

Editorial

This issue of *Zygon* presents the first installment of a major project that we have had in mind for some time: to take the measure of the burgeoning and significant work of the neurosciences. This venture will occupy more than half of this issue and most of the remaining two issues of 1996. Altogether, this thirty-first volume of the journal may well provide the most extensive treatment of the neurosciences in the light of religion, theology, and values that has ever appeared. When we remember that just ten years ago, in volume 21 (1986), *Zygon* devoted two successive issues to this same theme, we conclude that the neurosciences constitute one of the most significant elements of our stated program of yoking religion and science, and they surely will continue to be so in the years ahead.

In the pages of this issue we present three articles on the neurosciences and related fields. Robert Glassman's full-length essay argues that knowledge from the neurosciences reinforces and elaborates Ralph Wendell Burhoe's theory "that religion is the repository of cultural wisdom that encourages mutual altruism among non-kin, long-term social survival, and human progress." This being the case, Glassman proposes "cognitive theism"—that is, religion with a suspended disbelief about God—as a symbolic framework that can make sense of what we are learning from the neurosciences and their related sciences and also sustain adequate human living. John A. Teske proposes a thesis that is complementary to Glassman's, namely, that neuropsychological research suggests that the concept of self will not be adequately understood unless there is posited a system larger than neuropsychology itself in which the self can be contextualized. This larger system is what is denoted by the concept of spirituality. Both Glassman and Teske, in other words, are examining whether religious concepts may actually enhance the understandings of human beings now emerging from the neurosciences. At the same time, they clarify how those sciences may help us to understand religion in new ways. Eugene G. d'Aquili and Andrew H. Newberg tackle what they term "probably the most important general scientific and philosophical problem of our time": understanding the relationship of subjective awareness to external material reality. Readers who themselves take the measure of these three articles can compare and contrast them to the ten or more articles that will discuss the neurosciences in the September and December issues that follow, and thereby increase their understanding of the issues and possibilities that are being opened up by these sciences at an amazing rate.

The rich fare from the neurosciences is balanced with four articles that move into other realms. Patricia A. Williams presents a straightforward analysis of the major tenets of evolutionary ethics, particularly as they are represented by Michael Ruse, and argues that they are complemented and deepened, not

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rejected by a critical, yet fairly traditional, interpretation of Christian belief. Joseph Życiński adds to the attention this journal has given in recent years to the cosmological theory of Stephen Hawking. In his interpretation of the work of Donna Haraway, William Grassie adds to our series of articles that illuminate the significance of feminist thinking for the religion-and-science conversation. Readers will liken Grassie's piece to those of Ann Pederson (September 1995) and James Moore (December 1995), who also contributed to the analysis of feminism. In the Endmatter section, Henriette Kelker suggests the deeper significance of the methodology and intention of two disparately placed recent thinkers—futurologist Fred. Polak and cytogeneticist Barbara McClintock.

A new section debuts in this issue—"The Teachers' File." With the John Templeton Foundation's three-year "Science & Religion Course Program," there has been a dramatic surge of interest in colleges, universities, and seminaries throughout the world in the teaching of the materials that *Zygon* has focused upon over the years. Margaret Wertheim reported on this development in our September 1995 issue. A peer group of such teachers is emerging, and our journal aims to serve this group. In this inaugural effort, we present two articles, by Philip Hefner and Ted Peters, that survey the religion-and-science field for two different audiences—Peters, for theological readers, Hefner, for social scientists. When we received requests from college teachers to use these articles, we recognized that they might serve a larger audience. This section will continue as a pilot project. Give us your feedback and ideas—and let us know about materials that you would like to see in print here, including materials from your own or other courses.

—Philip Hefner