

# **Unproductive Implementation of Subjects Religion in Bulgarian School under the Regulatory V / S Innovative Educational Models Religion of Kyustendil Municipality**

Ivelina Nikolova Nikolova

(Faculty of Philosophy and History / Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" / Bulgaria)

---

**Abstract:** *This study was provoked by my direct observations on the development of religious education in Bulgaria: the lack of purposeful policy of the state in accordance with ecclesiastical authority, the lack of an adequate strategy for embedding items Religion in Bulgarian school, the inactivity of all concerning the issue of educational and educational literature, the lack of adequate curriculum Religion and many other things. Last but not least: the flaws in the current legislation governing the status of the subject of Religion are many. These regulations not only did not provide clarity on issues they soon stop the normal flow of the learning process in Religion, but did not help. Amid all this one municipality in Bulgaria - Kyustendil Municipality eighth consecutive year successfully built a methodological model for teaching Religion connected with the construction of strategy and project writing a concept of religion, textbooks, methodological guides and educational children's literature. The activity of Kyustendil municipality is of national importance. This study is the first of its kind that brings out the specific characteristics of the above-mentioned key points.*

**Key words:** *Religious education, legislation, Municipality Kyustendil, educational literature of Religion, strategy, concept*

---

Date of Submission: 29-01-2019

Date of acceptance:14-02-2019

---

## **I. Introduction**

Religious education in Bulgaria is part of the overall system of school education in Europe and as such an element is an important and controversial issue. He is regarded as an object of increased social, political, religious and educational interest and subject to thorough scientific discussions. On the one hand the interest is provocative place of religious liberty and freedom of religion in the member states of the European Union, on the other - it aims to identify themselves today directives of religious education in different countries. In his study "Innovative Model to support religious education in the Municipality of Kyustendil" Magdalena Legkostup identified several names and writings of leading educators in the field of religious pedagogy, whose experience and achievements underpins the established strategies for teaching Religion.<sup>1</sup>At the local level we could cite recent studies in the theory and methodology of education in schools Religion conducted by Prof. Dr. Bozhidar Andonov, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Magdalena Legkostup and stavroforen butler Dr. Zachary Detchev. In the field of religious education but work many other theologians and teachers, whether in a different aspect contributing to this problem. The experience so far of many aims to improve the quality of religious instruction in Bulgaria, on the other hand situate in view of the European educational system.<sup>2</sup>

As for religious instruction in Bulgaria, this issue is complex and requires special attention. As in most European countries,<sup>3</sup> and in our country operate mainly two sectors of religious education - public sector carried out in the school education system through lawful order and regulation. And conditionally called "private sector", which is based on confessional approach. It is in this last sector efforts of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church - Bulgarian Patriarchate in recent years were not crowned with great success. The reasons for this are many and of different nature. They will not be discussed here.<sup>4</sup>

### **1. Education on Religion v / s religious education?**

Over the last twenty years we are talking about religious education in our country. This highly expressed concept, contains several inaccuracies confinement. Express their disagreement with a similar formulation for the following reasons: religious education in the strict sense of in Bulgaria can not talk. Understood as a particular construct education is made possible by systematically conducted training process with relevant results, evidenced by a certificate diploma, certificate or other document.<sup>5</sup>As a "single streamlined process of education, training and acquiring collective knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and social habits"<sup>6</sup>Education is a deliberate and systematic policy of the state conducted its territory for example. When we treat religious education to the named above formulations can see that in no way could we talk about religious

education in Bulgaria - at least the last 100 years. They began the first indications of something not quite thought out and enjoying artificial prestige religious education.

## **2. Outlines of the history of religious instruction in Bulgaria**

Regarding the history of religious education in Bulgaria is written a lot and we can talk long. The direction of this article, however, does not allow us to do that. We will try to briefly outline the main directions of religious education from the Renaissance until today to identify gaps and achievements in it.

With the establishment of secular education in the Renaissance period (beginning of the 18th century and lasted more than a century) religious education is carried out only one subject that has different names and liberal selected content in individual schools (Law of God, Catechism, or Church history Liturgy) depending on the requirements of the school board and teacher training.<sup>7</sup>In the time after the Liberation of Bulgaria (1878) place the subject Religion in already modern for that time Bulgarian school was undetermined. Most Bulgarian statesmen have seen secular nature of Bulgarian education. Religious classes in schools gradually reduced to half an hour a week and half hour - the subject of lecture. In 1925 the subject Religion has been removed from the curricula of secondary schools. Renowned our Orthodox educator Hristo Dimitrov defined this process as "particularly tragic paradox in the recent history of Bulgarian spiritual culture".<sup>8</sup> Only in the 30s of the last century has seen a return to cooperation between Church and state to build a new status of religious education in Bulgarian School. Repeatedly Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church is taking action in this direction in the form of an exchange of letters, visits, written and oral requests and suggestions to the Ministry of Education and other responsible institutions the idea of introducing the subject Religion in the Bulgarian school to become a reality.<sup>9</sup> In the middle of last century church was especially take a number of practical action and not stand idly by.<sup>10</sup> Here, however, there was a danger that object to become a "foreigner among other subjects".<sup>11</sup>

We are aware that during the communist regime - 1944 - 1989 Religion object was removed from the curriculum. After the political changes in 1989 revived the idea of the restoration of religious education in Bulgarian schools. The debate around this idea continues to this day. Its main sides: the first side - secular educational experts, politicians and intellectuals, on the other hand - religious institutions: Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Chief Mufti's Office. We should not ignore and academics (theologians, philosophers, educators, historians) who support the idea of introducing general subjects Religion.<sup>12</sup>Do not be reached, however, concrete decisions or progress. Only after 2000 began a more intense period of return to this issue. According to many scientists learning object Religion must be introduced into the history, culture and ethics of the different religions, and its teaching must be in accordance with the secular nature of the Bulgarian school.<sup>13</sup> In 2000 the Committee on Religion MES develop normative and methodological guidelines and establish two forms of teaching the subject Religion: Religion-Christianity and Religion-Islam Res 2000 Committee on religion Ministry of Education and Science develop normative and methodological guidelines and establish two forms of teaching the subject Religion : Religion-Christianity and Islam-Religion.<sup>14</sup>In this way subjects are taught by spring 2018.

In 2014 he convened a special Expert Council with the task to examine the subject Religion in Bulgarian schools. In the Expert Council includes representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, professors from the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", representative of the Chief Mufti's Office, experts in theology from the regional inspectorates of education in Rousse and Sofia. For six months, the Council had to analyze the condition of the subject Religion with several goals: improving the regulatory framework didactic security of the subject and others. But he fails to complete its work due to the fall of the government. Only an opinion, it is necessary to restore the chief expert on Religion in the Ministry of Education to recruit five senior experts in regional departments of education, but these recommendations were taken into account and the teaching of Religion remains unspecified parameters.<sup>15</sup>From all these considerations it is clear one: religious education in Republic of Bulgaria should be adequate to modern conditions and to be referred to as perceptions of Christians and the non-Christians. The most important part of this issue is the organization that you should operate in accordance with the legal system in the country.<sup>16</sup>On the other hand, given the secular mainstream schools in the country is very difficult to be found mechanisms on the one hand to satisfy the interests of both units that serve the state: 1) the believers; 2) the unbelievers whose children attend the same schools. According to prof. Dimitar Kirov necessary release of templates and acquired momentum. At first you have to overcome some difficulties to convince employees of the Ministry of Education and Science, the public and politicians of the usefulness of religious education.<sup>17</sup> In this process the word of parents is important mainly if only by their consent subject can be studied by their children.<sup>18</sup>

More talk about the place of religious education in Bulgarian schools and fewer opportunities are found in practice through which to realize this idea. Numerous organizations and institutions globally are calling for the introduction of the subject Religion in schools, but everywhere it possible and strategic planning.<sup>19</sup> Very easy in this process is the opportunity to introduce and non-confessional religious education in order to prevent

conflicts between students of different faiths or varieties of the same religion.<sup>20</sup> Such training but faces resistance in the confessional oriented members of society, and especially of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.

