

CROSSCURRENTS AT 48

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On the occasion of our 70th anniversary, I present these words from our founding editor, Joseph Cunneen, originally presented at our 48th anniversary celebration, as he was retiring. It gives a vivid sense of the excitement surrounding the launch of this journal as well as highlights of the publication during his nearly 50 years as editor. It also traces, in brief, the history of the journal through its merger with the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life and its journal: Religion and Intellectual Life.

Looking back at *Cross Currents* after forty-eight years as editor and co-editor requires an effort to disentangle the personal story of a small group of friends from developments in both the church and the world since World War II. The record of what we published gives me considerable satisfaction but a moment's reflection makes it clear that we were not makers of history but excited and surprised participants in a process of rapidly accelerating change.

Seed for the earliest idea of the magazine was first sown by John Julian Ryan, while teaching an advanced writing course I took at Holy Cross College in 1942. He complained that there was really no first-class Catholic intellectual journal. One could be created, he maintained, by bringing together the best from existing reviews—and he offered as examples *Oratres Fratres* (publishing today as *Worship*) and *Theological Studies* in the United States, and *Dublin Review* and *Blackfriars* in England. The seed fell on poorly prepared ground. Ryan had captured my attention by

reading us an essay by a German refugee priest-liturgist, H. A. Reinhold, "Inroads of the Bourgeois Spirit," from *Commonweal*, which I had at least heard of, but the other journals were new to me.

More than three years later, the surrender of the Germans in 1945 occasioned a special opportunity for me to learn something of European intellectual Catholicism. I had served in a combat engineer battalion with Patton's 3rd Army in the advance from Normandy to Czechoslovakia; on the assumption that many of us would still be needed in the war against Japan, all kinds of programs were started to keep troops usefully occupied. I was sent to Paris for seven weeks for a course in French Language and Civilization, an idyllic period in which, after morning classes, I was free to walk all over the city. There, too, I had a reunion with a close high school friend who had gotten a weekend pass from an air base in northern France and gave me a copy of *Esprit*, a French monthly I had never seen before. He told me that its editor, Emmanuel Mounier, was a committed Catholic, which surprised me, since the cover of the journal announced, "Marxism est un humanisme."

I was nevertheless intrigued with its contents, and, at age 22 still naive enough to walk over to rue Jacob the following Monday and ask to see the editor. The receptionist was a bit startled, but ushered me into Mounier's office while he was eating a spartan lunch at his desk. When he quickly insisted that *Esprit* was not a Catholic journal, I was taken aback. I wasn't yet prepared to understand how Mounier's personalism had led him to create a journal in which agnostics and people of different faith traditions raised fundamental political and religious questions in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The background of *CrossCurrents* cannot be explained without a realization that the GI bill made graduate school a real possibility for a whole generation, including thousands of Catholics who previously could not have considered it. Discharged from the army in 1946, I attended Catholic University's flourishing School of Drama, and was sufficiently aware of my ignorance to try to take additional courses in theology. I earned my Master's degree with a thesis on the plays of Paul Claudel, but learned no theology because of graduate school policy at that time: no laity were admitted to theology courses, even as auditors.

The taste for Paris, as well as continuing curiosity about theology, next led me- after a brief experience on the stage as a member of Actor's

Equity- to use the GI Bill to take courses at the Institut Catholique in January 1948. There I was allowed to sit in on large lecture classes for which I was unprepared but could benefit, due to the practice of teachers distributing copious mimeographed notes. A relative pioneer as an ex-GI in the Institut's theology program, I was befriended by Fr. Louis Bouyer, who gave me an excellent introductory reading list, beginning with DeLu-bac's *Catholicisme*. I took endless notes on the books he recommended, and began to see important links between *Esprit*, Danielou's interreligious journal, *Dieu Vivant*, and the Dominican monthly, *La Vie Intellectuelle*. Even though I had no intention of working for a doctorate in theology, it was an educationally fruitful time; in addition to keeping up with contemporary French drama, I visited the offices of the JEC (Young Christian Students), where I was given treasured mimeographed pages by Teilhard de Chardin, and walked to Chartres with hundreds of other students on Pentecost weekend.

