

# Editorial

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## Globalising Science & Christian Belief

With this issue we welcome sixteen new members to the Editorial Board of the journal, reflecting the increasing international readership and influence of *Science & Christian Belief*. Our new members represent Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the USA, Canada, France, Switzerland and the UK. In keeping with the multidisciplinary nature of the journal, they also represent a wide range of disciplines – two theologians, a historian of science, a psychologist, a cosmologist, two physicists, a chemist, a materials scientist, five biologists, and a sociologist.

Members of the Editorial Board play a key role in refereeing papers, in giving advice to the Editors, in identifying new authors and in making the journal known in their respective geographical areas. In so doing they not only help to globalise the journal, but also to apply a necessary corrective to the natural tendency that journals display in reflecting their historical roots. For the debate between science and faith has very distinctive characteristics depending on culture and geography. Public attitudes towards the scientific enterprise are much more positive in the USA than in Europe. In the USA the science-faith debate tends to be dominated by issues of creation and evolution, of less interest in secularised Western Europe where bioethical and environmental concerns are given priority. Meanwhile third world countries still look to science and technology as the answer to their future developmental needs, and so they may be, but this can readily be allied with a naïve scientism in which the scientific enterprise is invested with overblown expectations.

Historical considerations also make a lot of difference. In Britain science continued to be seen as an ally of religion well into the 19th century, a mutually supportive relationship which has in some ways been re-kindled in the late 20th century, whereas only a few kilometres away across the Channel the 18th century *Philosophes* bestowed upon the French consciousness a feeling that science was allied with the forces of progress and enlightenment in contrast to religion which kept society in the shackles of darkness and superstition. These contrasting sentiments linger on to the present day.

An international journal addressing a field as broad as the interface between science and religion therefore needs an approach that avoids ethnocentricity, displaying sensitivity to the varied historical and cultural contexts of its readership. Although the medium of English language *ipso facto* maps out a certain cultural territory, nevertheless it is hoped that the now very international Board will assist in maintaining a process of globalisation that runs deeper than merely crossing geographical boundaries. It is also hoped that the international character of the journal will continue to be reflected in its authorship, as in the present issue with contributions from Holland, Britain and the USA.