

# The gospel of the old : media, gender, and the invisible conservative Dutch Catholic in the long 1960s

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# The Gospel of the Old – Media, Gender, and the Invisible Conservative Dutch Catholic in the long 1960s

Marjet Derks

In the spring of 1970, the journal *Paris Match* contained several pictures of two young Dutch nuns.<sup>1</sup> That they were nuns, however, could only be deduced from the caption, because they were portrayed as elegant, fashionably dressed and provocative women. One of them, named Ellen<sup>2</sup>, was even smoking a cigarette – the symbol of female provocative attitude since the 1920s. According to the text, the two nuns lived in an apartment in Amsterdam, and served as pastoral workers in their parish. Sister Maria was portrayed while telephoning – the text suggesting that she was talking to her bishop, asking his permission «to become the first female priest in the Netherlands». At the recently held Pastoral Council in Noordwijkerhout this question had been discussed and one bishop had answered that there were no theological arguments against the ordination of women as deacons. The picture and caption seemed to suggest that for women to become priests was only a small step from there.<sup>3</sup>

It was not the first time that 1960s Dutch Catholicism had featured in *Paris Match*. Four years earlier, the cover of the Christmas edition showed a photograph of a young boy facing a priest who held a chalice. The boy had a host in his right hand, which he had obviously picked up from his left hand, where the priest had put it. The text on the cover read: «This child in Holland gives himself Communion: one of the pictures in our *univers match* on the new mass.» «A new era», the editorial said.<sup>4</sup> The remainder of the edition had several pictures of unprecedented modes of celebrating mass in Holland. Liturgical renewal in Holland was «spectacular», according to the French journalist and expert on church life Robert Serrou, who wrote the corresponding article, headed: «Les enfants terri-

<sup>1</sup> I wish to thank prof. Annelies van Heijst and dr. Paul Luykx for their inspiring comments on this article.

<sup>2</sup> The text wrongly named her sister Elena.

<sup>3</sup> The question whether women could be ordained as deacon was briefly addressed during the discussion on celibacy in January 1970, at the fifth and final session of the Provincial Council.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Serrou/Noëlle Namia/Michel Leclercq, *La Nouvelle Messe*, in: *Paris Match*, nr. 923 (December 17, 1966).

bles de la foi». Among the pictures were those of so-called beat and jazz masses, of an experimental liturgy in a chapel in Nijmegen where all sacred ornaments, attire and texts had been replaced by simpler ones in order to re-create an early Christian celebration. There were even pictures of masses held in private homes, around ordinary tables, said by priests without vestments using ordinary cups and bread and modern music, and celebrated in the company of both Catholics and Protestants. According to the participants, their celebration had been authorized by Christ himself. In the article, one of the young participants in a beat mass was quoted as saying: «For us, mass is a happening».<sup>5</sup>

*Paris Match* was not the only journal in which Dutch Catholics featured as *avant garde* – the *New York Times* had already reported on the interfaith groups' Eucharistic meals in January and September 1967.<sup>6</sup> The 1966 Christmas edition did, however, have an enormous impact. The large photos that illustrated the text told a story of their own. While the two sisters in 1970 simply received an angry letter from a group of French nuns<sup>7</sup>, the public display of «de-sacralized» liturgy four years earlier caused great turmoil because it allegedly got to the heart of Christian religion. In the same week, a report followed in the Italian weekly *Epoca*. Conservative forces within the Curia were filled with indignation and even the more progressive ones felt that this would undermine the liturgical reform that the Second Vatican Council had begun. The little boy on the cover of *Paris Match* was transgressing Roman law. Within a week, a statement was issued by the Congregation of Rites and the Post-Conciliar Liturgical Commission, saying that some unauthorized experiments or innovations in Catholic masses and other liturgical rites had not been «in conformity with the letter or the spirit» of the Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. These experiments could not be excused on the grounds of renewal, because they were «contrary to the ecclesiastical meaning of liturgy».<sup>8</sup> Catholics needed to realize that liturgical reform took time and did not equate with excess nor self-willed action. Only those liturgical reforms would be tolerated that were allowed by local bishops. In its statement, the commission explicitly referred to articles and photos in newspapers and journals. It didn't take inside knowledge to understand that the statement was mainly addressing the Netherlands, and, to a lesser extent, Flanders and Brazil, where unauthorized celebrations were also taking place.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Serrou, *Les enfants terribles de la foi*, in: *ibid.*, (see footnote 4), 68.

<sup>6</sup> Clyde H. Farnsworth, *Dutch Catholics in Ferment of Change as Old Practices are Modernized*, in: *New York Times* (January 17, 1967); Edward B. Fiske, *The Dutch as Catholic Avant Garde*, in: *ibid.* (August 13, 1967); Clyde H. Farnsworth, *Dutch are trying new supper rite. Weekly Eucharistic Meals held by interfaith groups*, in: *ibid.* (September 9, 1967).

<sup>7</sup> Interview with sr. Ellen Terpstra (January 8, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> *Setback for Dutch liturgical experiment*, in: *Catholic Herald* (January 13, 1967).

<sup>9</sup> *Felle reactie uit Rome op liturgie-experiment*, in: *de Volkskrant* (January 7, 1967); *Liturgie in gevaar door onheilig namaak-ritueel*, in: *Het Centrum* (January 5, 1967); *Rome hekelt sommige vormen van liturgie*, in: *De Gelderlander* (January 5, 1967). The statement was signed by Cardinal Larcaro (Post-Conciliar Liturgical Committee) and Cardinal Larraona (Congregation of Rites).

*Mediacracy and religious crisis*

The Vatican statement was issued uncommonly fast, even without consulting the Dutch bishops, who felt overwhelmed.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, it was a direct and vehement reaction to media coverage, illustrating the importance of the media in creating a sense of awareness of on-going changes and their historical importance. To a certain extent, the media created and cultivated «the sixties» as a connected period in which cultural, political and religious transformations took place. Some historians talk about «the long 1960s», referring to the years between 1958 and 1974.<sup>11</sup> The border-crossing role of modern mass media in the cultural dynamics of this era, spreading the new spirit of rebellion, is largely acknowledged.<sup>12</sup> Dutch historian Hans Righart, the first to write an extensive study on the 1960s in the Netherlands, explicitly named this the era of «mediacracy». «The sixties» were in part a product of the media, he states, both at the time and afterwards. Not only did papers and journals zoom in on whatever was challenging, changing and transforming, but so did television, and especially so. Broadcasting companies showed, enlarged, and edited their version of what was going on.<sup>13</sup> According to Callum Brown, television became «a key medium for social change», also in the religious realm.<sup>14</sup>

Until recently, the impact of the media on religious transformations during the long 1960s had not been very extensively researched, but the agenda is changing. In the United States, professor of religion David Morgan has pointed at how religion's role in culture is increasingly mediated. He states that what we know as religion is constructed, shaped, practiced, and transformed by different media practices within which it is embodied. Furthermore, media themselves are the product of culture. This approach implies acknowledging the dynamics and dialectics at the intersections of religion, media, and culture.<sup>15</sup> Various German historians such as Frank Bösch, Nicolai Hannig and Benjamin Städter have elaborated specifically on the role of mass media in the process of church renewal, more specifically on its impact on the appearance of a language of crisis, and its remedy: renewal. They suggest that the religious crisis of the 1960s was foremost a media-

<sup>10</sup> Mgr. Bluyssen wist niets van liturgieverklaring, in: *Brabants Dagblad* (January 6, 1967).

