

Summary

Anne-Claire Mulder shows, by reference to the work of Luce Irigaray and Rosemary Radford Ruether, how new approaches to the relationship between the body and the spirit can lead to a transformation of the understanding of divine incarnation. The spirit/body dualism appears to function as a fulcrum: change this central binary opposition and other interrelated dualistic categories within the concept of the incarnation also change

(eg. God/humanity, transcendence/immanence). Next to and in contrast with 'the Word that becomes flesh', room is created for 'flesh that wills to become word'. This is especially relevant for women whose desires and hopes are denied linguistic form. The author demonstrates, by a comparison of Ruether's anthropology in which a re-evaluation of the body is linked with a minimization of sexual difference, and Irigaray's double hermeneutic where the difference between the sexes is irreducible, that only the second position can offer an analysis of the specific relationship of women to the source of life.

Denise Dijk examines in her article the ideology critique in the theological work of Sallie McFague. Upon what grounds does McFague base her forthright rejection of the traditional metaphorical language about God as almighty king and all-knowing ruler? And how far is her criticism of the dominating and harmful aspects of this image of God constructed upon a one-sided and rather anachronistic notion concerning the nature of God-language and its users? According to Dijk, in order to make a plausible argument for the changing of language about God and to God it is necessary to characterize the positions and opinions of the two involved discussion partners, namely 'mainstream Christianity' and critical feminist theologians. Further, the relationship between images of God and experience of reality requires fundamental research. In order to arrive at an inclusive and relevant God-talk the complexity (of meanings) of the current models for God should be taken seriously.

Freda Dröes, whose dissertation is based upon her research into the theological enterprise of the first generation of Dutch women post-graduate theologians, examines in her contribution the development in the work of Constance Gerlings (1875-1942). Gerlings was not only the first Dutch woman to receive a doctorate in theology, but also her dissertation may be considered the first *feminist* theological thesis. This study entitled, 'The Woman in Early Christian Congregational Life' (1913), was explicitly connected to the struggle for women's ordination within the Dutch Reformed Church. Gerlings was life-long active in this campaign and her name was connected by her contemporaries and later generations with that struggle. Does it then follow that her dissertation should be characterized as 'feminist propaganda' and its contents reduced to the question of women in the

Christian Ministry? Dröes demonstrates that the dissertation has more to offer. Once placed within its own historical theological context and then brought into a relation to the contemporary critical feminist reconstruction of early Christianity by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, surprising continuity is revealed. According to Dröes, from this perspective Gerlings' research can be read as engaged scholarly theology with a renewing power which throws light both upon the history of (Christian) women and upon the (pre)history of Women's Studies Theology.

Marieke Osterman analyses in her article the situation of a number of Dutch women who in the period 1923-1958 either gained admittance to the full Christian Ministry or who were excluded. What was their position and to what extent was it influenced by image-making of 'the woman'? What attitude did they themselves adopt in the light of their situation and this image? Osterman uses source material from the Minutes Book of the 'Circle of Female Christian Ministers in the Netherlands', a club of women from different Church confessions who, between 1923 and 1970 exchanged experiences and discussed their situation as women clergy on an annual basis. Applying the research model 'established group - outsiders' from the sociologists Elias and Scotson, Osterman offers an analysis which demonstrates that the confessional differences in the theological imaging of women was not the decisive criterion for choosing to ordain women. Rather, the decisive factors were: differences in the status of Christian Offices (determined by theologies of Christian authority) and historically verifiable differences in the availability of clerical labour.

Jacqueline Borsje examines the Irish Celtic tragedy of King Fergus and the slave-woman Dorn, a story that was orally transmitted in both prose and lyrical form and reached literary form in the Eighth Century. This case study constitutes a part of her research into the process of christianization of the Irish literary tradition in the period between the Seventh and Twelfth Centuries. The central theme of her study is the encounter with monsters. Borsje's hypothesis is that in the Irish Celtic tradition, monsters represented non-moral evil. Under the influence of Christianity they also came to symbolise moral evil. In this process of transition, elements from the case study received a Christian interpretation. Borsje demonstrates that the story itself has no Christian components. However she is of the opinion that the role played by the woman is too often ignored. The noble slave-woman Dorn, plays a key role in this tragedy. As she confronts the insincere king with the truth concerning his untenable position he kills her. As a result the king heroically kills the monster which threatens the community. The evil is defeated but the king loses his life in the struggle.

Anne-Marie Korte reports in her article upon the topical developments taking place as Women's Studies Theology research is incorporated into the institutional structures. Recent research programmes in this discipline at different theological faculties and universities- and at the initiative of STEGON- the creation of an inter-university research programme in this area, demonstrate that the scholarly interest in this field has begun to be recognised at an institutional level. But there are also signs which raise doubts about this tendency. The new organisational structures for financing research and concentrating theology and religious studies (AIO-network Divinity and the Research School Theology and Religious Studies) which have emerged in the last few years in the Netherlands appear to have overlooked the existence of Women's Studies research. According to Korte, these apparently contradictory developments are a reflection of the unusual beginnings of Women's Studies Theology in Dutch theological training. She makes a plea for a more dynamic profile and presentation for Women's Studies research as an independent discipline however it is institutionally incorporated.

Translation by Julie Hopkins.