

MBS TEXTE 65



3. Jahrgang
2006

Thomas Schirrmacher

**Biblical Reasons
for Evangelical
Missions**



Theological Accents

Theologische Akzente

Table of Contents

Inhaltsverzeichnis

31 Propositions.....	3
Part I: World Missions are an essential part of Christianity.....	3
Part II. Missions and Cultural Diversity	8
Part III. Conversion and Social Change.....	11
The Author	14
Impressum	15

* This propositions were presented as a common formulation of evangelical missiology to the tenth jubilee of the journal „Evangelikale Missiologie“ of the „Association of German evangelical missiologists“ (AfeM) in 1994 and published in the jubilee edition of this magazine as well as several other evangelical magazines in the German speaking world and the Netherlands. This is an updated version, making 31 propositions out of the original 30.

Biblical Reasons for Evangelical Missions

Thomas Schirrmacher

31 Propositions

Note 1. The following propositions are not intended to present the author's own theological position, but to formulate Biblical justifications for a doctrine common to the majority of Evangelical missiologists. The author is aware that such a generalisation can never satisfactorily reflect all views, and that his own opinion will always be evident. For this reason, he has chosen the title, „Biblical Reasons“ rather than „the Biblical Reasons“, as if he represented Evangelical missiology in general.

Note 2: The following propositions do not intent to present a summary of Christian doctrine. They assume acceptance of the Apostolic Creed, of the great dogmas of the Early Church (the Trinity, Jesus truly man and truly God) and of the Soteriology of the Reformation (Salvation by Grace and the Scriptures as sole authority for faith and salvation), etc.

Part I: World Missions are an essential part of Christianity

Proposition 1: God was the first missionary.

God was and is the first missionary. After the Fall of Man, the history of mankind appeared to come to an end.

God, however, did not leave things as they were, but came Himself, in His grace and mercy, to the Garden of Eden to seek Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8–9). He proclaimed to them both the Judgment and Salvation to come (Gen. 3:14–21).

Proposition 2: Jesus is the prototype of the missionary.

God the Father sent Jesus as a human being to earth to carry the punishment on the cross, and to bring about and proclaim salvation. Before the Creation (Eph. 1:4), God had already decided not to abandon mankind to his fate, but to send Himself into the world as a missionary in Jesus (John 3:16).

Proposition 3: The mission of Christ's church is rooted in God's original sending of Himself into the world as a missionary (Missio Dei).

The New Testament sees the sending of the disciples (the apostles) as the direct continuation of God's sending of Christ (Mt. 10:40, Mk. 9:37, Luk. 10:16, Acts 3:20, 26; about 50 times in the Gospel of John; first in Jn. 3:17. See Is. 48:16) and of the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:26, 15:26, Luk. 24:49). In John 17:18, Jesus says, „As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world“.

In John 20:21, he addresses the disciples personally, „As the Father has sent Me, I also send you“. God the Father sends His Son and His Spirit as the first missionaries. The church carries on this task through world missions. This is the reason for the existence of the New Testament church. Christian missions are rooted in the triune God and in His sending of Himself.

Proposition 4: Jesus chose the Twelve only for the purpose of preparing them for their commission in the world.

Jesus chose the disciples „that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach“ (Mk. 3:13). From the very beginning, the goal of their intensive training through living and working with Him was to prepare them for the Great Commission. Their training as missionaries was not arbitrary, but clearly according to His deliberate plan. Take, for example, the following steps. 1). Jesus first preached alone; 2). then preached while the disciples observed; 3). then let the disciples preach while He observed. 4). Next, He sent them out for a short mission (Mt. 10:1–11, Mk. 6:7–13, Luk. 9:1–6); discusses the results with them and then finally; 5). sends them out alone (although He is, as resurrected Lord, still with them. Mt. 28:20). The disciples then began to do the same with other Christians. Thus, training towards independence is a central element of missions.

Proposition 5: Jesus's most important concern between the resurrection and His ascent into Heaven was world missions.

All four Gospels include some form of the Great Commission given in the period of time following the resurrection (Mt. 28:16–20, Mk. 16:15–20, Luk. 24:13–53, particularly vs. 44–49, Jn. 20:11–23, particularly vs. 21–23, Acts 1:4–11). The various commissions indicate that Jesus proclaimed world missions, made possible by His sacrificial death on the Cross, for the most important aspect of His suffering, death and resurrection.

Proposition 6: Pentecost demonstrates that world missions in the power of the Spirit is the most significant characteristic of Christ's church.

