Editorial

We have divided this issue into four sections, each of which typifies the breadth of purview that our journal embraces. The first section attempts a global perspective on evolution, religion, consciousness, and morality. Ewert Cousins, theologian and scholar of spirituality, summarizes the evolution of consciousness, spirituality, and religion, with the aid of Karl Jaspers’s theories of the *axial* ages of humankind. We are now on the brink of a transformation of consciousness that presents challenges to our religion, our science, and also to our capacity to resolve critical global problems. I summarize Cousins’s conclusion: The unique contribution of the world’s religions “is to tap their reservoirs of spiritual energy and channel this into developing secular enterprises that are genuinely human,” principally, justice and peace.

Psychologist David Loye and anthropologist Solomon H. Katz are particularly interested in taking up Cousins’s challenge of resolving global problems. Loye presents the fruit of a decade of his multidisciplinary study of the origin and development of moral sensitivity and morality; it has led him to a theory of moral transformation. Taking seriously the recent calls for a global ethic, he presents this theory as a basis for such an ethic. Katz has also devoted many years to reflection on global challenges to human survival. His article offers a conceptual framework for bringing science, technology, and religious wisdom to bear on a global morality that is appropriate to these challenges.

In their commentaries on our two symposiasts, William E. Lesher (church leader and educator) and Eric J. Chaisson (astrophysicist) extend the concern for development and evolution of ethics. In so doing, the thrust of this set of articles comes through clearly as a call for translating our religion-and-science concerns into spirituality and morality that can contribute to the journey of the planet and its human community into a new phase of evolution. Such a focus is central to the mission of *Zygon*, as a reading of our boilerplate “Statement of Perspective” makes clear (see back matter of this issue).

Section two contains four articles that contribute to the breadth of the discussion. Anthropologist Ward H. Goodenough brings together several elements of his years-long study of how religion functions in human living, under the categories of self-maintenance and self-transformation. Theologian Gregory R. Peterson attempts to take the measure of recent studies
of animal cognition to formulate suggestions for how we ought to understand the evolution of consciousness and how that understanding impacts our theological concepts of nature. In the process, he proposes that nature itself is the image of God. Peterson thus adds yet another facet to the vigorous discussion of the image of God that characterized two recent discussions in *Zygon*: (1) The image of God and artificial intelligence, set forth in Anne Foerst’s article in March 1998, together with the commentaries by Helmut Reich, Mary Gerhart, and Allan Russell in June 1998, and Foerst’s response in September of that year; and (2) The image of God and neuroscience, in the article by James Ashbrook and Carol Rausch Albright and the sharp response to it by William Rottschaefer in March 1999.

John Teske (psychology) presents an arresting elaboration of methodological naturalism, which he argues can actually enrich our understanding of the human spirit. In still another probe of how evolutionary cosmology forces reinterpretation of traditional ideas of creation, Sjoerd Bonting seeks to utilize chaos theory in the formulation of his “chaos theology.”

The third section of this issue of *Zygon* presents a symposium on Karl Schmitz-Moormann’s posthumously published book, *Theology of Creation in an Evolutionary Perspective*. Few contemporary thinkers in the field of religion-and-science had a larger intellectual reach than Schmitz-Moormann. Duane Larson (theologian) and John Albright (physicist) elaborate some of the dimensions of the book, the former illuminating both its traditional and innovative elements, and the latter, the comprehensive scope of its proposals. Readers who recall the discussion of creation and the sciences of complexity that was initiated by Niels Gregersen in our September 1998 issue and carried on in the symposium that was featured in the March 1999 issue, may see the Schmitz-Moormann discussion as a somewhat different perspective on the same basic themes.

The fourth and final section of our offerings consists of a review article by Jensine Andresen (religious studies, world religions) of the new *Encyclopaedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*. With this piece, our June issue ends not far from where it began, in discussion of the global context in which we do our work of relating religion and science. In the process, we will have to stretch our concepts of both religion and science.

We are pleased with the largeness of mind and spirit that have brought this issue’s sections together and that will enrich the reading of it. It is the pleasure that Robert Browning knew when he wrote (and we paraphrase): “our reach exceeds our grasp,” else what’s our journal for?

—Philip Hefner