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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)).

This issue of Theo-Web has **two thematic parts**. The first one, as usual in our autumn issue, is the documentation of the annual conference of the German Association of (Protestant) Religious Education Scholars ('Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Religionspädagogik e.V.' GwR) which took place in the historically interesting city of Goslar from 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> September. The conference theme was '**How Protestant can practical theology and religious education be? Contextualisation in advance of the anniversary of the Reformation**'. As can be assumed from the title, this conference was special in that it was conducted in cooperation with the section Practical Theology of the Academic Association of Theology (Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft für Theologie, WGTh).

The second thematic part also has to do with the Reformation Anniversary. It draws on the lecture series entitled '**Reformation as challenge for today's educational landscape**' that took place at the University of Vienna in the summer semester of 2015.

Beside the two thematic parts of the issue you will find, as always, some interesting contributions on diverse themes in the section "**Research and Discourse**".

## **Thematic Issue, Part 1: ‘How Protestant can practical theology and religious education be? Contextualisation in advance of the anniversary of the Reformation’**

### **Introduction**

By Bernd Schröder & Thomas Schlag

### **The legacy of the Reformation in practical theology and religious education? A systematic-theological perspective**

By Martin Hailer

Systematic theology struggles to answer the question of whether and how the legacy of the Reformation is represented in practical theology, because the nature of that legacy itself is unclear. This paper introduces four important models for answering this question and advocates an understanding of the Reformation as an ensemble of motifs which fosters churches’ connection to Christ. This heuristic instrument is a path to opening dialogues with important newer concepts from practical theology and religious education. It becomes clear that questions for systematic theology have arisen in the practical disciplines.

### **The legacy of the Reformation in practical theology and religious education? From the perspective of practical theology and religious education**

By Uta Pohl-Patalong

What legacy of the Reformation do current discourses in practical theology and religious education refer to? If one asks oneself this question, it quickly becomes clear that the meanings of the ‘legacy of the Reformation’ and even simply the word ‘evangelical’ (or ‘Protestant’) are themselves far from clear, as an empirical study of religion teachers demonstrated. However, in scientific discourse – and not only in light of the anniversary of the Reformation – we must ask ourselves what precisely we (should/want to) express with the word ‘Protestant’ and what goal we want to achieve. The first step is a formal descriptive study of the sites and aims of references to Protestant foundations in monographs in the fields of practical theology and religious education. Using this material, they will be examined to identify and explain the foundational Protestant figures which they include. It will become clear that the ‘legacy of the Reformation’ is a challenge of practical theology and religious education which is to be reflected on hermeneutically.

### **How Protestant are practical theology and religious education anymore? An investigative survey**

By Michael Meyer-Blanck

The topic of my investigation begins with a descriptive question: how does current theory view Christian Protestant practice? This also includes a normative aspect of determining to what extent a theory of practice should be positional, church-based and confessional – in short, Protestant. It is clear that the main focus is not a Protestant profile of action, but rather the development of a scientific theory of this action. If we take this seriously, even the normative question sounds provocative:

how much of the Gospel does theology need in its practical aspects? I will address the descriptive and normative aspects sequentially, treating the descriptive aspect first as it is less difficult.

### **Student lab ‘Remembering the Reformation’ – a report**

By Häusler/Krause/Tobaben

As part of the HUmanitiesLab at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, the concept of the humanities lab for students as a teaching-learning laboratory was further developed and tested in religious education classes at the Faculty of Theology. On the basis of didactic considerations of the anniversary of the Reformation as a subject of religious education, this paper introduces the conception and realisation of the student lab ‘Remembering the Reformation’ at St. Nikolai in Spandau, a historically significant site. The use of the digital learning application Actionbound is of particular importance.

### **Methodological atheism and the confessionality of theology**

By Friedrich Schweitzer

This article discusses the role of methods in practical theology and religious education, with special reference to the question of ‘atheistic’ methods. It begins with discussions about such methods in exegesis around the year 1900, then refers to Martin Luther’s teaching of the two kingdoms as a possible background to a Protestant understanding of secular methods and finally uses the example of recent research on confirmation work in Germany and Europe as an example for deciphering the relationship between research and denominational presuppositions.

### **The Protestant profile of theological ethics – a model for practical theology and religious education?**

By Traugott Roser

I am pleased to have been invited to submit a contribution on the topic of the Protestant profile in the form of a balance between theological ethics and practical theology/religious education. I will attempt to achieve specifications in a field in which the confessional profile of church activity is questioned in a controversial manner: the relationship between pastoral and spiritual care in healthcare settings. In my opinion there are several remarkable parallels in this discourse to religious education which could be looked at more closely in joint discussions.

