

Reese, A. (2006). »*Ich weiß nicht, wo da Religion anfängt und aufhört*«. Eine empirische Studie zum Zusammenhang von Lebenswelt und Religiosität bei Singlefrauen. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus. ISBN-10:3-579-05298-5.

This shortened version of Annegret Reese's dissertation, which was accepted by the University of Essen in 2005, deals with the life structures and life experiences of childless single women around the age of 40. The author looks at a series of questions that are important from the point of view of religious education and pastoral theology: how do single women see themselves, how do they manage their lives, and what role do religion and religiosity play for them?

The book is divided into four main parts. A theoretical introduction to the subject (A) is followed by an account of the study methodology (B). The third part describes the author's empirical research (C), and finally the author presents her concluding hypotheses and discusses the religious-pedagogical and pastoral implications of her findings.

Reese does not restrict her study of the religiosity of single women to a predefined concept of religion. Instead, she allows the women themselves to define religiosity. In the theoretical introduction, Reese analyses the central concept of individualization, as well as the concepts of *Lebensgestaltung* (life structuring) and *Lebensbewältigung* (life coping). She presents the findings of singles research to date in these areas, as well as a very interesting overview of singlehood throughout human history. From her review of the existing literature, Reese concludes that the thematic field of the religiosity of single women remains a research desideratum.

The author supports her decision to use a qualitative approach to the subject with stringent and cogent arguments. The empirical study combines a number of different methods. The interviews are structured with the help of an interview guideline. The women were interviewed twice, at intervals of one to two weeks. Analysis consisted of a semantic-syntactic fine analysis of key passages as well as a thematically oriented reductive analysis of the interviews. After a pilot phase involving four women, Reese refined her instruments for the main phase of the study, which again consisted of interviews with four women. The interviews with three of the respondents from the main study phase were analysed.

In the semantic-syntactic fine analysis, linguistic content (syntax) and linguistic meaning (semantics) were analysed to unlock the meaning content of the text. In the thematically oriented reductive analysis of the interview material, key questions are grouped according to content. The thematic areas are: attitudes toward childlessness, the challenges of living alone, basic resources, and attitudes toward religion. The chapter entitled "Religion und Religiosität der befragten Singlefrauen" (Religion and religiosity of the single women interviewed) (353-393) shows that the three women whose interviews were analysed do consider themselves to be religious, although the notion of "religiosity" has different meanings for each one.

In the final part, Reese establishes hypotheses for the three areas "Life structuring of single women", "Tradition and the single woman", and "Religion and religiosity of single women". She concludes with a chapter in which she examines the gender-specific components of the interviews from a feminist perspective, analysing the contents of the individual thematic fields in terms of their relevance to religious education and pastoral

theology. The observed contents and associations are presented and are related back to the findings of the prior literature.

The results of the study are too numerous to be described individually here. One striking example of the author's findings, however, is that single women are virtually absent from the pastoral processes of the church, and that post-modern lifestyles are to all intents and purposes ignored in pastoral practice.

This book is a first-rate example of qualitative empirical research. The methodology is clearly exposed, and the analysis of the interviews is careful and thorough. The work is clearly structured and the numerous summaries further enhance the text's already superior readability.

Parallelisms between profane actions and religious motifs could give rise to interesting discussions (e.g. analogy of a fan's imitation with religious imitation). In connection with publications of qualitative empirical research, one of the questions that inevitably arise concerns how comprehensively the analytical process and results are presented. Annegret Reese has fully laid out the research process (the book numbers 581 pages). This is a book that should not be lacking from any library with a focus on religiosity or feminist theology. — G. RITZER, Salzburg