



Oderisia Knechtle (1900-1978): a pioneer for a holistic approach in religious education

Monika Jakobs

Sr. Oderisia Knechtle developed the symbolic approach to religious education while working with disadvantaged and disabled children in Germany from 1925 onwards. Her fame spread from the 1960s, after members of the Swiss Grenchener Kreis, who were engaged in the renewal of religious teaching, encouraged her to return to her home country Switzerland and dedicate her activities to courses for catechists and teachers. Didactically innovative and theologically conservative, and not part of the academic establishment she got little academic reception, not even through the revival of the symbolic approach in religious education since the 1980s which now has become part of the mainstream.

Keywords: Oderisia Knechtle, holistic approach, 20th century, Switzerland, symbol education, religious education.

Relationships and Activities: none.

Monika Jakobs — professor em. of religious education, the Faculty for catholic theology of Lucerne University, Lucerne, Switzerland. ORCID: 0000-0002-8776-3320.

Corresponding author: monika.jakobs@unilu.ch

Received: 03.05.2022

Revision Received: 21.05.2022

Accepted: 06.06.2022



For citation: Monika Jakobs. Oderisia Knechtle (1900-1978): a pioneer for a holistic approach in religious education. *Russian Journal of Church History*. 2022;3(2):137-147. doi:10.15829/2686-973X-2022-105. EDN TZXAOC

Одерисия Кнехтле (1900-1978): первооткрыватель холистического метода в религиозном образовании

Моника Якобс

Одерисия Кнехтле разработала символический подход к религиозному образованию, работая с детьми из неблагополучных семей и детьми-инвалидами в Германии с 1925 г. Ее слава распространилась с 1960-х гг., после того как члены швейцарской организации Grenchener Kreis, которые занимались обновлением религиозного обучения, призвали ее вернуться на родину, в Швейцарию, и посвятить свою деятельность курсам для катехизаторов и учителей. Ее дидактически новаторский и теологически консервативный подход к преподаванию не был принят академическим сообществом, но благодаря возрождению символического подхода в религиозном образовании с 1980-х гг., в современности стал частью мейнстрима.

Ключевые слова: Одерисия Кнехтле, холистический метод, XX век, Швейцария, символическое образование, религиозное образование.

Отношения и деятельность: не оказывает влияния на представленный материал.

Моника Якобс — профессор религиозного образования, факультет католического богословия Университета Люцерна, Люцерн, Швейцария. ORCID: 0000-0002-8776-3320.

Автор, ответственный за переписку (Corresponding author): monika.jakobs@unilu.ch

Рукопись получена 05.05.2022

Рецензия получена 21.05.2022

Принята к публикации 06.06.2022

Для цитирования: Моника Якобс. Одерисия Кнехтле (1900-1978): первооткрыватель холистического метода в религиозном образовании. *Russian Journal of Church History*. 2022;3(2):137-147. doi:10.15829/2686-973X-2022-105. EDN TZXAOC

Nowadays mainstream religious education and religious teaching have overcome the notion of mere instruction, of rendering religious knowledge along the lines of catechism and biblical stories, but try to create meaningful correlation between religious tradition and everyday life instead. But not only intellectually approaching religious issues, but also including all senses as well as creative work into the learning process, methods have become much more diverse. Namely practices of mindfulness and meditation have found their way into the teaching repertoire. Amongst these, one particular method, a stone meditation, can be found in varying forms in textbooks. Through this practice of in-depth attention to different aspects of the stone, children are supposed to sharpen their senses and increase awareness for the world around them as a precondition to access religious objects and issues, particularly to the understanding of symbols.

