

'Unhiding' women: Decolonising the mind of a female systematic theologian

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This article will consider the parameters of systematic theological-‘knowledge’ today by examining the contribution of women’s theology to the field. This examination takes place in the context of debates about knowledge-construction within institutes of higher learning, and context of increased numbers of women theology students, as well as international emphasis on achieving gender equality, such as the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals. With regard to curriculums of systematic theology, it is noted that a proverbial ‘canon within a canon’ exists with regard to including a diversity of voices in prescribed study material, specifically the contributions of women’s perspectives and women’s history as subject-content. This ‘data-gap’ is problematic with regard to epistemology and hermeneutics, which are instrumental in constructing a grammar of faith – that is, ‘church doctrine’ (which is traditionally the main component of systematic theology). This implies that a type of decolonisation, or unlearning is necessary. If a next generation of women systematic theologians are to be nurtured, approaches to teaching systematic theology and the methodology of systematic theology itself requires deconstruction.

Contribution: This research aims to contribute to the fields of systematic theology, women’s studies, women’s theology and gender studies. It will also contribute to the fields of postcolonial epistemology and hermeneutics, as well as the study of the methodology of systematic theology.

Keywords: women; theology; history; curriculum; systematic theology; gender equality; data; doctrine; education.

Introduction

Systematic theologians, systematic theology, ‘canons’ and ‘unhiding’

In 2014, the South African systematic theologian Danie Veldsman presented his inaugural address on the occasion of becoming head of the then Department of Dogmatics and Christian Ethics at the University of Pretoria (Veldsman 2014). Inaugural addresses many times have the function of presenting definitions of the research field, and overviews of the current state of the scholarship in that field. With regard to systematic theology, Veldsman stated that many systematic theologians and ethicists are themselves ‘not always precisely sure or clear on what they are doing ... partly because contextuality, historicity and personality come into reflective play’ (Veldsman 2014). In this regard, he indicated that there are different types of systematic theologians, and, in my opinion, different ways of doing ‘systematic theology’.

During my undergraduate years of theological study, and later on as a young researcher, I encountered systematic theology in a less diverse way than Veldsman referred to in his inaugural address – and it made me wonder if I was a ‘real’ systematic theologian. I encountered a proverbial ‘canon within a canon’ with regard to systematic theology, and this related specifically to a lack in diversity of voices in systematic theology I was introduced to. Ultimately, these voices and perspectives constructed the systematic theological ‘knowledge’ I was introduced to.

The expression ‘canon within a canon’ has deeper theological roots and complexities linked to it than I can expand on in the limited scope of this article (see e.g. Kooi 2004). For the purpose of this article, however, this phrase indicates that a specific perspective, concept, interpretation or voice from within the ‘canon’ – the recognisable body of work that could be regarded as ‘systematic theology’ – becomes indicative and determinative of the whole of that ‘canon’. It also implies that other perspectives ‘outside’ the canon, although indicative of the field, are not included in this type of ‘canon’. What I encountered was akin to a type of colonisation of systematic theology. When Jürgen Moltmann (2008:132) wrote about his life in his autobiography, ‘A Broad Place’ and recounts his German academic context, which

Note: Special Collection: Wim Dreyer Dedication, sub-edited by Jaco Beyers (University of Pretoria, South Africa).

was marked by colleagues critiquing each other for the sake of critique, and a very fixed, rigid form of academic theology with almost a modernist emphasis on hypothesis and methods – I can identify with that, as it is similar to my own encounters with systematic theology. I can also echo the words of Kwok Pui-lan (2005) in the introduction of her work, 'Postcolonial imagination and feminist theology', about the process of disentangling yourself from a specific construction of knowledge:

For someone like me who has studied Christian theology and read the works of Schleiermacher, Barth, and Tillich since the age of nineteen, there are many questions to be asked and a lot of unlearning to do. (p. 4)