When I returned to New York to begin teaching in Fordham's theater department in September 1948, the idea that was to become *CrossCurrents* was given further stimulus by contacts with an impressive team of Catholic graduate students at the University of Chicago. The group, which included specialists in philosophy, physics, economics, sociology, political science, and literature, had been responsible for *Concord*, a lively YCS magazine aimed principally at undergraduates, and were laying plans for a more ambitious and sophisticated journal. Because of considerable experience with the National Student Association, and international contacts through participation in the first post-war convention of the YCS, they were so aware of why academe often found campus Christian groups arrogant and irrelevant that they questioned the wisdom of giving the proposed new quarterly any religious identification.

Several of the Chicago team came to New York early in 1949 for a weekend of discussion with New York friends who were interested, and in August I went out to Chicago to see if the vague idea was ready to take shape. I was hoping that the *Concord* veterans would use their experience and their mailing lists to produce a translation of important articles from European sources.

Although only a minority of the Chicagoans were familiar with the French journals that had excited me, discussion was never acrimonious. The problem, endemic to young groups, was how to keep them together;

would there be enough people who would commit the time and energy needed to make the new journal possible?

It soon became apparent that the majority had other responsibilities: two were getting married and moving to California, another was writing his dissertation and would be unavailable for at least a year, another was accepting a teaching position in another part of the country, etc. By the time I took the bus back to New York, I believed the journal was still-born, even though I had asked Sally—who was travelling in France and England and whom I was to marry in November- to call on several European editors to facilitate permission to translate articles. Joe Caulfield, however, who was teaching humanities courses at Manhattan College, encouraged me to believe that with help from local friends who had shown interest, the magazine could be edited from New York. My mother-in-law even proposed its aptly open-ended name, and by the end of the year Sally probably believed that *Cross Currents* was part of the wedding contract. My New York associates, despite their many gifts, had no ideological agenda; unlike their French equivalents, they could not have fired off a manifesto before lunch. Nevertheless, they held some common attitudes and stressed some common issues, however broadly they might be conceived. These included a desire to move out of the largely self-imposed intellectual ghetto of an earlier immigrant Catholic generation, with the intention of drawing on Christian resources to engage the wider culture. They had learned to be suspicious of clericalism, resisted the defensive, censor-prone mentality still dominant in the Catholic colleges of the time, and believed that if the call for lay participation in the church was to be genuine, there must be far better communication, a genuine sharing of responsibility, and a less top-down style of operation. They thought it important to look on Marx, Darwin, and Freud, to choose three examples, less as enemies than as thinkers to learn from. It will be noted that no one in either the Chicago team or among my New York friends was a theologian, and none of us had the least intention of starting a theological journal. At the same time, perhaps more than today when there are far more Catholic PhD's, we assumed that aspiring intellectuals in any field should be theologically informed. The original editors had widely varying interests and strengths: Erwin Geissman, who was teaching Renaissance English literature in Fordham's graduate school, was struck by the importance of John

Courtney Murray's work on church-state relations; Caulfield was fascinated with the implications of the unpublished Teilhard material; Alfred DiLascia, who was teaching philosophy at Manhattan, had become a disciple of the exiled Dom Luigi Sturzo during the latter's years in New York; and my interest in the French Catholic literary revival was deepened by translating several plays of Gabriel Marcel. Marie-Christine Hellin was employed at the UN on issues of prison reform; Leon King was also involved at the UN, but more informally, working with francophone African delegates who were seeking national independence; Ernst Winter, who was teaching politics at Iona College, was looking for constructive ways of breaking out of the cold war impasse; and Sally was trying to juggle motherhood with literary-philosophical research on the conflict of freedom and love in personal behavior.

Many others deserve to be mentioned, doing everything from sharing ideas and translating articles to addressing envelopes. What was most striking, however, about our efforts to prepare the way for CrossCurrents was the response we received from a range of distinguished figures who might not have been expected to give much encouragement to unknown young teachers with an untried idea. Reinhold Niebuhr and his wife Ursula invited Sally and me to small gatherings at their apartment at Union Theological Seminary whenever some eminent foreign visitor was coming through New York; Hannah Arendt gave me leads to European Christian journals she considered indispensable; George Shuster, then the president of Hunter College, shared his knowledge of German Catholicism and lessons of his long journalistic career; and George Florovsky, at St. Vladimier's Seminary, reminded me of the riches of the Russian Orthodox tradition. Perhaps most important in terms of both practical help and enduring friendship, my brightest Jewish student at Fordham, when I wondered where to find a printer, sent me to Alexander Donat, a noble Polish Jewish printer-publisher who, with his wife and son, had survived the horrors of concentration camps and launched the Waldon Press in Greenwich Village. Donat not only showed notable patience with unpaid bills and corrected our omission of umlauts from German words, but would also predict, while a new issue was in page proofs, which article would elicit the most interest. His most important contribution, however, came late at night when the presses were quiet, his staff had gone home, and we were both exhausted; he would then raise the haunting

