

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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Christ is our Business Card

Christians cannot hide Christ or put him at the End of the Line: Dialogue is at the same time Missions

(Bonn, 24.08.2017) The Chairman of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance, during an address in Osnabrueck entitled “Christ Alone” and held upon the anniversary of the Reformation, has defended the thesis that the age of global dialogue where religions are made out to be the same is coming to an end.

In four events, the Lutheran Church of St. Paul (Evangelisch-lutherische Paulusgemeinde) in Osnabrueck has commemorated the four so-called “solas” of the Reformation upon the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation in 1517.

In this connection, the church invited four leading Evangelical theologians active in Reformation churches, that is Bishop Gerhard Maier to address “Scripture Alone,” Professor Thomas Schirmmacher to address “Christ Alone,” Ulrich Parzany to address “Faith Alone,” and Peter Hahne to address “Grace Alone.”

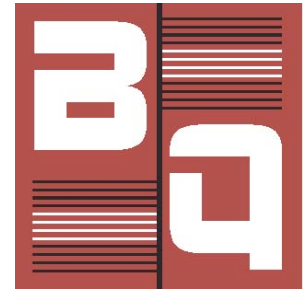
In contrast to an interreligious dialogue in which Christians first speak about Christ in the subsequent course of conversation or even think they are able to

completely leave Christ out, Schirmmacher emphasized that Christ is our business card, and it is our mandate to bear witness to Christ from the outset.

In this connection, Schirmmacher quoted from the paper on the ethics of missions jointly adopted by the Vatican, the World Council of Churches (WCC), and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) in 2011 entitled ‘*Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World.*’ In this paper, dialogue is integrated into the missionary mandate. At the outset one reads: “Mission belongs to the very being of the church. Proclaiming the word of God and witnessing to the world is essential for every Christian.” At the same time, however, dialogue is indispensable, and in this regard one reads the following:



Schirmmacher in the Lutheran Church of St. Paul in Osnabrueck
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Theological Commission of “Hope for Europe” (European Evangelical Alliance)
www.hfe.org

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“Christian witness in a pluralistic world includes engaging in dialogue with people of different religions and cultures (cf. Acts 17:22-28).”

World Christianity can no longer go back, and Schirmmacher holds that this has long since been a matter not unique to Evangelicals. The declaration ‘*Clarity and being a good Neighbor*,’ issued on the topic of Islam by the EKD (Evangelische Kirche Deutschland, or the Protestant Church in Germany) in 2007, has likewise worked that out very well. When for a time we emphasize common features towards Muslims and other monotheists and set aside Jesus for somewhat later, Muslims get everything before we Christians have even gotten started. We only know God through and in Christ and for that reason also have to, from the first minute onward, speak about him. And it is for that reason that we are rightly called “Christians.”

Downloads and Links:

- [Photo 1](#) and [Photo 2](#): Schirmmacher in the Lutheran Church of St. Paul in Osnabrueck © BQ / Warnecke
- [Photo 3](#): Thomas Schirmmacher and Burkhard Affeld, a prior long time pastor of the Church of St. Paul in Osnabrueck © BQ / Warnecke
- Website of the Lutheran Church of St. Paul (Evangelisch-lutherische Paulusgemeinde) in Osnabruck: <https://www.paulusgemeinde-in-osnabrueck.de>

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