

In Liberia Thomas Schirmmacher supports the 17 goals of the United Nations

Lecture at the National Council of Churches

Thomas Schirmmacher, Associate Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance for Theological Concerns, was keynote speaker at the 32nd General Assembly of the [Liberia Council of Churches](#). He was asked to answer the question of whether Christians and churches should support the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). For security reasons, the trip has only now been announced.

The chairman of the Liberia Council of Churches, Bishop Kortu K. Brown, had invited Schirmmacher already at the adoption of the 17 SDGs to visit Liberia and discuss the SDG with the church leaders. In Liberia, questions surrounding the UN are emotionally charged, as 14 years of UN peacekeepers have been stationed in the country since the end of the 15-year civil war, and their success or failure is being vigorously discussed.



The Liberia Council of Churches was founded in 1982 and comprises not only the traditional churches (Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists) but also the largest Pentecostal churches in the country. The Evangelical Alliance of Liberia strongly supported Schirmmacher's visit to the Liberia Council of Churches.

Schirmmacher made the case that while Christians are convinced that the causes of many of the problems identified by the SDG, such as racism or corruption, are much deeper, this does not alter the fact that the goals themselves are to be welcomed by Christians. For most of the goals, pertinent Bible verses would immediately come to the mind of every Bible reader.

Jesus taught us, said Schirmmacher, that the real evil comes from our hearts, which is why, for Christians, attitudes like racism, corruption, discrimination, or misogyny cannot be overcome by external factors only, but that a profound conversion of the whole personality is decisive for it. But the state cannot create or enforce such a conversion and has to provide for external justice.

According to Schirmmacher, the 17 sustainability targets of the UN themselves are hardly affected by ideology, which does not always apply to the 169 proposals on how they should be implemented. The

alternative, however, can only be to actively work for better ways to achieve the goal, but not just to sit back and comment on the events like the spectators of a cinema movie.

Just as in each country we can only work with the government we actually have, not with a government we would like to have. So it applies for the United Nations, too, that its mistakes and shortcomings have to be openly addressed, and demands for reconstruction have to be articulated, but that nothing alters the fact that it is currently the only chance for worldwide political collaboration for good aims.



[This post with more photos online ...](#)