

# Bonner Querschnitte

*Bonn Profiles – Press Reports*

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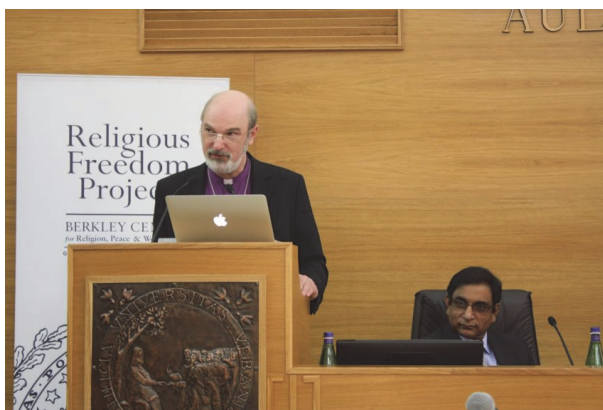
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## **BQ 410 – No. 15/2016**

### **Pontifical University: Schirmmacher calls all churches to unite in prayer, research and advocacy in face of exploding discrimination and persecution of Christians**

#### **IIRF well received by the US-Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom**

(Bonn, 17.05.2016) On the occasion of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Second Vatican Council's declaration on religious freedom, and an international consultation organized by the Center for Civil and Human Rights at the University of Notre Dame, the Religious Freedom Project at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University and the Community of Sant'Egidio, the director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) lectured at the Pontifical University in the Vatican. He was accompanied by two colleagues of the IIRF, co-director Prof. Dr. Christof Sauer from Cape Town, and Prof. Dr. Thomas K. Johnson. Since the time of this conference, Dr. Johnson has been appointed as Religious Freedom Ambassador to the Vatican by the leadership of the WEA.



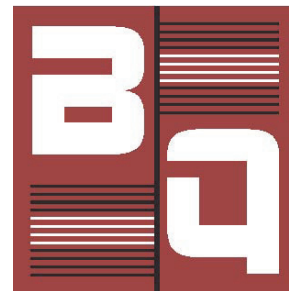
Thomas Schirmmacher lecturing in the Pontifical University Urbaniana, sitting Dr Paul Bhatti, Pakistan

Schirmmacher, who is also moderator of intrafaith and interfaith relations of WEA, called all churches to unite in prayer, research and advocacy in face of exploding discrimination and persecution of Christians. He pointed to the successful consultation of all churches worldwide in Tirana in November, 2015, which proved that such cooperation is possible and urgent.

The conference in Rome was attended by several Patriarchs and bishops of Oriental churches, by major researchers on religious freedom, especially from the USA,

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Institute for Pro-life and Family Studies  
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International Institute for Islamic Studies of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.islaminstitute.net](http://www.islaminstitute.net)

International Institute for Religious Freedom of the World Evangelical Alliance  
[www.iirf.eu](http://www.iirf.eu)

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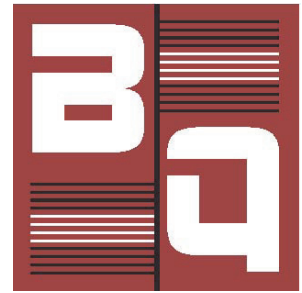
Pro Mundis e. V.  
[www.thomasschirmmacher.net](http://www.thomasschirmmacher.net)

Theological Commission of "Hope for Europe" (European Evangelical Alliance)  
[www.hfe.org](http://www.hfe.org)

Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance  
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including the team of researchers of the Religious Freedom Project, and by heads of major NGO's in the field of religious freedom advocacy and research.

During a reception in the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, Johnson and Schirmmacher spoke with U.S. Ambassador Ken F. Hackett, several other ambassadors to the Holy



(from left) Thomas Schirmmacher, Thomas K. Johnson, WEA's Religious Freedom Ambassador to the Vatican, the Cardinal of Nigeria, Ken Hackett, Ambassador of the USA to the Holy See – in his official residence

was President of Catholic Relief Services (CRS), an international humanitarian agency supported by the U.S. Catholic community, from 1993 to 2012.

Ambassador David N. Saperstein is the Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. He was confirmed by the Senate on December 12, 2014, and was sworn in and assumed his duties on January 6, 2015. The Ambassador at Large is, by law, a principal advisor to the President and Secretary of State and serves as the United States' chief diplomat on issues of religious freedom worldwide. He also heads the Office of International Religious Freedom in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. A rabbi and an attorney, Ambassador Saperstein previously served for 40 years as the Director of the Religious Action Center of

See and the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, David N. Saperstein. On that occasion, Saperstein thanked IIRF for upholding the topic of religious freedom in the academic world and for its journal, the only journal of its kind. He invited the IIRF scholars to his office in the State Department.

Ambassador Ken F. Hackett was nominated by President Barack Obama on June 14, 2013 to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See and confirmed by the United States Senate on August 1, 2013. Ambassador Hackett



Ecumenical service, Schirmmacher at the pulpit, left of him Dr Paul Bhatti, Pakistan

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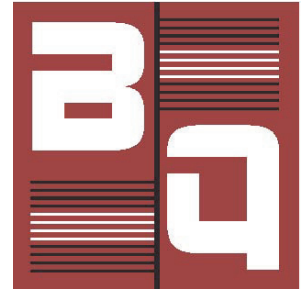
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Reform Judaism (RAC), overseeing the national social justice programming for the largest segment of American Jewry.

“Under Caesar’s Sword” is a three-year, collaborative global research project that investigates how Christian communities respond when their religious freedom is severely violated. The Templeton Religion Trust awarded a grant of \$1.1 million to the Center for Civil and Human Rights and the Religious Freedom Project at the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University to carry out the research

### Downloads and links:

- <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/rfp>
- <http://ucs.nd.edu/about/>
- **Photo 1:** Thomas Schirmmacher lecturing in the Pontifical University Urbaniana, sitting Dr Paul Bhatti, Pakistan
- **Photo 2:** (from left) Thomas Schirmmacher, Thomas K. Johnson, WEA’s Religious Freedom Ambassador to the Vatican, the Cardinal of Nigeria, Ken Hackett, Ambassador of the USA to the Holy See – in his official residence
- **Photo 3:** Ecumenical service, Schirmmacher at the pulpit, left of him Dr Paul Bhatti, Pakistan
- **Photo 4:** (left to right:) Prof. Bielefeldt, Prof. Sauer, Patriarch Ignatius Joseph III. Younan (Patriarch of the Syriac Catholic Church of Antioch in Beirut), Prof. Schirmmacher
- **Photo 5:** Thomas Schirmmacher lecturing in the Pontifical University Urbaniana

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