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**Editorial and Summary in English**

by  
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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@fau.de](mailto:manfred.pirner@fau.de)).

As usual for the autumn edition, **the thematic part** of this issue of "Theo-Web" presents the keynotes and papers from the annual conference of the German Society of (Protestant) Religious Education Scholars ("Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Religionspädagogik e.V." GwR) which was this time conducted as a joint conference together with the Association of Catholic Religious Education Scholars ("Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholische Religionspädagogik und Katechetik" AKRK). It took place from 11 to 14 September 2014 in Hildesheim and dealt with the question of ecumenical and confessional perspectives in present religious education in Germany relate to each other. As the contributions assembled from the conference are quite extensive, there will be no texts in the section "**Research and Discourse**" in this issue of "Theo-Web".

**Thematic Issue:**

**Ecumenical and confessional perspectives in present-day religious education**

**Is there Catholic / Protestant Religious Education Studies or are we ecumenical? A Protestant perspective**

by Friedrich Schweitzer

If ecumenical cooperation is to become fruitful, it seems advisable to address the notion of ecumenism and its concretion in religious education in a normative as well as an empirical perspective. In this context it should also be asked what scope of ecumenical work can be achieved by a single confessional teacher anyway, if he aims to present different denominations in an authentic way. Only when these aspects have been carefully reflected on, can an ecumenical religious education for pupils at public schools disclose a perspective at the different denominations that makes them curious to learn about the differences and communalities, that supports their understanding of their own confession without risking either a thinking that polarises or one that levels all differences.

## **Is there Catholic / Protestant Religious Education Studies or are we ecumenical? A Catholic perspective**

by Rudolf Englert

This contribution tries to give an overview of present tendencies in Religious Education Studies with regard to the confessional dimension. These tendencies show tensions and partly contradictions. On the one hand there is the decreasing significance of confessional differences in the life world and faith world of our contemporaries, and religious education academics have long been confidentially cooperating. On the other hand there are new attempts in church and theology to emphasize confessional identity. The author concludes: There is still 'room for more' in the effort for ecumenical togetherness in the sense of an "ecumenism of profiles" that understands differences primarily as chances of learning.

## **Between unbelief and re-confessionalisation – some highlights of a sociology of religion analysis**

by Maria Widl

This contribution offers an overview of important results from studies on juvenile religiosity and relates these to the current master theories of the sociology of religion in order to gain orientation in the field and for the task of religious education.

## **Religion in movement(s). New developments in the global context**

by Henrik Simojoki

When analysing and interpreting the present transformation of religion, German Religious Education Studies primarily concentrates on Central, Northern or Western Europe. However, the picture significantly changes as soon as this geographical context is transcended and the perspective is enlarged to a global one. In this contribution the implications of such a change of perspective are explicated in several steps: First, the focus is on general current transformational dynamics in the global religious field. Then, the shifts within global Christianity are analysed, arguing that these shifts have long influenced educational contexts in this country. Concluding, the consequences of a globally widened perspective are concisely reflected and demonstrated at the example of the international project „500 Protestant Schools Celebrate 500 Years Reformation“.

## **Secularisation as a chance for the churches. A look at the current situation of church and religion in Germany and at reactions of the Catholic Church (and others)**

by Tobias Kläden

The current situation of church and religion in Germany is characterised by massive tendencies to erosion that can be convincingly interpreted in the framework of secularisation theory. The three master theories from the sociology of religion, secularisation, individualisation and rational choice – are introduced and explicated in their consequences for practical theology. The author pleads for seeing secularisation and secularity as a chance rather than a threat to the churches, and for developing a theological theory of learning that allows for being surprised by the prophetic messages that can be found in secular culture.

## **How to deal with persons without religious affiliation in religious education – theses and examples**

by David Käbisch

Twelve theses and four examples on how to educationally address people without religious affiliation are explicated.

## **Perspectives of Christian-Orthodox Religious Education Studies in Greece**

by Athanasios Stogiannidis

In this contribution some major dimensions of Christian-Orthodox Religious Education Scholarship are outlined. First, its epistemological theoretical foundations are sketched. Then, its basic education theory perspectives are discussed, drawing from a theological as well as an educational science stance. Concluding, the current Greek discussion about the content of religious education in public schools is addressed.

