

## Appointment of a new WEA Secretary General

Dear friend,

The Search Process for the next Secretary General of the WEA has been underway now for some time. Through various communications you will be aware that we have been in the process of seeking to appoint a new WEA Secretary General to commence service in this role in the New Year. The search process began with the appointment of a Search Committee in March 2020. The call for applications and recommendations was widely distributed over the next few months and yielded over 16 responses from around the world, from within WEA structures as well as from those associated with the WEA.

The Search Committee drew up a short list of candidates for which they took up references. A further short list was agreed and interviews for the position took place in October. On completion of the interviews, the Search Committee submitted their recommendation for appointment to the WEA International Council. The International Council met on 27<sup>th</sup> October and unanimously ratified and adopted the recommendation of the Search Committee. I am therefore pleased to inform you that **Dr Thomas Schirmacher** has been appointed as the new WEA Secretary General, starting on March 1, 2021.

Thomas will be known to many of you, as he has served in the WEA for many years. He has served in various roles since 1999, and is currently the WEA's Associate Secretary General for Theological Concerns. Prior to this, Thomas was a member of the Commission for Religious Freedom, developed the International Institute for Religions Freedom, built up WEA's office for Intrafaith and Interfaith Relations, is Chair of WEA's Theological Commission, and WEA's Ambassador for Human Rights.

Thomas studied theology at colleges in Switzerland, USA, Netherlands and also received a degree from India. Thomas has several degrees in various disciplines and a number of earned doctorates to his name.

Thomas was pastor and co-pastor of local churches in the Bonn area from 1982 – 2000 and, in 2015, was consecrated as an episcopal leader serving the *Communio Messianica*, a global body of believers from another faith background. He also taught theology and trained future pastors from 1982 –

2018. Thomas has a great concern for the persecuted church and, with others, started the WEA's International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Thomas enjoys working with groups of diverse people and seeing people work together to advance the aims of the WEA. He is committed to building partnerships and seeing WEA contribute to the development of the global Christian community.

Thomas is married to Dr. Christine Schirmacher, and together they have two adult children, and currently live in Bonn, Germany. Christine is a professor of Islamic Studies at the Universities of Bonn and Leuven as well as serving WEA as Commissioner for Islamic Affairs.

Thomas has a great deal of other experience that we believe will benefit the WEA and we are very happy to appoint such a gifted person. We have every confidence that Thomas is able to lead WEA at this point in our life and history and with great vision for the future. We will continue to covet your prayers and support in ensuring that this very significant step proceeds smoothly and results in the strengthening of the WEA and the proclamation of the gospel around the world.

Goodwill Shana  
WEA International Council Chair