Jesus had often commanded the disciples to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit before beginning to evangelize the peoples of the world (Mk. 16:15–20, Acts 1:4–11). The Spirit was to come order to convince the world of the Gospel in Jesus' place (Jn. 16:7–11). With the coming of the Spirit, both the New Testament church and world missions had their beginning. On the day of Pentecost, as the apostles began to speak in the languages of hearers from different parts of the the whole world, and as their audience was able, to understand them, it became clear that the Gospel was able through the power of the Holy Spirit, to overcome all barriers of culture and language.

Proposition 7: Without the Holy Spirit, all world missions and mission strategies would be futile and come to nothing.

Only the Holy Spirit can convict men of their guilt (John 16:7–10), lead them into the knowledge of God and salvation through Jesus and make them new creatures in Christ (John 3:5). Although God permits Christians to take part in world missions and wants them to use their intellect in order to reach others (see e. g. Pauls many detailed travel plans as well as his general strategy, e. g. in Rom. 1+15), mission strategies can only be successful when God has decided to let them succeed (1 Cor. 12:4–6; Rom. 1:13).

Proposition 8: Jesus guaranteed the success of world missions as the result of His invisible Lordship. The success of world missions confirms His Lordship.

Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew's Gospel justifies world missions by the assurance, „All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth“ (Mt. 28:18), and that he will always be with His church (Mt. 28:20). Thus, the Great Commission is not only an assignment but also a promise. Jesus Himself carries the responsibility for discipling all nations, for, He says, „I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it“ (Mt. 16:18).

The Book of Revelations proclaims repeatedly that people of all languages and cultures belong to the numberless congregation of the redeemed. „And

they sang a new song, saying; ‚You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals; For You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God‘“ (Rev. 5:9–10. See also Rev. 7:9, 10:11, 14:6).

Proposition 9: Expansion is a characteristic of the Kingdom of Heaven, as is made clear especially in prophetic imagery in the Book of Daniel and in Jesus' parables.

Nebukadnezar's dream ends with a stone rolling down from Heaven to destroy the statue of the empires, and then to become a great mountain which filled the earth. Daniel comments, „And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever“ (Dan. 2:34–35, 44). Similarly, Daniel also dreams of empires portrayed as beasts (Dan. 7:9–14, 26–27). These kingdoms come to an end when the Son of Man, later Jesus' name for Himself, ascends to Heaven (the Ascension of Christ), where He receives „dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him“ (Dan. 7:14). This kingdom will be eternal (Dan. 7:14, 27).

As a matter of fact, Jesus established His kingdom, beginning with the disciples and the Church, in the time of the Roman Empire. In many parables

Jesus prophesied that His kingdom will grow until it fills the whole earth (e. g. the parable of the weeds: Mt. 13:24–30, 36–43; the parable of the mustard seed: Mt. 13:31–32; the parable of the yeast: Mt. 13:33–35). The promise of growth in both Testaments is universal, internal and external, spiritual and numerical, for the individual and for the group.

The internal and external growth of the Kingdom of Heaven and of the Church of Jesus Christ does not mean that every single Christian church, denomination or group automatically takes part in this expansion. God sometimes disciplines His Church or lets unfaithful churches die out (see Rev. 2:5; Rom. 11:20–21).

Proposition 10: The growth and the final success of the Kingdom of Heaven does not exclude, but includes the suffering of the Church of Jesus Christ. Christianity does not insure a life without problems.

Paul is not arrogant because of His „peace with God“ through the mercy of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1–2), but writes: „We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance ... because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit ...“ (Rom 5:3–5).

The parable of the wheat and the tares (Mt. 13:24–30, 36–43), which describes the growth of the Kingdom of God, demonstrates that not only the Kingdom of God, but also the kingdom of evil will mature. The weeds, however, can only last until the wheat has rip-

ened. The evil may only grow because God grows his church. If there would be no church in the world, the world would be ready for final judgment (cf. Gen. 18:22–23).

Proposition 11: The New Testament justifies world missions not so much with the Great Commission, but with quotations from the Old Testament.

In studying the New Testament discussion on the justification of world missions, one realizes that, in nearly all cases, the Old Testament is quoted instead of the Great Commission, which was the starting signal that God's plan, which had already been announced and prepared, was now to go ahead. The Great Commission is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The whole book of Romans, especially Chapter 15, is an obvious example because Paul quotes the Old Testament continuously in this letter in defense of missions.

