

**Theo-Web. Academic Journal of Religious Education  
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Editorial and Summary in English**

by  
Manfred L. Pirner

*This Editorial is intended to make the major contents of the contributions in German known to an international readership. It is based on the supposition that such an additional overview of the journal's articles is more profitable to international English-speaking readers than just additional English abstracts at the beginning of each German article.*

*We appreciate any reactions and comments by readers from outside the German language 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@ewf.uni-erlangen.de](mailto:manfred.pirner@ewf.uni-erlangen.de)).*

*This issue of Theo-Web consists of three major parts:*

*Thematic Issue 1 is a documentation of the annual conference of the Association of Religious Education Scholars that took place from 9 to 11 September 2011 in Zurich, Switzerland. Topic: School form-specific or inclusive Religious Education.*

*Thematic Issue 2 documents the contributions to another major conference, namely the Association for Historical Religious Education Research that took place from 27 to 29 May 2011 in Hofgeismar, Germany. It focused on the topic: The history of education in religious education research – looking for the systematic place of this sub-discipline.*

*In the section "Research and Discourse" there are five texts that deal with various topics.*

**Thematic Issue 1: School type specific or inclusive Religious Education – Annual Conference of the German Association of (Protestant) Religious Education Scholars "Arbeitskreis für Religionspädagogik e.V." (AfR)**

**Introduction to the thematic issue**

by MANFRED L. PIRNER

A ballot of members at last year's meeting of the AfR showed a large number of votes in favour of the theme "school type specific Religious Education". This met with the approval of the managing committee, especially since the theme was already – as you may have noticed – the subject of our first issue of Theo-Web this year. The journal "Schulformspezifische Religionsdidaktik" ("School type specific Religious Education") (Theo-Web 1/2011), issue editors Bernd Schröder und Michael Wermke, is recommended reading.

However, the committee realised that for the AfR conference the theme "school type specific Religious Education" should be complemented by the topic of inclusion. The UN resolution on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006 and ratified

by Germany in 2009 brought the issue of inclusion firmly into the debate on education policy and research. Inclusion is not just about children and young people with disabilities being integrated into mainstream schools; it is far broader and is about students with extremely diverse backgrounds and needs learning together.

We hope the conference and the material in this journal will contribute in a small way to discussion in the critical areas of school type characteristics and inclusion, external and internal differentiation in schools and universities, with a focus on the welfare of children and young people.

*Background information on the German school system for non-German readers:*

In Germany Religious Education is an obligatory subject (with exemption possible) at all public state schools. Education policy in Germany is decentralized and in the hands of the federal states, which sometimes makes things quite complicated. However, there are some basic structures that apply to the whole country. School in Germany starts after kindergarten with elementary school ("Grundschule") for all from age 6 to 10 (classes 1 to 4). At secondary level (classes 5 to 10, in Germany called "secondary I-level") there are a number of comprehensive schools in some German states, but basically, there is a three-tier system of general education that offers three achievement levels: high school ("Gymnasium"), middle school ("Realschule") and – traditionally – the so-called main school ("Hauptschule"). As the latter has more and more turned into a 'school for leftovers' in public opinion, several German states have recently made efforts to improve the main schools' bad image. Thus, they have promoted close co-operation (e.g. in Baden-Württemberg) or even fusion (e.g. in Saxony, partly in Bavaria) between main schools and middle schools, and they have integrated achievement classes in main schools that lead up to the middle school certification.

Qualification for university can be obtained at higher high school level (classes 11 and 12, in Germany also called "secondary II-level") or at vocational schools. There is a great variety of vocational schools ("berufliche Schule") in Germany, ranging from schools that aim to help young people with unsatisfactory school achievements to find vocational training places up to schools that qualify their students for universities of applied sciences. Handicapped or learning-impaired children may attend special schools called "Sonderschule" or "Förderschule" – which will probably change in the near future due to the UN resolution demanding far-reaching inclusion of disabled children in non-separated schools.

### **School type related didactics of religious education – taking stock**

by MICHAEL WERMKE

A review of religious education courses related to school type is followed by a discussion of their viability for the future in the context of current discussions on reforming the three-tier school system in Germany. In particular, there are marked shortcomings in religious education provision at Secondary level I, especially in the Hauptschule and Realschule, but also in the Förderschule. In view of the gradual move towards a combined school system an integrated provision for religious education is needed which takes account of the diversity of student background as well as the differentiated requirements of Secondary level I.

### **No child left behind – the challenge of inclusion**

by ANITA MÜLLER-FRIESE

The paper develops the theme from a variety of perspectives. Crucially and fundamentally, views and attitudes that inform the concept of inclusion have to be identified. Clear pointers are given by the Christian view of human beings. Starting from an understanding of inclusive education, the key pedagogical and didactic aspects which will shape religious education programmes are discussed.

