

Special issue proposal for JMSR: ***Title: Religion Lived and Studied: The Impact of Religion and Spirituality on Health and Well-Being.***

1. Background and rationale for the Special Issue

Religion and spirituality have an impact on wellbeing and quality of life. This influence can assume a positive or a negative value, and has clear historical roots: most evolved religions can be described as “salvation religions” and, as such, they are concerned about improving present and future life conditions, providing hope and peace. What could be obvious for more religious practitioners becomes problematic in modern times, as several critical voices point their fingers against religion as a form of alienation, a source of psychological problems, suffering and misery. The issue now is more open to better scrutiny beyond ideological biases. A reason is that freedom to believe and practice religion in many areas ensure that such practices depend on one’s own will and search, and less on imposition and tradition, helping to render more significant such influence. Then, new studies based on empirical methods help to better discern about that influence, taking religious indicators as variables.

We invite colleagues from different academic backgrounds to submit their studies and papers on religion, spirituality and wellbeing, and related issues:

- religious coping and resilience;
- religion and prosociality;
- religion and human flourishing;
- religion, meaning and hope;
- therapeutic value of religion and spirituality.

This call is related to the incoming Conference we plan to celebrate in Asissi (Italy) next 26-28 May, on this same topic.

[For more information: <https://religionwellbeing.org/>]

Conveners: Piotr Roszak, Nicolas Copernicus University, Torun, Poland; Lluís Oviedo, Antonianum University, Roma, Italy

2. Why it would be of interest to the MSR community and the readership of the Journal

Since studies on religion, spirituality and wellbeing are thriving in the last years, it becomes urgent to assess the real impact that such research body has in the way religion is understood, its utility and applications. Managing these aspects, which did get little attention until recently, is crucial in a context in which the increase of mental disorders demands to focus more on how religion is viewed and interacts with society and several social systems. It becomes crucial to develop life styles that ensure the prevention, coping and resilience strategies to address those problems, as a new agenda for religious entities and the offer of spiritual

assistance. Several social aspects appear as clearly involved in this turn towards the therapeutic aspect of religion and spirituality: the most obvious one is the relationship with health system, or the terms religion can collaborate and complement it; second, economic aspects are clearly relevant as derived from personal and social wellbeing; educational aspects are not less important, as a religious and spiritual pedagogy becomes instrumental to prevent distortions in the development of young generations and to provide a platform for human flourishing. Political dimensions are easily implicated too, as can be deduced from the implications in those social areas. Furthermore, aspects related to sustainability and equity are clearly involved in that new condition, as religion and spirituality become positive factors in the achievement of such goals. Religious organizations are called to rethink themselves after considering these long-range demands and opportunities.

3. Potential contributors

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- Lee J. DeLisle, Southern Connecticut State University
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4. References

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URL= <https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01525>

5. Submission Deadline

30 September 2023

Editors Biographical Note

Lluis Oviedo is a full Professor for Theological Anthropology at the Pontifical University Antonianum of Rome, and Fundamental Theology at the Theological Institute of Murcia (Spain). He is team member of research group on *Creditations*, based in Graz University (Austria). He edits a book series on “New approaches to the scientific study of religion” (Springer) and the bibliographic bulletin *ESSSAT News & Reviews*. Research interests focus on the dialogue between theology and sciences, including the new scientific study of religion, and more recently to the interaction between religious belief and AI, and to how religious beliefs and behaviors are related to personal and social wellbeing.

Piotr Roszak is a full Professor for Fundamental Theology and Philosophy at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, Poland; associated professor at University of Navarra, Pamplona, Spain; Ordinary member of Pontifical Academy of St Thomas Aquinas in Rome; editor-in-Chief of the journal '*Scientia et Fides*' dedicated to science-religion debate, but his research work includes also the analytic theology and the phenomenon of pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela. Author of several monographs and collective works, more than 140 articles in scientific journals; repeatedly awarded for achievements in scientific and research work by international organizations.