

News service

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At the centre of modern societies

Prof. Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel is the laureate of the Höffmann Academic Award 2019

The jury has decided: Prof. Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel is the laureate of the Höffmann Academic Award 2019. The theologian from the University of Münster (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, WWU) has received the award that focuses on intercultural competence and is endowed with 10,000 euros, for his work aimed at promoting a better understanding between different religions. The University of Vechta has awarded this prize, sponsored by the travel operator Hans Höffmann from Vechta, for the ninth time.

“I feel very honoured by this award and I am pleased that my work is now being acknowledged in Germany as well”, Perry Schmidt-Leukel said. “What pleased me the most was the fact that it was a student from Vechta who suggested to the University of Münster to nominate me for the award“, he added. Before the theologian had been offered a professorship in Münster, he taught at the Universities of Munich, Innsbruck, Salzburg and Glasgow. The focus of his work is in the fields of interreligious theology, theology of the religions, pluralistic approaches within the religions, interreligious relations in general and especially the dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism.

Perry Schmidt-Leukel is a representative of the pluralistic theology of religions. This theory disputes the assumption that Christianity is the religion that is superior to all other religions and assumes that at least some religions are equal to one another regarding their understanding of divine reality and their salutary power. In October 2015, Perry Schmidt-Leukel was the first German for 25 years to hold the renowned Gifford Lectures at the University of Glasgow. He presented his considerations on a fractal interpretation of religious diversity for the first time there, which are by now being discussed worldwide. In 2019, these lectures were also published in German language with the title “Wahrheit in Vielfalt” (truth in diversity). In the recently published anthology, “Neue Wege für die interreligiöse Theologie” (“New Paths for Interreligious Theology”), researchers from five countries are addressing the theory from the perspective of different academic disciplines and religious backgrounds. In addition, Perry Schmidt-Leukel has already presented his theses to some of the leading academic institutions worldwide, amongst others the American Academy of Religion and the European Academy of Religion.

Award and assessment of the jury:

The Höffmann Academic Award focuses on promoting intercultural competence. These skills serve as a key to a peaceful and constructive cooperation of people from different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds and help to recognise unifying elements as well as to learn from specific characteristics. Intercultural issues are in many ways an integrative element of academic research in numerous disciplines. According to the jury, Perry Schmidt-Leukel connects “research on philosophy, politics and religion in their most fascinating field, the diversity of religious cultures. The comparability of religions in their cultural structures leads to the centre of modern societies. For many years, he has been providing fundamental research that is indispensable for intercultural competence”.



Photo (Schmidt-Leukel/ Pawlowitzki) Honoured for his work aimed at promoting a better understanding between different religions: Prof. Dr. Perry Schmidt-Leukel

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