

Developing a culture of respect and recognition **T.Jähnichen**

"Dealing with moral and religious diversity is one of the greatest challenges", which modern societies have to cope with. This is especially true because moral and religious convictions with their basic assumptions about the interpretation of the world and the determination of human existence are of high importance for the identity of individuals as well as social groups and are often communicated with strong certainty.

The situation of pluralism has developed in the process of replacement of the relatively homogeneous old European societies. It is a consequence and a counterpart of democratic culture and corresponds to the human rights of freedom of belief, conscience and religion. Precisely for this reason, the question arises as to what extent a "fundamental consensus" on the form of coexistence and the manner of decision-making is possible. General rules are necessary in order to resolve conflicts fairly: "Therefore, absolute pluralism is not meaningful; only a relative pluralism that develops within fundamental commonalities is viable and desirable, including "at least some generally valid normative obligations" as expressed in human rights.

Accordingly, a capacity for pluralism to be taught in educational processes is necessary for living together, which includes the attitude of a "deepened tolerance" (Mackure/Taylor) or the "recognition of the other as a person" (Tillich). This perspective means recognizing the other as one who is as free and equal as oneself. This implies an attitude of mutual respect and, not least, a respect for the other's understanding of truth and beliefs. This attitude exceeds the traditional understanding of tolerance, since the other is not merely tolerated or (indifferently) endured, but accepted precisely in his being different or even foreign.

One concrete way to achieve this is through religious dialogues, in which respect for other convictions can be experienced. In the understanding of truth and, if necessary, the faith practice of the other, a culturally foreign or subjectively inaccessible form of religious or ideological knowledge can be respected, which is different from one's own conviction or can even contradict it. Standing up for one's own understanding of faith and its claim to truth must therefore be combined with respect for a foreign understanding of truth. The basis of this understanding is the knowledge not to confuse or even identify one's own confession with God's point of view. Theologically this means to trust in the self-assertion of truth, which is Christ himself (Joh. 8,32).

The attitude of respect for the conviction of the other finds a limit where this conviction in principle excludes the recognition of others, as for example racist ways of thinking do. Here respect is to be refused without withdrawing the recognition of the other as a person. In the background here is the fundamental Reformation distinction between person and work.