## **Anglican Perspectives on Christian Religious Education**

by Jeff Astley

This paper reviews the ambiguity behind the notion of Christian education in its application to Anglican (Church of England) schools, together with the ambiguities surrounding Anglicanism itself. It reflects on Anglican authority, comprehensiveness and distinctiveness, and on the established and parochial character of the Church of England, noting the theological and educational implications of these characteristic elements. Accounts of the 'spirit of Anglicanism' are discussed, with particular reference to this Church's claims to tolerance, inclusiveness, openness, freedom and a lay character; as well as issues relating to English character, Christian values and the role of worship and theological reflection in any Anglican theology of education.

## **Medialisation and its effects. Theological and religious education perspectives**

by Manfred L. Pirner

Digital media influence our life world in many ways, if frequently unnoticed and with individually quite different intensities and effects. This contribution first introduces one topical example of the enormous effectiveness of internet activities. The author's systematic major thesis is that the insight into the fundamental mediality of man („homo medialis“) and of religion („religio medialis“) constitutes the necessary basis for an adequate theological understanding of the medialisation of our life world and for reacting to it in religious education. Within this frame of reference major results from empirical media research are introduced and explicated in their consequences for religious education.

## **Fluid phenomena. Contemporary art as an inspiration for religious education**

by Viera Pirker

Contemporary art as a largely secularized field of society seems to increasingly tackle issues of religion and its symbolic worlds. The article looks at this phenomenon, a phenomenon in flux, which can be understood as a form of medializing the religious. It focuses on research and practice in the fields of religious education. Whereas the arts emphasize the absence of the religious and explore real presence anew by means of relational aesthetics, religious education understands artistic expressions mainly within a framework of representation. Using the example of recent pivotal artworks (by Theaster Gates, Thomas Bayrle, Andrea Büttner, Marina Abramović, Tino Seghal, Paul Thek), the author shows how the process of religious formation can be inspired by the arts, an external prophecy of today's world.

## **Ecumenical challenges for religious education**

by Ulrike Link-Wieczorek

Facing the fact that we live in an increasingly migrant society, religious education must ask how the concept of ecumenism can be newly defined and used in practice. RE is challenged by ever more diverse and secular pupils to develop their sensitivity to inter-religious relationships and to growing variety within Christianity. These contextual conditions may, however, also prove to be an excellent chance for the pupils to examine and further develop their own confessional self-understanding.

## **Confessional-cooperative research projects an the University of Tübingen (1995-2014)**

by Albert Biesinger & Friedrich Schweitzer

This article gives an overview of various research projects that were carried out at the University of Tuebingen in cooperation between the chairs of Protestant and Catholic religious education under the direction of Albert Biesinger and Friedrich Schweitzer over almost 20 years. The individual projects are briefly introduced and are commented in short. In addition, key publications are identified. In conclusion, looking towards the future, current projects are mentioned.

## **Go East – Confessional Cooperation between Catholic and Orthodox Christians in the context of the EU-Erasmus Intensive Programme**

by Martin Jäggle & Angela Kaupp

This contribution reports about the development of an Erasmus-Intensive-Programme in religious education. From the beginning, it was a project in cooperation between Protestant, Catholic and Christian Orthodox colleagues which brought together students and teachers from Western, Eastern and Southern Europe and lasted over 13 years. The intercultural and interdenominational learning in personal encounters and in overlap situations proved especially fruitful.

## **Confessional Cooperation in (religion) teacher education at the church-run university “Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems” near Vienna. Foundations and experiences**

by Thomas Kroboth & Georg Ritzer

Diversity is one of the most pressing challenges to present-day religious education. The Kirchliche Hochschule in Vienna/Krems takes up this challenge by its clearly ecumenical concept. Unique in the German-speaking world, the responsibility for this university is in the common hands of two Christian churches. The core of this cooperation is constituted by the joint education of religious education teachers, which is partly confessional and partly confessional-cooperative. A competence-centered evaluation shows the great acceptance that this concept enjoys among students and lecturers, with some controversial points that are also mentioned.

## **Cooperative research project on the topic „Catechetical and religious education literature from 1750 to 1900“**

by Urte Borchardt & Cornelia Müller

On 1 August 2012 resp. 1 March 2013 a DFG-financed project was launched that aims at establishing a complete bibliography of the catechetical and religious education literature from 1750 to 1900. In cooperation between Professor Bernd Schröder (Georg-August-University Göttingen) and Professor Werner Simon (Johannes-Gutenberg University Mainz) the bibliography is supposed to provide material for the history of the academic discipline of Religious Education Studies (primary reference disciplines, methodology, aims).

