessions who helped to insure the survival of the Armenian people.

A representative of the descendants of the orphans, Alecco Bezikian, paid tribute to his father, Aram Bezikian, after whom the museum has been named.

The newly opened museum is located in the facilities of “The Birds Nest” orphanage. The orphanage, started in 1915 and led by American and Danish missionaries, took care of many thousands of orphans during and following the Armenian Genocide. By the choice of this location for the museum, as the Catholicos explained, the Armenian Orthodox Church wants to express

Links:

- Program of the event: <http://www.armenianorthodoxchurch.org/en/archives/12989>
- Report of the Canadian-Armenian website Horizon Weekly about the opening of the museum: <http://www.horizonweekly.ca/news/details/70283>
- Report from the WCC: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-general-secretary-reflects-on-armenian-genocide-at-holy-muron-ceremony>

Downloads:

- All photos: © IIRF / Titus Vogt
- [Photo 1](#): Celebration at the opening of the new museum in Byblos
- [Photo 2](#): First visit of the new museum
- [Photo 3](#), [Photo 6](#): Thomas Schirmmacher talking with Alecco Bezikian
- [Photo 4](#): Thomas Schirmmacher bringing greetings from the WEA; at the table (starting from below left):
 - Chrysostomos II, Archbishop of the Cyprus Orthodox Church

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- Abune Mathias, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church
- Béchara Pierre Cardinal Rai, Maronite Patriarch of Antioch and All the East
- Catholicos Aram I of the Armenian Orthodox Church, Catholicate of Cilicia
- Tawadros II, Patriarch of Alexandria and Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church
- Theodoros II, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria
- Kurt Cardinal Koch, President of the Pontifical Congregation for Promoting Christian Unity
- Mor Basilios Thomas I, Catholicos of India of the Syriac Orthodox Church
- [Photo 5](#): Thomas Schirmmacher talking with Archbishop Chrysostomos II.
- [Photo 7](#): In front of the main church of the Catholicate of Cilicia des in Antelias (by Beirut): in the first row from left to right: Kurt Cardinal Koch, Archbishop Chrysostomos II, Patriarch Abune Mathias, Catholicos Aram I, Pope Tawadros II, Catholicos Mor Basilios Thomas I, Patriarch Theodoros II.
- [Photo 8](#), [Photo 9](#), [Photo 10](#): During the worship service
- [Photo 11](#), [Photo 12](#): bouquets of roses were presented in commemoration of the victims of the genocide at the memorial in Antelias
- [Photo 13](#), [Photo 14](#), [Photo 15](#), [Photo 16](#): Concert with the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Harout Fazlian at the conclusion of the two-day commemoration in St. Mary's Monastery in Bikfaya

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