<sup>11</sup> Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties. Social and Cultural Transformation in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, ca. 1958–1974*, Oxford/New York, 1998, 7; Hugh MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, Oxford, 2007, 1–5, and, for the Netherlands: Hans Righart, *De eindeloze jaren zestig. Geschiedenis van een generatieconflict*, Amsterdam/Antwerpen, 1995, 12–15.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Martin Klimke/Joachim Scharloth (eds.), *1968 in Europe: a history of protest and activism, 1955–1977*, Basingstoke, 2008); J. Hoberman, *The Dream Life: movies, media, , and the mythology of the sixties*, New York, 2003; Aniko Bodroghkozy, *Groove tube: sixties television and the youth rebellion*, Durham, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Hans Righart, *De wereldwijde jaren zestig. Groot-Brittannië, Nederland, de Verenigde Staten*, Utrecht, 2004, 72–80.

<sup>14</sup> Callum Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain*, London 2006, 227.

<sup>15</sup> David Morgan (ed.), *Key words in Religion, Media, and Culture*, New York/London, 2008); *ibid.*, *The Lure of Images: A History of Religion and Visual Media in America*, London, 2007.



ted crisis.<sup>16</sup> Modern mass media echoed and co-created the so-called narratives of the new. By magnifying «problems» in church life and religious culture, often based on social scientific research results, the media did not actually create but cultivated an overall sense of religious crisis in the 1960s. Looking at the Netherlands, the *Paris Match* case certainly seems to prove this point. Its pictures indicated that the spirit of the times had indeed reached the Catholic Church. The new language, style, mood and atmosphere in which conventions and traditions were thrown into a melting-pot were visible and hard to miss. It said «the sixties» were «happening» in Dutch churches.

Furthermore, some media provided a willing platform for those who spoke of renewal through narratives of the new. According to Hugh MacLeod, these narratives, aiming at both church renewal and a much broader religious-inspired change, started as elite opinion but gathered public awareness through media attention.<sup>17</sup> Among certain groups, this led to high hopes for change, especially during the period 1958–1967. The way in which reform and tradition were mediated thus contributed to the religiously explosive climate of these years that eventually provoked a restorative Vatican policy in the Netherlands in the early 1970s.<sup>18</sup>

In this article, the question of mediated religious expectations is elaborated on by tracing the in/visibility of Catholic actors. The line of analysis of Bösch *cum suis* is a proper starting point, but should be extended. The religious crisis of the 1960s seems foremost a mediated crisis, but what these authors do not take into account, is the nature of this mediatization along lines of gender and age. An aspect of the mediated crisis which is often overlooked is the enlargement of the young man as an icon of renewal. Thus, what could be described as «laddism» became a prominent aspect of dominant culture, both in politics, culture and religion. It seemed as if history began anew during the 1960s and young men set the pace.

Although this article does not offer any analyses of the reception of the mediated messages by a 1960s audience, it does presuppose that the one-sidedness of what (and whom) was mediated, did have an impact on the public. By mediating a specific religious and cultural message and highlighting a specific group of messengers, the aforementioned media lads constructed a specific Catholic narrative, namely that of «the new», of renewal. As a consequence, other categories

<sup>16</sup> Frank Bösch/Lucian Hölscher (eds.), *Kirchen, Medien, Öffentlichkeit. Transformationen kirchlicher Selbst- und Fremddeutungen seit 1945*, Göttingen 2009; Frank Bösch/Norbert Frei, *Die Ambivalenz der Medialisierung*, in: *ibidem* (red.), *Medialisierung und Demokratie im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2006, 7–23.

<sup>17</sup> MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis*, (see footnote 11), 83–101, 188–214.

<sup>18</sup> Nicolai Hannig/Benjamin Städter, *Die kommunizierte Krise. Kirche und Religion in der Medienöffentlichkeit der 1950er und 60er Jahre*, in: *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte*, 101 (2007), 151–184. At the Radboud University in Nijmegen, Chris Dols MA is working on a PhD-project that analyzes how various narratives of the new came into being, and how they functioned. The project in particular analyzes the important role of scientific research, the data it provided, the scientific underpinnings, and the changeable impact on (clerical) decision makers and public opinion. See: Marjet Derks/Chris Dols, *Sprekende cijfers. Katholieke sociaalingenieurs en de encensering van de celibaatcrisis, 1963–1972*, in: *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* (in print).

became (or remained) invisible, especially those who were at the other end of the spectrum of the dominant lads: older people, and especially older women, whose history had started much earlier than the 1960s, and who did not accord with the spirit of renewal and happenings. Quite the opposite, they held a conservative stand on religion, culture and society.

The term «conservative», although often used strictly in the political realm, is applicable to define their position, because it seems the closest to the self-image of this group. In their studies on American conservative Catholics from the mid-1960s onward, Manning, Weaver and Appleby also use the adjective «conservative», although they rightfully add that this is a much multilayered group. Generally, they are united in their opposition to modernity, postconciliar «abuses», pro-choice rhetoric, insufficient respect for papal authority, failure to obey Catholic teaching about artificial birth control, the tendency to lose touch with the hey day of Catholicism in the 1920s and 1930s, an abandonment of the devotional tradition of the church, and a disregard for the sound conclusion so scholastic theology.<sup>19</sup> Or, as Manning summarizes it: «Conservative religion promises the restoration of a golden age when life was simpler than today.»<sup>20</sup>

The fact that older conservative women were not in the media did not imply that they did not exist or that they were powerless. Although they were rather ultramontane conservatives than young and militant fundamentalists, they shared a feeling of battling against forces that threatened their most sacred values and therefore their identity.<sup>21</sup> They did not permissively tolerate and accommodate change in the 1960s either (as has been stated by some historians).<sup>22</sup> Instead, in reaction on the overall presentation of the progressive Catholics in the media, the conservatives started to create a distinct profile for themselves. They fiercely fought for their personal Catholic identity, defending the unity of the Church and claiming, by historical legitimizations, that religious authenticity was theirs alone.

Several academic, religiously conservative older women were, in fact, important actors in the religious battlefield of the long 1960s. They did not turn to public media to vocalize their views, whether by choice or because no journalist noticed them. Instead, they used an older and already tried and tested mode of operation to fight their battle: diplomacy and personal networking within the Vatican. Not only was this in accordance with their ultramontane religious vision, but the alliance between conservative women and the higher clergy had proven to be successful in the past. In the 1960s, it was still very much alive, as will be explicated.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Jo Weaver/R. Scott Appleby, Preface. Working on Being Right, in: *ibid.* (eds.), *Being Right. Conservative Catholics in America*, Bloomington, 1995, vii–xii; Mary Jo Weaver, *Who are the Conservative Catholics?*, in: *ibid.*, 1–14.

<sup>20</sup> Christel J. Manning, *God Gave Us the Right. Conservative Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, and Orthodox Jewish Women Grapple with Feminism*, New Brunswick/New Jersey/London, 1999, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God*, New York, 2000, xi–xviii.

<sup>22</sup> In: *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw. Nederland in de jaren zestig*, Amsterdam/Meppel, 1995, historian James Kennedy's central thesis is that a permissive tolerance and accommodation to change were typical of the Dutch conservative elites in the 1960s.

