

Editorial

ZYGON, EVOLVING

In forty-four years just three editors have served *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*: Ralph Burhoe, Karl Peters, and Philip Hefner. Ralph Burhoe, the founding father of the journal, was deeply involved with scientists who had a broad view of human responsibility and human flourishing (see Breed 1992). Right from the beginning, the issue was not just the compatibility of scientific insights and religious convictions; the issue was also to draw upon scientific insights in order to understand religion's role in human evolution (Burhoe 1979) and to promote religious and moral views that would be credible and relevant. The philosopher of religion Karl Peters, editor for ten years and coeditor for development for another twenty, continued the tradition. In his recent work he explores personal meaning in the context of our best scientific understanding, including the best understanding provided by the human sciences (Peters 2008a, b). The editor of the last twenty years, Philip Hefner, is a systematic theologian by profession and equally engaged in religion-and-science, as witnessed by his current writings, such as his Goshen lectures (Hefner 2008).

Willem B. Drees, the new editor, is professor of philosophy of religion and ethics at Leiden University, the Netherlands. His initial training was in theoretical physics. He also earned doctorates in theology and in philosophy (Drees 1990; 1996). He stayed for research in Berkeley at the Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences (1987), in Chicago at what became the Zygon Center for Religion and Science (1988), and in Princeton with the Center of Theological Inquiry (1993, 2008–2009); twice he received a Fulbright grant. He served as president of the European Society for the Study of Science and Theology (ESSSAT) and as dean of the Faculty of Religious Studies of Leiden University; he currently serves as vice-dean of its Faculty of Humanities. Though a vegetarian he considers himself intellectually an omnivore, interested in many different issues related to science and technology, values, culture, and religions.

To mark the transition, a symposium took place in Chicago with the title “Where Are We going? *Zygon* and the Future of Religion-and-Science.” Voices from that symposium will appear in print in this journal

next year. Looking back over the first forty-four years, the most remarkable change may well be in academic presence alongside personal subscriptions. Through Wiley-Blackwell, a major academic publisher, we now are available in almost 3,000 academic libraries (electronically, in print, or both); a further 610 libraries in the developing world have the journal through the International Network of Scientific Publications. More than 3,000 libraries provide access to the content via the EBSCO publishing databases. About one-third of the libraries that subscribe are in North America, one-third in Europe, and one-third in the rest of the world—a good variety, given the geography of scholarship worldwide, but there clearly is potential for further development qua authors and readers. Although *Zygon* often is classified with religion journals, about half of the authors are scientists; most cited in our articles are journals such as *Science* and *Nature* as well as more specialized journals in anthropology, psychology and other human sciences.

As signaled in the June editorial (Hefner 2009), we also have seen change in the persons involved. The first participants were scientists with an interest in society and culture. *Zygon* continues to provide a podium to such public intellectuals who reach beyond their particular specialization to speak on issues of great relevance. New disciplines have emerged, such as the neurosciences and chaos theory. When scholars in the humanities reflect upon the impact of new insights, they need scientists who signal that there are interesting and challenging developments in their field. Ethical concerns and the effects of medicine and technology on human existence all deserve a place in the journal as well, because religion and science operate in social contexts.

In later years, *Zygon* published more authors for whom part of their academic profession was to analyze religious beliefs and practices in modern culture. Such persons may be found in theology and religious studies, among philosophers and historians, but also elsewhere in the humanities and in the social and behavioral sciences. Established scholars as well as graduate students and post-docs are working on such issues. *Zygon* aspires to be a podium for various academic generations. Specialization in religion-and-science is viable and relevant only if it remains in constant communion with the larger community of scholarship in theology, religious studies, anthropology, science studies, and much more.

The last decades have seen a widening of religious communities involved. The diversity within Christianity is more explicitly represented; in December 2008 a section presented Pentecostal voices in the theology-science conversation (Yong 2008). *Zygon* has had, and will have more, articles that reflect upon Islam, Buddhism, and other traditions in their interactions with science. *Zygon* has been a major podium for voices that present religious naturalism in its variants and has provided space for challenges raised by humanists and atheists. Each voice contributes its own questions

and concerns. The rich variety together serves the quest to understand and reformulate human convictions.

The opening article of this issue is on the emergence of transcendental norms, our notions of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. Mark Graves approaches this from the bottom up, on the basis of a rationality that is rooted in our human biology. He considers the multilayered character of our existence as physical, biological, psychological, and cultural beings. Drawing upon analyses by Terrence Deacon, Arthur Peacocke, Philip Clayton, and others, Graves argues for the emergence of a human transcendent level that shows up in cross-cultural universals in morality, understanding, and aesthetics.

The next four articles have more of a top-down perspective. Christopher Knight approaches head-on a basic issue about theism, namely the nature of divine action. In order to speak of genuine divine action, does one need to reject the naturalistic tenor of the sciences so as to have room for divine interventions, or could one combine theism with a naturalistic understanding of the causal web of processes in reality? Knight argues that divine action is not to be confused with the causality inherent in natural (or created) processes. Thus, naturalistic theism is a genuine possibility. In this respect, he is at odds with Robert Larmer, who argues in the next article that a theist cannot and need not accept the causal closure of physical reality. A believer might allow for divine actions as creations *ex nihilo*. For a theist natural reality would not be an absolutely isolated system, and thus energy need not be conserved. The third article in this cluster, by Edward M. Hogan, delves deeper into the nature of theology given the notion of divine transcendence, appreciating the approach taken by John Polkinghorne critically while offering Bernard Lonergan's approach as a more fruitful alternative. The final article in this section, by Daniel Wisniewski, draws upon the spirituality of Francis de Sales, an early seventeenth-century Christian humanist, to understand the interplay of law and chance. Shifting the terms of the debate, de Sales implies that everything is to be seen in terms of love, a love that is intimately associated with liberty and the opportunity for diversity—de Sales spoke of created reality as “universe.” It is an interesting angle on a theology of chance and human co-creation derived from one of the lesser known theologians of the early modern period.

The next two articles explore how we relate to our nearest cousins, the great apes, and how to think of ourselves given their existence. Nancy Howell considers the intense sociality of bonobos as a window on interconnectedness and, hence, on embodied transcendence. Oliver Putz focuses on human uniqueness in the Christian tradition associated with the idea that humans are made “in God's image.” He argues for human uniqueness while expanding the concept of *imago Dei* to include moral animals such as the apes.

The Extended Mind, a concept discussed in contemporary philosophy of mind, is the topic of the third thematic section, for which Leslie Marsh serves as guest editor. That the mind is embodied in our brains but also in social structures and artifacts goes back to a 1998 article by Andy Clark and David Chalmers. The general idea is explained and evaluated here by Marsh and by Mark Rowlands. The concept is explored for its relevance for the understanding of persons by Lynne Rudder Baker (who in passing notes that for many people, their spouses are their main external memory devices); for Madyamaka Buddhism by Teed Rockwell; for a Zen Buddhist practice of responsiveness by Joel W. Krueger; and for humanist, religious, and secular systems by Leonard Angel. Matthew Day argues in his contribution that this concept also is of interest for the academic study of religion, because it might provide an antidote to cognitive theories that seek to understand religion in terms of the modularity of the human cognitive system; such approaches tend to pass by wisdom encoded in rituals and other practices.

This issue ends with two relevant book reviews, one by Jerome Stone of Daniel Dennett's *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* and one by George Tsakiridis of John W. Cooper's *Panentheism—The Other God of The Philosophers: From Plato to the Present*.

—Willem B. Drees
Philip Hefner

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