

# Religion as a Multi-Optional Kaleidoscope. The Multi-Religious Context in Europe

Klaus Vellguth

Europe is a continent of many religions. Around 75 per cent of Europeans are Christians (mostly Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox), six to eight per cent are Muslims<sup>1</sup> and 0.3 per cent are Jews<sup>2</sup>. Seventeen per cent of Europeans do not profess any religious belief<sup>3</sup>. A mere five per cent of Europeans describe themselves as convinced atheists.

Europe with its many religions is somewhat unusual compared to the rest of the world. Whereas on almost all other continents in the age of globalisation growing importance attaches to religions, in Europe their significance is waning. In Western Europe, identity is mostly determined not by established traditional religions. Rather it is the outcome of a competition between various identity providers offering a whole host of options. These range from the classical religions via esoteric merchants of meaning, cultural protagonists and providers of sport and leisure activities to commercial consumerism.

If theology is to properly grasp the significance to individuals of these suppliers of meaning, who are in competition with the traditional religions in Europe, and to fully appreciate the associated religious yearnings and the post-modern approach to them, it must live up to its own claim in the age of inter-culturalism and enter “foreign territory” so that it can observe and understand religion and church from a new perspective.<sup>4</sup> It is a fact that, in many areas and among many groups

---

<sup>1</sup> In numerical terms the most Muslims live in Russia (European part), Turkey (European part), Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Albania.

<sup>2</sup> In numerical terms the most Jews live in France, Great Britain, Russia and Germany.

<sup>3</sup> In numerical terms most of those with no religious affiliation live in Estonia, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Russia and the eastern part of Germany.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Vellguth, Klaus, “Weihnachten und der Wunsch nach Ich-Werdung: Versöhnliche Anmerkung zur religiösen Seite des Konsums”, in: Pastoralblatt, No. 12 (2008), 355–360, here: 355.

of people, the church has simply been “left behind” by consumerism, in particular, which serves as a *leitmotif* for the post-modern era. The hyping and branding of products has long since enabled consumerism to function as a provider of identity. This development can be welcomed or condemned but, if one is to understand how societies in Europe have developed in the post-modern era, it is undoubtedly useful to face the fact that consumerism is a quasi-religious activity which gives people a sense of identity. It will then be clear that, in the depths of their being, people in Western Europe remain *homini religiosi*.

### Religiousness in Europe

Even though the traditional religions are apparently dwindling in significance in Western Europe, considerable importance continues to be attached to them, nonetheless. This was convincingly demonstrated by the Bertelsmann Religion Monitor, which was first published in 2008 and has been regularly updated since then by further studies.<sup>5</sup> The monitor sees itself as an instrument for inter-disciplinary analysis of the religious dimensions of society. Its analysis encompasses sociological, cultural and theological aspects. A total of 21,000 men and women in 21 countries were surveyed for the purposes of this study. The first Religion Monitor was designed to assess the situation in Europe, the survey being conducted in Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Russia, Spain and Switzerland.<sup>6</sup> With the Benelux countries being omitted, the study focused specifically on Central Europe. In Eastern Europe the study initially surveyed only religiousness in Poland. Apart from Eastern Europe, the study was carried out along the same lines in Australia, Brazil, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Israel, Morocco, Nigeria, South Korea, Thailand and the United States.

In order to assess the religiousness of the population in the various countries the study spans six different core dimensions of religiousness: intellect, ideology (belief), public practice, private practice, religious experience and (ethical) consequences. In the core dimension “intellect” the Religion Monitor gauges people’s interest

<sup>5</sup> On what follows see Vellguth, Klaus, “Wie religiös ist Europa? Reflexionen über die religiöse Situation in Europa”, in: *Lebendiges Zeugnis*, No. 65 (2010) 1, 43–51.