The source for the above method, which never is mentioned, can be found in Sr. Oderisia (Knechtle)¹, a Swiss nun who dedicated her life to religious teaching. She was born named Emilie in 1900 in Appenzell and died in 1978 [Jakobs 2019]. She grew up in rural Switzerland with her grandparents, who managed the local workhouse, so the girl got to know people from disadvantaged circumstances from an early age. Later, she attended middle school and teacher training run by the order *Ingenbohrer Schwestern*, and joined the order at the age of 18. This order is a typical example for the educational activities of the catholic church in Switzerland in the 19th century, when a comprehensive state school system with compulsory schooling started to be established [Imhasly 1998]. As this enterprise was slowed down not only by a shortage of money, but also by a shortage of teachers, the catholic church saw a chance in increasing their dwindling political and cultural influence by establishing teacher training institutions for women, which subsequently become proper orders. For these girls, mainly from rural communities and farming families, they became a very much missed opportunity to enjoy higher education which also offered option for a self-contained professional — though frugal lifestyle — outside a marrying.

¹ In this article I will use her order name "Sr. Oderisia". As a publicized author she appears as "Oderisia Knechtle", which is in a way artificial, because it is neither her civil name nor her order name.

Soon after Sr. Oderisia had started teaching in canton Fribourg, she suffered from neuritis, which was treated unsuccessfully and of which she never really managed to get rid of throughout her lifetime. Over and over again she experienced periods of inability to read. In 1925 she was sent to teach in an orphanage in Sigmaringen in Southern Germany. The mixture of pupils of various skill levels, neglected children from difficult family backgrounds, as well as normally gifted and normally raised children turned out to be quite a challenge for the young teacher. Nevertheless, she tried to find new ways of learning and, from the very beginning, developed a symbolic approach in her teaching. Through her unconventional and successful practice she achieved some publicity and other teachers came to watch her teaching, particularly for religious education. During 22 years she remained in Sigmaringen. She even managed to save some disabled children from the secret police during the war, a deed about which she didn't boast and which was only reported by people who knew her [Oser 2011:271].

After the war she was sent to "St. Josefsheim" in Herten/Germany, an institution for children with learning disabilities. Her fame as an exceptionally gifted teacher spread, and more visitors were eager to get inspiration from her. One particular group of visitors, five men, who made their way in the late 1950s from Grenchen, Kanton Solothurn, Switzerland, turned out to become life changers for Sr. Oderisia herself. These men, amongst them the young teacher Fritz Oser, who later became a world-famous educationalist through his research about human development and professor in Fribourg, the teacher trainer Theo Stieger as well as three theologians (Guiseppe Crivelli, Alois Müller, Anton Meinrad Meier) who also were involved in teaching [Stieger 1963]. They had formed a group "Grenchener Kreis für die Erneuerung des Religionsunterrichts", because they sought to reform religious teaching to become more accessible, vibrant and meaningful as well as theologically sound and abstaining from memorizing catechism. They set out for Herten without high hopes, at a point when they felt they were on the verge of giving up their efforts. But then the unexpected happened: the visitors were fascinated and Sr. Oderisia managed, as Theo Stieger put it later on, to melt five ice blocks² [Stieger 1963:886]. On the way back home to Switzerland they decided to deal more thoroughly with Sr. Oderisia's concept in the near future, and moreover to encourage her to share it with a wider circle of Christian teachers. The main obstacle to this was her teaching six days a week and the refusal of her superiors to exempt her from teaching. Requests for Sr. Oderisia to run courses, namely from Munich, were rejected with reference to her poor health. The five men supported her in moving back to Switzerland for good to enable her to dedicate her activities to courses for teachers as well as to encourage her to write.

From 1959 on she lived in Switzerland, for many years in the village of Flüeli-Ranft, Kanton Obwalden, a well-known place for pilgrims, where the "Swiss national saint", Nikolaus von der Flüe, "Bruder Klaus", had spent most of his life. She led hundreds of courses in Switzerland as well as abroad, often up to 30 a

² „Eigentlich war unsere Fahrt eine Flucht, denn wir kamen mit unserer gemeinsamen Arbeit nicht mehr weiter. [...] Unsere Gespräche waren müde, weil keiner so recht an einen Erfolg unseres Besuchs bei Sr. Oderisia glaubte. [...] [Es gelang ihr] fünf kaltstarrende Eisklötze [...] restlos aufzutauen.“ [Stieger 1963:886-887].

year with huge number of participants. The archives are full of enthusiastic thank-you letters. The manager of an institution for children in Luxemburg, a certain H. H. Espen wrote, that for 30 years he had studied catechesis, but only now learned that he had to change his concept entirely, because he was addressing the children on an incomprehensible level [Jakobs 2019:636].