question: how, after the horrors of the Nazi era, is one to believe? In one way, the launching of *CrossCurrents*—its first issue appeared in December 1950—was a quixotic adventure, but we were as fortunate as we were naive. After we had ordered the printing of 50,000 brochures in June 1950, Pius XII issued *Humani Generis*, an encyclical which seemed a head-on condemnation of much that we had promised to print in early issues. Suspicion became attached to terms like existentialism, evolution, and “the new theology”: Henri DeLubac received a warning; Jean Daniélou showed extra caution as to which of his essays could be translated, Yves Congar’s *Vraiment fausse réforme dans l’église* was withdrawn from circulation, and Frank Sheed, in a fraternal gesture, cautioned us not to publish Teilhard in the near future.

Nevertheless, the long insulation of Catholic thought by means of a coercive anti-modernism was no longer possible. Though there was a cloud over a good number of the writers we were to publish in the 50s, this also meant there was less competition for the right to reproduce their essays, and *CrossCurrents* soon became known as the place to look for an English-language reflection of the most advanced and interdisciplinary European Christian thought.

What we had stumbled into—to our credit, we were actively searching out such material to give a deeper grounding to our own faith—was the harvest of long prepared projects like Edition du Cerf’s *Unum Sanctam* series on the church, the Barthian challenge to an earlier Protestant liberalism, and the lessons drawn by survivor-participants of resistance to totalitarian Fascism and Communism. As can easily be appreciated, such resistance—in terms of both political activism and scholarly reflection on the scandal of “divided Christendom” (a phrase used as a title for one of Congar’s *Unam Sanctam* studies)—prepared minds and hearts for an ecumenism that had not yet found public expression in the United States.

The first issue (Fall 50), which appeared in December 1950, contained a brief editorial which stated that “our primary function will be to reprint outstanding articles from foreign and out-of-the-way sources that indicate the relevance of religion to the intellectual life.” After stating our hope of drawing on non-European sources, it called for an end to Western domination of Asia and Africa and offered a sober reminder to U.S. readers: “our best friends all over the world are watching our country

critically .. America has not yet convinced them that she has a spiritual message with which to rally free men.”

The conclusion was concise: “Because we are Catholics, we welcome contributions to the truth from any source; we must try to find out—Christians and non-Christian together—what it might mean to be a Christian today.” The lead article was Mounier’s “Christian Faith and Civilization”; it was followed by Emil Brunner’s “The Christian Sense of Time,” Nicolas Berdyaev’s “Christianity and Anti-semitism,” and Franz Schoeninger’s “What is Christian Politics?,” as well as Marcel’s “Theism and Personal Relationships,” and DeLubac’s essay on Marxist and Christian man.

Not long after, I was asked to see the president of Fordham, and naively believed that I was to be commended for showing faculty initiative. Instead, I was asked what would be my response to a request that *CrossCurrents* submit to prior censorship. There had been no official complaint about the journal, the president told me, but the chancery office was apparently curious about the fact that its editor was teaching at the university. The president remained polite and made no demands; it was clear that he merely wanted to protect Fordham from embarrassment in case questions about orthodoxy were raised later. He had already secured an opinion from a canon lawyer, who soberly pointed out that there was not much work for a censor to do in this case: several of the articles we had included—including that by the Protestant theologian Emil Brunner—had first appeared in French Jesuit journals where material was already submitted to such oversight. The interview ended with neither defiance on my part nor insistence by the president; I could not help feeling, however, that there was something unhealthy in the fact that I was left with no record of the meeting to bring to my fellow-editors, and even without have a copy of the canon lawyer’s report. The vague cloud dissolved: there were friendly Jesuits at Fordham who worked out some formula that promised to insulate the university against the charge of laxity. Indeed, in the context of the time, McCarthyism—and its attendant anti-Communist hysteria—was a more immediate threat. This may be why several eyebrows were raised when our second issue contained Karl Barth’s “The Church between East and West,” which refused to give an uncritical blessing to “our” side. Overall reaction was enthusiastic, however, because of articles by Romano Guardini on myth and revelation, Marcel More on Graham Greene’s *The Heart of the Matter*, Martin Buber