<sup>6</sup> To date three surveys have been conducted for the Religion Monitor. The first was published in 2008, the second in 2013 and the third in 2017.

in religious topics. This is done by assessing religious reflexivity, religious search and spiritual and religious books. The core dimension “ideology (belief)” is seen to mean belief in God or something divine. This core dimension is measured by asking people about their notion of God, world views, religious pluralism, religious fundamentalism and other religious ideas. By “public practice” the Religion Monitor means religious practices which extend beyond the private sphere, i.e. attending church services, participating in congregational prayers or visiting a temple. The Religion Monitor considers the core dimension of “private practice” to mean prayer and meditation, which also includes other aspects such as obligatory prayers, family altar worship, etc. In the core dimension “religious experience” the Religion Monitor includes the aspect of you-experience and unity experience (cosmisation) and people’s religious feelings. This aspect is of crucial importance for religiousness, because religion only achieves an in-depth effect if it is not inculcated as a cognitive doctrine or ideology, but affords comprehensive access at the experiential level. In his book entitled *Mehr Religion als gedacht! (More Religion Than Expected)* Stefan Knobloch says that experience has a fundamental religious dimension: “The teachings of a religious group are only relevant for the individual to the extent that they have passed through the filter of personal experiential evidence.”<sup>7</sup> In the core dimension of “consequences” the Religion Monitor measures the relevance of religion to everyday life. This means the relevance of religion to various aspects of life, for instance in the family, politics, child rearing, sexuality, etc. Almost one hundred questions were compiled for the survey in order to adequately reflect these six core dimensions.

The outcome of this global / European survey was noteworthy. The 2008 Religion Monitor made it clear that the Christian faith continues to exert a strong influence in Europe. Three-quarters of all Europeans (74 per cent) in the countries surveyed were religious; a quarter of them (25 per cent) even considered themselves to be highly religious. Only 23 per cent of Europeans could be classified as non-religious. The Christian denominations were so dominant that the Religion Monitor was unable to make any representative statements about other religions due to the small number of cases.

<sup>7</sup> Knobloch, Stefan, *Mehr Religion als gedacht! Wie die Rede von der Säkularisierung in die Irre führt*, Freiburg 2006, 87.

It also transpired that religiousness was very marked in the fields of intellectual argument, engagement with faith and reflection on personal religiousness. Moreover, religiousness was also characterised by individual religious practices such as prayer and patterns of theistic spirituality. This meant that people in Europe felt themselves to be both religious and spiritual and had a religious and/or spiritual image of themselves.

The first Religion Monitor published in 2008 showed that religion is a constitutive and identity-creating factor for people living in European countries at the onset of the third millennium. It substantiated the statement made by the Second Vatican Council that all people are confronted with fundamental religious questions: “What is man? What is the meaning, the aim of our life? What is moral good, what is sin? Whence suffering and what purpose does it serve?” [...] And “What, finally, is that ultimate inexpressible mystery which encompasses our existence: whence do we come, and where are we going?”<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere the Council Fathers said “that man is constantly worked upon by God’s spirit, and hence can never be altogether indifferent to the problems of religion”<sup>9</sup>.

From the perspective of a theologian from Germany this is an important statement, because you sometimes get the impression that, at the beginning of the 21st century and at the very latest since the reunification of the country and the associated shifts in the sociology of religion, religion has disappeared from public life here. However, in Germany, too, there has been a growing awareness recently of the phenomenon or “factor” of religion. Initially it was sociologists like Hans Joas<sup>10</sup>, Paul Nolte<sup>11</sup> and José Casanova<sup>12</sup>, a lecturer at Georgetown University in Washington, who pointed to a misplaced “blindness to religion” in the social debate in Germany and urged Europe “to reconsider its relationship with religion in the public sphere”<sup>13</sup>. Among

<sup>8</sup> *Nostra Aetate* 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* 41.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Joas, Hans/Wiegand, Klaus (eds.), *Säkularisierung und die Weltreligionen*, Frankfurt a. M. 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Nolte, Paul, *Religion und Bürgergesellschaft: Brauchen wir einen religionsfreundlichen Staat?*, Berlin 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Casanova, José, *Europas Angst vor der Religion*, Berlin 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Polak, Regina, *Migration, Flucht und Religion: Praktisch-Theologische Beiträge* (vol. 1: Grundlagen), Ostfildern 2017, 104; cf. id., “Migration: Herausforderung für Theologie und Kirche”, in: *Diakonia*, No. 42 (2011) 3, 150–157.

