

“She Will be Unclean as Long as She Has the Discharge!” Concepts and Representations of Menstruation in the Context of Christianity

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(Summary)

The article aims to describe the construction of the Christian concept of menstruation and its influence on the beliefs of the traditional patriarchal Bulgarian society about women’s blood. This research examines Biblical verses and stories, as well as interpretations by theologians and representatives of the supreme power in the Church, who shaped societal and religious norms and attitudes towards menstruating women. Within the framework of institutional religiosity, female blood and female body are construed as potent and dangerous. Further they are associated with categories such as “sinful” and “earthly.” Thus, the author argues that there is a stringent control of blood within the context of the Christian pursuit of “divine purity” and “immaculateness.” The Orthodox position is not static and varies over the years – from extremely dogmatic ideas to more liberal ones, depending on the time period and context.

Keywords: Christianity; menstruation; female body; female blood

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