Guiding the child through the liturgical year

In 1939 Sr. Oderisia published her first book “Mit dem Kind durchs Kirchenjahr” (Guiding the child through the liturgical year). She wanted to encourage faith as something that is rooted deeply in human perception and emotion and should not be implemented by fear of sanctions and threatening imagery. She was very aware that normal religious teaching in terms of didactical suitability was far behind other subjects. Moreover, it failed to create an understanding for liturgy, which to her opinion, was its main purpose; obviously at that time attending mass regularly was an unquestioned duty. Having said that, performing liturgy as well as praying to Sr. Oderisia were not just an imposed obligation but the essence of faith. So liturgy for her is an excellent means to gain access to faith as a whole. Also, she was convinced that children are very susceptible to rituals. The whole learning process has to consider not only the developmental stage of the learner but also the interests and the potential of the children.

To achieve her goal, methods of teaching could not be merely intellectual, but would have to be sensual as well, enabling true religious experience and authentic insight, so that faith itself could grow and become vital for each individual's life. This should happen through digging into the understanding of symbols. It is a path of deciphering religious signs and symbols and make their meaning accessible through methods of imagination, awareness and enabling true religious experience. However, there is also theological reason for the religious approach through symbols. In sacramental theology the invisible reality of the divine presence is represented by symbols. So, education through symbols requires an understanding that there is a reality behind the visible world, which can't be grasped through human senses.

The liturgical year makes up the structure of the book. Every single lesson aims to provide preparation and attunement for the following Sunday liturgy. Each lesson starts with an introduction, followed by the interpretation of the respective symbol as well as an explanatory text which can be used by the teacher in the classroom. One finds information about the method that is supposed to be applied. The words are supplemented by drawings of the artist Alfred Riedel, who applies coherent minimalist classical imagery for religious symbols. I.e. God the Father is always drawn as a eye in the middle of a triangle, the Son as monogram of Christ, the Holy Spirit as a dove. The drawings have less of an illustrative character but carry a meaning in their own right, which has to be unfolded in the process of learning. Riedel's style contrasts the prevailing religious kitsch of the time, which was full of naturalistic sweet Jesus babies, images of God as an old man with a white beard and meek looking virgin mothers. Indeed, as will be explained later, the abstraction of religious representation turned out to be a theological provocation for her critics. But Sr. Oderisia was convinced that

a traditional picture book with realistic imagery would spoil true understanding of faith. Nevertheless she manages to work with items tangible for children. When she presents Christ as king for Christ the King Sunday, she explains that His beauty is greater than we can imagine, so we are not able to paint an appropriate picture of Him. Our eyes, she continues, are too weak to see what He really looks like. The difference between picture and the pictured must be understood from the beginning.

The children are introduced to the specific language of symbols by sharpening the perception of their senses by looking at objects, talking about what they see and feel, and are encouraged to discover the less obvious. Preparation for Christ the King Sunday i.e. contains a sequence of symbols for each day of the week, such as the king's coat for Tuesday, the crown for Wednesday. Kindergarten children may create mini crowns for themselves which they wear during the prayer. So, they recreate and reenact the symbol. These items are not just jolly handicraft work, but help to understand the human participation in the royal dignity of God through baptism.

Deepening of faith through the symbol

The second book "Glaubensvertiefung durch das Symbol", published in 1963, unfolds symbol education in seven steps. The writing as well as the publishing was supported by members of the Grenchen circle, namely Fritz Oser and Anton M. Meier. As they were convinced that symbol education was a huge opportunity for the renewal of religious teaching, they encouraged Sr. Oderisia to write down her practice in a comprehensive and theoretically sound way, being aware that the systematical approach would be a demanding challenge for her. The appeal of her creative, intuitive and multisensual teaching at the same time limits the effort to pack it into a well-defined academic nomenclature and indeed, some of her writing might be misunderstood. In his foreword to the book, Fritz Oser points out that there are no limits to the creative religious thinking of Sr. Oderisia, but that she renounces any claim to absolute truth, because always individual experience and relationships in the particular situation have to be taken into account. In anticipating criticism, he points out that some of the thoughts may seem not logical in terms of theology, but try to do justice to the nature of individual experience, an experience, which is not just sentimentality but a way of secure knowledge of the presence of God.