To elaborate on the mediated in/visibility of Catholic conservatives and their modes of operation which were so low-key in media terms, we first take a closer look at the Dutch lads who became very visible and therefore prominent actors in church renewal, both at a national and an international level. In addition, we turn to their counterparts, albeit through a gendered lens. First, we look at several elderly conservative men who became key protagonists, resisting the changing protocols of religious identity, practices and authoritative relations, both inside and outside the Church. Then, the perspective shifts towards several rather invisible, though not unknown, older women. Instead of the narrative of the new, these women embodied a gospel of the old. In the final section of this paper, the importance of a more multiform history of the religious 1960s is advocated.

### *Catholic laddism*

Who were the Catholics who became so central? When taking a closer look at Dutch press and television in the 1960s, it becomes apparent that these media had a strong preference for the same starring actors who were quoted again and again and whose pictures could hardly be missed. It can be stated that the image of the Netherlands as the ultimate and most radical forerunner of a progressive Catholicism rested, to a significant extent, on the appearances and performances of several relatively young and mediagenic priests, theologians and social scientists. Their age should be pointed out: at the dawning of the 1960s, they were not in their teens or twenties, but in their early forties. In Church terms, however, they were young. Furthermore, they presented themselves as young, rather rebellious, and as public figures who were after media coverage as much as the media were after them. They appeared to be the best and the brightest, and the camera loved them.

Among those, the Franciscan priest and sociologist Walter Goddijn (1921–2007) played an important role. From 1958 onward, he was one of the Catholic social scientists who analyzed and described socio-religious life using new techniques such as polling. In 1962, he was appointed as the advisor to the Dutch bishops at the Second Vatican Council and in 1965 he became the director of PINK, the pastoral institute of the Dutch church province. He was one of the designers of several important polls on issues such as celibacy. As the chief organizer of the Dutch Pastoral Council he had a great influence on the agenda, as well as on the (international) media coverage of this council. Allegedly, Goddijn himself used his large set of media contacts to make sure that a whole range of journalists was present at the reporters' gallery. This resulted in articles that affirmed the provocative progressive image of Dutch Catholics (reflecting Goddijn's own perception).

Goddijn's nickname the Dutch pope suggests the enormity of his reach, but another one, «handsome Walter», indicates that he was known and appreciated for his public appearance as well. He was a Catholic media icon and was frequently sought by those Catholic media men whose own thoughts and beliefs he represented. Thus, Goddijn's media persona tended to highlight changes in the Church and accentuate the role of the male actors who allegedly incited those

changes. But also the international press played a part by mainly zooming in on the change-minded Dutch Catholics. Prominent investigative journalist John L. Hess of the *New York Times*, for instance, reported daily from the Pastoral Council in Noordwijkerhout. He wrote articles with headings like «Dutch group ready to challenge Pope», in which he suggested that «those fanatically tolerant, flexibly stubborn Dutchmen» were «heading for a schism».<sup>23</sup>

Another handsome and influential appearance was the influential Belgian-Dutch Dominican theologian Edward Schillebeeckx (1914–2009), who was a professor of dogmatic theology and the history of theology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen. He introduced Dutch theologians to the so-called new theology (Nouvelle Théologie) of French theologians like Chenu and Congar. During the Vatican Council, he acted as ghost writer for the Dutch bishops and drafted various council interventions. Furthermore, he gave conferences on theological ressourcement for many episcopal conferences present in Rome. In the postconciliar period Schillebeeckx studied early Christian sources and drew from those to support proposals to disconnect sacramental priesthood and the obligation to celibacy. He defended this theme at the already mentioned Pastoral Council.<sup>24</sup>

Schillebeeckx, well known in the Netherlands and Belgium through his many interventions in the media, was by then known as the leading Dutch-speaking contemporary theologian. He became one of Holland's first television priests and appeared in talk shows with both serious political and church commentators. He was the guest of the very popular hostess Mies Bouwman, who had her own nation-wide television show. This live show held a regular item called «the chair», in which the hostess interviewed a well known guest who was seated opposite her and was asked ten rather personal questions.<sup>25</sup> During Schillebeeckx' appearance in the show on February 14, 1969, he talked about how the outcome of a recent poll on celibacy had marked the definite entrance of a new generation of priests into the modern media. Never before had one of them been the subject of such a personal and popular program. Furthermore, never before had a priest and Dominican been regarded as a well known Dutchman, and on top of that, been invited onto a show transmitted by the socialist broadcasting company.<sup>26</sup>

These are just two examples of the public and mediated image of Dutch Catholicism in the 1960s which was embodied by relatively young and mediagenic priests such as Goddijn and Schillebeeckx. They spread this image of progressiveness, modernity, youthful vigor, and male prowess, thus embodying the new narrative. In addition, the producers of the news who were the «messengers of the new» were similar. They were young male journalists, all members of a new generation that was liberating itself from old Catholic ties and networks – angry

<sup>23</sup> John L. Hess, Dutch group ready to challenge Pope, in: *New York Times* (January 7, 1969); *ibid.*, From the Dutch, a Bold Challenge to the Pope, in: *ibid.*, (January 12, 1969).

<sup>24</sup> Erik Borgman, *Edward Schillebeeckx: a theologian in his history*, London 2003; Marit Monteiro, *Gods predikers: Dominicanen in Nederland, 1795–2000*, Hilversum 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Righart, *De eindeloze jaren zestig*, (see footnote 11), 222; Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw* (see footnote 22), 146–147.

<sup>26</sup> Derks and Dols, *Sprekende cijfers* (see footnote 18).



young Catholic men, so to speak, *lads*, among whom newspaper journalists, for example Richard Auwerda, Michel van der Plas, Gerard Hulshof, Herman van Run, Kees Fens and Henk Suër, and television journalists, chiefly Ad Langebent and Aad van den Heuvel and were prominent.

These Catholic lads could emerge because of a structural transformation in both the Catholic newspaper and television culture. The traditional Catholic newspaper *de Volkskrant* underwent an important change in the middle of the 1960s. In 1965, almost at the same time as the opening of a new office building, a transformation took place. The old, law- and church-abiding journalists were replaced by a younger and critical group. The latter had less respect for authority and had a hitherto unknown direct and critical style and approach, towards both political and Church authorities. Symbolically, the traditional subtitle «Catholic journal for the Netherlands» disappeared in that year.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly, the Catholic Broadcasting Company's program on current events *Brandpunt* (started in 1959) developed into a critical follower of the developments in the Church. It became an influential trendsetting national program, many of its items being picked up by foreign broadcasting companies as well.<sup>28</sup>

The emergence of this new type of journalist was not just an internal Catholic development, but was part of a larger social transformation. Following the Dutch sociologist Jo Ellemers, historian Jan Bank typified these journalists as members of a «secondary elite». They were the off-spring of post-war expansion of education and often the first in their social class to attend university, or hold a professional education. Some journalists were former seminary students, whose religious ideals had evaporated or taken another direction altogether. The primary elite, the establishment, however, prevented their social rising, thus frustrating their ambitions. This caused a great sense of like-mindedness and fellowship among the secondary elite, plus a strong self-confidence that great things lay ahead.<sup>29</sup> They were present at the Second Vatican Council and mediated it as a promise of church renewal. Furthermore, they accentuated in their papers and journals, both in the Netherlands and outside, all the changes in the Dutch church province that followed from the Council, from liturgical renewal to polls on celibacy.

