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**Democracy and
Christian Ethics**



Ethics

Ergänzungen zur Ethik

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Democracy and Christian Ethics

Thomas Schirrmacher

Summary: Despite much ambivalence towards the relationship between Christianity and democracy, there are reasons that convinced Christians and minority churches have called for secular democracy, have moved it forward, and have helped to stabilize it.

The first demands for religious freedom, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press, and universal male suffrage arose in England in the middle of the 17th century in the radical wing of Protestantism. Michael Farris has conducted a comprehensive study regarding the early sources of religious freedom in the USA, which include countless sermons and tracts.¹ After Sebastian Castellio, who was a prior student of John Calvin and who in 1554 argued against Calvin for a rather rudimentary form of religious freedom (whereby there continued to be punishment for the 'Godless', that is the atheists), the first known tract that called for complete religious freedom appeared in 1614 and was produced by the English Baptist Leonard Busher.² The idea spread among Baptists and other 'dissenters' in England, the Netherlands, and then in

the USA. It was the Baptist and spiritualist Roger Williams (1604–1685), who in 1639 was a co-founder of the first American Baptist community with a congregational structure, who in 1644 called for complete religious freedom³ and achieved religious freedom and the first constitution with complete separation of church and state in Rhode Island in 1647. Religious freedom in Rhode Island even extended to Jews and atheists. This was the case in spite of the fact that Williams was a friend of Christian missionary activities. In 1652 slavery was already abolished. Rainer Prätorius nails it on the head when he says: "Not in spite of the fact but rather because he was deeply religious, Williams called for a separation of politics and religion"⁴ The same thing applied to William Penn's (1644–1718) later 'holy experiment,' Pennsylvania.

The Stepchildren of the Reformation

The Protestant theologian and philosopher of religion Ernst Troeltsch⁵ has supported the view that human rights is not due to the Protestantism of estab-

lished churches, but rather that it is due to free churches, sects, and spiritualists driven to the New World. This ranges from the Puritans to the Quakers. „It is at this point that the stepchildren of the Reformation finally had their hour in world history.“⁶ At any rate, in the USA hard-earned freedom of religion and conscience, as well as the separation of church and state, achieved by deeply religious pioneers such as Williams and Penn, was bound together with the constitutional drafts developed by Puritans and other Reformers (initially without religious freedom) and with democracy that had been put into practice by Enlightenment and deistic politicians in territorial states. In turn pious standards were put into practice in secular law.

The hour of birth of religious freedom – if I may admittedly exaggerate in my formulation – is the struggle for freedom by Christian minority churches against major Christian churches, and in many non-Christian countries it is religious minority movements over against majority religion. For instance, this was the case with Buddhists in India over against Hindus. This also explains, in my judgment, the ambivalence of historical Christianity over against democratic developments, even ‘the ambivalence of Christian tolerance,’⁷ which makes it impossible to draw a straight line through history from Christianity to democracy.

There are, however, too few studies regarding the question of whether there is only a close connection between

democracy and churches which are in the minority from an historical point of view, or whether this still applies today. Jeff Haynes, for example, presented a comprehensive study in 1996 that discussed which religious groups and tendencies in Africa foster or impede democracy.⁸ He comes to the conclusion that, on average, large, established churches have more problems with democracy than do small and new churches. Although the latter can be more fundamentalist, they are in themselves more democratic, offer more opportunity for advancement, and are not so strongly oriented towards achieving hegemony. Haynes also comes to similar conclusions regarding Islam in Africa.

Judaism as a Minority Religion

The conclusion that it was religious and often, additionally, persecuted minorities who brought about the call for democracy and freedom of religion applies not only to Christianity, but rather also specifically to Judaism or – in order to choose a much more recent example of a religion that did not originate until the 19th century – the Bahai religion. Whether one should go so far as Hannes Stein and say that “the modern constitutional state did not come from Athens . . . [but] . . . from Jerusalem”⁹ might remain to be seen, but after all the idea of a federal constitution and a separation between priests and king comes from the Old Testament.

