

Den nödvändiga manligheten

– Om maskulinitet som soteriologisk signifikant i den svenska debatten om prästämbete och kön –

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the theological reasons why male gender is perceived as a necessary qualification for the office of priesthood in the Church of Sweden. The issues that are investigated examine the masculine ideal, the concern for a feminization of Christianity, claims for legitimacy and representation, and which discourses were used to reinforce the arguments for an office of priesthood reserved for men. The thesis primarily analyzes minutes from the three church councils that focused on the question of priesthood and gender: in 1938, regarding a special church office intended for women; and in 1957 and 1958, when the office of priesthood was debated.

Throughout, the priesthood was described as very masculine, adapted to men, public, competing, and hierarchical. Church of Sweden was also portrayed as too masculine. The notion that the manliness of the Christian priesthood would be questioned and needed remasculinization does not emerge from the debates. The ideals presented as problematic for men outside of a Christian context, such as humility and gentleness, were not criticized during the Church council debates. But indirectly, the frequent occurrence of referrals to military and scientific discourses, which are examined in the fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis, may indicate a problematic masculinity: an unquestioned male clergy would hardly have had to emphasize their affinity with the military and physicists, or so often point out physical differences between men and women.

Keywords: Masculinity, Gender, Power, Priesthood, Church of Sweden, Ordination of Women, Men's Superiority, Theology of Gender