

**Theo-Web. Academic Journal of Religious Education  
Vol. 11, Issue 2-2012  
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@ewf.uni-erlangen.de](mailto:manfred.pirner@ewf.uni-erlangen.de)).*

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

*The Thematic Issue is a documentation of the annual conference of the Association of Religious Education Scholars that took place from 14 to 16 September 2012 in Berlin, Germany. Topic: Christian and Islamic Religious Education Scholarship in Dialogue.*

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

*As usual these two major parts of our journal are complemented by a comprehensive review of literature in the field of religious education theory and research by Martin Schreiner, and an overview of upcoming conferences.*

**Thematic Issue: Christian and Islamic Religious Education  
Scholarship in Dialogue. – Annual Conference of the German  
Association of (Protestant) Religious Education Scholars  
("Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Religionspädagogik" GwR)**

**Introduction to the thematic issue**

by MANFRED L. PIRNER

In Germany, there has been quite a development recently concerning Islamic Religious Education at state schools. The German Constitution demands that RE shall be an ordinary school subject at all public schools and that it shall be taught "in accordance with the religious communities" (Art. 7,3). Based on this constitutional clause, RE in Germany used to be mainly Protestant or Catholic RE, with "Ethics" or "Philosophy" as a substitute subject for those who opted out of RE. As the percentage of Muslims in Germany increased since the "guest workers" came in the 1970s (at pre-

sent about 5 % of the German population are Muslim) efforts were made to implement some kind of Islamic instruction at German schools. The biggest problem was and still is that Muslims in Germany do not have a democratically legitimated representation on the national, state or district levels that could function as dialogue partners for state authorities. Recently, several German states have tried to bridge this problem by accepting regional or local councils as legitimate representations of the Islamic community and have introduced Islamic Religious Education on a constitutional basis.

This development has been decisively promoted by the influential German National Academic Council (“Deutscher Wissenschaftsrat”) who recommended that Islamic RE should be expanded and underpinned by high-quality academic teacher education, not only in religious education but also in Islamic theology. Consequently, the German Ministry of Research and Education has financed four centers of Islamic Religious Studies (or Islamic Theology) at four German universities over the past years (Tübingen, Münster, Erlangen-Nuremberg, and Frankfurt) with about a dozen professorships. These centers are still in their early constituting phase but have already enhanced the spirit of innovation and optimism concerning the development of a kind of “European Islam” in Germany that will be compatible with Western democratic and human rights values and will support successful integration of Muslim migrants into German society.

This is the background of the conference put up by the German Association of Religious Education Lecturers (Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Religionspädagogik, GwR) titled “Christian and Islamic Religious Education Scholarship in Dialogue”. Its aim was to bring together RE scholars from both religions in order to intensify dialogue and co-operation as well as to support each other in promoting high-quality religious education in German schools. It did so by inviting renowned academics to deliver key notes in three inter-religious tandems on “taking stock”, “learning from each other”, and “common perspectives for research”. In addition, there were workshops on topics such as inter-religious learning in religious communities, school textbooks for Islamic RE, multi-religious school ceremonies, and controversial topics from the RE curriculum.

### **The situation and currents of present Islamic Religious Education in German-speaking countries**

by EDNAN ASLAN

This contribution primarily gives an overview of the historical development and present situation of Islamic religious education scholarship in German-speaking countries. In addition, it points to present tensions and challenges in this area. For instance, the tension between the practice of Islamic religious education and the academic discipline of religious education is mentioned as well as the tension between Islamic theology – that is being constituted at several German universities – and academic Islamic religious education. Concluding, the author pictures the present state of Islamic Religious Pedagogy as a building site where building has to go on at many places.

### **The situation and currents of present Christian Religious Education. An interpretive attempt**

by FRIEDRICH SCHWEITZER

The author offers an overview of the present situation of religious education scholarship in Germany. Special attention is given to the following aspects: the thesis that there is a break-off of traditions, the fact of religious and world-view diversity, expectations from churches and from theology towards religious education, the change schools are undergoing, education policy and scholarship. Concluding, the author advances his own perspective on the dialogue between Christian and Islamic religious education scholarship.

### **Learning from each other in religious education. An Islamic perspective**

by JÖRG IMRAN SCHRÖTER

This contribution asks, what teachers and scholars on the Christian as well as on the Islamic side can learn in the context of the new situation that at many places in Germany there is Islamic RE now and Islamic teacher education is developing. Starting with the commonalities of the Abrahamic religions, it goes on to focus also on the dangers of overwhelming the other or to adopt too quickly and without enough reflection the other's concepts.