It is surely not by chance that it was the famous Jewish philosopher and reformer Moses Mendelsohn (1728–1786) who was the first in Europe to advocate the separation of church and state and with it freedom of religion, even when strangely enough it did not include the tolerance of those devoid of religion. The Jewish Enlightenment, starting with Mendelsohn, influenced the secular Enlightenment as well as Christianity and finds a solid position in the prologue to democracy.¹⁰

Christianity and the Enlightenment

What was readily overlooked, perhaps because the large churches were the primary writers of church history, was the following: the anticlerical Enlightenment of the French Revolution and the American Revolution, which was shaped by very pious and deistic individuals, has a deep commonality which at first glance one would not suppose is there. That is the fact that both of them were directed against the ruling large churches.

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805–1859) supported the view from 1835 onward, in his famous work addressing democracy in America, that in America deeply religious and mostly reformed movements experienced a symbiosis with enlightened points of view.¹¹ The interplay between Christianity and the Enlightenment, insofar as the emergence of democracy in America was concerned, operated with significantly

less friction, while in Europe democracy stood at the end of numerous and often even violent and bloody conflicts. This continues to have an effect up until the present day and explains the often lack of understanding that Europe and America have for each other.

One way or another, any and all monocausal explanations have to be avoided. Neither the Enlightenment could have led to democracy, were it not for certain Christian concepts in Western civilization, nor would have Christianity changed its political ethics or given up its comfortable position of alliance between throne and altar, had it not been for the Enlightenment.

Christianity and the Waves of Democratization

Manfred G. Schmidt writes the following in *Democratic Theories*: Democracy above all has its roots, although not exclusively, in countries which were culturally influenced by Christianity and – in spite of a prolonged and strained relationship between democracy and the Christian religion – received their general outline for the order of coexistence from Christianity and further developed it.¹² In this connection he refers to one of the most important Australian political scientists, Graham Maddox.¹³ While Maddox as well as the American historian Page Smith¹⁴ do not speak on their own account, the best known German representatives of this thesis are theologians such as William J. Hoye or the politician Hans Maier.¹⁵

This thesis has naturally not been left unchallenged.¹⁶ In the 19th century state churches on the European continent were all too obviously allied with monarchies against revolution or against the 1848 movement, for instance, to speak convincingly of a monocausal path from Christianity to democracy.

In 1993 Samuel P. Huntington put forth the famous and widely received thesis of four waves to democracy.¹⁷ In addition to sociological and economic factors, he recognizes a striking accumulation of religious majority religions or denominations. According to him – and I reproduce it here in simplified form – in the first wave from 1828–1926 above all Protestant, in the second from 1943–1962 primarily Protestant, Catholic and Far Eastern, in the third wave 1974–1988 especially Catholic and Orthodox countries became democratic, and in the fourth wave, after 1989/1990, all the religions just named were again involved. At the end of all of this, out of 88 free democracies, 79, or more than 90%, are majority Christian. In addition, there is one Jewish democracy and seven democracies which have Far Eastern religions in the majority, whereby in Mauritius and South Korea Christians make up a second, large segment of the population. Mali is the only free, democratic country that has a majority Muslim population.¹⁸

Is it by chance that a correlation between religious orientation and the ability to democratize repeatedly was seen after the breakdown of Soviet imperialism? Is it by chance that the

secular, Protestant and Catholic countries which had earlier been a part of the sphere of influence of Soviet Communism rather quickly became functioning democratic states, that Orthodox countries only became so in part (the democracies in, for instance, Russia, Georgia, Montenegro and Macedonia remained incomplete), and that none of the Muslim countries followed suit?

Islamic Countries

It is not meant to be said that Islamic countries basically are not capable of being democratized. Mali has contradicted this thought since 1991. More than ever this topic should not have to do with deriving a feeling of superiority based on some historical advantages Christianity has experienced. The failure of large sections of Christianity in the face of National Socialism¹⁹ is a reminder to Christians of Paul's words: "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" Democrats, including Christian democrats, can really only be filled with the desire that Muslim states also become democratic.²⁰

Nevertheless, research has until now, in my opinion, neglected to investigate more closely what it is in Islamic cultures that hinders the establishment of democracy and which theological and cultural varieties of Islam have which effects on the political framework. Of course one can assume that respective configurations of Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and Asian Islam also exert an

influence on the degree of democratization and freedom in the countries they dominate. But the question that has rarely been pursued is whether in Islam there are not parallels to intra-Christian development that Islamic minorities and sects had and have, such that they have a greater openness towards democracy than the respective majority representation of Islam.