The basic assumption of symbol education is that all earthly things are representing divine creation. The connection between tree and cross may serve as an example here. The wood, originating from a tree, forms the materiality of the cross, where Jesus suffered. The learning process starts with the tree, which is not just an object, but has to be approached in a way that creates a real experience. The objects used in that way are "Erlebnisthema" (life-experience topic). The first steps of contemplation of various aspects of the tree may lead to the opportunity for identifying with particular characteristics of the bespoke tree, and acting out to be like a tree. But the children realize that a certain material can be used ambivalently, i.e. when the wood is made into a cross, an instrument of pain. The crucial moment arrives, when the meaning of the body on the cross is unveiled. At this point careful and considerate use of language is key for the

understanding what an image is. The sentence “This is Our Savior on the cross”³ should be avoided and replaced by an expression that points out that the cross as well as the body you may find in a church, a classroom or a private home is just an image, a sign made of wood, a placeholder which reminds us of the unknowable divine.

The attitude towards the child

The love for each child, the ability to cherish their ideas and their imagination and to put oneself in their position form the basis for Sr. Oderisia's success with so called difficult children as well as for symbol education in general [Jakobs 2019:642-643]. Also, this attitude combined with the fact that her philanthropy was intertwined with a positive, joyful faith founded on the theology of good creation was one of the main reasons for the appeal to her visitors and to the participants of her courses.

Indisputably Sr. Oderisia's image of the child as such shows romantic traits: it is open towards the world, pure, unspoiled and natural. She considers them rooted, with the ability for amazement and delight, just like living in a paradise, still “owning” silence. Whenever she sees children scattered the reasons have to be sought in inadequate adult behavior they experienced. Children, to her opinion, are not only particularly receptive for religion, but their religious potential and their capabilities are particularly valuable also for mutual learning of children and adults.

It would be easy to accuse Sr. Oderisia of romanticism. However, it has to be taken into consideration that she gained her attitude through experiences which were not romantic at all, but through encountering those with behavioral problems, emotional shortcomings and disabilities. These particular experiences made her insist on the inalienable dignity of every single child, which theologically spoken, is God's creature and thus glorification of the divine. This is remarkable given that the emphasis on individuality and independence of every human being was quite unusual in her time and in her circles. As she puts it: “Everyone of you is unique, and for everyone of you God has a different task, which only you will be able to fulfill. If you think about it, she says, nobody can be called totally normal”⁴ [Knechtle 1966:15]. It is understood that she detests coercion and drill as means of education.

Her attitude towards the children is reflected by her methodical approach. From nursery school age on individual expression is encouraged. She reports a situation where children had been asked to express how to be funny and which resulted in a huge variety, and how she felt that this created a beautiful picture showing how each individual contributes to the whole. Symbol education does not restrict expression to language and pictures, but also encourages musical and bodily experience as well as creative work of any kind. The temptation to educate children towards conformity must be counteracted from an early

³ „Jetzt ist es wichtig, dem falschen Begriff vorzubeugen, damit nicht laut wird: ‘Das ist der Heiland am Kreuz’ (...) Prägen wir sofort den obigen Begriff ‘Figur’ und leiten wir die Aufmerksamkeit auf andere Figuren! Sie sind ja nur Zeichen aus Holz, Stein usw.“ [Knechtle 1963:41].

⁴ „Jedes von euch ist ein ganz Einziger! (...) Für jedes von euch hat der liebe Gott eine andere Aufgabe, die nur du lösen kannst. [Von niemandem kann gesagt werden], er sei vollkommen normal.“ [Knechtle 1966:15].

age. Little questions and impulses show her continuous attempts to encourage individuality: “Which word do you like most?”⁵ [*Knechtle* 1939:11]. She emphasizes that every question of a child must be dealt with.

