

# Entangled Religions

Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Religious Contact and Transfer

## Call for Papers for Special Issue

# RELIGION AND PANDEMIC: SHIFTS IN INTERPRETATIONS, POPULAR LORE, AND PRACTICES

The global crisis caused by the **COVID-19 pandemic** brings about various responses, from acts of social solidarity to outbreaks of hidden conflicts in public life. Religious communities and organizations are strongly entangled in these processes. The very fact of the pandemic, its emotional perception, as well as its medical and political implications require **instant reactions from religious institutions and individual believers**. These reactions may relate to changes in rituals, daily practices, and forms of communication; lead to a crisis of the religious economy; cause the emergence of new myths, phobias, and protective strategies; and generate theological interpretations and new ethical choices.

For academic disciplines studying religion, this critical situation provides **unique material** and produces new methodological and conceptual challenges. Methodologically, the research will require new inventiveness to cope with the constraints of direct face-to-face fieldwork. Theoretically, there is a need to revisit a few currently used concepts and research fields, such as, for example, **material religion** (in connection with the quarantine regime of social distance); **semiotic ideologies** (due to the increased need for providential interpretations); **the structure of religiosity** (due to changing relationships of belief, ritual, and behavior); **virtual/digital religion** (due to a massive transfer of religion into the digital space); **lived religion** (due to the growth of normative uncertainty with the weakening of authoritative sources of identity); **transnational syncretism and hybridity** (due to the suspension of migration contacts and the revival of national barriers).

In this *Entangled Religions special issue*, we will seek new ways to address the notions of **religious contact and transfer in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic**. We will look both at intra- and inter-religious dynamics with a prospect of their future comparison. We will especially welcome studies of interconnected, "entangled" responses to the crisis, in line with the focus of this Journal (for more information, see: <https://er.ceres.rub.de/index.php/ER/about>).

We invite scholars in **religious studies, anthropology and sociology of religion, and other related disciplines** to submit their research to this special issue. We look for proposals of about 2500 words and papers of around 7000-8000 words. The contributions should not only report on current religious reactions and responses to the pandemic but also offer a critical discussion of these phenomena that will address a broader academic debate. In this way, we aim to produce a series of studies that will remain relevant regardless of whether the COVID-19 pandemic will turn out to be a one-time disaster or a recurring and long-lasting problem.

### Deadlines:

- Please submit paper **proposals by July 31, 2020** to the contacts indicated below.
- Authors will be notified of **acceptance by August 15, 2020**.
- **Draft papers** are due by **January 15, 2021**.

For this very relevant topic, we propose an innovative reviewing procedure, the so-called *open peer review*. After an initial review by the guest editors and editorial staff of *Entangled Religions*, drafts will be published online, and reviewers will publicly comment on them. The revised articles will then be published in the online journal *Entangled Religions*. We believe that this new approach to peer review and editing will make the process more transparent and will facilitate a fruitful debate about the issues that are still ongoing and full of stimulating new turns.

To submit your proposal or receive more information, please contact the guest editors:

- Alexander Agadjanian (Center of Religious Studies, Russian State University of the Humanities)  
[grandrecit@gmail.com](mailto:grandrecit@gmail.com)
- Konrad Siekierski (Department of Theology and Religious Studies, King's College London)  
[konrad.siekierski@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:konrad.siekierski@kcl.ac.uk)