

# In this number

SARI KIVISTÖ & SAMI PIHLSTRÖN

## **Antitheodic, the Tragic Human Condition and Critical Distance in the Corona Crisis**

This article examines the ethical problems in “theodist” ways of thinking, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, by critically integrating interpretations of literary depictions of pandemics with a philosophical defence of “antitheodism,” which rejects any attempt to justify or excuse why God (or any secular proxy) permits meaningless suffering to take place. It also employs the concepts of the tragic human condition and the ethically appropriate critical distance between human beings in conducting this analysis. While antitheodist critiques of theodicism can be traced back to the Book of Job, they have received important articulations in modern philosophy (e.g., Kant, Levinas) and literature (e.g., Camus, Roth). The authors emphasize not only one’s ineliminable individual responsibility for other human beings in a pandemic situation but also the unavoidability of the tragic fate of instrumentalizing others’ suffering.

JENNI SPÄNNÄRI & PAMELA SLOTTE

## **The Role of Authenticity and Community in the Construction of Conceptions about Infectious Diseases**

Dealing with a global pandemic requires effective health policies, which must in turn account for how individuals negotiate their attitudes towards infectious diseases and conceptions about health and large-scale health policies. This article contributes to this discussion on public health policy by examining interview data from the Pietarsaari region. The key finding is that conceptions about health and health policies are created in authentic meaning-making processes, with multiple different ways of negotiation, framed by a wide variety of meaning horizons and social structures. This study also finds that religious communities and ways of thinking function as arenas of authenticity and can prompt different kinds of attitudes towards vaccines.

SINI MIKKOLA & LAURA KALLATSA

## **Lived Theology: The Views of Finnish Vicars and Parishioners concerning Online Communion**

A lively debate on the observation of the Eucharist during the COVID-19 pandemic has been taking place all over the Christian world, including in Finland. In this article, we investigate the views and experiences of Finnish vicars and parishioners concerning online Communion. Our study is based on two sets of data collected in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland during the first wave of the pandemic. Our multimethod research shows that online Communion is primarily a theological problem for both vicars and parishioners, as only a few respondents addressed its practical aspects. The data are analyzed from the theoretical viewpoint of lived theology, which is part of the framework of lived religion.

KATI TERVO-NIEMELÄ, JOUKO PORKKA & JARI PULKKINEN

## **Young People, Confirmation Work and Corona: The Impact of Corona Pandemic to the Experience and Fulfilment of the Aims of Confirmation**

In this article, we analyse the changes in confirmation work implemented around the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus is on the impact of these changes on the experiences of confirmands and on the fulfilment of the aims presented in the confirmation work plan. The article shows that these changes have been received negatively by confirmands, with only a small minority offering positive evaluations. The most critical of these changes were those young people who attended groups with no camp period. If the confirmation time was organized fully online, the confirmands were critical as well. The results show that the length of a camp period correlates strongly with confirmand satisfaction and the fulfilment of the aims outlined in the confirmation work plan. Likewise, an online confirmation group without physical contact fares poorly in both measures.