Also, untypically for her time, she tries to avoid moralizing, because she is convinced that faith is something joyful that can't be achieved by pressure, but only through identifying the child's potential and bolstering its development. The ability to dive into the child's world and to relate to it is a crucial requirement for any teacher of religion. The failure of traditional teaching of religion is indeed rooted in the missing appreciation of the inner world of the child and the particular ability to let themselves fall and plunge into something, which forms a valuable resource for the approach to religion. This ability notably can be found amongst children affected by trisomy or otherwise disabled children. If the Holy Scripture can be written with letters made of stone, plants, flowers, animals and human beings, these children are particularly susceptible for it [*Knechtle* 1966:15].

The theology

As stated earlier the belief in God's good creation forms the core of the theology Sr. Oderisia's pedagogical approach. When reading the texts she suggests for classroom communication, her commitment to traditional theology of her time as well as to the liturgical practice becomes obvious, at the centre of which we find devotion to Christ. Her personal belief — even her private notes — show no doubts whatsoever and her writings exude an unshiftable missionary confidence. Passing on the joy of faith is her greatest ambition. In this participating in liturgy is seen as the richest source for this sentiment.

Consequently, she avoids teaching based on fear and threat although traditional catholic theology seems to provide plenty of ideas and images which could be used in this sense. This becomes evident i.e. when she talks about the holidays All Saints and All the Faithful departed, which traditionally are connected with notions of purgatory and hell. She offers an alternative: “If the soul is not entirely pure, it has to wait in purgatory, which hurts just as a real fire in your heart. But if we pray for those souls, or do something good on behalf of them, the purification will happen quicker”⁶ [*Knechtle* 1939:16]. Even if this explanation seems strange nowadays, the use is not accidental, but follows the idea that a metaphor when used must be understood by children. They might know the metaphor of the burning heart, and at the same time a symbolic level for the understanding of purgatory is set. It is by no means a real fire, but comparable to a feeling everybody might have experienced. Secondly she empowers children by offering them prayer as a tool that improves the situation of the poor souls. Over and over again she warns against exaggerated religious demands and excessive ascetism.

So, could you accuse Sr. Oderisia not only of romanticism when it comes to her perception of children, but also in theology? Words frequently used for

⁵ „Welches Wort gefällt euch am besten?“ [*Knechtle* 1939:11].

⁶ „Wenn die Seele nicht ganz rein ist, muss sie im Fegefeuer warten, und das tut so weh, wie wenn ein Feuer im Herzen brennen würde. Aber wenn wir für die Seelen, die im Fegefeuer sind, beten (...) oder sonst etwas Gutes für sie tun, geht das Reinwerden schneller.“ [*Knechtle* 1939:16].

describing religious objects are “dear“, “holy“ and “glorious“⁷. She introduces nursery school children to the concept of the holy cross by saying: “Who sees a cross in this room?“ and continues: “We are standing now in front of the dear cross“. “We greet the dear cross“⁸. This shows is her way make religious symbols intellectually and emotionnly accessible. One could argue that this kind of religious education might lead to an image of God which lacks real challenge. However, her approach makes sense in a context where the image of God was based on fear and pressure and was used to keep people obedient and devote. Albeit the language in all its overboarding sweetness and kindness might seem odd at times, her choice of words always proves thorough and purposeful. To clarify that images do not copy but symbolize something, she emphasizes that Christ hides in the consecrated bread and is not identical with it. Sr. Oderisia uses traditional theological motives, but in an encouraging and positive way, which probably helped the appeal of her courses, where many of the course participants might have experienced a new approach to faith for themselves.

It doesn't come as a surprise that Sr. Oderisia detests religious kitsch, and strongly advocates that challenging children with a small appropriate amount of religious language, of symbols and abstract ideas which they cannot yet fully understand, and warns against trivialization of religion as it can be found in children's prayers. Accordingly, stimulating the senses for quality in art is crucial for symbol education. Through art the child learns that beauty is not limited to outer shine.