Confessional Political Ethics and Democratization

John Witte has suggested that, as a rule, countries with a certain denominational majority have endorsed democracy in their political ethics prior to waves of democratization.²¹

Is it really only by chance that the Catholic Church's turn towards freedom of religion, etc., in the 2nd Vatican Council and around the world preceded the third wave of democratization which embraced many Catholic countries from 1974–1990 in Europe and Latin America? I do not want to establish a unilinear dependency, but at the same time the thought that the theological teachings of the major world religions have absolutely no influence on the actual politics of their followers is not seriously advocated by anyone.

Since it was most difficult for Orthodox theology to accept a post-Enlightenment set of political ethics, it comes as no surprise that among the Christian countries it is above all the Orthodox countries that have the most difficulty

with a truly free democracy. Although in the meantime all countries elect their governments, several, however, exhibit substantial defects, such as autocracy (Russia) or limited religious freedom (Greece). At the same time, the recognizable steps towards reform in theological terms and in political ethics within Orthodox churches, and extending to human rights and democratic forms of government,²² give reason for hope that democracy in Orthodox countries will become stronger and freer.

A review of all German language ethical approaches by Christian theologians of all stripes in the last 20 years has shown that none of them defend an undemocratic form of government or speak in some form about a Christian theocracy. What I mean with democracy is the election of a government via free elections, a constitutional state, which means a separation of powers, and a verifiable form of agreement, where national action is taken under justice and law. Furthermore, there are independent courts and effective opposition, a situation where the constitutional state affords and protects human rights and the rights of its citizens as well as the protection of minorities, and the separation of church and state including the freedom of religion.²³

A perusal of English speaking equivalents, even if I cannot exhaustively look at them, produces the same result. Drafts of political ethics by Christian theologians, who do not present democracy as the best form of government, either come from countries that are not

free and or from an Orthodox quill, as already noted. To my knowledge, and fortunately so, there are no new examples that have been added to the list. The success story of how the ethics of the world's largest religion got involved in the most complicated and youngest form of government in history has not yet been truly written.

The internal Structure of Denominations

An additional question regarding the question of political ethics is the topic of the internal organizational structure of Christian denominations. The French political philosopher Montesquieu (1689–1755) represented the viewpoint in his magnum opus that monarchy rather tends to fit with Catholic religion and that a republic rather tends to fit with Protestantism.²⁴ For a long period of time he seemed to be correct, but an increasing democratization of Catholic countries gradually made a differentiation necessary.

Nevertheless, at this point we have to return to the role of minority churches and free churches. The first constitution in history that was utilized to found a state is that of the US State of Connecticut (1639). This occurred just a few years before the founding of Rhode Island, and it is a particularly obvious example of the influence of congregationalism, to which the majority of inhabitants belonged.²⁵ In Reformed countries with Congregational or Presbyterian church structures, such as the

USA, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, development in the direction of democracy occurred more quickly.

In the 18th and 19th centuries in the USA, according to Marcia Pally in her book about the Evangelical movement, Evangelicals were a “backbone of the civic-democratic development,”²⁶ because they themselves were congregationally structured, massively promoted municipal development, were anti-authoritarian and individualistically forged, and finally, on the basis of their anti-racist past history,²⁷ were supporters of black churches and women preachers.

It is striking that Christian denominations throughout the entire development of the waves of democratization came to terms with enlightened democratic states, the more similar their internal structures were. The more lay people had a say in decisions, and the more churches were organized through elections from bottom to top, the earlier denominations swayed on a global scale. Only at one point did this not apply, because according to this Catholic countries would have had to have been embraced by the wave of democratization *after* the Orthodox countries.

In order that this not be understood as a one-sided, denominational partisanship, it should be pointed out that with the emergence of the German constitution (“Grundgesetz”) the just mentioned principle was suspended. One has to differentiate the official teaching office of a denomination from that which the lay people actually do.

Catholic lay people often acted much earlier than their church in favor of the separation of church and state. Above all, in the shape of the party 'Zentrum', political Catholicism backed the Weimar Republic. With the formation of the German Constitution, convinced Catholics worked on lay Catholics in a formative manner.