In a way, this article is about a decolonisation of the mind of a female systematic theologian (i.e., my mind). It is about a journey of realisation of the diversity of the voices in the field of systematic theology, which included women's voices long before I was an undergraduate student. In this regard, the word 'unhiding' in the title is significant and purposeful, and links up with Pui-lan's word 'unlearning'. Literally, to 'bring out of concealment', 'unhiding' is purposefully chosen as a hermeneutical key to this article about the changing landscape of systematic theology. I link 'unhiding' to the notion of 'unlearning' as an act of translation, an act of liberation from conceptual entanglements, and an act of reconsidering instruments of comprehension. This is how I read Pui-lan's use of the word 'unlearning' and also how it is encountered in the work of Hannah Arendt (cf. Knott 2014). If 'unlearning' is about disentangling the way you comprehend, then 'unhiding' is about disentangling the hidden from that which made it hidden, questioning the hiddenness in and of itself. It is about unsettling constructs about the conditions for visibility. In a postmodern sense, it is also about the recognition that aspects of the hidden remain. Unhiding is an epistemological and hermeneutical process, involving different acts of disclosure, and exploring multiple facets of hiddenness.

This article is also about highlighting the problems associated with the male-dominated systematic theological knowledge constructions I had as a student and a young researcher. Finally, this article is about a consideration of the landscape of systematic theology today, specifically by examining the contribution of women and women's theology to the field. As the brief mapping exercise at the end of the article will indicate, women's contributions to systematic theology have been taking place for a number of decades, but these contributions are not necessarily considered 'mainstream' – and therein lies the problem for undergraduate students of theology and religion, and the challenge for future systematic theologians.

Purpose of the article

The purpose of this article is threefold. Firstly, it is presented in honour of a colleague, associate professor Wim Dreyer. In the period between 2017 and 2018, the Department of Church History and Church Polity, and the Department of Dogmatics and Christian Ethics at the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Pretoria, merged into a new department, namely Systematic and Historical Theology. Dreyer is a church historian and historical theologian and we became colleagues.

He was also one of my undergraduate lecturers at the same Faculty between 2002 and 2008. This article is written on the occasion of his retirement, and as such, in honour of his work in the field of historical theology (see e.g. Dreyer & Pillay 2017:117–132), there are some historical aspects to this article.

In my undergraduate study of church history and historical theology, I encountered much the same as mentioned earlier with regard to systematic theology (and Christian ethics): I did not learn about the history of one, single woman theologian or female historical figure, nor was I prescribed any scholarly work by women theologians in the field of historical theology. Secondly, the purpose of this article is therefore also to provide a very brief (limited) mapping of the women working in the field of systematic theology. The purpose of this is to give a glimpse of the immense existing contribution, and to critique the invisibility of these women's work in my experiences of undergraduate curricula.

Thirdly, the purpose of this article is to indicate aspects of a changing landscape of systematic theology and to make an argument in favour of deconstructing paradigms and approaches when it comes to determining the scholarly work our students of systematic theology is exposed to. This all takes place against a growing emphasis on gender equality, globally,¹ and protests about the harmful, lasting impact of patriarchal hegemony. In South Africa, at Institutes of Higher Learning and Education such as universities, there is also a pronounced focus on decolonising curricula (Saurombe 2018; Senekal & Lenz 2020). This article is presented at the intersection of all of these factors.

Approach and methodological remarks

This article makes use of aspects of feminist methodology, which overlap with aspects of gender methodology, in as far as it recognises gender and gender constructions as a significant variable when doing research. Feminist methodology (and gender methodologies) recognises the varieties of experiences related to different gender identities and acknowledges that gender sensitivity should be an integral part of the research process with reference to the identities of and relationships between the researcher and the researched. Specifically, feminist methodologies recognise the significance of politics, power and emotion during the entirety of the research process and emphasise that the personal involvement of the researcher cannot be ignored (Letherby 2015:76–96). In this regard, the use of the first person, singular 'I' is both necessary and non-negotiable.

A changing landscape for systematic theology?

In her PhD thesis, titled, 'Imagining human flourishing? A systematic theological exploration of contemporary soteriological discourses', Nadia Marais (2013) incorporated the

¹See, for example, the annual Global Gender Gap Report, published by the World Economic Forum (2023), since 2006.

theology of women theologians in a significant way. As the PhD was in the field of systematic theology, utilising women's theological scholarship in this way did represent an important indicator of a possible changing landscape in systematic theology. The study illustrated that there is a variety of voices and in fact a substantial cohort of women theologians' work that can be utilised. It is an example of how theologians—scholars, researchers, practitioners—are by no means dependent on a male default in theology and in systematic theology in particular. In this vein, I am curious about what a survey of prescribed work in schools, departments and faculties of Theology and Religion across South Africa *currently* would yield: how many women theologians' works are prescribed generally, but in systematic theology in particular. How much work by women theologians might be listed on an 'extra reading material' or recommended or secondary list? Two issues are involved (or at stake) here. Firstly, it is about students learning that there *are* women (systematic) theologians, and secondly, learning that women have contributed in a major way to the body of systematic theological inquiry and research. This is about being exposed to women's insights into systematic theological themes and finding out that there are a variety of voices, a variety of theological mentors and a variety of ways of systematic theological expression, which include, of course, different approaches to the notion of 'church doctrine'.