### **3. The current legislation regulating religious education in contemporary Bulgarian School**

With the adoption of amendments to the Degree of education, general educational minimum and curriculum (DEGEMC) in 2002 (SG. 95 of 2002) and the introduction of Instruction № 2 / 23.06.2003 of training on subject "Religion" (SG. 60 of 2003) regulates the study of "Religion" in the form of elective (EPAs) and obligatory training (PIU).<sup>21</sup>

#### **3.1. Regulations underlying the religious education general education schools of the Republic of Bulgaria**

- Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria
- Law on Religions
- Education Act
- Implementing Regulations of the Education Act
- Act on pre-school and school education, effective 1.08.2016
- Ordinance on the curriculum (project MES)
- Law degree in Education, General Education Minimum and Curriculum
- Ordinance № 7 of December 29, 2000 to determine the number of classes and groups and the number of students and children in classes and groups of schools, kindergartens and servicing units
- Ordinance № 5 of 15.05.2003 for evaluation and approval of textbooks
- Decree № 3 of February 18, 2008 for standards of teaching and procedures for determining the number of personnel in the public education system
- Instruction № 2 / 23.06. 2003 to conduct training on subject "Religion"
- European Convention on human rights.

#### **3.2. Legal principles underlying the teaching of Religion in Bulgarian School<sup>22</sup>**

Religious education in Bulgarian schools observe international conventions ratified by Bulgaria, its constitutional and legal principles:

- Religious tolerance (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, Art. 26, § 2);
- Freedom of religion and conscience (the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, Art. 18);
- The child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Convention on the Rights of the Child, art. 14, para. 1);
- Freedom of conscience and choice of religion (Constitution, Art. 37; Act religion, Art. 4);
- Equality of denominations (Constitution, Art. 37; Act religion, Art. 4);
- Secularism and education (Constitution, Art. 13; Public Education Act, art. 5; Denominations Act, art. 4);
- Formation of tolerance and respect for religious identity of every citizen (Law on pre-school and school education, art. 5 para. 1, p. 8);
- Non-ideological and religious indoctrination of students (Law on pre-school and school education, art. 11, para. 2).

#### **4. Handicaps in teaching the subject Religion and organization of learning**

This whole set of laws and regulations is not anything to bring important organization of learning in religion. Conversely, he hamper its harmonious flow. They emerged many infirmities and defects in the organization of the learning process. As a result, and also the lack of success experienced in the last twenty years in Bulgaria, Ministry of Education and Science is not secured:

- 1) Concept of the teaching of the subject Religion;
- 2) Strategies for teaching the subject Religion;
- 3) State educational standards for teaching the subject Religion;
- 4) Adequate and new curriculum for Religion 1 to 12. class consistent with recent developments in mainstream schools;
- 5) New textbooks or textbooks on Religion for the entire course in comprehensive school.<sup>23</sup> Until eight years were available textbooks on Religion issued by the Ministry of Education and Science, only 1 class. According to prof. Klimentina Ivanova "Ministry previously washed his hands (more elegant than Pontius Pilate), having clearly stated - or non-denominational and pluralistic mandatory teaching of religion, or freedom (in the best case - required) elective subject, where the parents themselves to decide whether and how religion will choose for their children".<sup>24</sup> Holy Synod opposed the concept, presenting a project that focuses on the traditional side Orthodox Faith, from which it follows that he is strongly against the introduction of the subject "Religion" as a compulsory.<sup>25</sup>

#### **4.1. Getting handicap: Religion curricula developed and approved by the Ministry of Education**

The curriculum at which hitherto teach religion in general education schools in the country was made in 2000 years. Since it was time to make a new program, in 2018 the Ministry of Education and Science has again taken steps to develop a curriculum for religion. It was created a committee to develop a concept, curriculum and textbooks on the subject. This committee involved representatives of the Orthodox Church and the Muslim religion, educational and experts who had to come up with already established a new program. To everyone's surprise, however, in Religion program from 1. to 12. classes. The class turned out to be the same from 2000 with very minor modifications. This fact clearly suggests or inaction of all participants in this process, or deliberate unwillingness (possibly under pressure) that happen. I would like to think that this result is related to incompetence. This has provoked quiet anger and frustration of the teachers' guild in Bulgaria.

#### **4.2. Second handicap: the status and location of the subject Religion in the learning process in the Bulgarian School**

The "Instruction № 2 / 23.06.2003" the place of the subject Religion is determined according to the needs of students, the possibilities of the municipality and the school to provide qualified personnel and also depending on the possibilities of placing the subject in the school.<sup>26</sup> According to the "Law on pre-school and school education" learning object Religion is a priority primarily to religious schools to Bulgarian Orthodox Church.<sup>27</sup> This makes it clear that the priority of school and will not be subject Religion and learning. While particular attention to the location of the subject in the educational process, its place is diminished because the same law stipulates that the study of religion are enshrined in various subjects in historical, philosophical and cultural aspect. While mentioning that might be studied learning subject Religion, it does not is given proper place.<sup>28</sup> The "Ordinance on the curriculum (project)" also give space for the subject Religion that place again nesituirano adequate.<sup>29</sup> According to this Ordinance shall determine the number of hours in the subject Religion and their place in the curriculum of the class.<sup>30</sup> The subject Religion continues to be a different status than in other countries.<sup>31</sup>

According to those regulations, it appears that the subject Religious practice can be taught only in the range of 16.00 to 17.00. On school weekdays, or between 12:15 to 12:45, when students are at lunch. In most schools in Bulgaria operates full day form of education, which prevents learning Religion subject take place in another time, except that

This means that according to the regulations and all-day form of training in intervals specified for classes can not be held more than 10 hours a week Religion. These 10 hours a week Religion is impossible to be covered, for several reasons:

- *They are designed for 10 groups of students.* In most of the schools in the country these 10 groups serve primarily early stage. In schools with more than 4 or about 6 classes ten hours are sufficient only for 1 and 2 class.

- *This 10 hours is put in a competitive environment.* We must admit that this is the best case which releases real 10 hours for the subject Religion, but in practice in a school are enshrined in several circle, elective subjects and clubs, and students must choose from among several. Thus, a group of students is placed in a position to attend simultaneously to two hours or more, which is impossible.

- *Travelers students.* The other problem with the positioning of the subject Religion in the said time limit applies to traveling students. In many cities in the country a large part of the capacity of the school is the pupils who are transported from the villages and that after 15.45. Now go back to their homes.

