

In this number

BJÖRN VIKSTRÖM:

“Populism is a Gospel for the People”: The Mutual Relation between Religion and Nationalist Populism

In this article, I argue, with examples drawn from the Finnish context, that there is a mutual dependence and interaction between religion and populism. The influence of populism is not restricted to the supporters of certain political ideologies: similar rhetorical means are used by representatives of quite different political parties and theological perspectives. The article also contributes to the discussion, whether light-versions of nationalist populism, or “decent” populism, are able to provide alternatives to right-wing nationalist parties, or if they simply function as a “Trojan horse” for the normalization of populist discourse.

NIKO HUTTUNEN

Modernized Paul: Päivi Räsänen’s Interpretation of the Romans

MP Päivi Räsänen’s writings on the Bible and homosexuals have reached vast publicity in Finland. In this article, I sort out her interpretation of Romans 1. She accepts Paul’s negative estimation of same sex relationships while passing his explanation for the origin of those relationships. Räsänen presents a modern reasoning for homosexuality. Thus, Räsänen’s interpretation exemplifies the general features in applying the Bible. She rejects certain elements of the text while chooses other ones and relocates them into her own context.

TOMI KARTTUNEN

The Ontology of Christ’s Presence: Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Finnish Luther Research

The core thesis and result of the Helsinki school of Luther research is that the idea of Christ present in

faith is at the centre of Luther’s theology and doctrine of justification. The paradigmatic contribution of this ecumenical Luther interpretation is Tuomo Mannermaa’s study *In ipsa fide Christus adest* (1979). Research has paid attention to the parallels between Mannermaa’s and Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s (1906-45) interpretations of Luther’s theological ontology. In this article, I argue that there are various points of convergence between their approaches, although there are also differences already because of the differing contexts.

SAMPSA RAUTI, SAMULI LAATO,
ERKKI SUTINEN & ANTTI LAATO

Church Employees’ Experiences and Perceived Opportunities of Encountering Location-based Game Players at Church Grounds

Location-based games (LBGs) such as Pokémon GO bring players daily to the proximity of churches and other places of religious significance. This can be seen as an opportunity for the church to reach out to the players. However, some might see LBGs as a threat to the integrity and peace of the church’s grounds, especially sacred places. We investigated how the employees of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran church feel about the opportunities and challenges that come with LBGs via an online survey (N=131). Qualitative analysis on the replies revealed that an overwhelming majority of respondents saw LBGs in a positive light, highlighting their potential for encountering players and building bridges between the church and regular citizens. Some voiced concerns that mobile game players are not receptive to the church’s message, which was also echoed in other replies suggesting careful strategies for approaching LBG players, such as inviting them inside for refreshments or for charging their phones.