Such a survey might not be possible or feasible because of the inherent competition between universities in South Africa, safeguarding individual and specialised research niches, fear of what critique might do to public images or rankings and theological academic study's fight for survival. In their book, *For the Life of the World. Theology That Makes a Difference*, Volf and Croasmun (2019:35–60) allude to this when they state that 'Christian theology has lost its way because it has neglected its purpose' (Volf & Croasmun 2019:11). They are talking about the 'Western type of Christian academic theology' and not Christian theology in general, because what they describe as 'accidental theology' is flourishing in other parts of the world and also outside of the academy.² Although their work requires a more thorough analysis, their identification of the external and internal crises of theology underscores why it might be difficult to undertake a survey as I have mentioned. They point out that theology has a vibrancy *outside* of traditional Western (male) theology. This does not mean one should exclude these voices. There is, however, quite some distance to cross before the variety or diversity that Veldsman (2014) hints at in his inaugural address is attained.

The Finnish systematic theologian, Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen (2016) succinctly states this in the introduction to Volume 4 of his series, 'A constructive Christian theology for the pluralistic world', titled, *Spirit and Salvation*. The heading of the introduction is, 'In search for a new methodological vision for constructive theology':

2. When considering 'theology that makes a difference', they argue that one should be mindful of the way the descriptive and normative dimensions of theology might be distorted. This relates to how theology is reduced to science, and how, on the one hand, there are attempts to cling to past convictions and on the other hand, theology is only about unending suspicion and critique (Volf & Croasmun 2019: 52–52). Their work is noteworthy and requires a more thorough analysis.

While gratefully building on the deep and wide theological reflection in Christian tradition and in the diversity of contemporary approaches, the current project also continues sympathetic critique and corrective work concerning the grave limitations and omissions in earlier works. Particularly alarming in all systematic theological presentations (unless they are intentionally 'contextual' in which case they do not attempt a comprehensive doctrinal task) is the limitation of conversation partners and writings consulted to white Euro-American males—to whose company I belong! To rectify this serious weakness, the current project not only seeks a robust and consistent dialogue with the best of historical materials, but also includes as equal dialogue partners theologians from across the current diversity of genders, races, geographical and social locations, and agendas such as liberationism and postcolonialism. (Kärkkäinen 2016:1)

In his way, he highlights that recognition and incorporation of different voices other than the *default* is a necessary and urgent undertaking. As systematic theologians, we don't have to go in desperate search for these voices, or imagine them—we just have to let the existing diversity of voices, speak. Just as I am curious about how many women theologians' work feature in curricula and postgraduate studies, I am also curious about the effect it would have if their voices would be included, and more 'radically', prescribed as part of the foundational texts. It might be interesting to have a debate again on what are considered, 'foundational texts' and on which foundation they are regarded thus.

In this regard, it turns out a survey almost like the kind I describe was undertaken by Ernst Conradie and the results were published in 2005 in an article titled, 'Teaching Systematic Theology in the Southern African context: A survey of current practices'. A variety of theological institutions were included in the survey and at the minimum, two observations from the article are notable: firstly, there were no modules about women's theology or liberation theology included in any of the 12 curricula mentioned; and secondly, of the 14 core prescribed texts in systematic theology, only one was by a woman. Has this changed since that article was published? Has a possible change energised the field of systematic theology? If there is a continuation of a 'canon within a canon', what is the effect of that? In my opinion, these are some of the questions the subject-field of systematic theology is faced with.