#### **4.3. Third handicap: the lack of qualified faculty**

Since 1990 he specialized higher theological schools - Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of" Sv. St. Cyril and Methodius "held retraining of primary school teachers in teacher Religion. Hundreds of primary school teachers have gained qualifications to teach the subject Religion since then, but in very few schools actually realized. Another issue is the real high-quality training to those teachers who have gained their diplomas in some cases for about a month. In some places in Bulgaria Metropolis also organized retraining courses with equally uncertain status and duration of training.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, dozens of qualified scholars with educational qualifications were left without a job opportunity. The reasons are many:

- Directors of schools in the country rarely rely on qualified theologian account his lack of prior experience, and also the moderation of his religious beliefs and understanding of the Orthodox religion and its application among students;

- Higher theological schools in the country have good personnel training in the 'professional qualification teacher Religion "and this is no secret to anyone."<sup>33</sup>

#### **4.4. Poor remuneration policy of religious classes**

It is no secret that a large percentage of qualified theologians do not want to teach the subject Religion or unable to do so because of lack of adequate fiscal policy on the part of their pay. In the "Instruction № 2 / 23.06.2003" Section IV "Financing and control" reads as follows: Art. 16. Funding for teaching the subject "Religion" is provided in accordance with Art. 41 of the Education Act, art. 159, para. 1 of the Implementing Regulations of the Public Education Act and § 1 of the level of education, general educational minimum and curriculum. For more than 20 years religious classes are paid on the retainer within 5.00 at 7.00 leva per hour (this equates to \$3- \$6). This is established statutory charge. When classes are once a week, the teacher is forced to receive for their work between 20.00 and 28.00 leva monthly fee (this equates to \$12 - \$24). This mockery of labor, qualifications and authority of the teacher of Religion discourages many quality teachers to engage in teaching the subject. Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church does not fund the teaching of Religion, and according to established rules and regulations is paid by the school.

## **II. Innovative educational models for teaching and training in the religion in Kyustendil Municipality**

For more than 20 years in Bulgaria are made unsuccessful and partially successful attempt to introduce the subject Religion in Bulgarian mainstream schools. With this question are mainly engaged Bulgarian Orthodox Church and associations<sup>34</sup> and local organizations. In some regions of the country also take initiatives in order to meet the needs of society and the requirements of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church to introduce the subject Religion in mainstream school. Adequate Christian education, consistent with modern European education system and the needs of society is lacking. And today we have no answer why no strategy for teaching the subject Religion in Bulgarian school, built by the Ministry of Education and Science and comply with the requirements of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church.<sup>35</sup> For inaction and inadequate efforts spoke lack of unity in the political and ecclesiastical structures of the country. This question should not be separated from the issue of the development of Bulgarian education in general. Here, too, we can find a number of problems and proposals for inadequate solutions.

Over the past nine years, however, a municipality in Bulgaria spoke very seriously about the place of religious education in Bulgarian School and adopted this as a mission and a cross. This is the Municipality of Kyustendil. It is a municipality that is an example of cooperation between representatives of the church, municipal and state institutions. This part of the article will try to describe presented a successful model of interaction in the municipality of Kyustendil and transfer of best practices and results from the teaching of the subject Religion.

The presentation of innovative educational model of Kyustendil Municipality is revealed in the following components:

**Study Duration:** Tracking the entire organization in the learning process in the municipality of Kyustendil ran from December 2010 till December 2018.

**Sample size:** The observation was carried out on seven schools and 11 kindergartens in the city of Kyustendil, village Slokoshtitsa and village Piperkov homestead. The number of children approximately every year is ok. 1200.

**Sample size calculation:** According to preliminary calculations, the number of children who want to study the subject Religion in the city. Kyustendil is increasing every year by at least 20%, but the possibilities of this happening in practice are minimal (ok. 5 %).

**Subjects & selection method:** tracking study used observation and introspection, evaluation, analysis and synthesis, Case study research and other methods.

Kyustendil Municipality is the first municipality in Bulgaria to create a general educational model of teaching and training in the Religion in the municipality. This model is built on cooperation between church, state and municipal institutions

As a result of diligent and systematic performances planned model it is multiplied in several municipalities in Bulgaria. As noted by M. Legkostup, this model "can be successfully replicated and adapted to the different conditions in the country".<sup>36</sup> In practice, this happens in the last five years.

### **1. Municipality of Kyustendil, interaction, experience and perspectives between religious education and local municipal authorities. How it all began?**

In 2010 the Mayor of Kyustendil Mr. Petar Paunov invites me by His Eminence Metropolitan of Varna and Veliki John, then as a vicar bishop of the Metropolitan Sofia and Bulgarian Patriarch Maxim. The invitation is expressed in a request to launch a religious education in the municipality of Kyustendil. Then my modest experience in teaching Religion was four years 77 kindergarten "Magnolia".<sup>37</sup> At the invitation of Mr. Petar Paunov I went to town. Kyustendil. After meeting with the head of the "Education and Science" Mrs. Ekaterina Paskaleva and with the assistance of the Deputy Mayor of Kyustendil Mr. Victor Yanev, we started

targeted action to build a home base for the introduction of the subject Religion throughout the city. After meetings with all directors of schools and kindergartens, as well as parents of children in 2010 started teaching Religion in nine kindergartens and three schools willing to introduce the subject for the first time. Read successful year and next year already all kindergartens and three schools introducing the subject Religion. In this model for eight years gradually entering the subject Religion in the upper classes and today is taught in all kindergartens and all schools from 1. class to 7. class in the city of Kyustendil and in neighboring villages. In the junior school stage groups are mixed. For the successful conduct of hours working seven teachers Religion.<sup>38</sup>

So far cooperation between educational institutions in the city and regional management of education at the Ministry of Education and Science continues successfully. Municipal government is currently in the person of Mr. Petar Paunov, Mr. Svetoslav Vassilev (Deputy Mayor for humanitarian action) and Mrs. Nelly Petkova (head of the "Education and Science") is intentionally working to establish the necessary organization in the subject Religion, as fully until all training is funded directly by the municipality.<sup>39</sup> Kyustendil Municipality fully fund the payment of seven teachers of religion.

## **2. Innovative model for teaching the subject Religion in the municipality of Kyustendil**

Kyustendil Municipality build interactive methodical system for teaching Religion in mainstream schools and kindergartens - something that was first done in the history of religious education in the country. First, this methodology was probated in the early years of teaching the subject mainly in kindergartens. Subsequently expand into schools. The practical dimension of this methodology is revealed in teaching aids and use of interactive flashcards for kindergarten.<sup>40</sup>

### **2.1. Status of the subject Religion in the municipality of Kyustendil**

The status of the subject Religion in the town of Kyustendil is heterogeneous. In a small part of the city schools the subject is studied as EPA and optional courses, according to relevant regulations.<sup>41</sup> In the majority of schools subject is taught as a circle or club, depending on the capabilities of the curriculum<sup>42</sup> in the school. For a second consecutive year the subject is taught in all schools and kindergartens for two hours a week and are taught by qualified teachers of Religion.

Experience so far shows that where Religion is taught as an optional subject or discipline an optional set of children and placing the curriculum is challenging. Legally settled this matter does not create major prerequisites for positioning the subject Religion in a well organized environment. On the contrary, the presence of more than three or four similar objects placed items in a competitive environment in which pupils have to choose two among all. This creates prerequisites for unbalanced selecting items Religion who otherwise favored by students, but for the most part they can not visit it.

