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## **Education and Religion**

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The headline "Education and Religion" suggests that it is reasonable to talk about a relation between religion and education. Thus, the question is: Does something like religious education belong to education in general? To begin with, I would like to show you a scene from the movie "Last to know" by Marc Bauder and Dörte Franke which was very successful at the Berlinale (which is the Berlin International Film Festival). The German name of the movie is "Jeder schweigt von etwas anderem" which means: "Everybody remains silent about something different". This movie was released on DVD<sup>1</sup> recently. As a documentary film it can act as a counterbalance to the oscar award winning movie "The Lives of Others". In fact, the movie "Last to Know" is about the lives of others, namely about three victims of the GDR-regime, who were redeemed by the Federal Republic of Germany after serving most of their sentences. The main issue of the film is the communication or non-communication of these experiences among different generations of families affected. One of these families is the Storck family. Matthias Storck was studying theology when he was arrested. Today he is a priest in Westphalia. In the scene which I am going to show you, he speaks about one of the main experiences of his imprisonment. Now my thesis is: You cannot understand this scene from a current documentary film about recent German history without religious knowledge.

Scene. Min: 00:32:26 – 00:35:15

„Every time I hang my robe here I read that it holds a lot of experiences, more than other clothes of this kind. Because my father's name is stitched into it. It contains conciliation, father – son, everything merges into those initials. And this wonderful story, in the prison in Kissing Street.

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<sup>1</sup> This DVD will come with additional didactic background information for school lessons and for religious education. [www.bauderfilm.de](http://www.bauderfilm.de)

I was brought into a small room, there were two minders and the interrogator sat at the desk which stood there like a "T". There were two chairs facing each other at the long side of the "T". I sat down on one of those chairs and then the door opened and my father came in. It was the first time for months that I met someone who was not my minder. Anyway, when the conversation was coming to its end and I asked for the Lord's Supper my father took one slice of cake and spoke the introducing words for the Lord's Supper: "This is my body which is given for you". Then he took the cup of coffee and said: "my blood, shed for many for the forgiveness of sins". I thought I would collapse, it was such an impressive moment. Well, then we spoke the Lord's Prayer and the minders didn't know what to do, they sat there and didn't know whether they also had to clasp their hands or what to do. They were completely helpless in that situation. The interrogator shut up as an act of courtesy and probably because he understood that he could not do anything about it. Then my father left and I was brought to my cell. Well, I lived off this story for a long time without feeling hungry or thirsty." <sup>2</sup>

What happened here and to what extent can the movie scene be relevant for the question about the general need for religious education?

To answer this question, we can stay on the level of knowledge in the beginning. Certainly this implies a difference, which is also discussed again and again in religious pedagogy and educational policy, namely the difference between knowledge and experiences. It is undisputable that school is required to impart knowledge. But it is disputed whether that is all what school has to do. However, we will get back to that later when we think about the question what we mean by religious education provided by school. It is generally agreed, that imparting knowledge is somehow part of the educational duty - even in the field of religion.

Now I claim that this movie scene cannot be understood appropriately without religious knowledge. If I don't know what the Lord's Supper is, if I don't know, that it is not a normal meal but a ritual act, that you do not have it or – what would be the more appropriate expression which you also have to know – (that you do not) "celebrate" it with coffee and cake but with bread and wine (or juice of the grape – to eliminate this detail) then you lack all fundamentals to understand that movie scene. The difference between a copy and the original is only visible when you not only know the copy but also the original – and that is what makes that report so meaningful. It is like

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<sup>2</sup> also confer to Matthias Storck (1997).

one of those “Find the differences” pictures. If you don’t know the original you cannot find any differences.



