

## EDITORIAL

The present issue marks the passing of the baton from Ronald Youngblood, *JETS* editor for the last twenty-three years, to myself. I consider it a distinct honor to serve our Lord and you, members and friends of ETS, as the editor of our journal. Let me take a moment to bring you up to date on some recent developments.

First, last year's presidential address (which, according to established practice, is featured as the lead article in the present issue) stirred up a considerable amount of controversy. For clarification purposes, it should be noted that ETS has no policy on the orthodoxy of certain positions on Gospel criticism or theories of Synoptic interrelationships and that members in good standing hold to a variety of views. Also, in the spirit of scholarly dialogue that has characterized our journal from its inception, the June issue will include an essay by Grant Osborne which will take up several of the issues raised in Prof. Geisler's presidential address.

Second, as many of you are no doubt aware, there is currently a substantial backlog of book reviews. I am grateful for the executive committee's decision to increase the number of pages (effective with the present issue) in order to reduce this backlog as soon as possible. It is my hope that by shortening the interval between a book's publication and the appearance of the review in *JETS*, those of you who work hard at producing thoughtful reviews will be rewarded with greater impact and relevance of these reviews. Speaking of reviews, may I draw your attention to a new feature, the index of book reviews found at the back of this issue.

Third, the resignation of the book review editor for theology, Michael Bauman, has created an opening for a new person to step into this role. This is a very significant opportunity for ministry and influence, and it is our prayer that God will lead the ETS executive committee in the search for a replacement presently underway.

Fourth, in keeping with common practice among scholarly journals, I have in recent weeks formed a board of referees (listed on the last page of this issue). These scholars have kindly agreed to help evaluate the ever-increasing number of articles submitted to *JETS*. The need for such diversification is particularly acute since, unlike many other specialized journals, *JETS* publishes articles in a wide variety of theological disciplines. For refereeing purposes, may I ask prospective contributors from now on to submit three copies of their essay.

Fifth, our webmaster is at the moment working on several initiatives centering on the new technological possibilities presented by the internet. This includes maintenance and improvement of our website (<http://etsjets.org>), putting *JETS* back issues on CD, and installing an on-line subscription area. I believe that the coming years will continue to witness major changes in

academic publishing, and it is important for us to take advantage of the new opportunities ahead of us in this regard.

Finally, at the onset of my tenure as editor, and as a fellow-struggler on the way, I close with a comment on civility of scholarly discourse. In her best-selling 1998 book *The Argument Culture: changing the way we argue and debate*, sociolinguist Deborah Tannen identifies “the Western tendency to view everything through the template of a battle metaphor, and to glorify conflict and aggression,” which has created an “argument culture” marked by “the notion of ritualized opposition.”

Tannen's goal is not to discourage criticism of other people's viewpoints where such is called for. But what she questions is “the ubiquity, the knee-jerk nature, of approaching almost any issue, problem, or public person in an adversarial way.” One may disagree with the thrust of Tannen's book or her proposals, but any observer of recent events in American public life can attest to the fact that discourse in virtually every area of human existence is increasingly becoming more adversarial, even when this is arguably not the best way to resolve a given issue.

This is an exciting time in the history of our society. We are celebrating our fiftieth anniversary year and are standing on the threshold of a new millennium. As we are faced with great challenges and opportunities for evangelical scholarship, we have the opportunity to reconsider, not just the substance, but in particular the style of our academic discourse, and to ensure that it is pleasing to him whose judgment will be, not just in matters scholarly and editorial, final.

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