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Editorial and Summary in English

by

Manfred L. Pirner

This editorial is intended to make the substance of the German articles available to an international readership. It is based on the supposition that such an additional overview of the journal's articles would be more profitable to international English-speaking readers than providing additional English abstracts at the beginning of each German article.

We appreciate any responses and comments by readers from outside the Germanophone context and are grateful for suggestions that can help us to further improve our journal's accessibility and attractiveness for an international readership.

(You are invited to e-mail your comments to manfred.pirner@fau.de).

As usual in our autumn issue, the **thematic part** represents the documentation of the annual conference of the German Association of (Evangelical) Religious Education Scholars (*“Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Religionspädagogik e.V.”*, abbreviated *GwR*) which took place in Vienna, Austria, on 8–10 September. The conference theme was **“Migration, Religion and Education. Ways towards a Migration-Sensitive Religious Education.”**

In addition to the thematic part of the issue, you will find, as always, some interesting contributions on diverse topics in the **“Research and Discourse”** section.

Thematic Issue: “Migration, Religion and Education. Ways towards a Migration-Sensitive Religious Education”

Migration and religion from an educational perspective

Isabell Diehm

Abstract

This article examines the connection between migration and religion from an educational perspective. Since the ensuing approach and argument require an analytical and therefore non-normative approach, the article adopts in turn diachronic and synchronous perspectives. The author pursues this task in four steps: After a few preliminary remarks and conceptual clarifications (1), which serve to disclose the author's own scientific-theoretical locations, the second step examines to which degree religion functions as an explicit category of difference in the context of education and migration — and thus in the past and current production of ethnically-coded constructions of difference (2). This is followed by a more synchronous approach in the third step, which recapitulates religion as a topic and subject in educational, but especially empirical migration research (3). The last section of the article presents the nascent interdisciplinary research network at the Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, which under the auspices of Protestant theology examines “Religious Positioning in the Jewish, Christian and Islamic Contexts” (4).

Migration as topic and problem for (practical) theology: A Roman Catholic perspective

Regina Polak

Abstract

This article first presents the official Roman Catholic perspective on the phenomenon of migration: For the Catholic Church, which has been pastorally and politically active in the field of migration for decades, migration is a “sign of the times” — i.e., in the Church’s conception, an opportunity to experience God’s approval of and simultaneously God’s demands for the present. Subsequently, the author differentiates this soteriological-eschatological interpretation through its biblical-theological anchoring in an attempt to make it more comprehensible. For the Old Testament, the experiences and phenomena of flight and migration are central theologically-generative loci (“*loci theologici*”), while migration hermeneutics also serves as an important matrix for texts of the New Testament. In this manner, ethical monotheism has been essentially wrested from migratory experiences. The author therefore sees the central task of contemporary theological research and pastoral practice as the collaboration of theological disciplines in order to reclaim the meaning of the current challenges of migration from that posited by socio-politically- and media-dominated narratives.

Towards a culturally- and religiously-sensitive education: Theses and reflections on a paradigm shift within intercultural and religious education

Thomas Heller, Sophie Seher & Michael Wermke

Abstract

Based on a survey of current intercultural and interreligious educational approaches, this article presents the pedagogical and social requirements for an education that is sensitive to culture and religion, whose conceptual principles are exemplified by the Culturally- and Religiously-sensitive Education Project (*KuRs.B-Project*) at the University of Jena’s Center for Religious Educational Research (*ZRB*). The guiding question here is how public educational institutions that operate outside of the church can best meet the religious educational needs of their students.

Religious education in the multicultural city

Gordon Mitchell

Abstract

Creating a framework in which educational processes are possible is an important societal challenge. Designing a religious education in the context of a diverse European city like Hamburg is a complicated task, yet this situation also offers special opportunities to shape the processes of meaning formation. Accordingly, the topic of this article is how learning processes can be structured in public schools. After a brief historical and conceptual introduction, the author uses examples from teacher training to approach the issue of religious education in a multicultural context.

