

Editorial

This third issue in our thirty-third year of publication is one of the largest we have ever sent out, and it also presents as many proposals for new departures in thinking about religion and science as we have ever published in one issue. Let me enumerate them:

1. Theologian Niels Gregersen makes one of the first attempts we know to relate classical thinking about creation with the new research into the phenomena of complexity, focusing upon processes of autopoiesis. In March, 1999, we will feature a full-length symposium on this article.

2. Larry Arnhart, a political scientist, takes a new turn, beyond both the social Darwinism of the previous century and conventional political theory, in arguing how Darwinian naturalism can provide insights into thinking about the body politic.

3. In their article, David Jones and John Culliney, economist and nature writer, provide a different perspective on the phenomena of complexity—from the traditions of Confucianism. This piece represents our ongoing interest in the world religions.

4. Process theology, based on the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, has been one of the major contributors to the dialogue between religion and science. Noted scholar Ian Barbour has offered a classic critique of this theological position (although he leans toward it himself). Joseph Bracken believes that he has constructed a revision in process thought that engages Barbour's concerns.

5. The final article, by two philosophers, William Dembski and Stephen Meyer, offers a framework for assessing all of our articles, in its suggestion that what religious thinking should provide for the interaction with science is explanatory power; that is, the religious framework can stand as a cogent (sometimes the *most cogent*) explanation of the scientifically described phenomena. Dembski and Meyer offer an example of the application of their suggestions in their own reflection upon Big Bang cosmology and the Christian doctrine of Creation. Readers can explore the fruitfulness of the Dembski-Meyer apparatus and determine its usefulness for reading our journal.

6 and 7. In the Teachers' File, James Yerkes shares his pedagogical attempt to share newer scientific and theological understandings of nature, while Craig Nesson breaks ground in incorporating sociobiology into the methodology of theology.

8. Readers who followed Anne Foerst's highly original proposals concerning artificial intelligence and theology in the March issue, as well as the responses to her piece in the June issue (by Helmut Reich and by Mary Gerhart and Allan Russell), will find her response to the responders useful as she tries to tie a provisional knot on the discussion. Those who have not followed the discussion can retrieve the earlier issues and get on board now.

9. Nancey Murphy has been charting new territory in relating philosophy and theology to the sciences throughout her young career. In the Book Symposium, Wesley Robbins and Philip Clayton comment on two of her recent books, and she offers a rejoinder.

10. Willem Drees continues our series on the contributions to our field made by Ralph Burhoe. Drees presents an analysis of what might come of engagement between European theology and the Burhoe program.

I suggest that readers begin as soon as possible to digest this issue, because it will likely take them most of the next three months to do so—and they will want to be ready to get to work on our December issue, which will offer another platterful of nourishing fare.

—Philip Hefner