A lack of knowledge on one area cannot be compensated by ever so much knowledge on another area. To understand the scene in the prison it is useless to have other knowledge and experiences in excess that means, to know what it looks like to be in prison because you have seen it on TV or you have been there yourself as a prisoner or you are a professor for criminal law. There are still many arguments in favour of a type of education which involves – as Wilhelm von Humboldt described in Friedrich Schiller’s magazine *Neue Thalia* –

- “the highest and most harmonious development of one’s powers to a complete and consistent whole” (Humboldt 1792, page 106) and we may add “also involving religion”

Michael Meyer-Blanck agrees and adds:

- “Education without religion is incomplete and religion without education is dangerous” (Meyer-Blanck 2003, page 280).

This statement hints at the fact that - according to the common belief about education - educated religions are less likely to develop fundamentalism than such religions which avoid education.

You can also inverse this statement: „Religion without education is incomplete, education without religion is also dangerous“. But why is a lack of religious education dangerous? Well, indeed you could think that religious education is only a privilege for wealthy people. “The highest and most harmonious development of one’s powers to a complete and consistent whole” is at most the guideline of high schools and universities, which are often even called Humboldt Highschool or Humboldt University, but which do not have much in common with the real life of the German youth. Especially, when they grow up in Berlin Neukölln (which is a problematic district of the former Western Berlin) or Lichtenberg (which is a problematic district of former Eastern Berlin) and attend the kind of school with the poorest education (*German secondary modern school*).

As someone who knows life in the multicultural districts of Berlin and I think nearly all big city’s in the world, you can also strongly disagree and say that especially in Berlin-Neukölln youngsters need nothing as much as religious competence to manage everyday life and sometimes even to survive. There, a lack of religious education can be life threatening. I don’t want to talk about the headlines of the German yellow-press newspaper “Bild” “Ban on headscarves, honour killing, fundamentalism, martyrs” etc. I already sense the objections: That has nothing to do with religion. For this reason, to know that has nothing to do with religion, religious education is essential!

Not for nothing

- we must expect that a public school enlightens about its own religion.

That applies to every religion – also to the Christian religion and not only to its errors during the crusades. Of course it also applies to the Islam and that is certainly one of the reasons why not only churches plead for Islamic religious education at public schools. A large part of fundamentalism is caused by the lack of knowledge about the own religion and what it is regarded as.

However, it is interesting that the anti-fundamentalistic effect of religious education starts before religious criticism. Even an affirmative religious education can point out the misuse of religion. There is an extensive consensus among Muslim justice scientists that the Koran bans suicide and would never advertise it as a way to paradise. However, religious education at school must exceed these aspects by also discussing issues of religious criticism. The question about the origin of the

Koran must not be tabooed, neither the question of the origin of the Bible. Fundamentalist answers to these questions are not to be ignored, especially because they are always present in the everyday life of the religions, but they must be included into a plural discourse of all answers.

- Practising the communication between different religions is at least as important as religious education

It is striking: German School students learn to discuss about problems of mathematics and geography but religious problems are either discussed in different subjects or they are not a subject of discussion at all because in Germany the curriculum as well as the organisation of religious education is a concern of the federal states. Thus, religious education becomes an exclusive privilege. And in the same way it literally excludes others, especially with a view to Berlin-Neukölln. However, it is not only important that we do not practise a religious sight which identifies someone who has a different religion as "not associated". So far, the religious groups which offer religious education can decide to what extent they inform *about* the other religions. However, the perspective of the *cooperation with* other religions is much more uncommon! But, this is important for the multi-religious coexistence.

To prevent misunderstandings: The aim of the communication among religions and philosophies cannot be a harmonic unification of all positive religions but is rather

- the awareness and reflexion of similarities and differences of religions and philosophies.

Covering the differences is as useless as a kind of tolerance which just ignores everything. Religious education is neither saying "I don't care what you belief" nor thinking "In principle we all belief the same". Religious education expresses itself in recognizing and respecting similarities but also differences (cf. Dressler 2006).

Again, we can refer to Wilhelm Humboldt whose concept of education was the answer to the differentiation in the world. If we cannot balance the world because there are too many different points of view, then unity in the world is not possible. However, every individual has to constantly try to manage all the different challenges in the world, for example in family, in business, in a clique, at school or music school, at the confirmation class or at an internship. The world cannot achieve this by itself. That is why religious education needs to teach how to handle religious dif-

ferences. As generally known, differences not only occur between religions but also within single religions and philosophies. Especially discussing such differences within a religion, confession or philosophy will be important for creating an individual religious identity of adolescences because it offers the chance to not only experience religion as a homogenous block but to encourage youngsters to position themselves by constituting their differences.

We still have not reached the chapter "experiences" but we are approaching it quickly. First of all we have to refer to the complete opposite. In order to develop a handy picture, we have to move from the multicultural western district Berlin-Neukölln to the atheistic district Berlin-Lichtenberg in East Berlin. Although our society appears to be multireligious, a growing number of Germans – and the majority of people in East Germany – is not member of a religious group neither religiously active. Most people in East Germany did not even resign from church themselves because their parents and grandparents had already done so. Religion as an element of human being is not part of these families anymore (cf. Pollack, Detlef 1993, 1994, 1996). Insofar we cannot rely on religious socialisation in parental homes and parishes because the parental homes are not religious and the parishes can hardly reach their own members, not to mention outsiders (cf. Rinn 2006). The knowledge about religion is no longer imparted by these institutions. But the one who does not know anything about religion won't understand our movie scene. The one who does not know that the Lord's Supper is normally celebrated with bread and wine or grape juice won't be able to recognise the special aspect of that Lord's Supper which was celebrated with coffee and cake. The one who does not know what the introductory words are won't understand what they mean to coffee and cake. Thus, interpreting and understanding a main scene of the film requires a minimum of religious education. And it does not matter whether the person is religious or not.

Now you can still think that only applies to problems of the upper class. Who would watch a documentary film? Aren't that only those well-educated people who have at least a basic religious knowledge? We already pointed to that fact when we discussed everyday life in Neukölln. But you can also use our medium – film – as an example. Originally I wanted to show you a Renault tv commercial instead of the film scene. No scene from a documentary film but a real part of everyday life in the 90s. The reason that I looked for such an old commercial is that I am hardly watching any commercials at the moment but I am sure that there are also current commercials like that Renault commercial which cannot be understood without religious knowledge. Despite best contacts to the Renault department for public relations I could not manage to reanimate this old

commercial. At least, Andreas Mertin gave me some pictures of the commercial and I would like to show them to you:



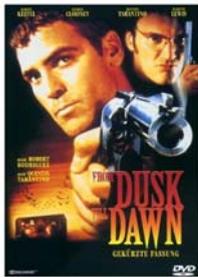
Maybe some among us can remember this commercial. As far as I can remember it there was no text below the pictures but in the end of the commercial there were two naked people and a snake and a sonorous French male voice mumbled something about paradise. But even in the presence of the text, one need at least a rough idea of what the Paradise or even the Garden of Eden are, what seduction means when it is not connected to sex and what the snake's function is.

That also applies to movies in the same way, not only for exceptional movies like the first part of the Matrix trilogy,



-> Matrix

whose references to religious topics cannot be ignored but also to worst horror films, like "From Dusk till Dawn".



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Especially those are not understandable without basic religious knowledge. For example, why should daemons

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escape when they are confronted with a cross or shot with holy water?



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Especially the loss of religiousness shows to what extent our culture rests on religious foundations. Since the school's role is providing a general education to its students so that they can become responsible members of our society, school cannot go without religious education in times when more and more people live without a religion. So far, I haven't talked about the numerous ways to interpret the world from a religious point of view; I only referred to straightforward cases where you won't understand anything without a minimum of religious knowledge.

→ According to this, the task of a school is to provide religious education for everyone.

Especially because other institutions in our society cannot fulfil this task anymore, schools have to close that gap in order to serve the duty of general education.