When Paul and Barnabas had been rejected by the Jews, and wanted to justify preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles of Antioch instead, they did not cite the Great Commission given by Jesus, but the Great Commission to Isaiah, „For so the LORD has commanded us: ‚I have set You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be for salvation to the ends of the earth‘“ (Acts 13:46–49, quoting Is. 49:6). The context of the verse in Isaiah shows that the apostles were appealing to an Old Testament Commission, „It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of

Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel, I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth“.

James also concluded the council of Jerusalem by justifying Paul’s plan to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles with Amos 9:11–12 (Compare Is. 61:4, Ps. 22:27–28, Zech. 8:22), in which the tabernacle of David – for James the Church – is rebuilt by adding the Gentiles to the remnant of Judah. Peter defends the conversion of Cornelius with a reference to the Old Testament, „And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remissions of sins“ (Acts 10:42–43).

Proposition 12: The Old Testament justification for New Testament missions demonstrates that world missions are a direct continuation of God’s activity from the Fall of Man and the election of Abraham on.

Jesus confirmed the Old Testament justification for New Testament missions in the Great Commission of Luke. „These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.“ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, „Thus it is written and thus it was necessary for

the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.“ (Luke 24:44–48) According to these words, all parts of the Old Testament speak not only of His coming and of the Cross and the resurrection, but expressly also of world missions: forgiveness must be preached to all nations.

Proposition 13: The choosing (election) of the Old Testament covenant people was made with the thought of all nations in mind, so that the theme of world missions was already present in the Old Testament.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were elected, so that all nations of the earth should be blessed through them. (Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14). The promise made to the patriarchs is thus referred to in the New Testament as justification for the evangelization of non-Jews (Luk. 1:54–55, Acts 3:25–26, Rom. 4:13–25, Eph. 3:3–4, Gal. 3:7–9, 14, Heb. 6:13–20, 11:12).

Proposition 14: For this reason, the Old Testament includes many examples of non-Jews who heard God’s message from Jews and came to a saving faith in the one true God. At the same time, many texts in the Old Testament prophetic books are addressed to heathen nations.

The Book of Ruth, for example, reports the conversion of a heathen, the

Book of Jonah the prophet's successful missionary journey to Nineveh. Almost all Old Testament prophets call heathen nations to repentance. Naaman, the Syrian, Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and the prostitute, Rahab are only three examples of heathens converted to the Living God. The Old Testament frequently records proclamations of world rulers which praise God and are directed to all peoples (above all in Ezra, Nehemia, Esther and Daniel).

Proposition 15: Thus, world missions cannot be divorced from the Old Testament, from the history of the people of Israel and from the Old Testament salvation history but must be practiced and interpreted in the light of its teaching.

Paul confirms this in Romans 9–11. The relationship between world missions and the Jewish people has two sides: first, the election of the Jews, and second, their disobedience, „Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers“ (Rom. 11:28). Paul shows that the future conversion of the Jews to their Messiah, Jesus Christ, will have immeasurably positive effects on the evangelization of all nations (Rom. 11:15,24–26).

Proposition 16: The book of Romans shows that world missions must be rooted in sound, thorough Biblical teaching, and that healthy, systematic Biblical teaching always leads to world missions.

Paul wrote the book of Romans in the midst of mission work and justifies the necessity of the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel. At the same time, the Book of Romans is the most systematic Biblical presentation of the Gospel and the Christian creed in the Bible. In the book of Romans, Paul plans to come to Rome (Rom. 1:14–17), because he wants to proclaim the Gospel to all men without exception, regardless of language, culture and race („Greeks and non-Greeks“), education or social class („the wise and the foolish“). Following this description of his missionary plans, he begins his ‚actual‘ subject. The well-known verses which introduce his doctrine (Rom. 1:16–17), begin with „For ...“. At the end of his letter (Rom 15,14–16,27) Paul returns to his concrete missions plans. The chapters between are simply a dogmatic justification of his plans. The ‚obedience of faith‘ must be delineated first, so that it can be proclaimed to all nations.

Whoever practices missions only pragmatically, without reference to ‚doctrine‘, does so in his own name, because he ignores God's directions. Whoever teaches ‚doctrine‘, without reference to missions, teaches his own ideas and ignores the reasons why God has given for His Word.

Part II. Missions and Cultural Diversity

Proposition 17: The variety of peoples and cultures is not the result

of sin, but was planned by God. According to the Scripture, we need to reject only those elements of a culture which expressly contradict His holy will.