In conclusion there are (school) organisational and structural factors necessary for successful learning in combined classes.

### **Church community pedagogy between place of learning and inclusion**

by HILDRUN KEßLER

In the past decades the major pedagogical initiatives in the church community have rarely, if at all, tackled the theme of connection between people with and without disability. What is the reason for this non-connection between the pedagogy of church community and that of integration/inclusion?

The article shows how the community as the place of learning has the potential for inclusion, and that church community pedagogy is capable of being an inclusive pedagogy. But enquiries also show that, as a result of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006/2009), there are new challenges for the church community in discussions on pedagogical theory and practice, and teacher training and development.

### **Religious education teacher training – a challenge for higher education between differentiation and inclusion**

by HANS MENDEL

Differentiation and individualisation are not only challenges for RE courses in schools but also for the training of religious education teachers at university. This paper offers some critical observations on the state of the profession before outlining ways of responding appropriately to the diversity of student background in the school setting; in the following a heuristic framework for universities is developed for which a focus on the learner's subjectivity and a constructivist methodology are major concepts. The second part shows how it is possible to address diversity of background, multiple internal differentiation of teaching and individual diagnosis and evaluation. In conclusion brief reference is made to the "challenge of inclusion".

### **Far away ... and yet nearer as presumed? On the state of religious education in Switzerland and in the Canton Zurich**

by THOMAS SCHLAG and RAHEL VOIROL-STURZENEGGER

The article offers an overview of the situation of RE in Switzerland and especially in the Canton Zurich where the traditional school subject of RE has been replaced by a subject called "Religion and Culture". This subject is no longer provided in cooperation with the church, but is run exclusively by state institutions. This may be a situation which prefigures the development in other Western countries, too. It is a situation, in which the church, on the other hand, looks for new ways of religious education in congregational settings. A concept for such congregational forms of reli-

gious education has been developed in Zurich and is introduced at the end of the article.

### **Inclusion at school and in religious education – challenges and possible concepts**

by WOLFHARD SCHWEIKER and ANITA MÜLLER-FRIESE

The workshop presentation outlines the main challenges for implementing inclusion in the school and religious education classes on a macro-, meso- and micro-level (1). The concept of “Arbeitshilfe Religion inklusiv” (theory, methodology, classroom materials) published by Calwer Verlag is highlighted. The general principles of the materials are explained (2) and the principle of inclusive teaching briefly illustrated by the four differentiated routes for access and acquisition (basal perceptive, concrete objective, demonstration modelling and abstract conceptual (3).

### **Becoming a teacher of RE in the *Hauptschule*. Reflections on theological studies with a course component on school type**

by FRANK M. LÜTZE

Starting from observations on the particular conditions and challenges of educational provision in the *Hauptschule*, the article considers the value of a school type component in the training courses for teachers of RE in both *Hauptschule* and combined *Hauptschule/Realschule*. It focuses on the specialist and didactic requirements of the subject with particular focus on training in practical and systematic theology.

### **Training religious education teachers for vocational schools – requirements and ideas**

by ANDREAS OBERMANN

In the article the (vocational) educational elements for religious education in vocational schools (BRU) is described and the system of “Berufsschule” and “Berufskolleg” (vocational schools and colleges) is outlined. The author then poses basic questions about religious education in the dual system of vocational education (work place and school based) for which every teacher should have realistic answers. This leads on to what BRU teachers are expected to do and, therefore, how the courses should be developed. The aim of the workshop was to reflect collaboratively on ways of expanding university level training for BRU, drawing on proven areas of success, in order to meet the huge recruitment problem.

### **“Red in the face, eyes lowered” – what teachers need to know about children and feelings of shame**

by DANIELA HAAS

A main focus of the 2011 AfR conference was the theme “inclusive religious education”. In the workshop “Red in the face, eyes lowered’ – what teachers need to know about children and feelings of shame” the main argument was: shame shuts you out. Therefore, inclusion in the culture of school and classroom means being sensitive to shame. Religious education as a curriculum subject contains the potential for understanding and learning what shame is and how to deal with it in a constructive way.

### **Learning circle on the topic of Jesus Christ: student teachers and RE teachers explore models for Secondary level I**

by ULRIKE HÄUSLER and CORNELIA OSWALD

A teaching and learning project is described in which student teachers and religious education teachers collaborate on developing a learning circle for heterogeneous learning groups in Secondary level I. Using the book "Schlüssel zur Bibel" ("Keys to the bible") by Peter Müller, which connects bible teaching to real life, learning stations on the theme of Jesus Christ were designed. The article focuses on the opportunities and difficulties of this kind of collaborative project.

