

## *Editorial*

The main articles in this issue of *Zygon* may be interrelated as constituting moments in a train of thought. Eugene d'Aquili and Andrew Newberg set the theme in motion with a neuropsychological reflection upon religion. The persistence of religion for millennia in human history is accounted for by the fact that it expresses fundamental ordering functions that are located in the workings of our brains. These functions are essentially ordering activities that put our worlds of experience together: "the ordering of elements of reality into causal chains giving rise to explanatory models of the external world, whether scientific or mythical." These models are in turn related to the most basic, even transcendent, realities.

The four articles that follow serve as examples of the ordering function that d'Aquili and Newberg describe. Each of these articles makes use of specific themes from specific religious communities to construct larger frameworks of meaning. Derek Gatherer, a molecular biologist, relates theories of memes to the philosophy of Karl Popper and, even more, to the work of the twelfth-century Muslim thinker Averroës. Bringing these elements together enables Gatherer to propose a concept of nonpersonal immortality. Physicist George Murphy utilizes a Christian theological theme, that of the cross and crucifixion of Jesus, to construct a way of understanding how God may be said to act in a world that is described by scientific cosmology. Raymond Grizzle, an environmental scientist, and economist Christopher Barrett juxtapose a comprehensive analysis of six Christian traditions of environmentalism to the secular concepts of biocentrism, ecocentrism, and anthropocentrism. Out of this interaction, they develop their own concept of "cosmocentrism," which in turn leads to their proposal for "pluralistic stewardship" of the environment. This proposal, although shaped within the Christian religion, takes into account both holistic environmental perspectives and also the plurality of worldviews present today. After reading these articles, the reader may assess whether their authors are doing within various religious perspectives what d'Aquili and Newberg believe is the fundamental function of such perspectives.

This very full issue of our journal also includes two astute responses to Anne Foerst's March 1998 article on the dialogue between theology and the theory and practice of embodied artificial intelligence. These responses are offered by Helmut Reich, a physicist and psychologist,

and by coauthors Mary Gerhart, in religious studies, and Allan Russell, a physicist.

In the Teachers' File, William Carroll describes a new degree program in religion-and-science studies at his college, while Stephen Pope presents a basic statement on how Catholic theology might approach sociobiology. Our series of recollections of Ralph Wendell Burhoe continues with pieces by Michael Cavanaugh and Karl Peters.

Readers will recognize that there are important messages conveyed here; at the same time they will notice that the medium in which the messages appear is also interesting. Four of the articles, for example, are authored by two persons—two by authors in the same or related fields, two by authors representing different disciplines. Furthermore, there is an interdisciplinary character to the issue that is striking, even if we are inclined to take it for granted in these pages: Eleven different disciplines are represented in the graduate-level education of our authors—in order of appearance: neuroscience, anthropology, molecular biology, physics, environmental science, economics, philosophy, psychology, religious studies, history, and law. Physics and religious studies can claim three authors each. The editors consider it a privilege to be able to assist such a diverse intellectual group in addressing the readers in this issue of the journal.

—Philip Hefner