Causes of flight, negative foils, orientation frames, and identity anchors? “Religion” in children’s and young adult literature that deals with the topic of flight

Mirjam Zimmermann

Abstract

Studies on religion-related migration research point to the importance of religion in the context of flight and migration. Recent young adult and children's literature should therefore be examined to see how religion is discussed, which religious functions play a role at the textual and audience levels, and what role religion plays in these texts as a cause of flight, negative foil, orientation frame, identity anchor, resource, etc. Having done this, this article considers the consequences that religious educational work might have on children's and young adult literature.

Student attitudes to religious and ideological diversity: Survey instrument development based on item response theory

Sabine Hermisson

Abstract

Current migration movements are changing cultural and religious diversity in Europe. In response to this challenge, this article develops a survey tool to analyze the attitudes of students to religious and ideological diversity. The focus is on the following questions: Which religious and ideological affiliations are students prepared to interact with? What are the difficulties they encounter? And where do they encounter borders or limits? The study's preliminary results suggest that respondents distinguish between their own religions and other religions, and are more willing to accept diversity in their own religion than among other religions.

Internationally-networked religious education teacher training: READY?

Peter Kliemann

Abstract

“READY – Religious Education and Diversity” is an EU-funded project, in which six institutions from five European countries exchange views on different forms of teacher training and religious education and ethics instruction. The first part of the workshop introduced the concept of the project. The second part, following the conference theme, focused on a sequence from the documentary film *La cour de Babel*, in which immigrant students in a French classroom discussed the role of religion in their lives in a highly engaged and emotional manner.

Escape as a theme of the Bible. Exegetical proposals for a migration-sensitive biblical didactics

Thomas Naumann

Abstract

Migration experiences in ancient Israel have left a lasting mark on the reflection of God and the ethical and narrative traditions in the Hebrew Bible. This article offers biblical-exegetical insights, focusing on cases of forced migration – i.e. flight, expulsion and deportation. These situations are always experienced in the Bible as a serious biographical crisis in the face of the ideal of trans-generational sedentariness in one location. Thus, stories of flight unfold against a background of hope for a new place of settlement. God is frequently understood as a support and savior and depicted accordingly. The causes of flight are war, hunger and economic hardship, as well as familial and

political conflicts. In individual miniatures (Exodus, Ruth, Joseph, Hagar) overarching aspects are concretized. Old-Israeli migration experiences lead to the conception of a rescuing-escorting God and, in ethical terms, to legal protection for nonresident migrants. Subsequently, the article develops opportunities for a migration-sensitive biblical didactics, such as the empathic imagination of the reduced narrative. At the same time, the author critically warns that biblical flight experiences should not be hastily coopted as salvation history or misapplied as “experiences of grace” or “learning opportunities of faith.” An overview of biblical flight stories can be found in the appendix.

Migration and ethical education in religious education

Ingrid Schoberth

Abstract

In order to properly prepare ethics instruction for religious education, it is necessary to fundamentally establish how and wherefrom ethics instruction acquires its contours. The current debate about the ethics of disposition and responsibility has not carried over to this field. Accordingly, this article attempts to investigate this fundamental question and, employing Dietrich Ritschl’s distinction between lingering importance and momentary urgency, examines how the contours of ethics instruction may be developed from this tension. This fundamental question is further suited, especially in the preparation of religious education processes, to sensitize what ethical education should be. The article works out what this means for instruction on the topic of migration and briefly points out aspects of the implementation of such instruction.

Migration and interreligious learning in religious education: The school as a laboratory and learning field for novel social interaction

Miriam Schambeck

Abstract

(Forced) migration changes our society and challenges both schools and the field of religious education. The article posits schools and religious education as a laboratory and learning field which, by taking cultural and religious differences seriously, enables the practice of new forms of social coexistence with all their opportunities and difficulties. Unlike social science, this article also looks at religion as a factor in integration processes and asks how religious education should be organized and conceptualized against this background.

