

Bonner Querschnitte

Bonn Profiles – Press Reports

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International theological declaration on theology of martyrdom released

(Bonn, Germany / Cape Town, South Africa / 22.10.2010) The co-director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom – IIRF (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo) of the World Evangelical Alliance, Dr Christof Sauer, announced that an international theological declaration on facing suffering for Christ has been released.

The aim of the *Bad Urach Statement*, named after the location in Germany, where it was drafted, is to develop an evangelical theology of suffering, persecution and martyrdom for the global church in mission.

The declaration emanates from an international consultative process, coordinated by the institute on behalf of the Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance. This process culminated in a consultation which took place on September 16-18, 2009, in Bad Urach, Germany. About 30 theologians from 5 continents participated.

The *Bad Urach Statement* subtitled “Towards an evangelical theology of suffering, persecution and martyrdom for the global church in mission” is a 50 page statement. It calls the church to properly understand the relationship between its mission and suffering.

Sauer, who chaired the editorial group, explains: “We found it crucial to extensively develop the biblical foundations, as they have often and long been forgotten in many parts of the world.” The statement also develops in great detail appropriate Christian responses to suffering, persecution and martyrdom. It does so on all levels, from the realm of the individual Christian, the local church, national churches and Christian networks, to mission and theological education.

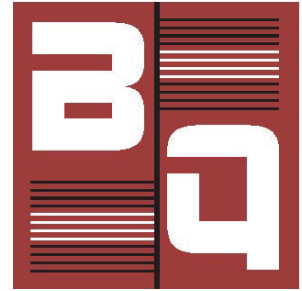
The statement is also summarized in “*The Bad Urach Call – toward understanding suffering, persecution, and martyrdom for the global church in mission*”, for popular use. It calls Christians to remember their persecuted brothers and sisters in prayer, assisting them as possible; to understand the forces that lead to persecution, and to become transformed, learning from fellow believers truths of God that can only come through suffering.

Rev Godfrey Yogarajah (Colombo, Sri Lanka), the Executive Director of the Religious Liberty Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance comments that this subject is of great relevance to the global church at this time of history: “Mission is being done in the context of suffering and persecution and to undergird it with a solid biblical and theological foundation is the need of the hour.”

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Institute for Emergency Counseling, Terminal Care and Grief Counseling
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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

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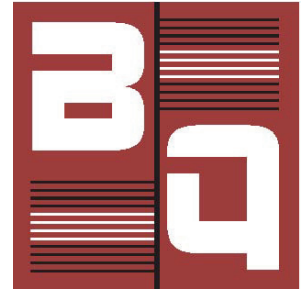
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This sentiment is echoed by the Executive Director of the Mission Commission of the WEA, Bertil Ekström (Brazil), and Dr William Taylor (USA), the Global Ambassador of WEA: “We thank God for the Bad Urach Statement as we affirm the need for solid theological foundations on the issue.”

Rev Dr Christopher J.H. Wright (London), the Chair of the Lausanne Theology Working Group noted: “These issues are at the heart of the biblical faith in both Testaments, and need to be given much more theological attention, such as this process and consultation did.”

Prof. Dr Thomas Schirmacher (Bonn, Germany), the Director of the IIRF lauded the symbolic value of the broad cooperation of various bodies. He holds: “Many leaders and theologians living under persecution have developed a sound biblical and theological evaluation of suffering and its consequences for believers, churches and the world at large. It is time that international theology and especially Western theology starts taking their contribution seriously as a major part of a contemporary approach to our world and of systematic and historical theology.”

Dr Paul Murdoch (Tübingen, Germany), the Chairman of the International Institute for Religious Freedom explained that the International Institute for Religious Freedom plays an enabling role, networking academic research of religious liberty issues on a global level.

The full text of the Bad Urach Statement and The Bad Urach Call can be viewed at the International Institute for Religious Freedom website, www.iirf.eu.

It is also published in the new book edited by the convenors of the consultation, Christof Sauer and Richard Howell “Suffering, Persecution and Martyrdom – Theological Reflections” Kempton Park, South Africa: Acadsa / Bonn, Germany: VKW.

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Downloads:

- Bad Urach Statement (pdf)
- The Bad Urach Call (pdf)

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