The CTNS Bulletin: Looking Back on its First Years with Joy

Robert J. Russell

This remarkable issue of the CTNS Bulletin marks the completion of the central scholarly publication program of CTNS to this point. The history of the Bulletin stretches back to its inception, along with that of CTNS as a whole, in the fall of 1981. It is steeped in the intense professional acuity of its principal editors; it has lifted up the finest essays and reviews in theology and science to an international audience; it has provided a much-needed opportunity for entering faculty and even doctoral students to try out bold new ideas; it has celebrated the leading programs of CTNS by publishing essays generated from their participants; and with this final issue it takes a well-deserved place of honor in the history of essays generated from their participants. And with this final celebrated the leading programs of CTNS by publishing in theology and science to an international audience; it has principal editors; it has lifted up the finest essays and reviews of 1981. It is steeped in the intense professional acuity of its to its inception, along with that of CTNS as a whole, in the fall newsletter into the quarterly membership now grown to several hundred, I turned the School of Theology, Berkeley. After two years and with a owned by one of the GTU consortium seminaries, the Jesuit beginnings of CTNS in 1981. I composed it on a computer letter to our initial twelve (!) members dating back to the their editorial experiences over these past two decades.

The CTNS Bulletin began, actually, as a simple newsletter to our initial twelve (!) members dating back to the beginnings of CTNS in 1981. I composed it on a computer owned by one of the GTU consortium seminaries, the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley. After two years and with a membership now grown to several hundred, I turned the newsletter into the quarterly CTNS Bulletin. It was designed as a vehicle for publishing leading scholarly essays in what was still a very new but rapidly growing field of study. It now included book reviews and, frequently, a list of books received at CTNS. It was circulated to both members of CTNS and subscribing libraries. From the first issue of the Bulletin in 1984 through my last issue as its first editor in 1989, I was blessed with terrific editorial and production support by Tom Ross, the first doctoral student I worked with at the GTU. During those “springtime” years of CTNS, Nancy Murphy generously gave her time and talent to several volumes while writing her (second!) dissertation here at the GTU, and I relish the chance to read the essays by its successive editors about their editorial experiences over these past two decades.

In these twenty years, CTNS has published more than 160 essays and over 180 book reviews. From the outset, our commitment has been to publish only the highest quality essays and book reviews. The sources of these materials include both internally generated essays through key CTNS programs and externally produced essays which we have either actively sought or, on occasion, gleaned from the unsolicited manuscripts we regularly receive. Our “flagship” issues have been those featuring the annual research conference lecture and responses of our J. K. Russell Fellowship in Religion and Science, as well as the Fellow’s Public Forum. Our topical areas have spanned the natural sciences, from physics and cosmology to evolutionary biology and the neurosciences. Although our primary focus has been Christian theology, we have included articles on philosophy of religion, philosophy of science, history of science, technology, environment and ethics, and essays framed within the theologies of other world religions as they encounter issues from science and technology. Occasionally, one or two issues have been dedicated to single themes and voices, including essays by pastors, doctoral students, and forum presentations by visiting scholars. We also have offered a source for publication of the best essays drawn from professional conferences such as the AAR, the AAAS, ESSSAT, and so on. Key CTNS programs have also been a frequent source of essays for the Bulletin. These include the three-year research program on theological and ethical implications of the Human Genome Project, the decade-long CTNS/Vatican Observatory collaboration and its principal focus on science and divine action, our recently concluded Science and Religion Course Program which internationalized and helped to institutionalize courses in the field, and Science and the Spiritual Quest which currently is in its second round promoting dialogue among internationally renowned scientists on the connection between scientific research and their religious or spiritual identities.

As this issue of the CTNS Bulletin completes its 20 years of publication, we have provided a complete index for your reference. If you would like to order back issues, simply fill in this form below and mail or fax it to CTNS.

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