

## Religious diversity as pedagogical force of upbringing tolerance of pupils

K. Yu. Mazurenko

Chernihiv national pedagogical university after name T.G. Shevchenko, Ukraine  
Corresponding author. E-mail: K8K8@i.ua

Paper received 12.10.17; Accepted for publication 18.10.17.

**Abstract.** This article describes modern situation in nonconfessional religious education in schools. We take into consideration situation in the world and global changes that influence education and science in general and religious education specifically. Special attention is paid to pedagogical aspect of religious education which excepts indoctrination in schools. Also the most important moment is child-centered pedagogy which is the corner-stone of pedagogical modern nonconfessional religious education.

**Keywords:** *nonconfessional religious education, pedagogical, approaches, religious understanding.*

**Introduction.** Modern situation of social changes, globalization and development of sciences greatly influenced the transformation of religious education that became more scientific and child-centered. Immigration and emigration brought great changes into “cultural map” of the Earth. From the other hand, the swift spread of internet erased borders between national and cultural perception of traditions irrevocably. That is why school obligatory must widely elucidate these changes in its programs but not only pay a bit of attention to them. One of the main resources that can be used in realization of these purposes can serve nonconfessional religious education. The main demand to it is pedagogical orientation of this subject. Also very important point is showing and representing wide quantity of religious traditions. Pedagogical orientation of religious subject reflects in the urgent aims that promote upbringing conscious personality, especially tolerance. Though the acceptance of world religions as an integral part of religious education at all stages is the cause of disputes among scientists, but the longer it takes the more our society becomes pluralistic and multi-cultural. This is the reason why the need of changes in pedagogical side of religious education in school becomes more necessary.

**Analysis of relevant research.** Different aspects of religious education in Ukraine and abroad have become the issue of special interest. The most famous scientists that worked on this question were: Ninian Smart, Edwin Cox, Michael Grimmit, Harold Lukes and so on.

**The aim of this article** is to show different aspects of modern nonconfessional religious education through the prism of social changes and needs of children.

**Materials and methods.** In the article the following methods are used: general research methods – analysis, synthesis, comparison, classification and generalization, which are necessary for studying the works of scientists, official and normative documents; terminological analysis which helped to reveal the essence of investigated pedagogical phenomena by detection and clarification of values, fundamental concepts; historical and chronological, which enabled to explore in a historical perspective the theoretical and practical approaches to the provision of pedagogical support of pupils in Ukraine.

**Results and their discussion.** One of the most important values of nonconfessional religions education is the ability to appreciate variety of religious traditions and the dialogue between different types of cultures that sometimes stand opposite to each other. The perspectives of the development of cross-cultural and multireligious

dialogue must be represented in all aspects of religious education. That must be realized step by step according to the age of pupils. Educational programs must propose a wide specter of religious information about traditions and ideologies, must be, represented not only in religious education, but also in humanitarian disciplines, social education and closely related subjects such as literature and art. In that case programs will support and complete each other and teach moral qualities, especially such as tolerance [3].

Pedagogical nonconfessional religious education has an inestimable pedagogical educational and upbringing potential. The more child would discover about variety and diversity of cultural and traditional display of the world, the more tolerant he would become towards those who differs or something unknown. Because unknown or unusual can evoke fear and enmity at the beginning, but when you get to know it closer you become friendlier and tolerant because of deeper understanding. Especially when child get the information about different traditions direct from the owners of this traditions. In that case child would understand that majority of stereotypes, that accompany a lot of religions don't correspond the truth. In that case widening of cultural (religious) outlook will promote development of the educational level between pupils and also increase moral level and will promote upbringing of tolerance as well. So, it will be very useful to present wider quantity of religious knowledges and traditions on the lessons of nonconfessional religious traditions and also it is very important to practice intercourse and communication with owners of this religions.

Religious environments have positive influence on upbringing of understanding of religious diversity and dialogue, because traditions of the most of religions teach us to respect those who have other beliefs. Because of religious traditions are the result of intruding moral values into practice, as usual that is why moral aspects of life and programs of such religious communities must be especially sensitive according to the needs of appreciating religious diversity and dialogue between different views and traditions [1].

