

# FEMINIST CHRISTIANS IN FLANDERS 1979-1990: A NEW FEMINISATION?

## Introduction

The second feminist wave in the sixties and seventies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not go by unnoticed in the western catholic world. From the beginning of the seventies, a new feminist theology came into being <sup>(1)</sup>. In spite of the great diversity within this new theological current, some elements remained constant. Criticism of the male bias of traditional theology, and the wish to bring in the experience and viewpoint of women, remained central issues. Although most feminist theologians stayed within the Christian tradition, striving for its critical reform, some chose to explore different paths, considering Christianity as too patriarchal to be fruitful for women and turning their backs on it <sup>(2)</sup>. The best known among the latter was undoubtedly Mary Daly in the United States.

Originally, feminist theology was particularly popular in the United States, where Mary Daly and also Rosemary Radford Ruether were the principal theologians in this context <sup>(3)</sup>. Influenced by the American example, some prominent representatives

(1) R. GIBELLINI, *Panorama de la théologie au 20<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, Paris, 1994, p. 482-484; A. LOADES, *Feminist Theology*, in D.F. FORD (ed.), *The Modern Theologians. An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford, 1997, p. 575; S. DANAVEY, *Continuing the Story, but Departing the Text*, in R.S. CHOPP and S.G. DANAVEY (eds.), *Horizons in Feminist Theology. Identity, Tradition and Norms*, Minneapolis, 1997, p. 198.

(2) N.J. FINLEY, *Political Activism and Feminist Spirituality*, in W.H. SWATOS (ed.), *Gender and Religion*, New Brunswick, London, 1994, p. 164; A. PORTERFIELD, *The Transformation of American Religion. The Story of a Late Twentieth-Century Awakening*, Oxford, 2001, p. 166; R. GIBELLINI, *Panorama...* [see n. 1], p. 487-488; U. KING, *Gender and the Study of Religion*, in U. KING (ed.), *Religion and Gender*, Oxford, Cambridge, 1995, p. 6; R.R. RUETHER, *The Emergence of Christian Feminist Theology*, in S.F. PARSONS (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Feminist Theology*, Cambridge, 2002, p. 9.

(3) R.R. RUETHER, *The Emergence...* [see n. 2], p. 7, 9; M. JACOBS, *Feministische theologie in Europa: tussen beweging en academische institutionalisering*, in *Concilium*, 32 (1996), p. 45.