

## Language of Hope in Europe

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### Abstract

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In Europe, the diversity in religions, cultures, languages and historical backgrounds is enormous. World War II and the Soviet Regime have played a large part in this and the flow of refugees from other continents increases the pluralism. How can religious education add to bridging between differences? The language across European countries is different, literally between countries, but also figuratively speaking and even inside individual countries. These differences occur in cultural sense and across age groups as well. Secondary education has the task to form young people to become firmly rooted people who can hold their own in society. It is essential that they learn to examine their own core values and their roots. Recognising their values should be a main focus of religious education. However, schools are currently accommodating increasing numbers of non-religious pupils. What role do religious values still play in this situation? How do pupils feel about active involvement in religious institutions, and about basing life choices on religious beliefs? Can other, non-religious values be detected which could form the basis for value-oriented personal formation? Research of these subjects has been ongoing in the Netherlands for more than twenty years and is currently being expanded to the Czech Republic

and(former East) Germany. These are also secularized countries but have a very different history. Does the history and context of these countries play a role, and does this show in the values that are important to pupils? A comparative pilot study is being conducted as start of this broadening perspective geared towards greater insight into the values of pupils in these three European countries. This information helps to design appropriate new forms of religious value-oriented worldview education.

《 **Keywords** 》

Europe, Refugees, Pluralism, Cultural sense, Secondary education, Core value, Religious beliefs, Worldview education

## I. Introduction

Three countries first will be described, especially their religious and cultural developments in recent history. Our research questions are based on former research on religious values and will be presented at the end of this chapter. With answering them we hope to add to new forms of religious worldview education on denominational schools in secularized countries, taken into account the differences in culture and history (Ter Avest, 2020, 15).

Like many Western European countries, the Netherlands is a pluralistic, multireligious and secularized country. Originally mainly Protestant and Roman Catholic, the Dutch society was characterised by *verzuiling*(pillarisation) from second half of the nineteenth century up tot he 1960s. There was sharp segregation between the Protestant, Catholic, liberal and socialist sections of society, which was deliberately enforced by the elites at the

top of these four 'pillars'. It was sustained by the churches, media, vocational corporations, political parties, schools, hospitals, and even universities, and provided the members of the 'pillars' with a strong sense of identity. The rapid dismantling of this system was caused by turbulent developments worldwide in the 1960s, but as such it also caused a wave of secularisation in the Netherlands. Nowadays, the Netherlands has low percentages of religious affiliation: 40% of the population call themselves Christians, and 49% non-affiliated. The expectation is that this decline will continue over the coming years. Hellemans has called this decline the third stage in the development of the main established churches: "far-reaching secularization and increasing marginalization of the main churches without the rise of new churches or groups to fill up the void" (Hellemans, 2012, 3). The place of young people in today's Dutch society is not very different from that in the rest of Western Europe. Dutch researchers have studied the way young people in Western Europe currently experience faith, and have concluded that for most, faith is oriented towards family, friends, and themselves as individuals, which is defined as 'immanent faith'.

The Czech Republic is among the most secularized countries in Europe when it comes to belief in the basic elements of Christian doctrine. It has approximately 10.5 million inhabitants. According to a 2011 census of persons, houses, and apartments, almost 1.1 million of these inhabitants are members of the Catholic Church. 51,000 people stated that they were members of the second largest church, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, and 39,000 that they belonged to the third largest church, the national Czechoslovak Hussite Church, which was founded in reaction to anti-modernist tendencies in the

Catholic Church after the First World War. By contrast, more than 4.5million inhabitants did not answer the census question on religious affiliation at all. The question was optional and a part of the public manifested its disagreement with the otherwise obligatory census of persons, houses, and apartments by not answering the optional questions. But Christians were generally encouraged by the churches to answer these questions, among other reasons because at that time census results still affected church financing. 3.6 million stated that they professed no religion, and 708,000 that they were believers but were not members of any church(ČSÚ, 2014). However, people who believe neither in God nor in any other supernatural power or phenomenon form an absolute minority in Czech society. In the 2008 ISSP enquiry, only 6% of the respondents responded in these terms and can thus be labelled real atheists (Hamplová, 2013).