One of the most important and valuable steps on the way of modernization and adoption of religious education due to changes in modern society and pedagogical aims is to change the situation concerning the question of indoctrination. The case is that grownups and children stand in not equal position according to relationship with the church. The reason is that grownups attend church due to their conscious choice, because they have already become

christians or they have a goal to find the answers on their own questions, also because of their conscious choice [10]. Children, from the other hand, attend school hot voluntary, more of this, children are not mature audience and they appear to be in the situation in which they must perceive information that school presents to them, taking decisions by the child. Also school is not taking into consideration the natural right of choice of children. In that time most of the children don't relate to any religion at all, not even christianity, though it is the most popular and widely spread in Europe. Also children have more pluralistic perception of the world than grownups. One more reason why children don't relate to any of religious traditions is that, they haven't got such life experience when the needs of spiritual answers appear. But that is not a reason why children, even the smallest ones, shouldn't be taught the religious diversity, because they grow up in global world and they should be able to orient in its diversity and also be able to take their own choices and decisions and become conscious persons and tolerant ones.

Taking into consideration such circumstances, situation when the church use lessons of religious education in school to indoctrinate children into their religion, especially little ones, provoke a lot of questions from the side of pedagogical science and moral point of view. A type of attitude towards approaches of nonconfessional religious education that is able to satisfy the needs of pedagogical science must be based on children interest, on the educational aims that help to develop personality of the child in creative, intellectual and moral grounds. The main cause that can prejudice realization of this aims is the authoritative style of teaching that replaces child from the center of pedagogical process. That can be compared with the situation when, for example, marxism ideology would have been taught in schools with the goal of supporting political interests of separate groups of politicians. That situation ones had place in history. But it doesn't mean that christianity or marxism must be excepted as information from the school programs.

The subject that learns and teaches religious traditions has much in common with understanding of human psychology and soul that is why it connected closely with such sciences as psychology and philosophy and has great spiritual and transcendental part in content and that is why that subject can not be taught only with the help of facts. And to make this subject more pedagogically educative teacher must always turn to their own personal feelings and personal experience of the child and place child into the center of pedagogical process. So when we have deal with themes like this, we must stop using as a "pedagogical method" "instructing" children in some concrete religion or ideology with the aim of indoctrinating children in some religion or ideology. But one of the main goals for religious education is to "teach" children some information, what means to understand different beliefs and ideologies, between them should be christianity and marxism which can be an examples from a great number of various religions, traditions and ideologies.

We should pay attention one more time to the importance of teaching a maximum spectrum of social types of thinking and perception of the world in the school programs, but never teaching just one of the aspects. State school, instead of church, has a responsibility and a goal

to teach children "religious understanding", to help them to orient in policultural world and to give them an opportunity to develop useful moral qualities, especially tolerance towards other people that might differ, with their views and way of life. The realization of teaching of non-confessional religious education must be interactive in maximum way: from dialogues and discussions in groups to dramatization with giving different roles between pupils, with purpose to develop maximum empathy in the process of placing oneself on the place of other ones.

New approaches in religious education appeared on the ground of need of putting religious component of men's understanding of the World on the pedagogical basis in school and leave the confessional character of religious education exceptionally to the churches, but not to the state schools. One of the approaches named "The Personal Quest approach" that discovers its sense through the interpretation of life basis and realize itself through the meaning and intention of religion in life. It means placing practical compound of religious tradition on the first plan, paying the main attention to the personal experience of the owners of this religions and to the own feeling of the pupil. One more approach named "Religious Understanding" concentrates more on spiritual compound of realizing religion in general and also religion is examined through the meaning of it in practical life and is grounded on personal experience of pupils.

One of the most famous scientists that worked on the creation of this conceptions was Edwin Cox. He pointed his attention on the aspect that this approach gives an opportunity to the children to examine "religious interpretation of life" and involve into personal search of the meaning of religion, it is intention and values. Concerning progressive goals of the approach E. Cox sais that the goal of religious education is to help children to understand nature of modern secular, pluralistic and global world and society, to help them to think rational about their state and place in the world, to give them an opportunity to choose objectively and on the logic criterions between religious traditions which are often in conflict. Approach "Religious Understanding" has the main aim to prepare pupils to be ready to make their own judgments in great variety of religious traditions, to become an independent thinking person. Also it's important to up bring tolerance in children, to prevent future conflicts between ideas that differ much and people which have different views.

One the most important sides in the new approaches in religious education ("The Personal Quest Approach" and "Religious Understanding") is that they put personal child's experience as a starting point of religious education [4]. The main religious conceptions that are produced through various traditional religious symbols and language in practice go from human experience and reflect their own personal life, feelings and social existence.

This new approaches have much in common with the "child-centered" education. New religious education has a great philosophical, psychological and pedagogical support from "child-centered" education. Making conclusions according new approaches in religious education Edwin Cox sais that he has a feeling that religious education must be "open-ended". It means that religious education must settle aim of giving to a child such named "religious

view” in life, but not giving them “done answers”. Also it means that children should be able to choose freely in what way they would realize their “religious views” in practice.