Cultural diversity is neither negative nor the consequence of God's judgment by means of the confusion of languages following the erection of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9). By confusing man's languages, God enforced His own command, to scatter all over the earth („fill the earth“, Gen. 1:28, 9:1), which automatically resulted in the division of mankind into a multitude of families and nations, as well as professions, capabilities and cultures. In building the Tower of Babel, man tried to establish a single, uniform worldwide culture. As the Book of Revelation and the Antichrist in both Testaments make clear, this has always been Satan's plan. The „Beast“ of Revelation receives his power from the „Dragon“: „It was granted to him to make war ... And authority was given him over every tribe, tongue, and nation“ (Rev. 13:1–10). God, however, wants neither a single uniform city, a single worldwide government, nor a worldwide uniform Humanism. His Word guarantees the unity of the world, but not any visible earthly structure. He „scattered“ mankind „over all the earth“ (Gen 11:9).

From the sons of Noah onwards „the whole earth became inhabited“ (Gen 9:19) and people „spread out ... according to their nations“ (Gen. 10:5, cf. 10:32). God is therefore Creator of all nationalities, because „from one man

he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live“ (Acts 17:26, similarly in Deut. 32:8, Ps. 74:17).

Proposition 18: Christians are free from any cultural pressure. They do not have to accept any human tradition or commandment besides those given by God.

This is especially evident in Mark 7:1–13, where Jesus criticises the Pharisees for raising their own human culture to the level of divine Law.

Proposition 19: Christians are able to judge other cultures according to Biblical standards, once they have learned to distinguish between their own culture (even their own Christian culture) and the overall valid commandments of God.

Mark 7:1–13 explains this best. The Pharisees had honorable, pious motives for creating obligatory regulations in addition to God's Law which many of these rules actually contradicted. Jesus severely criticizes the sect for equating their own customs with divine Law: „They serve me in vain, because they teach commandments of men“ (Mark 7,7; Mat. 15:9).

Proposition 20: Because Christians belong to Christ alone and must submit to His Word alone, they can view their own culture and that of other people's critically, but are

obliged by love to adjust to other's cultures.

In 1 Cor. 9:19–23, Paul explains the necessity of adjusting to other cultures while evangelizing: „For through I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law, to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.“

A Christian can be so heavily involved in his own culture, that he does not realize that at the best he is not understood and at the worst he is a „barrier“ (1 Cor. 9:12) for others to understand the Gospel.

Proposition 21: We are not only responsible to tell other people the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, but also to insure that people have understood the message.

This is the reason, why the Bible other than the Quran may be translated into every language and that the Gospel may and should be proclaimed in every dialect and cultural form.

Proposition 22: World missions does not ignore the existing social situation, but use it strategically. For this reason, Paul founded churches at the great merchant junctions and population centers, left the evangelization of the surrounding areas to these churches and moved on to unreached areas by the Gospel to found new churches.

Paul usually founded churches in the great cultural centers, soon appointed elders trained by him to lead the churches, and then moved on, leaving the penetration of the surrounding areas with the Gospel to the new church. He writes to the Thessalonians, „... you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything“ (1 Thess. 1:7–8).

When Paul says, „from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ“ (Rom. 15:19), he does not mean that he had proclaimed the Gospel to every individual in the area, but that he had founded churches in strategic places. This is also true of the statement that he has no place in these parts (Rom. 15:23). He seeks not areas where Christ is already named, nor where others had preached (Rom. 15:20–21), but where no one had proclaimed the Gospel and where there were no churches.

Proposition 23: All partiality – whether due to culture, economic status or for any other reason – contradicts God’s character and the Christian faith.

Because God is completely impartial, both the State and the New Testament church must be impartial (Deut.1:17, 10:17–18, 16:18–20, 2 Chr. 19:7, Prov. 18:5, 24:23, Job 13:10, Col. 3:25, Eph.6:9, Jas. 2:1–12). James writes, „my brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality ... If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‚You shall love your neighbor as yourself,‘ you do well; but if you show partiality, your commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors ... So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty“ (Jas. 2:1, 8–9, 12).

Proposition 24: Dialogue is a Christian virtue when it means peaceful discussion, honest, patient listening and learning from others.

A dialogue between convinced Christians and believers in other religions is possible, insofar as Christians are willing to speak peacefully about their faith with others („always be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in you but with meekness and fear“, 1 Pet. 3:15) and listen to others (Jas. 1:19). They wish to learn from others’ experiences in many aspects of life (See esp. the Book of Proverbs) and are willing to call themselves and their behavior into question.

