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Reformation and Conquest in the Tension of Mission, Culture and Political Correctness

That women could raise their voices as theologians only 500 years after Reformation is due not least to the fact that the Reformation was not able to produce female evangelical theologians, nor had it wanted to, nor could it do so. This would change only with the transformation in universities' politics in the 20th century.

The Reformation has a far-reaching missionary dimension. Martin Luther, with his translation of the Bible, had not only contributed to the transcription of the German language. He initiated a theological process of translation and transculturation of the Bible. Patriarchally-coined cultural-historical and socio-political contexts have undergone a theological evaluation and have had a great effect in the history of political mission. The woman, ambivalently seen as the witch, the whore and the saint, is reduced into a "Protestant serving-body" in the patriarchal reference system. In the tension between exegesis and eisegesis, the Protestant-becoming monk transferred the Bible into the everyday language of the German Middle Ages. As an agency-oriented mediator – to use current day terminology – he inscribed, in his translation, his theology of Reformation. Oscillating between author and reader, source and target text, he gave the biblical word the interpretation that he regarded as politically correct and theologically viable. The so-reformed Bible was an innovation for patriarchal European theology and science, facilitating male progress in the form of individualism and national democracies and states. Protesting Catholic women theologians and Protestant-becoming nuns had no historical opportunity. With the termination of monastic life in the Protestant Church, formal life options and education possibilities for women had become restricted.

A newly-published, current-day German Protestant Bible translation in the tradition of Martin Luther illustrates the old problems, positions and perspectives of Christian biblical hermeneutics between tradition and transgression. In going back to the Reformer, hermeneutical categories of source text and originality are juxtaposed with a neopatriarchal understanding of the normativity

attributed to traditional writings. The partial visualisation of the feminine in the translation may be seen as reference to feminist theology. However, this is far from sufficient.

Another aspect of reform and Reformation is the colonised and missioned so-called “New World”. The export or import of transmitted culture and religion, including patriarchal and misogynistic structures, does not meet the reformist dogma of the Church’s self-description as “*ecclesia semper reformanda*”. The position of women in language, culture and society is as much a proof of this as are feminist implications in politics and science, be their context theological or secular.

The hermeneutic conflict of translation and interpretation theologically manifests the networking of politics and culture in the interrelatedness of theology and mission – internal and external. In its ideological involvement in the gradient of patriarchal structures, this has had an impact on political modernity – east and west, north and south. This phenomenon connects the cultural and theological history of the Reformation over space and time with the modern concept of neopatriarchalism as part of global cultural transfer. The present yearbook is an eloquent testimony of this.

In the interplay of feminine voices from Catholic Spain and evangelical Chile, breaches in tradition and theology are visible, where the term Reformation finally represents the fundamental distinctions more than the common denominators of the shared Spanish language.

The current, European-Protestant-ecclesiastical heritage seems to have left the motherland of Reformation with all its concomitant challenges. Throughout the world, the events of 31 October 2016 in Lund, Sweden, have been hailed as the first ever ecumenical commemoration of the Reformation. The joint event, organised by the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church, was the stage for Pope Francis’ embrace with Antje Jackelén, the Archbishop of the Church of Sweden. The photo, a sign of hope as well as tension, has gone around the world. The Lutheran Church of Sweden strives to be a pioneer in questions of gender and sexuality, freedom and norm. It is part of a society where faith is now a voluntary option. The former state church is faced with new challenges concerning religious and cultural diversity. The Church of Sweden holds these different positions together through its program of Reformation, whereby it views itself as a church in need of constant reform.

The plurality of translatorial communication of the gospel opens up critical perspectives on our times. A feminist, gestalt theological dialogue of world religions unfolds beyond the binary dichotomy of centre and periphery.

Epistemologically and hermeneutically creative strategies link innovatively in the struggle for historically canonical scriptures as today's holy texts; and their inheritance reverberates in the tension field of power factors and intersectionality: *Ecclesia semper reformanda*.

Gender plays a significant role in the social processes and media of interpretation and in the translational explanation and interpretation of religious writings. Misogynist traditions of interpretation were by no means gone with the reform.

Catholic female theologians are still denied access to the office, even today, five hundred years after Katharina von Bora. Regulated and reduced to an externally determined post-factual image, female spaces and possibilities are limited. Just three months before the reformation-minded, conciliatory photo from Sweden, the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church decided to abolish women's ordination.

As if there had never been a Reformation in Europe, every cultural-theological, social-religious debate in time and space still puts at its focus women's code of conduct. Their clothes and their bodies, their behaviour and their freedom are patriarchally determined. Not infrequently, they become co-opted agents, losing themselves among the claims of the so-called modern and uninhibited *zeitgeist* in culture, religion and society.

The tension between gender and theology is reflected in the location amidst vertical and horizontal religious authority. It remains to be seen how the phenomenon of authority in religions can be further developed and how visions of an interreligious medium- and context-oriented hermeneutics may take shape. Categorisations and postulations of truth, authority, and Holy Scripture pose a challenge if they are to be communicated horizontally rather than vertically. Modern neopatriarchal fields of tension, such as fundamentalism and secularisation, deconstruction and construction, often significantly limit the way in which migration and translation are viewed. Hegemonic endeavours of power and identity contribute substantially to the expansion of foreignness. Theologically, this must be countered.