on “the education of character,” Danielou’s “dialogue with time,” and two subtle French Jesuit essays—by Jean Rimaud and Louis Beirnaert, on psychiatry, morality, and holiness. There had been only 300 subscribers when the first issue was printed. By the end of the first year there were 1700. John Cogley wrote a complimentary column on the journal in *Commonweal* in 1951, and *Christian Century* gave a rave review to the 1954 bound volume, saying, “Every article, every review, is of interest to Christians.” Readers were responsive to the range of topics and viewpoints, from a dense historical analysis of church and state by John Courtney Murray to Simone Weil’s “Beyond Personalism,” Friedrich Heer on the French priest-workers, Jean Lacroix on the meaning of contemporary atheism, Augustin Leonard’s “The Christian and the non-Christian,” Henri Dumery’s “The Temptation to do good,” Paul Ricoeur’s “Morality without sin or sin without moralism?,” Karl Rahner’s “Church of Sinners,” Paul Tillich’s “Jewish influences on Protestant theology,” Guardini on Dostoyevsky’s Idiot, Congar’s “True and False Reform,” Buber’s “Guilt and Guilt Feelings,” Niebuhr on the cold war, and Cardinal Newman’s “On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine.”

They also appreciated the fact that not all articles had explicit “religious” concerns but were chosen because they dealt seriously with topics on which the U.S. media of the day left us inadequately informed: the economics of third-world countries, the problem of nuclear weapons, the emergence of an independent Africa, the media revolution, ethics and population control. Philosophers were impressed by a pluralistic parade of essays by such leading figures as Jaspers, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Blondel, Pieper, and Maritain, and by the exhaustive annual surveys of Philosophy by James Collins. And at a time when psychoanalysis was frequently condemned by religious spokesmen there were enough articles on religion and psychiatry to fill a first-rate anthology.

The journal’s greater self-confidence manifested itself in the inclusion of more articles by North American authors, including Bernard Lonergan, Rosemary Ruether, Krister Stendahl, John McDermott, Gregory Baum, Eugene Fontinell, Arnold Jacob Wolf, William Birmingham, and David O’Brien. By 1958 there was a new pope in Rome, John XXIII, but the editors did not immediately perceive the possibilities he opened up when he almost immediately called an ecumenical council. After a worldwide request went out for statements of Christian aspirations, however,

interest soon quickened. As the opening of Vatican II approached, we translated a half-dozen articles from a special issue of *Esprit*, added a few U.S. contributors, and produced “Looking Toward the Council” (Spring 62), bringing together the concerns of Catholic, Protestant, and Eastern Orthodox Christians on several continents. The explosion of demands in the 60s inevitably found reflection in the review. In terms of church structures, Piet Fransen explained episcopal councils as a way to reduce excessive centralization in Catholic decision-making. On a more human level, the deep frustration of lay Catholics at Paul VI’s decision to remove birth control from Vatican IPs agenda found a reflective outlet in 1964 with Louis Dupre’s sober re-examination of underlying issues in that debate. A many-faceted look at the wider subject, “Sexuality and the modern world,” was drawn from another special issue of *Esprit*; Francis Simon offered a bishop’s open-ended discussion of “the new morality,” and the narrower question of the acceptability of married priests was carefully addressed by R. J. Bunnik in a two-part historical-theological essay. Of much wider import, Rosemary Ruether’s “The Becoming of Women in Church and Society” (1967) raised feminist issues to which society was beginning to listen and the Catholic hierarchy still preferred to ignore. In international terms, U.S. policy in Vietnam was exposed in a 1965 analysis of the “Viet Cong” and Francois Houtart examined the war in the light of “*Populorum Progressio*,” Paul VI’s encyclical on development. Tissa Balasuriya dramatized growing third-world impatience in “World Apartheid,” and in 1968 James Lamb guest-edited “For White America,” a special issue that challenged both colonialism and Western assumptions about human needs. But even in that terrible year of assassinations and disillusionment, CrossCurrents was able, with the assistance of yet another guest-editor, Walter Capps, to produce a symposium on the theology of hope.

Prompt translation by David Abalos of key documents from the 1968 Medellin conference of Latin American bishops gave readers a head start in understanding the turmoil in Latin America that grew increasingly dramatic in the next decade. Gary MacEoin guest-edited a special issue on liberation theology in 1971, introducing the work of Gustavo Gutierrez and providing a needed historical and political context.