This was not the case with Protestants. One can indeed say the following about Anglo-Saxon countries at the time of the World War II and before: "In the churches of the USA, but also of Great Britain, democracy and Christianity were practically viewed as synonyms."²⁸ And this view naturally made its way to Germany with more or less gentle pressure through the Anglo-Aaxon victors. Still, the Evangelical national church partly had its difficulties with democracy at the time of the formation of the German constitution. It was not until 1985 that the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) expressed 'no ifs and buts' about democracy in a famous memorandum.²⁹

Evangelicals, Christian Fundamentalists, and Democracy

Martin Riesebrodt thinks that all fundamentalists are pitted with "hostility" against democracy. "True fundamentalists are never democrats on principle, but rather always only out of opportunism."³⁰ He cannot, however, demonstrate that with historical or empirical studies. Neither does the his-

tory of democracy prove him correct, which had at its beginning numerous fundamentalists, nor does the present. One has to specifically look at each group on their own in order to judge their own capacity for democracy. Well aware that the concept of fundamentalism hardly suffices for scholarly purposes anymore – fundamentalists are generally known as 'the others,' I would like to go along with the idea by simply assuming the fundamentalist character of certain movements.

Let us for instance take Brazilian Evangelicals, who are largely influenced by Pentecostalism. According to studies by the Brazilian sociologist Fonseca,³¹ in 2003 25 of 57 Evangelical congresspersons belonged to opposition parties and 22 belonged to the ruling labor party. They accounted for 11% of the representatives, and with that they represent about the percentage of the population that is Evangelical. In Brazil votes can namely be cumulated for certain candidates. Fonseca observes a high grade endorsement of democracy, which he does not always find this on the side of the Catholic Church. The fact that *all* democratic parties are a place of Christian involvement demonstrates to him that the secular character of the state and parties was fully accepted.

In South Korea Evangelicals account for 15% of the inhabitants, with Protestants accounting for the largest part. Measured against German standards they are predominantly oriented toward fundamentalism – whether it has to do with the Presbyterian or the Pentecostal

wing. However, they live peacefully in a society that has a Buddhist majority and stabilize the secular democracy.³²

We have most recently found ourselves in the comfortable position where sociological studies on the relationship of Evangelicals to politics and in particular to democracy have been presented in many countries of the southern hemisphere, by friends and foes.³³ The bottom line is very positive, and any support for dictators or unjust regimes remains the exception.

At this point it can be shown that the 300–400 million Evangelicals outside of the USA are not simply to be equated with the 50 million Evangelicals in the USA. Even among US Evangelicals, one finds that a significant portion is Afro-American and Latino, and under Bush there were even 40% of the Evangelicals who still voted for Democrats.³⁴ Globally, Evangelicals break down politically into the right and the left anyway, whereby Evangelicals of the left in Latin America and India³⁵ could almost be seen to adhere to liberation theology, and in the USA, with representatives such as Ronald Sider and Jim Wallis, they belong to the strongest critics of the politics of George Bush.³⁶

To choose a completely different sample group, one could take the existing Christian ethics of Evangelical theologians, who are, according to Riesebrodt's definition, fundamentalist as well – even when they would see themselves otherwise. What one finds is that they all argue for democracy for many sorts of reasons. And that is surely not just a sham.

Reinhard Hempelmann, among others, has documented his thesis that German Evangelicals predominantly are not fundamentalists, and that Christian fundamentalism in German has absolutely no basis, by pointing out that small Christian parties such as the party of the Pentecostal Church, the Bible-Believing Christians Party (Partei Bibeltreuer Christen, or PBC), and the Catholics' Christian Middle (Christliche Mitte) hardly receive votes.³⁷ Additionally, these parties are not principally supported by their respective churches. However, something similar also applies to the USA. The 'Christian Reconstruction' movement is considered the only movement which theoretically wants to obligatorily have a Christian republic with Biblical laws in the sense of the first states of the USA. The movement remains tiny, has barely survived the death of its founder, and has never actually arrived on the political scene.³⁸

In the process one should not overlook something else. The problem of the Evangelical movement in its history and in parts up until today is rather that it has kept clear of politics and has left it to others to shape society. Specifically due to this, Evangelicals are not dangerous for democracies, if one does not consider the segment which is non-voting to be dangerous. They often do not even work together with other Evangelicals. Anyway, they predominantly come from the completely or partially pacifist traditions of the Mennonites and Baptists and are for this reason in terms of violence or abuse of politics completely innocuous churches. In a religious sense

they may be fundamentalists, but in a political sense they surely are not. In as much as fundamentalism seeks to reproduce the original conditions of

religion, what arises in the Christian sphere, with the ideal of the completely apolitical first church in Jerusalem, is a rather pacifistic movement.