## **Teaching the form language of religion! But how? ‚Performative Religious Education‘ in Catholic and Protestant interpretations**

by Florian Dinger

The discussion about the performative dimension of religious education has been intensive among recent Catholic as well as Protestant scholars and religious educators. Meanwhile, quite a number of performative approaches have been advanced that reveal very different didactical goals. This contribution explores cross-denominational perspectives of the notion of ‘performance’ and its semantics. It analyses existing approaches and elaborates their communalities as well as their differences.

## **Teaching and learning in a confessional-cooperative setting in teacher education. A teaching project – empirical evaluation – perspectives for university teaching**

by Sabine Pemsel-Maier

Religious education at schools that is conducted in cooperation by both major denominations in Germany has consequences for teacher education. In the context of the Baden-Württemberg confessional-cooperative approach to RE a teaching project at the University of Education in Karlsruhe is outlined. The goals, contents and methods of a confessional-cooperative seminar are introduced and suggestions for university teaching are given. The evaluation of the pilot project confirmed that such

teaching-learning processes lead to increasing denominational and ecumenical knowledge, to the reduction of confessional stereotypes, a differentiation of the students' confessional identity and a heightened interest in ecumenism.

### **Research work shop „competencies for confessional cooperation in religious education“. A university teaching project at the University of Bamberg**

by Konstantin Lindner & Henrik Simojoki

Confessional-cooperative approaches to RE demand more from religious education teachers than the mono-confessional type of RE. In order to enable teachers to professionally implement this option, it is important that courses in academic teacher education are also increasingly cooperative. This is the concept of the Bamberg research workshop „*competencies for confessional cooperation in religious education*“. Interlinking reflection and practice, students are supposed to acquire those communicative, reflexive, academic, subject-centered and didactical competencies that are necessary for planning and conducting their religious education lessons in cooperation with colleagues from the other denomination.

### **The Swiss ‚curriculum 21‘ – a challenge (not only) for ecumenism**

by Christian Cebulj & Thomas Schlag

In the German-speaking part of Switzerland there is – in the context of the introduction of the new ‚curriculum 21‘ – a development from confessional or ecumenical religious education to a form of RE independent of any denomination and in the sole responsibility of the state. This reform also touches on questions of ecumenism, because the Roman-Catholic and the Protestant-Reformed Churches have to newly address the question of their educational responsibility. In this process international European influences can be seen, but also uniquely Swiss paths.

### **Do differences make a difference? The freedom of religion and belief in public schools. A research project about primary school teaching in the context of diversity, heterogeneity and religious identity**

by Klaus Kießling

On the one hand, there is the traditional practice of Catholic religious education and the conviction that its confessional approach contributes to the education and identity-formation of young people and enables them to engage in dialogue. On the other hand primary schools today present themselves as culturally diverse and heterogeneous worlds in which Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, other religious and non-religious children learn together. The proportion of Catholic pupils decreases, the wish to have religious education together in class is increasingly voiced at schools. Often, the groups of Catholic pupils are too small to make a Catholic religious education class possible at all. This religious change raises the questions of identity formation anew.

### **„Follow the star!“ – An ecumenical university project at the Christmas Market in Erfurt**

by Andrea Schulte & Maria Widl

The contribution sketches the generation, design, execution and effects of an ecumenical university project that students of Protestant and Catholic Theology carried out together with their professors at the Christmas Market in Erfurt in winter semesters 2007/8 and 2008/9.

### **From confessional RE to a multifaith RE at vocational schools?**

by Matthias Gronover & Andreas Obermann

This workshop paper was developed on the basis of the long-time cooperation between the Protestant Institute for Vocational Religious Education in Bonn (bibor: [www.bibor.uni-bonn.de](http://www.bibor.uni-bonn.de)) and the Catholic Institute for Vocational Religious Education in Tübingen (KIBOR: [www.kibor-tuebingen.de](http://www.kibor-tuebingen.de)). Because in German vocational schools, religious education is mostly given to all pupils in one class, reflections on vocational RE can pioneer on the way to intensifying ecumenical concepts in other school forms, too.