the reasons he gave was that Germany should open up in the age of migration, reconsider the relevance of the “factor of religion” in the public arena and grasp the opportunity it offered. After all, dialogue between religion and society nurtures productive debates – including that of the meaning of life and a reliable source of guidance in society as well on peaceful interreligious coexistence rooted in respect and mutual interest.<sup>14</sup>

### Religiousness in Germany

Following on the first Religion Monitor it had published five years earlier, the Bertelsmann Foundation issued a second monitor in 2013. A total of 14,000 people in 13 countries were questioned – this time in a modified form – about their personal religiousness and values and about the relationship between religions, politics and society.<sup>15</sup> It showed that religiousness in Europe and in Germany, in particular, had undergone modest changes, whereas in other parts of the world religion continued to have much greater relevance. The question of whether respondents were “highly religious”, “quite religious” or “moderately religious” elicited a positive response from 82 per cent of those surveyed in Turkey, 74 per cent in Brazil, 70 per cent in India and 67 per cent in the USA. The highest numbers of those who explicitly regarded themselves as “non-religious” were to be found in Israel (45 per cent) and Sweden (44 per cent).

Only 57 per cent of respondents in Germany considered themselves to be “highly religious”, “quite religious” or “moderately religious”, an outcome which put the country in mid-table.<sup>16</sup> There was a striking difference between the western and eastern parts of the country in this respect. Whereas the figure in Western Germany was 64 per cent, in Eastern Germany it was just 26 per cent. The survey

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Kiesel, Doron/Lutz, Ronald (eds.), *Religion und Politik: Analysen, Kontroversen, Fragen*, Frankfurt a. M. 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.), *Religionsmonitor 2013 – verstehen was verbindet: Religion und Zusammenhalt in Deutschland. Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse im Überblick*, Gütersloh 2013.

<sup>16</sup> A change in the method employed should be noted here. In comparing the following numbers from the 2013 Religion Monitor it should be borne in mind that they were derived from personal statements made by the respondents, whereas the numbers given in this article from the 2008 Religion Monitor related to the indexing undertaken in the Religion Monitor. Whereas the figures emerging from the survey are thus valid and meaningful within themselves, a direct comparison of the values presented from the different survey periods is not valid.

made it crystal clear that younger people in Germany apparently attach less importance to religion than older people do. The older the respondents, the more religious they were. There was evidently a direct correlation between a religious upbringing and religiousness in adulthood. It should be noted that 69 per cent of people in Western Germany have a religious upbringing compared to 45 per cent in Eastern Germany. It was also clear that the percentage of people brought up to be religious is declining steadily. For instance, only 25 per cent of 16 to 25-year-olds in Western Germany and 12 per cent in Eastern Germany grow up in a religious environment. Compared to the family, school and friends, religious communities play only a subordinate role in the communication of values. There are barely any differences in this respect between Christians, Muslims and those who profess no religious belief.

The Bertelsmann Religion Monitor also makes it plain that religiousness depends on a personal profession of religion. Religion plays a much greater role for Muslims than it does for Christians. On average only 20 per cent of the respondents living in Germany described themselves as being “quite religious” or “very religious”; the figure among Catholics in the country was 26 per cent, among Protestants 21 per cent, and among Muslims 39 per cent. Of interest in this context is the change in values recorded in the Religion Monitor. This change is apparent across the generations irrespective of religious affiliation. Hedonistic values are more important for the younger generation, there being no difference here between Christians, Muslims and non-believers. At the same time young people also set great store by a willingness to help – again irrespective of religious adherence.

Other more recent studies note similar outcomes to those contained in the Bertelsmann Religion Monitor as regards religiousness in Germany. In December 2018, for example, the Pew Research Center interviewed adults in Europe about their religiousness.<sup>17</sup> In Germany 11 per cent of respondents said that religion was important to them. Almost a quarter (24 per cent) stated said they attend church service once a week and nine per cent said they prayed daily. It was deduced from these data that 12 per cent of Germans are highly

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Metzloff, Paul, “Volkkirche oder Entscheidungskirche? Ein Plädoyer für eine Vision des erfüllten Lebens”, in: *Lebendige Seelsorge*, No. 70 (2019) 5, 310–314, here: 310.

religious.<sup>18</sup> Overall it turns out that, while Christian identity remains an important marker for people in Germany, the Christian society in which a culturally rooted Christianity developed is dissolving.

