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 Religionspädagogik

## The role of teachers in Protestant schools concerning social justice

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## DISCLAIMER

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**cjd** Das CJD – die Chancengeber

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„No one must get lost !“


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Das CJD – die Chancengeber

Kontrast English Leichte Sprache

Angebote Aktuelles Über uns Arbeiten im CJD Spenden & Stiften Unsere Themen Service

Über uns > Bildungsverständnis

Angebote suchen

Fachbereich

Vorlesen

### Das CJD Bildungsverständnis

Wir lieben Menschen, denn Gott liebt uns Menschen. Weil jeder Mensch ein absoluter Wert ist, ist Bildung immer von gleichem Wert, welche Möglichkeiten und Einschränkungen der Einzelne auch mitbringt. Das Recht auf Bildung ist unverzichtbar.

We love people, because God loves us people. Because every human being is an absolute value, education is always of equal value, no matter what possibilities and limitations the individual has. The right to education is indispensable.

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Das CJD – Die Chancengeber  
CJD Göddenstedt

Angebote Aktuelles Über uns Zukunft Jobbörse




Seit über 40 Jahren ist das  
**CJD Göddenstedt**  
als freier Träger der Jugendhilfe und  
Schulträger im Landkreis Uelzen tätig.  
Von Anfang an kooperierten die  
Jugendhilfeangebote eng mit der  
Förderschule emotionale und soziale  
Entwicklung und dem eigenen  
Psychologischen Dienst.


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## The role of teachers in Protestant schools concerning social justice

1. Christian school ethos and educational aims – and their links to social justice
2. The challenge of social justice – it's not about quantity, but quality, and the future
3. Three major tasks for teachers: context, content, action
4. Conclusion


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## 1. Christian ethos and educational aims – and their links to social justice

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### 1. Christian ethos and educational aims



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Empirical survey among CJD staff (N=936) (Pirner, 2008, 2013)  
Sub-sample: schoolteachers only (n=210) (Pirner, 2010)


Basic data

- 52.9 % female, the rest male
- most of them between 36 and 50 years old
- Religious affiliation: 62.4 % Protestants, 29.5 % Catholics, 5.2 % without religious affiliation, the rest free church or orthodox
- 69.5 % affirmed that they believe that God exists

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### 1. Christian ethos and educational aims



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Empirical survey among CJD schoolteachers (N=210)

**Characteristics of a Christian educational work such as is done in the CJD**


This aspect should be emphasized  
very strongly (1), strongly (2), not so strongly (3).  
*(ranking list with mean values; list of 14 options)*

- 1) Unconditional acceptance and appreciation of pupils (1.3)
- 2) Special commitment for the disadvantaged (1.3)
- 3) Respect and collaborative attitude towards colleagues (1.4)
- ...
- ...
- ...

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### 1. Christian ethos and educational aims



Empirical survey among CJD schoolteachers (N=210)


**Understanding of “Christian pedagogy”** (list of 8 options)  
 ”Christian pedagogy is for me in the first place ...”

- 1) ... a pedagogy that is in its aims and methods guided by the Christian image of man. (90%)
- 2) ... a pedagogy that shows especially in the personal relationship between educator and child. (77.1%)
- 3) ... a pedagogy that devotes itself especially to the disadvantaged. (76.2%)
- ...
- ...
- ...

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### 1. Christian ethos and educational aims



Empirical survey among CJD schoolteachers (N=210)


**Basic propositions of the Christian faith that gives me orientation for my work**

- 1) Before God, all humans are equal. (84.4%)
- 2) All human beings are created by God. (77.1%)
- 3) You shall love your neighbour as yourself. (73.8%)
- ...
- ...
- ...

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## 1. Christian ethos and educational aims



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Empirical survey among CJD schoolteachers (N=210)

Substantial parts of non-believers endorsed Christian propositions and the concept of a Christian pedagogy (between 5 and 21 %).

