

Call for Papers

Religion on the Move: How Motion and Migration influence Religion

10th Conference of the Working Group on Ethnology of Religion, Szeged, Hungary
12-14 September, 2012

In many ways movement is an important aspect of religion and spirituality. Not only has the significance of motion within the practice of religion and rituality increased (Coleman & Eade 2004), but also, through the movement and migration of people all over the world, religions and religious practices are relocating and changing (Jenkins 2007).

Movement is significant for the practice of many religions. It seems that motion has been gaining in importance and that the performative expression and execution of religious practice play a stronger part than they used to do. There might be related to the more participative role of believers in religion and rituality and the enhanced relevance of individuals 'doing' religion. The popularity of walking the many pilgrim ways through Europe is an example of that trend, while other expressions of movement like dancing, meditations, processions and other rituals also seem to be more in focus.

A second strand of movement is connected to migration for, by moving, people bring faiths and religious practices to other places in the world where they were not previously known or practised. Nowadays, through mass migrations, refugees, displacements because of war and other translocations, religions and beliefs can expand both spatially and quantitatively. These are processes in which the faiths which are moving are being transformed, and the religion(s) of the areas in which people and their religion are newly settled are likewise affected (examples include Islam in Europe and the new Christians from Africa in Europe). Sometimes beliefs are appropriated through tourism or by 'spiritual seekers'; aspects of Eastern religion and esoterism have been imported to Western society. In that regard modern media and even more the Internet have become migratative instruments, in their capacity of 'posting' religion all over the globe and into people's homes, regardless of what religion is practised there. The extension of religion through (digital) migration has an impact on social, cultural and political contexts (Woodhead et al. 2002). The movement of religion might lead to an adaptation to new circumstances, to inculturation, but also potentially to a transformation in the religious constituents of the local culture as well. Sometimes there is openness and religion finds new host communities. Evangelical, Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal churches have spread across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe (Coleman 2007) and so have Afro-American religions, as Candomblé, Umbanda, or Santería cubana (Capone 2004; Saraiva 2010). Sometimes the members of the host country become involved in such new practices, but movement may also lead to segregation within host communities and contested situations.

Papers connected to these two research strands on movement and religion are welcomed; one could for example think of the following topics:

- The influence of migration on religion
- Movement as constitutive element in religion and ritual
- Effects of globalisation and transnationalism on religion
- Changes in religion through digital movement, via the Internet.
- Movement and spatiality related to the practice of religion

Format: the conference takes place over two days, followed by an excursion on the third day. Paper presentations are limited to 20 minutes each, followed by ten minutes of discussion. In total 20 paper presenters will be selected. Colleagues who do not present a paper are welcome to participate in the conference and its discussions. A business meeting of the SIEF Working Group on Ethnology of Religion will be held during the conference.

Organizers: the conference is organized by the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Szeged together with the Bálint Sándor Institute for Research on Religion and the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF).

Venue: University of Szeged and Gál Ferenc Theological College of Szeged

Fee: the conference fee is 60 €, including conference materials, reception, coffee, brunch, excursion. Participants are responsible for travel and accommodation; there is no funding for expenses available.

Application: submit an abstract of your paper of maximum 300 words, together with your name, position, and institutional affiliation to Dr. István Povedák povedak@yahoo.com by March 15, 2012. The selection of the papers will be done in collaboration with the Board of the SIEF Working Group on Ethnology of Religion. The final selection will be communicated by April 1, 2012.

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