### **When coordinates shift: on the Protestant profile of religious education in a predominantly secular context**

By Michael Domsgen

One of the core tenets of our field is that a theory of religious education, child-rearing and socialisation must be profiled in context. That this has repercussions on both the theoretical and the practical level can be observed particularly clearly in religious education classes – and not only because the term ‘confessionality’ here corresponds to the term ‘evangelicity’ in its wider meaning. A brief look will be taken at two selected regions to illustrate this.

## **Thematic Issue, Part 2: ‘Reformation as challenge for today’s educational landscape’ (Documentation of the lecture series in the Anniversary Year of Vienna University and in the Year of Education of the Protestant Church in Austria 2015)**

### **Introduction to the lecture series**

By Martin Rothgangel

‘Reformation as challenge for today’s educational landscape’ was the title of a lecture series that took place at Vienna University in the summer semester of 2015. It marked the double occasion of the 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Vienna University on the one hand and of the Year of Education of the Protestant Church of Austria on the other hand. It was conducted by the following cooperating actors: the Vienna University (Faculty of Protestant Theology, Faculty of Philosophy and Educational Science, Faculty of Catholic Theology, Centre for Teacher Education), the The University College of Teacher Education Vienna/Krems (KPH) and the Protestant Church of Austria.

### **Introductory statement**

By Thomas Hennefeld

The author outlines the history and importance of the ‘Heidelberg Catechism’ from its enthusiastic reception as a pedagogically valuable book of consolation, faith and education at the time of the Reformation to its rejection during the Enlightenment and its rediscovery in the 20th century.

The author also examines the relevance of the work, which is deserving of study even after 450 years, to the modern era. Although the Catechism was a seminal work at the time of the Reformation, it is not suitable for today’s educational purposes. The ‘Heidelberg Catechism’ can serve as a supplementary reference book for personal reflections and conversations on faith.

### **Catechism as an educational programme?**

By Susanne Heine

Catechetical instruction and books express the identity of confessions and display a social and political function. What they contain does refer to faith as a personal conviction. Principles of faith can be learned and added to the body of knowledge a person has at his or her disposal. However, this does not bring about inner certainty. Such a certainty can only be received as an insight disclosing existential sense. This corresponds to an epistemological principle saying that insight, for all efforts, is revealed in spite of oneself. Therefore, related to faith, for Martin Luther it is the Holy Spirit who lets human beings attain inner certainty. This contribution sees insight the basis of education and forming.

### **Problems and potentials of Luther's catechisms. A statement for discussion**

By Martin Rothgangel

This contribution explicates historical problems of Luther's catechisms (Luther's historical misjudgements, different sociological and religious life conditions, memorising method). At the same time it points to their potentials that should be acknowledged and reflected on when conceptualising a present-day catechism.

### **From an educational catastrophe to a re-justification of the school. Challenges in mass education in the Reformation**

By Henning Schluss

The Reformation represented a massive crisis for the medieval education system. This paper contends that this crisis was in Luther's interest, as it was a result of the Reformation and an end to the old model of schooling. Luther took advantage of this opening and promoted the establishment of schools. In addition to advocating for schools for a variety of reasons, many of which were quite secular, he also developed organisational concepts for new schools. Aspects of reform pedagogy, such as coeducative perspectives which transcend the boundaries of class, can be identified; however, these concepts are always rooted in Luther's temporal context. These new concepts are justified, quite in the spirit of the times, by references to classical Greece, which serves as the model for Luther's (and his humanistic contemporaries') educational theories. In doing so, Luther changed the old model and thus created a new conceptual approach to the justification of education.

### **Education, Reformation and profession. Vocation – more than a profession**

By Albert Biesinger

Skillfully opening up to the world is an important element of the Reformation: work, professions and vocations must not lose sight of each other. The tendency to allow the working and professional world to become a 'God-free zone' should be seen critically. On the basis of the concept of universal priesthood, individual Christians' responsibility in these everyday settings has a specific spiritual approach: God – life – career. Ultimately it is a matter of holiness in our working day, or 'everyday holiness'. Seeking God in our encounters with His Creation, our environment, our world, is more than a profession: it is a vocation. In our professional actions which produce material or intellectual 'products', God as the Creator is not separate from us, but rather is immanent, making our actions possible.

### **Pluralistic didactics (between position and reflection). Visits to lessons on the threshold between historical-political and religious education**

By Tilman Grammes

Building on the Reformation tradition of visits to schools and lessons, this contribution invites the reader on a journey through time with heuristic intent to scenes of eight lessons from various sociopolitical epochs in German history from the 19th century to the multireligious present. The perspective also includes international teaching cultures. The scenes are located on the threshold between historical-political and religious topics related to the Reformation and Peasants' War and the associated perspectives and role models. The focus is on teachers' and students' questions, which

balance the openness and closeness of the negotiated knowledge. To conclude criteria for pluralistic didactics in a democratic school culture are formulated.

