



Editorial Note

We are pleased to introduce this new issue of *Temenos*, the first issue under our journal's updated name: *Temenos – Nordic Journal for the Study of Religion!*

Changing the name of a journal is seldom done on a whim, especially not with a journal as distinguished as *Temenos*. However, academia is not a set field. Subjects and concepts develop and change. This is also the case in our field, the study of religion. While the term 'comparative religion' for some still broadly incorporates the multifaceted field of religion research, it is for others a fairly unknown concept, highlighting more a method than a varied perspective. This varied understanding, or lack thereof, is something both the current and earlier editors have noted.

The discussion about updating the name of *Temenos* to better communicate the aim of the journal was initiated with the publishers of the journal, the Finnish Society for the Study of Religion, and its board. We then brought the topic to our prominent editorial board. The support for a name change was unanimous, though the need to continue to highlight the comparative approach as one important method was also underlined. The final decision to update the name of our journal was taken at the annual meeting of the Finnish Society for the Study of Religion in 2022.

At the same time as we update the name of the journal we have also wanted to update our look. We hope you like our new colour scheme!

What has made *Temenos* such an important publication in the study of religion over the years is of course not to be found in the journal's name but in its content. Our new issue brings together both Nordic and international research on a range of current and thought-provoking topics, ranging from death to mental illness and from Christmas and Covid-19 to the journey of a drum.

We begin with last year's *Temenos* lecture by Anna Sokolova. The lecture was held on 8 December and is titled 'Imagine There Is No Death... Soviet Funeral Reforming en Marche'. Sokolova argues that the Soviet practices of death and attitudes towards dead bodies can be seen as one of the most important changes that have taken place in Russian society over the last 150 years. While Soviet leaders were given lavish state funerals, the death of an 'average' person became less and less visible. The state made efforts to

reform the funeral sphere, but this did not lead to the development of new funeral rituals. Rather, as Sokolova shows, this policy gradually diminished the social value of funerals and facilitated a transition to DIY funerals.

The following two peer-reviewed articles focus on Christmas in different ways. Evelina Lundmark explores how Christian heritage is engaged with, strengthened, and contested in and through Swedish newspapers and in the annual Swedish Christmas Calendar. While Sweden is perceived as highly secular, the ideas of the Swedish cultural heritage remain tied to notions of a Christian past. Christmas is particularly salient for Swedes' understanding of their cultural heritage and national identity, which includes perceptions of Christmas as 'merely' a tradition. Using theories of nostalgia and banal religion, Lundmark illustrates how Swedishness is constructed in the Christmas Calendar and in the framing of the Calendar in Swedish newspapers.

Elisabeth Tveito Johnsen next explores ecclesial online identities during the Covid-19 pandemic, focusing on the majority churches in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden and their Facebook activities during the Christmas of 2020. The Covid-19 pandemic was a situation in which churches were 'forced' to use digital media as a primary arena of outreach. The study demonstrates how the Church of Norway and the Church of Sweden enacted church practices on Facebook, while the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark tried not to be too 'churchy'. Overall, Johnsen shows that the churches' online identities on Facebook are not new representations but rather intensified versions of their distinct offline identities as 'folk churches' for the whole population.

In the third peer-reviewed article Siv Ellen Kraft takes us on the fascinating journey of a drum. In October 2006 a drum embarked on what is possibly the most extensive journey of any drum at any time. The ambitions of the world drum were grand: to serve as a wakeup call to the needs of Mother Earth by linking people, things, and places. Kraft presents her take on the project in the context of the reclaiming of drums in Sápmi and globalizing discourses on indigenizing religion, and through a focus on object agency, and the modes and codes of Indigeneity on the move. 'Drift matter' is proposed as a concept to think with as we follow the drum's journey.

In the final peer-reviewed article Francis Ethelbert Kwabena Benyah explores the role of prayer camps in contemporary Ghana. Prayer camps serve as an environment for healing rituals and play an important role in the lives of many Ghanaians, spiritually, economically, and socially. Benyah illustrates the reasons for the continuous reliance on prayer camps as institutions of healthcare for individuals suffering from mental illnesses. He

argues that prayer camps will continue to exert public influence and play a dominant role in the treatment of mental health issues in Ghana due to the underlying religio-cultural beliefs associated with illness and the inadequate resources at the disposal of state-owned psychiatric hospitals.

We conclude this issue with a review article written by Jere Kyyrö, in which three recent volumes exploring discourse analysis in the study of religion are presented and compared, and a book review written by Linda Hyökki.

We hope you will enjoy this issue!

Sofia Sjö and Minna Opas