

## *Editorial*

Religion and science, in some form, permeate the fabric of life today. Because both religion and science originate in the unquenchable human need to know the truth about the world and ourselves, we conclude that religion and science have filled the spaces of our lives for a long time, indeed. It is no surprise, therefore, that a concern with religion and science inevitably brings us into contact with every dimension of life and with every field of thought, research, and experience that life encompasses. Such a realization is both exciting and daunting. This realization is the day-in and day-out preoccupation of this journal. With this issue, we begin our thirty-ninth year of attempting to track the ways, actual and potential, in which religion and science together weave the tapestry of our lives.

Language is fundamental to our existence. The fact that we have language and the ways in which we use it are critical to both religion and science. We take language for granted most of the time, almost like the air we breathe. Perhaps that is why the religion-and-science discussion has devoted relatively little attention to language. Much to our disadvantage, we might add. A great deal of misunderstanding and even wrongheadedness follows from our failure to focus on our language—on what “is” means, for example. *Is* physical matter nothing but molecules and atoms? Do quarks have being? *Are* there quarks? or are they necessary constructs and thereby have no “real” being? Readers will certainly have differing opinions about such questions, reflecting differing assumptions about what “is” means when applied to subatomic particles and other aspects of microscopic reality. Even intelligent, well-educated people have been known to use language to write and talk about the state of things before the Big Bang, even though language about such states is highly problematic, perhaps even nonsensical. Certainly “is” means something different when a theologian says “There is a God” than when a climatologist says “Global warming is real.” “Is” means something different in the statement of a paleontologist that *Homo sapiens* “is” in the developmental line of higher primates and that of lovers gazing at the sky and whispering that the moon “is” breathtakingly beautiful.

The first section of this issue focuses on the “is” of metaphor in religious and scientific talk. Physicist Allan Russell and religious studies scholar Mary Gerhart have given many years of attention to metaphor and meta-

phoric process in a series of writings since 1984. We reprint several excerpts from their previous work, with commentaries by Betty Birner (linguistics) and Robert Masson (theology, philosophy) and a concluding response by Russell and Gerhart. Our intention is explicit, to draw attention to this work and to promote further reflection on how language figures in the religion-and-science discussion.

In the second section, an underappreciated scholar and idea receive attention—Pitirim Sorokin and the idea of love. Ursula King analyzes love in the thinking of Sorokin and Teilhard de Chardin, while Mary Montgomery Clifford deals with Sorokin and Paul Tillich.

Andrew Robinson (medicine, theology) provides an innovative theological reflection on evolution, drawing on Trinitarian traditions and the semiotics of C. S. Peirce. The result is a formidable and highly original interpretation of evolution.

An English literature scholar, David Goslee, offers a study of Thomas Huxley that opens up the breadth and complexity of the man's thinking on evolution and ethics—a “conflicted legacy,” in Goslee's words.

In the final section of this one hundred fifty-third issue of *Zygon*, a bundle of themes receive attention, often in strikingly original interpretations. Theologian Joseph Bracken reflects on the classical doctrine of the soul while at the same time providing a demonstration of the usefulness of Alfred North Whitehead's “process” philosophy for religion-science discussion. Uko Zylstra (biology) argues for an alternative to both philosophical materialism and intelligent-design theory. Shamanism, a phenomenon that receives increasing attention these days, is delineated by anthropologist Michael Winkelman in its significance for the emerging field of neurotheology.

Winkelman's piece also contributes to *Zygon's* efforts to take the measure of the neurosciences, as does psychobiologist Heather Looy's discussion of the origins of morality in the phenomenon of disgust. Bringing this issue to its conclusion, Lynne Hume (religious studies) presents a discussion of Australian Aboriginal cosmology, specifically the phenomenon of “The Dreaming.”

The tapestry we examine in *Zygon* is not only large but also intricate. It is true that most readers will give attention to only a portion of the whole, to only a few threads of the entire woven fabric. There is consolation in the fact every thread possesses beauty and significance, thus assuring enriching engagement for every reader.

—Philip Hefner