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IRiS academic to present at international conferences

Posted on Thursday 14th March 2013

IRiS academic, Professor Martin Stringer, will be giving papers at two international conferences in 2013.

Critical Analysis of Religious Diversity network: Theory and Methodology (CARD) International Workshop

24-25 May 2013
Organised by the Centre for Contemporary Religion, Aarhus, Denmark

Professor Stringer will be giving the following paper: Discourses of Religious Diversity

This paper will outline a research project based in the city of Birmingham, UK, that looked at the way everyday conversations around the city engaged in issues of religious diversity. Birmingham is one of the most diverse cities in the UK and the physical landscape, as well as the look and language of many of its people, means that issues of religious diversity cannot be escaped. What is apparent, however, is that when we listen to the way in which the ordinary people of the city, many of whom no longer claim any religious affiliation, they are seldom consistent in their understanding of, or reaction to, the fact of religious diversity. Context matters and the complexity of the range of discourses that occur, be they around buildings, dress, festivals, images in the media, or news stories, makes for a nuanced and ever changing environment for the understanding of diversity. It is my contention that we need to be aware of these local and popular discourses, their differences, their complexity, and their changing nature, in order to engage in wider academic and policy decisions about religious diversity at a more abstract level. This paper will outline the methodological issues raised by the project, outline some of the findings in a specific context, and offer possibilities for future research.

32nd ISSR Conference: Rethinking Community: Religious Continuities and Mutations in Late Modernity

27-30 June 2013
Turku-Åbo, Finland

Professor Stringer will be giving the following paper: Researching Religion in the Context of Super-diversity; Lessons from Birmingham, UK.

Due primarily to international migration many of the world's urban areas are now becoming characterised by what Stephen Vertovec has identified as 'Super-diversity'. This describes a situation where the number of nationalities, ethnicities, languages, and religions within any one area is such that no single group, or identity, predominates. This suggests a locality where the usual assumptions of religious diversity or pluralism are breaking down. This paper aims to explore how we can begin to investigate religion within this context with specific reference to religion within the Handsworth area of Birmingham in the UK.

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