

Preface

The present volume of the book series “Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses” (KCID) documents the results of a conference which dealt with the concept of “Environment” in Judaism, Christianity and Islam and was held at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. The conference was organised by the research unit “Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses” and held online on June 17 and 18, 2020, due to the then ongoing pandemic of COVID-19.

The research unit “Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses” was jointly run by the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg and the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt between June 2018 and June 2021. As the title already implies, the joint project focused on interreligious discourse. Its aim was to reflect upon and thereby facilitate a theologically well founded interreligious dialogue. For only if every partner in a conversation has a clear notion of what is discussed, the dialogue can be conducted reasonably. It was the project’s ambition to provide such clarification by examining concepts that are of central importance for Judaism, Christianity and Islam, both, historically in terms of their interdependencies, and by setting them in a relation to one another. Common values and origins, but also differences and contradictions between the three monotheistic religions shall be clearly elaborated, by reflecting on and comparing central ideas and beliefs in their historic contexts. By disclosing key concepts of the three closely interconnected religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, a deeper mutual understanding is fostered, prejudices and misunderstandings are counteracted and thus a contribution is made to peaceful interaction based on respect and recognition.

Only through precise knowledge of the central ideas of the foreign as well as of one’s own religion a well-founded, objective and constructive interreligious understanding can prevail. Conferences at which international experts from the fields of theology, religious studies and philosophy of religion intensively discussed and clarified core religious ideas from the perspective of the three religions served this purpose. Developments within religious history never proceed in isolation; rather, they interpenetrate each other and are mutually dependent. Thus, the research unit “Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses” pursued fundamental research and aimed at an “archaeology of knowledge” with its comparative conceptual-historical investigations.

Inasmuch as world peace cannot be obtained without religious peace, the project contributed importantly to a peaceful social coexistence and thus corresponds to the obligation that has been newly assigned to the universities in re-

cent decades, namely, to engage in social concerns in addition to teaching and research. This is expressed by the term “third mission”.

I wish to thank Dr. Wenzel Maximilian Widenka, who not only organised the conference but also edited this volume. In addition to the cooperation partners of the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg and the De Gruyter publishing house for including this volume in the book series “Key Concepts in Interreligious Discourses”, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the third-party funders, the Karpos Foundation of the Diocese Eichstätt, Maximilian Bickhoff Foundation and the ProFor Program of the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. Without their support, neither the conference nor the present volume would have been brought into being.

Christoph Böttigheimer