Before I finally reach the chapter "experiences" I have to bring up a precondition for religious education at German schools which is special compared to other countries.

Nowadays, neither our parents' status determines our future status nor our parents' profession determines our future occupation. Those facts have become a feature of modern times and must also apply for the development of our religious identity. It is taken serious that every individual themselves is responsible for developing a religious identity as well as for developing an identity at all since it is no longer determined by birth. Interestingly, the Protestant Church agrees in principle.<sup>3</sup> In Lessing's work "Nathan the Wise" the sultan approached Nathan with something that was given to only a few people at the time of Lessing, namely the chance to decide about his and her own religion: "A man like you will hardly stay where the accident of birth threw him. Or, if he does, he stays for reasons, choosing what's better with insight" – we remember that the sultan said that with a certain deceitfulness which influenced Nathan's fate. In modern times everyone can choose

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<sup>3</sup> The EKD-expose "Identity and understanding" advocated such an understanding of identity (cf. EKD 2000).

their religious identity. Our religion is just as related to the religion of our parents as the occupation we choose. As far as I know the catholic position still is the trias of the catholic education, the catholic teacher and the catholic students. However it is doubtful to what extent the concept of a developing and cross-linking identity can be realised in a subject that is bound to a denomination. Insofar we need tuition modes which can realise the modern concept of education implying that individuals have to educate themselves by examining the world, also from a religious point of view.

→ (*DON'T READ*) Religious identity must be understood as being open and developing.

We have to demand concepts of religious education which ensure that the students' religious identities are not automatically their parents' religions.

Now let's move on to the promised role of experiences:

The question of religious education at school generally has two opposing answers: EITHER it is understood in a way that education itself is somehow religious OR that it informs about religion(s) but does not take a stand, which means that it discusses religion like it discusses geography.

The difference between both concepts becomes clearer when we look at two other subjects. The first example is sex education. Here, sexuality is examined in an educational way but it is not practised at all.

However, the intention of language lessons is completely different from that. Such a subject is not about learning everything about grammar, history and application of the language but the language itself has to be practised. That won't work without the students reading and speaking that language in class.

Now I could ask you a question whose answer would divide you into two groups and each group would have good arguments. This question is: Is it better to describe religious education in school by the example of sex education or language lessons?

My answer to that question consists of several parts:

→ Experiences are not the aim of education provided by school

When we think about the aim of school we can justifiably come up with many good ideas. We can look at the preambles of our school laws if – caused by the educational reality - we accidentally forgot about the major aim of school. I don't want to decry that, it is important to have such guidelines for pedagogic actions. However, when we ask for the aim of *school lessons* in a smaller frame, the answer which defines the aim of educational interactions as gaining competences and skills is preferable.

Since our world and the educational reality are differentiated, it does make sense to demand and aim for expert competences. (That does not constrict interdisciplinary cooperation.) PISA described such competences for the native language or foreign languages or mathematics (cf. OECD 2001). However, thinking about the competences that students should have after completing their religious education subjects - namely religious competences - is not prohibited at all.

In a corporate research project with religious pedagogues at Humboldt University we try to describe and survey religious competences. Unfortunately, we don't have enough time to introduce the whole concept, so we have to defer it. Nevertheless, I would like to introduce two basic principles of our concept. <sup>4</sup>

	Religious competence	
reference religion		
other religions		
extrareligious areas		

The terms for religious competence that were used in the DFG-project specification refer to three areas: Reference religion or denomination of the school subject, other religions and religious aspects of extrareligious areas.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf.: Benner/Krause/Nikolova/Pilger/Schieder/Schluß/Weiß/Willems 2007.

