

Editorial

It is significant that in the twentieth century thus far there has been a large number of miracles proceeding from the application of the sciences in satisfying various human wants and needs. The miracles include fantastic new sources of energy, marvelous medical cures, and instant communication around the earth.

However, the miracle of satisfying man's most critical need has not yet happened. This critical need, we suggested in our March editorial, is religion—the cultural technology for transmitting values to motivate the behavioral patterns required for the emergence and maintenance of human society above the animal level. Our analysis of the increasing psychological and social disorder accompanying the declining effectiveness of religion led us to conclude that we must, and now could, revitalize and advance the basic value-transmitting functions of religious institutions by reinterpreting their long-evolved and sacred wisdom in the light of our best science. Our hypothesis is that only in this way can religious convictions again become credible, relevant, and effective in the new scientific and technological world.

Under certain conditions, the application of scientific understanding to meet human needs can occur rather quickly. A little more than three decades ago a critical mass and mix of people were brought to Chicago to work in Stagg Field to test the hypothesis that a much wanted source of tremendous energy was available from atoms. Before long we had atomic energy. There have been reports that at that time the theologians to whom some of the atomic scientists appealed for help to guide the moral control of this potentially awful genie were not able to respond satisfactorily.

It may be significant that late last winter the Chicago Cluster of Theological Schools invited affiliation of a recently formed group of scientists, theologians, and other scholars who have something of a vision as to how the sciences today may be constructively applied to the reformation and revitalization of religion—civilization's core institution for acculturating its long-range, apex values. The Chicago Cluster schools border Stagg Field, where now stand the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago and a memorial marker of the awesome Promethean event when the application of scientific knowledge led to man's use of atomic energy. The new group, called CASIRAS (Center for Advanced Study in Religion and Science), was first brought to the attention of *Zygon* readers as a "Proposal" in the September 1972 issue. Since then, CASIRAS has been incorporated in New York as a not-for-profit corporation for the purposes stated in its certificate of incorporation: "(a) to study the relationship between religion and science with a view towards integrating religious beliefs and values with the conceptual systems of

contemporary sciences; (b) to stimulate and coordinate the activities of scholars, students, and creative artists in the fields of religion and science; (c) to sponsor and conduct meetings, conferences, seminars, and summer programs, and to cooperate with doctoral programs in various universities and theological schools . . . ,” and to communicate and publish. CASIRAS has succeeded Meadville/Lombard Theological School as copublisher of *Zygon*.

The Chicago Cluster of Theological Schools, in its statement of affiliation, offers institutional support and cooperation in the Center’s chartered goals. Earlier the eight schools of the Boston Theological Institute also invited CASIRAS to affiliate for similar ends.

As a corporation to stimulate research and development and to cooperate with educational programs, the educators on the CASIRAS board of directors are in contact with a few hundred scholars in the various scientific and religious disciplines who have a proven talent for the task and who have indicated readiness to cooperate in special research and development and educational programs as these may become funded and institutionally housed or sponsored.

In the symbolism of the Stagg Field enterprise, for CASIRAS there has not yet occurred the event parallel to an Einstein’s writing to a Roosevelt that the project is well worth what it would cost. As yet no funding has been promised to enable bringing together the proposed critical mass and mix of talent deemed necessary for this kind of union of religion and science. However, continued gestation is possible. The Chicago Cluster has offered to house and incubate CASIRAS. CASIRAS will be headquartered with the Cluster during the coming year.

Meanwhile, in the absence of some of the ingredients for an intensive development, we witness the fact that people in many separate places are joining in this enterprise. The number and diversity of the readers of *Zygon* are increasing. The Institute on Religion in an Age of Science (IRAS), joint publisher of *Zygon* with CASIRAS, is a membership organization in which those wishing to work toward these same goals from their present professional bases can find stimulating associations in meetings and other activities of a voluntary society “to formulate dynamic and positive relationships between the concepts developed by science and the goals and hopes of man expressed through religion.” “A Twenty-Year View” of IRAS was presented to readers in the March 1973 issue of *Zygon*. An announcement concerning a future IRAS conference is found on page 188 of this issue. Inside the back cover will be found a membership application form for those who may wish to join others in these activities. The four papers of this issue are from the IRAS 1973 Star Island summer conference.

R. W. B.