Another major problem occurred in traveling children from villages that due to the settlement of transport leave from school late in the afternoon and unable to always go perfectly classes in Religion. In schools where the learning object Religion is enshrined as a club or circle, he taught in a more free form and with the opportunity for greater attendance by students.

In the period 2013 - 2016 subject Religion was visited an average of 1000-1200 children and students from the city. Over the next two years 2017 and 2018 the subject was met with approval and high public attitude on the part of parents and principals.

New legal regulations related to the change in the curriculum, though not always in a favorable position in relation to the overall organization of the subject. Notwithstanding that fact, the number of children studying Religion is not reduced drastically. On the contrary, in these years there has been increasing interest of new children to the study of religion. During the years 2016 - 2017 are invading more active in lower secondary.<sup>43</sup>

### **2.2. Assessment and self-assessment**

At the end of each school year to make questionnaires among students to follow their opinions and attitudes in relation to the past year that have studied the subject Religion. Based on these questionnaires provides a comprehensive summary associated with Religious education.

### **2.3. Continuity and consistency in implementation of religious education from kindergarten to 7. class**

The subject Religion is taught constructive and creative children from kindergarten to 7. class already in comprehensive school in all schools and kindergartens in the town of Kyustendil. The idea of the sequence of this model belongs to Mr. Victor Yanev (Deputy Mayor of Kyustendil, currently governor of Kyustendil). In this way, students have the opportunity to know each successively more important substantive aspects of methodical content of the object in its upgrade function.

### **3. Project "Religion - Kyustendil" - an innovative model of Religious education in national administration**

The construction of the project "Religion- Kyustendil" performed at the initiative of Mr. Petar Paunov - Mayor of Kyustendil. It started in 2015. The aim of the project was to build a comprehensive strategy for the teaching of religion. It includes several components: writing a concept for the teaching of Religion in the Bulgarian school, compilation and publication of textbooks on Religion for children from kindergarten and students from 1 to 12. class books for teachers and methodological manuals for teachers Religion.

*Scientific and technical team to the project "Religion - Kyustendil."* Kyustendil Municipality build a team of professors and teachers of Religion,<sup>44</sup> through which they were developed teaching aids and methodological manuals for teachers from kindergarten to 5. class in the subject.

- In the author team that prepared the theoretical framework of methodological developments for educational units from kindergarten, 1 to 4 includes the following experts: Prof.d.teol.n. Dimitar Kirov, Ch. Assist. Dr. Ivelina Nikolova, ch. Assist. Dr. Paul Priest Subev, Priest Tihomir Iossifov, nun Valentina Drumeva, Boris Marinov Kalinka Peicheva, Ivona Tacheva Dr Anna Marinova, Mariana Ekklesia;
- Authors of methodical development of the educational content of books for teachers from kindergarten, 1. to 4. Classes. Dimitar Kirov and Ivelina Nikolova;
- Project and composition of methodological units of lessons from kindergarten, 1. to 4. classes Assoc. Prof. R. Neminska and Ch. Assist. Dr. Ivelina Nikolova;
- Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Claudia Sapundjieva;
- Education editor and consultant: prof. D.Sc. Siyka Chavdarova-Kostova
- Consultants: Assoc. Prof. Dr.Kostadin Nushev, Alexandra Milanova
- Leading editors: Prof. D.Sc. Tsvetana Petrova Veneta Dyakova
- Consultants Methodology of Teaching Religion: Assoc. Prof. Magdalena Legkostup, Valentina Kojuharova
- Consultants on Religious Education: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rumiana Neminska and Ch. Assist. Dr. Ivelina Nikolova, Evgeniya Komarova-Kaziola
- Consultants church catechism: Alexandra I. Milanova, Svetlozara Garbeva
- Consultant Christian art: Assoc. Prof. Ivan Rashkov Krustanov
- Collective artists: Mladenka Landjev, Dobromira Mitrovska, Adrian Krastev;
- Graphic-designer: Iveta Pelova, Galya Petrova, Mikhail Tanev, Ivelina Nikolova
- Prepress: Galya Petrova, Spaska Shopov, Ivelina Nikolova
- Correction: Ana Grgiorova

#### **3.1. Concept for teaching the subject Religion in Bulgarian School**

The concept of Religious education is something that in the last twenty years has not been done in our country. Although talk about the present concept of teaching Religion, composed by the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, in practice it can not be called a concept in the strict sense because descriptive recreates the main units of the requirements of the Synod for teaching Religion. Throughout the country have developed other concepts for teaching religion that does not fared with authority.<sup>45</sup> Author of the concept of teaching the subject Religion in the Municipality of Kyustendil, Professor. d.teol.n. Dimitar Kirov.

#### **3.2. Religion curriculum for kindergarten from 1 to 12. classes**

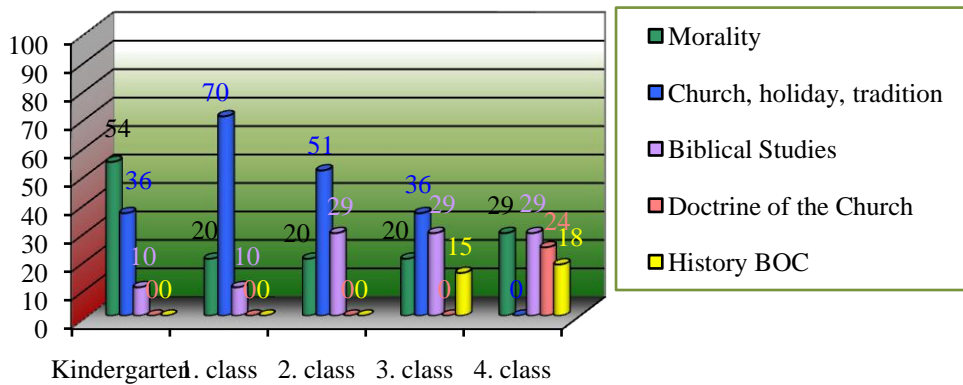
Religion curriculum to project "Religion - Kyustendil" is prepared by Prof. d.teol.n. Dimitar Kirov and Dr. Ivelina Nikolova, for the purposes of religious education in the Municipality of Kyustendil.<sup>46</sup>The program is made according to:

- the requirements of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, Bulgarian Patriarchate;
- The requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science;
- innovations in curricula in modern educational system in Bulgarian schools;
- interdisciplinary links with other humanitarian items similar in content to the subject Religion;
- systematic arrangement of individual shares in Bulgarian Orthodox theology;
- tradition of Bulgarian Orthodox theology;
- age of the children and students in appropriate classes;

At each stage has set specific thematic streams that unfold according to the previous and next stage.

