

Never the twain shall meet?

Constructing religion and homosexuality in the media

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Outline

- LGBT emancipation in the Netherlands
- Religion and homosexuality in Dutch media
- Research questions
- Case 1: the Antichrist in Russia
- Case 2: the Gospel according to Conchita
- East and West
- Taking part in media debates as an LGBT Christian
- Discussion: homosexuality and religion in Spanish media

LGBT Emancipation in the Netherlands

- 2001: same-sex marriage
- 1998: registered partnership
- 1986: first church denomination blesses same-sex couples
- 2004: Protestant Church of the Netherlands blesses same-sex couples
- State support for NGO's
- LGBT rights as an export product

Religion and homosexuality: debates in the Netherlands

- ❑ MARCO (Marriage Registrar with Conscience Objections)
- ❑ Islam
- ❑ LGBT-teachers

- ❑ Whose legal rights are more important?



Changing the guard in the Netherlands

Private

Public

Before: Homosexuality

Religion

Now: Religion

Homosexuality

→ What about other countries?

* Serbia (Orthodox), Sweden (Lutheran/ secular), Spain (Catholic/secular)

→ Why homosexuality/religion?

Discourse analysis

- Discourse: a set of ideas, based on an ideology
- Power works through language
- Authority of the speaker
- Reach of the medium
- Emotions that are evoked

- Discourses about homosexuality often connected to other things (national identity, religion, place in society)

The Antichrist is gay: Russia (I)

The Antichrist will teach evil, teach that killing and violence are good. One would think: who would accept such a leader? However, today, it is being implemented in our consciousness that there is no objective difference between sin and virtue as in many countries same-sex marriages and normal marriages are legally placed on the same level.

(Patriarch Kiryill of Russia)

The Antichrist is gay: Russia (II)

- The Antichrist: a strong term?
- Inflation of the Antichrist: used many times in Russian history
- Connected to the “non-Russian” (US, Western Europe)
- The Antichrist as glue
- Challenge for LGBT activists

The Gospel according to Conchita



Conchita in Western European perception

- Personal story
- Bullied
- Coming-out
- Happiness

Conchita in Eastern European perception

- Russia: shave your beard!
- Serbia: reject this Jesus-like figure

Conchita as Jesus



Saint Wilgefortis



East and West

- Are we “defending” a dominantly secular or religious country?
- Cf. Popularity of the Pope(s)
- East and West need each other in their series of a collective “we”
- Reality is more complicated

LGBT Christians in the media

- Important role: we can show nuance
- Use the power of language
- Be creative about your own theology/ reading of Bible and tradition

And what about the South? Discussion

- What are major debates on homosexuality in Spain? Does religion play an important role there?
- What were the responses to Conchita in Spain? And to the Pope(s)?
- There seems to be a clear East-West divide in Europe. What about Southern Europe? How can it be characterized, what is specific for Spain?
- Would you want to become an active participant in public debates? Why (not)? What would you want to add to current debates?