Articles by liberationists like J-L Segundo, Jon Sobrino, and Leonardo Boff soon followed, as well as Archbishop Romero’s declaration on the

church, political organization, and violence, which we published just before he was murdered. The power of Christian “base communities” was illuminated by Frei Betto’s declaration, “The church we want,” and the Brazilian movement was carefully analyzed by L. Deelen. J-B. Metz’s “Redemption and Emancipation” and Dorothee Solle’s “Christianity and socialism” indicated parallel developments in European political theology.

American intellectual provincialism was further challenged by “The Good Red Road,” an issue devoted to Native American literature and religion and edited by Mary Louise Birmingham, as well as other special issues on Sri Aurobindo, (edited by Robert McDermo Birmingham, as well as other special issues on Sri Aurobindo, (edited by Robert McDermott), Africa, and the cross-cultural and religious research of Raimon Panikkar. Parig Digan’s lengthy analysis of his torical relations between “China and the churches” was equally mind-stretch ing. The Spring 1977 issue brought together articles by James Cone, Shawn Copeland, Joyce Erickson, and Beatrice Bruteau, revealing parallel concerns in black and feminist theology, while Beverly Harrison’s “The New Consciousness of Women” and Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza’s “Early Christianity in a Feminist Perspective” compelled recognition of feminist theological maturity. If the underlying ferment of the decade was best put in per spective by Michel DeCerteau’s “Revolutions in the Believeable,” the 1974 double issue on world spirituality, “Word out of Silence,” edited by John-David Robinson, bringing together Chistians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and Sufis, received the most enthusiastic response.

The 80’s gave initial welcome to “The Personalism of John Paul II,” by John Hellman, and saw special issues on the international peace movement, gender, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker, and Jacques Ellul. While conflict with Rome over liberation theology, and with Washington’s repressive policies in Central America, were recurring topics—as seen in articles by Anselm Min and Jan Black, room was made for the introduction of previously unknown European writers ? Brigitta Trotzig, by Adma d’Heurle, and Jean Sullivan, by Padraig Gormally. Georges Khodr looked closely at scriptural ambiguities in “The Gospel and Violence,” Rene Girard saw “The Gospel Passion as Victim’s Story,” and Raymond Brown tried to preserve the gains of Catholic biblical criticism from extremist interpreters. Vincent Harding called for a genuine inclusiveness in his “open letter on Habits of the Heart,” and interreligious exchange

was expanded by Aloysius Pieris' magisterial essay on Christian-Buddhist dialogue, as well as by a group of 1985 articles by Leonard Swidler, Jacob Neusner, Anton Ugolnik, Notto Thelle, and Beatrice Bruteau. Probably the most significant development in the journal during the 80s was increased awareness of the religious dimension of the ecological movement, best expressed in the special section of the Summer-Fall issue devoted to the work of Thomas Berry, including three key essays? "Creative Energy," "The New Story" and "Dream of the Earth." Another special issue, "Revising Philosophy," asked Western philosophers to stretch their understanding to include Eastern thought. Raimon Panikkar raised a crucial further question: can Christians claim both chosenness and universality? As William Birmingham, co-editor since 1985, insisted, "To read his essay... as an exercise in negative criticism would be mistaken. Panikkar has written instead a prolegomenon to Christian self-understanding."

1990 meant a happy alliance with the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life (ARIL), which produced the practical benefits of a third co-editor, Nancy Malone, O.S.U. (who had previously edited the Association's quarterly, *Religion and Intellectual Life*), and an office at the College of New Rochelle (through the kindness of Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly, O.S.U., the college's dynamic president).

The fact that ARIL was a Christian-Jewish association made it easier to attract a new group of Jewish scholars to write for *CrossCurrents*, extending the dialogue fostered in previously published essays by Elie Wiesel, Emil Fackenheim, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacob Neusner, Arthur Cohen, and Eugene Borowitz, as well as Krister Stendahl's call for a new relationship between Judaism and Christianity. The inaugural joint issue, Spring 1990, concentrated on Jewish-Christian subjects, with contributions on Jewish-Christian marriage, an exchange on liberation theology, and Lawrence Hoffman's irenic discussion of the possibilities of common worship. The Summer issue included the major papers of ARIL's consultation on faith commitment and intellectual disciplines, including papers by Edith Wyschogrod, Robert Wuthnow, David O'Brien, Richard Niebuhr, and Denise Levertov, and Fall added a further interreligious perspective in Riffat Hassan's "What does it mean to be a Moslem today?"