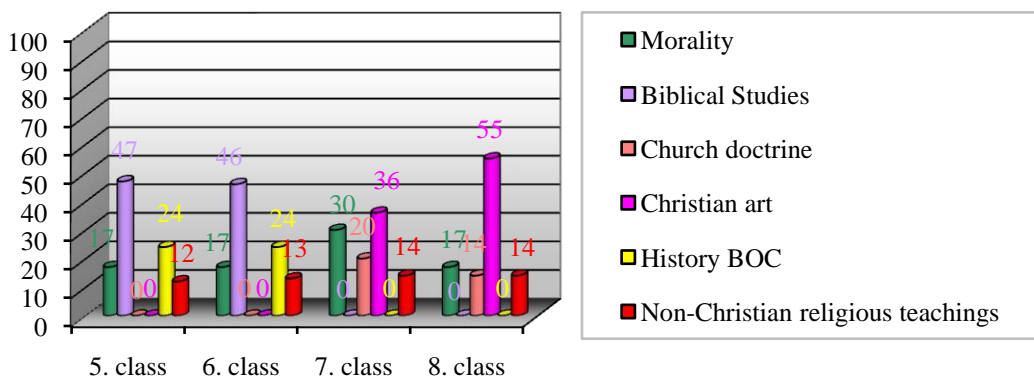
The main directions in preschool and elementary stage of education (Morality, Church holidays and tradition, biblical studies and history BOC) pass through each class. The above chart reflects the guidelines of the concept of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, according to which the country needs "to introduce the subject of religious and moral relevance. The nature of the object to be culturological, historical, cultural, moral and traditional obryadov".

**Figure 1.** Correlation between the thematic streams (Morality; Church, holidays and tradition; Biblical studies; Doctrine of the Church; History BOC) in the program Religion for pre-school and primary stage



Direction "History of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church" (15% - 18%) starting from 4 class and continues in lower secondary. The first three lines stretch into five classes, in agreement with the main direction, the meaning of sections and general line of concept. Direction "Church Holidays and Traditions" (36% - 70%) occupies most of the program, followed by directions "Morality" (20% - 54%) and "Biblical Studies" (10% - 29%).

**Figure 2.** Relationship between thematic areas (Morality, Biblical Studies; Doctrine of the Church, Christian art and culture history BOC) in Religion program for lower secondary

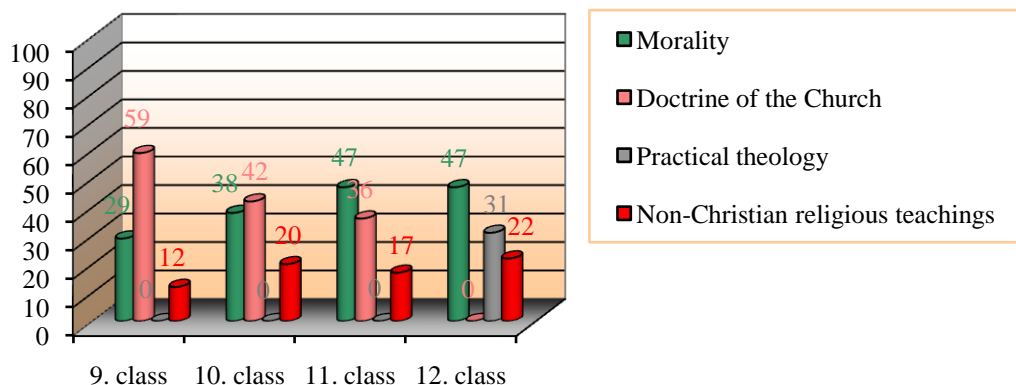


Mainstream "History, Spirituality and Culture" (lower secondary) harmonizes with the set direction by the Holy Synod to teach the subject Religion: "At secondary level content should reflect the historical, cultural and moral facts from the life of Bulgarians transmitted through the eyes of Orthodox worldview directly interdisciplinary relationship with other general subjects". Accordingly moral issues take their place (17% - 30%). The primary form of orthodox theology starts from 7. class (20%) and 8. class (14%), and the real part of church teaching will be presented in the secondary stage. In the direction "biblical studies" (c. 46%) are contained in the characteristic themes of the OT and the NT history. Starting with the creation of the world and man and reaches the reign of Solomon. New Testament themes are connected with the life of Jesus Christ with deliberate references to His moral teaching.

The location of the lessons of History of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church in 5. and 6. classes is consistent with the location of historical themes in mainstream school. This corresponds to the project of the Holy Synod topics Religion to be "in direct relation to other interdisciplinary general subjects." In 7. class and 8. class students are introduced more widely in Christian art, culture and spirituality. This share is the most compact (36% - 55%) and contains specific topics in the field not only of Christianity, art and culture, but also of church architecture, early Christian literature and Old Bulgarian literature. Topics for non-Christian religions present in the four classes of this stage and occupy ok. 14%. Named main sections and their associated topics are imbued with the traditions of the Orthodox Church.



**Figure 3.** Relationship between thematic areas (Morality; Doctrine of the Church; Practical Theology; non-Christian religious teachings) in Religion program for high school



In high school principal place is given to the Orthodox religion, morality and church practice. The thematic flow coincides with the main direction in the four classes. This cycle contains basic ideas underlying the concept of the Holy Synod: "At the top level of education curriculum content items include moral principles and norms of Christian doctrine, the Christian understanding of man and his personal and public use, cultural and historical achievements of Christian civilization and the historical road of the Christian Church since its establishment until today, and the history of world religions". Accordingly requirement moral issues form 29% and 47% and include the following directions: Christian anthropology, aretologiya, social morality, Christian spirituality and bioethics. In high school dogmatic teaching of the Church is most pronounced (36% - 59%); it covers the essentials of the doctrine of God, Jesus Christ, for the salvation and the Church. The topics in the field of practical theology are placed in 12 class in two parts: Orthodox liturgy and church music (31%), after learning the basic subjects systematically by the students. For better orientation of students in this stage directing their attention to the differences between the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant denominations and the Orthodox Church. This last part of the curriculum comprises 12% to 22%.

### 3.3. Teaching literature on the subject Religion

Complete coverage of the learning process on Religion in Kyustendil Municipality is done by the municipality through the assistance of Mr. Petar Paunov - Mayor of Kyustendil. On his initiative project "Religion - Kyustendil" and began writing and publishing textbooks and methodological manuals Religion from kindergarten to 12. class. So far they issued complete sets of textbooks and methodological manuals from kindergarten to class 6, which numbered 15 book blocks and 222 interactive flashcards. So far issued more than 14,000 textbooks and methodological manuals and have found application in various municipalities and dioceses in the country.

#### 3.3.1. Textbooks in Religion from 1.class to 6. class

Since the beginning of 2015 started preparation for writing and publishing textbooks on Religion firstly for the initial stage. Another end of the year were issued textbooks for 1. to 4. classes. Authors of teaching aids: Prof.d.tel.n. Dimitar Kirov and Ch. Assist. Dr. Ivelina Nikolova.

Teaching aids written according curriculum Religion of Kyustendil Municipality and are deployed in innovative and meaningful design style. Efforts have gone through the approval of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and expert assessment of the relevant deputy ministers and experts at the Ministry of Education and Science.

*Structure and content of course units: In the compilation of the course units used interactive approach.* Made with great color and exquisite design. The structure of each teaching aids from 1 to 4. class is binary: basic content, which includes the development content of all course units and additional content (practical tasks) which in the form of interesting practical tasks students supplement and practically mastered the studied material. Each handbook ends with a diploma for the achievements of students during the school year, teacher Religion completed at the end of the year.

*The deployment of learning content is done in the following way:* by having the course units for new knowledge, methodical units to consolidate the knowledge to summarize the knowledge to work independently to assess student performance and to contain a methodical unit. The main sections of teaching aids include 5 to 9 topics, each topic is provided first class, but it could fit and 2 hours. For students from town. Kyustendil helps

get away free. Teaching aids are age children with the requirements of the Ministry of Education and Science of content and layout.

