

Special Issue

Birth and Death: Studying Ritual, Embodied Practices and Spirituality at the Start and End of Life

Message from the Guest Editors

Birth and death are fundamental human experiences. Both life-transitions are meaningful and profound but can also lead to ambiguous feelings, negotiated in embodied, cultural, spiritual and symbolic practices. The study of birth and death as existential transitions, comparing and contrasting these two life-events from a ritual and embodied perspective, can reveal novel insights into spirituality and religiosity. In this Special Issue of *Religions*, we want to unravel these questions and explore new theoretical and empirical research on birth and death from multidisciplinary perspectives, such as cultural anthropology, religious studies, chaplaincy studies, medical and cultural psychology and psychology of religion and related disciplines. Rituals at the start and end of life have also been changing. What kind of challenges do we face in changing birth and death contexts? What can we learn about meaning making and spirituality by studying birth and death rituals? How is embodied spirituality negotiated in birth and death rituals and practices?

Guest Editors

Dr. Joanna Wojtkowiak

Department of Humanist Chaplaincy Studies, University of Humanistic Studies, 3512 HD Utrecht, The Netherlands

Dr. Brenda Mathijssen

Department of Comparative Study of Religion, University of Groningen, 9712 GK Groningen, The Netherlands

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Religions
Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
religions@mdpi.com

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Fresh developments in the disciplines that consistently make significant contributions to our understanding of religious personality, authority, devotion, and community – disciplines ranging from psychology, sociology, and anthropology to history, art history, philosophy, literary criticism, and political science – fuel general, as well as scholarly, interest in the world's religions.

Religions is inviting innovative and comparative contributions. Please consider Religions as an exceptional, exciting enterprise ready to reward your trust, attention, and participation.

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Professorship Quality of Life, Spirituality and Coping, Faculty of Health,
Witten/Herdecke University, Gerhard-Kienle-Weg 4, 58313 Herdecke,
Germany

Prof. Dr. Klaus Baumann

Caritaswissenschaft und Christliche Sozialarbeit, Theologische
Fakultät, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, Platz der Universität 3, D-
79098 Freiburg, Germany

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