

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

**one world - changing perspectives
on reality**

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**Papers presented at the
Second European Conference on Science and Religion
March 10-13, 1988**

University of Twente

edited by
Jan Fennema and Iain Paul

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Statement of intention

In December 1986, the Organizing Committee issued a statement of intention, the text being:

It is the aim of the organizers of the European Conferences on Science and Religion to provide a forum for discussing this fundamental theme of Western culture in an interdisciplinary way. Science is a dominant factor of present day society, and so is religion in its many forms, both inside and outside the traditional institutions.

Scientific points of view and expectations need to be in dialogue with religious forms of understanding - and religious traditions need to take account of the new scientific perspectives on the world and the ethical problems generated by science, medicine and technology. Thus the organizers hope to provide an opportunity for a balanced exchange fruitful for both 'science' and 'religion', and for the benefit of society as a whole.

Preface

The world is increasingly becoming one. It is, at the same time, one endangered ecosystem and one thriving market place with material and spiritual goods on competitive display. And the good and evil things of life cannot easily be sorted out. The world is becoming one also in the sense that it is better understood today than it was in earlier times, that the material good and the spiritual good, though seemingly belonging to different realms of fact defined by their respective modes of existence, together constitute effectively one and the same reality: the modern world of science, technology, computerized administration and power, that calls upon humankind to struggle for a ‘just, participatory and sustainable society’*, and to strive for a society of the future that will be the world over both long-lived and worth living. The Second European Conference on Science and Religion, held on 10-13th. March, 1988, on the campus of the Universiteit Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands, was meant to be a modest market place, a forum, where standpoints and opinions could be presented and criticized. It was meant to offer an opportunity to meet and to make acquaintances in the expectation that the exchange of thoughts would lead to new conceptual horizons that would challenge what so far had been considered as hard fact or what until now had been looked upon as a distinctive feature of a well-established view either of the kingdom of the sciences or of the realm of religion.

The decision to organize the Second European Conference on Science and Religion was taken by the International Committee, at the time consisting of the following members:

Prof. Dr. S. Andersen, theologian, Aarhus Universitet, Aarhus

Dr. J. W. R. Fennema, physicist, NWO/FOM, Universiteit Twente, Enschede

Dr. H. May, theologian, Evangelische Akademie Loccum, Rehburg-Loccum

Dr. A. R. Peacocke, physical-biochemist and theologian, Ian Ramsey Centre,
St. Cross College, Oxford

Prof. Dr. K. Schmitz-Moormann, theologian and anthropologist, Fachhochschule,
Dortmund

Dr. M. Striegnitz, physicist, Evangelische Akademie Loccum, Rehburg-Loccum.

* World Council of Churches terminology; see e.g. Charles Birch et al, *Faith, Science and the Future*, Church and Society, WCC, Geneva 1978.

The first meeting of this Committee followed the closing of the First European Conference on Science and Religion, which was held in the Evangelische Akademie Loccum, 10-13th. March, 1986. The theme of the Second Conference was chosen and details of its programme were arranged in conformity with the wishes expressed by the participants during the closing session of the First Conference. In order to organize the new Conference properly, an Organizing Committee was formed consisting of the members of the International Committee and representatives of four institutions in The Netherlands that are active in the field of 'science' and 'religion'. The names of these institutions and of their representatives are given below.

The theme of the Conference was: 'One world - changing perspectives on reality'. The Organizing Committee invited twelve speakers to address the conference participants in full session. Moreover thirty three papers were submitted for discussion in sectional meetings.

Part I of the present book contains the texts of the lectures that were delivered by the invited speakers; due to unfortunate circumstances one lecture could not be delivered at the Conference. The texts are given following the pattern of the Conference programme. After introductions to the Conference theme from different angles, surveys are given of developments that are taking place in the natural sciences and in theology; next come the lectures that consider in retrospect the traditional dichotomy between science and religion, and, finally, there are those lectures that enlarge upon expectations for the future.

Part II contains the summaries of contributions made by participants in the sectional meetings, although two of them, those by J.A. Mawuli Awudza and by C. Ouafu Moghomaye, were presented in a full session; five contributions, those intended by A. Drago, G. Gaizler, J. Scheer, J. Szél and H.J. Winkler, were not presented for a variety of reasons, such as delayed arrival or ill-health. All summaries are in English but, at the Conference itself, many papers were read in French or German. The summaries have been placed in the alphabetical order of the authors' names, an arrangement that seemed much less contrived in the present context than the six original groupings of the Conference programme. The summaries reflect a wide variety of opinion and approach, dealing with all kinds of questions. We suggest that the reader interested in a particular text should correspond with the author(s). All texts edited by us have been returned to their authors for a final check. In some cases, we have not received a reply (in good time). This circumstance is indicated by the sign '(eds.)', appearing at the end of the given text.