In an extensive study which combines a religious studies approach and a historiographical approach, David Václavík(2010) has convincingly shown that the roots of the contemporary negation of ecclesial forms of Christianity and the associated skepticism with regard to anything formally or manifestly religious grew gradually and continuously in Czech history. Its beginnings must be sought at the latest in 1867 when the Austrian Empire was transformed into the Austrian-Hungarian monarchy. When official opposition politics against the Viennese government began, the Catholic Church, or practicing the Catholic faith, were rejected. The communist regime was thus merely an episode, albeit an important one, in the process of the Czech nation's breakaway from established forms of religiosity. In a way, the social processes of the 19th century, including those at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, and therefore also

the massive wave of defections from the Catholic Church after the First World War, appear to have been a greater influence on the Czechs' breaking away from the Christian faith than the forty-year-long period of communist government (Hamplová – Nešpor, 2009). In the 1920s alone, approximately 2.5 million people left the Catholic Church. About half of these entered the national Czechoslovak Hussite Church; the other half remained without any religious affiliation. This movement of defection from the Catholic Church probably has no parallel in world history as to scale and speed. However, a “general religiosity”, calling for a renewal of the churches and demanding that religion serve humanity and national development, was already apparent at that time. In addition, alternative religiosity was developing markedly in Bohemia, a phenomenon which only became widespread elsewhere in Europe at the end of the 20th century (Hamplová, 2013).

We may conclude therefore that “the proverbial ‘Czech atheism’ is anything but real atheism” (Nešpor, 2010). “Despite all changes that have occurred in the Czech religious scene in the course of the 20th century, it is possible to observe a long-term transition from ecclesial forms of religiosity to ‘alternative forms’, to personally experienced and especially in extreme moments utilized transcendent anchoring” (Nešpor, 2016).

Germany, in its turn, also has a peculiar history of its own. Article 4 of the constitution guarantees freedom of religion for the German people: the “*Freiheit des Glaubens*”, the “*Gewissens*” and the “*Freiheit des religiösen und weltanschaulichen Bekenntnisses sind unverletzlich*”. The separation of church and state was proclaimed in 1919. In 2002, approximately 34% of the population belonged to the Protestant, mainly Lutheran churches, and another 34% to the Roman Catholic Church; 3.7% belonged

to the Islamic faith. In 1995, the Jewish community counted 72 communities with a total of nearly 54,000 members. In 1933, before Hitler came to power, the Jewish population in Germany came to about 530,000. The largest Jewish community is located in Berlin, followed by Frankfurt and Munich. Traditional Jewish communities in Leipzig and Dresden have been actively professing their faith, also since the German reunification. 18 Lutheran and Reformed(*reformierte*) churches in West Germany are united in the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland(EKD). In 1991, the EKD was merged with the Bund der Evangelischen Kirchen from the former GDR. The Evangelical churches in Germany belong to the World Council of Churches and there is close collaboration between them and the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant churches organize biennial national gatherings: the so-called church days.

Up to 1994, the Roman Catholic Church was divided into 23 dioceses, five of which were archdioceses. After a reorganization necessitated by reunification, Germany currently has 20 dioceses and seven archdioceses: Bamberg, Cologne, Freiburg, Munich and Freising, Paderborn, Hamburg(new), and Berlin. The archdiocese of Cologne is the richest in the world, thanks to the German system of church tax("Kirchensteuer"). The Roman Catholic Church organizes biennial meetings: the so-called Catholics Days(Van der Mark).

