

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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Chairman of IIRF Awarded Honorary Title in Sri Lanka

(Bonn, 02.10.2015) Rev. Godfrey Yogarajah, the Chairman of the Board of the International Institute for religious Freedom (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo) (IIRF) and Executive Director of the Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), was conferred the national honorary title of “Deshamanya” by the government of Sri Lanka. The title which means “Pride of the Nation” is the second highest national honor awarded for highly meritorious service. Rev. Yogarajah was presented the award in honor of his work in human rights, religious freedom and humanitarian aid in Sri Lanka.

“I thank God for Godfrey’s faithful and effective ministry that has had such a great impact far beyond the evangelical community, not only in his own country



Rev. Godfrey Yogarajah is presented with the Deshamanya Award

but also around the world,” said Bishop Efraim Tendero, Secretary General of the WEA, who congratulated Rev. Yogarajah on this national recognition.

Thomas Schirmacher, director of the IIRF and moderator of WEA’s intrafaith and interfaith office and team, said upon receiving the news: “I often call Godfrey ‘Mister Religious Freedom’ and he deserves more than any other to receive the third award for his work. That it is time the government of Sri Lanka itself, which so often has been the recipient of his criticism and challenges, proves, that people recognize, that behind all Godfrey’s diligent documentation and presentation of human rights violations stands a positive approach to live in peace with everyone.”

Rev. Yogarajah has also been General Secretary of the National Christian Evangelical Alliance in Sri Lanka (NCEASL) for 25 years. In this role he championed human rights and religious freedom in Sri Lanka. He was also the visionary behind the launch of the NCEASL’s relief and development arm, the Alliance Development Trust, an agency



A joint platform for the following Bonn organizations on the basis of the Evangelical Alliance:

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Culture and Science Publ.
www.vkwoonline.com

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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.islaminststitute.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.iirf.eu

Martin Bucer Seminary
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Pro Mundis e. V.
www.thomasschirmacher.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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that has received commendations from the government for its work in relief, rehabilitation and development.

Through the WEA, Rev. Yogarajah has worked extensively for religious freedom across the world. He has trained persecuted religious minorities and national Evangelical Alliances on religious freedom and human rights, advocated for religious freedom at institutions such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the United States state department and met with governments to advance religious freedom in restricted nations.

Rev. Yogarajah is also the recipient of the 'Good Samaritan Award' (2004) for religious freedom, presented by Advocates International and the 'Pro Fide Award' (2005) presented by the 'Friends of the Martyrs' in Finland for his contribution to the rights of minorities.

Upon receiving the award, Rev. Yogarajah said: "I think many times we leaders reap the harvest of the hard labor of our staff. The honor is due to their exemplary work. I believe this honor will give greater visibility and credibility to the country's evangelicals who have long been denied state recognition."

The NCEASL, WEA's member body in Sri Lanka, stated that "it means a great deal for evangelicals, who are a marginalized and persecuted minority in Sri Lanka, to have one of their most senior leaders honored by the state. As such, the award is a symbol of encouragement and recognition for evangelical Christians in Sri Lanka. Moreover, it also illustrates the impact and contribution made by evangelicals to the life of our nation."

Source: <http://worldea.org/news/4584/executive-director-of-wea-religious-liberty-commission-awarded-honorary-title-in-sri-lanka>

Downloads:

- [Photo 1](#), [Photo 2](#): Rev. Godfrey Yogarajah is presented with the Deshamanya Award

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