By means of a case study from a video-based educational research project with refugees, the author formulates consequences for interfaith education, which help differentiate the social discourse of integration.

Morning Prayer: “My father was a wandering Aramaean” (Dtn. 26:5). What the Votive Church tells us about migrants and refugees

Alfred Garcia Sobreira-Majer, Thomas Kroboth, Dagmar Lagger

Abstract

On the one hand, the ideas that shaped the given Morning Prayer are based on the topic of the *GwR* conference: “Migration, Religion and Education. Ways towards a Migration-Sensitive Religious Education.” On the other hand, they spring from the desire to have the church speak for itself in a manner that combines the churchly with the spatial and the pedagogical. A look into the (building) history of the Votive Church in Vienna invokes issues such as homeland, war and migration. And it so happened that these

same historical references became relevant again when in 2012 the Votive Church became the final refuge for a group of refugees, occupying and embroiling the Archdiocese of Vienna and ecclesiastical aid organizations in controversy for more than two years. Serving as a real site for the concrete challenges of refugees, this conference venue confronted the preparatory team as well as the participants with the political, existential and spiritual consequences of the topics of the presentations which were held in university buildings not far from the Votive Church.

Given the current situation of migrants who want to enter and settle in central Europe, and the various political strategies of dealing with that issue, this Morning Prayer offers a biblical assurance as well as a pastoral offer for moments of powerlessness and overburdening.

Conference retrospective

Thomas Weiss and Fahimah Ulfat

Abstract

The conference discusses the current problems of migration, religion and education, presenting the connections between them through an educational, religious educational, and theological focus. This conference retrospective summarizes these different perspectives under the following headings: “Topology of the Stranger,” “Escape as Grace / Escape as Crisis,” and “Teaching/Learning Processes in Schools and Migration.” The final part of the retrospective formulates open questions and highlights research desiderata.

The role and importance of individual religiosity in refugee aid volunteering. A state-of-the-art report of relevant research

Ulrich Riegel & Andrea Schneiker

Abstract

Volunteering to provide aid to refugees takes place in an environment strongly associated with religion. Religious organizations, for example, play an important role in coordinating this aid, and refugees are strongly identified with the religion of their country of origin. It is thus all the more astonishing that religion plays no significant role in the research on refugee aid. The present article reviews the few relevant studies regarding the insights they provide about the relationship between individual religiosity and voluntary engagement. It also compares these findings with research on the relationship between religiosity and voluntary engagement in general. Through this comparison it becomes clear that religion is equated with altruistic motives, which foster the will to offer assistance. In the context of refugee aid, membership in the same religious tradition further motivates voluntary engagement. In the discussion of this finding, we argue that previous research systematically suppresses the field of alternative spirituality and call for further research in this direction.

Religion as resource and risk. The religiosity of refugees in Germany: Empirical insights

Manfred L. Pirner

Abstract

Compared to the majority of Germans, migrants have very high religiosity. When it comes to refugee youths, however, there has been very little empirical examination of the significance of their religiosity towards their life, their integration and their learning outcomes, as well as the development of their religiosity in the context of their new homeland. It can be surmised that these factors can serve both as resources for improving living conditions and integration, as well as engender life-impairing and integration-inhibiting risks — if, for example, they assume strongly conservative, fundamentalist or extremist forms. This article presents the current state of research and reports the results from a qualitative pilot study in which N = 22 adolescents were interviewed. On the basis of this data, the article concludes by providing preliminary insights for further research, political action and the generation of appropriate educational opportunities.

Research and discourse

Governing religious diversity in a (post-)secular age: Teaching about religion in French and American public schools

Armandine Barb

Abstract

Using France and the United States as case studies, this article undertakes a transatlantic comparison which aims to explore why and how, in these two constitutionally-secular states, religion has come to be reconsidered as a legitimate educational and civic requirement over the past three decades. The article retraces how “teaching about religion” has been integrated into French and American public secondary schools since the 1980s, not only as a means to manage the challenges of religious diversity in the sphere of education, but also, more generally, to promote a model for the “good” governance of faith within a secular democratic society. The author critically examines these attempts at achieving an inclusive and pluralist education about religion in the context of constitutionally-secular states, where religious identities remain highly politicized.

