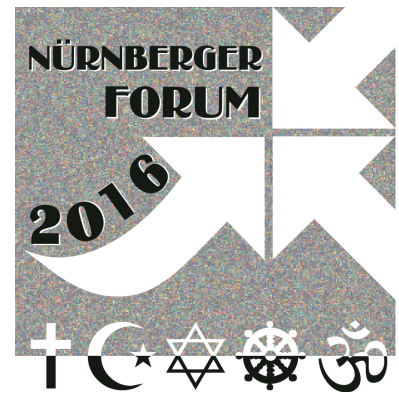


Manfred L. Pirner

**Overlapping Consensus and Complementary Learning –
A Framework for Public Religious Pedagogy
with Reference to Rawls and Habermas**



ABSTRACT

The philosophical discourse on the question of “how citizens who remain deeply divided on religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines, can still maintain a just and stable democratic society” (John Rawls) corresponds with the discourse in educational science on the question of how a consensus on major objectives of public education in general and the role of religion in this context in particular can be reached. The author’s contention is that public theology and public religious pedagogy can be conceptualized as a response to the challenges formulated by the two recently most influential social theories of our times, those developed by John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas.

At the center of such a framework will be the competence of self-reflection that will lead to a modest epistemology, a self-critical hermeneutics, a positive valuation of religious plurality and a diaconical perspective at the world. Accordingly, public religious education will be located in the overlapping area of specific religious traditions, their dialogue with other religions and worldviews, and their relation to public reason and the basic democratic values such as human dignity or human rights values. On this basis, public religious education aims to be a benefit to all people, irrespective of their religious or nonreligious orientation, and in this way a contribution to the common good in pluralistic societies and in the world.

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