

Book Reviews

Daniel Enstedt and Katarina Plank (eds): *Levd religion: Det heliga i vardagen*. Nordic Academic Press 2018, 352 pp.

The anthology *Levd religion: Det heliga i vardagen* [Lived Religion: The Sacred in Everyday Life], edited by Daniel Enstedt and Katarina Plank, gathers studies by Swedish and Danish scholars contributing to the lived religion research field. The book consists of nineteen independent and thematically arranged chapters providing a thorough and versatile presentation of studies addressing the nature of religion outside institutions, texts, and beliefs. The book's various case studies cover a wide range of topics: contemporary and historical Sufism; religious tourism; alchemy; religious youth; gardening; apocalyptic groups; tantric practices; and lived religion within institutions like schools and hospitals, just to name a few. Besides a large variety of research subjects, the volume also presents studies utilizing different kinds of research data: for example, qualitative fieldwork data, historical archive materials, and media material. Different theoretical approaches such as spatiality, materiality, and queer theories are also addressed in relation to the overall topic of lived religion. Together, the chapters convey a nuanced and extensive picture of the religious lives of individuals beyond official practices and belief systems. The large variety of case

studies, research data, and theoretical perspectives employed within this anthology also underline that lived religion cannot be regarded as a specific way of being religious or spiritual. It is rather a versatile field of research that seeks to investigate the ways in which religiosity and spirituality are present in people's lives.

The volume continues in the footsteps of pioneering scholars like Robert Orsi, Meredith McGuire, and Nancy Ammerman, and thus relates to the religious lives of individuals as bodily practices with spatial, material, and cultural dimensions. The chapters are organized in five themes, each addressing the overarching topic of lived religion from a different perspective: religion in the field, place, and materiality; life and archive; society and institutions; the body and sexuality. The first part focuses on the relationship between academic discussions and ethnographic fieldwork. While ethnographic methodologies are certainly not a new approach in the study of lived religion, they are undisputedly a very fruitful (if not, the most fruitful) method for exploring the practice of spirituality and religion in individuals' everyday lives. The section therefore seems essential, emphasizing the advantages of scholars engaging in the lives of their research participants, and discussing how such a research method often challenges theoretical assumptions and provides new perspectives

on the studied subject. Furthermore, Enstedt and Plank suggest that combining ethnographical research data with additional 'non-narrative' materia and analyses may serve to enrich and deepen future studies of lived religion.

The volume's second part addresses questions concerning place and materiality. This section consists of texts which illustrate the ways physical places and artefacts influence individuals' religious lives. The third part includes four chapters, all utilizing different kinds of data and methodologies for studying religious practices. It includes different methodologies to investigate everyday religious lives such as in-depth studies of individual cases, studies of internet material, participant observations, and analyses of archive data. The fourth part examines lived religion in a societal context. It consists of four chapters, discussing religious engagement and expressions of religions within social institutions like hospitals and schools from a lived religion perspective. The final part gathers studies examining the body as an essential part of people's religious lives by employing theories of embodiment and queer theory. Since people express, feel, and encounter both inner and external experiences through their bodies, a bodily dimension is fundamental for understanding how religion operates in individuals' lives. Meredith McGuire (2016) has even referred to the concept of embodied practices to emphasize that

spiritual experiences are 'embedded in and accomplished through the body'.

The book represents an intriguing addition to the lived religion research field. Many chapters interestingly illustrate how religiosity and spirituality often appear in mundane situations. For example, Jessica Moberg's chapter on Pentecostals in Stockholm demonstrates that religious dilemmas not only materialize in religious practices and items, but may at an individual level emerge through more day-to-day objects like a pair of jeans. Many of the other chapters also depict in different ways how the religious and seemingly secular parts of life interact. Åsa Trulsson's study shows how religious young people use religion to orient and structure their day-to-day lives in secular surroundings, while Lena Roos's article considers how mundane activities like gardening can become elementary components in constructing a religious identity. Both chapters effectively illustrate how seemingly secular daily practices and explicitly religious activities are not by default separate spheres of life. Instead, personal religious lives appear more complicated and nuanced than such traditional distinctions allow us to assume. As Roos puts it, the most mundane activities like gardening may be important elements of religious practice or the developing of a religious identity. Another chapter dealing with this question is Wilhelm Kardemark's study, in which he analyses how individuals relate to a secular place – the gym.

In Kardemark's study it emerges as an important arena for reflection on worldviews.

An aspect of the anthology with room for further elaboration is what the authors refer to as seven levels of lived religion, presented in the introductory chapter. The levels consist of seven recurring and overlapping themes in the articles: material; embodiment; religious practice; relationships; power; spatiality; and narratives. These categories are doubtless intriguing and may well provide central and novel perspectives for scholars to gain a deeper understanding of how religion is subjectively expressed and experienced in everyday life. However, it would have been interesting to read more about these levels in relation and comparison to each other, and how they might be operationalized in future studies. This is not a major shortcoming, and it by no means diminishes the book's main strength, which is that it provides the reader with an extensive collection of case studies, methodologies, and theoretical discussions examining how religion is lived in both contemporary and historical settings. The book can be warmly recommended to anyone interested in how religious and spiritual lives are individually expressed and practised in everyday life.

Linda Annunen
Åbo Akademi University

LINDA ANNUNEN PhD is a postdoctoral researcher at Åbo Akademi University and coordinator for the Åbo Akademi University Foundation research institute.
Email: linda.annunen@abo.fi