



## ***Religion Compass Exchanges***

### **Notes for Contributors**

Thank you for agreeing to contribute to [Religion Compass Exchanges](#), the companion forum to Blackwell's online survey journal, [Religion Compass](#). Our regular forum contributors are often drawn from the journal's international team of section editors and editorial board members, although we are glad to welcome select forum contributors from elsewhere.

Please take a few moments to read over these notes in their entirety before getting started.

#### **What is Religion Compass Exchanges?**

*Exchanges* aims to offer an online forum for the discussion of both topical and perennial issues in religion. Intended as a companion to [Religion Compass](#), *Exchanges* seeks to debate issues of interest not only to scholars but also to the community at large. Those debating will be scholars, and *Exchanges* will be an academic, rigorously monitored forum. But the issues debated may range from abortion to the afterlife, from capital punishment to animal rights, or from evolution to miracles. The positions held by specific religions on issues may also be debated. The goal is to organize opinionated but responsible exchanges of views.

The debates will, at least at the outset, be limited to members of the editorial board of *Religion Compass* and to others invited to participate. But anyone anywhere can access *Exchanges* and anyone can offer comments on the debates.

Just as *Religion Compass* articles survey recent trends in the extant academic literature, so it is hoped that the forum will be a complementary forum for debate. The aim is to publish content that maintains a stimulating balance between scholarly rigour and free-form discussion. Links with *Religion Compass* will regularly be made.

The editor of *Exchanges* is Robert Segal, who is Sixth Century Chair in Religious Studies at the University of Aberdeen. For ten years he has been European Editor of the journal *Religion*. He will commission the debates. Anyone who wishes to propose an issue suitable for debate or a suitable debater is welcome to contact Prof. Segal at: [r.segal@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:r.segal@abdn.ac.uk).

The length of a statement can range from about 1000 to 1500 words. The statements are not intended to be formal academic papers, but they are expected to be well written and well argued. Some may first appear as a single position on an issue, with other views to follow. Or contrary positions may appear side by side. The exact format is fluid.

*Exchanges* is meant to be more than a blog. It is intended to be a forum for real debate, not the expression of a single person's point of view on all issues. It is hoped that this forum will soon become a regular site to which both scholars and non-scholars will turn to find out who is saying what on which provocative issue concerning religion.

### **How to Sign Up as a Forum Contributor**

- Go to: <http://wordpress.com/signup/>.
- Enter a username, your email address, and then check the radio button saying 'Just a username, please'.
- You'll then receive a confirmation email, which will contain a link to activate your membership. Click this link.
- Once you've signed up, just drop an email to [RECOeditorial@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com](mailto:RECOeditorial@oxon.blackwellpublishing.com) to inform us and we can then invite you to be a contributor on the 'Exchanges' homepage. That's it!

The URL for the forum is <http://religioncompass.wordpress.com> and you can always sign in here: <http://wordpress.com/wp-login.php>.

### **Your Forum Posts – Content**

While you will have been commissioned to write on a particular topic, a forum post can be more informal than a traditional journal article, and more suited to ongoing discussion and exploration – contributors are only asked to ensure their posts remain academic in nature.

**IMPORTANT:** Although forums can be relatively free and experimental, it is still a public forum and so the usual academic guidelines about not infringing copyright, publishing libellous material and so on still apply. It is also probably best not to directly quote an individual contributor or participant at a conference without their permission, but rather give a summary of proceedings and debates.

### **Your Forum Posts – Tips**

- When you write a post, assign a category on the right (otherwise your post won't appear on the live site!). If nothing stands out in particular, just use 'General'. Conversely, if you have chosen a category, please don't click 'General'!
- When writing your post, you might notice there is a 'more' button on the formatting toolbar which you can insert – this means that the content below the 'more' button will be clicked through to by the reader. Please insert this at

the appropriate point – this enables readers to scan down the forum frontpage and quickly see what posts are on offer.

- We *strongly encourage* you to upload images or other materials to jazz up your posts – the only caveat being that they should be images you have permission to use.
- If you wish, you can change your display name to be different to your user id e.g. Jane Smith could be used instead of jsmith. Just go to ‘My Profile’, usually top right of your dashboard, and change the ‘Nickname’ field, before making your choice from the ‘Display name publicly as’ dropdown menu.
- Tell us if there’s a link you’d like added to the sidebar to the right of the screen. This is particularly true of any other good academic blogs and forums you’ve come across! Reciprocal linking is a good way to get the word out about the forum and your posts.