The German Democratic Republic(German: Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR), often also called East Germany, was a communist country in Europe. It was founded in 1949 in the Soviet-occupied part of defeated Germany. Officially, the GDR existed from 7 October 1949 to 3 October 1990, the day of German reunification. On that day the GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany were united, thus forming present-day

Germany. Most of the old federal states that had existed before the GDR were restored. More than half of the population in the area of the former GDR and in the northern state of Hamburg have no religion. A huge shift has taken place in East Germany in this regard. There was an ongoing marginalization of the influence of organized religions by the Communist government of East Germany. The great emphasis of the state was on avoiding religion (Kellner). Gaertner observes that by now what has already become clear in the Netherlands is also becoming clear in Germany: certain Catholic institutions are outdated and will implode. In the part of Germany mentioned in this study, these institutions were already for some time disappeared in the lives of the people and their experiences, which in the Czech republic is quite different, as stated.

## II. Religious Thinking and Discourse

People in Central and Eastern European countries are not as familiar with open discussion of religion and values as their counterparts in so-called Western European countries are. The main reason for this is that the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and its successor states were never colonial superpowers in the sense that Great Britain, France, Spain, or the Netherlands were. Their experience with overseas countries was always mediated. From the point of view of the colonial history of Europe, the question is rather to what extent individual European countries such as the Czech lands, Croatia, Slovakia, etc., were Austro-Hungarian colonies. But in Central and Eastern Europe, this question is not and cannot be posed in this way, because the relationships between states and nations were ordered differently.

In the past decade, however, a colonial role has been ascribed to the European Union and its leading member states, especially Germany. The EU has also been compared to the Soviet Union and its “colonial” endeavor, even though most Central and Eastern European countries were never part of the Soviet Union. An important conclusion that follows from this is that the mentality that is prevalent in contemporary Central and Eastern Europe is like the mentality of the victims of colonial oppression. This has an important impact on public and political discourse on key issues, as well as on the way current world events are interpreted. As a result, significant segments of society in Central and Eastern European countries a priori reject a focus on the outside world and on concepts such as secularization. The societies of the individual states are polarized between two basic positions. One can be characterized as a position that insulates itself from everything foreign, a priori rejecting social change and the impact of world developments, rejecting the findings of the humanities and social sciences – e.g. regarding the social construction of reality (Grümme, 2020, 67). The other position is open both to foreign influences and to social change and development, and strives for rational and objective assessment of these, as well as other information. The first position fears “colonization” on the part of the EU, the second points out contemporary Russia’s “colonizing” efforts. This polarization has led to an ideological fight in the whole of society, in discourse, and in political debates.

Older investigations of spirituality and religiosity already confirmed that certain kinds of fear are felt especially in Central and Eastern European societies, regardless of whether these are predominantly Catholic, such as Poland, or secularized, such as the Czech Republic. These fears are associated with the



transformation of society, and they arise from a low standard of living and also include existential fears, especially the fear of death, of one's own futility and uselessness(Groome, 2020, 45). Religion, which helped to form and reinforce, develop and defend identity in Central and Eastern European countries, is becoming an instrument of oppression of everything that is different. A highly secularized country like the Netherlands can, for instance, be seen as representative of a new way of life that must be opposed, and might therefore be seen as a new kind of enemy, or opponent. Earlier research amongst Dutch pupils(age 15-18) showed that faith related values are not important for them, nor being religious, having faith or belonging to a religious institute(Van Dijk 2015).

### III. Religion in the three Countries

We look first at the figures in the three countries, compared to world figures.

〈Table 1〉 Religions in three countries compared to world figures(in %)

	Netherlands	Czech Republic	Saxony	World
Christian*	40%	27%	26%	33%
Orthodox	-	1%	<1%	-
Muslim	5%	<1%	-	22%
Hindu	0.5%	-	-	14%
Buddhist	0.5%	-	-	7%
Other religion	5%	-	1%	12%
Atheist	-	25%	-	-

	Netherlands	Czech Republic	Saxony	World
No religion	49%	46%	73%	2%

(\*Christian here includes Protestant and Roman Catholic. Data: Netherlands: Schmeets and Van Mensvoort, 2015 p. 4; Czech Republic: Pew Research Center 2017, World Johnson and Grim, 2013 p.12; Saxony: Ergebnis des Zensus 2011)

For East Germany we have chosen the Saxony figures. Some details were not available in the data sets for all countries(--- in the list). What is clear is the Christian nature of these countries, and the presence of a large percentage of non-affiliated people. In Czech republic, the label of non-religious or atheist is often used by fans of alternative spirituality/religiosity, including horoscopes, amulets and so on. Compared to the rest of the world these countries have very few Muslims(the Netherlands tops the list in this respect with 5%) as well as few Hindu or Buddhist people.

