

Unit K40: Prerequisites and methods of intercultural communication and interreligious dialogue

1. Summary

Appropriate behavior in situations of intercultural communication is one of the most effective and sustainable ways to avoid interculturally motivated violence and to deal with intercultural conflict. A special form of intercultural dialogue is interreligious dialogue. The method of theme-centered interaction is suitable for both dialogue situations.

2. Intercultural encounter and intercultural communication

In practice, intercultural encounters always take place in small groups: even if thousands of people are involved in such an encounter or event, the immediate and direct encounter experience is always limited to a relatively small group of people interacting with each other. For this reason, I present below an encounter model with four possible behavioral variants.

2.1 Intercultural communication

Each small group represents a kind of micro-social continuum that is limited but changeable. The following text is taken - slightly edited and supplemented - from Jäggi 1988:50ff.

2.1.1 The micro-social continuum as a place of social interaction

The journalist Jean Liedloff (1982:38) has defined the (socio-cultural) "continuum" as a "sequence of experiences compatible with the expectations and aspirations of the human species in an environment consistent with that in which those expectations and aspirations were expressed. It includes appropriate behavior of others and appropriate treatment by them as part of that environment." This continuum represents something like a grid of "human conditionals."

The religious scholar Richard Friedli (1981:92-102) saw the following aspects of human "conditionals" (Friedli 1981:97):

- the physical dimension,
- the psycho-cultural dimension,
- the spiritual dimension,
- and, as it were, as the connecting piece of these three factors, the socio-social conditions.

In other words, the life of every human being is influenced by physical "endogenous" (material needs) and "exogenous" factors (physical environment), by psychic (prenatal, early childhood, and later experiences, conscious and unconscious expectations, ...) contents, of religious experiences, values and ideas - or by their absence! - as well as by again and again reproduced inter-human behaviors, ways of life and world views.

Following this, I would now like to try to define the term "continuum" as follows:

A socio-cultural continuum comprises a limited number of people, who

1. **interact in some way during a limited period of time.** A continuum can also be understood in the sense of the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas (1973:153) as a community of communication, namely "first as a community of interaction and not as a community of argumentation, as action and not as discourse". That is why Priester's (1973:78/79) reproach does not meet the continuum concept that the author makes to various peace researchers who, in her opinion, reduce emancipation to a purely "linguistic-hermeneutic problem of the sphere of interaction alone." The continuum concept, as I propose it, is not "idealistic" because an essential characteristic of a continuum is that it is limited. This means that continuum members encounter other continua or their members. The way in which this happens in practice shows, depending on the case, the "domination-reducing" or "emancipating" or, on the other hand, the appropriating or "domination-reinforcing" structure of the continuum in question;
2. **satisfy their material needs in interdependence** through some form of economic activity,

3. **have similar basic unconscious and conscious psychic structures and contents,**
4. **have internalized and internalize common images of the world, of humanity and of values, which are shaped by their socio-cultural tradition and environment,**
5. **live in the same environment (biotic and abiotic factors) and encounter it in a similar way, as well as**
6. **have had or are having comparable numinous, religious, or spiritual experiences.**

Thus, a (microsocial) continuum is always limited in time, place, and people. It includes the relationships between the people involved, but also their relationship to the non-human environment and to the transcendent realm.

A continuum may include different occupational members - such as farmers, traders and scientists, if they are in some way interdependent.

A continuum can also include ideologically opposed people, e.g. an atheist Marxist and a devout Christian traditionalist, provided they both have common social experiences and ideas at a deeper level: For example, about the occidental-enlightenment way of thinking of the separation of (secular) state and (religious) private life, about a (bourgeois-parliamentary) understanding of democracy.... In contrast, it is quite conceivable that a believing Muslim and a believing Christian cannot belong to a common continuum, because Islam ultimately cannot accept the Western-Enlightenment concept of the separation of religion and society or politics due to its conception of the world and God.

A continuum is - as the word suggests - a kind of space that continues beyond its borders. There it passes over into another, neighboring continuum and so on. In other words: A continuum is limited, but nevertheless not closed. It is comparable with an open system of the ecology, which stands out from its environment, but nevertheless is not separated from it. Based on experiments, the two neurobiologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela are convinced that our experience is inextricably linked to our structure. In other words, instead of dividing the world into an observing subject and an observed object, as traditional science does, the point is that the observer experiences himself as part of the observed. The authors rightly write, "We do not see the 'space' of the world, but we experience our visual

field; we do not see the 'colors' of the world, but we experience our chromatic space. Yet, without doubt, we are in a world. But if we examine more closely how we come to know this world, we will find again and again that we cannot separate the story of our biological and social actions from how the world appears to us. This is so obvious and obvious that it is particularly difficult to recognize" (Maturana/Varela 1987:28).

In contrast to other living beings, which perish if they do not find an ecological niche in an existing ecosystem, humans have a formative effect on the ecosystem in which they live. In this respect, "continuum" could also be understood as an ecosystem, but one that is unconsciously and consciously shaped and changed by its "main inhabitant", man, through his actions and behavior. Adaptation is thus twofold: on the one hand, humans adapt to the surrounding ecosystem - especially in the short term - and, on the other hand, the ecosystem is increasingly altered by the human way of life. Cf. also Picht 1979.

So there are not "facts" or "objects" out there that we can "perceive" as "neutral observers". Rather, there is a circularity between cognition and action: Every act of cognition produces a world. Or as Maturana/Varela (1987:31) put it more pointedly, "Every doing is cognizing, and every cognizing is doing." Every cognition, like all other doing, is indissolubly connected with the continuum in which the cognizer finds himself. Outside of continuums there is no cognition. This is also true for culture and religion. The content of faith, but also intercultural communication, is thus first defined by doing - or better in doing.

Hans Holzhey (1988) summarizes this problem under the dichotomy autonomy/heteronomy. Humans must recognize that, in addition to striving for autonomy, they are also still - if not increasingly - dependent on the environment, on nature. The Kantian statement that "judging by mere reason ... man has no other duty "than merely against man (himself or another)", that "his supposed duty against other beings ... is only duty against himself" (quoted from Holzhey 1988), can also be understood extensively: To "man himself" belong his history, his relation to the environment that nourishes him and keeps him alive. Man himself decisively co-constitutes his "living space". At the same time, however, this shaping of the "habitat" takes place in close dependence on climatic, physical and other

environmental factors. This "heteronomy" - which I tried to capture with the concept of the continuum - complements the "autonomy" of the human being acting as a subject.

In relation to the individual, this heteronomy (= dependence on other factors) is also expressed in each continuum as social pressure emanating from the other interacting people, but also from the institutions and structures of the community, society or state in question. Stanislav Bor, a former Czech refugee living in Switzerland, describes this fact vividly using the example of his home country: "Imagine, but do it now and for real: your gifted child would not be allowed to attend school and do an apprenticeship because you go to church on Sundays; - would you still remain practicing believers? - You would have to ask a year in advance for permission to visit your acquaintances, e.g. in Bregenz - and your request is rejected year after year because you have been a bit critical of the cantonal government in private; - wouldn't you rather refrain from criticism next time? - Your married children, after ten years of waiting on the waiting list, do not get their own apartment after all and have to continue to share your three-room apartment with you; - wouldn't you put the ballot paper of the communists into the ballot box at the next non-secret elections?" (Bor 1988).

The various factors of a continuum will, depending on its structure, emphasize the dependence of the individual to a greater or lesser degree, and the individual will generally submit to this social pressure. But as history shows, no continuum is unchanging or even closed for any particular time. At any time, the more or less unstable equilibrium between the external or internal factors involved can shift, their interaction can change, new dynamics can emerge within a continuum.

