

# Editorial

What is the significance of the first modern Olympic Games established eighty years ago [1896]? This effort to recover a beauty of ancient Greece signifies the end of mind-body dualism that had dominated our culture and education for a millennium and a half.

Paul G. Kuntz

When the Seoul Olympiad was held in September 1988, most people's interest and most media coverage focused on the athletic events. Such a focus is indeed consistent with the interpretation of philosopher Paul Kuntz in his 1981 article "Olympic Games: The Attempt of the Modern World to Recover a Beauty of Ancient Greece" in *Diotima: Review of Philosophical Research*. The rise of modern-day athletics to the point of capturing world-wide attention does indeed serve as a symbol to remind us that humans are both physical and mental creatures.

However, the almost exclusive focus on physical excellence at the Olympics has come to overshadow what was part of the Greek Olympic tradition—namely that the games honored the mental as well as the physical side of human nature. It was in order to recover the mental along with the physical that, prior to the athletic events of the 24th Olympiad, a multi-week fine arts festival, scientific conferences, and the World Academic Conference of the Seoul Olympiad (WACSO) were conducted. Regarding the latter, Park Seh-Jik, president of the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee, stated: "Although the Olympics have always been much more than a simple sports competition, continuously attempting to harmonize the intellectual, moral, and athletic aspects of the Games, the regular World Academic Conference being convened this year is a special feature of the 24th Seoul Olympiad."

The theme of WACSO was "The World Community in Post-Industrial Society." Beginning on 21 August and ending on 8 September, more than 260 scholars from over 30 countries addressed this topic in five sub-themes, each commanding a three-day conference of its own. The first four sub-conferences dealt explicitly with new developments and issues arising out of humanity's moving in the direction of a more global culture. "Changing Families in the World Perspective" considered the issue of women's rights and its impact on the traditional family. "Continuity and Change in Communications in Post-Industrial Society" dealt with the impact of the information age on international relations and the autonomy of countries and individuals. "The Confusion in Ethics and Values in Contemporary Society . . ." discussed the impact of materialism on traditional cultures and religions. "The Encounter Between East and West and the Creation of a Global Culture" focused on the role of cultural diversity in a world that in modern times has been dominated by Western industrialization and the acculturation of other societies to Western norms.

In the context of the Olympic games, all these sub-themes examined the world-wide effects of human mental activity manifested in culture. The final three-day conference, however, addressed the mind-body problem in its global manifestation as "The Human Encounter with Nature: Destruction and Reconstruction." The aim of this sub-theme was expressed by Kim Yong-Jun,

chair of the organizing committee, a professor of chemistry at Korea National University, and a *Zygon* subscriber:

Development in the name of progress has so far inflicted heavy scars of destruction on the environment. The problems of destruction following the development of third-world countries present a challenge to the entire international community. The continual problems of technology, energy, and natural resources, and their concomitant economic developments are matters of concern for all.

Humanity may find fulfillment in life through the search for new encounters with nature, and not through conquest. It has become necessary for the spirit of reconstruction to germinate. Our technological civilization, which has developed over the past 200-300 years, must find new channels for a scientific culture, . . . and the relationship of humanity and nature must be redefined through a new encounter in which both the perspectives of the East and West are reconsidered ("Sub-theme V Chairman's Program Overview," *Program: The World Academic Conference at the Seoul Olympiad '88*, Seoul: WACSO, 1988).

The papers in this issue of *Zygon* are a sample from the World Academic Conference of the Seoul Olympiad (papers from the entire conference are being published in book form). Five are from the "Human Encounter with Nature" conference and one, by Marc Dupuis, is from the "Encounter Between East and West." Many other papers conducted excellent analyses of the contemporary situation between Eastern and Western cultures and between humanity and nature. However, taken together the six in this *Zygon* issue also present a framework for integrating the diversity of our world's cultures with the diversity in the biological and physical environment—the framework of "bio-cultural evolution."

Napoleon Wolański's opening essay is a classic statement of bio-cultural evolution, and it discusses not only the impact of human urbanization on the natural environment but also the further impact on human beings and their societies. The two following papers by Sri Sivaraksa and Marc Dupuis serve as examples of the impact of Western technology on the environment and on third- and first-world societies. All three papers make suggestions regarding resources for reconstructing a more positive humanity-nature relationship that preserves some of the distinctiveness of the various human cultures.

A major step toward redefining the human-nature relationship is made in Hwe Ik Zhang's scientific picture of the solar-earth partnership as being the primary unit of life. In light of this primary unit human beings, human societies, other organisms, and ecosystems all constitute sub-systems of a single, evolving planet-star system. Shu-hsien Liu portrays a similar picture of humanity and "heaven" in harmony from the perspective of neo-Confucian philosophy revised in light of modern science. And Karl E. Peters presents a scientifically grounded philosophy of cosmic evolution and resources from Western religion as a basis for an integrated partnership among human societies and between humanity and the rest of nature.