The key findings of the Europe's Young Adults and Religion survey contain the following figures on young people's religiosity:

- The proportion of young adults(16-29) with no religious affiliation("nones") is as high as 91% in the Czech Republic.
- 70% of Czech young adults - and 60% of their Dutch counterparts - 'never' attend religious services.
- Only 6% in Germany say they attend Mass weekly. This contrasts sharply with their peers in the Czech Republic(24%).

Source: Stephen Bullivant(2018).

## **1. Research Design**

In our research we will focus on these three countries. Knowledge about their religion and their belief, and the role it plays in meaning making in life will help to develop RE-lessons. Therefore, we ask pupils on denominational schools questions regarding their religious affiliation, their religious activity, their belonging and believing, their religious and nonreligious values and the sources where they find inspiration in their lives as possible entrance for religious education. We compare these three countries to find out whether, despite their almost equal secularization level, values differ or concur. This might add a purpose for learning in religious education addressing the different worldviews and historical context.

## **2. Method**

### **1) Introduction**

In this chapter the variables, respondents and methodological choices will be described. The translation of the questionnaire, the respondents and their characteristics as well as the sampling procedure is presented.

### **2) The Questionnaires**

In this research we used a questionnaire which was used in the Netherlands for over twenty years to establish the religion, belief, values and worldviews of secondary school pupils (Van Dijk-Groeneboer 2001, 2005, 2008, 2010, 2013). The items were translated by native speakers in Czechic and German language and very slightly adjusted when necessary for the specific context, for instance the school levels, and expressions as

'Protestant', 'Evangelical', 'Lutheran' and 'Christian', which in all three countries have different pronunciations and meanings. Especially the meaning of certain values remains hard to grasp, as will be elaborated on in our discussion paragraph. The full original questionnaires are obtainable via the authors.

### **3) Sampling Procedures**

To find respondents, a convenience sampling method was used. Especially when religious elements occur in research, many schools decline participation, so finding an entrance into schools is difficult. All three researchers have their contacts in this religious education field with denominational schools through the RE teachers. Therefore, the schools that participated were those with teachers who were known to the researchers. This of course has an effect on the possibilities for generalization of the data, which will be focused on in our discussion paragraph. All pupils could complete the questionnaire digitally using their own devices.

300 Czech pupils, 300 German pupils, and 900 Dutch pupils in denominational secondary schools completed the same questionnaire. In Czech Republic, the pupils came from 59 high schools across the country, 21 of which were founded by political parties, 31 were Catholic, 5 were Protestant, and 2 were Jewish. In the Netherlands, 4 Catholic and 4 Protestant secondary schools participated, and in Saxony three Catholic *Gymnasium*(=*highest education level*) schools participated.

### **4) Data Management**

The survey was conducted for scientific reasons only. The data will be saved and guarded according to the data management rules in scientific research. All data will be kept without

any personal details, so that none of the answers can ever be traced back to the respondent. The respondents participated voluntarily. The data will be kept as an original data source at the Faculty for Catholic Theology for ten years, and is open for other researchers to check the reliability of our analyses and conclusions. Approval for the research was given by the data management team of this Faculty and their data management policy is in line with the Fair Information Principles in the GDPR.

### 3 Results

#### 1) Statistics

Descriptive analysis of the data was conducted with SPSS. This yielded in frequencies tables and crosstabs tables. In some questions a Likert scale was used where possible answers were ‘totally disagree’, ‘disagree’, ‘neither agree nor disagree’, ‘agree’ and ‘totally agree’. These were assigned numbers 1 to 5 and the weighted mean was used in the data description.

