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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).

The thematic part of this issue of "Theo-Web" is the documentation of the annual conference of the German Society of (Protestant) Religious Education Scholars ("Gesellschaft für wissenschaftliche Religionspädagogik e.V." GwR). It took place from 13 to 15 September 2013 in Göttingen and dealt with the topic "Being Critical Contemporaries – A Challenge for both Religious Education Studies and Systematic Theology". It aimed at involving the two disciplines in dialogical discourse. As in Germany the school subject Religious Education is confessional in the sense that the religious communities (mainly the Catholic or Protestant Churches) are responsible for the contents and objectives of RE, Religious Education Studies and teacher education are based primarily on theological foundations. In fact, Religious Education Studies itself is normally conceived of as a theological discipline, namely as a sub-discipline of Practical Theology. Among the other theological disciplines Systematic Theology (subdivided into Dogmatic Theology and Theological Ethics), with its major task to elaborate the possible meaning of religious traditions for present people in modern societies, constitutes an extremely important dialogue partner for Religious Education Studies which also aims to disclose the meaning and potential relevance of religion in general and of specific religious traditions in particular to the pupils. Thus, the title of the conference, "Being Critical Contemporaries", may be seen to denote a central common challenge for both disciplines, in the tension between faithfulness to their own religious tradition and the necessity to adapt it to contemporary contexts so that people today can 'make sense of it'. In order to facilitate a real dialogue, the conveners of the conference asked the presenters to act as tandems – one Systematic theologian and one Religious Education scholar speaking on a common thematic field.

*After the 15 contributions of the thematic issue there are also four contributions in the section "**Research and Discourse**" that successfully passed our double-blind peer review process.*

Thematic Issue: “Being Critical Contemporaries – A Challenge for both Religious Education Studies and Systematic Theology”

What are the challenges Systematic Theology is facing today?

by Martin Laube

The paper starts by summarizing some criticisms and reservations that tend to be voiced on the side of Religious Education Studies against Systematic Theology. They all concentrate on the basic problem of how the truth claim of the Christian faith can be appropriately argued for under the conditions of modernity. Addressing these challenges the author, on the one hand, rejects expectations that the problem could be exclusively assigned to Systematic Theology. On the other hand he reminds us that in the work of Ernst Troeltsch an approach can be found how in a co-operative way Religious Education Studies and Systematic Theology can take account of the Christian truth claim.

Interpreting life in the mirror of Christian tradition: expectations by Religious Education towards a systematic-theological hermeneutic of Christianity

by Martina Kumlehn

In her reply to Martin Laube’s contribution, the author explores intersections, dialogical perspectives and possible joint projects between Systematic Theology and Religious Education Studies. A thread of tradition that understands Dogmatic Theology as part of Practical Theology and intends to integrate Religious Education perspectives into Dogmatic Theology is taken up. It is further developed by sketching the theological programme of a Religious Hermeneutic of Every Day Dogmatics, the intentions of an empirical Dogmatics of youth, and the challenges of child and youth theology. In a cross cutting manner, the question of how Religious Education Studies should address the so-called “truth claim” is also reflected upon. In addition, the author presents the expectations as to the contributions of Systematic Theology to RE teachers’ theological-pedagogical competence.

No religious affiliation, undecided religious orientation, religious diversity – challenges for Systematic Theology in the face of lived religion

by Christiane Tietz

The author discusses, in general lines, which challenges the phenomena of people without religious affiliation, of undecided religious orientation and of religious diversity in our society constitute for Systematic Theology. She expresses the hope that a Systematic Theology that is sensitive to these phenomena can vice versa be a challenge to them.

Jointly addressing lived reality? – Theological Ethics and Religious Education Studies

by Reiner Anselm

The author first conceptualizes Theological Ethics as the sub-discipline of Systematic Theology that does not just apply the dogmatic-theological view of reality to questions of how to live one’s life, but rather has the task to interpret the variety of life forms in

the context of Christian tradition. Such an interpretation must especially take into consideration the question of how liberty can be realized. The author suggests that realization of liberty means to be able to take a self-determined position towards the goods that are present in our society today. Theological Ethics thus not only addresses people's individual conduct but must be supplemented by a theory of goods. Both describing these goods and exploring possibilities of individual positioning constitutes a task for the accomplishment of which Theological Ethics has to co-operate not only with the historical disciplines but also and in particular with Religious Education Studies as that theological sub-discipline that addresses the pre-conditions for a personal acquisition of the Christian tradition.