### **Importance of gender specific teacher training – theories, stimuli, examples from practice**

by MONIKA JAKOBS

What does it mean today to talk in gender specific terms about religious education? Gender discourse is characterised by many instances of asynchrony: highly elaborated – though not always recognised – at the level of research; but there are also the political and private levels, and gender discourse is not yet fully part of religious education discussion, especially in schools. Here the key concept is diversity, which also suggests a nuanced approach to educational provision for boys. Gender dramatisation/de-dramatisation is offered as a model for planning and analysis of classroom situations.

### **School type related or inclusive religious education – a conference review**

by CHRISTOPH GRAMZOW

A summarising review of the whole conference is offered.

### **Morning meditation on 11 September 2011**

by GABRIELE KLAPPENECKER

Morning meditation

### **Discourse on inclusion as a challenge for empirical theological research in the area of teaching in Protestant schools**

by INA SCHRÖDER

After a summary of inclusion discourse and its application to religious education the implications of the concept for Christian pedagogy are examined. The idea of inclusion, in current writing on religious education matters usually treated from the Christian view of human beings, engages us to reflect on its consequences for theological anthropology. Since it is impossible to deduce pedagogical principles from theological deliberations, the challenge of inclusion discourse is used to outline a concrete research perspective for Protestant schools and, beyond that, to a Christian pedagogy.

### **Inclusion and anthropology – Christian educational perspectives**

by MANFRED L. PIRNER

This paper at first asks to what extent it is possible or legitimate to apply Christian principles and perspectives to the UN convention concerning the right to inclusive education. Then, from those aspects of biblical Christian anthropology fundamental to an understanding of inclusive education three ideas are developed: humans as God's image (3.1), humans as fragmentary creatures (3.2) and humans as creatures requir-

ing, and capable of, amendment. The paper concludes with some comments on implementing inclusion in the public education system.

## **Thematic Issue 2: The history of education in religious education research – looking for the systematic place of this sub-discipline (Annual Conference of the Association of Historical Religious Education Research)**

### **Introduction into the thematic issue**

by STEFANIE PFISTER and MICHAEL WERMKE

The “Arbeitskreis für Historische Religionspädagogik” (Association of Historical Religious Education Research), whose speakers’ council is chaired by Prof. Michael Wermke (Jena), chose as a central topic in the annual conference of 27–29 May 2011 the systematic place of the history of education in religious education. Religious educationalist Dr. Bernd Schröder (Göttingen), church historian Prof. Peter Gemeinhardt (Göttingen) and teacher and historian Frank-Michael Kuhlemann (Dresden) were invited to take part. Dr. Dieter Reiher, former education minister in the last East German government, also agreed to give an evening lecture. These papers are included in the present issue of Theo-Web. Besides the academic-theoretical aspects, the function of historical referencing in current discussions on religious education in schools was given a special focus. A particularly profitable addition this year was a call for papers on current research in the field of historical religious education. Eleven junior researchers from different disciplines came forward and a selection of project reports is also included in this issue.

### **Religious education in history – reflections on focus and function**

by BERND SCHRÖDER

Historical studies are an expanding area of activity within religious education, increasing not only in quantity, but also in quality, notably in methodological complexity. Development and characteristics are described (2), attention is drawn to historical research requirements in religious education (3), historical religious education research is put into context in general religious education theory (4) and the function for judgement and theory forming is described (5).

### **Why history of education in religious studies? Stimulus for discussion from the perspective of church history**

by PETER GEMEINHARDT

The paper takes recent research into the relationship between education and religion in late Christian Antiquity in order to develop a church history perspective in the history of education. The concept is sub-divided into school education, formation of religious identities and theological reflection. Emphasis is placed on the historical dynamic of educational ideals and concepts, as well as the necessity for interdisciplinary collaborative work with historical religious education, and other disciplines both within and outside theology. In conclusion the paper describes the Göttingen University Research Centre EDRIS and the studies of comparative religious history in relation to Graeco-Roman religion and philosophy, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

## **Church and religion in historical education research**

by FRANK-MICHAEL KUHLEMANN

The author assesses the significance that recent historical research in education attaches to the area of church and religion. In humanities education the connection between religion and education was always present, but a deep divide has opened up between religion and education under the socio-historical focus of historical research in education, and also as a result of earlier developments in Protestant theology. Since the 1990s, however, there has been a growing interest in the systematic and historical connections. This new interest is briefly exemplified by a number of research outcomes and desiderata (both systematic-theoretical and from biography, genealogy, history of education and teaching).

## **Attempts to reintroduce religious education into general education during the transition period in the German Democratic Republic (GDR)**

by DIETER REIHER

In the GDR schools were subject to the principles of uniformity and secularism, underpinned by the socialist ideology of secular education for all. The Ninth Education Congress in the GDR held in 1989 rejected the internal reform aspirations of education scholars as well as fundamental demands from grass-roots groups. Proposals for dialogue made by the Protestant church also went unheeded. By the time of the *Wende* (change) there were several lines of discussion around “religion in the school”: R.E. as option, religious studies, R.E. as compulsory option. The hesitant introduction of religious education in the new *Bundesländer* (the new East German states) means that the relationship between general education and religious education remains an ongoing and controversial process.