In other words, they told and spread the narrative of the new and they positioned their mirror images as its main actors: the secondary clerical elite, who sought to replace the old establishment by appropriating the renewal process.<sup>30</sup> Together, they created a male rebellious culture of «laddism». Originally, this

<sup>27</sup> Kennedy, *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw* (see footnote 22), 154.

<sup>28</sup> Jan Bank, *Televisie in de politieke cultuur van de jaren zestig*, in: J.Th.J. van den Berg, e.a., *Tussen Nieuwspoor en Binnenhof: De jaren '60 als breuklijn in de naoorlogse ontwikkelingen in politiek en journalistiek*, Den Haag 1989, 34–46.

<sup>29</sup> Jan Bank, *Televisie in de politieke cultuur van de jaren zestig* (see footnote 28), 34–46; J.E. Ellemers, *Nederland in de jaren zestig en zeventig*, in: *Sociologische Gids*, 26/6 (1979), 429–443. Also: Frank van Vree, *De vuile was van het gezag: Dagbladpers en journalistieke cultuur in de jaren vijftig en zestig*, in: *Jaarboek Mediageschiedenis*, 3 (1991), 215–242.

<sup>30</sup> Michel van der Plas/Henk Suër, *Those Dutch Catholics*, New York 1968.



concept applied to white working-class boys, defined through their defiant and humorous opposition to the work ethic and middleclass respectability.<sup>31</sup> It also seems an appropriate term to define both the ambitious priests and the angry young media-minded men who cultivated a language of the new with which to transform established relations in Church and Catholic culture. The coalition of these clerical and secular young men dominated the historical image of the religious 1960s.

### *Other Catholics in the 1960s*

The progressive image excluded Catholics who did not meet these standards, but were nevertheless very much part of Dutch Catholicism at the time. Progressive Catholics have been absent in the historiography on Catholicism in the conspicuous and triumphant 1920s and 1930s, while the more conservative ones have been left out of the overall picture of the 1960s.<sup>32</sup> Historian Paul Luykx labeled the former «other Catholics».<sup>33</sup> The other Catholics of the 1960s were not the progressive ones, but the conservatives and they should be included into the historiography of the religious 1960s.<sup>34</sup>

Some historians have drawn our attention to the circle of Catholic conservatives that gathered around the journal *Confrontatie* (*Confrontation*), which acted as the mouth-piece of primarily clerical malcontents. Its chief contributors were the Jesuit Jan Bots (1930) and the Dominican priest Jan van der Ploeg (1909–2004). The latter was an internationally distinguished pioneer and expert in biblical sciences and archaeology, and a professor in Exegesis of the Old Testament, Hebrew, and Syriac at Nijmegen University who was widely known for his research on the Dead Sea Scrolls. In his studies, he fostered tradition as a solid and sacred locus. He tried to restore the religious traditions and power relations that he felt were being threatened by the renewal and its main executors in the Netherlands, Goddijn and Schillebeeckx.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Rob Pattman, Laddism, in: Michael Flood (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities*, London 2007.

<sup>32</sup> McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (see footnote 11), 207–212, mentions the growth of conservative Protestant Churches, but leaves the Catholics out.

<sup>33</sup> Paul Luykx, *Andere katholieken, 1920–1960*, in: *Jaarboek van het Katholiek Documentatie Centrum*, 16 (1986) 52–84; *ibid.*, *Andere katholieken: een nieuwe visie*, in: *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 124/1 (2009), 75–81. I have argued to include radical conservative Catholics of the 1920s and 1930s into this definition. See: Marjet Derks, *Heilig moeten. Radicaal-katholiek en retro-modern in de jaren twintig en dertig*, Hilversum 2007, 15–38; 396–406.

<sup>34</sup> This historiographical gap bears a similarity to the writing on the political 1960s, where the focus has been on the New Left and the progressive student movement, while neglecting the birth of conservative movements. Thus, the sixties have become identical with the political and the religious progressive, even though, as Michael Heale has pointed out, they could be characterized as the native soil for conservative movement as well. See: *The Sixties as History: A Review of the Political History*, in: *Reviews in American History*, 33 (2005), 133–152, there 135–136.

<sup>35</sup> Ton van Schaik, *Alfrink, een biografie*, Amsterdam 1997, 469–470.

A similar journal was *Katholieke Stemmen* (*Catholic Voices*), which was also one of Van der Ploeg's channels of communication. Other contributors were Jesuits such as C. Sträter and R. van Essen, and Dr. H. van Dijk, a Priest of the Sacred Heart, who were all more or less connected to the Association to Preserve Roman-Catholic Life in the Netherlands.<sup>36</sup> The monthly journal reported on the various and numerous activities that took place among conservative Catholics, such as Latin masses, lectures on the «causes of the crisis in the Church», the spread of Missals and books on religious doctrine, and the organisation of pilgrimages. Thanks to the heavy clerical imprint, these journals also inspired dissatisfied lay Catholics, among whom the politician Klaas Beuker (1924–2000), who translated conservative Catholic viewpoints into political issues in the Dutch Parliament in the 1970s. Another orthodox influence was the so-called Willibrord community, lead by the Assumptionist priest Winand Kotte (1922–2006). This group condemned the allegedly modernist degradation of Catholicism in the Netherlands and aimed at the restoration of liturgical and pastoral practices. Its members successfully demanded a weekly orthodox Tridentine mass in the Willibrord church in Utrecht, in the centre of the Dutch church province.<sup>37</sup>

### *Elderly academic women*

The clerics and male members of religious orders who contributed to these journals and actions have been depicted as the face of Catholic conservatism. This is a one-sided image, because it ignores the part that women and their strategies had in this religious counter-culture. Most invisible were the older, elitist, intellectual, and religious conservative women. They represented another world altogether. As older people, they embodied bygone times. As women, they were the second sex, especially in a decade that lay at the eve of the feminist wave. As elitists, they represented a past order that was at odds with the democratized and egalitarian trends of the sixties. And last but not least, as conservative Catholics, they were the advocates of traditional values, habits, and rules governing church life, religious doctrine, and traditional Latin mass. This disposition was square on to the new dominant mode of Catholicism. Mass media ignored them, but moreover, these women on their part shied away from the modern mass media, which they thought vulgar or, at best, liberal. Their invisibility in the public realm, however, did not imply that they were marginal and without influence.

Several conservative women, among them a remarkable number of professors, were part of a non-formal cultural and intellectual elite network: Christine Mohrmann (1903–1998), Liesbeth Allard (1904–1991) and Cornelia de Vogel (1905–1986) were the key figures in this network. All three of them were religiously, culturally and intellectually formed in the hey-day of Roman Catholicism in the Netherlands when they were among the first Catholic women to enter academia.

<sup>36</sup> Katholiek Informatiebulletin van de Stichting tot behoud van het rooms-katholieke leven in Nederland, continued as *Katholieke Stemmen*, 1 (May 1972) nr. 1, 1–5.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 478–489.

