

God's gifts and the paradox of choice: gender roles and the interplay of conservatism and liberalism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia.

Content

The language and narratives employed by representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia in explaining women's roles within the church highlight the interaction between conservative and liberal ideologies. In this paper, I will focus on the "gift" as a key concept both in the rethorics of pastors as well as anthropological theoretical concept that helps to sustain the conservative paradigm. The idea of "God's gifts," used by pastors and church members, shows a contradiction when it comes to choice and free will, foundational to liberal perspectives. The metaphorical use of "God's gifts" suggest that certain roles and choices, like gender roles, are determined by God. This creates a tension between the idea of personal freedom and the belief in a fixed, divinely ordained way of life. The analysis will explore how the division of gender roles is naturalized and reproduced.

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