In other words, no continuum is ever complete in the historical sense: Continuums always exist at a particular time. They are changeable.

2.1.2 Intercultural communication as an encounter of different micro-social continua

It will be readily apparent that the continua found in practice are very different depending on their structure. They differ according to the expression and combination of the six criteria mentioned:

- Interaction of a number of people,
- material satisfaction of needs in mutual dependence,
- similar conscious and unconscious psychological structures,
- common world views from their socio-cultural tradition,
- similar environmental factors, and
- comparable numinous or religious beliefs.

If one or more of these criteria or their relationship to each other changes, then the continuum changes as well.

In empirical studies of members of various religious groups, four encounter variants could be demonstrated (cf. Jäggi 1987:159-163):

- 1) Defense in the form of blind, unreflective withdrawal to the culture or religion of origin;
- 2) defense as jumping over to the foreign culture or religion,
- 3) foreign-determined swaying back and forth between two cultures or religions, as well as
- 4) creative-playful interaction with one's own and the foreign culture or religion.

The first three encounter variants are characterized by the fact that they do not succeed in successfully encountering the respective other culture. In other words, because the respective other continuum is rejected as "false," "untrue," "primitive," or at least "less true," etc., it cannot be seen as an alternative to one's own way of life, to one's own continuum. The condition for a successful encounter, however, is that the encounters experience themselves as equal, standing on the same level. This is not the case in the first three encounter variants. Such encounters can also be described as violent or not peaceful. This is because they devalue the counterpart in some form or reduce it to an object.

As Werner Levi correctly noted as early as 1970 (:191), the ability to deal nonviolently with other people and their continuums does not imply a change in human nature or the abolition of conflict. "Only the use of violence as a normal and accepted pattern of social relations has disappeared" (Levi 1970:191). New patterns of behavior and the emergence of other institutions can lead to what Levi (1970:191) calls "the integration of hitherto aloof groups into the community."

The encounter variant 3) (foreign-determined to and fro) differs from the first two forms of defense only in that the temporal duration in a continuum is shorter. Experiences from the field of new religious movements show that "leapfrog" phases lasting minutes, hours or days can alternate with equally long periods of blind withdrawal to the continuum of origin. But no matter how long the defensive phases in the form of skipping or blind withdrawal last, in all cases the respective foreign continuum is denied any truth content. Conversely, this means that only truth can be ascribed to one's own - non-reflective - world view; a relativizing position is psychologically impossible. If the foreign is wrong, the own must be right - and vice versa. The same is true - with reversed signs - for skipping. As a rule, all defensive behaviors are more or less determined by others. In addition, "defenders" are characterized in some form by the fact that they do not perceive contradictions and antagonisms in their own world view or at least cannot admit them.

Defense can take on a whole range of behaviors: Passive or active rejection of members of the foreign continuum, discrimination, persecution, mistreatment, killing, but also all attempts to sanction and justify such behaviors by laws, etc. Structural appropriation should also be mentioned here (cf. also Jäggi 1986:28-37 as well as 1987:159-163). In short: all forms of violence.

What do these four types of encounters mean for intercultural communication?

First of all, it is a matter of recognizing defensive - or partially defensive - behavior as such. Depending on the type of defense, there are very different causes behind such behavior: Skipping (2) is the result of overidentification with the foreign culture, which usually has its

cause in unprocessed experiences, blind spots and repressed experiences. In contrast, a blind retreat to one's own culture (1) often goes back to unprocessed encounter experiences or also to earlier communication difficulties and deficits. Such a blind retreat to one's own position can also - paradoxically - express a lack of reference to or rootedness in one's own culture of origin: For example, one can repeatedly observe among religious fundamentalists - and our studies (cf. Jäggi 1991b) have confirmed this - that fundamentalist behaviors represent a spasmodic, unreflected attempt to find a supporting foundation (!) in one's own religion, using coercion and violence, and by physically or psychologically persecuting deviating and reflexive opinions.

Strangely determined vacillation (3) between two cultures also expresses a lack of a supporting relationship to a culture, and such behavior also seems to indicate a lack of personal autonomy and low self-esteem. Both are compensated by extreme heteronomy, i.e. heteronomy (for examples in the new religious field see Jäggi 1986).

In other words, intercultural communication is successful when

- a) a clear but reflected reference to a position is made,
- b) this positional reference can be communicated to the counterpart,
- c) the different positions or cultural points of view can be dealt with in a creative and playful way - i.e. they can be communicated, both mutually referred to and tried out, but also rejected again,
- d) the respective point of view is experienced as absolute at the moment, i.e. "right" and "meaningful", but
- e) there is always the awareness that there are also other, deviating "correct" or "meaningful" points of view, contexts of experience or cultural systems of meaning.

2.2 Interreligious dialogue

Intercultural communication is (almost) always also interreligious dialogue: Every culture contains implicit or explicit religious and ideological content - without an understanding of the respective religion and cosmology, a culture often cannot be adequately understood. Every culture contains basic answers to existential questions such as the meaning of life,

how to deal with the problem of death, and so on. These questions can be answered explicitly by religions, or in a broader - implicit - sense by a meaning-giving philosophy of life or worldview, which can also be explicitly areligious or atheistic. A religion or a philosophy of life always also provides an ethical-moral framework of orientation and action according to which people can (or in extreme cases: must) orient themselves.

Although in Western Europe and North America, but probably also in most other countries, very many - if not the majority - of the inhabitants are little or not at all religious, the question of religion in a somewhat broader sense also arises for these people. Be it that their ethical-normative ideas are historically (co-)founded by a religion - such as human rights, among others, by Christianity - be it that they live in an intercultural society, in which people of the most diverse religions have to do with each other. Today, for example, it can be assumed that there are about 400,000 Muslims living in Switzerland - more than six times the population of the city of Lucerne.

Basically, the same rules apply to interreligious conversations as to intercultural communication. However, practice shows that people who live in a strongly secular (= non-religious) way often find it difficult to engage in a personal, non-polemical interreligious dialogue. This is especially true if they have never come to terms with or repressed their religious roots.

Basically, it can be said that every religion offers as its central concern the invitation to reconciliation, peace, and harmony with a dimension or reality (e.g., God, Allah, transcendence, nirvana, etc.) that transcends human beings. However, the paths offered to get there are different. In every religion there are also statements which forbid the dispute of faith or religious disputes with people of other faiths.

To every people we gave norm (religion) and an open way. If only Allah had willed, He would have given you all only one faith; but thus He will test you in what you have been given. Compete, therefore, in good works, for you will all return home to Allah, and then He will enlighten you as to that about which you disagreed.

Source: Quran 5:49

Believers are called to respect other religions and their believers.

Whatever figure you believers worship, it is I who give you faith.

Source: Bhagavad-Gita VII, 21.

Yes, instead of hatred and violence, people should love each other regardless of their religious (or cultural) affiliation. Many religions include solidarity with the disadvantaged, the weak and the poor as a central commandment.

But I say to you, love your enemies [do good to those who hate you] and pray for those who persecute [and slander] you. Then you will be children of your heavenly Father, who makes his sun rise on the righteous and on sinners. For if you love only those who love you, what reward will you have?

