

STATEMENTS ON CHURCH PEDAGOGY / 2002

Basic Understandings of Church Pedagogy / 2002

Church pedagogy aims to open up churches to people. Its goal is to make people understand the meaning of christian churches by using their head, heart, and hands. Thus the understanding of christian religion is promoted and a path to a spiritual understanding is opened up. In this effort, there is no room for separate denominational understandings, since there are basic and fundamental common views.



1. Church pedagogy creates a relationship between man and the church as a building.

Church buildings, their architecture and furnishings, have preserved christian meanings and traditions through the ages. Church buildings can regain new relevance by bringing them into a relationship with the everyday life of those participating in church pedagogy.

Church pedagogy takes into consideration the previous experiences and feelings of the participants. It works with the new, fresh perspective participants might have.

2. Church pedagogy means working with space and with experiences.

Church sanctuaries are the place, the theme, and the medium of church pedagogy.

Sanctuaries make participants aware of their own bodily existence, space inside churches is experienced with the whole body and all its senses.

Church pedagogy unlocks churches and their sanctuaries not only verbally and visually, but also by moving about within them, by tactual and other, f.e. acoustical sensation.

3. Church pedagogy opens up paths to religious experience.

The special aura of a room as well as the personal attention given, the concentration of sensual awareness and the slowing down of everyday life while working with church pedagogy can open up paths to submerged religious experiences and yearnings of the participants.

Church pedagogy aims to be a guide in moderating these processes in an unassuming and gentle way.

4. Church pedagogy uses a variety of methods.

Church pedagogy works with methods of aesthetics, drama, movement, music, meditation as well as methods of traditional religious instruction. Depending on the specific group of participants, on the given potential of a church and on the particular local setting the methods are selected.

Future efforts of church pedagogy will develop methodological guidelines taking clues from these different methods and working with them.

5. Church pedagogy needs time to be effective.

Learning in a church sanctuary needs slowing down in order to give room for processes of heightened awareness and experiences of growing sensitivity.

Taking part in a project of church pedagogy means taking time.

Past experience shows that several hours are needed for school groups.

6. Church pedagogy affects other institutions like schools.

Church pedagogy has been established by linking pedagogical work in museums and schools for small children and adolescents. Here church pedagogy work has its roots. Church pedagogy connects religious instruction at school with topics of many other subjects, especially history, art, politics, latin, and musical instruction. The separation of these topics is being removed by working in a church, the authentic place of christian tradition and practice. For schools church pedagogy offers an extra-mural place of learning which affects their educational methods.

Church tours for tourists are greatly enriched by making room for the dialogue between a church and its visitors.

7. Church pedagogy has an effect for the church itself and its congregation.

Church pedagogy enriches a congregation's work with children, grown-ups and adults. By making a congregation more aware of its church building and its riches church pedagogy helps to make congregants feel more at home and attached to their church. Church pedagogy helps congregants understand the value of their church during the week and while celebrating services.

The sanctuary of a church and its design, its care and the teaching of a church buildings message to others can grow into a center of the activities of a congregation. People with little attachment to the traditional activities of a congregation can be attracted to these tasks of care for the church.

8. Church pedagogy is a long-time investment in future generations.

To a large extent the future of the church in a multi-cultural society will depend on making christianity understandable and accessible in mind and body to secularized people and people of others cultures.

Positioned on the threshold of church and society Church pedagogy provides an indispensable service for the public exposure of the biblical message.

In the not too distant future congregations, territorial churches and dioceses have to be made aware of this value since church pedagogy largely depends on local support.

Translation from German: Bernd Wrede, January 2009