

# Bonner Querschnitte

## Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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## BQ 438 – No. 43/2016

### Schirmmacher thanks the Württemberg Synod

(Bonn, 10.09.2016) The President of the International Council of the International Society for Human Rights, Thomas Schirmmacher, gave a plenary lecture to the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg in Heilbronn on the topic “Human Rights in the One World.” Schirmmacher had been proposed and invited by representatives of the ‘Open Church’ discussion group (comparable to parliamentary groups or factions).

“At focus day ‘Reformation – One World and Just Peace,’ theologian Thomas Schirmmacher said that human rights were not only above state rights but also above religions. ‘Human rights must be superordinate to all religions and world views; otherwise, they do not function.’ Christianity is easiest among the religions to accept the secular character of human rights,” reported the Protestant Press Service (epd) in its summary of the lecture.



Thomas Schirmmacher before the Württemberg Synod in Heilbronn © BQ/Warnecke

At the same time, Schirmmacher thanked the Synod and Bishop Frank-Ofried July for more than 20 years of support by the Württemberg Church for the work of the World Evangelical Alliance in matters of ecumenism and religious freedom. This support had borne rich fruit and had also contributed to the fact that in the meantime the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) cooperate with each other. He was therefore very pleased to be able to speak directly after the WCC's highest ranking representative.

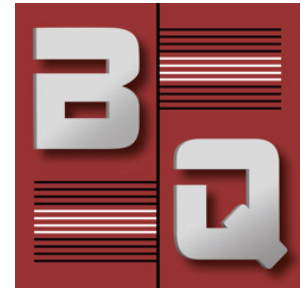
Prior to Schirmmacher, Dr. Agnes Regina Murei Abuom, moderator of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), spoke about the need for a theology of life for the preservation of the planet. Abuom belongs to the Anglican Church of Kenya.

Schirmmacher had met a week earlier with Abuom in Trondheim, Norway, at the WCC

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

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

Department of Theological Concerns of World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.worldevangelicals.org/pdf/TN-47-1-Jan-2018.pdf](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/pdf/TN-47-1-Jan-2018.pdf)

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

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

International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) of the World Evangelical Alliance (International Headquarter, German Branch Tübingen, EU-Office Brüssel)  
[www.iirf.eu](http://www.iirf.eu)

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Office of Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations of the World Evangelical Alliance

Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance  
[www.europeanea.org](http://www.europeanea.org)

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

UN Bonn liaison for inter-religious concerns of WEA

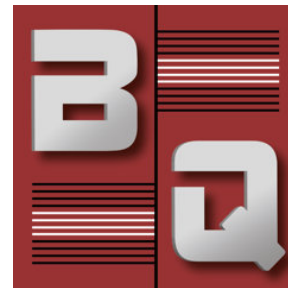
WEA Sustainability Center  
[www.wea-sc.org](http://www.wea-sc.org)

World Evangelical Alliance – Office Bonn

SOS World (Brussels)  
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Central Committee meeting, which Schirmmacher attended as a consultant.

In addition to his plenary address, Schirmmacher also spoke in a synod workshop on refugees. He repeated his principle support for church asylum for hardship cases in order to persuade the state to run checks but stressed that this must always be the last resort. On the contrary, church congregations should ensure that such critical cases are recognized well in advance and should be able to accompany them competently.



(from left to right) Bishop Frank Otfried July, Dr. Agnes Regina Murei Abuom, and Thomas Schirmmacher in discussion © BQ/Warnecke

Thomas Schirmmacher was accompanied by Prof. Dr. Christof Sauer, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg and co-director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom, who pleaded in the workshop for precautions to be taken if members of religious minorities were harassed in refugee shelters. To explain, he stated the following: “A central registration office at the highest level of the country (or alternatively at the Diakonisches Werk, a federal wide diaconal institution) should be created, where places of accommodation can register that are willing to receive refugees in need of special protection. Those who are acutely affected or individuals speaking for them should also be able to lodge reports there if a transfer is necessary due to an acute threat.”

### Downloads and Links:

- The lecture in the version distributed at the Synod ([pdf](#))
- [Photo 1](#), [photo 2](#), [photo 3](#), [photo 4](#), [photo 5](#), [photo 6](#): Thomas Schirmmacher before the Württemberg Synod in Heilbronn © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 7](#): Bishop Frank Otfried July listening to the lecture © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 8](#): Dr Agnes Regina Murei Abuom, WCC moderator, responding to questions © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 9](#): (from left to right) Bishop Frank Otfried July, Dr. Agnes Regina Murei Abuom, and Thomas Schirmmacher in discussion © BQ/Warnecke
- [Photo 10](#): Thomas Schirmmacher in conversation with Bishop Frank Otfried July © BQ/Warnecke

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