#### 2) The Data

Our analysis will first answer questions regarding their religious affiliation.

⟨Table 2⟩ Religious affiliation(in %)

	Czech Republic	Netherlands	Saxony
Roman Catholic	37	12	20
Protestant	3	2	28
Christian	23	18	9
Jewish	1	1	10
Muslim	0	3	0

	Czech Republic	Netherlands	Saxony
Atheist	7	12	10
Humanist	4	2	1
Non-affiliated	20	43	26

Over a third of respondents in Czech Republic, a fifth in Saxony, and a tenth in the Netherlands call themselves Catholic. Almost a third of German young adults call themselves Protestants, either Evangelical or Free Evangelical, i.e. belonging to the “Evangelische Freikirchen”. 18% of the Dutch respondents and 23% of Czech respondents call themselves Christians. Almost half of Dutch young adults are nonaffiliated, as are a quarter of their Eastern German, and a fifth of their Czech peers.

〈Table 3〉 Religiosity and religious activities(in %)

	DISAGREE			AGREE		
	SA	CZ	NL	SA	CZ	NL
I call myself religious	37	28	61	59	63	32
I know exactly what I believe	23	31	43	65	61	46
I want to believe but somehow I cannot	77	82	79	9	6	15
If I marry, I will do that in church	27	22	56	56	58	27
If I get kids, I will baptize them	40	30	69	39	54	15
I would like to have a religious funeral	27	21	62	50	60	24

Statements on religiosity and possible involvement with the church for future life events were presented and pupils were again asked to express their level of agreement. Czech and Saxonian pupils call themselves religious far more often than their Dutch peers, and more of them know exactly what to believe. Life events like marriage, the birth of a child, or a funeral are much more associated with religion for Czech or

German young people than for Dutch pupils.

We furthermore asked the pupils what they think it means to be faithful with regard to religious affiliation and attending church services(believing and belonging). In all three countries, about 50% of the respondents say that “when you believe you do not need a religion, nor do you need to attend services”.

⟨Table 4⟩ Believing and belonging(in %)

	<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Saxony</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>
Actively religious, strong belonging to one religious organization	37	27	6
Actively religious, feeling connected with different religious organizations	13	15	4
Actively religious, not connected to any religious organization	27	18	10
Not actively religious, belonging to one religious organization	8	16	24
Not actively religious, not connected to any religious organization	15	24	55

This table shows Dutch pupils are hardly feeling belonging to a religious organization and more than half of them is not actively religious. Most of the Czechian pupils are actively religious as well as half of the Saxonian pupils.

The survey tries to identify the values upon which the respondents base their identity formation. A list with 23 variables was presented to the pupils, and they could then mark whether they regarded each of these values as very unimportant, unimportant, neutral, important, or highly important(ranking 1 to 5). In the list were three faith-related values, which produced the

following results(the percentage that agreed or strongly agreed that this is an important value).

〈Table 5〉 Faith-related values(in %)

	<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Saxony</b>
Having a life guided by God, Allah or a Higher power	32	13	22
Having trust in God, Allah, or a Higher power	52	15	40
Having faith	67	21	47

Furthermore, we present the three values that were most often chosen in each country(the values that had the highest weighted mean, marked with\*), and we have placed these beside the figures of the other countries for comparative purposes, as the following overview shows.

〈Table 6〉 Values ranked high(weighted means)

	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Saxony</b>
Being free and independent	4.37*	4.10	4.42
Being happy with yourself	4.49*	4.60*	4.63*
Living for your family	3.48	4.49*	4.22
Enjoying life	4.53*	4.32	4.53*
Having a happy relationship	4.23	4.55*	4.47*

One of these values was among the highest in all three countries, “Being happy with yourself”. Saxonian and Dutch pupils value “Enjoying life” very high and Czechian and Saxonian pupils value “Having a happy relationship” very high.