The empty crib: conflicts

For her contemporaries, particularly those who didn't have the chance to meet her in person, the combination of traditional theology and obedience to requirements of the church on the one hand and her new unusual approach to teaching religion with emphasizing both sensual and aesthetic aspects of religious symbols on the other hand was hard to understand.

Her strongest opponent was Alois Gügler, who in 1964 had become professor of religious education at the Faculty of Theology in Lucerne, where a new institute dedicated to religious education just had been founded: “Katechetisches Institut Luzern“ [Jakobs 2016]. He also was editor of the catholic journal for teachers “Schweizer Schule“. In 1968, he wrote an article about the “so called symbol education“ which, as he understood, even demanded that no figuration of the baby child Jesus was allowed in the crib of the nativity. The whole thing, so he wrote, was nothing but unscrupulous, because so the human nature of Jesus was undermined. His choice of words was quite sneaky and aggressive i.e. but by “deeply regretting“ how impertinently these queer theories were presented as pedagogical principles [Gügler 1968].

The response didn't come from Sr. Oderisia herself, probably because of her bad health, but from her fellow sister Sr. Klara-Franziska Walder [Walder 1969]. She defended Sr. Oderisia against the allegations by insisting that human images of Jesus clearly had a place in symbol education, and that there was no

⁷ „lieb“, „heilig“, „herrlich“.

⁸ „Wir stehen jetzt vor dem lieben Kreuz“. „Wir grüssen das liebe Kreuz.“ [Knechtle 1963:14].

doubt at all in the belief that the Son of God has become a human child. This statement was published in the next issue, but with another critical comment by Gügler. What became public in the journal but was only the peak of an iceberg, which consisted in a number of letters previously exchanged between him and Sr. Alodia Möhl, another fellow sister who often assisted Sr. Oderisia⁹. Here we find an even more condescending, paternalistic style of the professor of theology clearly conscious of his status writing to a nun. The conflict was a clash between a professor representing male academic theology as well as clericalism on one side and a nun, an extraordinarily gifted pedagogical talent on the other from the far end of Switzerland, who had to study theology autodidactically, because academic theological education was not available for her. She gained resonance through her talks and courses, while he, in spite of being a professor, didn't. She was popular, while he was seen as a bit of a difficult person. Sr. Oderisia's cause was supported by Anton Meier, a priest and member of the Grenchen circle, who he compares the conflict with a biblical story, whereby Sr. Oderisia, acting like David, aims at the great intellectual who hence loses his temper and even starts to threaten her¹⁰. Apart from all the personal issues it shows that there was no understanding at that time for a sensual and aesthetic approach in religious teaching at all. It was argued the new method would probably be appropriate for the lesser gifted, but not for normal kids. The idea to cherish the religious thoughts and questions of children and to minimize the level between teacher and pupil, which is today part of pedagogical mainstream, namely in the so called "Kindertheologie" (theology for children), was unthinkable.

Conclusion

With the symbolic approach in religious teaching, Sr. Oderisia Knechtle did not only come up with couple of new methods for teaching, but provided a comprehensive aesthetical understanding of religious education. In spite of deeply being attached to traditional theology and religious language, she manages to open up new horizons, with a pedagogical approach which can be called holistic in thinking truly pedagogical and trying something that is holistic in the true sense. Her religious teaching clearly aims to be more than skilled passing on of adamant truths, but instead aims at making faith a part of each individual life and thus widening the understanding of theology.

Reading through the instructional notes and explanations for both the teachers and the children, one might get the impression of a strong power of possibly overwhelming children, particularly when there is a charismatic teacher like Sr. Oderisia herself. This can be prevented by focusing strongly on the appreciation of the thinking and the creativity of the children as well as integrating them into the learning arrangement. Symbol education takes into account their intellectual and emotional development and through introducing them to symbolic thinking manages to gain abstraction, which leads to the next step of understanding symbols.

⁹ Three letters from Sr. Alodia (8.1.; 16.1.; 9.2) and responses from Alois Gügler (10.1.; 2.2; 19.2.), all 1968.