The support of several priests had been pivotal. Mohrmann had been the close assistant of the Joseph Schrijnen, priest, founder of the first Roman Catholic University in the Netherlands in Nijmegen in 1923, and professor of Greek, Latin and Linguistics. She shared his mission to enhance catholic academia and often referred to the 1920s and 1930s as the «founding years». In 1926, Allard had entered the Women of Nazareth, a conversion movement of militant young women. She became one of the leaders of the Grail movement, an international girls' movement that set out to re-Catholicize the world. De Vogel was a convert, whose religious quest ended in 1944 when she entered the Catholic Church. They were all scholars, who, like Jan van der Ploeg, were experts in early Christian language (Mohrmann), philosophy (De Vogel) or medieval Christian literature and traditional non-western anthropology (Allard). Tradition, i.e. the early Christian era, held a special meaning for them, representing the unchangeable and a-historical core of Christian culture.

Already in her much read book from 1946, *Ecclesia Catholica*, an intellectual justification of her conversion process, De Vogel had elaborated on the importance of acknowledging God's will and plan in history. It was not human opinion nor choice in religious matters that were decisive but the Divine Truth. Following Cardinal Newman, she stated: «(...) there is a truth, there is one truth, and it is God's will for us to know that truth, and that our choice is an awful giving forth of lots, on which salvation or rejection is inscribed.»<sup>38</sup> De Vogel's biographer Paul Luykx states that she aimed at connecting history, tradition and continuity. The teachings on the sacraments, view on the Church and other views from the Church Fathers could be traced back to the New Gospel. Everything that the Catholic theology and the practices of her time and age taught, were therefore echoes of the Bible and the tradition of early Christianity. Rome was the keeper of the real Christian truth and dogma and had to be followed.<sup>39</sup>

During the long 1960s, De Vogel, Mohrmann and Allard disclosed themselves more and more as defenders of an orthodox ultramontane Roman Catholicism. They firmly believed in doctrine over inquiry and opposed any restructuring of the church to which they themselves had turned in their quest for doctrinal certainty. They resented religious renewal as much as the transformation of academic culture, where a new generation demanded democratization and egalitarianism instead of hierarchy. In this regard, they were much alike: as elderly female professors, they felt overwhelmed by what they perceived as a revolt of the masses, both in academia and *in religiosis*. Modern theology and irresponsible Church leadership threatened to undermine the connection between the continuity, tradition and authority within the eternal Church. They tried to fight the narrative, practices and styles of «the new», especially those elements that they perceived as religious liberty, the decline of liturgical tradition and a growing influence of a new societal elite based on informality.

<sup>38</sup> Cornelia de Vogel, *Ecclesia Catholica*. Redelijke verantwoording van een persoonlijke keuze, Utrecht/Brussel 1946, 246. The book was translated into French in 1956: *Du protestantisme orthodoxe à l'Eglise catholique. Les motifs d'une opinion personnelle*, Paris.

<sup>39</sup> Paul Luykx, Cornelia de Vogel. *leven en bekering*, Hilversum 2004, 116–117.

*Close to Rome: Christine Mohrmann*

To discern how these older conservative women acted against the turn of events of the 1960s, we will look into the beliefs and strategies of Christine Mohrmann, in whose life Allard and De Vogel regularly turned up. Mohrmann was a pupil, close assistant and intended successor to the main founder and first principal of the Roman Catholic University of Nijmegen (1923), the priest Joseph Schrijnen, whose legacy she guarded and defended throughout her entire life. They both saw it as their duty to contribute to the scientific emancipation and cultural elevation of Catholics in Dutch society. Together, they developed the theory of early Latin group language, i.e. as a socio-psychologically and religiously determined language variant within Latin. This became famous as the so-called *École de Nijmègue*, the Nijmegen school, which provided the young university with a world-wide reputation.<sup>40</sup> Although it took a while before the Catholic University opened up to the idea of a female professor (until 1952, to be precise), Mohrmann became the first woman to hold this position. By then, she was already an acknowledged and respected expert in early Christian Latin.<sup>41</sup>

Because of her status, Mohrmann contributed to the Second Vatican Council and agreed with several of its decisions, but she was fiercely opposed to its effects. In 1964, she was asked by assistant-bishop Jan Bluysen, who had been ordered to implement in the Netherlands the decisions of the Vatican Council in relation to the Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), if she would join the Dutch executive committee. Mohrmann accepted his request to advise and supervise the translation of the *Ordinarium Missae* into Dutch.<sup>42</sup> But she soon disagreed with her fellow committee members, mainly because they were aiming to replace the sacred Latin with the vernacular, not simply extending the use of the vernacular in the liturgy, particularly in the readings. Mohrmann did not consider the vernacular suitable as an overall liturgical language, although this had rapidly become common practice in the Netherlands. In her eyes, it de-sacralized the mass. Furthermore, she was critical of the input of several committee members: «pseudo-savants», lay-men who vigorously sympathised with liturgical renewal, but who used it, according to Mohrmann, merely to push through their progressive ideology while the weak Dutch bishops allowed them to. She resigned from the committee «under protest».<sup>43</sup>

Fundamental to Mohrmann's estrangement with renewal at large was her perception of it as a rupture with «authenticity», which in her eyes was rooted in early Christianity. She stated that the formation of the Latin liturgy was part of an all-inclusive effort to evangelize classical culture, a process that took shape in the second century. The Latin liturgy was from the beginning a sacred language

<sup>40</sup> Marjet Derks/Saskia Verheesen-Stegemann, *Wetenschap als roeping*. Prof. dr. Christine Mohrmann (1903–1988), *classica*, Nijmegen 1998, 15–26, 31–42.

<sup>41</sup> E.g. Christine Mohrmann, *Études sur le Latin des Chrétiens*, Rome 1958–1977; 4 parts.

<sup>42</sup> Mohrmann Archives, nr. 19: correspondence with Jan Bluysen (March 10 and 18, 1964).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, nr. 20: correspondence with the editor of *Wort und Wahrheit* [Vienna] (n.d.); nr. 23: correspondence with Dom. Fr. Huiting [prior of the abby of St. Paul, Oosterbeek] (March 22, 1968); nr. 24: correspondence with dr. Deroy (December 12, 1969); nr. 28: letter to the National Council for Liturgy \*NRL) (September 3, 1973). Also: *Études* (see footnote 41), part IV, 205.



separated from the language of the people. There had been processes of estrangement before, especially caused by the development of national cultures and languages. But the whole liturgical renewal of the 1960s was an ultimate attempt to replace «sacred formulas» with fashionable trends, an anthropological focus and a cult of sentimentality. For this, she blamed texts such as those of the young (soon to become ex-) Jesuit Huub Oosterhuis, which became very popular in Dutch liturgy. According to Mohrmann, the liturgical downsizing converged with a cultural renewal that was based on egalitarianism. The opposition to liturgical Latin had something to do with the weakening of the study of Latin and with a perceived tendency toward «secularism». Mohrmann criticized the disappearance of the hierarchal differences between priest and churchgoers. A priest, she stated, should not be a «guide on a search».<sup>44</sup>

According to close fellow workers, Mohrmann suffered deeply because of the liturgical renewal during the 1960s and even more because of the student revolts at the turning of the 1970s.<sup>45</sup> She perceived both developments as «mental strip-teases», instigated by a new, ill-mannered, self-declared elite that threatened everything that she believed in and had worked so hard for: Catholic tradition and emancipation, values, and hierarchies.<sup>46</sup> After her own battle to become part of the establishment, she detested egalitarianism in general and the liturgical and clerical downfall in particular, especially of priests who questioned celibacy or didn't hold to it. On this matter, De Vogel and Allard felt and acted similarly. Allard in 1973 publicly left the defence of a PhD-thesis when she stood eye to eye with one of her colleagues, who had recently left the priesthood. In an explanatory letter she wrote afterwards to the abandoned PhD candidate:

«I can assure you, that as person of almost seventy years old, I have never had a personal enemy that I didn't wish to great. However, at our institution, founded in 1923 as a Catholic University for scientific education, one cannot great a married priest as a colleague, particularly if they have the brutality to keep showing up there.»<sup>47</sup>

How did Mohrmann fight her battles and win an audience in the highest circles of the Church? Apart from writing articles on the matter and critical letters to people who were involved in liturgical renewal, she gave lectures to the Association for Latin liturgy – until she disagreed with its board.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, in 1965 she signed a petition from worried Catholic conservatives to Cardinal A. Bugnini, the secretary of the Post-Conciliar Council of the Sacred Liturgy. This petition was the initiative of her colleague at the Catholic University of Nijmegen,

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Jo Tigcheler O.Carm. [former doctoral student] (September 16, 1997).