Part III concludes the book with a list of names and addresses. At the Conference desk we registered one hundred and forty seven participants, including speakers, but the list also contains the names of those who showed their interest in other ways.

We asserted earlier that the Conference was a market place. These words may be taken as an apology for the absence of a report on the discussions that took place in full session. In principle, ample time was allowed for the exchange of thoughts among the participants on questions relating to the Conference as a whole. A case in point is the discussion, which remained open-ended, concerning the name of future conferences: Are they to be called 'conferences on science and religion' or 'conferences on science and theology'? Times are

changing. And the name does make a difference: the right name makes an auspicious start in creating a programme!

Some explanatory words about religious confessions seem to be in order. In addition to typical Jewish and Christian points of view, more or less implicitly taken as a framework for many discussions or conversations, Islamic and Bahá'í convictions were expressed, as well as the persuasions of many participants who had obviously no particular religious affiliation. It was, indeed, a great pleasure for the Organizers to find so much evidence of a 'pluriformity' of expression regarding religion. In fact, traditions that appear to be well-established and that have been hallowed through the centuries should be open to criticism and dialogue, from the bottom up rather than from the top down. They should be challenged to make their positions clear and secure in modern - and post-modern - times, and to this momentous end they should be questioned at the grass roots by those who profess entirely different things, whether religious or irreligious.

Finally, though probably superfluously, we wish to stipulate that the responsibility for any of the texts published in this book rests with the author of that text.

The Conference has received considerable financial support from several sources. During the preparation of this book, further support was obtained to enable its publication at a reasonable price and promote its distribution. We acknowledge gratefully the generosity bestowed upon us. Listed alphabetically, the supporting institutions are:

Euregio
Evangelische Akademie Loccum
Faculteit der Wijsbegeerte en Maatschappijwetenschappen, Universiteit Twente
Haella Stichting
Kirchenkanzlei der Evangelischen Kirche der Union, Berlin
Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen
Ministerie van Onderwijs en Wetenschappen
Sormanifonds
Stichting Universiteitsfonds Twente
Vereniging voor Christelijk Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs.

Moreover, three donations were received from private sources in France and in The Netherlands.

The host of the Conference was the Universiteit Twente (the University of Twente), and the participants were welcomed by its Rector Magnificus, Prof. Dr. Ir. H.H. van den Kroonenberg.

While organizing the Conference in the University's conference and study centre, Drienerburgh, institutional support, again listed in alphabetical order, was graciously given by: Atomium (Prof. Dr. H.W. de Knijff; Dr. P. van Dijk)

Bezinningscentrum Vrije Universiteit (Prof. Dr. A.W. Musschenga; Drs. W. Haan)
Katholiek Studiecentrum Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen
(Prof. Dr. J.C.F. Nuchelmans; Drs. G.P.A. Dierick)
Multidisciplinair Centrum voor Kerk en Samenleving (Dr. Mady A. Thung);

and by the

Secretariaat Wijsbegeerte, and other departments, Universiteit Twente
Directors and Staff Drienerburgh, Logica and Bastille.

In addition, there was fruitful co-operation with:

Evangelische Akademie Loccum
Raad van Kerken in Nederland.

The Organizers could also rely on recommendations given by (emeritus) members of the following universities:

Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen (Prof. Dr. P. Bennema, physicist)
Rijksuniversiteit Leiden (Prof. Dr. P. van Duijn, biologist; Prof. Dr. A.A. Verveen, physiologist)
Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht (Prof. Dr. H.M. de Knijff, theologian;
Prof. Dr. H.M. de Lange, economist)
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Prof. Dr. M.A. Maurice, mathematician;
Prof. Dr. P.P. Kirschenmann, philosopher)
Universiteit Twente (Prof. Dr. D. Feil, chemical-physicist).

The Organizers felt honoured that the VHS-Kammerorchester, Ahaus, and the Euregio-trio, Enschede, both conducted by Mrs. M. Lindeboom, were willing to grace one of the Conference evenings by giving a concert, that was greatly appreciated.

It is a pleasure for us to acknowledge the co-operation of Videac and Centrale Reprofdeling, Universiteit Twente, of Fit-to-Print, and of Kluwer Academic Publishers, in matters of publication: posters, the Conference programme and, finally, this book.

Last but by no means least, the organization of the Conference would have been impossible without the gentle(wo)men's agreement with Mrs. M. Schmand (Drienerburgh) and Drs. F.S. Verschoor (Universiteit Twente) at an early stage of the preparations, and it still would have come to nothing if Anja, Lila and Roel had not been there to assist us so ably no matter the nature of the task that had to be tackled during those hectic days.

Working in the field of 'science' and 'religion' is a life long undertaking that can only be invigorated by those who awaken joy and enthusiasm in creativity and knowledge. The editors, therefore, are pleased to acknowledge gratefully their great indebtedness to the institutions for interdisciplinary research in which they were active: Atomium (Enschede) and the Center of Theological Inquiry (Princeton), respectively.

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