

An Analysis of the Constitutional Mandate of Religious Courses under the German Basic Law

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Abstract

As the German society becomes diversified and popularized, various religious issues and conflicts are generated. The conflicts are amplified after the unification between East Germany and West Germany for most East German are not Christians. The religious conflicts apparently are reflected upon the education law among individual states. It is the constitutional mandate that religious courses are required in schools. However, Land Brandenburg, a state of former East Germany, implements the constitutional mandate and replaces the original religious courses with the course entitled "Life, Ethics and Religions". Such a replacement provokes vehement criticisms from German legal and religious academia and the public opinions. In fact, religious courses taught at schools are a part of the process of religious learning in a modern and popularized nation of constitutionalism and the religious courses shall be designed and furnished with a view to facilitate religious tolerance. They are offered neither to promote Christianity, nor to enhance the development of the Christian Church. The religious courses are offered with a view to the religious self-fulfillment of people in a popularized society. Therefore, in modern and popularized nation of constitutionalism, religious courses are offered at schools in order to cultivate students with open and diversified religious tolerance as students will learn how to tolerate others with different religious beliefs. The religious courses will serve as a basis to establish an open, neutral and tolerated religious relationship, and enable students to develop and experience religious

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self-fulfillment. These goals shall be the consciousness of modern religious education.

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