

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

Phone: +49 / 4106 / 804806; Fax: +49 / 4106 / 804807  
E-Mail: [bq@bucer.de](mailto:bq@bucer.de); <http://www.bucer.org/bq.html>

*Released for free complete or partial reproduction*

### **BQ 380 – No. 44/2015**

## **Schirmmacher calls for more Solidarity among Christians around the World in Address in Neuss “Cathedral”**

### **Vespers held in the Neuss Cathedral by the Working Group of Christian Churches in and around Neuss broach the Issue of the increasing Discrimination and Persecution of Christians of all Denominations**

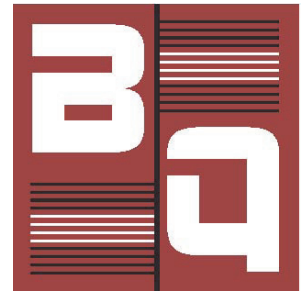
(Bonn, 23.10.2015) In light of the world situation, the World Evangelical Alliance's coordinator for relationships with other churches and religions, the human rights expert Thomas Schirmmacher, has called upon the worldwide Christian community to wake up from its lethargy and demonstrate a heretofore unknown level of solidarity. According to Schirmmacher, there are politicians, journalists, and leaders of non-Christian religions who are standing up publicly for the fate of persecuted Christians more intensively than many church leaders.

There is no Christian and no church able to say that they do not have the time, the personnel, and the financial means for the simplest form of solidarity, prayer. A short prayer for those Christians who are affected by sheer violence should simply have a place in every Sunday worship service, every church event, and in every individual's morning and evening prayers.

Making reference to both of the passages upon which his sermon was based, Schirmmacher, a theologian and religious scholar, views Paul as only being acquainted with suffering Christians and with those suffering along with them as compassionate Christians. There was no uninvolved group. According to Schirmmacher, “You have forgotten us!” is the most frequent lament he hears from a complete range of countries



Thomas Schirmmacher in the Neuss Cathedral



**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](http://www.ead.de/akref)

Culture and Science Publ.  
[www.vkwonline.com](http://www.vkwonline.com)

Giving Hands – International Charity  
[www.gebende-haende.de](http://www.gebende-haende.de)

Help Worldwide – International Charity  
[www.hilfe-weltweit.de](http://www.hilfe-weltweit.de)

Institute for Pro-life and Family Studies  
[www.bucer.de/ifw](http://www.bucer.de/ifw)

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.islaminstitute.net](http://www.islaminstitute.net)

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.iirf.eu](http://www.iirf.eu)

Martin Bucer Seminary  
[www.bucer.org](http://www.bucer.org)

Pro Mundis e. V.  
[www.thomasschirmmacher.net](http://www.thomasschirmmacher.net)

Theological Commission of “Hope for Europe” (European Evangelical Alliance)  
[www.hfe.org](http://www.hfe.org)

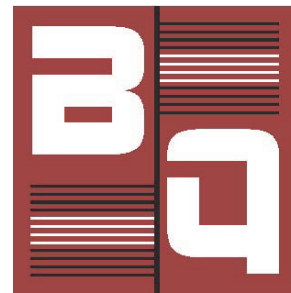
Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/)

**Bonner Querschnitte** *Bonn Profiles – Press Reports*

**Text & Technology:**  
Titus Vogt (ViSdP)  
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau  
Phone: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06  
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07  
E-Mail: [Titus.Vogt@bucer.de](mailto:Titus.Vogt@bucer.de)

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports



such as Nepal, Pakistan, Syria, or the Maldives. Christians from all continents should be working against this.

Efforts for persecuted Christians have a positive effect on ecumenical relationships. From Schirmmacher's point of view, there is not only ecumenicity among martyrs. Rather, it is often when we first see individuals suffering for Christ that we recognize fellow Christians. Fifty years ago, according to Schirmmacher, most Christians would



From left: Archpr Panagiotis Tsubaklis, Msgr. Guido Assmann, Pastor Sebastian Appelfeller, Thomas Schirmmacher

not have accepted the seven ancient Eastern churches, which are currently suffering most bitterly, as Christian due to their alleged “Monophysitism” (“the teaching that Christ has one nature”). In Schirmmacher's view, however, that is history since it has long since been recognized that these churches are largely saying the same thing as all other churches thing while different terminology, and that “monophysitism” is a misnomer.

Schirmmacher counts as one of the people who is most familiar

with the situation regarding religious freedom around the world, and particularly as it also relates to the situation facing all denominations within the church. He has conducted discussions with Pope Francis on this subject and with all patriarchs within the Eastern churches. He also speaks before parliaments and at universities around the world.

The “31<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Michael Vespers in the St. Quirin Basilica in Neuss” took place and had as its topic “Ecumenical Solidarity in light of afflicted and persecuted Christians (Hebrews 10:32-35 and 1 Corinthians 12:24b-27).” The worship service was moderated by the heads of the three major denominations in Neuss: District Dean Msgr. Guido Assmann, Senior Pastor at St. Quirin (Münster) and host, Archpriest Panagiotis Tsubaklis from the Orthodox Church of Holy Nektarios in Neuss, and Pastor Sebastian Appelfeller, Chairman of the Association of Protestant Churches in Neuss.

