

HORIZONS



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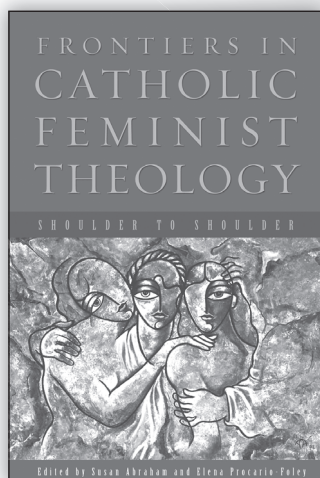
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COLLEGE THEOLOGY SOCIETY

The College Theology Society is a professional organization of college and university professors of religion in the United States and Canada.

The purpose of the College Theology Society is to improve the quality of the teaching of religion: by stimulating and sharing scholarly research; by developing programs of theology and religious studies which meet student needs and interests; and by exploring, evaluating, and encouraging effective ways of teaching which are interdisciplinary and ecumenical.

Annual membership dues in the Society are \$50.00 (Full Professional or Associate), \$50.00 (Joint Professional for husband and wife), and \$25.00 (Graduate Student). Membership in the Society includes a subscription to Horizons. Contact Daniel T. Michaels, KEYPOPPY Christian Resources, 1726 West Cape Rock Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701. Telephone: (573) 651-4199. E-mail: dmichaels@keypoppy.com

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From the Editor

The cover of a recent issue of *America* (5 October 2009) asks, in bold red letters on a stark black background, “Is God Back?” This is a quite conscious echo of the famous *Time* cover from 8 April 1966, “Is God Dead?” What it announces is Austen Ivereigh’s interview with the editor of *The Economist*, John Micklethwait, on the publication of the latter’s new co-authored book, *God is Back: How the Global Revival of Faith Is Changing the World* (2009). At the end of the 1960s, who would have guessed that God and religion would come roaring back to such prominence—and at times with such ferocity—in Western culture? While the interview emphasizes pluralism as the key element in the “revival” of religion, it is disconcerting how easily the “return of God” is cast in consumer terms: America’s model of Christianity is “Protestant, elected, market-sensitive,” while Catholicism’s “brand” has a competitive edge: “it is the first multinational, ‘the General Electric of the religious world’.” The interview brought to mind the exciting work done by a number of our colleagues who have explored the relationship between religious faith and the capitalist consumer context we currently inhabit. Some of their conclusions are less sanguine than Micklethwait’s, and at the end of the interview I was left hungering for a gutsier, more differentiated treatment of the issue. Is that discussion possible in our public discourse, or are we trapped in polarizing frameworks (good-vs.-evil, evangelicals-vs.-new-atheists, etc.) for the foreseeable future? And how would our students approach the question of the “fit” between religion and culture?

On that topic, this issue of *Horizons* offers a number of stimulating approaches: an analysis of contemporary belief in Christ with the help of Byzantine and postmodern interlocutors (Christopher Denny), a critical view of Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic model through the lens of the Tower of Babel narrative (Marianne Moyaert), a look at one key aspect of the work of one of the twentieth century’s finest cultural critics, Thomas Merton (Christopher Pramuk), and an argument for the retrieval of a virtuous tradition in the light of contemporary mores (Cara Anthony). The theological roundtable in this issue is especially significant. In the March 2009 issue of the *Herder Korrespondenz*, Peter Hünermann published a controversial analysis of the decisions taken recently by the Vatican concerning the followers of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, the Society of Saint Pius X. Professor Hünermann has allowed us to publish an expanded version of that article and to place it in a *quaestio disputata* context, where four North American colleagues offer insightful comments and Professor Hünermann responds. The annual report of the College Theology Society and thirty-four book reviews round out this issue.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome Elena Procaro-Foley as assistant editor of *Horizons*. Many know Elena for her fine work as the CTS secretary over the past several years. The journal will benefit greatly from her sharp editorial eye, fine theological sensibilities, and commitment to interreligious dialogue. I also want to express my sincere gratitude to Rena Black, my graduate assistant, who performs a number of tasks at the journal with efficiency and good humor. If you have reviewed books for *Horizons* lately, then you know just how efficient Rena is. Finally, I want to laud the wonderful and quite irreplaceable work of my editorial assistant, Irene Noble. Without Irene handling the myriad day-to-day details, the journal simply could not get published. I especially want to thank Irene and Rena for keeping the journal on track while I was away last spring at the University of Dayton.