

Editorial

It is becoming clearer every day that there are “many worlds” on the interface of science and religion. An adequate map of the territory along this interface will need not only to locate the different worlds, but also to identify the specific character, motives, and aims of the people who inhabit each world. Even though no one, not even *Zygon*, can undertake such a map, we do attempt to remain in touch with several of these worlds and to publish work that they produce. Our readers can then attempt their own maps, filling in from other sources what we leave out. For the most part, the thinkers in each world are ignorant of what goes on in the others; quite often each world is inclined to believe that the others are on the wrong track in relating religion and science. Indeed, since this journal is itself committed to a programmatic enterprise (see the boilerplate at the end of each issue for a summary of this programmatic intention), we do at the very least imply our own value judgments concerning what approaches on the interface are more important and more adequate.

Zygon does inhabit more than one world in the religion-and-science terrain, however, and our pages seek not only to show how the efforts of several of these worlds contribute to our program, but also to acknowledge and honor the inherent worth of certain (not all) of these worlds. Each of its six sections makes the point that this second issue of year 2000 is a “many worlds” offering.

Gregory Peterson, in the first of the two “think pieces,” describes the complex challenge to theology that is presented by the fact that there are several different theories (or “worlds”?) of evolution presented by leading scientific writers. Ursula Goodenough enters the world of metaphor in both religion and science and, refreshingly, suggests some basic criteria and rules of thumb for navigators in this realm.

The second section explores the resources that naturalist modes of thought and expression bring to the interaction of religion and science. Each of the remaining issues this year will include articles that continue this exploration. We intend thereby to make a contribution to the often skewed and polarized wider discussions in our society that tend to focus on traditional supernaturalist religious thought and atheistic materialism, as if they are the only available positions for persons who seriously attempt to reconcile their personal religious or philosophical positions with contemporary science. The naturalist approach insists that there is a different

way to engage questions of religion and science, and in this sense offers an alternative (*not* a “middle of the road” position) to our conventional dichotomies. Michael Cavanaugh maps the territory of what some call *religious naturalism*. He fashions a creative genre that brings together Internet discussions, personal conversations, and publications relevant to his subject. William Rottschaefer argues that naturalist thought provides the most adequate model for understanding moral agency. Michael Ruse, in two chapters from a forthcoming book, suggests that traditional Christianity and Darwinian naturalism have for over a century been set against each other as *necessarily* mutually exclusive, and he tells his readers why this need not be the case.

The world of naturalistic thinking is peopled by scientists, theologians, philosophers, and religious believers, as well as agnostics. The third section focuses on the world of Christians, mainly theologians, and the ways they attempt to take science seriously. David Byers works strategically, sharing insights from many years of dialogue work in behalf of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Stanley Grenz, an evangelical Christian theologian, provides a rich view of the world that many mainstream Christian theologians inhabit and offers his interpretation of how they view science as essential for their work, while at the same time they use it as a building block for their own distinctive theological construction.

In the fourth section, we find a potpourri of scholarly presentations: Jensine Andresen opens the door to Hinduism, specifically its artistic products; Peter Scott interprets technology within a theological framework; Gerald Cory adds to our journal’s decades-long reflection on the significance of the neurosciences for understanding religion.

The world of postmodernity is still relatively unexplored in the religion-and-science discussion. The fifth section presents Jerome Stone’s commentary on the work of J. Wentzel van Huyssteen, who has devoted many years to interpreting this world, along with van Huyssteen’s own commentary on Stone’s thinking.

Feminist modes of thought and experience are also an unknown world for much our discussion. In the Teachers’ File, Joyce Nyhof-Young projects a religion-and-science curriculum that takes feminist pedagogy seriously.

Readers will certainly agree that simply getting in touch with these “many worlds” is challenging. Are we able to summon our energy to ask how these worlds are related to each other, and whether they are in fact, or ought to be, *one* world? Even though such questions may be premature at this moment in history, they cannot remain unexplored for long. The editors gladly welcome such explorations.

—Philip Hefner