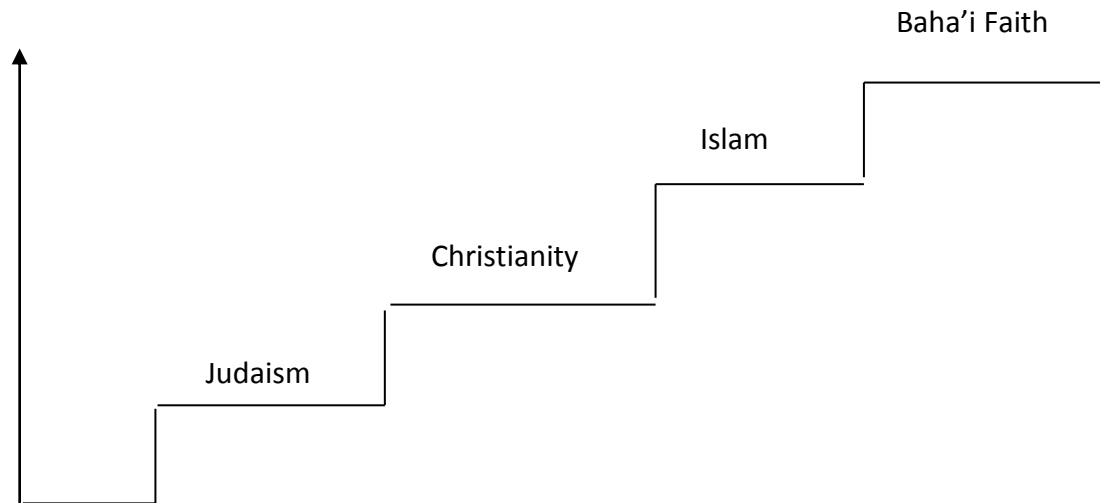
Source: Matthew 5:44-46

On the other hand, the scriptures and statements of (almost) all religions also contain statements of rejection, demarcation or even hostility toward people who belong to a different faith or worldview. Because the major religions are patriarchal religions, they also contain statements that discriminate against and devalue women. Especially on the level of social and societal norms, many religions are anything but egalitarian, democratic or humanistic. These concerns were later taken up - for example in the Western Occident - and unfortunately not always without violence, by the Enlightenment, modernity, liberalism, socialism and other movements and - at least in part - enforced. This not least because of the failure of the Christian churches.

So what does this mean for interreligious dialogue?

First of all, there is the problem that the great religions emerged at different times. In the area of the monotheistic religions of revelation, for example, this looks as follows:

Timeline



Source: Jäggi 2020:24.

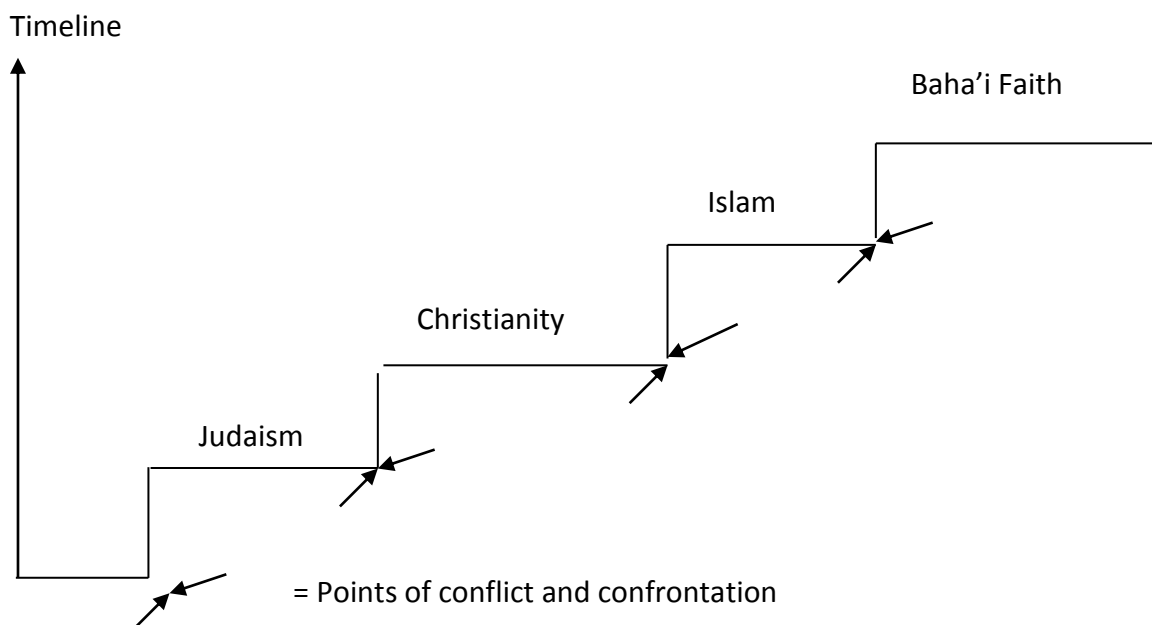
Often founders of religions have known or belonged to the already existing religion: Jesus, for example, was a Jew, Mohammed certainly knew various Christian currents, Baha'ull'ah was Babi, i.e., a member of a precursor religion of Baha'i Faith.

This poses a particular problem in interreligious dialogue: already existing religions feel threatened by new revelations or religions and tend to reject or ignore them. In Christianity, for example, the central question for several centuries after the emergence of Islam was whether Islam represented a pagan or a heretical (= apostate) Christian current (cf. Jäggi 1987:34ff). Or Islam massively persecutes the independent new religion of revelation of the Baha'i, which emerged in the 19th century: In Iran, for example, Baha'i are accused of fornication and condemned, because their rite of marriage is not recognized by the Islamic jurisdiction and therefore married Baha'i formally live in fornication with each other for the Islamic courts.

On the other hand, the newly emerged religions repeatedly instrumentalized existing religious content or reinterpreted it in an apologetic sense. Paul, for example, said to the citizens of Athens: "I went through your city and looked at your holy places. In doing so, I discovered an altar with the inscription, 'To the unknown god.' This God, whom you worship without knowing him, I will now make known to you. He is the God who created the world and everything that lives in it..." (Acts 17:23-24). The Koran addresses itself centrally to the

"believers of the Scriptures", i.e. Jews and Christians, with the call to return to the true faith in the one, indivisible God - nota bene to the God whom Mohammed worshipped under the name Allah. In the process, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, for example, was (and is) reinterpreted as "schirk," i.e., as polytheism, and opposed to the one-God faith. Or Baha'u'llah claimed against Islam to have completed its revelation and to have replaced the Islamic laws by the Baha'i laws of the Kitab-i-Aqdas.

Thus, interreligious dialogue faces the following problem: The respective perception of the other religion happens differently, depending on whether an earlier, already existing religion is confronted with a new religion, or whether a new religion has to or wants to assert itself against an existing, powerful religion. Schematically, the following points of conflict arise:



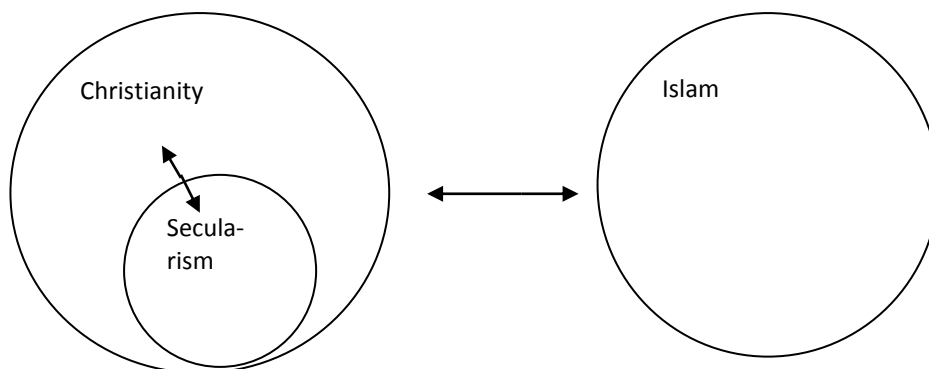
For interreligious dialogue, this means that the mutual historical position of the religions involved is of crucial importance for dialogue. What successive religions often have in common is that they refer to a similar understanding of God and a similar vision of revelation - for example, in the case of the Abrahamic religions Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Baha'i Faith. Difficulties exist where a religion sees its predecessor religion as "concluded," "annulled," or replaced by the "new, now valid" revelation. This has been the case both on the part of Christianity (Messiah expectation) vis-à-vis Judaism, on the part of Islam vis-à-vis Christianity, on the part of Baha'ism vis-à-vis Islam. Conversely, the newer religions also face the same problem as their predecessor religions as soon as a new claim of

revelation appears. This was true, for example, of Judaism, which did not recognize the revelation of Jesus Christ, or of Christianity vis-à-vis the revelator Muhammad ("no one comes to the Father except through me," if understood as Christianity's personified claim to exclusivity), or of Islam vis-à-vis Baha'i Faith, as well as Baha'ism vis-à-vis a possible subsequent religion ("If anyone makes a claim to an immediate revelation of God before the expiration of a full millennium, such a person is certainly a lying deceiver." Baha'u'llah 1971: 226).

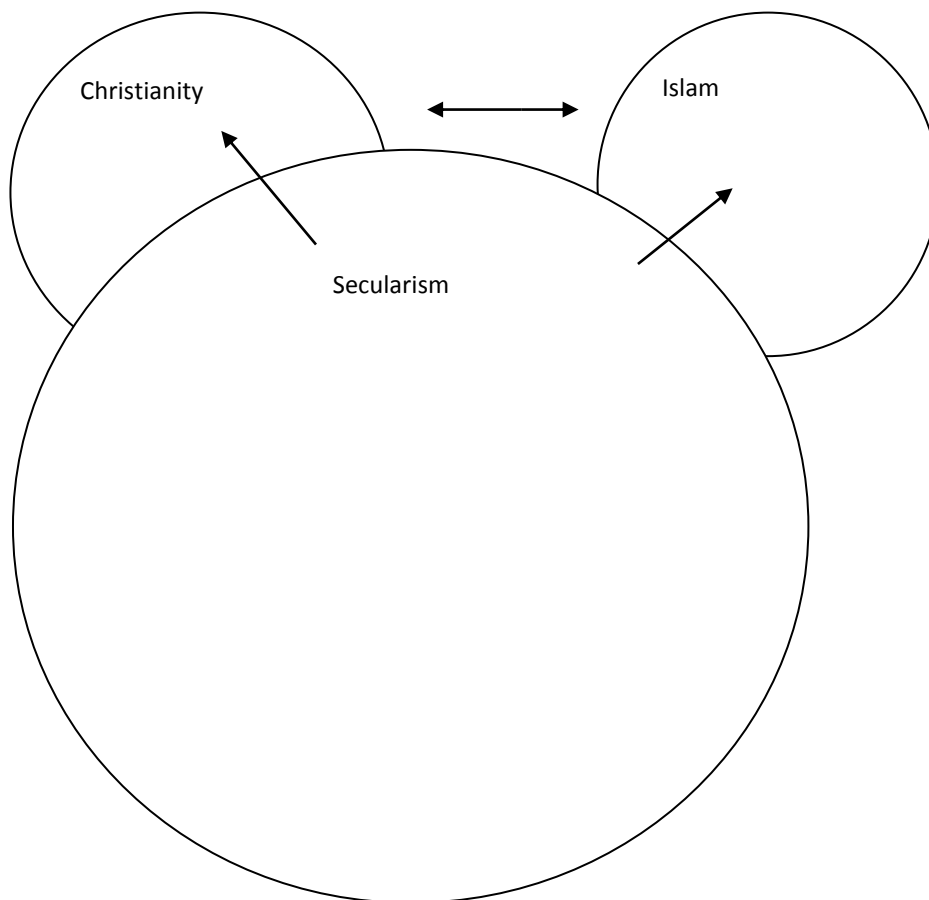
Another problem exists with regard to interreligious dialogue: The great religions - including Christianity - have as their purpose(s) the establishment of an order revealed by God: in Islam, it is ummah, the community of believers, which has to exercise concrete political and religious power at the community level - in accordance with the (no longer existing) caliphate. For the Baha'i, it is the National and Local Spiritual Councils, which have (or will have) both religious and political functions. In Catholicism before the Second Vatican Council, it was ecclesiastical bodies - and in the early Christian Church, congregations of the faithful - that sought to ensure the enforcement of the order God intended. In many religions, this concern, namely to enforce politically and socially an "order revealed by God," has led over time to bureaucratization and, in some cases, to organs of power that have also exercised political domination and physical violence - and have taken action against dissident believers as well as against those of other faiths. In the confrontation with religious claims to omnipotence and control, but also as a consequence of religious and confessional disputes, democratic-secular concepts of the state developed in Europe and in other parts of the world, which broke through the monopoly of power of the religions and declared religion to be the private affair of each individual (civic liberalism, human rights, etc.). However, this view has not prevailed in all countries - or has been reversed. To this day, there are major clashes between religious fundamentalist ideas on the one hand and secular basic and human rights ideas on the other (ideas of equality, democracy, the principle of "one-man-one-vote" and individual religious freedom). Currently, this can be seen in countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia, for example, and in some places in Asia.

It should not be forgotten that the concept of the civic-secular state emerged, so to speak, on the terrain of Christianity and represented, ideologically, a competing worldview of a quasi-religious character (democratic worldview and secularism), with which Christianity confronted itself partly by force and partly by dialogue. As a result, Christianity learned and acquired a culture of dialogue, but on the other hand lost part of its Christian roots. A corresponding development - namely, a phase of enlightenment - was missing in other religions, e.g., in Islam. In the course of time, Christianity took up many achievements of the bourgeois-democratic ideals, but on the other hand, Christianity also moved away more and more from its original Christian ideas. In addition to this, secularism has become more and more the actually dominant and hegemonic worldview on the level of our planet in the last 100 years.

If one compares the development in the Islamic and Western Occidental area, the following picture emerged with the emergence of secularism:



Today, the situation looks more like this:



This means that secularism marginalized not only Islam but also, in another sense, Christianity.

In other words, secularism has become the dominant worldview and political power. Religions - and all of them! - are marginalized by it. In addition, many members of non-Christian religions - e.g. Islam - have always experienced secularism only or mainly in its most negative effects (colonialism), and not infrequently equate it with Christianity. Interestingly, however, Muslims living in Western Europe and North America in particular are aware that today an orientation critical of secularism (not anti-secularist!) can be a common basis for Christian-Islamic encounters and activities. This is especially true in those areas where secularism has obviously failed (answering existential questions, ethical-normative basic orientation in the face of excessive globalization, etc.).

This offers two possible starting points for an interreligious dialogue:

- Joint projects and activities in the social field, such as youth work,
- Recollection of central and supporting religious contents and ideas as a basis for answering existential questions and developing an ethical-normative framework for action.

Rather problematic are so-called interreligious roundtables, in which representatives of the religions present themselves and - on an often superficial and thus non-binding level - conduct theological discussions. This is because

- interreligious conversation is always a conversation with rough edges, i.e. it is always binding and often also unpleasant, because the other person holds up a mirror to you,
- interreligious conversations should take place better bilaterally than in a group composed of several religions: The subject matter is so complex and conflictive that participants in a multi-religious discussion group are simply overwhelmed. Moreover, there is even less time for intensive discussions between several religions.
- It is important that the actors in the interreligious dialogue are the people involved and not any representatives or figureheads: interreligious dialogue is a dialogue in small groups, between people like you and me with all their everyday problems and wishes.

