

## *Editorial*

*Zygon* thus far has primarily published papers from conferences in which the Editor has had a hand, or papers he has solicited from authors long known to him. It is encouraging that in its second year *Zygon* has begun to attract a number of significant volunteered papers from a wider range of perspectives. This issue presents some of these.

1. Paul Weiss in his "Toward Unity of Culture" reflects a wide range of *Zygon's* aims, which he deduced from a completely independent analysis of the world's cultural crisis, before he was aware of *Zygon*. Such independently arrived at conclusions of the same general form from the contemplation of similar phenomena are the source of the "objectivity and universality that lend credibility and conviction to scientific and rational analyses."

He and, of course, a number of others, join us in the prophecy of the necessity, not only of (a) a new unity or tighter integration of the scientific with the religious or humanistic value concepts of Western culture, but (b) also of a new unity amidst diversity between each culture of the world and the others but also with the rather universally accepted scientific world view. Because of the rapid acceleration of culture change under the impact of the sciences, he also joins us (c) in prophesying that we cannot wait for the slower rectification and selection of value convictions that were sufficient in previous cultural evolution. We might say that ethical and religious evolution must join most of the technological arts, such as medicine, transportation, agriculture, and manufacturing, in their rapid response to potential error *in advance*, by scientifically or rationally grounded foresight, rather than always waiting for empirical hindsight. He further joins us (d) in seeing ideas or intellectual concepts as generative of motivation, feeling, or emotion—that is, of human values.

Weiss then proceeds from defining the urgent problems to specifying some optimal methods for resolving them, and these are pertinent for *Zygon's* policy, since *Zygon* (as well as the Institute on Religion in an

Age of Science and the Center for Advanced Study of Theology and the Sciences of the Meadville Theological School, which sponsor and publish *Zygon*) aims to be one of the agencies helping to find the necessary viable unity of culture. *Zygon* has elected particularly that phase of the task defined as yoking two of his "traditional doctrinal areas—the scientific, the religious . . ." for a coherent world culture.

2. Isma'il R. al Fārūqī's "Science and Traditional Values in Islamic Society" illuminates explicitly the problem of uniting the new scientific culture with a traditional religious culture. For the first time in *Zygon* there is a detailed analysis of science in a major non-Western religion. It also illuminates implicitly the problem of uniting the various traditional religious cultures, since the comparative analysis of the impact of science upon another religious culture reveals some common-core elements with the Judeo-Christian tradition in which most of *Zygon's* present readers are immersed. The historians of religions and the psychosocial scientists who have made a "comparative anatomy" of religions have provided us with new insights whereby we can better discern what are the basic common-core foundations of the varieties of world religions generally from the variant superstructures which seem to be the idiosyncracies of adaptation to the particular ecological niches of geography, culture, and history in which they evolved.

In Islam's reaction to science, Westerners will find reflections of their own problems and attempts to adapt, and perhaps new insights into the general problem of religion in an age of science, akin to what in our tradition we call a "modernist" apologia.

3. William G. Mather's apologetic for a Christian position in "Man's Ability to Co-operate" represents what might be called a higher or more advanced stage of the effort to synthesize religion and science in its presentation of religion as a part of the scientific picture of the organic and cultural evolution of man. While in some ways Mather seems to shortchange religion's authority by his placing greater reliance on the second of Fārūqī's two books—the book of nature—he nevertheless derives from his evolutionary context an even stronger case for the continuing role of religion than does Fārūqī, epitomized in Mather's statement applying to religious as well as to other cultural adaptations: "We are in no position to kick aside the ladder upon which we are climbing." Mather further exemplifies the evolutionary thesis of the value of variety or diversity along with a central common core of religious or cultural values, supporting Weiss's contention.

4. Lawrence Cranberg, speaking from a physicist's background, ar-

## ZYGON

gues convincingly that the sciences are in fact disciplines of the humanities, with a high relevance for ethics and law; and that a proper understanding of this situation would eliminate the more general split between the sciences and the humanities which Weiss said must be repaired.

5. Walter S. Olson's "Has Science Dated the Biblical Flood?" is a new and probably rare kind of paper even for the future of *Zygon*, for it brings scientific evidence to the corroboration and understanding of an ancient religious legend or myth, rather than to reformulate religion in accord with the currently reigning myths about the nature of the world and man's place in it. This paper is more of a piece to fill in the archeologists' jigsaw puzzle than for our more complex and urgent puzzle to fashion a sufficiently unified and effective world-wide religious culture for an age of science. Yet, indirectly, the success of our unifying task depends on such understandings of religions as the historians, archeologists, and other scholars of human cultures establish. Moreover, the relative simplicity, clarity, and fruitfulness of this kind of scientific hypothesis about ancient religious legend should make it pleasantly entertaining as well as a nice example of the sciences in humanistic and religious studies—that is, of the potential unity of culture.

R. W. B.