¹⁰ „Da schießt also eine kleine Schwester wie damals David auf einen berühmten Geistesmann und vermag ihn aus der Fassung zu bringen, so dass er sich vergisst und unflätig Drohungen ausstößt.“ Letter from Anton M. Meier to Sr. Alodia (28.2.1968).

Nevertheless, the big success of symbol education, which spread through the enormous numbers of courses and participants she — and later Sr. Alodia — taught, mainly in Switzerland, but also in Bavaria and often with visitors from abroad, had its pitfalls. Many of the participants, inspired by the new approach and appealing teaching methods as well as by Sr. Oderisia's personality, started to apply these methods in the classroom straight away without the required carefulness and consideration. Anton Meier writes to Sr. Oderisia in a letter dated September 29th, 1961, that the big publicity and the favorable climate for symbol education bears the danger of superficiality by applying the new methods without understanding the underlying meaning of them¹¹.

Despite her success, Sr. Oderisia's concept of symbol education was not adapted by academia and thus was not unfolded and taken further at the time. One can rightly say symbol education is on a par with Montessori pedagogy, and would deserve more thorough academic investigation. Even in the symbol education movement since the 1980s she gets hardly mentioned¹². But she was not only forgotten by academic theology, but also by the historiography of her own diocese (Chur/Switzerland). The reason behind this is the missing appreciation of church historians for the role of the female orders of the 19th century, despite of their huge numbers and despite their influence in contemporary society up to the middle of the 20th century. The oeuvre of Sr. Oderisia Knechtle still waits to be valued historically, pedagogically and theologically with effort.

Источники/Sources

- Provinzarchiv des Klosters Hegne Nr. 06 — 276.
Archiv des Klosters Ingenbohl 8.02.04 Oderisia Knechtle /01.
— Knechtle, Oderisia: Verk rzter Lebensabriss, [1963].
— Giger, Flavia: Schwester Oderisia Knechtle und ihr Charisma [Nachruf der Mitschwester], 1979.
— N.N. [evtl. Alodia M hl], Werdegang der Symbolerziehung.
— Dankesworte des H. H. Espen, Direktor des Kinderheimes in Luxemburg, 8. September 1968.
Archiv des Klosters Ingenbohl 8.02.04 Oderisia Knechtle /02.

¹¹ „Mit den vielen Kursen wurde eine grosse Publizität geschaffen und ein günstiges Klima für die Symbolerziehung, doch zugleich die grosse Gefahr der Oberflächlichkeit, der Ungebildetheit, die Gefahr, dass einige sich nach relativ kurzer und ungenügender Anleitung schon fähig hielten sich eigenständig der Symbolerziehung anzunehmen ohne aber mit dem Anlige noch mit der Methode wirklich vertraut zu sein.“ Letter from Anton M. Meier to Sr. Alodia Möhl, 28.2.1968.

¹² An exception is Anton Bucher, who had been assistant of Fritz Oser in Fribourg [Bucher 1995].

