

Editorial

The present issue completes volume 4 of *Religion and Gender*. It is the long-awaited special issue on Pussy Riot's Punk Prayer, the controversial performance in Moscow's Christ the Saviour Cathedral with which the Russian political art collective, Pussy Riot, in February 2012 became world-famous. As the editors of this special issue, Anne-Marie Korte, Katya Tolstaya and Heleen Zorgdrager, point out in their introduction, the Punk Prayer performance serves, in a manifold way, as a litmus paper, and hence the various contributors read the event and its unfolding dynamics through the intersecting lenses of political protest, religious culture, female bodies and gendered symbols. As much as this special issue focuses on a single, though high-profile, case that emerged in a specific geographical and socio-political context, we believe that the examination of Pussy Riot's Punk Prayer as a particular manifestation of religion and gender in the public domain is relevant to the understanding of wider dynamics of gender, religion and sexuality in the contemporary world.

Launched over three years ago, *Religion and Gender* has successfully established itself at the intersection of the study of religion(s) and gender studies. In a relatively short period of time, the journal has become internationally known and is increasingly recognised as a leading forum and key source for the systematic study of gender and religion in an interdisciplinary perspective. This is reflected, for example, in the increase of the number and the quality of unsolicited submissions to the journal, in the growing number and global spread of online subscribers to the journal, and in the impressive statistics of website visitors and downloaded articles.

All this could not have been achieved without the enthusiastic and dedicated support of the members of our editorial and advisory boards, whose names are listed on the journal website, www.religionandgender.org. Having completed its first three-year cycle, *Religion and Gender* acknowledges the contribution of various board members who have contributed to the establishment of the journal and have now terminated their service. Among them are B Scherer, who has served as one of the executive editors and over the years made a significant contribution to discussions about the journal's content and editorial strategy, as well as the following editorial board members who in various ways – not at least by associating their names and academic reputations with a newly

launched journal – have contributed to the successful start of *Religion and Gender*: Pamela Sue Anderson, Gerard Loughlin, Shuruq Naguib, David Plüss, Lieve Troch and Meyda Yeğenoğlu.

Initially established as an Open Access journal thanks to an incentive grant from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, *Religion and Gender* is currently reconsidering its publishing strategy. The field of Open Access publishing is complex, especially in the Humanities, and from an international perspective developments in this field are far from uniform. As editors we are committed to further develop *Religion and Gender* as an internationally recognised, refereed academic journal, and the question we face is what publishing policy and infrastructure is needed to facilitate this for the longer term. We are currently discussing this question both internally and with some academic publishers and we hope to update our readers on the outcomes at a later stage. As for now, we can at least reveal one of our strategies, which is to further build an academic community supporting *Religion and Gender*. To that aim, an International Association for the Study of Religion and Gender will be launched at the Religion, Gender and Body Politics conference, taking place at Utrecht University, the Netherlands from 12 to 14 February 2015. For more information about this conference and the association, please check the website www.projectreligionandgender.org. We look forward to welcoming many of you, readers of *Religion and Gender*, at what promises to be an exciting conference.