Annotations Anmerkungen

¹ Michael Farris, *From Tyndale to Madison*, Nashville, 2007.

² Leonard Busher, *Religious Peace*, Amsterdam 1614, London 1644.

³ Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenent, for Cause of Conscience*, London 1644, ders., *Christenings make not Christians*, London, 1645.

⁴ Rainer Prätorius, *In God We Trust, Religion und Politik in den USA*, München 2003, p. 35.

⁵ Comp. Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, "Puritanische Sektenfreiheit versus lutherische Volkskirche," *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte*. Vol. 9 (2002) 1, pp. 42–69.

⁶ Ernst Troeltsch, *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt*, München/Berlin 1911, p. 62.

⁷ Rainer Forst, In: Manfred Brouck/Tine Stein (Hrsg.), *Christentum und Demokratie*, Darmstadt, 2006.

⁸ Jeff Haynes, *Religion and Politics in Africa*, London, 1996.

⁹ Hannes Stein, *Moses und die Offenbarung der Demokratie*, Berlin 1998, p. 10.

¹⁰ S. Christoph Schulte, *Die jüdische Aufklärung*, München, 2002.

¹¹ Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, 2 vols., Paris 1835, 1840, additionally Manfred G. Schmidt, *Demokratiethorien*, Wiesbaden 2008⁴, pp. 113–131.

¹² M. Schmidt (annotation 7), pp. 422–423.

¹³ Graham Maddox, *Religion and the Rise of Democracy*, London/New York 1996.

¹⁴ Page Smith, *Rediscovering Christianity. A history of modern democracy and the Christian Ethic*, New York, 1994.

¹⁵ William J. Hoye, *Demokratie und Christentum*, Münster, 1999; Hans Maier, *Demokratischer Verfassungsstaat ohne Christentum – was wäre anders?*, St. Augustin 2006; auch in: M. Brouck/T. Stein (annotation 7); comp. as early as Hans Maier, *Kirche und Demokratie*, Freiburg, 1979.

¹⁶ Comp. the edited volume with pro and contra, M. Brouck/T. Stein (annotation 7).

¹⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave*, Norman, 1993; comp. Samuel P. Huntington, *Religion und die dritte Welle*, in: Europäische Rundschau 20 (Winter 1992) 1, pp. 47–65; Samuel P. Huntington, "After twenty years," in: *Journal of Democracy*, 8 (1997) 4, pp. 3–12.

¹⁸ Classification according to www.freedomhouse.org, comp. for quality M. Schmidt (annotation 11), pp. 381–386, 392–398 and further studies, *ibid.*, pp. 417, 422.

¹⁹ See Thomas Schirrmacher, *Hitlers Kriegsreligion*, 2 vols., Bonn, 2007.

²⁰ Moataz Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, London, 2006; Frédéric Volpi, *Democratization in the Muslim World*, London, 2007; Larry Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy*, New York, 2008; as a plea: Benazir Bhutto, *Reconciliation*, London, 2008; comp. critically Franco Burgi, *Export of Democracy to the Arab World*, München, 2007.

²¹ John Witte (ed.), *Christianity and Democracy in Global Context*, Boulder, 1993.