### **Education and Reformation – women. On resistance and involvement**

By Margit Leuthold

Not only men, but also women found themselves, their lives and their circumstances reflected in the key tenets of the major reform movements of the late Middle Ages. They found ways to connect their convictions with their own lives. However, their involvement remained ambivalent as the movements of both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation perpetuated the patriarchal social structures. Thus the reformation to the freedom of all (Christian) people has not yet been concluded.

### **The Reformation as a humanistic educational movement**

By Volker Leppin

The role of education in the Reformation is a case of transformation: Luther and his followers did not totally break with medieval and humanist conditions, but they intensified some of them and underlined them with their theological principles. Their first aim was to reform the universities based on a combination of humanist impulses and emphasis on Biblical education; the same approach was taken to the reform of the Latin schools. In his tract 'An die Rathherren aller Städte deutsches Landes' ['To the councilors of all German towns'] (1524), Luther demanded an improvement of classical education as well as of theological training in schools. Sociologically the most important impact of the Reformation was the broadening of the basis for education – not only the burghers, not only boys should benefit from schools. This also promoted late medieval and humanist tendencies, thus making them a central focus of Protestant formation.

## **Research and discourse**

### **How is social activism influenced by religious affiliation, religiosity and values? Answers based on the 'Religion Monitor 2013'**

By Margit Stein

The connections between religious affiliation, religiosity, values and activism are strong, as an empirical analysis of the 'Religion Monitor 2013' shows. The people who are predominantly involved in activism demonstrate a strong sense of their own values and have a charitable, universalistic worldview. Whether their values influenced their activism depended strongly on the respondents' religious affiliation. Values and the centrality of religion were decisive factors for Christians, to a lesser extent for non-affiliated persons and not at all for Muslims when deciding whether to engage in activism.

## **A first look at the introduction of Protestant free church religious education in Austria**

By Clemens Sander

Religious education by Protestant free churches has been offered at Austrian schools since the 2014/15 school year. This article introduces the state-recognised religious community of free churches in Austria and describes the motives for the introduction of their own religion classes. It finds that there is a wide range of Protestant theology and education and that controversies arise predominantly in relation to the topic of biblical literalism. Religious education is advertised as being modern and varied and the curriculum is planned accordingly. The extent to which individual teachers actually implement this is a question which requires more research.

## **Types and contents of religious learning depending on religious affiliation in lower secondary education**

By Thomas Benesch

In an empirical study the types and contents of religious learning were investigated and 17 items were identified. Life relevance, existential questions, mystagogical and social-welfare-oriented dimensions of learning, and the concept of questioning religiosity were used in addition to existing items by Bucher. Differences were found between religious affiliations (Roman Catholic, Protestant, Muslim), respondents' perception of the religiosity of their upbringing and proclivity to read holy texts. Religious learning was explained up to 61.8 percent by religious affiliation, number of household members and proclivity to read holy texts.

## **Literary and theological conversations – an interdisciplinary perspective**

By Hanna Roose

This contribution links the discourse about theological conversations in the didactics of religious education with the discourse about literary conversations in literary didactics, with the aim of enhancing the profile of theological conversations in this dialogue – in accordance with and distinction towards literary didactics.

One essential result of this dialogue is the distinction between theological dialogue as a subject-related learning vehicle aimed at fostering theological competence and the use of Christian semantics, and the theological conversation as an interdisciplinary learning vehicle which enables participation in sociopolitical and religious debates, thus encouraging the formation of democratic habits.

## **A blockbuster as a subject of religious education: 'Jupiter Ascending'. Religious polyvalence as an opportunity for interreligious learning**

By Ulrich Kumher

Blockbusters are the most conspicuous film format of our era. Their targeting to a global audience and potential religious content mean that they are of interest for religious education which strives to analyse and describe global popular culture in order to establish a foundation for engaging with culture in terms of religious education. Following several remarks on blockbusters and their educational relevance (1), 'Jupi-

ter Ascending' (USA 2015) will be introduced as an example of this film format (2) and analysed (3). Among other things, it becomes clear that religion is also portrayed polyvalently in the film. On the basis of the results of the film analysis, considerations (4) of the possibilities for viewing and dealing with a blockbuster in the context of religious education are discussed, namely to foster media and interreligious competence and as part of Christian utopia formation.

### **Performance of Hungarian students at religious schools and educational value**

By Erika Kopp & Agnes Vámos

In this paper an analysis of the database of the Hungarian national assessment of core skills is used to differentiate the performance of religious schools in the Hungarian system and to identify the migratory tendencies in the religious school system. The goal of the paper is to provide an overview of the comparison of students' test results from schools funded by various church organisations using data from the school years from 2010 to 2013. The research has identified tendencies in the test results of students at schools funded by various church organisations as well as factors of the socioeconomic and institutional context which may be responsible for these findings. Using linear regression analysis and a multivariate variance analysis, a significant difference between groups of schools funded by traditional churches and new churches was found.