Instead of the common term “own religion” we use the term “reference religion” because nowadays we cannot assume that the reference religion of the school subject (in our case Christianity and the Protestant denomination) is always the student’s religion.<sup>5</sup>

Religious competence must spread beyond the limits of its reference religion and also cover other denominations and religions. Indeed, its inter-denominational and inter-religious perspective is based on the reference religion because working with religions is always done from a certain point of view. But it also requires that the students learn to change their perspective from one religion or denomination to another and to reflect on it (cf. e.g. Nipkow 2005, pp. 267-268). For this reason religious education based on a reference religion needs to discuss sources, references and rituals from other denominations and religions and needs to offer interreligious contacts as well.

However, religious competence is not limited to that. It refers to those areas of culture and society which nowadays are not defined as religious areas. They cannot be described appropriately by the secularisation of former religious fields of activity, but they have their own way of thinking: Economic, ethic or political patterns, for example. Their references to religious aspects are based on the fact, that differentiated areas of our society influence each other and single phenomena cannot be assigned to one exclusive area but they can also be seen from at least one other point of view. This interaction with religion is not limited to the presence of religious goods in civilisation but it can be found in everyday actions, symbols, signs and texts, for example in commercials and movies as just demonstrated. It is the task of religious education to discuss, make aware of and reflect the religious roots or meanings of the mentioned elements. What comes with that is that students must learn to recognise signs of religion in extrareligious areas and to discuss their extrareligious meanings from a theological point of view.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Students who attend a Protestant religious education class do not have to be member of that religion as constituted in the decision of the EKD council for religious education in Sekundarstufe II (the German 6<sup>th</sup> form) from 1974. All students whose parents wish them to attend protestant religious education classes or students who decide for themselves after reaching religious maturity can participate. They can be members of other Christian denominations or they can be undenominational; they can also be members of non-Christian religions or they can be non-religious students. (EKD 1994, p. 66).

<sup>6</sup> The definition of competences for religious education does not contain everything that forms the area of religion but only that part of religion which is measurable and assessable according to the concept.

	Religious competence	
	Religious competence of interpretation	Religious competence of participation
reference religion		
other religions		
extrareligious areas		

Religious competence in examining the reference religion, other religions and the religion in public requires the competence of interpretation that results from the concept of religion and it also requires the competence of participation which discusses that concept in public <sup>7</sup>. Part of the competence of participation is to experience phenomena with religious references and realise these religious references, to expand the experiences by the knowledge gained at school as well as to understand and to reflectively form an opinion about these experiences and all their different meanings.

Competence of participation means the ability to individually, collectively and publicly comment on religious issues and phenomena with religious aspects, and this ability must be applied to the reference religion but also to other religions and the public. This definition of religious competence is supposed to prevent the misunderstanding, that evangelising adolescents is the main task of religious education. <sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The tests developed by F. Oser for assessing political knowledge in the areas 1. Knowledge, 2. Skills of interpretation, 3. Individual opinions about concepts of democracy and bourgeoisie, 4. Attitudes, 5. Participational actions are an interesting analogy to this. (Oser 2003, S. 20-23).

<sup>8</sup> In 1971 the Protestant Church in Germany unmistakably clarified that denominational religious education as stated in the German Constitution is to be performed according to article 4 of the Basic Law which constitutes freedom of religion. It has to conduce to securing the exercise of the Basic Law for every individual, the individual child and adolescent. They should be able to freely and independently orient themselves religiously. Religious education is no instrument for securing the continued existence of the Church. [...] It is legally laid down in the Basic Law and is based on the same fundament which is common to all subjects, namely the school's task of education. Mainly, this task is to be fulfilled in pedagogic categories. (EKD 1994, p.11 et seq.).

Religious competence of interpretation	Religious competence of participation
Experiences with religious phenomena	Experiences in participation
Knowledge in religious education	
Hermeneutic skills	Reflexion and position on opportunities of religious participation

Both types of competences have strong interactions with each other which can be described by using the image of the hermeneutic spiral. The competence of interpreting religious phenomena and relations influences the participational learning processes by securing required basic knowledge and understanding, for example. In the opposite sense, the competence of participation contributes to experiences and perceptions which have to be expanded and interpreted differentially at school.