### Europe as a multi-religious context

The majority of Europeans profess Christianity. The second largest world religion after Christianity is Islam. This is reflected in its presence in Europe,<sup>19</sup> where Muslims constitute the largest religious minority. Islam formed part of a pluralist and multi-religious Europe well before the age of global migration flows. As an Abrahamic religion it is very close to Christianity. “In terms of their individual revelations, Christianity, Judaism and Islam believe that the inherent message of revelation is divine – and, therefore, everlasting and infinite – mercy and justice. For all the differences between the three monotheistic religions they nevertheless share common ground in the determinability of God, for instance in their appeal to a merciful God.<sup>20</sup> Be that as it may, many Europeans still regard Islam as an alien element which, in their view, cannot be integrated into their cultural setting. They fail to understand and consequently reject the wearing of a headscarf by Muslim women and girls, since they regard it as a symbol of female oppression and as an expression of a concept of religion which requires it to be practised not just in private but also in public. This results in a clash between Muslim religious practice and a mostly vague understanding in society of what a secular or laicist state is. One factor contributing to a disassociation from Islam is the media coverage of Islamist terrorist attacks in Europe, which is used to telling effect by right-wing populists.

The 2017 Bertelsmann Religion Monitor incorporates statements about the religiousness of Muslims in Europe. An above-average degree of religiousness among Muslims was recorded in a survey carried out in five European countries (Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain and Switzerland): “Whereas eight per cent of Muslims

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/05/29/christ-sein-in-westeuropa/> (13.11.2019).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. bin Talal, El Hassan/Ashmawey, Mohamed/Mahgoob, Safwar Ali Morsy, “Islam”, in: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (ed.), *Partner für den Wandel: Religionen und nachhaltige Entwicklung*, Berlin 2016, 105–117, here: 105.

<sup>20</sup> Fuchs, Ottmar, “Wenn Fremde bei dir in eurem Land leben ...” (Lev 19:33–34): Zukünftige Herausforderungen durch die aktuelle Migrationsbewegung”, in: *Theologie der Gegenwart*, No. 60 (2017) 1, 47–71, here: 71.

are religious and 41 per cent are very religious, the corresponding figures among Christians are 16 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. In the non-Muslim population 33 per cent are religious and only 16 per cent very religious.”<sup>21</sup> According to the study, Muslims are becoming increasingly integrated into society in Europe. However, this social integration is inhibited in Muslims whose personal identity is defined to a very large extent by their religious affiliation.<sup>22</sup> Here, too, Muslim women find it harder than Muslim men to integrate into the labour market.<sup>23</sup> The study comes to the conclusion that putting Islam on an institutional par with other religious communities is essential to the integration of the Muslim population. It advocates permeable education systems, more openings in the labour market for Muslims and the fostering of interreligious discussions with a view to forging a social consensus on democratic rules and a democratic understanding of society.<sup>24</sup>

### Interreligious dialogue as a challenge in a multi-religious Europe

At the outset of the third millennium Europe is a multi-religious continent which faces the challenge of replacing national identities by pluralistic and multi-religious identities. This is, not least, a prerequisite for peaceful social coexistence: “There can be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions; there can be no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions. This calls for urgent action in churches, mosques, temples and synagogues.”<sup>25</sup>

In the age of globalisation and migration, interreligious dialogue constitutes a major task for Christianity in Europe and elsewhere. An open dialogue which begins with an explanation of one’s own standpoint, does not exclude contradictions between religions but makes explicit reference to them and encounters other religions with an attitude of sympathy, patience and understanding does not pose any risk for religious identity.<sup>26</sup> “Ever since preference has

<sup>21</sup> Halm, Dirk/Sauer, Martina, *Muslimen in Europa: Integriert aber nicht akzeptiert?*, Gütersloh 2017, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 51.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 50–52.