Finally we describe the respondents’ religious and mystical experiences in music, sports, and nature. Pupils were asked to



select whether they believed that the following statement applied to themselves or not. The ‘agree’ figures(adding up “agree” and “totally agree”) are shown here in percentages.

⟨Table 7⟩ Inspiration in music, sports and countryside(in %)

	<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>Saxony</b>
Music is important, because it helps me when I am sad	75	57	79
Sports are important, when I do sports I can really feel happy sometimes	27	37	43
I like going into the countryside, it makes me feel at ease and I experience unity	53	23	46

#### 4. Discussion

In our data we find indications that confirm our hypothesis that the values of the pupils in the three secularized countries differ. Religious affiliation and religious activities, religious and nonreligious values, as well as the relationship between believing and belonging to a religious institute are different in these countries. For religious education in all countries however, the entrance might be found through music and by entering into a dialogue about the meaning of religious experiences in this music, as well as in sports or in going to the country.

Doing comparative research in different countries with different languages is very difficult. Especially doing quantitative research, since the real meaning the respondent attaches to certain concepts cannot be checked, as is often the case in surveys. This is especially problematic with religious and value-oriented questions, because the concepts themselves have everything to do with the real, true meaning of words.

Unfortunately, this cannot be avoided and we are aware of it (Jang, 2017, 53).

Some remarks are to be made concerning possible bias in our data. The questionnaire was spread during RE classes, so pupils might have been tempted to answer 'more religiously' than usual because their expectations in this setting turn more towards religion. Moreover, the lists were spread amongst denominational schools that were also known to the researchers, so generalization to all Catholic or to all denominational schools in the country or towards non-public schools in general are hard to make. Thirdly, it is important to point out that the results of these pupils on denominational schools are also likely to be much more 'religious' than the average figures for young people in these countries, as believing and religiously active families are more likely to choose these denominational schools that have been founded by churches(in all three countries) and by local authorities(Czech Republic) than to choose public schools. The representativeness of the figures is therefore somewhat uncertain.

18% of the Dutch respondents and 23% of the Czech respondents call themselves Christians, which is interesting in itself. Are they just Christians 'in general', as in: 'good citizens'? Or are they in fact Protestant or Catholic, but without using this more precise definition due to their religious illiteracy? The latter is most likely the case at least for the Dutch respondents. The percentage of pupils calling themselves atheist is worth further elaborating on, taken into account the remark of Nešpor whether atheism in Czech Republic is real atheism.

Looking into the results on believing and belonging to religious institutions, there is a wide tendency to be skeptical

about institutions, which have lost their importance, as other research has confirmed. In Czech Republic, over a third of respondents stated that they belonged to and believed in one specific religious institution. This was a little less than a third in Saxony, whereas hardly any Dutch pupils at all shared this statement. Another interesting fact is that almost a third of the pupils in Czech Republic said they were actively religious but did not feel connected to any religious institution, whereas about a fifth of the Dutch and Saxonian respondents said that they were not religiously active but did feel connected to one religious institution. This appears to be more a case of having an old feeling of belonging to a specific religious institution, which however the respondents in question attend only at Christmas and for life-changing events. These different types of belonging and believing can be connected to earlier research outcomes (Riegel, Van Dijk-Groeneboer & Ziebertz).

## VI. Conclusion

The results show insight in the values pupils give meaning. The religious oriented values are only found important by Czech pupils, especially having faith and having trust in God, Allah or a Higher Power. In the Netherlands, the values that scored highest were all individually oriented, whereas in Saxony and Czech Republic, two out of the three highest ranking values were family- and relationship-oriented. This might have something to do with the history of these countries. A good relationship and good family life is important especially for Christian and Catholic people, as they live lives that are not promoted by the state itself and, even more importantly, have been op-

posed for many years by the communist regime. As a result, faith was opposed and became a private matter. Many Czech people feel religious bonds across borders and say that religion is important in life, but do not feel proud to be a citizen of their country. This alienation or feeling of loneliness among Christians is a known phenomenon in Czech Republic and to a lesser degree in Saxony(Ökumenismus der dritter Art).

