

Editorial

This issue brings to a close the thirtieth year of *Zygon*. In addition to publishing 25 percent more material than in an average year, this volume's contribution took a definite shape, providing in-depth discussion of four thinkers who are significant for the enterprise to which this journal is committed, the effort to throw light on fundamental human questions through the interrelating of science, religious tradition, and theology—thereby fashioning new paradigms of thought and action. The March issue offered a comprehensive reassessment of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a giant figure of the first half of the twentieth century who inspired and otherwise stimulated a generation of persons to engage in the dialogue between religious faith and science. In June, the profile of James Gustafson deepened our insights into how religion and science interact in the context of a theological ethics that takes seriously the breadth both of human experience and of scientific knowledge of the world. In both June and September, commentators reacted to the stunning (if controversial) effort of mathematical physicist and cosmologist Frank Tipler to explain the physics of immortality.

The year presented studies on a range of important theological and philosophical themes, like those of previous years including the theology of nature, sociobiology and morality, behavioral psychology, and ways of conceptualizing God's action in the world. We also surveyed several areas into which we have not previously ventured but to which we surely will return: the sciences of complexity, perspectives on religion-and-science issues from the world's various religions, and feminist approaches to the issues of religion and science.

This December issue ends the year with five articles focusing on the founder of the journal, Ralph Wendell Burhoe. For the most part, they come from a younger generation of scholars: James Gilbert, a cultural historian, sketches the exciting post-World War II context of interest in religion and science in which Burhoe's work took shape; religious historian John Godbey deals with specific sources of Burhoe's thought; Joel Haugen analyzes our subject's comprehensive interpretation of human life in the cosmos, including his concepts of soul and immortality; German scholar Hubert Meisinger interprets Burhoe's contribution in the light of current European discussions of evolution and human life; and Eduardo Cruz, a scholar from São Paulo, brings a new set of categories, from cultural and social-placement critique, to bear upon Burhoe's work. Taken as a whole, these articles point to questions that Burhoe's work continues to raise and directions future analyses of his thinking might take. They also make considerable progress in placing Burhoe, both historically and culturally. Consequently, they constitute a step toward helping us interpret the lasting significance of the work that animates this journal, as well an appreciation for the ways in which its founder (and we) have been shaped by time, place, and culture. In an important sense, the studies by Meisinger and Cruz lay

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the groundwork for what might be called postmodern interpretations of Burhoe and this journal. For many persons, *postmodern* signifies confusion and the dismantling of ideas. I prefer to think of postmodern sensibilities as those that take seriously not only conventional critical thinking, but also the reflexivity that derives from a sophisticated sense of place, time, culture, and interest (whether that interest be personal, social, philosophical, or cultural). Although such critique sometimes seems to have a dismantling consequence, its effort to contextualize ideas within their geographical, historical, and social settings should in the long run provide a clearer and fuller view, one that is supportive of the kind of creative thinking that informs this journal's aims.

James Moore's article may be construed as another contribution from the postmodern side. It sketches a provocative set of questions: whether contemporary scientific cosmology is inextricably bound to the conventional images of God that seem to be both explicit and implicit in the writings of Stephen Hawking, Steven Weinberg, Frank Tipler, and Paul Davies, or whether it could be woven just as well on the loom of theological images proposed by feminist thinkers Sallie McFague, Rosemary Reuther, and Mary Gerhart—and, if so, what difference it would make. Robert Deltete literally ends the year with his Endmatter reflection on the theology of Stephen Hawking.

We close this third decade with vigor and enthusiasm. Our ten-year index recaps the past. Looking ahead, our plans for the thirty-first volume include a profile of Ian Barbour, the doyen of religion and science studies in this country; two issues that give substantial attention to the neurosciences and the cognitive sciences, including the work of neurotheologian James Ashbrook; and an issue devoted to what some observers have termed the "common creation story"—the node of spiritual and intellectual reflection where scientific cosmology and religious myth appear to intersect with powerful consequence.

Please join us for this thirty-first trip into unexplored territory—and bring some friends with you.

—Philip Hefner