<sup>45</sup> Interviews with Mariëtte Stoelinga-Kruse [Mohrmann's secretary] (November 18, 1997) and dr. Toon Bastiaansen [colleague] (May 15 and September 17, 1997).

<sup>46</sup> Christine Mohrmann, *De studie van het oudchristelijk Grieks en Latijn. Verleden, heden, toekomst*, Utrecht/Antwerpen 1973; Prof. Mohrmann kritiseert seculariseringstendens aan K.U., in: *K.U. Nieuws* (February 1, 1974).

<sup>47</sup> Letter by Liesbeth Allard to dr. J.P. van der Voort (June 26, 1973). I wish to thank dr Van der Voort and drs Jan Willemsen for allowing me access into this correspondence.

<sup>48</sup> Mohrmann Arch., nr. 27: letter to Liesbeth Allard (March 5, 1972).



Liesbeth Allard, who had sent it to her and to Cornelia de Vogel, who held a chair in classical philosophy at the University of Utrecht. Mohrmann and De Vogel shared an extensive knowledge of the Greek and Latin Church fathers, who for them were crucial in understanding and cherishing tradition.

The petition stated that the overall introduction of the vernacular in liturgy would not stop secularization and might even discourage fervent Catholics from attending. It undermined the Mystery of Mass, and above all, the texts used were mediocre and very often hard to understand. The petitioners asked for a celebration and perfection of Latin Mass, as a token of unity, because they feared that «in the storm of adaptation» not only the language of the church was being threatened, but also everything else that was sacred.<sup>49</sup> The petition was well received, but did not lead to immediate action. It did inspire Allard, together with her brother, who was a Benedictine monk, to found a national Association for Latin Liturgy which organised weekly Latin masses as if there had never been a liturgical renewal.

The church renewal in the Netherlands led to a re-ultramontanization of mal-content Catholics like Mohrmann, Allard and De Vogel. They passed the bishops over and turned directly to Rome, the heart of the mother church. On their part, Cardinals from the Curia perceived elite women as important instruments for Catholic purification. This had proven to be a successful strategy in the past. Already during the 1930s, Catholic women were important allies of the Vatican. Pope Pius XI regularly received in private audience the influential and very conservative presidents of the International League of Catholic Women's Organizations and its counterpart, the International Federation of Young Catholic Women. The Dutch Florentine Steenberghe-Engeringh and the Belgian countess Christine de Hemp-tinne travelled the world in their respective roles and had been asked by the Pope to collect information during those frequent travels. As loyal agents they informed him about secularization, threats of upcoming communism, and the progress of implementing the lay apostolate of the Catholic Action in various countries. Because of papal blessing, the Catholic (Young) Women's Leagues were able to flourish and, in return, the women became loyal ultramontanes.<sup>50</sup> In other words, the Vatican did have a tradition of turning to influential, yet (Church) law-abiding women to obtain information on what was going on in the religious realm.

This alliance was still very much intact during the 1960s. Through her connection to the influential Kasteel family, Mohrmann had a direct connection to the Vatican. Piet Kasteel was the former Dutch delegate at the Vatican and his son Karel the holder of a high position in the Curia. Both held Mohrmann in

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., nr. 87: letter of a group of Dutch Catholics to Cardinal A. Bugnini CM (October 1965).

<sup>50</sup> John Pollard, *The participation of the laity in the Apostolate of the hierarchy*. Pius XI's attempts to impose the Italian model of Catholic Action on worldwide Church in the 1930s. Unpublished paper presented at the Seminar «Religion and Society, 1750–2000» in Leuven (February 11, 2010); Marjet Derks, *Maria van Nispen tot Sevenaer-Ruys de Beerenbrouck (1903) en de katholieke vrouwenbeweging*, in: Marjet Derks/Catharina Halkes/Annelies van Heijst (eds.), *Roomse dochters. Katholieke vrouwen en hun beweging*, Baarn 1992, 13–51. I am currently working on an article on Florentine Steenberghe-Engeringh.

great respect.<sup>51</sup> The Kasteel residence, near the Vatican, was her Roman address, and was also a place to stay for Cornelia de Vogel whenever she was in Rome.<sup>52</sup> Mohrmann regularly updated the Kasteel family on developments in the Netherlands in general and at the Catholic University of Nijmegen (the locus of Edward Schillebeeckx) in particular. With Kasteel, she shared an intense dislike of the transformations this university underwent, for which she partly blamed its theological faculty.<sup>53</sup>

Through the mediation of the Kasteel family, she had several audiences with Pope Paul VI, whom she considered a personal friend. She repeatedly shared her concerns on contemporary developments, such as the contested (but internationally widespread) *New Catechism*, to which the Jesuit priest Piet Schoonenberg and other theologians from Nijmegen had contributed. Mohrmann wrote the Pope a *Pro Memoria*, in which she sketched her view on the desolate situation in the Dutch church province. She mentioned especially what was lacking in the theological formation of priests (many of whom had to follow her classes in order to learn church Latin), what was lacking in the work of the Dutch Committee on Liturgy, the growing admission of the texts of Huub Oosterhuis (a critical and soon to be ex-priest) into the mass, and the critical attitude of the Catholic media. She stated that it seemed that Dutch Catholics were determined to forget the language in which «faith, devotion, and spirituality is formulated». Furthermore, she criticized the flawed and «deliberate deceit» of translations of the Roman Missal that stood in the way of Church tradition.<sup>54</sup>

The Pope seemed to share her concerns, but according to Mohrmann did not act accordingly. Mgr. Karel Kasteel wrote to her that his policy was not to polarize, although after 1971, restorative liturgical tendencies got the upper hand.<sup>55</sup> Paul VI appointed two rather conservative bishops, Ad Simonis and Jo Gijsen, to stop the all- too- progressive turn of events in the Netherlands. Kasteel had acted as an important liaison, and Mohrmann (as well as De Vogel) was one of his direct Dutch sources. It was also because of Kasteel's interjection that the Pope requested Mohrmann to take up teaching Church Latin at the seminary of Rolduc run by the newly appointed Mgr. Gijsen. As a close friend of Gijsen and instigator of his appointment, Kasteel wanted to strengthen Gijsen's position and improve the clerical education in his diocese in order to re-build a more pure and orthodox Dutch Church province.<sup>56</sup> Mohrmann's contribution to this was very welcome, since she could guarantee an impeccable Latin education. Because of Gijsen's controversial reputation among Dutch Catholics, it was hard to find teachers for the seminary, but Mohrmann did take up this assignment as a special

<sup>51</sup> After her death in 1988, Piet Kasteel wrote an In Memoriam, full of praise. See: <http://www.jhmoormann.nl/Diversen/chrmoormann.html>. The origins of their contact demand further research.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Luykx, Cornelia de Vogel: leven en bekering, Hilversum 2004, 151.

<sup>53</sup> Mohrmann Arch., nr. 27 & 35: correspondence with Karel Kasteel (1972).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., nr. 81: letters to Pope Paul VI (February 12 and June 23, 1977).

<sup>55</sup> Gerard Lukken, Een kritische blik op het hedendaagse rituele landschap met het oog op het christelijk ritueel, in: Jaarboek voor liturgie-onderzoek, 22 (2006), 113–133.

<sup>56</sup> Van Schaik, Alfrink (see footnote 35), 462.

favour. Thus, she became the first woman to teach at a seminary. Her reputation boosted Rolduc's image and strengthened Gijsen's position. However, true to form, she did not hesitate to resign after a profound disagreement with Gijsen in 1978. Although she agreed with him on Church matters, she felt offended by him. In this matter, even the mediation of Piet Kasteel was not successful: bishop or not, Mohrmann did not accept being disrespected.<sup>57</sup>

Even more successful in fighting the narrative of the new was Cornelia de Vogel. Unlike Mohrmann and Allard, she reacted first to the renewal by writing a booklet (in 1973) *To the Catholics of the Netherlands, to all*, and this contained her criticism of bishops and theologians as well as a call to return to the right path. Due to her contacts in Spain (through an Opus Dei connection) and Italy, it was translated into Spanish and Italian. She also publicly applauded the appointment of Simonis and Gijsen.<sup>58</sup> But this did not put a hold on the on-going publications of theologians such as Schillebeeckx, whose historical and contextual approach to religion, and to Jesus in particular, De Vogel vehemently rejected.<sup>59</sup> She wrote a critical comment, but also went further than that.

Like Mohrmann, de Vogel kept close contact with Rome where her knowledge of classic philosophy was acknowledged. In 1980, she wrote directly to Cardinal Franjo Seper, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and accused Schillebeeckx of being «an enormous evil to the Church, not only in the Netherlands, but throughout the world.»<sup>60</sup> Schillebeeckx, De Vogel argued, had developed along the same line of thinking as that of the German theologian Hans Küng, who by then had been condemned by the Vatican and had been forced to resign as a professor of theology in Tübingen. Schillebeeckx' work on Jesus was being scrutinized by Roman theologians, but through Van der Ploeg and Mgr. Kasteel, De Vogel had learned that such a condemnation as Küng had received was not to be expected. De Vogel decided to give fate a helping hand and wrote her accusatory letter. Kasteel delivered it to Cardinal Seper and also sent five copies to other Curia Cardinals. Due to the Vatican archives being closed, it is difficult to discern the direct relation between De Vogel's action and the Vatican's summoning Schillebeeckx to come and explain his views again in 1984. It can be assumed, however, that it did contribute to his negative reputation in Rome.

### Conclusion

«The 1960s were an international phenomenon in religion as in much else», Hugh McLeod rightfully states. He and other historians have shown that we cannot reduce this decade to the decade of the funeral of God whose death was caused by modernity, as sociologists, especially, have claimed.<sup>61</sup> If anything, religion

<sup>57</sup> Mohrmann Arch., nr. 90: correspondence with Jo Gijsen (1975–1978).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 143–144.

<sup>59</sup> Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jezus. An Experiment in Christology*, Baarn 1974.

<sup>60</sup> Luykx, Cornelia de Vogel (see footnote 52), 150–153.

<sup>61</sup> MacLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s* (see footnote 11); Patrick Pasture, *Christendom and the legacy of the sixties. Between the secular city and the age of Aquarius*, in: *Revue d'his-*

and power relations within religious institutes were critically evaluated, transformed, and more than ever mediated through mass media. That was especially the case within Catholicism, symbolized by Vatican II. But contrary to the dominant historiographical perspective, the journalists' reports and the media exposure of those days, religious transformations in the sixties were not unequivocally of a progressive nature either. Rather, this decade was also the start of a historical period in which a novel type of Christian radicalism interfaced with the public domain and with existing groups of orthodox Christians who, as a consequence, radicalized in an opposite direction. Even in the Netherlands, the state presumed to be the front runner in Catholic change, the 1960s were also the breeding ground of religious conservatism.

The conservatives, though a multiform group, shared certain common characteristics that excluded them from «the new», in particular their established socio-cultural position, their age, and their gender. This paper focused on a substantial and influential group among those conservatives, one that consisted of older women who held high-ranking academic positions. In the eyes of a younger generation, their position and age, combined with their gender, made them representatives of «the Old», both literally and symbolically. Their identification was rooted in the 1920s and 1930s, when they had been the co-builders of Dutch Catholic emancipation. They perceived themselves as the children of this emancipation who by the time of the Second Vatican Council had become old and part of the Catholic and academic establishment. Both the progressive, relatively young clerics and lay men who tried to establish a religious renewal, and the journalists who cultivated these attempts, felt little connection to those women. Through a shared culture of anti-establishment laddism, the upcoming men were constantly dealing with each other and excluded the older female conservatives.

However, their relative invisibility did not imply that these conservative academics were helpless. They did not tolerate change permissively nor accommodate themselves to change, but instead fought fiercely the decline of liturgical tradition and a perceived growing influence of a new societal elite based on informality. Appropriating the key word of the sixties, *authenticity*, they stated that this had nothing to do with the expressive individualism that was the invention of this decade, and therefore they condemned all experimenting with liturgy and hierarchy in the Netherlands.<sup>62</sup> They did not want the Church to adapt to contemporary society and to lose its sacred authentic roots. By constructing a «gospel of the Old», they engaged in a practice of cultural memory, attempting to equate their views with Christian «tradition». They defended the unity of the Church and claimed, by historical legitimizations, that religious authenticity was theirs alone. While progressive Catholics, in response to Vatican II's call for ressource-

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toire ecclésiastique, 99/1 (2004), 82–117. For the debate on «the sudden death of religion in the 1960s» see: Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, London 2001; Peter van Rooden, *Oral history en het vreemde sterven van het Nederlands christendom*, in: *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 119/4 (2004), 524–551.

<sup>62</sup> Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, Cambridge Mass./London 2007, 473–504.



ment, sought the «authentic» Church in a small scale and democratic model that allegedly could be traced back to early Christianity, conservatives referred to the doctrinal aspects of the Church that were also rooted in early Christianity. The call for the authentic, so vital for the 1960s, was clearly an ideologically occupied territory. Both claims need to be acknowledged in the religious history of the 1960s.

The gospel of the Old was for a large part, in fact, the gospel of old women. And the lads of the new narratives of the sixties did not stop for them. However, the fact that the media excluded these older women did not imply that they did not exist or that they were powerless. There were other ways of communication in the 1960s besides public media, such as the older and already-tried diplomacy and personal networking within the Vatican. As long as the Vatican archives cannot be consulted, the direct effects of this network are hard to trace. Nevertheless, the bonds between the higher clergy and certain groups of conservative, highly educated women do seem an important and continuous factor in Catholic history. It is, however, only through historical research over a longer period than the long 1960s, that such continuities become apparent. After all, the «sixties» were not just about rupture and renewal.

Developments have not stopped since the long 1960s either, and what has happened since also prompts some re-evaluation. Just two examples may illustrate this point. Since then, the Eucharist texts of Huub Oosterhuis have become more and more debatable among Dutch bishops. In 2000 they were officially banned from formal volumes and in March 2010, several of his very popular songs were also banned. In addition, several older conservative catholic women have today found ways of achieving publicity. They have their own web log or they contact journalists regularly. Their critical and across the grain approach of some contemporary church leaders is now often portrayed as the contemporary «new».<sup>63</sup> Their public re-emergence suggests an on-going media dimension of emerging patterns of religion and a whole range of related sensibilities. Of course, there is the question of its impact. Further research to analyze the dynamics between these media instruments and an audience is needed to provide answers.<sup>64</sup>

Sister Ellen Terpstra, from *Paris Match*, on the other hand, hardly ever re-appeared in the media. She still does not wear a habit, although her skirts have become somewhat longer and she also often wears pants. Despite expectations from numerous conservative Catholics, she did not leave the order. Quite the opposite, since 1999 she has been its mother superior.

<sup>63</sup> I.e. <http://observatrix.blogspot.com/> This is the web log of the Rotterdam advocate Erica Schruer, who also keeps up a «Liber Niger», where she gathers information of what goes on in the Dutch Catholic Church in order to help Rome to prepare for the so-called «Ad limina» visit of the Dutch bishops in 2011.

<sup>64</sup> Stewart M. Hoove, Audiences, in: Morgan, Key words in Religion, Media and Culture (see footnote 15), 31–43; Joris van Eijnatten, Een cultuurgeschiedenis van het publiek. Over kritische betrokkenheid in heden en verleden, Amstelveen 2008.



*The Gospel of the Old – Media, Gender, and the Invisible Conservative Dutch Catholic in the long 1960s*

This article deals with the Dutch 1960s as a historical period that was not only the breeding ground of a novel type of Christian radicalism, but also of religious conservatism in which existing groups of orthodox Christians radicalized in an opposite direction. Anti-establishment modern media, however, dominated by young men, predominantly represented religious renewal, while obscuring and excluding the conservatives. A substantial and influential group among those conservatives consisted of older women who held high-ranking academic positions. They did not tolerate change permissively nor accommodate themselves to change. Instead, through long existing means like diplomacy and personal networking within the Vatican, they fought fiercely the decline of liturgical tradition and a perceived growing influence of a new societal elite based on informality. While progressive Catholics, in response to Vatican II's call for *ressourcement*, sought the 'authentic' Church in a small scale and democratic model that allegedly could be traced back to early Christianity, conservatives referred to the doctrinal aspects of the Church that were also rooted in early Christianity. By constructing a 'gospel of the Old', they engaged in a practice of cultural memory, attempting to equate their views with Christian 'tradition'. The call for the authentic, so vital for the 1960s, was clearly an ideologically occupied territory. Both claims need to be acknowledged in the religious history of the 1960s, that was not just about rupture and renewal.

*The Gospel of the Old. Medien, Gender und die unsichtbaren niederländischen Konservativen in den langen 1960er Jahren*

Dieser Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit den 1960er Jahren in den Niederlanden als Periode, welche nicht nur einen neuen Typus eines christlichen Radikalismus hervorbrachte, sondern auch einen religiösen Konservatismus, in welchem sich bereits existierende Gruppen eines orthodoxen Christentums in eine entgegengesetzte Richtung radikalisierten. Die gegen das Establishment gerichteten modernen Medien, die vor allem von jungen Männern dominiert wurden, stellten in erster Linie die religiöse Erneuerung dar, während die Konservativen mehrheitlich von der Berichterstattung ausgeschlossen wurden. Eine substantielle und einflussreiche Gruppe innerhalb der Konservativen stellten ältere Frauen in guten akademischen Positionen dar. Sie richteten sich gegen Wandel und kämpften mit den hergebrachten Mitteln der Diplomatie und persönlicher Netzwerke mit dem Vatikan vehement gegen den «Niedergang» der liturgischen Tradition und gegen einen – wahrgenommenen – zunehmenden Einfluss neuer gesellschaftlicher Eliten. Während progressive Katholiken als Reaktion auf den Ruf des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils zur Selbstbesinnung die «authentische» Kirche in einem demokratischen Modell verfolgten, welches vermeintlich bis in die Frühkirche zurückverfolgt werden konnte, bezogen sich die Konservativen auf die doktrinären Aspekte der Kirche, die für sie ebenfalls im frühen Christentum ihre Ursprünge hatten. Indem sie einen «Gospel of the Old» konstruierten, wandten sie Praktiken eines kulturellen Gedächtnisses an, indem sie versuchten, ihre Perspektiven mit der Christlichen «Tradition» gleichzusetzen. Der Ruf nach «Authentizität», der für die 1960er Jahre so zentral war, stellte ein ideologisch besetztes Territorium dar. Beide Seiten müssen in der Religionsgeschichte der 1960er Jahre Beachtung finden; die 1960er Jahre waren nicht nur durch Umbrüche und Erneuerung gekennzeichnet.

*The Gospel of the Old. Des médias, du genre et des conservateurs néerlandais invisibles dans les longues années soixante*

Cet article se penche sur les années 1960 dans les Pays-Bas comme période ayant vu se cristalliser non seulement un nouveau type de radicalisme chrétien, mais également un conservatisme religieux. Au sein de ce dernier, des groupes chrétiens orthodoxes se radicalisèrent dans l'opposition. Les médias modernes opposés à l'establishment, dominés par de jeunes hommes, représentaient en premier lieu le renouveau religieux, alors que les conservateurs étaient plutôt exclus de la couverture médiatique. Un groupe substantiel et influent au sein des conservateurs, formé de femmes d'un certain âge et occupant de bonnes positions académiques, s'opposait au changement et se battait vigoureusement, à l'aide de moyens diplomatiques et de réseaux personnels avec le Vatican, contre le «déclin» de la tradition liturgique et contre l'emprise de nouvelles élites sociales, perçue comme croissante. Tandis que les catholiques progressistes répondirent à l'appel de quête intérieure du Deuxième Concile du Vatican et adoptèrent un modèle démocratique de l'Eglise «authentique», prétendu remonter jusqu'à l'Eglise ancienne, les con-

servateurs se rapportèrent aux aspects doctrinaux de l'Eglise qui trouvent également leurs origines, selon eux, dans le christianisme ancien. En construisant un «Gospel of the Old», ils tentèrent de mettre en parallèle leurs perspectives avec la «tradition» chrétienne et appliquèrent des pratiques d'une mémoire culturelle. L'appel à l'«authenticité», capital dans les années 1960, représentait un terrain idéologique occupé. Les années 1960 ne furent pas que bouleversements et renouveau; l'histoire des religions se doit de considérer les deux tendances.

*Schlüsselbegriffe – Mots clés – Keywords*

Netherlands – Niederlande – Pays-Bas, 1960s – 1960er Jahre – les années 1960, media – Medien – médias, religious conservatism – religiöser Konservatismus – conservatisme religieux, gender – Geschlecht – genre, cultural memory – kulturelles Gedächtnis – mémoire culturelle.

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