For our question, it is only important what distinguishes expert religious competence as just explained - and which we want to test among students from Berlin and Brandenburg with sophisticated questionnaires - from other goals of education. The so-called global competences "issue competence", "self-competence", "social competence" and "method competence" are very popular and to a large extent still part of the curricula. In contrast to this model, the new expert competences which have become more important since PISA at the latest, have the advantage of being checkable. No later than when assessing "self-competence", we have to be subjective.

However, in contrast to the pure knowledge - which is also checkable - the term "expert competence" always refers to skills and not only to knowledge. Of course, skills imply knowledge, but skills are always the own way to use this knowledge and this, in turn, obeys checkable rules. It is not only about learning allegories or ways of interpretation by heart, but in the "Oberstufe" (which is the German sixth form) it is about the ability to reasonably choose a special interpretation method and apply it in an appropriate way when confronted with a known or unknown allegory. It is about solving problems and also about discovering and expressing problems. However, such skills not only imply knowledge about the topic but also experiences with it, in our case with religion.

- Experiences are required for that kind of school education which intends to expand experiences (scientifically).

To stay with the example of sexual education: This subject requires special experiences with the own body. It can do that because everyone has an own body. Then, these experiences are expanded with special educational methods. In this example, as well as in religious education, experiences are not a goal of the lessons. Experience cannot and is not to be tested – “Have you also experienced that correctly?” – but it is a prerequisite which should be expanded in school to become the skill of reflexively dealing with such experiences. If there was a norm which was to be reached by school education, for example to talk to a Muslim classmate about the religious life in the diaspora, it won't be sufficient to know all the dates and facts about Muslims in Germany, but one also needs empathy for the situation of minorities, for foreignness, for feeling at home in religion etc.. We can think of the popular Indian saying: “To really understand a man, you have to walk a mile in his moccasins.” However, it is equally important to state and reflect the own position. And this is also based on experiences. The actual educational task is guiding and encouraging the ability of stating and reflecting an own position. Gaining religious competence without religious experience is hardly possible, like learning a foreign language without speaking that language. According to religion this means that religious experience is necessary. Purely informative religious education is not sufficient but the education of faith is going too far. Gaining religious competence rather means reflecting religious experiences in order to responsibly exercise the legally laid down freedom of religion.

- Experiences in religious areas often do not exist or are insufficient

I don't need to talk about this statement in detail because this problem has even reached areas in Germany and nearly the whole western world and the former east block to, that used to be conservative hosts of churchdom only 20 years ago. Even at denominational schools, which are open to all students, not only nondenominational students go to school without having said grace after breakfast or without having visited children's service on Sundays (cf. Domsgen 2005). Even in Saxony that is very faithful for east German relations only 20 percent of all pupils visit the religious education subject and 50 percent of all students attending (protestant) religious education come from nondenominational homes (vgl. Nipkow 2000, S. 284). This is a remarkable success for religious school education, since its learning opportunity is not only appreciated and taken seriously

within the church. When the task of religious education is to expand experiences scientifically, then it is also obvious that experiences have to be present in order to form religious competences. When these experiences cannot be brought from outside school, as thought in the churchly concept, then

→ Opportunities for gaining experience on religious areas have to be provided “pedagogically”

When reflecting about religious experiences is part of religious education, then adolescents have to be given the opportunity to visit a synagogue, a mosque, a Buddhist temple, the opportunity to take part in a prayer, to read a psalm or to experience what charity means at a welfare institution (cf. Dressler 2003). In this case, experience is always seen in a twofold sense as active and passive experience. Dewey wrote in 1916 “The active part of experience is trial and error – one gains experience. The passive part is incurring, accepting.”<sup>9</sup>

