

Editorial

It seems appropriate, as *Zygon* enters this first full year of the third millennium, that we present a full slate of articles that “push the envelope,” that attempt, before our very eyes, to reach forward beyond existing boundaries of thought into new ways of thinking. These attempts may indeed go in directions that their authors have not envisioned; they may even prove in the long run to be abortive. In any case, however, they serve to stretch our minds and engage us in the authors’ search for new ways of thinking and new ways of imagining the agenda for this new millennium.

Our two Thinkpieces set the tone. Gregory Peterson clarifies our thinking about an old concept—religion—so as to render it more accessible to insights from the cognitive sciences that promise to be essential for the future of religious efforts to fashion viable twenty-first century worldviews. Ursula Goodenough adds another building block to her ongoing project of reflecting upon the transcendent possibilities of the natural world, and in the process contributes the ideas of “vertical” and “horizontal” transcendence.

In the “Articles” section, four authors propose ideas as candidates to become fundamental to the next century’s worldview that Peterson speaks of. Ludovico Galleni takes seriously that humans are the thinking element in the continuum of planetary evolution, with the twin conclusions that human beings do theology in the awareness of their position and that their theology (and all thinking) is in fact the biosphere’s act of thinking. Anne Kull builds on the insight that in our present stage of evolution, nature, culture, and technology are inseparable. Rather than separating the two, she argues that in our time culture and technology have indeed become nature. Matt Rossano focuses on the technology of artificial intelligence, thereby giving concreteness to Kull’s concerns and at the same time introducing normative concerns of ethics and community. Larry Arnhart also moves to surpass conventional dualisms—in his proposal that Darwin is a congenial partner to both aesthetics and religion.

John Teske and R. Joseph contribute to a third section on the neurosciences, thereby extending *Zygon*’s ongoing emphasis on work in the area. They bring quite different approaches to a common concern for how their science relates to religion. Teske states his idea directly: “spirituality is a product of the very processes of human evolution that make the social

construction of human culture, human meaning, and individual psychology possible, and even necessary.” Joseph examines a wide range of religious phenomena, most of which exemplify mystical states, and concludes that they are made possible by the evolution of limbic and temporal lobe structures.

Our final section focuses on technical philosophy and theology. Here, too, there is an effort to fashion new ideas that can take the measure of the challenges of our new millennium. One of these ideas, known as supervenience, is a more sophisticated development of older ideas of emergence. In ways that may be consistent with Ursula Goodenough’s project of describing transcendence under conditions of naturalism, supervenience speaks of how the new can emerge from the present without invoking external causation and also without being reducible to the context in which it emerged. Joseph Bracken and Dennis Biefeldt guide us through at least a portion of this philosophical-theological terrain.

We take some satisfaction in the group of authors in this issue: two biologists, a psychologist, a neuroscientist, a political scientist, and four theologians. Multidisciplinary discussion is basic to our *Zygon* approach. As we peer into the future, the millennium ahead demands such a strategy if we are to understand and interpret the human quest in ways that really matter.

—Philip Hefner