Editorial

Having spent some decades on the fringes of “management” (in religion, education, and business), without ever being given that title, two thoughts impress me ever more deeply.

The first is an empirical observation. Others’ experience may differ, but I suspect that any idea that has ever occurred to me, or any course of action I have ever proposed, has always been improved, in and by the process of discussion. The other “thought” is entirely unoriginal, but seems to run counter to much management behaviour (and even theory?): “never change anything until you have been in post for a year.”

Such thoughts come to mind because the Journal has developed a policy of devoting the fourth and final Issue of each year to a particular theme (thanks entirely to the ideas expressed—and repeated—by the Trustees of CSIRCS at their twice-yearly meetings). So in Volume 14, No. 4, in December 2011, was devoted to Psychology and Implicit Religion, which has had some of the consequences that were hoped for, including the production of a Special Issue of Mental Health, Religion and Culture devoted to Implicit Religion (Volume 16, Nos. 9–10, November, December 2013: Routledge. ISSN 1367-4676).

Then, in December 2012, Implicit Religion 12.4 was devoted to the Papers that were given at (or consequent upon) the very well-packed (in each sense) Study Day held in Leiden on 20 April 2012, to mark the retirement as Professor of Non-institutional Religion, of Meerten ter Borg. December 2013’s Special Issue (16.4), readers will recall, was devoted to Veiling, whose suitability to this Journal turned out to be even greater than had been guessed, when it was first initiated.

December 2014’s Special Issue was on the “implicit religions” to be detected within Science Fiction. This (2015’s) December’s (18.4) will be a slightly delayed mark of the 50th Anniversary of Dr Who. While Science Fiction and Dr Who may not arouse quite the width or depth of response that Veiling does, each nevertheless is a significant phenomenon, both in the breadth and depth of the appeal (or antagonism).
Other topics for Special Issues keep being suggested—and more suggestions will be welcome. Thus one that is being held in reserve at the moment is the implicit religiosities that are present within inter-faith dialogues; another is the place of Implicit Religion within the teaching of Religious Studies (ideally, at primary and secondary, as well as tertiary, levels).

Meanwhile, however, our Special Issue at the end of next year (December 2016, 19.4) will be devoted to the “Nones”: the rapidly increasing numbers (in Western-style societies) of those who say they have “no religion.” In a way, this question is what sparked off the study of “secular” or “implicit” religion, in 1968. (So perhaps we shall need even more pages than for our other Special Issues?)

However, suggestions for further Special Issues, and suggested contributions (of Articles or Reviews, either of books or of other cultural phenomena), as has often been said, will be very welcome.

The other development being suggested (by members of the Editorial Board, in this case), is that the Journal should establish a tradition of including what are sometimes called Research Notes: in essence, a mini-Article. We have already published a number of contributions along these lines: shorter Articles, often with very little bibliography, because they are expressing the author’s own and original thoughts. Indeed, the Journal’s policy has always clearly said that poems (without any footnotes or references!) would be very welcome, and once we did publish a Letter to the Editor (on the beneficial consequences for the practical work of a student who had studied for a diploma in implicit religion).

Contributions of such mini-articles will therefore be welcome (of, say, a single-digit number of pages, and so 3,000 words at most). Suggestions for an alternative title would also be appreciated: such contributions are not seen as “an apology for a (proper) article.” Rather the custom-to-be is intended as a space to share experiences and/or ruminations, inviting others to suggest modifications or further ramifications as to the possible significance of the phenomenon “in question” (as it might most aptly be put). For, as suggested above, an idea (or proposal) that is fully discussed, always tends to be one that is improved.

Edward Bailey