Jointly addressing lived reality? – ethical learning from a religious education view

by Elisabeth Naurath

A theory of ethics that addresses lived reality must first become aware of a deficit concerning empirical data on effective religious and ethical learning. What is necessary, in particular in the face of the current problems to legitimize RE at public schools, is to facilitate research on the development of religiously grounded value commitments on the one hand, and to promote (and demand) the reception of empirical research by Systematic Theology (and especially Theological Ethics) on the other. Results of the research around the theology of children and adolescents in particular should be integrated into the ethical discourse. This could help to demonstrate theology's relevance in the context of present conditions of socialization as well as to draw consequences for processes of ethical learning. Clearly, concentrating on the subjects of learning and integrating emotional learning dimensions appear to be highly significant for ethical learning.

„Religious Educational Theology“ – a desirable innovation in the context of a differentiating theology

by Martin Rothgangel

In the context of a differentiating theology the potential of a „Religious Educational Theology“ can be seen in theologically taking account of the results of empirical and phenomenological research in Religious Education and thus contributing to the unity of theology. In addition, the development of a “Religious Educational Theology” can indicate that Religious Education Studies is more than an applied science and that other theological disciplines can profit from its empirical as well as theological work. In this context, a core challenge can be seen in defining the relationship between Religious Education Studies and Systematic Theology. In doing so, it becomes clear that aspects that are characteristic for the latter (e.g. its concept of “contemporarity”) even add to the significance of a “Religious Educational Theology”.

“Religious Educational Theology” – didactical responsibility of Systematic Theology?

by Dorothee Schlenke

The paper proposes a definition of the relationship between Religious Education Studies and Systematic Theology (Dogmatic Theology) in view of the general task of

theology that is conceptualized in the form a theory of education. As starting point it refers to Friedrich Schleiermacher's encyclopedic concept of theology. In this concept, a categorical understanding of education is advanced that implies different disciplines of academic theology as well as differentiation in theological study programmes and in various fields of practice. Against this background, the concept of a "Religious Educational Theology" is critically assessed. Finally, some suggestions are made as to possible interdisciplinary co-operation between Religious Education Studies and Systematic Theology.

Why did the reception of Paul Tillich's concept of „religion“ by Religious Education Studies go so wrong?

by Reinhold Mokrosch

In the author's opinion, the adoption of Paul Tillich's Systematic Theology by representatives of the Problem-centered Religious Education at the beginning of the 1970s, in particular by Siegfried Vierzig and Hubertus Halbfas, went wrong. Why? Both authors took young people's quest for meaning to be a religious quest and consequently discovered among them an alleged need for religion. They felt that this diagnosis was supported by Tillich's prominent quotation "Religion is what ultimately concerns us". But Tillich's "theontology" connects that which ultimately concerns us with the belief in the "Being-Itself" as "God above God" and with the revelation of the "New Being" in Jesus, the Christ. This background mostly was neglected by Problem-centered Religious Education. Still, Halbfas' and Vierzig's misunderstanding was productive as it generated the thematic and problem-centered approach to religious education.

An encounter of Dogmatic Theology and Religious Education Studies in university setting exemplified by the topic "belief in the creation in the 21st century"

by Maren Bienert & Hiltrud Stärk-Lemaire

The theological disciplines Dogmatic Theology and Religious Education Studies both have to address the transformation processes of theological traditions in modernity across the disciplines. Exemplified by the doctrine of creation as appropriate common subject matter the framework for a co-operation of the two disciplines in academic teaching is sketched. The reflections are based on experiences with an interdisciplinary university course on "belief in creation in the 21st century". The paper has three parts: First, the disciplines' self-concept is outlined and mutual expectations towards the other are focused (1). Then, conditional factors for succeeding co-operation are explored (2). Finally, the example of a joint co-operation is introduced.

Christian Dogmatic Theology's focus on the life-world: consequences and challenges

by Carsten Gennerich

The paper elaborates on the criterion of life-world-orientation in Dogmatic Theology. It shows that life-world-orientation in the sense of external coherence is connected with dilemmas concerning the internal coherence of Dogmatic Theology. To address this dilemma in a religious education context, the author suggests to systematically pre-

sent a variety of theological positions without harmonizing or unifying them. In this way, the question of how helpful theological perspectives are for life comes into focus and can be related to a diversity of orientation patterns of the pupils or students (external coherence). The alternative option of optimizing internal coherence by developing more complex theological concepts is seen as a less appropriate solution of the above-mentioned dilemma.

