

Editorial

PRACTICES, APPROACHES, AND AGENDAS IN PLURAL

In this issue of *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, Zainal Abidin Bagir argues for an understanding of “religion and science” that considers the practical context in which people and religious and scientific claims to authority may run into each other. He heads the Center for Religious and Cross-cultural Studies in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. This ancient city is close to a volcano, the Merapi, in a country prone to earthquakes. Bagir studies human responses to such natural disasters. Religion is not only involved in positive experiences, as in arguments from the appearance of design and beauty. Again and again, experiences with natural evil have triggered people to ask questions about God, nature, and our responsibility (Drees 2003). Bagir (2012, 360) writes: “Natural disasters become an epistemological window to understand the society, nature, people’s religious understanding, as well as the interaction of science (as today’s best empirical knowledge about the natural world), religion, and culture (from which most Indonesians draw as sources for giving meanings to events) in understanding and responding to the natural world.” When it comes to policy, there may be a clash between some religious leaders and certain scientific authorities (and behind these the government).

“Religion and science” is enriched by new voices, bringing other religions as well as other social and cultural contexts into play. Bagir’s contribution is part of a larger section on a recent book on Islam and science by Nidhal Guessoum (2011), an Algerian physicist who works in the United Arab Emirates. *Zygon* has previously published articles by him (Guessoum 2008, 2010). The Jordanian biochemist Rana Dajani concentrates on the resistance to evolution among Muslims, the historical dimension of which was recently treated in *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* by Marwa Eshakry (2011). Salman Hameed, an astronomer and professor who studies the relations between humanities and the sciences and who is the driving force behind the blog *Irtiqa* (<http://sciencereigionnews.blogspot.com/>), challenges the overarching concept of theistic science (science interpreted in a theistic way), although finding much to praise in Guessoum’s analysis and proposals. These four essays by Hameed, Dajani, Bagir, and Guessoum show that among Muslims who all are knowledgeable about science (even if they are not scientists themselves), and who all seek a moderate course, there is diversity, just as in other traditions. Even more diversity is evident when one considers the positions they reject, such as the claim that modern scientific insights can be found in the Qur’an (Bigliardi 2011). The opening article of this section is by John Brooke, who considers the parallels between

discourses on religion and science in Christian and Islamic environments, as well as the particular features of Guessoum's contributions.

In this issue of *Zygon*, we find three more articles that argue for particular approaches to "religion and science." Larry Crockett turns to the pragmatism of William James. George Karuvelil argues for an existentialist approach, with some sympathy for Stephen Gould's Non-Overlapping Magisteria (NOMA; Gould 1999), although he prefers to speak of AMA, Alternative Magisteria. And Young Bin Moon offers a further development of his theological appreciation of Niklas Luhmann's work (see also Moon 2010), with a tinge of Philip Hefner's "created co-creator," when Moon speaks of the "mediatized co-mediator."

The issue opens with a piece on thought experiments, using contemporary philosophical analysis to engage John Polkinghorne's ideas on quantum physics and theology. Christopher Pynes recovers some *ad hominem* arguments against Intelligent Design, which in a previous article in *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* had been dismissed as "bad" arguments (Koperski 2008). Two "Think Pieces" call us to work on broader agendas with respect to evolution, one by former editor Philip Hefner and another with respect to contemporary global problems such as peace and sustainability by Helmut Reich, who has written on the limited impact of "religion and science" in this journal (Reich 2008). So much to read, and even more to think over, and act upon.

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