



Trajectories of learning and knowledge in congregations (LETRA)

The project seeks to describe and critically analyze processes of learning and knowledge in congregations in the (Lutheran) Church of Norway. It simply asks: **What do participants and professionals in congregations learn, and how do they learn?**

Learning

Learning is understood in a wide sense, as relative stable changes in behavior, cognition, value-orientation and identity in individuals, groups and in relations between actors. Theories on learning and knowledge in the broad and developing socio-cultural tradition are central to this project. Using these perspectives in an analysis of learning processes in congregations will hopefully prove fruitful in producing new knowledge on what and how congregations learn, and how they develop knowledge. A number of questions are raised: How can the relationship between informal and formal learning be understood? What is the relationship between participation and learning? How does learning develop in different kind of relations in the congregation? Which are the tools and artifacts, and how do they mediate learning, knowledge and identity?

A vital aspect in the project is that learning is negotiated between participation in a number of social activities. This means that we want to analyze how the participants and professionals in congregations negotiate knowledge between different social practices, as for instance family, media, school, work and leisure activities. It is assumed that these negotiations form 'trajectories' of learning and knowledge.

Knowledge

Knowledge is here understood as Christian knowledge in a wide sense. Christian knowledge is understood as a language about God and the world. This does not imply intellectualist, academic or cognitivist reductions. Knowledge includes practical, evaluative and tacit, as well as theoretical and explicit, knowledge. The project seeks to describe and critically analyze how actors express and develop faith and their experience-based everyday theology. The role of academic theology will also be of interest: How do pastors and Christian educators negotiate between academic knowledge and practical knowledge? And: What part, if any, does academic theology play for the construction of everyday theology among groups of participants in congregations? Further: How do the actors negotiate their everyday theological knowledge in the situation of the general changing, evolving and fluid character of knowledge in late modern 'knowledge societies'?

Design

The project is designed as a case study of four congregations. In the congregations five groups are studied in detail: 6 years olds, confirmation participants, adult volunteers, pastors/Christian educators and diacons. This means that the project will study professional learning, as well as volunteers' and participants' learning. The congregations will be studied through a one year field work. The field work will consist of participatory observation, focus group and individual interview and participants' logs. A few professionals and participants will be selected for extensive 'shadowing', in order to follow their negotiations of Christian knowledge through participation in various social practices and activities.

The project involves six researchers for a four year period (2010-2014): Ingrid Reite, Morten Holmqvist and Marianne Rodriguez Nygård (PhD-students), Heid Leganger-Krogstad, Sverre Dag Mogstad and Geir Afdal (professors). It is financed by MF Norwegian School of Theology and by research grants from The Church of Norway.

Contact information

Researchers:

Prof. Geir Afdal (geir.afdal@mf.no)

Prof. Sverre Dag Mogstad (sverre.d.mogstad@mf.no, +4722590618)

Assoc.prof. Heid Leganger-Krogstad (heid.leganger-krogstad@mf.no, +4722590507)

PhD-student Ingrid Reite (ingrid.reite@mf.no, tlf. +4722590650)

PhD-student Morten Holmqvist (morten.holmqvist@mf.no, +4722590606)

PhD-student Marianne Rodriguez Nygård (marianne.r.nygard@mf.no)

Mailing address:

MF Norwegian School of Theology
P.O.Box. 5144, Majorstuen
N-0302 OSLO, NORWAY