<sup>25</sup> Küng, Hans, *Projekt Weltethos*, Munich 1990, 76.

<sup>26</sup> Raimundo Panikkar describes endeavours to show understanding and sympathy as an “intra-religious dialogue” which is an essential precondition for inter-religious dialogue. Cf. Panikkar, Raimundo, *Le dialogue interreligieux*, Paris 1985.

been given to the model of dialogue, it has been insinuated that Christian identity is undergoing reappraisal. On the contrary, it should be pointed out that the normative determination of Christian identity and efforts to engage in an open religious dialogue are two sides of the same coin. The very essence of the Christian faith calls for relations with adherents of other faiths to be conducted in a spirit of open communication, which does not involve a suspension of personal belief in Christ.”<sup>27</sup> With this in mind, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue notes in its declaration on *Dialogue and Proclamation*, which it issued jointly with the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples<sup>28</sup>, that interreligious dialogue is now conducted at four different levels: the dialogue of life, the dialogue of action, the dialogue of theological exchange and the dialogue of religious experience.<sup>29</sup> Whereas in the dialogue of life (Protestants use the term “dialogue in community” for this form of dialogue<sup>30</sup>) the aim is to live in an open and neighbourly spirit, sharing joys and sorrows, human problems and preoccupations, in the dialogue of action Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people. In the dialogue of theological exchange specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages and to appreciate each other’s spiritual values, whereas in the dialogue of religious experience persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance

<sup>27</sup> Bernhardt, Reinhold, “Religiöse Identitätsbildung im religionspluralen Kontext”, in: Heimbach-Steins, Marianne/Könemann, Judith (eds.), *Religiöse Identitäten in einer globalisierten Welt*, Münster 2019, 87–94, here: 91f.

<sup>28</sup> Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue/Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples: *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflection and Orientations On Interreligious Dialogue And The Proclamation Of The Gospel Of Jesus Christ*, No. 42., [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/interrelg/documents/rc\\_pc\\_interrelg\\_doc\\_19051991\\_dialogue-and-proclamatio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interrelg/documents/rc_pc_interrelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html) (14.08.20).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Renz, Andreas, “Begegnung schafft Vertrauen: Beispiele gelingenden Dialogs zwischen Christen und Muslimen in Deutschland”, in: *Anzeiger für die Seelsorge*, No. 124 (2015) 5, 11–14; Ozankom, Claude, *Christliche Theologie im Horizont der Einen Welt*, Regensburg 2012, 236f.; Müller, Johannes, “Achtung der Religionsfreiheit und Pflicht zum christlichen Zeugnis – ein Widerspruch? Eine ‘indonesisch-katholische’ Perspektive”, in: Heimbach-Steins, Marianne/Wielandt, Rotraud/Zintl, Reinhard (eds.), *Religionen und Religionsfreiheit: Menschenrechtliche Perspektiven im Spannungsfeld von Mission und Konversion*, Würzburg 2010, 93–111, here: 107.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the relevant documents of the World Council of Churches (WCC). Sundermeier, Theo, “Missio Filii, Missio Dei, Missio Ecclesiae: Zur Enzyklika ‘Redemptoris Missio’ und zur Studie ‘Religionen, Religiosität und christlicher Glaube’”, in: *Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts Bensheim*, No. 42 (1991) 3, 48–50, here: 49.



with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute.<sup>31</sup>

However, interreligious dialogue is not just conducted on different levels; it must also translate a certain mindset into practice. Karl Lehmann has set out several standards for successful interreligious dialogue which extend beyond any intellectual assessment criteria.<sup>32</sup> He points out that, bearing the specific nature of religious convictions in mind, a dialogue must, above all, be authentic in character and renounce all partiality and powerful positions when partners in dialogue meet on an equal footing. The partners should not strive to refute what those on the other side say and be courageous enough to accept their own “weaknesses”. Moreover, the dialogue should be marked by a willingness on both sides to identify errors in thoughts and actions and openly concede them. This yardstick must be applied to every religion which engages in dialogue and its representatives should ponder the question of whether it meets the fundamental requirements or “minimum standards” of interreligious relations.<sup>33</sup> Since understanding is also bound up with sympathy, interreligious relations must not be reduced to cognitive aspects, but should also take due account of inter-personal relations, on which understanding ultimately depends. Thus an epistemological dignity is befitting to inter-human relations.

