

Editorial

Let me advise the reader that the images of this editorial may have been directly influenced by the gift of a National Geographic globe that arrived just as I was pondering this first issue of *Zygon's* thirty-seventh year of publication. It prompted me to coin a word—"multilocationality." This word should be read with the image of the globe in mind.

Who are the players in the engagement of science and religion? Who are the thinkers who are coining the new ideas and elaborating the old ones? Where are the participants "coming from"? These questions are not the theme for discussion in this issue of *Zygon*, but the articles that follow provide testimony to the fact that the players are coming from every point on the compass, representing a staggering variety of worldviews and commitments. To be sure, it is our authors' ideas that we focus on for our discussion, but the ideas are inseparable from their broad range of backgrounds and perspectives. Furthermore, the breadth of that range reminds us that the ideas at the center of the science-religion discussion do not emerge from a single crucible of intellectual ferment—nor even from just a few. It is not geographical nearness, similarity of education, or even a common literature that has produced the discussion in our journal.

The multifarious origins of the authors and their ideas prompts us to ask what common thrust or intention brings them together in the pages of this journal. Several things need to be said in response to this question. First of all, the identity of *Zygon* commits it to all points of the compass. There is no single intellectual, scientific, or religious-spiritual location that is authoritative for our conversation. Our principle of selection is articulated in the Statement of Perspective that appears in the back matter of each issue:

The journal *Zygon* provides a forum for exploring ways to unite what in modern times has been disconnected—values from knowledge, goodness from truth, religion from science. . . . *Zygon's* hypothesis is that, when long-evolved religious wisdom is yoked with significant, recent scientific discoveries about the world and human nature, there results credible expression of basic meaning, values, and moral convictions that provides valid and effective guidance for enhancing human life.

Every piece that we publish contributes, in the editors' opinion, to the hypothesis we espouse. On occasion even the authors disagree with our hypothesis, because editors sometimes see aspects of an article that the author does not.

Because this statement of perspective focuses on the enhancement of human life, it is not surprising that *Zygon's* authors represent different locations within the human community. It is also not surprising that we are never entirely satisfied with the range of differences represented in the journal—we recognize that we have miles to go before we can say we have accomplished our stated goals.

There is a deeper dimension to this multilocational character of the authors we publish, a dimension that may not be apparent. We edit the journal with an almost exclusive focus on the production of the hard copy—the printed volume that reaches most of our subscribers in the regular mail. My guess is that the larger number of these subscribers experience the multilocationality as an obstacle to their reading. It is difficult to access ideas that emerge from points on the globe that are foreign to us; or we may simply not be interested in certain topics. Nevertheless, even if readers do no more than scan the Table of Contents, they see the large map that is set before them.

An increasing number of our readers do not ever see the hard copy or hold the bound volume in their hands, since they access the journal electronically. Chances are that these readers have carried out a search, with the result that they read only the articles that correlate with their preset interests (or research topics). Most of these readers will never read this editorial. For the electronic readers, the journal makes a great contribution—they have found what they needed for their purposes. On the other hand, they may have no inkling whatsoever of what I call the multilocationality of our publishing venture.

In one sense, therefore, we do not achieve our goals—those who see the broad and varied range of authorship and ideas do not actually walk the path that each issue sets before them, while those who digest thoroughly a few articles are never aware of the global offering that is available in the journal. This is no discouragement for us, however. The multilocationality is both inherent and necessary to our venture; it is mandated by the statement of purpose that I cited above. Both the bound volume that can be held in hand and the electronic text that is sent instantaneously around the world are irreplaceable images of who we are and what we intend for this journal. That fact is itself substance for reflection, discussion, and even publication: Why is multilocationality inherent and necessary in the engagement of religion and science? Everyone who is interested in the engagement ought to entertain that question, at least briefly. The editors, moreover, will welcome your responses to that challenging question, and we would hope to publish them, too.

A brief overview of the contents of this issue: The two Thinkpieces, by Thomas King and Gregory Peterson, bring differing theological perspectives to bear, Jesuit and liberal Protestant, and provide commentary on two

current ideas that carry weight in our public life: cosmic design theory and globalization.

The centerpiece of this issue is the symposium “Science and the Religions”; readers are directed to the special introduction to this section. By definition, such a symposium brings together significantly different locations—religious and cultural. At least six distinctive religious-cultural perspectives are represented here. The symposium underscores our editorial intention to give increasing space to the interreligious dimension of the science-religion discussion. The Parliament of the World’s Religions, at its 1999 sessions in Cape Town, South Africa, provided the venue for several of these pieces. That Parliament prompted us to join hundreds of other groups around the world in pledging to extend the spirit of the Parliament in our regular programs. Several of these articles are programmatic in nature, and their proposals can be explored for their usefulness in future thinking.

Among the general articles, neuroscientist Patrick McNamara adds new thinking to the correlations between brain activity and religious practices. Ethicist-philosopher Victor Anderson approaches the engagement with science from the perspective of American traditions of naturalist, empirical philosophy and theology. Finally, biologist Rudolf Brun and theologian Terence Nichols—both working from Roman Catholic perspectives—present in impressive detail how Christian theology and evolutionary theories interact. The issue concludes with an especially challenging set of book reviews that emerge from E. O. Wilson’s attempt to comprehend the fullness of science, as well as Ludwig Feuerbach’s classic efforts to do the same for religion, and also serious reflections in theology, spirituality, and the neurosciences.

A request, in light of these editorial meanderings: make a friend the gift of the Table of Contents of this (or any other) issue. It represents the *Zygon* “globe.” Let your friends take it from there.

—Philip Hefner