The following years saw a wide variety of special issues—on the "Return to Scripture," "The Once and Future University," interdisciplinary perspectives on the self, ecotheology, esthetics and religion, "Spiritualities

in a post-Einsteinian universe,” science and religion, and new feminist theologies. Readers seemed to find that a new feature, interviews, with David Tracy, John Polkinghorne, Bishop Rowan Williams, and John Dominic Crossan, offered helpful introductions to major figures and complex questions. Since there was no way to avoid the subject of post-modernism, the journal presented diverse approaches: Peter Ochs’ essay on Eugene Borowitz and Jewish postmodernist philosophy, a theological analysis by Daniel J. Adams, a Protestant professor in Korea, and the e-mail exchange between Edith Wyschogrod and John D. Caputo.

At the merger of ARIL with CrossCurrents Nancy Malone expressed her vision of “creating for the first time in the United States an avowedly interfaith journal that will be a voice for our country’s entire religiously and morally engaged intellectual community.” The editors, she said, “are committed to breaking the silence about religion in the intellectual life of the United States, to show that religion is liberating, that it has a central place in discussion of hunger, of ecology, of every social issue. We hope, in particular, to inject religion into the overwhelmingly a-religious conversation of higher education.”

Despite the outreach of ARIL’s annual convocation, its month-long Colloquium for younger scholars, and scattered success with local discussion groups devoted to related ends, at retirement in 1997 she would probably have claimed only modest gains toward such goals. Not that she or her co-editors aren’t proud of the publication record of those years: a hefty anthology could be made up of the best of the 1990s, perhaps opening with Eugene Pogany’s powerful 1995 memoir of twin brothers—his Jewish father and priest-uncle, separated by faith after the Holocaust. Other essays I would nominate for such a volume include that of Mary Boys on whether the cross can be reclaimed as a Christian symbol, David Tracy on the hidden God, Brenda Meehan on wisdom/sophia, Russian identity, and feminism, Jacob Neusner’s “There has never been a Jewish-Christian dialogue—but there could be one,” Marie Sabin’s analysis of the representation of women in Mark’s Gospel, David Toolan’s “Praying in a post-Einsteinian universe,” Albert Raboteau’s reflections on African American history, and Sandra Schneider’s discussion of the possible transfiguration of religious life.

Lists make boring reading or I would be tempted to continue, exploiting the names of even better-known authors. More useful, however,

would be to suggest gains and omissions. An opening to positive resources in Islam, as in Khalid Duran's Winter 1992-3 essay on an alternative to Islamism, represented a real advance in interreligious understanding, as did Pravajika Vrajaprana's discussion of "What do Hindus do?" and Leo Lefebure's probing of related concerns in the work of Masao Abe and Karl Rahner.

On the other hand, the emergence of the United States as the one unchallenged world power, coupled with the dehumanizing consequences of economic liberalism in the emerging world economy, did not find comparable in-depth discussion. Everyday editorial frustration, however, as well as a slow loss in circulation, has probably been due more to the difficulty of an interreligious journal communicating a sense of clear identity. There is genteel approval of our good intentions, but also a widespread sense among Catholics, Protestants, and Jews alike that it is not "their" publication. The problem is intensified at present because intellectuals in all these groups are discouraged by internal losses and divisiveness. Since CrossCurrents began as an ecumenically-oriented initiative of Roman Catholics, it is appropriate to conclude with a brief comment on the situation in the church, presently dominated by the restorationist impulses of a papacy that speaks of human rights for everyone but Catholic intellectuals. The Curia may well feel they can do without theologians, but the church can hardly thrive when millions of its best-informed and committed women are deeply alienated. No attack on papal authority could have done as much damage to its prestige as John Paul II's insistence that the church is not free to consider the ordination of women.

Only a tiny percentage of women seek ordination for themselves, but all of us, men and women alike, are capable of getting the point of Joseph Blenkinsopp's 1995 essay, that what is "at stake in the non-ordination of Roman Catholic women" is power, not theology. The situation has extra pathos because John Paul II is brilliant, prayerful, and charismatic—as well as very ill. But this does not reduce the harm done by a disregard for tradition in the appointment of subservient bishops, or in contradicting lofty declarations of support for the poor by turning over dioceses to the *Opus Dei*. As for Cross Currents, it will inevitably change to reflect new developments, but such change will most likely be incremental. In any case, Rome's difficulty in surmounting the strictures of celibate clericalism should not distract Catholic intellectuals from continuing to read

and write for CrossCurrents, while redoubling their efforts to interiorize their faith and to avoid reducing the Gospel to ideology.

Joseph Cunneen
Founding Editor