*Teaching aids for lower secondary* - 5. and 6. class with author prof.d.teol.n. Dimitar Kirov and are structured according to age group and their thematic links with other related general subjects. Teaching aids to add "Reader in Religion" and "Symphony in religion".

### **3.3.2. Methodological guidelines for teacher Religion from 1. class to 6. class**

Methodological guidelines for teacher Religion with this status and method of deployment shall be issued for the first time in Bulgaria. Authors of manuals are Prof. d.teol.n. Dimitar Kirov and Ch. Assist. Dr. Ivelina Nikolova.

In terms of content guides are competitive so far issued methodological guides for relatives humanities at the initial stage. They have the following structure: Part One. Strategy teaching religion which contains: I. Characterization of religious education; II. Content on Religion; III. Training documentation on Religion. Part Two. Methodical development of curricula in religion. Part Three. Common thematic framework of lessons on religion; Tests for group work to the lessons of the curriculum; Reference apparatus; Appendix Index (names of saints and feasts dictionary) application log teacher; Used and recommended literature.

## **4. Children's educational literature**

The availability of child Orthodox educational literature in Bulgaria is weak. Some dioceses issued bulletins and children's magazines,<sup>47</sup> But that is not strictly methodological character. The content of the majority of child Orthodox literature is translation (from Greek, Russian, Romanian and Serbian editions) or with a strong spiritual and moral character. This and other reasons motivated me to do two projects supported and funded entirely by the Municipality of Kyustendil: magazine Orthodox hobby "Little Sunflower" and a CD with Orthodox primer copyright Bulgarian folk songs with Orthodox religious content with the title "In the Orthodox faith to abide".

### **4.1. Journal for Orthodox hobby "Little Sunflower"**

*Journal "Little Sunflower" is issued for the fourth consecutive year with the blessing* of His Holiness Bulgarian Patriarch and Sofia Metropolitan Neophyte. The journal is issued and spiritual support and assistance to Ruen Monastery "St. Ivan Rilski" in the face of his abbot - priest John Peshev.

*The age group of consumers of the magazine is from 4 to 15 years.* The majority of the sections of the magazine are made by the children themselves.

*Authors:* editor of the magazine is Ivelina Nikolova and editors and consultants - Magdalena Marinova (Legkostup) - consultant Methodist, Desislava Kancheva, Kostadin Bojchin, Ljubljana Natcheva, Christina Petrova, Kalinka Peicheva, Reni Petrova and Daniela Petrova - teachers. Theological version is specified by the monk John Peshev and prof. Dimitar Kirov.

*The aim of the journal "Little Sunflower" is to draw the eyes of children to the main themes and highlights of Orthodox spirituality and culture, deployed in parallel with Bulgarian folk tradition and culture.*

*Methodological approach:* individual details in the magazine are methodologically controlled by interesting interactive approaches. Thus transmitted to children important Orthodox truths and knowledge of Bulgarian folk festivals and traditions.

*Frequency of publication:* journal is published twice a year - for the Holidays "Christmas" and "Easter". Distribution: the journal is intended primarily for children from the town of Kyustendil, though spreads already within the country. The other main user of the journal are the temples and Sofia Holy Metropolis. So far issued more than 8000 copies of the journal in the country.

### **4.2. CD copyright Bulgarian folk songs with Orthodox religious content and Orthodox Primer them "In the Orthodox faith to abide"**

The CD contains 26 original Bulgarian folk songs with Orthodox religious content related to Christian holidays, lives of saints and moral lessons. Each festive song is complemented with the corresponding antiphon.

Music and Lyrics of the songs: Tsvetelina Veleva; Arrangement: Jordan Vladev; implementation of troparia: butler Kiril Popov, Kalin Kirilov, priest Ivan Petrov; performance of songs: butler Kiril Popov, Kalin Kirilov candle. Ivan Petrov, Tsvetelina Veleva, Teodora Nikolova.

*Application of Bulgarian folk songs with Orthodox religious content:*

- In religious education. They can be substituted for the main course units, but can be used for additional samples and an adjuvant.
- In drama and other artistic performances for children.
- In workshops and informal learning process.

• Outside the education sector, they can be listened to just like any other songs.

*Practical application of the songs*, listening and playback; in theatrical and other circles; performances; Religious education.

*Practical realization of the concept* in the context of direct its engagement with the methodology of the teaching of Religion set in the strategy for teaching Religion, c. Kiustendil (preschool - initial stage).

• The songs could be a segment of the consolidation of lessons or teaching in two hours, the second hour is dedicated to the review and consolidation of the main ideas of the previous hour.

• Combining the basic core of music education with basic cores in teaching Religion (proposed strategy for teaching Religion)

*Basic cores in music education*: perception; reproduction; music and game; elements of musical expression.

*Main cores in teaching Religion*: Church; Bulgarian folk tradition; Christian holidays. The relationship between church and folk tradition revealed in the "Church tradition holidays" (preschool - early stage).

Set "in the Orthodox faith to abide" was released with a circulation of 1000 copies.

## **5. Implementation of the model of Kyustendil Municipality in other Municipalities in Republic of Bulgaria**

The experience developed in the municipality of Kyustendil proved useful for other municipalities. At present model of teaching and learning in the municipality of Kyustendil, and the use of teaching aids and methodological guidelines issued by the Municipality of Kyustendil, applies in the following Municipalities: Petrich municipality; Blagoevgrad Municipality; Vidin Municipality; Radomir municipality; Lovech Municipality; Plovdiv Municipality, as in many towns and villages in the country.

### **III. Conclusion**

In summary, we here in the first place the favorable conditions for work and the teaching of religion in terms of the "Religion - Kyustendil" created by the Mayor of Kyustendil Mr. Petar Paunov and his team. Numerous shortcomings teaching of religion at the state level have been overcome, while others - compensated in full co-operation between municipal authorities and local teaching structure.

Similarly, created favorable conditions for work and in the community associated with the project "Religion - Kyustendil".

Almost ten years of hard work in the town. Kyustendil and the whole team, which has become a question in the upper pages managed to do several things if you need to speak in the first person plural, would count as immodest. Therefore we adduce assessment Assoc. Prof. Magdalena Legkostup - a longtime teacher, a professor of Christian Education and is currently a member of the Expert Council on Religion MES. In his study "Innovative Model to support religious education in the Municipality of Kyustendil" Assoc. Prof. M. Legkostup summarizes whereby thanks to long-standing practice of teaching and learning in the municipality of Kyustendil, create:

• sustainable model of interaction between municipal government and educational institutions regarding the teaching of religion;

• real access to appropriate learning solution for those wishing to study religion;

• continuity and consistency by creating a permanent group in the study of religion from kindergarten through the initial stage of school education up to high school.

On this basis, there are positive results among students of Religion children and adolescents who:

• receive religious culture and education;

• acquainted with Christian morals and values, which they recognize as positive and constructive life;

• reduce the negative effects and manifestations of stress and aggression by teaching classes in religion good examples and models. Religious education in the municipality of Kyustendil proves the ability and the positives:

(1) to teach in accordance with the criteria and the quality of general education;

(2) to be socially important and contributes to the wide range of secular education;

(3) to be engaged with the formation of the peace and tolerance;

(4) should be based on children's right to religion and religious education, which puts the child at the center of learning;

(5) teachers are specialists.<sup>48</sup>

Thanks to their cooperation and support in the municipality establish a recognized and appreciated model of teaching and learning Religion in Bulgaria by the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, the Ministry of Education and Science of Municipalities and several Dioceses in the country.