Even though this approaches promised to be “open in the end” but in practice realization of religious education remained deeply connected with christianity. This situation appears to be in schools of Great Britain and spread all over Ukraine too. Even when religious education was founded and based on christianity, that again had a character of indoctrination, though not of the evident one. Approach in nonconfessional religious education according to the goals that it puts on the first place, would have been the one that wouldn’t just wait for the child to become willingly an adopter of christian belief after they study different traditions and analyze them. But pedagogically correct and honest attitude from moral and conscious side would be to give children an opportunity to discover all the amount of alternative views and atheistic too and theological as well [8]. One of the most important conditions is not to press on the child while taking a decision by a child which ideology or religion to take side or not to take any at all. More over, not to use a child in manipulating games where the next electorate is up brought.

For example, Harold Jukes has common views on pedagogical character of religious education in schools of Great Britain. He suggests to teach nonconfessional religious education using not only one subject, but to lead children towards understanding of “religious dimension” through all school subjects and various experiences from child’s life. But anyway he also suggests taking christianity as a prism to look through on different questions and we think it is not according to modern global way of life and has less pedagogical usefulness.

One of the most pedagogical approaches in religious education we can name the one that was ratified in the document School Council Working Paper № 36 and named phenomenological. This approach investigates religion as a field for discovering and tries to show what is special, different and unique in every branch of various religious traditions. One of the features which differ from confessional approaches is pedagogical ground which should be the same as it is in every other common school subject as mathematics or literature and art. This subject (religious education) must answer the question whether it assists developing child’s individuality and personality, whether it helps them to understand reality that surrounds them in life and there place in the world, whether this subject helps children to become more creative, to deepen their self-conscious and to become better persons [6].

Also Ninian Smart pays his attention to the big quantity of dimensions in understanding of the nature of religion. He makes an accent on the question that learning and investigating of religion must include not less than six dimensions that are inter-dependent between each other. Ninian Smart enumerates six dimensions like this: mythological, ethical, ritual, dimension of experience, social dimension [9]. Ninian Smart is one of the creators of phenomenological approach of nonconfessional religious education. He pointed his attention on the moment where religious education must be not only presentation or giving information concerning practices or religious beliefs

of different traditions. He accents on the point that religion must go out of frames of facts. He determines that involving in understanding of religion demands personal experience of “hidden” or inner spiritual elements of religion such as love, empathy and need of expressing these feelings through “serving to God”.

Also ignoring of this hidden side of religion would mean situation when discovering would disappear from the sight of investigator (pupil’s sight), but this aspect compounds the base of religion and is the reason of its existence. So, scientist considers that we can not take responsibility and give only one side of actual information (facts) of religious education. Because using only facts make more reasons for manipulating of children’s thoughts and views, that are just forming. School must have an aim to develop mind, intellect and moral qualities, especially tolerance, but not dictate its own will and point of view. Actual side of religious education doesn’t realize the main function of religious education: upbringing sympathy and tolerance, because this side accepts personal experience of the child [8].

Ninian Smart, for example, said that one of the most important goals of the phenomenological approach in religious education is “religious understanding”. That approach is opposite to indoctrination. That attitude towards approaches in nonconfessional religious education dominated in previous approaches in religious education.

We can take for an example other subjects such as literature, music, art, acting and make a parallel between that subjects and a subject of religious education, because all of them demand involving a child into understanding, feeling of dimension of various parts. The same way as on the lessons of music, arts or learning poems, when one of the aims is developing the feeling of nature and sense of arts, also the lessons of religious education must have an aim to up bring the same type of feeling of the spirit of religion, but not with the aim of bringing child into concrete religion [7].

The main goal in phenomenological approach of nonconfessional religious education is to up bring and develop deep understanding of nature of religion and upbringing other useful moral qualities on the base of religions. Ninian Smart pointed his attention on the importance of the state when every dimension demands different initial approaches in learning religions. For the addition, attention must be dedicated to theistic and atheistic philosophies, because they also are the systems of beliefs, that also are to be realized and understood by children [5].

One more aspect of nonconfessional (nondogmatical) approaches in religious education in general that makes one of the biggest difficulties in realization is professionalism of the teacher. Of course, to be a suitable professional for nonconfessional religious education teacher must be tolerant, sympathetic and reflect information concerning different religions traditions and not to make bigger attention towards any of religions.