On the substantive-theological level, the conversation should focus on,

- a) the commonalities but also
- b) to work out the differences of the religions in a loving-critical way.

The commonalities are therefore of central importance, because they can be the basis for dialogue, for mutual understanding and respect, but also for joint interreligious activities. The differences can help to avoid being seduced by a superficial and apparent harmony into suppressing the painful and sometimes deep differences of opinion and antagonisms instead of working them out. The practice of interreligious dialogue shows that it is precisely the confrontation with the very different and contradictory that often makes it possible to understand and experience one's own religion in a new and deeper way. In addition, a

religion should always be understood as a whole, and the specific form and formation of a religion includes precisely that which distinguishes it from other religions.

Even people who have no particular religious interest would do well to reprocess their own religious blind spots, prejudices and repressions. Especially aversions or strong feelings about religious matters indicate that such unprocessed areas exist in the personality. This processing is important not least because someone is only capable of dialogue if he or she can take a clear position - and also justify it (reflectively). It is not so central whether the position is a religious or religion-specific one, or a secular one.

What methods are there to better understand the similarities between two religions? A good method that generally works is to look for common bridging terms and bridging concepts. Such bridging terms should a) be present in both religious meaning systems and b) have a functionally equivalent role or meaning: They do not have to be synonymous - they almost never are - but they must be able to tap central categories of meaning in the respective context. In Christian-Islamic dialogue, for example, the following terms can have such a bridging function (cf. also Jäggi 1987:206ff.):

- The - one and indivisible - God as Creator,
- the prophets as revelators of God's will,
- the figure of Abraham,
- Jesus as prophet,
- the angels as divine spirit beings,
- love,
- the responsibility of man before God (e.g. in the form of a last judgment).

As differences to be worked out, the following topics, among others, would have to be brought up in the Christian-Islamic dialogue:

- Jesus as Son of God (criticism from the Islamic side: God cannot have a son - otherwise he would be man and no longer God),
- Mohammed as a prophet (question of recognition by Christians),
- Islamic Sharia (problem for the Christians - but also for a part of the Muslims),
- concept of the state,

- human rights,
- position of man and woman (Muslims accuse Christians of discriminating against women, Christians accuse Muslims of oppressing women),
- concept of paradise (physical-male view of paradise in Islamic scripture, more metaphorical concept of paradise in Christianity).

All common forms of conversation and communication are suitable as methods, but also non-verbal methods. However, strict care should be taken to ensure that the methods used do not offend any of the parties present or contradict their religious feelings. A good option is Theme-Centered Interaction, which we will introduce below.

2.3 Theme-centered interaction (TCI) in intercultural communication

In the beginning there was a dream

One night ... I dreamed of an equilateral pyramid. When I woke up, I immediately realized that I had "dreamed" the basis of my work. The equilateral dream pyramid meant to me: Four points determine my group work. They are all four interconnected and equally important. These points are:

- the person who is turned towards himself, the others and the subject (= I);
- the group members, who become the group through their attention to the topic and their interaction (= We);
- the topic, the task addressed by the group (= It);
- the environment that influences and was influenced by the group - that is, the environment in the closest and broadest sense (= Globe).

I considered that these four points symbolize every group: that is, there is no group that is not defined by these four points. However, nowhere - neither in our groups nor in the literature - I found this definition of the group. But what was important to me above all was the equilibrium of the pyramid conceived in the dream, which means that the four points are equally important. And with this balance of I-We-It and Globe, group leadership with TCI was defined.

Cohn 1984, quoted from Löhmer/Standhardt 1992:16/17.

The method of Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) has achieved great popularity in educational work in groups. It is a method of living learning and active communication.

TCI views the human being as a wholeness of head, heart and hand and sees itself as part of humanistic psychology. The world and human view of TCI includes three basic axioms:

- "1. Man is a psycho-biological entity. He is also part of the universe. He is therefore autonomous and interdependent. Autonomy (self-reliance) grows with the awareness of interdependence (all-connectedness). ...
2. Respect is due to all living things and their growth. Respect for growth requires evaluative decisions. The human is valuable; the inhuman is threatening.
3. Free decision happens within conditional inner and outer limits. Expansion of these limits is possible" (Cohn 1975:120, quoted from Galuske 1999:220).

The first axiom refers to the existential-anthropological dimension, the second axiom to ethical-social aspects, while the third axiom has been called "pragmatic-political axiom" (Galuske 1999:220) and outlines concrete conditions for (pragmatic) change. For example, if material poverty impedes free choice in any area, this is an external limit that can be extended in principle: "I am convinced that any change in social order that is to take account of all people must carry out both economic and humanistic reforms. If people do not feel and think inwardly humane, any economic reform will only lead to a change of strata, but not to the abolition of injustice and cruelty. Conversely, humanistic education without economic reform is impossible; for humanizing education must lead to thought and action in the sense of humanizing the political and economic situation" (Cohn 1975:166). It seems that Ruth Cohn has formulated a central truth there, which has all too often been forgotten in the situation of globalization.

TCI, Theme-Centered Interaction

Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) refers to a group concept that focuses on active, creative and discovering learning - "Living Learning" - and working.

TCI grew out of the experiences and insights of psychoanalysis under the influence of group therapies and experientialism. It was initiated by Ruth C. Cohn and further developed in the Workshop Institutes for Living-Learning (WILL) by her and her colleagues in the USA and later in Europe.

TCI promotes

- Attentive perception of oneself and others in private and professional life.
- to strengthen independence and personal responsibility in contact with others
- To make knowledge transfer lively and in relation to the people involved
- To combine the necessities of work with respect for the person and the interpersonal relationship (in the profit as well as in the non-profit sector)
- To conduct work meetings, conferences, congresses, etc. in the spirit of lively communication and to use rivalries in favor of cooperation.

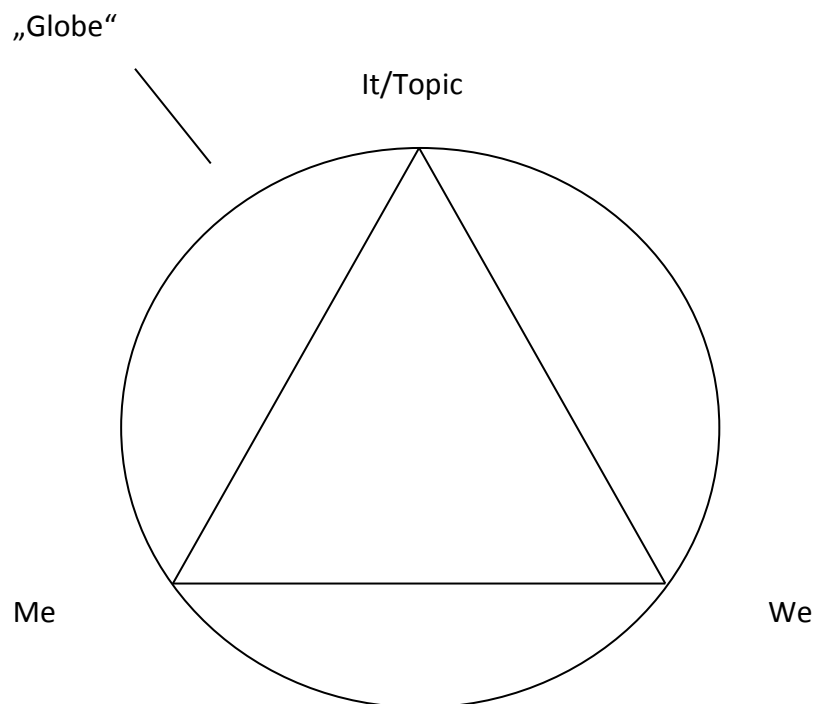
TCI sets structures in the group process that strive for a dynamic balance between the various needs of the individual, the interaction of the group and its task (I-We-I balance) and always take into account the environment ("globe") - in the narrowest and broadest sense.

