

# In this number

TEEMU RATINEN

## **Sick or Sinner? Shifting Homosexuality and the Church between the Years 1952 and 1984**

This article examines how the rise of different psychotherapeutic discourses changed the position on homosexuality in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland between the years 1952 and 1984. The material consists of memoranda, handbooks, articles, official statements and reports of the Church and of the Family Affairs Committee of the Church. A close reading of the material shows that the therapeutic turn of the Finnish Church ensues from a shift towards psychoanalytical understanding in family counselling work. Within the new paradigm, homosexuality is seen as an identity and a trait of personality rather than a sin or a sickness, as it was understood earlier. Instead of protecting the society from homosexuality, the Church now aims at accepting and supporting homosexual individuals.

NINA JÄRVIÖ

## **The Church and Same-sex Marriage: Citizens' Initiative Campaign I Do2013 and the Three Voices of the Finnish Evangelical-Lutheran Church**

This article examines the role of religion, particularly of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland, in the debate on same-sex marriage in Finland between the years 2013 and 2015. The article shows that despite the attempts of the civil society actors campaigning for the legalisation of same-sex marriage to disregard religious discourses, religion was given a notable role in public debate by the Parliament of Finland. It also demonstrates how the opinion of the Church was publicly divided three ways, which was beneficial for the campaign. Building on but also challenging earlier research on religion and the diffusion of same-sex union policies and by using insights of feminist and queer theologians, I argue that to understand how and why same-sex union policies have been implemented, we need to further explore the complex religious debates in play.

MERI-ANNA HINTSALA

### **Embodied Faith in Online Discussions on Contraception among Conservative Laestadians**

This article focuses on an embodied religious practice, the rejection of contraceptives, in the Conservative Laestadian revival movement through online discussions. The article illustrates how this embodied religious practice is construed between theology and the body of a believer. My argument is twofold. Firstly, theology is deeply internalised in the everyday life of the Laestadian believers and effectively regulates their sexual lives. Secondly, a body produces resistance and adaptation in relation to theology, which affects the reinterpretation of theology in the post-modern individualistic society. The tight relation between doctrine as cognitive and everyday life as embodied religion leads to offer an alternative concept of lived faith for the academic discussion about lived religion.

JOANNA TÖYRÄÄNVUORI

### **The Symbol of the Sea in Monarchic Legitimation in the World of the Old Testament**

The words 'sea' and 'king' appear together in many ancient Northwest Semitic texts, dating back to the Mari of the Old Babylonian period, featuring in the epics of Late Bronze Age Ugarit, all the way down to biblical texts dating to the Persian period. The sea is also a significant element in many Assyrian and Babylonian royal inscriptions, figuring in the feats of many, if indeed not most, of the kings following the Urukian Lugal-zage-si and Sargon of Agade. While the sea is an important geographical feature on the shore of the Eastern Mediterranean where ancient Ugarit was located, there is much less justification for its prominence in the myths and royal inscriptions of inland empires like Yamkhad, Mari, and Assyria – let alone the Hebrew Bible. The significance of the symbol may lie in the use of the ancient Near Eastern myth of divine combat, or *Chaoskampf*, as an instrument of monarchic legitimation in the many kingdoms that seem to have modelled their royal ideologies on the example of Sargon and the mythologised narratives of his conquests.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi