

# In this number

VILLE JALOVAARA

## **The Church, State and the Finnish Social Democratic Party**

The article explores and illustrates how the relationship between the Finnish government and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has been discussed at the party congresses of the Social Democratic Party of Finland since its founding in 1903. The article notes that the issue of the separation of church and state has divided opinions at the congress, especially after the Second World War, and that decisions on the matter have changed repeatedly.

LIISA LAMPELA

## **The Choice of Motherhood**

In this article, I discuss the manifestation of religious socialisation in the life choices of Conservative Laestadian brides. I used interviews to explore why modern young women make choices that may lead to a continuous string of pregnancies up to menopause and to becoming the mother of a large family. The role of the family in the socialisation process is most clearly apparent in the appreciation of one's role as a mother on the one hand and one's professional role on the other, and in the combining of the two. The influence of the Conservative Laestadian movement on socialisa-

tion becomes evident when examining the sexual ethics and moral views of the interviewees. The strength of the movement, specifically its sense of community, seems to be the best explanation for the interviewees' life choices, which are in line with the values of the movement. Motherhood and faith are both communal traits for members of the Conservative Laestadian movement. The interviewees are highly committed to their community and willing to fulfil the expectations vested in them.

AILA VIHOLAINEN

## **Transition in Medieval Iconographical Research**

Theology and how images relate to it is one of the cornerstones of the study of Medieval iconography. Medieval art has traditionally been seen as a visual aid for religious instruction. Today, however, the view is that theology is a tool for interpretative practices, while visual expression is in itself a form of information that should be analysed in its own context and on its own terms. For the past 30 years, an extensive reappraisal has been going on internationally concerning the practices, methodologies and theoretical fundamentals of Medieval iconographical research. The present article focuses on this debate, which has gone virtually unnoted in Finland.

PANU PIHKALA

### **Defining Ecotheology**

The article proposes a dual definition of ecotheology. Firstly, ecotheology should be seen as comprising both the academic study of Christianity and ecology (or nature) and practical ecotheologies. Secondly, it would seem helpful to make a distinction between more emancipatory and less emancipatory practical ecotheologies. These definitions clarify the field and also make it possible to see the connections between various theological disciplines and ecotheology. Based on this new theoretical understanding, various contributions to ecotheology are assessed and new international research on the field is presented. The role of ecotheology as contextual theology is discussed and critically evaluated.

TARJA EHNQVIST

### **Elements of Professionalism in the Work of a Teacher of Religion**

Finnish teacher training and the professionalism of Finnish teachers are of the highest quality. The occupation of teacher has always been considered a profession, in the original meaning of the Latin term *professio*. Recently, however, the teacher's profession has been saddled with new expectations and job descriptions. Teachers have increasingly become mechanical executors of external demands rather than autonomous actors. This curbing of autonomy has led many researchers to question the *professio* nature of the teacher's profession, teachers of religion not excepted. The present article explores the professionalism of teachers of religion and the ways in which it could develop.

Translation: Jaakko Mäntyjärvi