TCI starts from basic premises, without which the system would disintegrate into incoherent techniques: Man's autonomy is all the greater the more consciously he recognizes and activates his social and universal interdependence. Value decisions are indispensable and must be made in a spirit of respect for the living and its unfolding. Decisions are conditioned by inner and outer limits - an expansion of these limits is possible.

TCI is a systematic approach to realize such expansion through psycho-dynamic and group pedagogical process guidance in practice.

Source: <http://www.praxis-info.ch/tzi.htm>

Theme-centered interaction works with a holistic but concrete model. It assumes that any group activity, i.e., any communication, is influenced by three factors or variables, which can be thought of as a triangle: 1. the I or personality, 2. the We or group, and 3. the It or theme. Surrounding these three factors is the environment ("Globe"), consisting of time, place, and the concrete historical, social, and beyond. Figuratively, the TCI triangle can be represented as follows:



The three factors subject, we and I mean the following:

1. Me: The subject and his personality characteristics, his world view and world view, the perception and processing mechanisms, the personal maturity and development situation, etc.
2. We: Generally, it means the group reference, or "a number of people engaged in the same place, at the same time, on the same subject" (Langmaack 1994:51).
3. Subject: it means the content or the subject in which the individual in the group setting is engaged and which is the center of (group) attention.

In the opinion of TCI, on the one hand the topics, and on the other hand personal involvement, give meaning and dynamics to living together.

According to Galuske (1999:222), the globe includes the available time budget, financial resources, laws and norms, political, family and professional environments and hierarchies, age, gender, class affiliation of the people involved, as well as the individual and overarching history.

TCI Model

The TCI model is based on the following basic assumption: Living learning takes place in the DYNAMIC BALANCE in the triangle (ME-WE-IT) under consideration of the framework (GLOBE). If one of the poles is neglected (individual learning needs, group dynamic processes, factual structure), sooner or later disturbances will occur which signal an imbalance. They should not be warded off, but productively included in the learning process. The art of group leadership according to TCI is to select and formulate the topics in such a way that the dynamic balance is achieved.

topics in such a way that the dynamic balance is maintained. Through a participative leadership style, the leader should allow for responsibility and allow for disruption. For this, above all, a deepened (self-)perception is necessary.

For the practical work in TCI groups, Ruth Cohn has therefore formulated the following postulates, which are

which apply to the leader as well as to the participants:

1. be your own chairman/chairwoman, be the chairperson of yourself. In interactional groups, this means: Practice being aware of yourself and others, give yourself and others equal human respect, respect all facts in a way that increases the freedom of your decisions. Take yourself, your environment and your task seriously.
2. give priority to disturbances and concerns. Notice obstacles in your path, your own and others'; without their resolution, growth is hindered and impeded.

In order for communication in TCI groups to be lively and issue-centered, and for disturbances to be addressed openly, Ruth Cohn recommends the following auxiliary rules:

- Represent yourself in your statements; speak by ME and not by WE or MAN.

- When asking a question, say why you are asking and what your question means to you. Express yourself and avoid the interview.
- Hold off on generalizations and interpretations of others as long as possible. Instead, speak your personal reactions.
- If more than one wants to speak at a time, agree in bullet points on what you intend to talk about. (No reporting rituals, no list of speakers!).
- Be authentic in what you say! But don't say everything you think! Everything you say should be genuine, but don't say everything here and now! (Principle of selective authenticity)

It is important that these rules are not applied mechanically, but according to the person and the situation.

appropriate to the situation. "Helping rules help when they help." (Ruth Cohn)

Source: http://www.sembs.rv.bw.schule.de/forum/_disc/0000001c.htm

It is also important to keep the following points in mind when formulating the topic (according to Löhmer/Standhardt 1992:42-44):

- short and clear formulation of the topic, so that it remains present in the memory,
- not trite or boring
- tailored to participants in terms of language and knowledge requirements,
- formulated in such a way that no one is excluded and that no feelings of a group member are hurt,
- not too narrow (concrete), so that there is room for ideas and images,
- not too broad (abstract), but somewhat focused,
- consider emotional appeal (group jargon, witty/humorous phrasing, appeal to current events, etc.),
- opening and favoring new horizons and ways of solving problems,
- no one-sided formulation (exclusion of certain possibilities and thus manipulation),
- no contradiction to values of human rights or to the code of values of TCI,
- equal weight and balance between the different concerns of the participants and the factual necessities and thus conducive to the group process,
- taking into account the verbal expression and language habits of the group participants.

Experience shows that TCI is also an excellent method for communicating across cultural boundaries in intercultural communication situations. This is especially true because the conception of human beings in TCI, in the sense of humanistic psychology, on the one hand

creates room for unforeseen events and on the other hand also places great value on mutual appreciation and empathy.

2.4 Some religion-theological questions about interreligious dialogue

In addition to more psychologically and sociologically oriented models of encounter and pragmatics of action, the question of how to deal adequately with religion-specific differences and interreligious dialogue also arises from the perspective of (interreligious) theology.

From the perspective of theology, the following fundamental questions must be answered:

1. the epistemological question: is it possible to grasp and understand religious realities without remaining attached to one's own perspective: "Is there a transreligious basis of comparison?" (Wrogemann 2015:38). In this context, Wrogemann (2015:38) understands "transreligious" to mean "a basis ... that originates as a religious basis from one's own tradition, but is claimed as transcending it and ... also occurring in other religious formations." Behind this is the epistemological question whether a "neutral" - in this case religion-independent - cognition is possible at all. 2.
2. the hermeneutical question: can a (different) religious self-understanding be inferred from their own history and tradition, and in such a way that above all the internal and as little as possible the external view comes to bear?
3. the salvation question: is it possible to develop an approach that cannot understand people of other faiths and traditions as outside of (one's own) truth, (one's own) revelation and (one's own) salvation?
4. the theological question: How can the fate of people of other religious beliefs be understood in a non-defensive, non-apologetic [= related to the defense of one's own theological view] and non-deprecating way, and what does this mean for one's own image of God and for one's own understanding of ultimate reality (cf. Wrogemann 2015:38)?
5. the ethical question: how can the "good" be understood as transcending religions and how can superordinate norms of action be developed that do not contradict the

religious traditions and beliefs of the individual (and own) religions (cf. in detail also Jäggi 2016a)?

6. the socio-political question of the double normativity of religious and secular convictions: How can religious approaches be developed in order, on the one hand, to uphold one's own religious truth and beliefs and, on the other hand, to preserve the freedom of those of different faiths and beliefs within and outside one's own religious tradition (cf. in detail Jäggi 2016b)?

One of the founders of comparative theology - F. X. Clooney (2010:66ff. as well as 106ff.) - has postulated to read religious texts interreligiously. "Interreligious reading, for Clooney, is about (a) consciously and persistently wanting to leave open questions about the existence of other deities. (b) It is about purifying and intensifying one's own approaches and about spiritual growth. (c) Old traditions can be seen and appreciated anew, new methods can be tried, new colleagues from other religious traditions can be met, new truths can be found, and unexpected paths can be taken." (d) Clooney distinguishes between fresh insights on the one hand and truth on the other. Accordingly, new insights are possible through the work of comparative theology, but not new truths. (e) By avoiding general statements, its theological work takes place in the midst of interreligious plurality in order to eliminate misunderstandings. (f) According to Clooney, however, "comparative theologians do not detach themselves from confessional theology in the process, but remain connected to it" (Wrogemann 2015:116). According to Clooney, there is thereby no cross-religious narrative, that is, a cross-religious (con-)text (cf. Wrogemann 2015:117). However - so one would have to object - Clooney and his understanding of comparative theology do not escape the problem of relativism either (for a detailed discussion of comparative theology see Jäggi 2021:20ff).

Wrogemann (2015:118) summarizes comparative theology as follows: "In summary, we can ... state: The accent is on the particular with regard to the comparative material, on the floating with regard to the fundamental theological determinations of relationship, and on the philological with regard to methodology." The question, however, is: can comparative theology live up to these claims?

3. Control Questions

1. Why does intercultural communication happen micro-socially, i.e. on the level of the small group?
2. What does Liedloff mean by a continuum?
3. What human conditionalities does Friedli distinguish?
4. Which six dimensions determine a micro-social continuum (according to Jäggi)?
5. How changeable is a continuum?
6. Explain the concept of "social space" in the sense of Maturana/Varela!
7. To what extent can a human continuum be understood as an ecosystem?
8. Explain the circularity between cognition and action!
9. Compare the continuum concept with Holzhey's distinction between heteronomy and autonomy!
10. Which four encounter behaviors can be found in practice (according to Jäggi)?
11. Why are the first three types of encounters potentially or acutely violent?
12. Why does non-violent action not mean an abolition of the conflict?
13. Why are defenders unable to perceive or admit contradictions in their own world view?
14. What are the consequences of the encounter model for intercultural communication?
15. Which five conditions must be fulfilled for intercultural communication to be successful?
16. Why is intercultural communication (almost) always also interreligious dialogue?
17. What are the common concerns of virtually all religions?
18. To what extent can defensive content also be found in religions?
19. What are the consequences of the fact that the religions emerged with a time lag for their relationship to each other?
20. Why and in what way do existing religions often react defensively to new religions,
21. Why and in what way do new religions often behave defensively to existing religions?
22. What special problem arises in interreligious dialogue with regard to secularism?
- 22.

23. Why is secularism a competitor and threat to religions today?
24. Which two levels are suitable for interreligious dialogue?
25. Why are interreligious roundtables among representatives of several religions problematic? 25.
26. Give reasons why both the similarities and differences between religions are crucial in interreligious dialogue!
27. Why is it important for secular, i.e. non-religious, people to come to terms with religion-related blind spots?
28. Explain the importance of bridging concepts in interreligious dialogue!
29. Name five possible bridge terms in Christian-Islamic dialogue!
30. What are the three axioms of the concept of human being in TCI?
31. Explain the TCI triangle and explain the four factors!
32. What two postulates for TCI work in groups did Ruth Cohn formulate? 32.
33. Name and explain Ruth Cohn's five auxiliary rules!
34. What should you pay attention to when determining topics in TCI?
35. What are the six basic questions from the perspective of an interreligious theology?
36. What is comparative theology according to Clooney about?

4. Links

Der Dialog zwischen den Religionen: Zur Notwendigkeit des interreligiösen Austauschs
Text von Manfred Spieker

http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_7806-544-1-30.pdf?060119094042

Das Konzept des interkulturellen Dialogs im Europarat, in der EU und in der UNESCO
Von Jürgen Endres

http://www.ub.unibas.ch/digi/a125/sachdok/2011/BAU_1_5663537.pdf

Informationen und Datenbank über Religionen

<http://www.inforel.ch/>

Ökumene und interreligiöser Dialog

<https://de.zenit.org/articles/category/okumene-und-interreligiöser-dialog/>

Interkultureller Rat in Deutschland e.V.

Interreligiöser Arbeitskreis

<http://www.interkultureller-rat.de>

Religions for Peace Deutschland – früher: Weltkonferenz der Religionen für den Frieden WCRP

<http://www.religionsforpeace.de/?id=start>

Interreligiöser Think Tank

<http://www.interrelthinktank.ch>

Einführung in die Themenzentrierte Interaktion

<http://www.feliz.de/tzi.pdf>

Arbeitsblatt Themenzentrierte Interaktion

<http://arbeitsblaetter.stangl-taller.at/KOMMUNIKATION/TZIRegeln.shtml>

1. Angeführte und weiterführende Literatur

Amirpur, Katajun / Weisse, Wolfgang (Hrsg.)

2015: Religionen Dialog Gesellschaft. Analysen zur gegenwärtigen Situation und Impulse für eine dialogische Theologie. Münster: Waxmann.

Aries, Wolf Ahmed

2011: Der christlich-islamische Dialog. Chancen und Grenzen. Marburg: Tectum-Verlag.

Arnold, Johannes (Hrsg.)

2012: Sind Religionen austauschbar? Philosophisch-theologische Positionen aus christlicher Sicht. Münster: Aschendorff.

Baha'u'llah

1971: Ährenlese. Aus den Schriften Baha'u'llahs. Baha'i-Verlag.

Baur, Katja (Hrsg.)

2009: Abraham - Impulsgeber für Frieden im Nahen Osten?!: Ein friedenspädagogisches Studienprojekt evangelischer Hochschulen zum interreligiösen und interkulturellen Lernen in Jordanien und Israel. Zürich: Lit.

Bernhardt, Reinhold et al. (Hrsg.)

2013: Interreligiöse Theologie. Chancen und Probleme. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag.

Bernlocher, Max

2013: Interkulturell-interreligiöse Kompetenz. Positionen und Perspektiven interreligiösen Lernens im Blick auf den Islam. Paderborn: Schöningh.

Bor, Stanislav

1988: Über die Folgen der Unfreiheit. In: Engadiner Kollegium (Hrsg.): Gebot und Freiheit. Das Bild vom Menschen - wie ist es heute, wie soll es werden. Zürich: M & T Glauben aktuell.

Bsteh, Petrus / Proksch, Brigitte (Hrsg.)

2009: Spiritualität im Gespräch der Religionen I. Wien: Lit.

Bürgisser, Margret

2009: Interreligiöser Dialog: Grundlagen - Erfahrungen - Perspektiven: mit zahlreichen Praxisbeispielen. Bern: hep.

Clooney, F. X.

2010: Comparative Theology. Deep Learning Across Religious Borders. Chichester, UK.

Cohn, Ruth C.

1975: Von der Psychoanalyse zur themenzentrierten Interaktion. Von der Behandlung einzelner zu einer Pädagogik für alle. Stuttgart.

1991¹¹: Von der Psychoanalyse zur themenzentrierten Interaktion: Von der Behandlung einzelner zu einer Pädagogik für alle, Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

Crisp, Richard J. (Hrsg.)

2015a: Intercultural communication. Critical concepts in psychology. Vol. 1: Intercultural differences. London: Routledge.

2015b: Intercultural communication. Critical concepts in psychology. Vol. 2: Intercultural conflict. London: Routledge.

2015c: Intercultural communication. Critical concepts in psychology. Vol. 3: Intercultural ideologies. London: Routledge.

2015d: Intercultural communication. Critical concepts in psychology. Vol. 4: Intercultural integration. London: Routledge.

Dausner, René (Hrsg.)

2014: Theologien in ihrer kulturellen Prägung. Beiträge zum interreligiösen Dialog in Indien und Deutschland. Grundlagen, Probleme, Chancen. Regensburg: Pustet.

Delgado, Mariano et al. (Hrsg.)

2012: Schwierige Toleranz. Der Umgang mit Andersdenkenden und Andersgläubigen in der Christentumsgeschichte. Fribourg: Academic Press.

