



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

Neither the secularization nor the modernization of society have suppressed religion. The search for meaning has remained and even renewed and strengthened the devotion to religion. Countries such as the USA or South Korea show that religiousness can also accompany or even precipitate economic growth as well as scientific and technical progress. Particularly in this time of globalization, associated with increased complexity and disorientation, the need for authoritative standards is growing. People turn to religion for guidance. In many parts of the world, religions are experiencing a "resurgence."

Christianity is currently the fastest growing religion. More than two billion people declare themselves followers of Christ – and this number is increasing. In the process, manifestations are changing and the focus is shifting: from the institutional Church to new forms of Christian spirituality, from the old world to the new one.

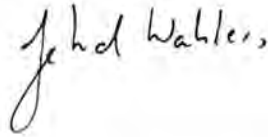
In Africa, for example, it is estimated that the number of Christians is rising by around 25,000 people every day. Meanwhile, almost one in two Africans is Christian. The churches are gaining influence as an important development factor. The same is happening in Asia. The results of a new study carried out by the Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing entitled "Bluebook of Religions 2010" show that, in China alone, the number of Christians is increasing by one million people every year. According to the findings, 23 million Protestants and around six million Catholics belong to the official churches recognized by the state. The official figure has been revised upwards. And the estimated number of unreported cases is likely to be much higher. Many believers – increasingly young people and intellectuals – practice their beliefs behind closed doors. Protestant Free Churches are experiencing a particular surge in popularity.

This phenomenon can also be observed in Latin America: The still predominantly "Catholic continent" is undergoing a change. Due to a growing resonance of prosperous, Protestant Free Churches, the proportion of Catholics is declining. In Brazil, the proportion that until a few years ago used to be about nearly 90 percent, has dropped by more than a quarter in some federal states. This development applies to Mexico and Central America as well.

In the Middle East, the birthplace of Christianity, the situation is completely different: The once vibrant and rich source of Christian belief is threatened to dry up. The three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – were all founded here. They are not just tightly interconnected in the region, but they also clash horns in a manner not experienced anywhere else in the world. This has grave consequences for Christians. More and more, they are being forced out of the countries from where their faith originates. The dramatic situation in Iraq continues to make the headlines. Moreover, there is an increasing amount of reports from other regions about harassments and persecutions of Christians, and the demolition of churches. Even moderate countries such as Egypt or Turkey are frequently the subject of debates about a lack of religious freedom.

Investigations have shown that Christianity is not just the fastest growing religion, but it is also the one that is most under threat. For the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Christian values are both a mission and an obligation: We do not just advocate Christian values, we also want to protect them. After all, we are convinced that religion has the power to shape society. The Christian image of man offers guidance and an ethical framework, in which liberty can be enjoyed responsibly.

Global developments show that Christian values are not a phase-out model or a relict of a bygone age, but are, in fact, a vivid and progressive power. Christianity is growing and is prospering. But it also faces danger in a number of places.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'G'.

Dr. Gerhard Wahlers
Deputy Secretary-General