

## *Editorial*

Religious thinking (and much thinking that emerges in what we call the humanities) insists that empirical studies cannot exhaustively account for all that is real. William James spoke of the factor of “over-belief” that religion entails, while Paul Ricoeur refers to the same phenomenon with the phrase “surplus of meaning.” This over-belief poses a fundamental issue in the interaction between religion and science. On the one side, how should religious thought articulate this surplus of thought and meaning—are there not criteria that assess more and less adequate ways of expressing it? On the other side, how are the sciences to react to even the most careful statements of over-belief? If the scientist’s responsibility demands critical skepticism toward such statements, must these also lead to outright dismissal of over-belief as wishful thinking or even self-delusion?

Many of the authors in this issue of our journal wrestle with the idea of science and religious over-belief. Alan Nordstrom starts the discussion in his poem “Is There More?” which he himself describes as “a dialogue between Sight and Insight,” which in turn is an interior dialogue within his own mind, evoking intentional hints of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Bertrand Russell.

The poetry is followed immediately by a different sort of dialogue on essentially the same theme. In the section “Dialogue on Theological Models,” theologian David Klemm and physicist William Klink offer a detailed proposal for testing theological models in a way that can parallel testing scientific hypotheses. Theologian Langdon Gilkey responds with critical appreciation, to which Klemm and Klink respond in turn.

Several of the articles that follow in the next section extend reflection on the basic issue of the “more.” Leif Kennair juxtaposes evolutionary psychology and intelligent-design theory in their ability to account “for the empirical world, or the world as it is.” Physicist Larry Fagg takes a definite position favoring the “more,” with his proposal that the ubiquity of electromagnetic interactions is “a compelling metaphor for the ubiquity of God’s indwelling.” From a theologian’s perspective, Ilia Delio carries this dialogical theme into the discussion of the ability of brain science to throw light on religious belief.

Sjoerd Bonting (biochemistry) contributes to the ongoing discussion of extraterrestrial life. C. MacKenzie Brown provides an updated reflection

on the pioneering work of psychologist James Leuba, who in 1916 presented an interpretation of religious belief among scientists. Noting that Leuba's conclusions have sparked renewed attention in recent years, Brown presents his own interpretation of how the beliefs of scientists contribute to our understanding of the "more."

In our previous issue, we featured a symposium on the proposals of psychologist Helmut Reich for what he calls "relational and contextual reasoning." In this issue, Reich offers a case study of how that reasoning functions in teaching a basic religion-and-science theme.

In the last section, Barbara Strassberg (sociology) brings together seven articles on organ transplants from the perspective of science and world religions in the context of the formation of a global ethic. Last March we published a section on HIV/AIDS that in many ways parallels this current set of articles. These collections of articles introduce a new dimension to our religion-science discussions, a dimension that deserves special attention. Strassberg provides a detailed interpretation of these pieces in her introductory article, but here we reflect on the general significance of this section.

Bringing representatives of multiple religious traditions into conversation with scientists on an issue of practical import for a global ethical approach makes for a more complex mix than we are generally accustomed to. This heightened complexity makes the conversation between religion and science more difficult.

Why do we invite this complexity and difficulty into our discussion? Because it reflects the actual situations in which religion and science interact today. The perspectives of scientists and religious thinkers are brought into dialogue, but that dialogue is embedded in the sociocultural context in which specific practical issues arise that require global (i.e., cross-cultural and cross-religious) responses. The approach signaled in here is an important reminder that religion-science is not the monopoly of a recognizable peer group of writers who publish their work under a "religion-and-science" rubric, nor is it confined to an academic field or specialty. The substance of the religion-science domain is as broad and rich as life itself, and consequently it fractures the rubrics and departmental boundaries. This being the case, there is always a messiness to religion-science writing that will be a source of necessary discomfort to those invested in clear boundaries. The breadth of this sociocultural context will increasingly have to be incorporated in thinking that reflects on the science-religion interaction.

In this set of articles on transplants, the authors represent medical science, anthropology, sociology, social work, molecular biology, and biomedical ethics as well as Christian, Jewish, and Islamic religious thought. In her introductory article, Strassberg provides a comprehensive discussion of cultural analysis, globalization, and efforts at framing a global ethic

as well as an interpretation of how these intersect with transplant science and technology.

Lawrence Cohen (medicine/anthropology) provides in-depth discussion of the situation in which transplants are undertaken and their impact on both individuals and communities in India. His interpretation of cases raises complex philosophical, ethical, and cultural issues in which both medical scientists and religious communities are implicated. Readers may wish to refer to William LaFleur's comparable treatment of transplants in Japanese culture, published in the September 2002 *Zygon*.

Frank Delmonico (medicine) and Nancy Scheper-Hughes (anthropology) focus on the buying and selling of human organs, which they vigorously oppose. Gayle Woloschak (molecular biology) describes the procedures necessary for successful transplantation and cites considerations that grow out of her Eastern Orthodox Christian religious community. Stuart Youngner (biomedical ethics) sets forth issues of death and dying in the transplant context, as well as the psychological and popular responses to transplants.

Steven Leonard Jacobs (Judaica) provides a survey of classic Jewish teachings that inform a global ethical response to the transplant phenomena, as well as a critique of some Christian approaches. Ghulam-Haider Aasi (Muslim studies) reports the positions of Muslim thinkers who oppose transplants and also those who support the practice, clarifying in detail the bases for both positions and the desiderata that must be observed if Muslims are to support transplantation.

Altogether, this collection of articles exemplifies the importance and also the complexities of this journal's long-standing stated aim of yoking science and religion for the purpose of fostering the welfare of the human community. With these articles, we come face to face with the future, since they delineate in bold terms one of the frontiers that challenge the religion-science discussion in the years ahead.

—Philip Hefner