

## Professor Dr Herbert Schultze 1928-2009

The death on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2009 at 80 of Herbert Schultze marks the end of an era in the history of Religious Education in Europe. His efforts to straddle the different pedagogies and philosophies of Religious Education over 30 years will remain a monument to his endeavour. Born in Stettin in 1928 he was educated in Berlin just before the Second World War and later, like the current Pope, was required to join the Hitler Youth. In 1944 he was sent to the eastern front and wounded. It was in 1945 when he was in hospital, with the news that Russian troops were advancing with little regard for the German wounded, that he managed to flee from hospital and was rescued by American and British troops. He was not yet 17.

For those who knew Herbert well, this was not a period about which he chose to talk but these traumatic experiences and his salvation by western forces was to have a significant influence on his life. His vision was to work productively towards a better understanding between all nations, especially in his field of Religious Education. He studied in the theological faculty at the University in Berlin receiving his doctorate in 1952. He continued to work as a school teacher and for a while, in 1954, in the Vikariat in the Evangelical Church of Berlin - Brandenburg. In 1962 he became Director of the Religious Teaching Insitut of the Evangelisch-Lutherischen church in Hamburg where he stayed for six years.

He came to the fore in the early 1970s when he was appointed as a Director of the prestigious Comenius Institut in Münster. His work there, from 1971 until 1988 gave him the platform and the opportunity to become an ambassador for Religious Education across Europe. When appointed Secretary of the Intereuropean Commission on Church and Schools (ICCS) in 1976, he worked closely with Colin Alves, then President of ICCS and, later General Secretary of the Church of England's Board of Education, to promote a pan-European understanding of Religious Education. In 1982 he became President remaining there until 1989. During this period, Herbert Schultze travelled across Europe. He became a well-known figure with his black beret, his long coat, at least two heavy bags and (before he stopped smoking) a long cigarette holder.

He was invited to become a member of the Shap Working party on World Religions in Education in the 1980s bringing enormous insight and experience to the Working Party and a collection of like minded contacts around Europe, East and West. He, with colleagues, formed the European Association for World Religions in Education (EARWRE) in 1990 and became its first Chair.

Herbert was committed to dialogue between religions and between educators. He set up an exchange of teachers between Germany and England that would last for twenty years, giving classroom teachers a unique insight into the everyday classrooms of their two countries. His writing was mainly collaborative; he was an *animateur* and many of us became involved in a number of projects through his initiative. He co-operated in the publication of a number of volumes on Christian education in the 1970s in England, The Netherlands, Sweden, France and Poland and also Greece in 1988 and the German Democratic Republic, published in 1990, just after the Berlin Wall came down. He was, with a

Muslim colleague, Professor Falaturi, instrumental in pioneering a series of studies across Europe that examined the representation of Islam in RE and History textbooks in the early 1990s.

When he left the Comenius Institut, he carried on working and travelling. He moved back to Hamburg but continued to teach in the University of Duisburg-Essen and received a rich reward for all his efforts with the award of an Honorary Professorship, conferred on him on 2005.

His influence is difficult to over state. He was committed to the teaching of RE but the structures for, and control of, RE continue to be very different in the European countries and Herbert became the point of reference for what was happening where. I followed him as President of ICCS in 1989 and on one occasion, with twenty people around a table from different countries, observed that the common denominator was Herbert Schultze. His work has been taken up and developed by others but Herbert was the trail-blazer. Others have followed, but Herbert Schultze did the hard innovative work.

He leaves a widow, his beloved Dorothee, whom he met many years ago but finally married in the 1990s in the only Protestant Church in Salzburg with the reception served from the car boot. He remained devoted to his son, Nicolas, from a previous marriage, and wanted him to be protected from the type of up-bringing he had experienced in his teenage years. Herbert was eccentric, strong willed and delightful. He lived a full life and all those who work in Religious Education in Europe need to mark the passing of this extraordinary man.

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