

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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BQ 545 – No. 28/2018

Detlef Blöcher to his 65th Birthday

By Thomas Schirmmacher, Chair of missiotop

(Bonn, 14.08.2018) The Executive Board of missiotop (Evangelical Forum for Missions, Cultures and Religions) of the German Evangelical Alliance takes the 65th birthday of Dr. Detlef Blöcher as an occasion for a very personal “thank you” in its journal “Evangelische Missiologie” 2/2018, pp. 113–114:

Dear Detlef,

when, after a quarter of a century, Klaus W. Müller, with his 65th birthday, wanted to resign from his post as chairman of the AfeM (today: Evangelical Forum for Missions, Cultures and Religions – missiotop) – even if he was to continue as our honorary chairman – it looked as if no successor would be found. It was then that you, not as the only one, but most intensively, took me personally to task, that the Working Group of Evangelical Missions (AEM) needs an independent discussion platform like the AfeM (missiotop) where one can think ahead, be theologically controversial, and research issues whose benefits are not detectable at first glance. You reminded me of my responsibility to keep ensuring this for the future. That shows how seriously you’ve always taken us, and that the close interlocking of AEM and AfeM was intended and used – for the best of the common goal given by Jesus Christ.



Dr. Detlef Blöcher © privat

You always had a sympathetic ear for the AfeM (missiotop). The thought that mission no longer researches, thinks and adapts to new situations, was a horror to you, and not because you have a loose relationship to the Bible or to the basic truths of the Christian faith, but particularly because the New Testament was a model in that mission is always on the move and that not we are the ones who want to write our history, but God is the one who always provides open doors in every new situation.

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Now you follow in Klaus W. Müller's steps. After 32 years of service to the mission, including 18 years as leader of the German Missionary Foundation, before that for 10 years as personell manager, and for 14 years as Chairman of the Working Group Evangelical Missions (AEM), you are leaving office on your 65th birthday.

Surveying your publications in our magazine "Evangelical Missiology (em)", I find that all articles revolve around diverse international research studies on the personal situation of missionaries. Why do missionaries return home? Why do they burn themselves out? What kind of support, mentoring, pastoral care do they need, and by whom? Here you underpinned, like a natural scientist, with solid facts, whatever motivated you at the DMG and AEM and you clearly showed: Professional support for our staff members abroad is a central need in mission and an integral duty of each missionary society, and no question of emergency "fire fighting" here and there, wherever it's burning – and often when it's too late. This is also the message you internationally promulgated to the many partner organisations of the DMG and to the World Evangelical Alliance.

You hand over your office in the DMG to two successors and the chairmanship of the AEM to your longtime vice and our longtime board member Dieter Trefz, the Head of Contact Mission. I hope – I say this with a smile – that's no hint that you did the work of three men.

We regret very much to have to do without you in the future! Especially as we lose with Dieter Trefz at the same time one of the pillars of our work on the Board of Management, even if, with him, a further good cooperation between AEM and missiotop is guaranteed.

May I, once I got going, praise three more things – I know already that you are by now furrowing your brow and are preparing an epistle about your mistakes :=)

- 1. With your calm, matter-of-fact manner, you've managed to divert many emotionally charged questions in our ranks from quarrel to a fruitful solution. This is a model for us, but also for the DMG with its 350 missionaries who work in 80 countries. Your successor, I know from experience, will continue along this line.*
- 2. You as a physicist and your wife as a graduated pharmacist apparently were lateral entrants in theology and mission. But that made sense and produced fruit, as already the good old Pharisees – much scolded and yet often later followers of Jesus – knew that actually no one should do theology without having first learned a decent profession. That your wife and you had focussed so much on the reality of daily missionary life had surely much to do with this.*
- 3. You were not above anything, you were not a "prince" of the missionary landscape. When in 2015 the many refugees came to Germany, you not only set the AEM on that trail, but rather personally tackled it and were active in a refugee reception camp. You've shown that mission is never just theory, but always also life, and a "mission leader" at heart always remains a missionary.*

Your Thomas, Chair, in the name of the whole board or missiotop

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- **Photo:** Dr. Detlef Blöcher © private
- Excerpt from “Evangelische Missiologie”, Issue 2/2018 ([pdf](#))
- missiotop logo ([png](#))
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