Sponsored by the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee, the World Academic Conference of the Seoul Olympiad was organized and directed by the Korean Christian Academy. The Academy was founded in 1965 by Dr. Kang Won-Yong with the help of leaders of the Academy House Movement in West Germany. Kang himself studied theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York under Reinhold Niebuhr, and upon returning to Korea he applied Niebuhr's vision that Christianity must address contemporary social issues in the society at large. A part of the Korean Christian Academy's program has been to hold dialogue conferences among the leaders of society.

In its first twenty years the Academy held over 300 conferences with over 12,000 participants on religion; politics and economy; society, mass communication, and social welfare; labor and rural economy; education, children, and youth; women and society; culture and arts; and science and technology. The Academy under Dr. Kang's leadership was thus well prepared to do its outstanding job of organizing and hosting the World Academic Conference. So well did Kang and his staff do their work, and so worthwhile did the scholars find the Conference, that a request was made to the International Olympic Committee to make sure that another World Academic Conference would be held in conjunction with the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain.

To me, as an editor of *Zygon*, the theme of WACSO, "The World Community in Post-Industrial Society," symbolizes much of what our journal represents. Our aims include not only exploring ways constructively to relate religion and science; they also include seeking increased understanding among all members of the human community. Our aims are not only to understand the world community in terms of bio-cultural evolution, in which the human community is nested in the creative matrix of a more extensive and older natural universe; they also include deepening peaceful relations between contemporary human societies through increased understanding and appreciation of their core values as they are expressed in religious and philosophical traditions. The next issue of *Zygon* (March 1990) will carry forward these objectives by focusing on questions of scientific cosmology and Eastern religions.

The March 1990 issue—inaugurating *Zygon's* twenty-fifth year of publication—will be produced through Basil Blackwell, Inc. and the new *Zygon* editorial office at the Chicago Center for Religion and Science. This December 1989 issue will be the last issue produced through the editorial office at Rollins College and Wilfrid Laurier University Press in Waterloo, Ontario.

For over ten years WLU Press has helped us continue to produce a high-quality journal economically. Individuals from the Press are acknowledged in the Acknowledgments section near the end of this issue. However, I would like to mention one person here: I express my deep appreciation to Doreen Armbruster for the steadfast, courteous, responsive, and professional manner in which she has overseen the production of *Zygon*.

From June 1979 our journal has benefited from the sympathetic support of the enlightened leadership of Rollins College, from the helpfulness and understanding of my colleagues in the Department of Philosophy and Religion, from the guidance of the offices of Development and Development Research, from the courteous record keeping of the offices of the Comptroller and Gift Records, and from the expertise of the management and staff of the Computer Center—as well as from all those in the *Zygon* editorial office. Individuals are named in the Acknowledgments. In particular, however, I would like to express my appreciation to four assistant editors who, during the past ten years, have done the copyediting and have overseen production for the journal: Edwin P. Abaya, who worked with both Ralph Burhoe and me, and who taught me so much about the fine points of copy editing; Carol D. Peters, who in one year copyedited eight issues of the journal and brought us up to date; Holly Loomis, who unified the functions of manuscript evaluation and editing; and Tim Yocum, who quickly stepped into the position with the skill, wit, and grace that has enabled me to complete my term as the editor of *Zygon*. And I give special thanks to and for Diane Goodman, who not only has been the mainstay of the office at Rollins for the last five years but who has literally

moved it to Chicago where she continues her fine work on behalf of the journal.

Finally, I and incoming editor Philip Hefner wish to dedicate this issue of *Zygon* to the person who had the vision and organizational skills to found the journal—Ralph Wendell Burhoe. As mentor and friend, counsel and guide, Ralph continues in so many ways to inspire the work of *Zygon*. He is a remarkable nexus of the information flows that he identified in his 1973 article “The Concepts of God and Soul in a Scientific View of Human Purpose” as cosmotype, genotype, and culturetype. Out of these flows of information arose the “soul” of Ralph Burhoe that has become the “soul” of *Zygon*. His own unique, personal, self-conscious, and constructive yoking of nature and culture represents for so many of us the direction of the future. It expresses the hope and vision that humanity’s encounter with itself and with the rest of nature will widen and deepen into the creative, peaceful harmony that fulfills the ancient vision (expressed in many ways in different religious traditions) of the union of “heaven” with earth.

Karl E. Peters