Proposition 25: Dialogue which surrenders Christianity’s assertion of absolute truth or abandons world missions is inconceivable, for it gives up Christianity itself.

Dialogue which requires the Christian to temporarily or principally waive the claims of absolute truth about Jesus Christ (John 14:6), the Gospel (Rom. 1:16–17, 2:16) or the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16–17, Heb. 4:12–13, John 17:17, so that Biblical revelation is equated with the beliefs of other religions, cannot be reconciled with Christian missions or with the essence of Christianity itself.

Christianity’s assertion of absolute authority is above all expressed in the doctrines of the Last Judgment and of Eternal Life. Hebrews 6:1–2 describes the „resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment“ as two of the six most important elements of our faith, as the Apostolic Creed says, „... from whence he will return to judge both the quick and the dead“.

Part III. Conversion and Social Change

Proposition 26: Peace between the individual and God – personal salvation through the merciful atoning sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross – is the first and foremost goal of missions and the prerequisite out of which all others develop.

In Mt. 16:26, Jesus expressed clearly that the salvation of the soul is more

important than anything else: „For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?“

In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul accordingly explains why Jews and Gentiles are lost in sin, and why only Jesus could achieve salvation. Romans 5:1–2 concludes, „Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand ...“. Only then, does he turn to questions of personal, social, cultural and political ethics.

Proposition 27: The priority of the goal of personal salvation for missions does not eliminate further goals, but lends them their significance

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20 includes the command to make all men „pupils“ (disciples). The first step is personal conviction and repentance. Baptism in the Name of the Trinity must be experienced personally. Still, this is the way God has chosen to win whole ‚nations‘. Thus, the goal of converting high percentage of a people does not contradict the need for personal repentance.

Conversion does not mark the conclusion, but the beginning of personal renewal, as well as the renewal of the family, church, economics, state and society. Every individual should become a pupil (‚disciple‘) of Jesus Christ. In the

command to teach „them to obey everything I have commanded you“, the Great Commission includes the exhortation to teach the whole range of biblical ethics. In transforming the individual, his everyday life and his environment, mission overcomes sinful structures and visible injustice.

Proposition 28: Social service within the Christian church, particularly in view of cultural differences, was institutionalised from the very beginning in the office of deacon.

The appointment of deacons in Acts 6 and the New Testament church in general is of great significance. It is remarkable, that besides the offices of overseers (bishops) and elders (prebyters), who were responsible for leadership and teaching, the church had only one other office, that of the deacons (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8–10) and the deaconesses (Rom. 16:1; 1 Tim 3:11–13), whose duties were exclusively social in nature. The social responsibility of the church for its members is so institutionalized in the office of the deacons, that a church without them is just as unthinkable as a church without leadership or Biblical teaching.

The church carries fully the social responsibility for its own members, insofar as the individual’s family is unable to do so (1 Tim. 5:1–4). This duty consists in more than donations or symbolic assistance for a few, but in responsibility for all.

The charge in Matthew 25:45, to help the least of the brothers, is also to be

understood in this sense. The ‚brothers‘ are Jesus‘ brothers and sisters-believers, not just anyone. Otherwise, this would be the only text in the New Testament which uses the term ‚brother‘ metaphorically to indicate anyone other than church members and fellow Christians.

Proposition 29: Acts 6 makes social responsibility an important role of the church, but the proclamation of God’s word and prayer remain the foremost tasks, institutionalized in the office of elder and apostle.

The apostles‘ reason for refusing the „responsibility“ (Acts 6:3) for support of the widows in addition to their other duties was so that they could „... give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word“ (Acts 6:4). The service of the presbyters and overseers is more important than that of the deacons, as in the Old Testament the service of the priests was more important than that of the Levites. Prayer and preaching take priority over social engagement. The Word and prayer belong together. Even Samuel’s ministry was prayer and teaching (1 Sam. 12:23).

Proposition 30: Christians‘ social responsibility for their brethren must be distinguished from their social responsibility towards others.

Social help for the brethren is a duty institutionalized in the office of deacons, whereas social service is offered to others symbolically, where possible and insofar as means are available. Additionally, the person who requests help should not be

the cause for his need. „Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in the power of your hand to do so“ (Prov. 3:27). Galatians 6:10 challenges believers to serve all men, but emphasises the priority of fellow believers, „Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith“.

Because they wish to express God’s love towards their enemies, and are to bless those who curse them (Rom. 12:14), Christians help impartially wherever they can. They are willing to assist in situations of concrete need, as well as to expose sinful social structures by use of the Scriptures, and change them when possible, but without force.

