

Dialogue session Wednesday, October 20, 2010, 4 pm, Westin Grand Hotel - Ballroom East

"In Defense of Christian Liberty: The International Ethic Code for Christian Witness"

Thomas Schirrmacher / Available for discussion: Godfrey (Colombo, Sri Lanka), Christof Sauer (Cape Town), Are L. Svendsen (Oslo, Norway)

Outline:

- 1 Proposal for a valid definition of fundamentalism as *militant* truth claim
- 2 Why you cannot be a fundamentalist if fighting for freedom and religious freedom
- 3 The historic role of the Evangelical movement against slavery, for religious freedom and for a democratic law protection of minorities
- 4 Peaceful mission as an integral part of freedom and religious freedom
- 5 The necessity for theological work and discussion here
- 6 Ethic codes for mission: theological and human rights reasons
 - * The secular ethic codes on mission (eg Oslo Coalition)
 - * The upcoming ethic code for mission by Vatican, WCC and WEA
 - * The upcoming ethic code for mission by WEA

Discussion questions:

- 1 Can we really grant freedom and religious freedom to people, whose faith is not the truth? Can we preach the gospel as truth to people and at the same time fight for the political freedom of those people to believe otherwise? Or even do peace-building in society together with them?
- 2 What could be the reason that virtually all former Christian countries are democracies today, most Muslim countries are not (and the other religions are in the middle field)? Does this mean that Evangelicals/Christians always have to be in favour of democracy?
- 3 Are there circumstances in which the church or its members might defend themselves physically when persecuted as Christians?

Available material

- IIRF/WEA-CD with *International Journal for Religious Freedom* (3 issues = Vols 1+2), *WEA Global Issues Series* (6 books on human rights, Islam, religious freedom) and many further books – take as many copies as you want!
- *Suffering, persecution and martyrdom – Theological reflections*, Sauer & Howell (eds.), Kempton Park: AcadSA Publishing / Bonn: VKW 2010, 360 pp.
- *International Journal for Religious Freedom* 3/1 (print only) "Mission & Persecution"; containing:
 - Oslo Coalition Code
 - Article by Schirrmacher & Johnson: Why Evangelicals need a code of ethics for mission
- Three sheets by Christof Sauer on: Suffering, Religious Freedom, Ethical Mission.
- Fundamentalism (6 pages) by Thomas Schirrmacher

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Prof. Dr. phil. Dr. theol. Thomas Schirrmacher (b. 1960) is professor of the sociology of religion at the State University of the West in Timisoara (Romania), president of Martin Bucer European School of Theology and Research Institutes, director of the International Institute for Religious Freedom (Bonn, Cape Town, Colombo), speaker for human rights of the World Evangelical Alliance and chair of its Theological Commission. He received doctorates in 1985 in missiology in Kampen (Netherlands), in cultural anthropology in Los Angeles in 1989, and in comparative religion in 2007 at the State University of Bonn (Germany).