One of most important and valuable contribution into development of nonconfessional religious education is Mickael Grimmit. He gave great attention to the importance of the teacher in the pedagogical process. He pointed out that professionalism of a teacher of nonconfessional religious education is very important aspect, because not everyone is able to teach this subject. This

person should reveal such qualities as tolerance and deep understanding of the nature of different religious traditions, also to display these qualities. Person who intends to teach religious education should be educated well in great amount of religions and read a lot in philosophy and different trends in modern and historical ideologies [4]. Mickael Grimmit points out on the moment, that teaching religious subject in Great Britain has a big defect. That is displayed in the situation when there is a view that everyone can teach the subject of nonconfessional religious education. That result in very low level of teaching that subject. Grimmit stresses, that religious subject demands not less attention and respect than, for example mathematics or english language. It means that preparation of the teacher of this subject must be very responsible and should be paid a great attention.

**The conclusions.** We can make a conclusion that the most important in realization of nonconfessional religious

education is child-centered oriented pedagogy. This new approaches have wide perspectives in nonconfessional religious education but anyway they have space in pedagogical development and leave to the scientists questions to be solved. We can explain such situation with the help of the conclusion that E. Cox makes in his book "Changing Aims in religious education" [2]. He sais that in modern life of rethinking and undefined period, religious education must be a search in which a teacher and a pupil "feel the truth and find it" as much as their experience and understanding let them do it. Anyway this searching is grounded on the belief, that experience of the past, can give us helpful instructions, that honest perception can lead to the truth and that the life was given to us with the sense and intended with the force that is greater than human and that is much more important than narrow and limited human interests, especially interests of small amount of people and so on.

#### ЛИТЕРАТУРА

1. Релігійна багатоманітність та міжкультурна освіта: посібник для школи / за ред. Джона Кіста / пер. з англ. – Львів: ЗУКЦ, 2008. – 160 с.
2. Cox E. Changing Aims in Religious Education / Edwin Cox. London, – 1966. – p.225.
3. Gundry D.W. The Teacher and the World Religions / D.W. Gundry. Jances Claris & Co. Ltd, – 1968. – p.173.
4. Grimmit M. What can I do in R.E.? / Michael Grimmit .Mayhew . McGrimmon, – 1973. – p. 26.
5. Hirst H.H. Christian Education. A Contradiction in Terms / H.H. Hirst// Learning for Living, Vol. 11, March 1972. – p. 215.
6. Loukes H. New Ground in Christian Education / Harold Loukes. London, – 1965. – p.79.
7. Loukes H. Teenage Religion / Harold Loukes. London, – 1965. – p.19.
8. Owen Cole W. Religion in the Multi Faith School / W. Owen Cole // Learning for living, Vol. 12, № 2, November 1972. – p.49.
9. Smart N. Secular Education and the Logic of Religion / Ninian Smart. London, – 1968. – p. 98.
10. Strawson W. Teachers and the New Theology / W. Strawson. Epworth, – 1969. – p. 56.

#### REFERENCES

1. Religious diversity and multicultural education: educational book for school / John Kist / trans.from english – Lviv, 2008. – 160 c.
2. Cox E. Changing Aims in Religious Education / Edwin Cox. London, – 1966. – p.225.
3. Gundry D.W. The Teacher and the World Religions / D.W. Gundry. Jances Claris & Co. Ltd, – 1968. – p.173.
4. Grimmit M. What can I do in R.E.? / Michael Grimmit .Mayhew . McGrimmon, – 1973. – p. 26.
5. Hirst H.H. Christian Education. A Contradiction in Terms / H.H. Hirst// Learning for Living, Vol. 11, March 1972. – p. 215.
6. Loukes H. New Ground in Christian Education / Harold Loukes. London, – 1965. – p.79.
7. Loukes H. Teenage Religion / Harold Loukes. London, – 1965. – p.19.
8. Owen Cole W. Religion in the Multi Faith School / W. Owen Cole // Learning for living, Vol. 12, № 2, November 1972. – p.49.
9. Smart N. Secular Education and the Logic of Religion / Ninian Smart. London, – 1968. – p. 98.
10. Strawson W. Teachers and the New Theology / W. Strawson. Epworth, – 1969. – p. 56.

#### Религиозное разнообразие как педагогическая сила воспитания толерантности у учеников

**К. Ю. Мазуренко**

**Аннотация.** Статья описывает современную ситуацию в неконфессиональном религиозном образовании в школах. Мы учим ситуацию в мире через глобальные изменения, которые повлияли на образование и науку в целом и религиозное образование в частности. Особенное внимание уделено педагогическому аспекту религиозного образования который включает индоктринацию. Также самый важный момент это ребенок в центре всего процесса образования которое является краеугольным камнем педагогического современного неконфессионального религиозного образования.

**Ключевые слова:** неконфессиональное религиозное образование, педагогические подходы, религиозное понимание.