

Editorial

In the world population of the twentieth century, the culturally transmitted belief systems about primary human values, usually called religious, are fast losing their efficacy, in spite of the many valiant and ingenious efforts to reinforce them. In the past, religious beliefs have provided perceptions and motivations effective on the whole for integrating the individual meaningfully into a viable relationship with the world and with the group of individuals with whom he is interdependent. But today, the cry that the gods are dead is fast spreading from the level of a relatively few sophisticated philosophers to a wide segment of the population. There is much evidence of feelings of personal meaninglessness and anomie and many signs of social instability and lack of social integration, as well as of unrealistic or invalid attitudes of man to the total world or reality in which he lives. Although there have been many worthy efforts to reform religions from within or to develop so-called secular systems of values—such as the various nationalistic and other “philosophies” of life—many of us feel warranted in saying that the function of formulating and transmitting the primary values of self, society, and the world is not being done at all adequately for the needs of the world today and tomorrow.

For more than a decade, the Institute on Religion in an Age of Science has been asking some of our wisest scientific and scholarly analysts what must be done if we are to be safely delivered from our crises in human values? What new formation of the religious enterprise can save us? In this issue of *Zygon* we present three recent papers delivered by members of the Institute to its conferences which seek to analyze what must be done. The Institute has been based on the conviction that any future religious beliefs can hardly afford to violate the scientific beliefs about the nature of man and the reality in which he lives. In this light these three papers deal with the problem of

religion and its reformation, the nature of man and his values, and how man's own image of himself and his values is formed.

Wieman, one of America's most creative theologians and a primary searcher for a theology viable in the context of science, here announces, against a critical analysis of the historical backdrop, the advent of the most radical reformation in religious history since the great reforms that took place about twenty-five hundred years ago to give rise to such great religious traditions as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, and Buddhism. He analyzes the similarities of that critical period of religious reformation to our own and sets forth the basic needs that have to be met, including a union of religion and science.

Hoagland, a distinguished physiologist and a founder of the remarkable Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, as well as a pioneer organizer and contributor to various outstanding programs to illuminate ethics and guide social behavior from the perspectives of the sciences, here clarifies the role of the brain as the center of our value perceptions and motivations in the two stages—the biological and the psychosocial—of the evolution of the basic value structures of human life. He suggests how our scientific understanding of the brain and life may be central for our perception of religious and ethical values.

Frank, one of America's broad-gauge minds of almost Aristotelian range, a distinguished contributor and stimulator across the spectrum of medical and psychosocial sciences and education, here shows the present crisis of religion and human values against a backdrop of man's changing image of himself. His perspective overlaps in part with that of Wieman and that of Hoagland and is suggestive of how religious and value concepts cannot be easily separated from those of the sciences. Frank's picture of the enculturation of religious and moral values effectively integrates pieces from a number of scientific disciplines and should be of basic concern for those concerned with reformulating religion for an age of science.

The *Commentary* section of this issue reflects extended critical opinions on parts of the first issue of *Zygon* by a creative physicist-theologian and three distinguished philosophers or philosophers of science. The editors will welcome and publish further commentary on that and on subsequent issues to the extent feasible. Such dialogue could become of the greatest significance for the objectives of *Zygon* as expressed in the first issue. Indeed, the learning and wisdom of these commentators promise this.

While the "negative feedback" of criticism is of prime importance

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for steering our editorial course, and we are specifically requesting this from readers of *Zygon*, the editors have also welcomed the receipt of many needed expressions of moral and tangible support for opening up *Zygon* as a channel of communication to formulate a sound union of the sciences with supreme human values. For you who have not yet seen in these pages a treatment of the topics or views that you feel of most significance, we hope you will work with us with patience as well as eagerness to build the subscriptions and gifts that will make possible the larger, more inclusive journal that we agree is needed. We shall welcome your suggestions for general topics and specific articles, of books and articles to be reviewed or noted, as well as your criticisms and support.

R. W. B.