In a 2019 publication, titled, 'Invisible women. Exposing data bias in a world designed for men', Caroline Criado Perez indicated that women's ways of knowing, or approaches or experiences in research are often considered as a type of speciality or niche area. On the one hand, this implies recognition of these voices. This, however, on the other hand, contributes to what she describes as 'canon-formation', by which knowledge and information are circulated, distributed or taught on the basis of their established impact (Criado Perez 2019:18–19). This relates to my introductory remarks. Because women's voices in this regard are regarded as a 'niche', a cycle starts whereby knowledge generated by women, which sometimes includes a focus on women, is never deemed 'universally applicable' or useful to a variety of students or

researchers; or it is not regarded as the type of research that has a historical impact, and therefore it is not referenced or prescribed. Because it is not referenced or prescribed, it cannot transcend the niche or make its way into the canon, and is therefore never acknowledged as having an impact. Although there are many women theologians, who certainly do not all focus on feminist or womanist theology, their work is therefore not deemed foundational and fades into obscurity unless someone makes a concerted effort to retrieve those voices.

In his work about 'Doing systematic theology in the postapartheid condition', Rian Venter (2012) indicated that the work performed by a younger generation of systematic theological scholars (he focusses on the Reformed tradition in South Africa), is much different from that of the previous generation. This is because of the way systematic theology and Christian ethics are more intimately related and the way that the social function of theology is pursued in the key area of public theology. Despite this change, Venter (2012) mentions a number of issues that are missing, which includes:

[A] sustained engagement with the African reality, dialogue with various expressions of the Arts and non-Christian religions, prominence of race as continued theological challenge ... and the virtual absence of women and African scholars producing significant [sic] body of work in Systematic Theology. (p. 148)

The empowerment of women scholars specialising in systematic theology remains a challenge. However, in a footnote, Venter relates 'significant' in terms of recognition and contributions to the notions of productivity and of 'demonstrable influence'.

In the light of Venter's description of what constitutes 'demonstrable influence', I remain curious as to whether the contributions of women theologians who did not make it into the 'canon' contributed to women's virtual absence in producing any significant body of work, at least in South Africa. While I was being prescribed the work of male American and European systematic theologians during my undergraduate studies, women theologians internationally had been producing work of 'demonstrable influence' for approximately 20 years (e.g., Mary Daly, Carter Hayward, Judith Plaskow and Carol Christ). I was not exposed to any of that. Venter conducted his study around 2010–2012, and since then a number of women have completed PhD's and are engaged in research and postgraduate studies in systematic theology (and ethics³) at institutions across South Africa. For the purposes of this argument, I would like to briefly reflect on the presence of some women theologians' voices particularly related to systematic theology in South Africa and beyond.

Mapping women working on systematic theology

Mapping is a technique encountered in the work of Serene Jones (2000; cf. Marais 2013). The purpose of this particular mapping is to provide a *brief overview* (my emphasis) of the

3. A brief remark about the connection I make here between systematic theology and Christian ethics: Although these are separate, demarcated fields, in my experience at my Faculty and in South Africa, these two fields tend to be grouped together in academic departments. In this article, for example, I reference both Veldsman (2014) and Venter (2012) who make the same 'loose' connection.

number of women working in the field of systematic theology, to counter the argument that there are too few women in the field, and therefore limited opportunities to reference and prescribe their work, an argument I have encountered many times over almost two decades. The method of the map, the parameters, was drawn by considering the official websites of academic institutions in South Africa in the Higher Education Sector, as well as academic institutions of Higher Learning in Southern Africa, and beyond. The 'map' is by *no means exhaustive*, and that would require a much larger study that is beyond the scope of this article.

The map is not about highlighting feminist theology. It is about women doing systematic theology and theology, although many times women doing systematic theology are doing feminist or womanist theology too or doing systematic theology from a women's theology perspective. This is simply because of the way feminist theology inherently recognises different epistemologies, which incidentally provided the language and theory that is utilised by contemporary postcolonial theory, as indicated by Pui-Lan (2005). In the introduction of 'Freeing Theology. Essentials of theology from a feminist perspective', Catherine LaCugna (ed. 1993:1–2) writes that 'the presence of women theologians not only has changed the sociology of who is doing theology today, it has fundamentally changed the way of doing theology'. This is the point: women's theology provides a gateway to enter into systematic theology and to reflect on it from an expanded perspective that recognises there is not an 'archetype' of systematic theology. Manion and Shah (2019) in their work about decolonising gender and education research highlighted how feminist methodological approaches' commitment to epistemically, theoretically and methodologically interrogate issues of power and difference has made a substantial contribution to the recognition that there are 'different ways of knowing'.

