

Editorial

WORLDS OF IDEAS IN A SINGLE WORLD

There are different worlds of ideas, and hence, ideas of the world. Some are concerned about the coexistence of religious views and evolutionary theory as a sufficient explanation of biodiversity and of the way organisms are adapted to their niche in the environment. Is there also some influence from religious views on science? Adam Pryor draws on Robert Russell's method of Creative Mutual Interaction (see Murphy 2010, 209; Russell 2001, 270–280) to correlate Terrence Deacon's work on emergence with Paul Tillich's "multidimensional unity of life." Another classic in the sphere of ideas is the relationship between ideas about creation and Big Bang cosmology and its competitor of the 1950s, the Steady State Theory. Adolf Grünbaum had written on this issue some decades ago. In this issue, his work is analyzed in detail by Mirsaeid Mousavi Karimi.

A complete tradition is at stake in the article by Stefano Bigliardi on the French doctor Maurice Bucaille. Bucaille promoted the claim that various passages in the Qur'an were prescient with respect to modern science. His book has since become a key text of the movement that seeks an "Islamization of science." Analyzing such a world of ideas, as Bigliardi does, is part of the academic responsibility, even if the contribution analyzed is considered nonsense. There are other views within "the Islamic world" (see for instance Elshakry 2011). In June 2011, I had the pleasure to participate in a conference in the United Arab Emirates, organized by the American University of Sharjah, the British Council, and the International Society for Religion and Science (ISSR), titled *Belief in Dialogue: Science, Culture and Modernity* (British Council 2011). Quite a few presentations by Muslims dealt with Islam and science, but at the conference there was no defense of strong claims à la Bucaille. A remarkable contribution on the interpretation of Islam in the light of science came from the main organizer, physicist Nidhal Guessoum (see also Guessoum 2008, 2010a). To his book *Islam's Quantum Question: Reconciling Muslim Tradition and Modern Science* (2010b), we will return in one of the issues in 2012.

Aaron Smith and Bob Stewart offer a remarkable participatory study on a spiritist community. While focusing on belief and conversion, the authors come close to the insider's perspective. It may seem as if we live in different worlds. However, we do not live in different worlds, but rather share a single planet.

Just leaving each other in "different worlds" is morally problematic and practically impossible. On this planet, religions and science have ecological and economic consequences. Energy is central to the interplay

of economy, ecology, and science. In this issue, we publish some major contributions on religion and energy. Physicist Normand Laurendeau gives an informative analysis of the science and technology, pointing to some broader issues. William Irvine considers our craving for energy a form of “gluttony,” pleading for a more sober attitude. Anne Perkins describes a project to engineer and build houses that need no input of fossil fuels. Ravikrishna discusses the situation in India—both as a world of ideas that he considers to be well in harmony with science and as a part of the world where those ideas have to be implemented. Fletcher Harper raises a sharp challenge to us, people who read and discuss issues. How should we follow up on the pep talk in churches and other religious communities? Drew Christiansen speaks from his experiences as a leader in American organizations for Catholic Social Teaching, the move toward ecological concerns, and tensions with other developments within the same church. The capstone article is by ethicist and theologian Larry Rasmussen. The transformation we have to go through now will be enormous, perhaps comparable to the Axial Age in the first millennium BCE, when the major world religions began. Which brings us to the opening article of this issue, by Whitney Bauman, who also speaks of this momentous shift in our priorities and perceptions of this world, and hence in the way we construct worldviews in a single, shared world.

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