



GLOBAL
PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
PROJECT 2
BIRMINGHAM CENTRE FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION



UNIVERSITY OF
AUCKLAND
Waipapa Taumata Rau
NEW ZEALAND



UNIVERSITY
OF LEEDS



JOHN TEMPLETON
FOUNDATION

Call for Fellowship Applications

Animistic Variations: Philosophy and Religion in and beyond the Pacific

Overview:

How should we conceive of our relatedness to other-than-human beings? How do animistic philosophies differ across religious and wisdom traditions in and beyond the Pacific? How can animistic ideas and practices contribute to living well within various religious and wisdom traditions?

This project explores how different types of animism relate to fundamental spiritual realities and well-being in underrepresented religions and wisdom traditions. We also acknowledge that ‘animism’ itself is not an entirely unproblematic term. Specifically, it has been used to group together a wide range of different ideas and to justify longstanding neglect and denigration of Indigenous lives and communities. This project seeks to correct this by attending to important work being done in this area. We intend to create a network of scholars representing and/or researching relationships with other-than-human beings in a variety of ways. Some areas of interest include:

- the presence of animisms in relational ontologies and epistemologies, especially in Pacific and non-Western philosophies
- how the *itulagi* connects living and non-living beings in a relational network (cf. Upolu Vaai and Aisake Casimira)
- the reclamation of Indigenous wisdoms and practices, including forms of animism, within dominant religions such as Christianity
- work that explores animism in Abrahamic texts and traditions
- ways that animistic ideas are being drawn on and deployed in non-religious or secular spaces (e.g. in environmental work and activism)
- engagements with the ‘new animism’ of cultural anthropology (cf. Nurit Bird-David, Tim Ingold, and Graham Harvey)
- limits of the language/ category of ‘animism’ (e.g. due to colonial its origins, imperial associations, etc.)

Fellowships:

We have 10 fellowships available. Selected fellows will embark on a 12-month virtual learning programme throughout 2026, which will involve monthly online meetings and discussions. Fellows will also gather in person for a 3-day workshop in Auckland in February 2027. Fellows will have an opportunity to present work and share draft contributions for a special issue of an academic journal.

All fellows will all receive an honorarium of £500 (approx. NZ\$1000). For those living outside Aotearoa New Zealand, travel bursaries will be available to assist with attending the workshop in Auckland.

Eligibility:

We welcome applications from scholars (at all levels), postgraduate students, practioners, and activists working both in and beyond the Pacific region. We especially welcome inquiries and applications from Indigenous and Pasifika people, women, and underrepresented religious and wisdom traditions.

Application:

To apply, please send:

- a cover letter (no more than 2 pages) outlining your background and what you would contribute to the programme
- a short CV
- one letter of support (to be sent independently)

The deadline for applications and letters is 1 December 2025. Applicants will be notified by 28 February 2026. Application materials should be sent to both j.leidenhag@leeds.ac.uk and michael.mawson@auckland.ac.nz

Project coordinators:

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