

Forgotten Christians in Brunei and Laos

Thomas Schirmmacher visited Laos and Brunei to draw attention to the situation of Christians living in countries where local Christians are not allowed to have contact with foreign Christians. In those countries even tourists are not allowed to attend a church service of a local church on Sunday. Schirmmacher was accompanied by his daughter Esther Schirmmacher, a doctoral student in Islamic Studies.

Schirmmacher, who heads the department responsible for the relations of the World Evangelical Alliance to the world religions, officially visited Buddhist temples and government buildings in Laos and several mosques in Brunei and, after a long river trip into the jungle, had the condition of the Mangrove forest in Brunei explained to him by experts.

In both countries it was agreed not to disclose any details of the meetings.

1.5 percent of the 7.038 million inhabitants of Laos are Christians, 66.3 percent Buddhists, 30.7 percent followers of ethnic religions. In Brunei, Christians make up 10 percent of the 429,000 inhabitants. With the exception of the St. Andrews Church, which is used by Catholics and Protestants, the Christian faith may only be practiced in private rooms that are not open to the public. This includes Christmas as well.

On the same trip, Schirmmacher also attended a service in the Anglican cathedral in Singapore and visited the Islamic quarter in Manila.

[Read this post with more photos online ...](#)