Exemplary comments from open-ended questions:

“You don’t have to be a Christian to practice a Christian pedagogy.”


“Living Christian values does not presuppose believing in God.”

“Good educational work does not depend on Christian faith.”

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Interim Conclusion


- A special commitment to the disadvantaged belongs to the top characteristics of the CJD teachers’ understanding of the Christian school ethos.
- This understanding is shared beyond the believing Christians among the respondents.

>> It may be more important that teachers at Protestant schools share a common school ethos (including to social justice issues) than that they all share the same personal faith.


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## 2. The challenge of social justice – it's not about quantity, but quality, and the future

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## 2. The challenge of social justice



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The two aspects of promoting social justice in schools:


- 1) Giving disadvantaged pupils a good chance in an inclusive school environment.
  - > Professional inclusion can require restriction of quantity in favour of quality.
- 2) Helping advantaged pupils to develop a sense of humility, understanding and empathy towards disadvantaged people – and thus develop responsibility in their future life.
  - > Contact alone is not enough ("contact hypothesis"); it must be quality contact, at best accompanied and moderated by professional educators or social workers


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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers: context, content, action

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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers


#### Context

Teachers should intensify their understanding of the societal, political context of their attempts to promote social justice by teaching at a Protestant school.

- Schools cannot be the repair shops for everything that goes wrong in society.
- In this light schools can and should not only mitigate social injustices in society but **encourage and empower young people to peacefully fight for a world with less injustice**, to fight for their own rights and those of others.
- This is why civic, democratic and human rights education is so important in Protestant schools – they enable the pupils and future citizens to change the societal context.

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<p>“We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.”</p>		
<p>Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Letters and Papers from Prison, 1943-1945)</p>		
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<b>Human Rights of Children and Youth in the Context of Schools</b>		
<p>A Conference on the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</p>		
 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Panel V</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Children rights in faith-based schools</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For example: Protestant schools</p> </div>		
<a href="http://www.kinderrechte-tagung.fau.de">www.kinderrechte-tagung.fau.de</a>		
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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers



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## Interview study with experts (N=12) on the role of democracy education at Protestant schools in Germany


### Main results

- There is a great heterogeneity as to the role and importance of democracy education at the schools.
- Almost all *good* Protestant schools include concepts of democracy / citizenship education.
- However, they mostly concentrate on individual moral responsibility and neglect political, civic aspects.
- Human rights or children rights are seldom referred to.
- Most Protestant schools seem to only begin to realize the significance of democracy education.
- Some perceive democracy education as an additional burden.

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## Content


Teachers should increasingly make social justice issues a topic of classroom teaching and learning in order to raise awareness, promote knowledge and increase empathy ...

- with cross-curricular references to the Christian and Protestant tradition (from Martin Luther to Martin Luther King and present public theology)
- with cross-curricular references to human rights discourse (under-represented in Protestant RE in Germany!)

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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers

#### Content

#### Christian faith perspectives can make a difference

- Protestants rate significantly higher concerning engagement in community activities and voluntary work compared to non-affiliated respondents  
German Protestant Church Member Survey 2012 (Pickel, 2015)
- A large quantum of voluntary work related to refugees takes place in the context of religious communities. For many volunteers in refugees work their religious belief is one significant motivation (among others)  
Riegel & Schneiker, 2017



