Editor’s Introduction

There is an element of déjà vu with this issue of *Religious Studies and Theology* as I return to the position of general editor, something I first did nearly thirty years ago, which truly seems a long time in the past. At the same time, I find much to celebrate, as *Religious Studies and Theology* has over its forty-year history continued to flourish by providing thought-provoking papers on a wide range of topics relating to religion and spirituality.

There have been several editors over the years, and they have all added something to the journal. But perhaps no one as much as Catherine Caulfield, who has served the journal with distinction over the last ten years, first as book editor and then as general editor. For this, the academic community owes her many thanks. Unless one has edited a scholarly journal there is only limited appreciation of the work this entails, and Catherine has been unstinting in her commitment. I am pleased that with this issue, *Religious Studies and Theology* has an Associate Editor for the first time. I welcome Sean Hannan from MacEwan University to this role. I am also pleased that Mark Chapman will continue as Book Editor.

This issue begins with Cyril Hovorun’s thoughtful and erudite essay, “Severus of Antioch as Theologian and Ideologist: Towards His More Ecumenical Evaluation,” which discusses how Severus has been wrongly categorized within the early Church. Although viewed as an influential early church theologian, Severus is also seen as a divisive figure associated with the “anti-Chalcedon movement” as well as the “antiliberal” faction” within this movement. In this regard, Severus’ approach to the two natures of Christ placed him in opposition to members of his own anti-Chalcedon group. While Hovorun discusses the details of this disagreement, he ultimately argues that Severus has been misinterpreted and that, while he might have represented the conservative faction in the Church, he never abandoned his concern for Church unity.

In what is probably first for *Religious Studies and Theology*, this issue includes five papers focusing on Islam. The first two papers focus on the important seventeenth-century Muslim philosopher and theologian Mulla Sadra. Sayyed Mehran Tatatabaei in his essay, “The Fourteen-fold Intelligences and the Principles of Mulla Sadra’s Theology” provides an account of Mulla’s understanding
of “intelligences” as they constitute learning and contribute to an understanding of reality. Tatatabaei’s paper also provides a useful context for Seyed Hassan Hosseini and Alireza Kazemi’s paper, “Ibn Sina [Avicenna’s] and Mulla Sadra on God’s Knowledge of Particulars.” They first discuss Ibn Sina’s understanding of “God’s knowledge of particulars” in relation to the physical world, and to this end, they reconstruct Ibn Sina’s main argument, and dwell specifically on how Ibn Sadra understands the “universal nature of knowledge of particulars.” The second part of the paper dwells on Mulla Sadra’s three criticisms of Ibn Sina’s argument: consequential concomitants in relation to God, the principle of causality and the “existential relation of cause and effect,” and the principle of “contingency of the highest.”

The remaining three papers on Islam dwell, not so much on philosophy and theology as on the role of religion in society. Nanang Hasan Susanto and Maghfur Ahmad in “Thoughts and influence of the Islamic Defenders Front in Indonesia” discuss the rise and subsequent fall of the Islamic Defenders Front as it relates to the political circumstances of Indonesia. They provide a discussion of its development, its relationship to radical Islam and the implementation of *Shari‘ah*, and its role in the relationship of Islam and the state. While the Islamic Defenders Front has been disbanded, they conclude that its influence is still being felt in Indonesian politics.

A similar paper is Seyed Mohammed Lolaki’s essay “Another Brick in the Wall: Mohammad Nakhshab and the Foundation of the Left-Wing Interpretation of Islam in Contemporary Iran.” It focuses on the creation of the Movement of God-Worshipping Socialists and on Nakhshab’s efforts to find a new interpretation of Islam in Iran and to formulate a new political structure. Lolaki provides a discussion of Nakhshab’s teachings and concludes the paper with a statement concerning the consequences of Nakhshab’s ideas.

While also discussing the relationship of religion and larger social issues, Fatemeh Mohammadi’s paper moves in a different direction in discussing the Muslim Diaspora and specifically the challenges of second-generation Muslim youth who have difficulty fitting into Canadian society. Mohammadi is especially interested in Muslim youth clubs in Ottawa, which constitute an independent place that, while maintaining Muslim practices and teaching, are removed from the pressures Muslim youth face at home. Her research recounts the results of her research and focuses on how Muslim youth define being “religious” as well as what it means to be Canadian.

As we come out of the isolation imposed on us by the COVID pandemic, and return to our normal academic work, we encourage authors to submit their work for consideration by *Religious Studies and Theology*. We welcome,
too, comments about the journal and how it might be improved. Finally, I would encourage writers with recent books to submit them to Mark Chapman for review.

David Atkinson
Grant MacEwan University, Canada