### Christian witness in a multi-religious Europe

Karl Lehmann thus emphasises an aspect which is of fundamental importance for a multi-religious Europe and is also to be found in

<sup>31</sup> It was John Paul II who not only invited religious representatives to prayers for peace in Assisi, but was also the first pope to visit a mosque, thereby setting an example for a possible dialogue of religious experience. Cf. Nennstiel, Richard, “Nostra aetate: ein bleibendes Zeichen der Zuversicht”, in: Ordenskorrespondenz, No. 55 (2014), 415–422, here: 40.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Vellguth, Klaus, “Relationale Missionswissenschaft: Wenn Mission dazwischen kommt”, in: Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religionswissenschaft, No. 101 (2017) 1–2, 190–195.

<sup>33</sup> Karl Lehmann sees it as a requirement of a religion that it should respect the dignity of all people, promote the freedom of people, support people in their search for meaning and security, avoid violence in their missionary activities and advocate both negative and positive religious freedom (especially for believers in other faiths). Lehmann, Karl, “Kriterien des interreligiösen Dialogs”, in: Stimmen der Zeit, No. 141 (2009) 9, 579–595, here: 590.

the document “Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World”<sup>34</sup>. In its second recommendation the code of conduct refers to building relationships of respect and trust with people of all religions – at both personal and institutional levels. The document published by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance states that these forms of interreligious dialogue could open up paths in numerous contexts to overcoming conflicts, establishing justice, healing memories, bringing reconciliation and creating peace.<sup>35</sup> The signatories of the document write in their third recommendation: “We recommend that our churches, national and regional confessional bodies and mission organisations, and especially those working in interreligious contexts, [...] encourage Christians to strengthen their own religious identity and faith while deepening their knowledge and understanding of other religions, and to do so also taking into account the perspectives of the adherents of those religions. Christians should avoid misrepresenting the beliefs and practices of people of other religions.”<sup>36</sup> In their fourth recommendation the authors call upon Christians “to cooperate with other religious communities engaging in interreligious advocacy towards justice and the common good and, wherever possible, standing together in solidarity with people who are in situations of conflict.”<sup>37</sup> The ecumenical mission document calls for the reduction in religious and confessional commitment to be overcome so that interreligious coalitions can be built for the common good, especially through the involvement of civil society. It was with this in mind that

<sup>34</sup> Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue/World Council of Churches/World Evangelical Alliance, Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations 4. <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world>. See also Biehl, Michael/Vellguth, Klaus (eds.), Christliches Zeugnis in einer multireligiösen Welt: Ein Rezeptionsprozess in ökumenischer Weite, Aachen/Hamburg 2019; Vellguth, Klaus, “MissionRespekt: Der ökumenische Verhaltenskodex zum christlichen Zeugnis in einer multireligiösen Welt und seine Rezeption in Deutschland”, in: Verbum SVD 55 (2015) 1–2, 160–179; Vellguth, Klaus, “MissionRespekt: Ökumenischer Kongress zum christlichen Zeugnis in einer multireligiösen Welt”, in: Pastoralblatt, No. 66 (2014) 12, 367–371.

<sup>35</sup> Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue/World Council of Churches/World Evangelical Alliance, Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations 2, <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/christian-identity-in-pluralistic-societies/christian-witness-in-a-multi-religious-world>, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 3.

the German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Gerd Müller, said: “If the 21st century does not become a century of cooperation, it will become a century of failure. We therefore need more cooperation, more common values, more dialogue. [...] We need those who see others not as aliens but as neighbours.”<sup>38</sup> What applies to the societies in countries involved in cooperation and development is equally true of the societies in a multi-religious Europe.

---

<sup>38</sup> Müller, Gerd, “Religion als Partner einer wertegeleiteten Entwicklungspolitik”, in: Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (ed.), *Religion als Partner in der Entwicklungspolitik*, Berlin 2016, 12–19, here: 13.