

Editorial Notes

For several years now the ecological crisis has been centre stage in contexts cultural and religious. The theme of the articles in this year's ARC - **religious attitudes to nature** - was chosen to continue an exploration well underway. It is not surprising then that some who have written here have been quick to qualify this theme. So Gregory Baum warns us that *nature* is always understood in a cultural and economic context, and not abstractly - to ask about religious attitudes to nature is to ask about our socio-economic interpretation of it. Richard Hayes tells us that our notion of *nature* is an inappropriate category for the ontological inclusivism of classical Buddhism and asks in that context, "What is not nature?" (Then he suggests a possible application of the Buddhist tradition to the problem of nature as we understand it.)

Ian Ritchie similarly cautions us against reading into African Traditional Religions a uniform religious view of nature before he seeks out similarities and contrasts between them. (The task is onerous - he notes that Nigeria alone has over four hundred and fifty tribes, each with its distinct language and religion.)

In a similar vein Loren Wilkinson examines the names that have been used for our subject; from *Nature* to *resources* to *environment*, he traces religious context and connotation, arguing finally for a biblical doctrine of *creation*. Hugh MacGregor considers the biblical notions of Sabbath and the year of Jubilee in terms of justice for people and land. The apparent conflict between those who would look first to the interests of people and those whose priority is the environment is examined by Craig Wentland. Chris Levan explores what he calls our *theological amnesia*, relating the threat of nuclear destruction to the ecological crisis.

If our knowledge of nature is mediated by our system of labour and economy, as Baum claims, then the experience of a "landless herdsman" and voluntarist communist like Gerrard Winstanley should be instructive for us. Andrew Taylor lays before us the seventeenth-century Digger leader's thought. Bruce Heggen similarly presents the themes of a pioneer "eco-theologian," Joseph Sittler, noting his specificity as exemplary of "earthy piety."

With this issue ARC has a fuller title ("The Journal of the Faculty of Religious Studies, McGill University"), a new format, a new cover and binding. Credit is due the editorial committee for these improvements. Former managing editor Richard Cooper is to be thanked for his advice and fine editorial example. David Seljak gave helpful early assistance in the editorial process as well. Bruce Guenther's careful attention to detail in hours of demanding work is greatly appreciated. Of course, the editor alone is responsible for any errors or omissions which may remain.