As indicated by the 2004 publication edited by Ernst Conradie and Charl Fredericks titled 'Mapping Systematic Theology in Africa. An indexed bibliography', creating an index of publications and contributions along thematic lines is a substantial undertaking which requires a specific methodology and benchmarks for inclusion in such an index. That particular research project was based on the fact that systematic theology had received little attention in postcolonial African theology.⁴ It could be necessary and worthwhile to conduct a similar research project focussed solely on women theologians' contributions towards systematic theology in South Africa, Africa and beyond.

Two South African women have published overviews of women's theology, with incidentally the same subtitle, namely 'Women doing theology'. Both Denise Ackermann (1994: 197–211) and Sue Rakoczy (2004) published on this matter,

4. In the inaugural address, titled, 'Constructively engaging in a post-dogmatic Dogmatics', Veldsman (2014) attempted a mapping of sorts and utilised David Ford's typology of five types of systematic-ethical reflection to 'situate' trends of systematic theology in South Africa.

TABLE 1: South Africa and Africa.

Theologian	Institution	Area of work	Reference	Date viewed
Louise Kretzschmar	University of South Africa	Christian ethics, spirituality and leadership, social ethics, woman, society and church	https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Louise-Kretzschmar	31 March 2023
Jennifer Slater	University of South Africa	Christian doctrine and theological ethics; human rights and values, gender issues, medical ethics and moral theology	https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jennifer-Slater	31 March 2023
Fundiswa Kobo	University of South Africa	Womanist theology; Black theology of liberation; African and Christian spirituality, systematic theology; Christian ethics	https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Human-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-centres,-institutes-&-units/School-of-Humanities/Department-of-Christian-Spirituality,-Church-History-and-Missiology/Staff-members	11 April 2023
Lerato Kobe	-	systematic theology, womanist theology	https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Human-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-centres,-institutes-&-units/School-of-Humanities/Department-of-Christian-Spirituality,-Church-History-and-Missiology/Staff-members	11 April 2023
Hannelie Wood	University of South Africa	Systematic theology (Eschatology, Ecclesiology), Gender studies	https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Human-Sciences/Schools,-departments,-centres,-institutes-&-units/School-of-Humanities/Depart	11 April 2023
Nontando Hadebe	University of the Free State	General systematic theology; contextual theology; African theology; womanist and feminist theology; Christian spirituality	https://www.ufs.ac.za/theology/departments-and-centres/historical-and-constructive-theology-home/general/staff?pid=PwE3dm70LjY%3d	11 April 2023
Selina Palm	-	Systematic theology, Ethics, Gender studies	https://www.ufs.ac.za/theology/departments-and-centres/historical-and-constructive-theology-home/general/staff?pid=yIGEqCvytlc%3d	11 April 2023
Beatrice Okyere-Manu	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Christian ethics	https://srpc.ukzn.ac.za/staff-profile/ethics/beatrice-okyere-manu/	11 April 2023
Lilian Cheelo Siwila	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Gender, Christian ethics and systematic theology	https://srpc.ukzn.ac.za/staff-profile/theology/lilian-cheelo-siwila/	11 April 2023
Sue Rakoczy	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Systematic theology, Feminist theology	https://srpc.ukzn.ac.za/staff-profile/theology/sue-rakoczy/	11 April 2023
Nadia Marais	Stellenbosch University	systematic theology, Public theology	http://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/theology/Pages/Systematic-Theology---Ecclesiology.aspx	11 April 2023
Manitza Kotzé	Noth West University	Christian Ethics (Bioethics); systematic theology, Reproductive health	https://theology.nwu.ac.za/christian-ministry-and-leadership-unit-reformational-theology-and-development-sa-society/manitza	11 April 2023
Tanya van Wyk	University of Pretoria	Systematic theology, Christian ethics; Gender studies	https://www.up.ac.za/systematic-and-historical-theology/article/2983728/dr-tanya-van-wyk	11 April 2023
Yolande Steenkamp	University of Pretoria	Systematic theology, Sustainable Development, Leadership	https://www.unsdsn.org/south-africa	11 April 2023
Elina Hankela	University of Johannesburg	Social ethics; systematic theology	https://www.uj.ac.za/members/elina-hankela/	11 April 2023
Isabel Phiri	University of the Western Cape	Feminist theology; religion; Christian ethics	https://desmondtutucentre-rsj.uwc.ac.za/tag/prof-isabel-phiri/	11 April 2023
Sarojini Nadar	University of the Western Cape	Women's theology; gender studies; transdisciplinary studies	https://desmondtutucentre-rsj.uwc.ac.za/prof-sarojini-nadar/	11 April 2023
Fulata Lisungu Moyo	University of Malawi	Systematic theology and Christian ethics	<i>cf. Fiedler (2017)</i>	-
Mercy Oduyoye Betty Ekeya, Anne Nasimiyu-Wasike, Musimbi Kanyoro, Bernadette Mbuy Beya, Rosemary Edet, Rachel Tetteh, Teresa Okure and Elizabeth Amoah	Circle of concerned African women theologians		<i>cf. Labeodan (2016:5)</i>	-
Mercy Oduyoye	Trinity Theological Seminary	African women's theology; includes aspects of systematic theology	18 November 2023	18 November 2023