A reception took place afterwards in the Cardinal Frings House (Kardinal-Frings-Haus). The organizer of the vespers, Dirk v. Hahn, observed that all the orders recognized by institutional churches were represented by delegations and participated in the vespers (Order of Saint John, Order of Malta, Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, Teutonic Order, Brotherhood of St. Michael). Dirk v. Hahn was highly satisfied with the way the vespers were conducted and with the timeliness of the topic of the ceremonial sermon.

### 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](http://www.ead.de/akref)

Culture and Science Publ.  
[www.vkwonline.com](http://www.vkwonline.com)

Giving Hands – International Charity  
[www.gebende-haende.de](http://www.gebende-haende.de)

Help Worldwide – International Charity  
[www.hilfe-weltweit.de](http://www.hilfe-weltweit.de)

Institute for Pro-life and Family Studies  
[www.bucer.de/ilfw](http://www.bucer.de/ilfw)

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.islaminstitute.net](http://www.islaminstitute.net)

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.iirf.eu](http://www.iirf.eu)

Martin Bucer Seminary  
[www.bucer.org](http://www.bucer.org)

Pro Mundis e. V.  
[www.thomasschirmmacher.net](http://www.thomasschirmmacher.net)

Theological Commission of “Hope for Europe” (European Evangelical Alliance)  
[www.hfe.org](http://www.hfe.org)

Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/)

## Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

### Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)  
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau  
Phone: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06  
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07  
E-Mail: [Titus.Vogt@bucer.de](mailto:Titus.Vogt@bucer.de)

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports



The following appeared in a report in the German newspaper *Rheinische Post*: “In light of the current stream of refugees, Professor Thomas Schirmmacher gave the attitude 'That doesn't have anything to do with us' a clear form of rejection. It was at the invitation of the Working Group of Christian Churches in and around Neuss (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen im Raum Neuss, or ACK) that Schirmmacher, the President of the International Commission and Chairman of the World Evangelical Alliance's Theological Commission headquartered in Bonn, preached on the topic of 'Ecumenical Solidarity in light of afflicted and persecuted Christians' in the Quirinusbasilika in Neuss. There, for the 31<sup>st</sup> time, Catholics and Evangelicals, Greek Orthodox and Old Catholic Christians together conducted ecumenical Michael Vespers.” [German news report: <http://www.rp-online.de/nrw/staedte/neuss/30-oekumenische-michaelsvesper-aid-1.5413324>]

The ecumenical vespers have taken place annually since 1984. Leading representatives from various denominations have repeatedly been obtained for the vespers. Thus, individuals who have held the ceremonial sermons have included the Archbishop of Cologne Dr. Rainer Kardinal Woelki in 2010, the Orthodox Archpriest Dr. Georgios Basioudis from Mannheim in 2011, Dr. Bernhard Felberg in 2012 and Dr. Karl Jüsten in 2013, both prelates and representatives of the Evangelical Church in Germany (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, or EKD) and the German Bishops' Conference (Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, or DBK) at the seat of the German Federal Government in Berlin, and in 2014 Dr. Athenagoras Ziliaskopoulos, from Frankfurt, Archimandrite of the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate (Istanbul).

### Downloads:

- [Photo 1](#): Thomas Schirmmacher in the Neuss Cathedral
- [Photo 2](#): from left: Archpriest Panagiotis Tsubaklis, Msgr. Guido Assmann, Pastor Sebastian Appelfeller, Thomas Schirmmacher

Released for free complete or partial reproduction

### DOWNLOADS OF GRAPHICS AND OF COMMUNICATION

<http://www.bucer.org/bq.html>

### SUBSCRIBING OR UNSUBSCRIBING BONN PROFILES

If you want to begin receiving or no longer wish to receive the Bonn Profiles, please send us an e-mail.

### Bonner Querschnitte Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

#### Text & Technology:

Titus Vogt (ViSdP)  
Vorderer Kamp 52a, D-25479 Ellerau  
Phone: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 06  
Fax: +49 / 4106 / 80 48 07  
E-Mail: [Titus.Vogt@bucer.de](mailto: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](http://www.ead.de/akref)

Culture and Science Publ.  
[www.vkwonline.com](http://www.vkwonline.com)

Giving Hands – International Charity  
[www.gebende-haende.de](http://www.gebende-haende.de)

Help Worldwide – International Charity  
[www.hilfe-weltweit.de](http://www.hilfe-weltweit.de)

Institute for Pro-life and Family Studies  
[www.bucer.de/ilfw](http://www.bucer.de/ilfw)

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.islaminstitute.net](http://www.islaminstitute.net)

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.iirf.eu](http://www.iirf.eu)

Martin Bucer Seminary  
[www.bucer.org](http://www.bucer.org)

Pro Mundis e. V.  
[www.thomasschirmmacher.net](http://www.thomasschirmmacher.net)

Theological Commission of “Hope for Europe” (European Evangelical Alliance)  
[www.hfe.org](http://www.hfe.org)

Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/tc/)