Mourning expression and bereavement among adolescents An analysis of a memorial book for a classmate who died in an accident

Florian Burk, Carsten Gennerich, Bärbel Husmann

Abstract

Are adolescents able to express their condolences properly and orderly? How can one determine what a proper message of condolence is? What strategies do young people use to cope with their grief? These questions should be investigated. The research basis for this inquiry is a memorial book that was publically displayed in a school and subsequently handed over to the parents after a 15-year-old student died in an accident.

The article goes on to frame the results of the memorial book analysis in religious didactics. Here, the issue is how religious education can build and promote skills that enable adolescents to deal competently with the topics of death, dying and life after death.

The absurd alternative of ethics and religious education. A logical-ethical commentary

Lukas Ohly: Abstract

This article analyzes the argumentative weight of comparisons between ethics and denominational religious education in public schools. The imputed competitive relationship between these subjects gives rise to categorical errors and ethical contradictions. If one avoids these, however, one can make the case for a juxtaposition of both subjects. The legitimacy of subjects depends on the scientific justification of their content. And the freedom of science, accordingly, forms the background for denominational religious education. However, religion as a cross-denominational subject implies an epistemological situation in which the criteria for verifying the truth claims of the various religions have been finalized.

Family resemblances. Question-forming and theological classroom discussions

Hanna Roose

Abstract

Theological classroom discussion happily uses the question-forming discussion as a (negative) foil for its own purposes. However, a closer historical and analytical view of both forms of discussions shows that they have surprising similarities. Both invoke the Socratic dialogue, and neither can escape the ambiguity or dialectic of teaching. A comparison of the question-forming and theological discussion forms brings to light the modesty of the latter as well as its obscuring of the norms of self-guided learning and effectiveness.

From teacher training to social work. A plea for the networking of the technical and university educations in the Evangelical-diaconal educational system

Martin Sander-Gaiser

Abstract

Access to higher education in Germany is strongly linked to the family background. At the heart of its counterprogram, Evangelical diaconal education promises education for all.

Networked, permeable models for educators with social work counteract the opacity and segregation of Evangelical educational institutions. At the same time, they make the state-sought rise through education possible. The recognition of ECTS is a first step. But it is more effective to lead the so-called “undecided” towards an academic education (EKD: “Education qualifications”) through a combination of technical college and university programs. In doing so, such networked opportunities should be affordable, time-constrained and regional. The graduates of such networked programs are in high demand among Evangelical and state employers, especially for management tasks.

Mixed-age learning in religious education from the perspective of the students. From necessity, to a religious educational “Yes?”

Susanne Schwarz:

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Abstract

Although mixed-age or inter-grade learning has been part of the everyday life of religious education in many places for a long time, religious education research has hardly taken into consideration this form of learning and the heterogeneity associated with it. It is also unknown how the pupils perceive this particular form of learning within the school year context. The present pilot study of student perspectives on mixed-age religious education meets this desideratum and provides impulses for further religious educational considerations.

Religiosity and religious self-orientation among Muslim religious education teachers and prospective teachers in Germany

Veronika Zimmer, Rauf Ceylan, Margit Stein

Abstract

This article provides an overview of the religiosity and religious self-orientation of teachers and prospective teachers for Islamic religious education. Methodologically, a total of 34 in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with (prospective) Muslim RE teachers and subsequently evaluated according to Mayring's qualitative content analysis. Among other things, the evaluation portion employs deductive categories such as Glock's dimensions of religiosity as expanded by Boos-Nünning. In addition, three types of religious self-identification were identified among the qualitative interview material and were found to reference the types of religious identity status according to Marcia.