albeit from feminist, womanist and ecofeminist perspectives.⁵ The one is a chapter and the other one is a book, but both present good references to the considerable work of women theologians globally and locally. Although Denise Ackermann does not describe herself as a systematic theologian, her overview for the purpose of this article is useful. Sue Rakoczy is a systematic theologian. For both of these women, spirituality is an important aspect of doing theology, which is something that can inherently be related to systematic theology as there

5. I am also indebted to the aforementioned work conducted by Nadia Marais in her doctoral thesis. Her work is mentioned specifically because of the systematic consideration of a number of women's theologians work, related to systematic theology specifically. Others, such as Manitza Kotzé (2013), have incorporated the work of Joy-Ann McDougall in her PhD-thesis titled, 'A Christian Bioethical Perspective on Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) and Genetic Manipulation (GM)'. Kotzé has also recently provided an excellent overview of the work of Mercy Oduyoye (Kotzé 2019). A thorough study about which systematic theologians refer to or reference other systematic theologians and which themes these references are related to, would be an enormous undertaking. For now, from a cursory glance, it seems if women theologians' voices are recognised, it is by other women theologians.

are a number of national and international scholars in the field of systematic theology and ethics that also teach and incorporate spirituality in their work. These include Dorothee Soelle, Anne Hunt, Elizabeth Johnson, Mary Catherine Hilkert, Catherine LaCugna, Felicity Edwards, Jennifer Slater, Maria Isasi-Diaz, Fundiswa Kobo, Louise Kretzschmar (including Philip Sheldrake, Rian Venter, Dion Forster and my late colleague, Vuyani Vellem).

A brief map (Table 1 and 2) of women who have been and are doing systematic theology is presented here. These scholars, some of them retired, at some stage either was or still are (at the date of this article), affiliated with institutes of Higher Education and Learning in South Africa and beyond. They have postgraduate qualifications in the field of systematic theology and related fields, such as Christian ethics, or they

TABLE 2: International beyond Africa.