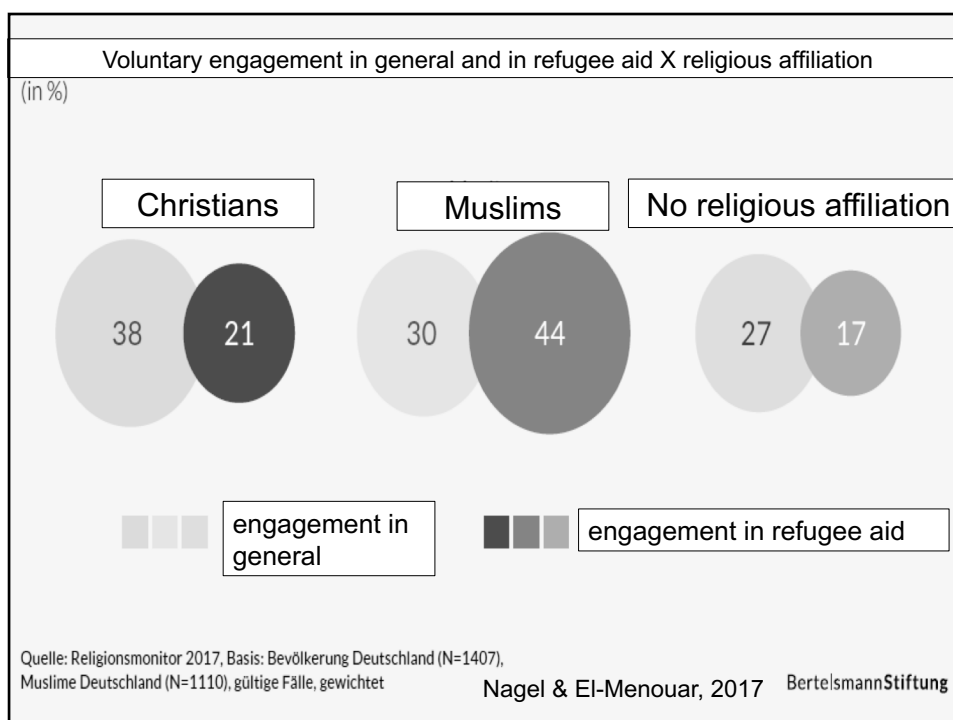
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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers

#### Action

Teachers should increasingly conduct projects that initiate active diaconical learning, service learning, compassion learning.




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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers

#### Key findings from empirical research

- General trust and social engagement: Individual religious practices have no significant impact, while taking part in community activities increases trust and social engagement clearly.  
Pickel & Schnabel, 2018
- Confirmees who get actively involved in church youth work develop a generally higher motivation to voluntary charity work and societal engagement.  
Schweitzer et al., 2017




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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers



#### Key findings from empirical research

- “Compassion” projects (mostly at Catholic schools) are highly effective in strengthening the pupils’ solidarity, cooperation and communication with people in need or in precarious situations.  


Kuld & Gönheimer, 2000
  
- “Service learning” (or: “Learning through engagement”) not only helps pupils to develop personal and social competencies, but is also especially beneficial for disadvantaged kids and improves their resilience.  

Seifert, 2011

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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers



#### Action


Teachers should increasingly conduct projects that initiate active diaconical learning, service learning, compassion learning.

- It is active involvement in projects that has the highest learning effect: encountering and working with disabled people, refugees, people in nursing homes, raising money for poor, homeless or otherwise needy people, getting engaged in One-World-projects etc.
- Accompanying reflection and moderation processes are crucial
- Links to civic, democratic and human rights education are crucial (“critical service learning”)

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### 3. Three major tasks for teachers

#### Action

“Pupils shall be able to experience the respect for fellow-  
humans and their rights in the daily communication at school  
and then draw conclusions for their own acting.”


Conference of Education Ministers of Germany  
(Paper on Human Rights Education, 2018, p. 4)

#### Positive Peer Culture

#### Class Council

#### School Parliament

...




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### Conclusion

Teachers at Protestant (private) schools have a great potential of  
contributing to social justice

- by offering individualised quality education to disadvantaged pupils
- by raising awareness and strengthening responsibility among advantaged pupils
- by promoting both disadvantaged and advantaged pupils through active diaconical learning / service learning
- by combining diaconical learning with civic, democratic and human rights education
- by, in all this, drawing on a rich Christian and Protestant tradition that can contribute to common values and social cohesion
- and, at the same time, being open to and willing to cooperate with other (e.g. humanistic or Catholic) colleagues and schools



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