

task of understanding the range of positions is still daunting. Moreover, Kragh is a historian of science who describes the positions but does not evaluate them, either pro or con, except parenthetically. Another reservation is that the book costs \$115. For readers interested in a précis of Kragh's discussion without all the details, I suggest his essay "Cosmology and the Entropic Creation Argument" in *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 37 (2007): 369–81.

ROBERT J. DELTETE

Professor of Philosophy, Seattle University
901 12th Avenue, Seattle, WA 98122–1090
RDELTE@seattleu.edu

The Universe as Communion: Towards a Neo-Patristic Synthesis of Theology and Science. By Alexei Nesteruk. London: T&T Clark, 2008. xii + 286 pages. \$140.00.

When one looks over the current dialogue in theology-and-science, the insertion of patristics is a rare but welcome interaction. Alexei Nesteruk, a senior lecturer in mathematics at the University of Portsmouth and Deacon in the Russian Orthodox Church, is one of the few scholars doing work in this important exchange with patristics. In *The Universe as Communion*, Nesteruk presents an argument for the place of theology-and-science within the long-standing Orthodox church tradition. Far from bringing the Church Fathers into a current-day discussion with theology-and-science scholarship, he does the opposite, proposing that this recent scholarship is a part of the church's tradition and the work of the Holy Spirit. The title of this text is an allusion to John D. Zizioulas' text *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), and, as is fitting, the author interacts with Zizioulas' material at various points in the book while also presenting his own vision of theology-and-science within an Orthodox ecclesiology.

Nesteruk puts forth the argument that just as Hellenism was the ethos from which Christianity arose in the time of the early church, theology-and-science arises out of this same Hellenistic ethos, as reclaimed by the phenomenology of the twentieth century. He states, "To uncover this hidden *telos* of Hellenistic antiquity in modern science and its philosophy one needs to employ . . . the philosophy which is capable of doing this. And this philosophy . . . is phenomenology" (p. 67). The emphasis of the book is exactly this same movement of the Holy Spirit through history, who has now brought phenomenology to the fore for such a time as this: the theology-and-science dialogue. For Nesteruk, "the dialogue between theology and science is not a dialogue at all: it is a drama of the human spirit" (p. 105). One understands his approach to the dialogue more clearly by placing it in an anthropological context.

In a related way, Nesteruk connects this dialogue with the eschatological aim of the church (p. 35), thus making ecclesiology a key component of the discussion. He later states this explicitly: "It is in this sense that the meaning of science in the perspective of the overall progress of the human spirit cannot be understood only on the grounds of the scientific and philosophical, that is, without a theological

input supported by experience of God in ecclesial communities and life of inner prayer” (p.166). Ultimately he moves the discussion to the study of cosmology where he advocates for a more multifaceted view of knowledge. He argues that Big Bang cosmology tries to destroy “the multihypostaticity of knowledge” by making it objective, thus falling short of the telos in his overall system (p. 232).

Because this text presents an Orthodox perspective from the viewpoint of a mathematician using Western continental philosophy, it is rooted in current theology-and-science scholarship while also integrating multiple viewpoints effectively. The text is somewhat technical for those without a philosophical background in phenomenology because the focus is on the ecclesial and philosophical versus the work of specific patristic thinkers. In addition, Nesteruk’s use of the twentieth-century thinker Georges Florovsky is notable. The volume presents an overall approach to Christian tradition that places the theology-and-science dialogue within it. This may be viewed as a shortcoming for those who do not subscribe to this worldview, as well as those outside of the Orthodox tradition. As a whole, Nesteruk has taken Orthodox discussion of theology-and-science to a new level, broadening the dialogue and presenting a synthesis of Orthodox Christian tradition and science.

GEORGE TSAKIRIDIS

Lecturer in Religious Studies
Saint Xavier University, Chicago, IL 60655
tsakiridis@sxu.edu

Spiritual Transformations: Science, Religion, and Human Becoming. By Karl Peters. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008. 146 pages. \$7.00.

In his reflection on the metaphor of “crossings,” one of the many metaphors that shape the chapters of this book, Karl Peters says that crossings can refer to both individual and social transformations depending on the religious perspective explored. This contrast is one of many that confound the search that Peters sets for the text, which is a set of reflections he gave at a Star Island conference that explored the recent work on spiritual transformations in the religion-and-science dialogue. Clearly the reflections are meant to explore not only the various ways that one can talk about spiritual transformations but also how that becomes a focus for conversation between religionists and scientists. Peters is a veteran at this effort and once again is successful in navigating the many challenges of the topic toward clarifying how a legitimate religion-and-science interaction can help bring new light to the issues involved.

Navigating the territory is a challenge because we face not only the difference between social and personal but also the problem we have in our culture of clarifying the relation between spirituality and religion. These issues seem to be related and prove to be part of the strength of the text but also perhaps a problem. Peters is adept at moving between different religious traditions, and these traditions actually resolve the relation between the personal and the social in different ways, opening the door for multiple possible understandings. He does this as well in introducing a variety of metaphors for transformation. Thus, his understanding of the religious and the spiritual does not become an either/or proposition, as we see in authors such as Diarmuid O’Murchu or Dean Hamer for strikingly different reasons. On