



Editorial Preface

R. L. Hall¹

Published online: 18 April 2020
© Springer Nature B.V. 2020

Introduction

This issue is devoted to a symposium on James P. Sterba's book, *Is a Good God Logically Possible?* With one exception, the articles printed here are just as they were presented in San Diego last February at the annual meeting of the Society for Philosophy of Religion. The one exception is the article entitled "Afterthoughts". In this article, the participants in the symposium (James Sterba, William Hasker, Michael Tooley and myself) add further reflections to their original presentations.

Many thanks go to Michael S. Jones who organized the symposium. Since his introduction to these articles is printed here, I will allow this to open this symposium.

I reserve the rest of this Preface to pay tribute to Eugene Thomas Long who died March 15th, 2020. Gene was the previous Editor-in-Chief of this journal. He served in this capacity from 1974 until his retirement in 2011. He did so much to make the IJPR a leading journal in the field of the philosophy of religion.

I got to know Gene and his wonderful wife Lynn, when I taught at a neighboring university in South Carolina. I had the great privilege of visiting with them in their home with notable guests that he had brought to the University of South Carolina where he was Chair of the Department of Philosophy. I remember so fondly occasions in his living room chatting with the likes of Phillip Quinn and Ninian Smart. I will always be grateful for being included in these heady conversations.

Many share my admiration for Gene, and I offer just a sampling of things they have said about him.

"Along with all those of you who knew Gene Long as colleague or friend, I wish to offer the following assessment of Gene's contribution to the field of philosophy. As a specialist in the area of philosophy of religion, Gene was renowned worldwide for his works. A meticulous scholar and a creative and imaginative thinker, Gene was able to lead us on paths of reflection that transcended the traditional schools of thought". (Calvin Schrag, Purdue University, Emeritus).

✉ R. L. Hall
ronhall@stetson.edu

¹ Department of Philosophy, Stetson University, Deland, USA

“Gene was the combination of a Southern gentleman, a fine scholar, and the best of friends one could have. He was committed to philosophy and especially to the Society for the Philosophy of Religion. In his role in the Associates for Philosophy of Religion (the managing board for the journal) he proved a steady hand in reminding the Associates of the history and purpose of both the journal and the society. His advice was always sound and reliable. Our memory of him will enrich our lives for years to come.” (Forrest Wood, long time member of the Associates).

“If I have learned from my French wife to appreciate what it means to be *sérieux* about personal cares and activities, in Gene I grew to discover a Scottish counterpart. He had pride in his family and career, yet with a private reserve that did not make it obvious. His academic life was filled with inner conviction toward things important to him. Liberal arts education was at the center of such important things. He studied and taught at Randolph Macon where he developed an appreciation for pluralistic approaches to philosophy. This pluralism is reflected in his work in the philosophy of religion, and especially in his journal editorship. Gene had a deep interest in the comprehensive history of the philosophy of religion in the recent century. He made lasting contributions toward understanding transcendence in all its fully human and religious aspects through *Existenzphilosophie* and other continental philosophies. Finally, he exhibited in retirement an avid determination to return to a passion of his youth. In this time, he discovered in the Columbia area a rewarding kinship with both large and small groups of jazz musicians. He was happily playing music with these groups right up until his death. I appreciated having Gene as my first departmental Chair and then later enjoyed him as a colleague and friend, I have learned above all to value the tacit and implicit dimensions of his own Scottish version of “serious.” (Jerald Wallaulis, Department of Philosophy (Emeritus) at the University of South Carolina).

Thanks, Gene, for all you meant to so many. We will miss you deeply.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.