

## *Editorial*

### CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

In order to remain the same, one has to keep changing. Science changes in order to remain true to its ambitions. Organisms have immune systems that are flexible so as to be able to counter new pathogens. Religious traditions emphasize their roots in past wisdom but need to relate old wisdom to new challenges. A case study of how this latter process might be organized was the analysis by Mohammed Ghaly earlier this year of the way new Islamic organizations have become places where theological leaders, medical doctors, and scientists engage in conversation on cloning (Ghaly 2010).

*Zygon* also faces continuity and change qua audience and focus, as discussed extensively in the June 2010 issue (Hefner 2010; Peters 2010; Schweitz 2010; Tirosh-Samuels 2010; Pederson 2010; Peterson 2010; Drees 2010; and others). *Zygon* also has to change in some of its practicalities, so as to continue to function in a changing academic landscape. At the time this issue appears, we will have moved to an Internet-based electronic submission system for new articles. This will be a change for authors and may take a moment to get used to. After registration at the Web site, an article has to be submitted with abstract and author note separately; the main body has to have been prepared for blind review. (For more information and a link, see [www.zygonjournal.org](http://www.zygonjournal.org)). In making this transition, we no longer will have a two-step review process—first the abstract, then the full article. Too often, in my brief experience as editor, I need the complete article in order to decide whether to send the article out for review and, if so, to whom.

With the electronic submission system, authors will be able to keep track of progress in the review process for their article. The system also will make it easier for office and editor to keep track of submissions. Otherwise, with the increase in e-mail traffic, messages and articles get lost too easily. Reviewers also will be asked to use these new mechanisms to do their important work. They help us to sort out what is thematically relevant, original, and of the best quality available, and thus worth presenting as *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* to our readers. By using this new

technology we expect to serve potential authors with a quicker review process, and thereby become an even more attractive journal for authors and hence for our readers.

Peggy Blomenberg was first listed as executive editor in the issue of December 1998 when she took over from Carol Rausch Albright. Much has happened in the intervening dozen years, not the least of which has been the doubling in size per issue in 2000, now running over 1,000 pages annually. This is the last issue of *Zygon* for which she will do her careful work. She has been attentive to many details and pleasant in contacts with our authors and with the production staff of Wiley-Blackwell and its predecessor in all those years. Thus, I here want to express my thanks for her contributions to the blossoming of this journal.

The interplay of change and continuity is a central theme in many of the contributions in this issue. We have a section on Buddhism and science, inspired by Donald Lopez Jr.'s book *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2008). The engagement with science affects Buddhism, for better or worse. This is not a development of the last few decades, when the Fourteenth Dalai Lama became such a prominent advocate of an encounter of Buddhists and scientists. The response to Western science in the nineteenth century was a matter of self-defense and of self-definition, and thus the relation to science also is an issue of internal diversity and controversy within Buddhism. In this issue, Lopez's analysis is considered by Peter Harrison in the context of the emergence of Western conceptions of religion and the "discovery" of Buddhism. He considers Lopez's study a model of how historical scholarship on the interactions of religious heritage and scientific practices can inform contemporary considerations. In passing, Harrison offers a miniature history of the invention of "religion and science" as a specific discourse. Thupten Jinpa, one of the translators of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and a scholar of Tibetan Buddhism in his own right, offers his response to Lopez's study, retelling the story of the modern engagement of Tibetan Buddhism with science, beginning with Gendün Chöphel (1930s). Obviously, Jinpa is an insider to the discussion, speaking of Tibetan views on substantive issues, whereas Harrison and Lopez are professionally outsiders who study processes and ideas in historical contexts. In his rich contribution, Lopez discusses the reception of his book, recapitulates its main ideas, and circles the mixed historical and normative question "What is Buddhism?"

John F. Haught, a Roman Catholic theologian who takes his tradition as seriously as the reflection on science, provides the occasion for another section. Gloria Schaab focuses on his theology, qua substance and methodology, and the theological creativity he allows himself in relation to science and science-inspired worldviews. Ann Michaud analyzes how Haught presents theology and science as constructively engaged rather than as competing or totally distinct perspectives on reality. Ted Peters considers

Haught's work as providing a foundation for the construction of a Christian theology of evolution; he offers four theses that should stand as pillars on this foundation. Scientist Robert Ulanowicz argues that Haught's response to Darwinian evolutionary theories resonates with certain criticisms of standard interpretations of science. Ulanowicz goes on to plead for a different interpretation of science and its understanding of reality, drawing on "systems ecology" and process metaphysics.

The third thematic section deals with a paradigmatic form of change: technology, especially artificial intelligence and its impact on our self-understanding. Mark Coeckelbergh argues that metaphors derived from modern technology, such as those of the network and those of the cyborg, provide ways to think about the relationships between the material and the spiritual. Laurence Tamatea explores modern Christian and Buddhist responses to the idea of artificial intelligence and the understandings of our own identity (in God's image? No self?) involved. Robert M. Geraci discusses the religious and pop-science beliefs that shape the public acceptance of artificial intelligence. One recent manifestation discussed is the Singularity University in California, founded by Ray Kurzweil.

In the first of the individual articles with which this issue opens, Stefaan Blancke from Belgium analyzes manifestations of creationism and intelligent design in the Netherlands preceding and during the Darwin year. These changes became manifest when some prominent advocates of ID, and even of young-earth creationism, publicly converted to a form of theistic evolution. In the second article, Nidhal Guessoum reflects critically on the way literalism shapes the public preaching on Islam and science. He focuses on the determination of the crescent-based Islam months (important for various holy occasions) and on biological evolution. Guessoum argues that it is more fruitful to consider the objectives of religious beliefs and practices and how these could be maintained in new circumstances—thus, in his own way, seeking a form of change for the sake of continuity. The third article, by James Van Slyke, deals with evolutionary and cognitive explanations of compassion. He then reflects upon the differences between such explanations and a Christian emphasis on the renunciation of the self for the good of others. Here, we have continuity across levels of scientific explanation and human understanding, but also categorical change, as he argues that the theological perspective can contribute something not yet obvious in the scientific approaches.

May the contributions in this issue contribute to appropriate changes in the continuing conversation on scientific understandings and religious practices and beliefs.

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