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Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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World Evangelical Alliance welcomes Ground Rules on Missions by Oslo Coalition

The International Institute for Religious Freedom and the World Evangelical Alliance would like to publicly welcome the Oslo Coalition for the Freedom of Religion or Belief into the international dialogue.

(Bonn, 30.09.2010) The International Institute for Religious Freedom and the World Evangelical Alliance would like to publicly welcome the Oslo Coalition for the Freedom of Religion or Belief into the international dialogue. Their Oslo Declaration, Missionary Activities and Human Rights: Recommended Ground Rules for Missionary Activities, should help stimulate and develop this important global discussion. Developed by Norwegian university institutes in cooperation with representatives of churches and non-Christian religions in Norway, it seeks to clarify those things about which the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Alliance are attempting to develop agreement within the Christian tradition. Reactions from some of our scholars:

The IIRF Director, Prof. Dr. Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher (Bonn), who participated in the expert discussions in Oslo in preparation for the Oslo Declaration, especially welcomed the fact that the Declaration recognizes peaceful mission efforts as an essential part of religious freedom and thereby as a basic human right, while also affirming the other rights of the people being served by missionaries.

The Co-Director of IIRF, Dr. Christof Sauer (Cape Town), announced that he plans to publish the Oslo text in the next edition of The International Journal for Religious Freedom in order to promote academic discussion of the Declaration. "This Declaration," claims Sauer, "offers a wide opportunity for Christians to establish ethical boundaries for their own mission efforts, in light of the whole range of temptations and failures of the past and present, as well as against the many partly unjustified objections from outside of the Christian faith."

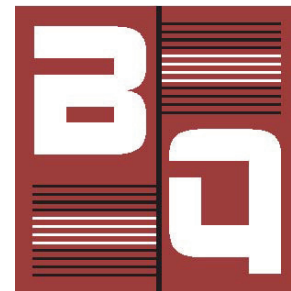
Rev. Dr. Paul C. Murdoch (Tübingen) noted, "As Chairman of the Board of IIRF, I am grateful for every contribution to the dialogue and discussion about mission and religious liberty. I welcome the sincere efforts of the Oslo Coalition to establish ethical guidelines and rules of fair play in the realm of missionary activity. It is my sincere hope that these 'ground rules' might further the cause and the implementation of religious liberty worldwide."

Prof. Dr. Thomas K. Johnson (Prague), of the Academic Council of the IIRF, was deeply impressed by the precise and balanced formulations of the Oslo Declaration.

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

Institute for Prolife and Family Studies
www.bucer.de/ilfw

Institute for Emergency Counseling, Terminal Care and Grief Counseling
www.bucer.de/ist

Commission for Religious Freedom of the German and the Austrian Evangelical Alliance
www.ead.de/akref

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

International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance
www.islaminstitute.net

Theological Commission of "Hope for Europe" (European Evangelical Alliance)
www.hfe.org

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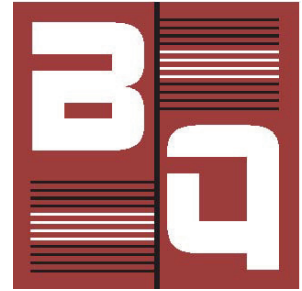
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“We should welcome the Oslo Declaration as a truly thoughtful contribution to the international discussion relating human rights with the world’s various religions. Representatives of all traditions should take it into account. It addresses the mystery of our humanness: tremendous reflected dignity mixed with the tragedy of our fallen condition that requires us to protect each other from each other. It should become our global goal that each person may freely consider which answer to the deepest questions of existence is most persuasive, without undue pressure or manipulation. If such a goal is achieved in even a tiny way, faith will be more authentic and society more humane.”

Prof. Dr. Dr. John Warwick Montgomery (Strasbourg), the distinguished human rights theorist and religious freedom lawyer, honorary chair of the academic board of IIRF, expects good results from the declaration: “A statement relating human rights to missionary activity is long overdue. Now this has been achieved--to the benefit of both believers and those who will learn of the faith from them.”

The text of the Oslo Declaration is available as a free download at www.oslocoalition.org/mhr.php and at www.iirf.eu, where one can also find valuable background material. A quality printed version can be ordered from Oslo Coalition, POBox 6706, St. Olavs plass, No-0130 Oslo, Norway. More information about religious freedom, human rights, and the ethics of missions can be found at the website of the International Institute for Religious Freedom, www.iirf.eu.

Downloads:

- “Oslo Coalition Groundrules for Missionary Activities”

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