Theologian	Institution	Area of work	Reference	Date viewed
Dolores S. Williams	Union Theological Seminary	Womanist theology; intersectional theory and theology	https://utsnyc.edu/the-legacy-of-dr-dolores-s-williams/	12 April 2023
Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz	Drew University	Mujerista theology; political theology	Delgado (2012)	
Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel	-	Feminist theology; systematic theology	https://daniellshroyer.com/elizabeth-moltmann-wendel-monday-memorial/	12 April 2023
Rosemary Radford-Ruether	Claremont/Howard University	Feminist theology; systematic theology, Christian ethics; Ecofeminist theology	https://divinity.howard.edu/remembering-dr-rosemary-radford-ruether	12 April 2023
Letty M. Russel	Yale Divinity School	Systematic theology (ecclesiology; eschatology); Christian ethics; feminist theology	http://archives.news.yale.edu/v28.n10/story6.html	12 April 2023
Catherine LaCugna	University of Notre Dame	Systematic theology	https://news.nd.edu/news/lacugna-dies-of-cancer/	12 April 2023
Sallie McFague	Vanderbilt University	Feminist theology; systematic theology	https://news.vanderbilt.edu/2019/11/20/sallie-mcfague-vanderbilt-divinity-school-dean-emerita-has-died/	14 April 2023
Kwok Pui-Lan	Emory Candler School of Theology	Postcolonial theology; feminist theology; includes aspects of systematic theology	https://candler.emory.edu/faculty/profiles/kwok-pui-lan.html	14 April 2023
Elizabeth Johnson	Fordham University	Systematic theology	https://www.fordham.edu/info/23704/theology_faculty/6347/elizabeth_a_johnson	14 April 2023
Serene Jones	Union Theological Sem, NY	Systematic theology (soteriology; eschatology); feminist theology and feminist theory	https://utsnyc.edu/faculty/serene-jones/	14 April 2023
Joy Ann McDougall	Emory University; Candler	Systematic theology	https://candler.emory.edu/faculty/profiles/mcdougall-joy.html	14 April 2023
Kathryn Tanner	Yale Divinity School	Systematic theology	https://divinity.yale.edu/faculty-and-research/yds-faculty/kathryn-tanner	14 April 2023
Linda Hogan	Trinity College, Dublin	Christian ethics	https://www.tcd.ie/research/profiles/?profile=lhogan2	14 April 2023
Lisa Isherwood	Winchester University	Liberation theology, feminist theology; Christian ethics; systematic theology	https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/staff/lisa-isherwood/	14 April 2023
Margaret Farley	Yale Divinity School	Christian Ethics	https://divinity.yale.edu/faculty-and-research/yds-faculty/margaret-farley	14 April 2023
Celia Deane-Drummond	Oxford University	Systematic theology; science and religion; Christian and religious ethics	https://www.theology.ox.ac.uk/people/professor-celia-deane-drummond	14 April 2023
Ellen Charry	Princeton Theological Seminary	Systematic theology; Christian ethics	https://www.ptsem.edu/people/ellen-t-charry	14 April 2023
Sarah Coakley	St Andrews University	Systematic theology	https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/divinity/people/sc340/	14 April 2023
Mary Catherine Hilker	University of Notre Dame	Systematic theology	https://theology.nd.edu/people/mary-catherine-hilker/	14 April 2023
Lisa Sowle Cahill	Boston College	Christian ethics; systematic theology	https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/theology/people/faculty-directory/lisa-cahill.ht	14 April 2023

have a general theology postgraduate qualification, but are involved in teaching aspects of systematic theology and Christian ethics. Many of them teach women's theology and religion from a systematic theological or ethical perspective. These scholars are presented in no particular order, save to group them by their former or current affiliations. A brief summary of their research work topics is presented in Table 1 and Table 2. These were gathered from their respective institutional websites, and their publication lists, as available electronically.

Conclusion

The future of systematic theology and an unfinished reformation

Women or female scholars have been working in the field of systematic theology for decades. The number of scholars, once you start to collate it, is actually remarkable. Therefore, in the theologians, women, who 21st century, at South African theological faculties and departments situated at institutes of Higher Learning and Education (as this constitutes my context), there is no justifiable reason to 'fall back' on a default 'canon' of male scholarly work. As stated, it would take a much larger study than this article to determine the extent of the changing landscape of systematic theology (also internationally). In my immediate context, which is a Faculty of Theology and Religion, the number of

female theology students has steadily been increasing since 2010, to the extent that they make up half of more than half of the demographics of the student population in my lectures. These upcoming theologians, women, who will be working in the reality of the global context, deserve to learn about their forebears. They need to provide a legacy for future generations of systematic theologians about an inclusive, diverse construction of systematic theological knowledge.

From the brief overview, further study would be required to determine if the classic formulations and methods of systematic theology (whatever they may be) are prone to exclude women's ways of knowing (see introduction), and will be able to adapt to include intersectional voices, which argue for a foundational change in our understanding of the notion of doctrine, and the related epistemologies and ecclesiologies. In all cases, this constitutes an unfinished reformation.

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This article is submitted as my contribution to honour a colleague, Associate Professor Wim Dreyer, at the time of his retirement in 2023. Professor Dreyer was one of my undergraduate lecturers, and later he became my colleague in the merged department of Systematic and Historical Theology at the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Pretoria. As such, I have known him in various capacities over almost two decades and it is a privilege to contribute to this collection of essays.

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Author's contributions

T.v.W. declares that they are the sole author of this research article.

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