- ²² Comp. for the Greek Orthodox Church Konstantin Delikostantis, "Die Menschenrechte im Kontext der orthodoxen Theologie," *Ökumenische Rundschau* 56 (2007), pp. 19–35; Konstantin Delikostantis, "Hē orthodoxia hōs protasē zōēs syllogikos tomos," Akritas, 1993; for the Russian Orthodox Church Kirche Rudolf Uertz, "Menschenrechte, Demokratie und Rechtsstaat in der Sozialdoktrin," in: Rudolf Uertz/Lars Peter Schmidt (ed.), *Beginn einer neuen Ära?*, Moskau/Bonn, 2004; Rudolf Uertz/Lars Peter Schmidt, *Die Grundlagen der Lehre der Russischen Orthodoxen Kirche über die Würde, die Freiheit und die Menschenrechte*, Moskau, 2008.
- ²³ Comp. the numerous versions of democracy and the question of what constitutes it in M. Schmidt (Anm. 11) and Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*, London, 1999.
- ²⁴ M. Schmidt (annotation 11), p. 77, on Montesquieu by and large pp. 66–79.
- ²⁵ So also R. Prätorius (annotation 4), pp. 32–34 and W. Hoye (annotation 15), pp. 143–145; Willam J. Hoye, "Neuenglischer Puritanismus als Quelle moderner Demokratie," in: M. Brocker/T. Stein (annotation 1), pp. 99–102.
- ²⁶ Marcia Pally, *Die hintergründige Religion*, Berlin, 2008, pp. 46, 88 et al.
- ²⁷ Chuck Stetson (ed.), *Creating the Better Hour*, Macon, 2007; Ian Bradley, *The Evangelical impact on the Victorians*, Oxford, 2006; comp. Thomas Schirmmacher, *Rassismus*, Holzgerlingen, 2009 and ders. *Multikulturelle Gesellschaft*, Holzgerlingen, 2006.
- ²⁸ M. Greschat (ed.), *Christentum und Demokratie im 20. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1992, p. VIII.
- ²⁹ *Evangelische Kirche und freiheitliche Demokratie*, Gütersloh, 1986³, 1985¹; comp. in addition Eberhard Jüngel, *Evangelische Christen in unserer Demokratie*, Gütersloh, 1986.
- ³⁰ Martin Riesebrodt, *Die Rückkehr der Religion*, München, 2001², p. 89.
- ³¹ Alexandre Brasil Fonseca, *Evangélicos e mídia no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, 2003; ders., *Religion and "Democracy in Brazil,"* in: Paul Freston (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America*, Oxford, New York, 2008.
- ³² Donald N. Clark, "Protestant Christianity and the State," in: Charles K. Armstrong (ed.), *Korean Society*, New York, 2006²; David Halloran Lumsdaine (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Asia*, Oxford, New York, 2008.
- ³³ See for instance David Halloran Lumsdaine (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Asia*, Oxford, New York, 2008; Terence O. Ranger (ed.), *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*, Oxford, New York, 2006; comp. also Paul Gifford, *African Christianity*, Kampala (Uganda), 1999.
- ³⁴ Marcia Pally (annotation 27), pp. 54, 57.
- ³⁵ Comp. for instance the Evangelical foreunner of the Indian ecology movement Ken Gnanakan, *Responsible Stewardship of God's Creation*, Bangalore, 2004.
- ³⁶ Ronald J. Sider, *Scandal of Evangelical Politics*, Grand Rapids, 2008; Jim Wallis, "Dangerous Religion. George W. Bush's Theology of Empire," in: Bruce Ellis Benson, Peter Goodwin Heltzel (eds.), *Evangelicals and Empire*, Grand Rapids, 2008; Randall Balmer, *Thy Kingdom come. How the Religious Right distorts the Faith and threatens America*, New York 2006
- ³⁷ Reinhard Hempelmann, "Fundamentalismus," *Materialdienst der EZW* 71 (2008) 7, pp. 243–244; comp. Thomas Schirmmacher, *Feindbild Islam. Am Beispiel der Partei „Christliche Mitte“*, Nürnberg, 2003.
- ³⁸ For instance M. Pally (annotation 27), p. 55; see in detail Thomas Schirmmacher, *Anfang und Ende von „Christian Reconstruction“ (1959–1995)*, Bonn, 2001.

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Thomas Schirmmacher (*1960) earned four doctorates in Theology (Dr. theol., 1985, Netherlands), in Cultural Anthropology (PhD, 1989, USA), in Ethics (ThD, 1996, USA), and in Sociology of Religions (Dr. phil., 2007, Germany) and received two honorary doctorates in Theology (DD, 1997, USA) and International Development (DD, 2006, India). He is professor of ethics and world missions, as well as professor of the sociology of religion and of international development in Germany, Romania, USA and India, and is president of Martin Bucer

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