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Veteran of global interreligious dialogue: Dialogue and mission belong together

(Bonn, 30.01.2025) Thomas Schirmmacher has compiled various lectures and essays from the last two decades that address the question of whether apologetics of the Christian faith towards other religions and worldviews is fundamentally compatible with interreligious dialogue or not and whether truth claims make dialogue with other religions and worldviews impossible or very difficult.

Schirmmacher writes: “I argue that the two sides can and must go together, that is, that a dialogue with other religions and worldviews is both 1. only intellectually honest and 2. only in line with the essence of the Christian faith if we face up to the truth claim of central Christian beliefs and at the same time seek a serious conversation on equal terms.”

The book is thus also a defense of the position of the 2011 document adopted by the Vatican, the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance, “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World,” which states that Christian world mission can and must go hand in hand with a dialogue with followers of other religions and with religious freedom and peace among religions.

According to a number of representatives of pluralistic theology of religion or similar concepts, dialogue can only take place if one strongly relativizes or completely abandons one’s own claim to truth. For example, Catholic theologian Paul Knitter says that dialogue is impossible if one of the partners enters into it with a claim to truth. Schirmmacher says: “In reality, a dialogue in which both sides give up their claim to truth never takes place, at least not if representatives of Islam are involved. Dialogue in which only one side does this takes place quite rarely. Most often, in reality, an intensive

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Evangelical Missiology, Journal of missiopotop – Evangelical Forum for Missions, Cultures and Religions (German Evangelical Alliance) missiopotop.org

Evangelical Review of Theology (New York, Bonn) theology.worlddea.org/evangelical-review-of-theology

Giving Hands – International Charity (Bonn) gebende-haende.de

Institut für Islamfragen der Deutschen, Schweizer und Österreichischen Allianz (IfI) islaminstitut.de

International Institute for Islamic Studies (IIS) (Bonn) islaminststitute.net

International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) (Bonn, Vancouver, San José – Costa Rica) iirf.global

International Journal for Religious Freedom (IJRF) (Bonn/Toronto) ijrf.org

International Secretariat of the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) ishr.org

Islam and Christianity journal.islaminststitute.net

Martin Bucer Seminary (Bonn, Zürich, Tirana, São Paulo, Helsinki, Istanbul, Delhi) bucer.org

SOS World (Brussels) sosworld.be/page-daccueil

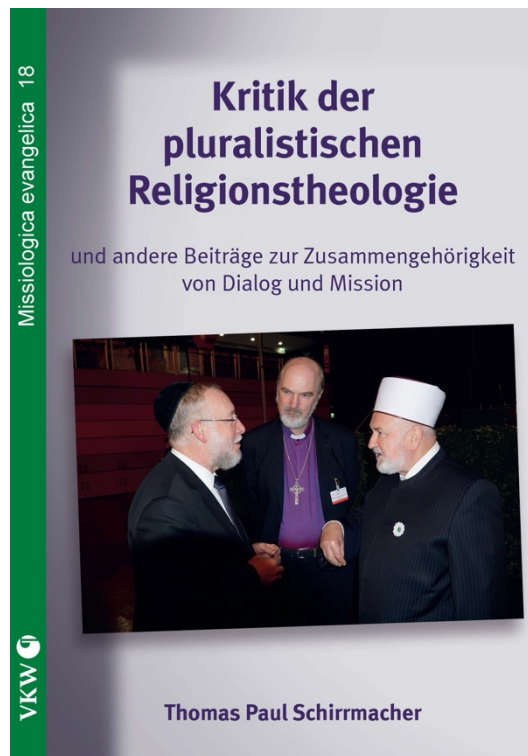
Theological Commission of the European Evangelical Alliance europeanea.org

Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft (VKW) (Culture and Science Publ.) vkwonline.com

WEA book series: Global Issues Series / World of Theology Series theology.worlddea.org/global-issues
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dialogue takes place between followers of religions and worldviews who listen to each other in a friendly and peaceful manner, who want to serve society together, but who do not consider the essence of their faith to be open to question.”

About the author

Archbishop Prof. Dr. theol. Dr. phil. Dr. mult. Thomas Paul Schirmmacher is President of the International Council of the International Society for Human Rights (Frankfurt), President of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Costa Rica, Vancouver, Bonn) and Co-President of Religions for Peace (New York). Since his doctorate in Missiology in 1985, he has been significantly involved in the worldwide spread of the gospel. At the same time, he has been participating in many global meetings of interreligious dialogue for decades, but he has also visited and supported many dialogue initiatives worldwide.

Bibliographic information

- Thomas Paul Schirmmacher. *Kritik der pluralistischen Religionstheologie und andere Beiträge zur Zusammengehörigkeit von Dialog und Mission*. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 2024. 320 S. Pb. 28 Euro. ISBN 978-3-86269-300-9.

Downloads and Links:

- Book cover ([jpg](#))
- **Photo 1:** Christian Muslim Buddhist dialogue in the largest Buddhist monastery in Bali 2023 © BQ/Martin Warnecke
- **Photo 2:** Global Evangelical and Jewish delegations at Yad Yashem Jerusalem 2023 © BQ/Martin Warnecke
- **Photo 3:** In the Brussels EU Commission with Muslims and Jews on the topic of slaughter in 2022 © BQ/Martin Warnecke
- **Photo 4:** Thomas Schirmmacher with the Secretary General of the Muslim World League Muhammad bin Abdul Karim Issa in Bali 2024 © BQ/Martin Warnecke
- Author's page on the book: <https://thomasschirmmacher.info/?p=22735>
- Download of the book: <https://www.thomasschirmmacher.info/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/978-3-86269-300-9.pdf>
- Order option: <https://vkwonline.com/Kritik-der-pluralistischen-Religionstheologie>

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