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Multiculturalism and Religious Education in Preschool and Early -School Education: A research approach

The modification of traditional societies to pluralistic societies is the main characteristic of globalization. The universal politics, economical and cultural changes have created a new international educational environment (Kalantzis 2002) and have changed the cultural and religious profile of the modern world (Cahill 2003). Globalization is by many researchers considered as one important factor that affects positively and negatively the shaping and evolution of religious matters in the 21st century. In the negatives of globalization are included facts such as, the creation of secular states, the imposition of a global culture, the promotion of consumerism and materialism. However, globalization creates new communication possibilities in internationalized religious networks as the local cultures are being internationalized and the universal culture is specified. The answer of religions towards the homogeny powers of globalization and the market forces is the emphasis to a spiritual way of life (Wuthnow 1991). In the modern societies' frame, the increasing interest in religions is an answer to a technologically progressed society and to the modern dilemmas that it creates (Thomas 2000).

In the same time, the educational systems are called to manage the cultural and religious pluralism through modern intercultural approaches, contributing to the structure of coherence and global peace societies. The religious education takes a new meaning and content, in a world where the need for auto- orientation meets the need for experiential, co-operational, and thoughtful- critical ways of learning and teaching.

Today's essay is a first approach of the religious education matters, from the multiculturalism's point of view, showing the opinions and qualifications of educators in preschool and early- school education in Greece. Matters researched are a) the educators' opinions about the inter- culturalism of Greek school and of the society generally and b) how educators realize the content of religious education and its contribution to the formation of modern emancipated civilians.