Religious experience is understood in various ways. It is not about experiences of evangelisation that are to be arranged. The term experience is rather based on the fact that topics, areas and methods, that have a religious connotation and are not part of the everyday life of an adolescent, evoke experiences in them. They need a certain impetus which exceeds the previous life experiences in order to be understood as religious experiences. These experiences come with an impetus of foreignness and they are provoking because they are able to question and recheck previous experiences and open new doors. An extreme example could be the experience of the death of loved ones as an example of randomness intruding everyday life. Of course, the death of loved ones cannot be arranged by school education. But it could also be a simple project for charitable learning in the religious education class, which gives the students an understanding for the question of the value or the meaning of life facing disabilities. Last but not least, working with biblical and other holy texts can make such experiences accessible. It is characteristic for these transcendences that they are not concluded after being experienced and the experienced randomness is not put aside but these experiences can accompany your whole life.<sup>10</sup> Although they have differ-

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<sup>9</sup> Dewey 1916/1993, p. 186. In his 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of democracy and education “Experience and Thinking” John Dewey refers to that twofold experience: “The character of experience can only be understood when considering that this term includes a passive and an active element which are connected to each other in a special way” (ibid.).

<sup>10</sup> At this point I would like to thank Hans Hermann Willke and Marcus Götz-Guerlin for a wonderful discussion about the term of experience while having a hot chocolate.

ent importance - depending on the current stage in one's life - they do have a noticeable impact on everyday life from time to time.

The alternative of experiencing religion in other parts of life (for example in football or at rock concerts) can hardly open up the whole broadness and especially the centre of religious experiences. The public demand of being neutral is not violated, but the basics of reflecting about religion are given in "pedagogically arranged rooms of experience" because the direct lifeworldly experiences from the own children's service, from the Martinmas procession, from the own confirmation are missing! <sup>11</sup>

We have to eliminate two misunderstandings:

The first one is that religious experience still indirectly becomes the goal of religious education. Experiences must expressively stay a prerequisite and are neither checkable nor assessable even when gained in pedagogically arranged context. The phrase "Your experience is correct" or "Your experience is incorrect" does not make sense, even with reference to religious education. Experience remains something subjective. It cannot be prescribed. There can be arrangements that *offer* experiences but *whether* these opportunities are used and *in what way* cannot be prescribed.

Another misunderstanding is the interpretation of "pedagogically arranged rooms of experience" in a way that teachers, who are actually not religious, have to pretend to be religious at all. Rather the consensus of religious education applies, which says that contacts with authentic faith are essential for experiencing the very faith. Teachers neither can nor need to represent all kinds of faith - today pietistic, tomorrow educational sceptic, then meditative. Concepts of religious education won't get around contacts, experiences and arguments with other believers since this is the only way to gain experiences. The term "pedagogic" does not refer to *artificial religiousness* but only to the *educational arrangement* of contacts with lived religiousness. That can mean, that children who do not go to Martinmas processions themselves, have to attend it as part of a school

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<sup>11</sup> By using the term „pedagogically arranged experience“ I refer to a concept used by Dietrich Benner (Benner 2004), who explains a comparable problem with the perception of „artificial tradition“. However, Johann Bellmanns (comp. Bellmann 2006) objection saying that every tradition is artificial leads me to using the phrase "pedagogically arranged experience".

project for example. However, what we can expect from our teachers in class is that they act as persons in front of their students who are adolescents and who will be the new adults and – like Hannah Arendt said – that our teachers account for a piece of the world and also a piece of faith.

Finally, when we remember the movie scene that we saw in the beginning, we notice that religious competence and especially religious education is more than knowledge about religion. The scene absolutely has something emotional and touching. Someone who cannot feel that, lacks a part of education. We cannot *produce* this emotional feeling, neither in us nor in others. But as pedagogues we can open rooms, where experiences can happen, which are the fundament for empathy and even for being accessible to sacred things. Opening rooms for people, for the education of human beings, can even happen at school.

Thank you very much!

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