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EDITORIAL

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As *FIR* approaches its first decade of publication, it is time to assess the journal's progress from its beginnings. At the same time it would be a good moment to consider my tenure as founding editor and in the light of my retirement from full-time employment in academia. The journal was founded when I was employed as a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Chester. At the time I was passionately convinced that the contemporary study of religion needed to reassess the relationship between hermeneutic study of text, the phenomenology of Ninian Smart and ethnography.

Throughout my career I was repeatedly reminded of the gap between religions as described through doctrine or “official” practices and the actual “lived” religion as embodied in the everyday lives of practitioners. In addition, the old debates concerning “insider” and “outsider” advantages and disadvantages in the study of religion were becoming outmoded as anthropology challenged the subjective and the objective in the actual processes of research. I began to become increasingly disillusioned with debates that presented a highly polarized view of Theology, on the one hand, and the study of religion, on the other hand. Modern Theology was moving into the field as the social impacted upon it.

As religion returned to the centre of public life and academic attention, more disciplines from the social sciences were once again picking up the arena of study.

Debates over reductionism re-emerged. Yet the social sciences would provide so many new avenues to methodologically study religion. The new question arose, with regard to the traditional place of Humanities as the home for the study of religion as an academic subject. From all these questions and challenges, came the idea of a multi-disciplinary journal in the study of religion as a home for fieldwork undertaken in the disciplines that contributed to new knowledge in our understanding of religion/s as human phenomena.

I remain convinced that such a journal is necessary for the study of religion, especially as the issues raised above show no sign of abating but will continue to challenge new generations of scholars of religion. I wish them all success in their endeavours. For my part, I seemed to have metamorphosed into an historian of Islam in Britain and the remainder of academic life is likely to be taken up with Victorian and Edwardian Muslim life in the West. It is time for new editors to take the journal forward and I hope to announce who they are and my new role with the journal in Volume 10.

This edition of the journal offers five contributions, to some degree dominated by antipodean scholarship. In the first article, we continue our original intention to help develop the careers of research students with an unusual piece of fieldwork carried out by Cale Leslie Hubble from the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Sydney, entitled “Effervescent Atheism: Embodiment and Collective Identity at the Global Atheist Convention.” The researcher describes how participants at the 2012 Global Atheist Convention experienced the power of gathering together. Drawing upon the interaction ritual model used by Randall Collins, the author shows how collective effervescence is experienced through boundary sharing and participation, creating a sense of the “atheist collective.” The second article describes the fieldwork carried out by an interdisciplinary team of researchers from the Religion and Society Research Centre, University of Western Sydney and the Faculty of Education, University of Sydney entitled “Chaplaincies in a ‘Post-Secular’ Multicultural University.” Adam Possamai, Arathi Sriprakash, Ellen Brackenreg, and John McGuire explore the diversity and intensity of religious life on campus in Australia and the role of religious professionals, that is, chaplains, and discover that their primary activity is pastoral and welfare support roles, this is theoretically linked to post-secularism. The third contribution by Asma Mustafa, another young scholar, from the Oxford Centre of Islamic Studies, entitled “Faith and Photography: Using Auto-Photography in Eliciting Perceptions of Religious Identity” continues the theme of the previous two contributions, that is, the complexity of what determines religious identities in modern post-secular societies. In the study the author draws upon the innovative tool of auto-photography to provide perceptions of religious identity among young

Muslims in Britain. The article assesses not only the respondents' feelings regarding their religious identities but also the methodology utilized.

The penultimate contribution provides insights on the challenges of "insider" status in the engagement with the field and the issues of subjectivity and objectivity. Tom Wilson, an Anglican priest and a governor of a school in Liverpool explores the relationship between the majority of students, who are multi-ethnic Muslims and the Christian foundation of the school. The article entitled "'It's a bit cool and awesome' Using Liverpool's Muslim Heritage to Help Muslim Pupils Learn how to 'Translate' their Faith in the Liverpool of Today" argues that Christian hospitality provides a distinctive framework within which the process of Muslim identity formation can be facilitated. The title quote comes from a response of a Liverpool Muslim child to participating in a class where the story of the first mosque in the city founded in 1893 was narrated. The children's responses to the lesson were recorded as part of the research encounter. In the final contribution, Stefania Palmisano, a lecturer in the Sociology of Organization at the University of Turin, Italy, where she teaches the Sociology of Religious Organizations, draws upon empirical research to explore New Monasticism in an article entitled "Asceticism in Modern Times: Challenging Monastic Pillars in a New Twenty-first-century Catholic Monastery." The research site is a monastery in Italy and shows how it has faced the challenges of accusations of "being out of date" and "trivial" which have been levelled at contemporary monasticism.