For more than twenty years we expect from the Bulgarian state and the Church to build a similar model for teaching and learning Religion in Bulgaria. Deserve it our children.

<sup>1</sup> Schweitzer, F. Let the Captives Speak for Themselves! More dialogue between religious education in England and Germany // British Journal of Religious Education, 28:2, 2006; Grimmit, Michael. When is Commitment a Problem in Religious Education? // British Journal of Religious Studies, 1981, V. 29 (1), p. 42–53; Richardson, N. Religious Diversity and Education in Europe. // British Journal of Religious Education Vol. 32, No. 3, 2010 (Legkostup, Magdalena Marinova. Innovative model for support of religious education in Kyustendil Municipality. In: Edu&Tech Education and Technologies, 8, 2017, p. 86).

<sup>2</sup> Hardly attempts to equalize the status of the subject Religion to that in developed European countries will succeed. It is known that in six European countries religious education enjoys the status of a compulsory subject without voting alternative. These countries are Austria, Greece, Ireland, Cyprus, Romania, Ireland. In eight other countries in Europe, religious education is practiced as required, but with the right to alternative object - such as Ethics, Morality and others. This is in the following countries: Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Serbia, Finland and Montenegro. Kozhuharov, C. (2009). Religious education in the European school system today. Veliko Tarnovo: Vesta, p. 184. See More Yordanova, Galia. Training in religion in school - mission (im)possible. In: 12th international balkan education and science congress – 2017, p. 463.

<sup>3</sup> In developed European countries has always been present morality and religion in the curriculum of students. Religious education is compulsory in all European countries until the mid-twentieth century. After the 50s and 60s the object accept slightly different contents - training not only in traditional religion a country, but also the history of religions and religious teachings. While in the 90s of the twentieth century appear parareligiozni groups with simple beliefs, it is now showing signs of a broad religious syncretism within which Christianity occupies a marginal position. more see Yordanova, Galia. Training in religion in school - mission (im)possible, p. 462.

<sup>4</sup> The article is published in the "Christian and cultural heritage of Northwestern Bulgaria - Strategies for preserving and translating local identities" (KP-06-OPR 05/6).

<sup>5</sup> Radev, Plamen. Tradition and modernity in education (Glimpses of debate). University Publishing House "of Plovdiv", Plovdiv, 2018, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> <http://talkoven.onlinerechnik.com/duma/%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5>.

<sup>7</sup> Sapundjieva, Claudia. Religion, values and Bulgarian school.

<https://www.verouchenie.com/%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%8F%D1%82%D0%B0-%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5/>.

<sup>8</sup> Dimitrov, Hristo. Foundations and main lines in the development of the curriculum in religion. GBF, Volume 10, 1032-1933.

<sup>9</sup> See more Spirova, Polina. Three modern myth of religious education.

[https://dveri.bg/component/com\\_content/Itemid,105/catid,71/id,12086/view,article/#\\_ftnref4](https://dveri.bg/component/com_content/Itemid,105/catid,71/id,12086/view,article/#_ftnref4)

<sup>10</sup> For the academic year 1945-46, the Bulgarian Church managed to organize over 1,300 Sunday schools throughout the country. The largest number of schools are found in Plovdiv diocese - 321 (available in 442 parishes), and the many difficulties in the regions diocese, which employs only 35 schools. See more Kalkandjieva D. Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the state, the 1944-1953 Sofia, 1997, p. 78, 79.

<sup>11</sup> Dimitrov, Hr. Op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Sapundjieva, Claudia. Religion, values and Bulgarian school.

<sup>13</sup> Evstatiev S. Religion in Bulgarian schools. In the magazine Strategies of educational and scientific policy, vol. 2 2007, 137.

<sup>14</sup> Nushev K. debate on introducing religion in Bulgarian schools. - Strategies of educational and scientific policy, vol. 2, 2007, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup> See more Yordanova, Galia. Training in religion in school - mission (im)possible, p. 467, 468.

<sup>16</sup> Kozhuharov, V. (2009). Religious education in the European school system today. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Kirov, D. (1996). The meaning of religious and moral education in the Bulgarian school. Q: magazine "Renaissance" issue 5, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> The "Instruction № 2 / 23.06.2003" reads the following: Art. 7. (amend. - SG. 106 of 2014) student to 14 years requested the study of the subject "Religion" with a statement signed by his parent or guardian, and from 14 to 18 years old - with application signed by him and by his parent (or guardian). The application shall be submitted to the school director in a period decided by.

<sup>19</sup> For example, in 1999 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is preparing a recommendation entitled "Religion and democracy." In it for religious education states that: "Education is the main means of overcoming ignorance and stereotypes. It should as soon as possible to revise the curriculum in secondary and in higher education institutions so that they can contribute to a deeper understanding of different religions and religious education to be carried out so as not to be detrimental to learning religions that are one of the most important parts of the study of world culture, history and philosophy." More see Cohen, E. (2008). Teaching religion in terms of human rights and European practices. In Freedom for everyone. Religion and public education. Issue 15 - March 2008. <http://svobodazavseki.com/broj-15/46-religiya-v-darzhavnotouchilishte.html>.

<sup>20</sup> The main discussions in this area are related to the meaning and approach to the study of the subject Religion - as the new general subjects that give knowledge and culturally enriching students, ie Religion studies (for those who prefer nadkofensionalniya variant). The other question was related to the teaching subject Religion as confessional particular subject. In both cases, parents themselves must decide if and what religion to choose for their children. Thus the question, although seemingly be decided by Stalin - "no subject, no problem".

<sup>21</sup> See more Yordanova, G. Training in religion in school - mission (im)possible, p. 462.

<sup>22</sup> The principles are quoted from the draft curriculum Religion MES for non-confessional education.

<sup>23</sup> Last textbooks have Religion: Religion for 1. class. First steps in Orthodoxy (Authors: Ivan Zhelev, Emilia Milanova, Dimitar Korudzhiev Publishing text: Enlightenment, 2014, approved by Protocol № 32 / 03.08.2001; Religion 2. class. Orthodoxy, 2013 (Authors: Valeria Lavchev Vania Stancheva Violeta Rogacheva, Rosica Georgieva) Religion to 3. class. Orthodoxy, 2015 (authors: Vania Stancheva Violeta Rogacheva), approved by order № RD 09-902 / 07.06.2015 In order 4. class textbook Religion has not been published to date.

<sup>24</sup> Ivanova, Klimentina. Subject "Religion" in school? Mandatory. In: E-magazine "Politics" issue. 3,

2008. <https://dobrotoliubie.com/2016/04/20/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%82-%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%8F-%D0%B2-%D1%83%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%89%D0%B5-%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B4%D1%8A%D0%BB%D0%B6%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5/>

<sup>25</sup> Negative was the attitude of the authorized persons of the Muslim community, and representatives of the parents. Result: mandatory will be. Parents can choose whether their child to learn English, playing, painting, practicing a sport or studying Christianity, respectively - Islam. Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> In the "Instruction № 2 / 23.06.2003 years" in Part II "Organization of training" read as follows: Art. 3. Organization of teaching the subject "Religion" is performed in accordance with: 1. the desire of students; 2. The capacity of the municipality and the school to ensure qualified teachers.