### **Islamic inspirations in Christian RE. Chances of learning through Islamic traditions**

by KARLO MEYER

What can be learnt from Islam in Protestant RE? Much of the present teaching material seems to concentrate on basic information. However, the aim should be to neither restrict oneself to the transmission of encyclopedic knowledge nor to apologetically put up borders, but rather to let oneself be involved in thinking about religious and world-view questions – about one's own self-understanding and the common sense of our society. After such clarifying thinking one's own position and the variety of Islamic positions can be seen more clearly.

### **Interreligious learning in the Berlin school subjects „Religious Education“, „World View Education“, and „Ethics“**

by JOACHIM WILLEMS

This contribution sketches the legal and organisational situation of the Berlin school subjects "Religious Education", "World View Education", and "Ethics", and explains the theory of interreligious learning that guides the analysis, and describes the religious and ethnic diversity in Berlin schools. The major controversial positions that marked the discussion about the subject "Ethics" up until 2009 are introduced. Then, an critical analysis of the presence of interreligious learning in the diverse school subjects is given. Concluding, perspectives for the future development of interreligious learning in Berlin are developed.

## **On the necessity of a dialogical theology as a foundation of a contemporary Islamic religious education theory**

by MOUHANAD KHORCHIDE

The subject “religious (teacher) education” is a very new subject in the Islamic context. RE teachers are quite often simply graduates from theological university programmes who see their role as RE teachers primarily in the transmission of religious contents. Many of them still view the students as empty vessels that have to be filled with religious knowledge. With this perspective, the students’ life-world, their experiences, hopes, desires and expectations are not taken into account. In contrast, the author advances the hypothesis that seeing the students as subjects of religious learning requires to elaborate and establish a dialogical Islamic theology – a theology that does not only consist of a collection of commandments and prohibitions, but explicates the foundation of a dialogical loving relationship between God and humans.

## **Joint horizons of research in Islamic and Christian RE. A Christian perspective**

by WOLFRAM WEIßE

In this contribution possible joint horizons of religious education research are localised in the frameworks of internationality, interdisciplinarity and interreligious dialogue. Common research can focus on the following fields: religious education in diverse contexts, development of teaching material in communication with representatives of diverse religions, analysis of young people’s religiosity, enhancing approaches of a theology of youth, dialogical forms in teaching. The author suggests expressing the common perspectives terminologically by speaking of a religious pedagogy with in interreligious orientation with Protestant, Catholic, Islamic etc. emphasis.

## **Multireligious school ceremonies**

by JOHANNES LÄHNEMANN

Workshop

## **The question about God in Islamic RE – experiences from Islamic RE-teacher education in Osnabrück**

by REINHOLD MOKROSCH

Workshop

## **Multireligious morning meditation**

by JOHANNES LÄHNEMANN

## **Morning meditation**

by ULRIKE HÄUSLER

## **Religious Education Scholarship in tandem? A dialogical review of the conference**

by ELIF MEDENI & HENRIK SIMOJOKI

## **Research and Discourse**

### **Islam in Christian RE. An analysis of the Islam chapters of the two Protestant RE school text books “Kursbuch” and “SpurenLesen” for secondary schools**

by NACIYE KAMCILI-YILDIZ

In this contribution an analysis of the chapters in two school text books dealing with Islam is offered. The books are the current versions of for Protestant RE in secondary schools, “Kursbuch Religion” and “SpurenLesen”. The analysis follows the aspects of contents, scope, pictures, relation to the presence and work tasks.

### **Learning to interpret religion and interpreting religious learning - opportunities of Jesus films in RE by the example of Jesus' temptation**

by JOACHIM WILLEMS

In a philosophy of education perspective, the major task of religious education is to teach the students how to interpret religion and how to interpret the world religiously. The contribution shows how this can happen with the help of Jesus movies, exemplified by the presentation of Jesus' temptation in three films (Miracle Maker; Jesus of Montreal; The Last Temptation of Christ). To this end, the respective scenes of Jesus' temptation in the desert are analysed, and possibilities of dealing with them in religious education classes are sketched. In the attachment the transcripts of two of the scenes are included.

### **Learning in the identity trap? On the allocation of social identity in inter-religious RE**

by HENDRIK MEYER-MAGISTER

The starting-point of this article are Amartya Sen's reflections on the “identity trap”. They are elaborated with the help of Henri Tajfel's social identity theory: people who are exposed to massive negative identity allocations from their social environment tend to internalize them as the only element of their social identity. This can generate considerable potential for conflict. Referring to selected examples of inter-religious learning, the author shows that they bear the danger of such allocation processes. To avoid this danger, teaching has to take account of the diversity and openness of cultural systems of meaning as well as social identities. Learners must not only be addressed as “Christians” or “Muslims”, but be able to choose their social identity free and rationally out of the many possibilities offered by their social environment.