## **Remembering the crucified Christ – the example of the Wilsnack pilgrimage for social, diaconal learning**

by JENS KRAMER

Pilgrimage to the Church of the Holy Blood in Wilsnack is an example of how a welfare programme existed as early as the late middle ages and was intended in part for the support of pilgrims. Images of saints or “acts of mercy” say to the viewer that whoever receives, and cares for, pilgrims is doing a “good work” and they invite imitation. Beyond this, motifs of suffering play an important role, in particular vivid depictions of Christ crucified. Identifying emotionally with the suffering, the individual is encouraged to support those in need with charitable actions. These are relevant perspectives for religious education because they show, on the one hand, how processes of diaconal learning were begun in the late middle ages, and on the other, that conclusions can be drawn for diaconal learning in the classroom.

## **Religious education in *Realschulen* – an analysis of religious education in the middle tier of Secondary level I**

by STEFANIE PFISTER

*Realschule*, *Bürgerschule* (“citizen school”) and *Mittelschule* belong historically to the middle tier of Secondary level I and came about from a variety of rationales. A precise definition of these terms is the intention of the post-doctoral research project “Religion at *Realschulen* – A religious education analysis of the middle tier school system” which analyses the relationship between “realia” (delivering a practical

grounding in science) and religious education from the perspective of the history of concepts (Reinhart Koselleck). The methodology of August Hermann Francke's "school of realia" provides a basis for accurately recording transformations, modifications and substitutions.

## **Research and Discourse**

### **Learning about faith – possibilities and limitations of the educational theorem**

by EVA BAUMANN-NEUHAUS

Religious communities are repositories of collective memory and narrative whose future depends decisively on their ability to pass that knowledge on; that is, under altered social conditions, to communicate their religious beliefs and practices in a way both understandable and relevant to others. In many countries people, especially those sympathetic to the charismatic evangelical and neo-pentecostal movements, find a solution to the crisis of communication so often identified with the majority churches in *Alpha*, a faith course based on concepts current in sociology and education. The "learning package" is client friendly and experiential, meeting the spiritual and social needs of the individual in an easily accessible style, and its success can be measured by its great popularity. Only time will tell whether the strength of the course is also ultimately its weakness standing in the way of realising its basic goal of promoting church growth.

### **How do children visualise God?**

by THOMAS BENESCH

Qualitative studies were conducted to determine the polarities in children's images of God. The resulting pairs of opposites were grouped as environmental, or as physical and mental characteristics. 27 opposing pairs were selected, and with the help of a written questionnaire completed by the children, were set out to show how they related to God. The aim of the test was to see whether these opposites revealed gender differences. A factor analysis was carried out and an independent t-test used to check the resulting factors for gender differences. The results show that girls and boys have different ways of describing God.

### **"It showed me that I really was now at university...". Systematic theology and learning independent thinking – the orientation phase "open space" format**

by JULIA GERTH and GOTTFRIED ORTH

By restructuring the introduction to systematic theology it is hoped to find an answer to the constantly changing entrance requirements for students: building on the constructivist understanding of education and the work of M. B. Rosenberg and Ernst Lange students have the experience of successful learning and seeing their needs addressed in an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and esteem, of lively friendly relationships in the student community, while retaining their autonomy. A parallel research project is examining what influence this change in university teaching has on the development of methodological and didactic skills of future R.E. teachers.

### **What has liturgy got to do with me?**

### **Developing a concept of performativity for (more critical) use of liturgy in the introductory phase of Roman Catholic religious education**

by MATHIAS HENKEL

Up to now discussion on performative religious education has provided little practical advice on classroom teaching design, especially for classes 11 and 12 of the *Gymnasium* (high school). This paper describes a performative concept for religious education in Secondary level II which has been tested in practice. Lessons based on the liturgy of the hours enable students to reflect critically on liturgy and ritual. Employing the participative observation method students use a prepared structure to note down their ideas about their experience. These observations can also be used for qualitative evaluation of the lessons, and they provide the teacher with an insight into the students' actual learning processes.

**Learning to ask about the meaning of existence.**

**The influence on religious education of existential interpretation.**

**On the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rudolf Bultmann's birth**

by JÜRGEN HEUMANN

On the occasion of the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday of the renowned Protestant theologian Rudolf Bultmann his concept of existence and understanding is explicated and its adoption by religious education scholars Martin Stallmann, Hans Stock, and Gert Otto is sketched. The differences between them and their ultimate failure prompt the question what remains of Bultmann's thinking for present religious education. As a conclusion, the present significance of Bultmann's existential hermeneutics is reflected, exemplified by the quest for truth.