Different values are appreciated differently in these three countries, partly because of their diverging histories and the deeply rooted cultures these have evoked. Young people from the 3 different countries in this research realise that they have values when asked, but do not consciously articulate them yet. In Christianity, philosophers and theologians have been specifying these values for centuries. If these values are held up as a mirror to young people, instead of opposing them of expecting them to be clearly articulated, the awareness in the young can be sharpened. If young people are stimulated to take a look through that mirror themselves, they become more aware of their values. If they discuss these with each other and with significant others like teachers, parents and religious guiders, they get an articulated moral compass(Joo, 2017, 81). Both in the more Catholic countries of origin and in the more secularised countries, the differences between young people in their awareness of their values appear to be wafer-thin. The values may be different from the history and culture of the country, but the awareness has not yet been sharply drawn in all of them. This means it will be possible to develop better educational practices to form them(Kienstra, Van Dijk & Boelens, 2016, 2017). A good dialogue and genuine connection with them can contribute a lot to this. If the REteacher connects with the language and consciousness of the young people,

she/he can then hold up that mirror to them from traditions. Then the awareness of the roots of the implicit values in young people is increased. These activating and reflective educational tools will help to create brave, strong young people, who are open and aware of their own values in today's world.

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한글 초록

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## 유럽의 관점에서 조망하는 희망의 언어

모니크 반 디주-그뢰느보에르 (틸버그대학교/교수/네덜란드)

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유럽에서 종교, 문화 언어, 그리고 역사적 배경의 다양성은 거대하다. 이차세계 대전과 소비에트연합은 유럽에서 커다란 역할을 한다. 다른 대륙에서 난민의 유입은 다원주의를 증가시킨다. 종교교육은 이러한 차이의 다리 역할에 주목한다. 유럽 대륙에서 언어는 매우 다양하다. 나라와 발음, 심지어 개별 국가에서도 차이가 있다. 이것은 문화 감수성과 세대 간의 집단별 차이를 발생시킨다. 중등교육은 청소년들이 그들 사회에 대한 견고한 뿌리를 내리는 인격 형성의 중요한 역할을 한다. 중등교육에서 청소년의 핵심 가치와 문화적 기반을 검증하는 학습은 필수적이다. 종교교육의 핵심은 그러한 가치를 검토하는 것이다. 그러나 학교는 현재 점차 증가하는 학생들의 비종교성에 적응해야 하는 도전에 직면하고 있다. 종교적 가치는 이러한 상황 속에서 어떠한 역할을 하는가? 학생들은 종교 기관에 적극적으로 참여하는 것에 대해서 어떠한 느낌을 가지는가? 그리고 종교적 신념에 대한 삶의 선택에 대해서 어떠한 생각을 가지는가? 비종교적 가치가 가치 기반의 인격을 지닌 타자의 인격적 기초를 형성하는 것을 파악할 수 있는가? 비종교적 가치는 가치 기반의 인격 형성의 기초를 형성할 수 있는가? 이러한 주제에 대한 연구는 네덜란드에서 20년 이상 지속해 온 것이다. 그리고 현재 체코슬로바키아와 동독 지역으로 확산되고 있다. 이러한 주제는 세속화된 나라에서 그리고 다른 역사에서도 현저하다. 역사와 이러한 국가의 상황은 학습자들에게 중요한 가치를 보여주고 그들의 역할을 가시화한다. 비교 연구는 이러한 유럽 국가의 학습자의 가치를 검토하는 것에 보다 폭 넓은 관점을 제공한다. 이러한 지식은 종교 기반의 세계관 교육의 형성과 계획에 도움이 된다.

〈 주제어 〉

유럽, 난민, 다원주의, 문화 감수성, 중등교육, 핵심 가치, 종교적 신념, 세계관 교육

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