10th International Conference on the Social Context of Death, Dying and Disposal

Introduction

The Tenth Death, Dying and Disposal Conference (DDD10) was held at Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands, on 9-12 September 2011 under the auspices of the University’s Centre for Thanatology and Faculty of Philosophy, Theology and Religious Studies, and the international Association for the Study of Death and Society (ASDS).

This international conference, held every two years since 1993, continues to bring together academics and practitioners from many of the Arts-Humanities, Social-Sciences and Medicine-Palliative Care fields.

This was the DDD’s first visit to Continental Europe and to Nijmegen, the oldest city in The Netherlands, where in 1678-79 a first step to European unification was taken when the Treaties of Peace of Nijmegen were signed. Still today, the Eurovision-tune is the prelude of the Te Deum that Marc-Antoine Charpentier wrote for this occasion. In this mood the conference sought to contribute to a comparative framework to improve our understanding of the rapidly and radically changing death ways in the various countries of Europe and elsewhere.

Such a framework considering the resemblances and differences is both of scientific and practical relevance as regulations and institutional arrangements vary considerably and death can be expected to play an increasing role in the societies concerned because of several factors: an aging population, early diagnosis coupled with prolonged dying, rampant individualism, increased physical and social mobility, environmental degradation, and, most recently, the threat of terrorism and a pandemic. Furthermore, the provision of care for the elderly and dying is not secured, end-of-life decisions have become a hotly debated issue, traditional meaning systems crumble, new and more personalised forms of religiosity arise, and cemeteries are shrinking and difficult to maintain due the increase of cremations.

The overarching theme of the conference was mortuary variation in Europe and beyond.

Plenary speakers

- Dr Margaret Stroebe, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands
- Prof. Dr. Johannes A. van der Ven, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands
- Prof. Dr. Reiner Sorries, University of Kassel, Germany
Social Programme

Friday 09 September

13.00 - Cultural programme: visits to local graveyards and museums

19.00 - Opening of conference: Prof. Dr. Eric Venbrux, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands

19.10 - ASDS Announcements: Prof. Jenny Hockey, University of Sheffield, UK

19.20 - Mortality Announcements: Dr Carol Komaromy, Open University, UK

19.30 - Keynote lecture, Prof. Dr Maraget Stroebe, University of Utrecht, The Netherlands

20.30 - Reception

Saturday 10 September

17.45 - 18.45 - Dinner

18.45 - ASDS Council Meeting

19.30 - ASDS Annual General Meeting

20.30 - Cultural Programme

Sunday 11 September

19.00 - Conference dinner

This evening’s talk is from Prof. Dr Peter Nissen, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Monday 12 September

13.30 - Lunch and concluding talk

The final talk is given by Dr Thomas Quartier, University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Links:
Centre for Thanatology: http://www.ru.nl/ct/english