Литература/References

1. Bucher 1995 — Bucher, A. A. (1995). Symbolerziehung, in: *Schweitzer, Friedrich/Faust-Siehl, Gabriele (Hg.) Religion in der Grundschule. Religiöse und moralische Erziehung*, Frankfurt/Main, 118-125.
2. Gügler 1968 — Gügler, A. (1968). Leere Krippe, *Schweizer Schule*, 55 (23), 909-910.
3. Gügler 1969 — Gügler, A. (1969). Nochmals: Leere Krippe? *Schweizer Schule*, 56 (1), 6-7.
4. Gügler 1969 — Gügler, A. (1969). Eine offene Antwort an Sr. Klara-Franziska Walder, *Schweizer Schule*, 56 (1), 8.
5. Grossrieder 1979 — Grossrieder, H. (1979). Schwester Oderisia Knechtle von Appenzell, *Innerrhoder Geschichtsfreund*, 23, 94-96 [Nachruf].
6. Imhasly 1998 — Imhasly, M.-F. (1998). Aspekte zu den Anfängen der höheren Mädchen- und Frauenbildung im 18. Jahrhundert bei den Schwesternkongregationen Baldegg, Menzingen und Ingenbohl, *Helvetica Franciscana*, 27 (1), 283-321.
7. Jakobs 2016 — Jakobs, M. (2016). 50 Jahre RPI und die religionspädagogische Entwicklung in der Schweiz, in: Jakobs Monika (ed.): *Sehen und gesehen werden. Impulse zu 50 Jahren Religionspädagogik in der Schweiz*, Zürich [TVZ], 10-34.
8. Jakobs 2018 — Jakobs, M. (2018). Das pädagogische Konzept der Lehrerinnenausbildung von Theodosius Florentini (1808-1865) als Reaktion auf die moralische Krise der Gesellschaft, in: Maier, Alexander/Conrad, Anne/Weber, Jean-Marie/Voss, Peter (ed.): *Lernen zwischen Zeit und Ewigkeit. Pädagogische Praxis und Transzendenz*, Bald Heilbrunn [Julius Klinkhardt], 50-63.
9. Jakobs 2019 — Jakobs, M. (2019). Sr. Oderisia Knechtle (1900-1978). Wegbereiterin einer sinnlich-ästhetischen Religionspädagogik des Symbols, in: Berlis, Angela/Leimgruber, Stephan/Sallmann, Martin (ed.): *Aufbruch und Widerspruch. Schweizer Theologinnen und Theologen im 20 und 21. Jahrhundert*, Zürich [TVZ], 632-649.
10. Oser 2011 — Oser, F. (2011). Die Architektur des inneren religiösen Lebens, in: Lachmann, Rainer/Rupp, Horst F.: *Lebensweg und religiöse Erziehung. Religionspädagogik als Autobiographie*, Bd. 3., 267-303.
11. Meier 1961 — Meier, A. M. (1961). Sr. Oderisia Knechtle und Symbolerziehung. Ein Beitrag zur Katechese der Unterstufe, *Schweizer Schule*, 60, 397-400.
12. Stieger 1963 — Stieger, K. (1963). Begegnung mit Sr. Oderisia Knechtle, *Schweizer Schule*, 50, 886-889.
13. Walder 1969 — Walder, K.-F. (1969). Ein offener Brief an Herrn Prof. Gügler [zu: Leere Krippe], *Schweizer Schule*, 56 (1), 7-8.
14. Knechtle 1939 — Knechtle, O. (1939). Mit dem Kind durchs Kirchenjahr. *Werkbüchlein zur Erziehung der Kinder für das Leben und Beten mit der Kirche*, Freiburg i.Br. Mit Zeichnungen von Alfred Riedel. Zweite, durchgesehene und verbesserte Auflage 1941.
15. Knechtle 1960 — Knechtle, O. (1960). Wie symbolische Handlungen vollzogen werden sollen, *Schweizer Schule*, 47(12), 403-406.
16. Knechtle 1961 — Knechtle, O. (1961). Symbolischer Vollzug und kindliches Erleben, *Schweizer Schule*, 60, 400-402.
17. Knechtle 1963 — Knechtle, O. (1963). Glaubensvertiefung durch das Symbol. *Die Symbolerziehung als Weg zur kindgemäßen religiösen Unterweisung*. Mit methodischen Besinnungen von Karl Stieger, Freiburg i. Br. (2. Auflage 1965).
18. Knechtle 1967 — Knechtle, O. (1967). Glaubensbelebung durch das Symbol. *Symbolerziehung als Weg zur vertieften Schau der Dinge für reifende und reife Christen*. Mit Besinnungen von Fritz Oser, Solothurn.
19. Knechtle 1965 — Knechtle, O. (1965). Symbolerziehung, *Das Steuer. Werkblatt der führenden Sodalität in Kongregation und Blauring*, 32(1), 30-33, 39.
20. Knechtle 1966 — Knechtle, O. (1966). Ist Symbolerziehung möglich beim behinderten Kind? *Beiträge zur Psychiatrie und Seelsorge*, (8), 13-18.