Engin, Havva / Reder, Michael (Hrsg.)

2014: Wandel durch Dialog. Gesellschaftliche, politische und theologische Aspekte des Dialogs zwischen Islam und Christentum. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer.

Fierz, Gaby

2000: Kulturelle Identität contra Diversität. Eine politische und gesellschaftliche Herausforderung. In: Neue Zürcher Zeitung vom 9.10.2000.

Friedli, Richard

1981: Frieden wagen. Ein Beitrag der Religionen zur Gewaltanalyse und zur Friedensarbeit. Freiburg/Schweiz: Universitätsverlag

Galuske, Michael

1999²: Methoden der Sozialen Arbeit. Eine Einführung. Weinheim/München: Juventa.

Goshen-Gottstein, Alon

2016: The Jewish Encounter with Hinduism. Wisdom, Spirituality, Identity. Hampshire, GB: Palgrave Macmillan.

Habermas, Jürgen

1973: Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Hepp, Andreas

2014²: Transkulturelle Kommunikation. Konstanz: UVK.

Hintersteiner, Norbert (Hrsg.)

2012: Thinking the Divine in Interreligious Encounter. Amsterdam: Rodopi

Holzhey, Helmut

1988: Autonomie und Heteronomie im Verhältnis zur Natur. In: Engadiner Kollegium (Hrsg.): Gebot und Freiheit. Das Bild vom Menschen - wie ist es heute, wie soll es werden. Zürich: M & T Glauben aktuell.

Jäggi, Christian J.

1986: Zur Methodologie des interreligiösen bzw. interkulturellen Gesprächs aus der Sicht der Ethnologie. In: Braun, Hans-Jürg/Krieger, David J. (Hrsg.): Indische Religionen und das Christentum im Dialog. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag.

1987: Zum interreligiösen Dialog zwischen Christentum, Islam und Baha'itum. Frankfurt: Haag + Herchen.

1988: Frieden und Begegnungsfähigkeit. Ein Beitrag zur Friedensdiskussion aus der Sicht des interkulturellen Dialogs. Frankfurt/Main: Haag + Herchen.

1991a: Ein Modell für interreligiöse Begegnungen. In: Baumann, Christoph Peter / Jäggi, Christian J: Muslime unter uns. Islam in der Schweiz. Luzern: Rex-Verlag. S. 110 – 116.

1991b: Fundamentalismus heute – eine vielschichtige Erscheinung. In: Jäggi, Christian J. / Krieger, David J.: Fundamentalismus. Ein Phänomen der Gegenwart. Zürich: Orell Füssli.

1993: Zum Problem der interkulturellen Kommunikation im globalen und mikrosozialen Kontext. Meggen: Institut für Kommunikationsforschung – inter-edition. Bezugsadresse: www.verein-inter-active.ch.

1994: Statt Rassismus – interkulturelle Kommunikation! Rassismus als Kommunikationsstörung. Meggen: Institut für Kommunikationsforschung – inter-edition. Bezugsadresse: www.verein-inter-active.ch.

2016a: Auf dem Weg zu einer inter-kontextuellen Ethik. Übergreifende Elemente aus religiösen und säkularen Ethiken. Münster/Wien/Zürich: Lit Verlag.

2016b: Doppelte Normativitäten zwischen staatlichen und religiösen Geltungsansprüchen – am Beispiel der katholischen Kirche, der muslimischen

Gemeinschaften und der Bahá'í-Gemeinde in der Schweiz. Münster: Lit-Verlag.

- 2020: Grundbausteine einer gerechten Wirtschaftsordnung im biblischen Christentum. Eine ethisch-exegetische Analyse. Berlin: Frank & Timme.
- 2021: Säkulare und religiöse Elemente einer ökologischen und nachhaltigen Gesellschaftsordnung. Eine Zusammenschau. Marburg: Metropolis-Verlag.

Johannsen, Friedrich (Hrsg.)

- 2013: Die Menschenrechte im interreligiösen Dialog. Konflikt- oder Integrationspotential? Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer.

Kandel, Johannes

- 2015: Streitkultur statt Harmonisierung. Eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme des christlich-muslimischen Dialogs. Bonn: Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft.

Kuschel, Karl-Josef

- 2013: Festmahl am Himmelstisch. Wie Mahl feiern Juden, Christen und Muslime verbindet. Ostfildern: Patmos-Verlag.
- 2016: Keine Religion ist eine Insel. Vordenker des interreligiösen Dialogs. Kevelaer: Verlagsgemeinschaft topos plus.

Langmaack, B.

- 1994²: Themenzentrierte Interaktion. Einführende Texte rund ums Dreieck. Weinheim.

Levi, Werner

- 1970: Über die Ursachen des Krieges und die Voraussetzungen des Friedens. In: Krippendorff, Ekkehart (Hrsg.): Friedensforschung. Köln/Berlin: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

Lexutt, Athina / Metz, Detlef (Hrsg.)

- 2009: Christentum - Islam: ein Quellenkompendium (8.-21. Jh.). Köln: Böhlau.

Liedloff, Jean

- 1982: Auf der Suche nach dem verlorenen Glück. Gegen die Zerstörung unserer Glücksfähigkeit in der frühen Kindheit. München: C.H. Beck.

Löhmer, Cornelia / Standhardt, Rüdiger

- 1992: Themenzentrierte Interaktion, Die Kunst, sich selbst und eine Gruppe zu leiten. Mannheim: PAL.

Maturana, Humberto R. / Varela, Francisco J.

- 1987: Der Baum der Erkenntnis. Die biologischen Wurzeln des menschlichen Erkennens. Bern: Scherz.

Meissner, Volker et al. (Hrsg.)

- 2014: Handbuch christlich-islamischer Dialog. Grundlagen – Themen – Praxis –

Akteure. Freiburg i.Br.: Herder.

Neue Zürcher Zeitung

28.12.2000: Zwischen Fasten und Feiern. Zum Ende des Fastenmonats Ramadan in Zürich.

Petschnigg, Edith / Fischer, Irmtraud (Hrsg.)

2016: Der „jüdisch-christliche“ Dialog veränderte die Theologie. Ein Paradigmenwechsel aus ExpertInnen-sicht. Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau Verlag.

Pfüller, Wolfgang

2012: Interreligiöse Perspektiven. Studien zur Religionstheologie und zur komparativen Theologie. Berlin: Lit.

Picht, Georg

1979: Ist Humanökologie möglich? In: Eisenbart, Constanze (Hrsg.): Humanökologie und Frieden. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta

Priester, Karin

1973: Über die Schwierigkeiten einer „Erziehung zum Frieden“. In: Wulf, Christoph (Hrsg.): Kritische Friedenserziehung. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Rötting, Martin / Sinn, Simone / Inan, Aykan (Hrsg.)

2016: Praxisbuch Interreligiöser Dialog. Begegnungen initiieren und begleiten. Sankt Ottilien: EOS.

Stosch, von, Klaus

2012: Komparative Theologie als Wegweiser in der Welt der Religionen. Paderborn: F. Schöningh.

Thull, Philipp / Yousefi, Hamid Reza (Hrsg.)

2014: Interreligiöse Toleranz. Von der Notwendigkeit des christlich-islamischen Dialogs. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Wrogemann, Henning

2015: Theologie Interreligiöser Beziehungen. Religionstheologische Denkwege, kulturwissenschaftliche Anfragen und ein methodischer Neuansatz. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Zwick, Elisabeth / Hofmann, Norbert Johannes (Hrsg.)

2013: Dialog der Religionen. Eine interdisziplinäre Annäherung. Berlin: Lit.