Being critical contemporaries as basis and objective of Systematic Theology and Religious Education Studies – contextual work in schools and churches in Chile

by Sabine Dievenkorn

The Protestant Churches in Chile attribute high significance not to education but rather to the „communication of the gospel“ in school, church, family and even in the public sphere, e.g. in streets and squares. Religious education approaches and theories, their analyses and focuses are pushed into the background by practice. In the context of modern post-colonial or de-colonial debates at the universities of Europe and North America the question of how the characteristic processes and problems that are explored in the context of Chile can be connected with academic theological and educational work opens surprisingly new perspectives.

The religious education paradox viewed from a systematic-theological perspective

by Antje Roggenkamp

The paper is based on the assumption that Systematic Theology can help Religious Education Studies to conceptualize a problem that in the context of modernity reveals itself as the religious education paradox. This paradox, that was probably first explicitly elaborated by Bernd Schröder, describes specific characteristics of religious learning. By offering its own approaches for addressing the paradox, Systematic Theology may help Religious Education Studies to learn something new. Vice versa, Systematic Theology may also go through a helpful learning process. Thus, in the paper's reflections the relationship of Systematic Theology and Religious Education Studies is not defined in patterns of deduction, induction or abduction, but is rather seen as implying the rewarding potential of mutual changes of perspectives.

Learning how to interrupt violence. Non-violent communication – a challenge for Religious Education Studies and Systematic Theology

by Gottfried Orth

Non-violent communication is an attitude and a method that is of increasing significance in the violence prevention in schools, in school development, and in the context of inclusive education. In addition, it becomes more and more important in vocational education for school counseling. Protestant adult education offers various types of introduction to and education in non-violent communication. In hermeneutical respect it offers ways to work with texts that are similar to bibliodramatic methods. In theological contexts non-violent communication poses a number of challenges and stimulating questions. Some of them were addressed in the workshop held at the

conference. The paper contains the introduction as well as the work sheets that were designed for four work groups.

Systematic Theology and Urban Religious Pedagogy. Trinitarian theological realizations and religious-educational heterotopias.

by Reinhard Wunderlich

The author suggests that a new paradigm is needed for focusing religious education and its (Christian) religious learning processes at German public schools: the paradigm of an Urban Religious Pedagogy. He claims that the proprium of Christian faith, the Trinitarian concept of God, has the guiding force to enable religious education to crossfade between diverse urban life worlds (that are to be captured descriptively) and the "City of God" (that is to be disclosed normatively).

"Being Critical Contemporaries – A Challenge for both Religious Education Studies and Systematic Theology". A tandem review of the conference

by Sara Haen & Cornelia Richter

Research and Discourse

Hermeneutical Religious Education as a cipher for Hans Stock's religious pedagogies?

by Urte Borchardt

In academic research, Hans Stock's concepts of religious pedagogy are summarized under the umbrella term of the Hermeneutical Approach to Religious Education. The paper intends to show that as the major protagonist of the hermeneutical approach to RE Hans Stock authored several concepts of RE of different scope within this one approach and consequently should be perceived in a more differentiated way. Six programmatic writings by Stock are analyzed and a five-fold way of reading Stock's writings is suggested.

1968 and Religious Education. A very personal retrospect

by Bernhard Dressler

This text (that is not academic in the ordinary sense of the word) was written on the occasion of celebrating Rudolf Tammeus' retirement. It explores the meaning of the highly symbolic date of "1968" for the experience of a whole generation of religious educators who in these years reach their retirement.

Education as creational humanization. Hans G. Ulrich's contribution to an ethics of education (Hans G. Ulrich on his 70th birthday)

by Marco Hofheinz

The Erlangen theologian Hans G. Ulrich has published a concept of the ethics of creational life that is worth being reflected in its implications for educational theory. On the occasion of his 70th birthday the paper appreciates his concept as an attempt to rethink education theologically. By following the "trace" of the biblical ethos in his theological explorations and thus being drawn into educational theory, Ulrich tries to revision the notion of "Bildung" (education / formation) and to innovatively place it in the centre of an ethics of creatureliness.

Cognitive activation as a characteristic of good religious education. Challenges from empirical teaching research

by Manfred L. Pirner

Over the past decade, the construct of „cognitive activation“ has found increasing approval in empirical teaching research as naming one core characteristic of good teaching. In the academic discourse about good religious education it has up to now been scarcely noticed. The paper traces the origin and the meaning of the concept of "cognitive activation" and explores its specific relevance for religious education. The author suggests to increasingly take cognitive activation into account in the research, theory and practice of religious education. He argues that exactly the challenging, dynamic and demanding way of learning that the concept implies could be an important factor to improve the quality of religious education.