<sup>27</sup> The "Law for pre-school and school education" Art. 48 (4) to read as follows: "Spiritual schools providing general education and specialized training in the relevant religion. Religious schools and provide professional training in professional field "Religion" or specialized training".

<sup>28</sup>The "Law for pre-school and school education" Art. 76 (4) states: "In the process of schooling religions are studied in historical, philosophical and cultural aspect through educational content on various subjects. Under the terms and conditions of this law in the process of school education can be studied and learning the subject Religion." In this draft curriculum MES learning object Religion can be studied in Section "B" - elective classes.

<sup>29</sup>Ordinance on the curriculum (project). In art. 10. (1) elective classes on the curriculum can be implemented: ... 9. studying religion.

<sup>30</sup>In the "Instruction № 2 / 23.06.2003 years" in Part II "Organization of training" we read: Art. 5. (amend. - State estnik, No. 106 of 2014): The weekly number of hours for studying the subject "Religion" for individual classes for both types of training - obligatory and / or elective, is determined in accordance with sections B and In the Annex to Art. 3, 4, Art. 5 para. 1 and 2, Art. 17, para. 1 and § 2 of the Decree № 6 of 2001 on the allocation of teaching time to reach the minimum general education classes, stages and levels of education (SG. 54 of 2001).

<sup>31</sup>The subject Religion is taught in almost all European countries (except France), as there are adjustments made in teaching according to the specifics of each country. For example - in countries such as Austria, Ireland - subject is compulsory religious base, allowing in some cases students can be exempted from studying it. In the second group of countries subject is compulsory but with possibility stead students to study alternative object (Finland, Spain, Portugal). Kogulis, J. (2004). The location of the subject "religion" in primary and secondary education in Greece. - In: Proceedings "International religious-educational symposium in Bulgaria: Religious education in the context of the common European home - materials". Sofia, p. 87.

<sup>32</sup>Such a course for retraining of primary and other teachers in the teachers Religion was held in the summer of 2008 in Plovdiv diocese. At the initiative and with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas of Plovdiv were held courses. "The purpose of the seminar is to enhance the qualifications of teachers - linguists and historians, to provide more knowledge of experts theologians of teachers who catechize children in Sunday school and need and lack of specialist theologians take and lead times EPA or PIU - religion, as well as additional time / workshop / by Orthodox faith in mainstream schools". See more Plovdiv world Diocese organized a course for teachers of religion. Source: Plovdiv24.bg. Last seen on December 31, 2018.

<sup>33</sup>Until recently in the Theological Faculty of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" workshops the students were led in Sofia Seminary, not in school, not allowing students to have an adequate idea of school learning process and after graduation they can work as teachers of Religion in such an environment.

<sup>34</sup>Foundation "Gifts" is a Bulgarian non-governmental organization established in 2006. The Foundation conducts public benefit. Under its initiative to organize seminars in conjunction with the motivation to learn the subject Religion in Bulgarian School. Similar seminars were made in Petrich, Lovech, Sofia and elsewhere in the country.

<sup>35</sup>The "Law for pre-school and school education, effective 1.08.2016, the" Art. 76. (1) reads: "In the process of school education can be studied under the teaching mother tongue". Paragraph (4) states: "In the process of schooling religions are studied in historical, philosophical and cultural aspect through educational content on various subjects. Under the terms and conditions of this law in the process of school education can be studied and learning the subject Religion".

<sup>36</sup>Legkostup, Magdalena Marinova. Innovative model for support of religious education in Kyustendil, p. 86.

<sup>37</sup>In 2010 77 Kindergarten "Magnolia" in Sofia became the base kindergarten teaching practice of students from the Faculty of Theology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". It is the first and only kindergarten, which for more than 20 years taught purposefully Religion, thanks to the diligence of the director of the kindergarten - Stefka Rabadjieva (educator and theologian).

<sup>38</sup>Kostadin Bojchin, Ljubljana Natcheva, Kalinka Peicheva, Daniela Petrova, Hristina Petrova, Ivelina Nikolova, Tsvetelina Veleva. Our team worked and Reni Petrova, Magdalena Legkostup and Desislava Kancheva.

<sup>39</sup>When funding is provided by the municipality, credibility status, content and securing the object is greater among the local community. Taking such steps is established the Municipal Council, taking into account the major financial units, which are important for strengthening the entire organization in the process of teaching religion. Municipal finance matters in connection with the support and confidence of the directors of the schools to the subject. Thus they are not directly involved in financing, which creates a good base in terms of sharing resources for additional timetables for teachers of religion.

<sup>40</sup>The kit for learning and teaching of Religion designed for kindergarten author prof. Dimitar Kirov Authors are enshrined production of 222 interactive flashcards, which are entertaining and engaging way represent the content of the course units of the situations.

<sup>41</sup>In the "Instruction № 2 / 23.06.2003 on conducting training on subject" Religion "in Section I" General "states the following: Art. 1. This instruction defines the terms and conditions for conducting training on the subject "Religion" in times of obligatory and optional training; Art. 2. Students from class I to XII have the right to study the subject "Religion" in times of obligatory and / or elective training.

<sup>42</sup>Ordinance on the curriculum ... (project MES), art. 10. (1) In the optional classes of the curriculum can be performed: 1. specialized training; 9. study of Religion.

<sup>43</sup>On average, about 60 groups of children in kindergartens study subject Religion and about 40 groups in schools. See more Ilchev, V. Teodora Nikolova, teacher: Interest in learning the subject "Religion" in Kyustendil is increasing every year. Radio "Focus" - Kyustendil. <http://www.focus-news.bg/opinion/2017/04/18/42627/ivelina-nikolova-prepodavatel-interesat-kam-izuchavaneto-na-predmetareligiya-v-kyustendil-se-uvlechava-vsyaka-godina. html> [18.04.2017].

<sup>44</sup>In the team that prepared teaching aids on Religion and methodological manuals attend university professors, teachers Religion, educators and professionals in the field of religious education in the country.

<sup>45</sup>At present concepts for teaching Religion thus far we can name: 1) Concept of the Holy Synod of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church for religious education; 2) Proektokontseptsiya training on the subject "religion" in a comprehensive school in Bulgaria; 3) The concept of introducing a school subject "Religion" in Bulgarian school (Council on teaching religion in school); 4) Training Program in Religion in pre-school education and training in the church, state, municipal and private kindergartens (Stavrou. Sc. Dr. H. Detchev); 5) The concept of training in the Religion in comprehensive school in Bulgaria.

<sup>46</sup>When designing the curriculum was taken by then acting curriculum Religion founded by MES program Orthodox education in the municipality of Lovech (Lovchanski St. Bishopric) Curriculum with educational and methodological materials on Religion - Orthodoxy prepared by the Plovdiv Bishopric world.

<sup>47</sup>Children's magazine "Chime" is published with the blessing of Varna and Great Preslav by John Parish in "St.. Athanasius "Varna. Distributed free of charge.

<sup>48</sup>Legkostup, Magdalena Marinova. Innovative model for support of religious education in Kyustendil Municipality, p. 90.