Proposition 31: Mission work begins within the Christian church and family by being an example, though education and by teaching the Word of God to the next generation.

The proclamation of God’s word to people outside of the church must not take place at the cost of the Christian family. A sound Christian family is a prerequisite for all leading positions in the New Testament church (1 Tim. 3:4–5, 12–13, Tit. 1:6–7). When Christian parents relinquish the raising of their children to others, they can give up their endeavors to influence the Church, the State, the economy and society, for they have abandoned the best road to achieving that goal.

The Author

Über den Autor



Thomas Schirmmacher earned his doctorates in Theology (Dr. theol, 1985, Netherlands) in Cultural Anthropology (PhD, 1989, USA) and in Ethics (ThD, 1996, USA) and received a honorary doctorate (DD) in 1997. He is president of Martin Bucer Theological Seminary with campuses in Bonn, Berlin, Hamburg, Vienna, Innsbruck, Prague and Istanbul and holds chairs in ethics, world religions and international development in Germany, USA and India. He is also president of Gebende Hände GmbH (Giving Hands), an internationally active relief organisation, as well as owner of a publishing house and coowner of a consulting company. He is Secretary of the Commission for Religions Freedom of the German and Austrian Evangelical Alliance and member of the same commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship. He has written and edited 74 books. He is married with Dr. Christine Schirmmacher, who holds a chair in the Science of Islam, and is father of a son (12) and a daughter (9).

Martin Bucer Seminar

Berlin • Bonn • Chemnitz • Hamburg • Pforzheim

Ankara • Innsbruck • Prag • Zlin • Zürich

Studienzentrum Berlin

Martin Bucer Seminar, Breite Straße 39B, 13187 Berlin
E-Mail: berlin@bucer.de

Studienzentrum Bonn

Martin Bucer Seminar, Friedrichstr. 38, 53111 Bonn
E-Mail: bonn@bucer.de

Studienzentrum Chemnitz:

Martin Bucer Seminar, Mittelbacher Str. 6, 09224 Chemnitz
E-Mail: chemnitz@bucer.de

Studienzentrum Hamburg

Martin Bucer Seminar, c/o ARCHE,
Doerriesweg 7, 22525 Hamburg
E-Mail: hamburg@bucer.de

Studienzentrum Pforzheim

Martin Bucer Seminar, Bleichstraße 59, 75173 Pforzheim
E-Mail: pforzheim@bucer.de

Website: www.bucer.de

E-Mail: info@bucer.de

Studycenters outside Germany:

Studienzentrum Ankara: ankara@bucer.de

Studienzentrum Innsbruck: innsbruck@bucer.de

Studienzentrum Prag: prag@bucer.de

Studienzentrum Zlin: zlin@bucer.de

Studienzentrum Zürich: zuerich@bucer.de

Martin Bucer Seminary is no university according to German law, but just offers courses and lists all courses in a final diploma. Whitefield Theological Seminary (Florida, USA) and other schools outside of Europe accept those courses under their own legal responsibility for granting their degrees to students. Much of the teaching is by means of Saturday seminars, evening courses, extension courses, independent study, and internships.

The work of the seminary is largely supported by the contributions of donors. North American supporters may send contributions to our American partner organization, The International Institute for Christian Studies. Checks should be made out to IICS, with a note mentioning MBS and sent to:

The International Institute for Christian Studies:

P.O. Box 12147, Overland Park, KS 66282-2147, USA

EU:

IBAN DE52 3701 0050 0244 3705 07

BIC PBNKDEFF



Publisher:

Thomas Schirrmacher, Prof. Dr. phil.
Dr. theol. DD.

Editor:

Ron Kubsch, M.Th.

Editorial Committee:

Thomas Kinker, Th.D., Titus Vogt

Contact:

mbsmaterialien@bucer.de

www.bucer.de

MBS-TEXTE (MBS-TEXTS)

Theologische Akzente
(Theological Accents)

Es erscheinen außerdem folgende Reihen:

(The following series of MBS
Texts are also being published:)

Reformiertes Forum
(Reformed Forum)

Pro Mundis

Geistliche Impulse
(Spiritual Impulses)

Hope for Europe

Ergänzungen zur Ethik
(Ethics)

Philosophische Anstöße
(Philosophical Initiatives)

Vorarbeiten zur Dogmatik
(Preliminaries for a Systematic
Theology)