

## The New Year

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Anyone who has known me for any length of time realizes that I am not one who is not overly impressed with numbers, or more correctly, statistics, of any sort. It is not that I am afraid of them or necessarily dislike them for themselves. I suppose this arises out of coming of age in the Viet Nam era and saw figures trumpeted by public officials or in the media that “proved” we were winning that war when we were not. And in my long career as a pastoral care department head, I got used to seeing barrels full of numbers poured out that “proved” something supposedly vital about some program initiative or other and then mysteriously disappeared from view a short time thereafter. This sort of contrivance contributed to my becoming incredulous when encountering particularly harebrained ideas and posturing on the part of those who should have known better. Most importantly, however, I seem to have been born or developed early on my own version of Paul Ricoeur’s “hermeneutic of suspicion,” an attitude or disposition that has served me well as I have negotiated the twists and turns of professional life.

But *now* I am an Editor in Chief and *I* have to deal with certain statistics. For 2014, we had 310 submissions and 168 articles were peer-reviewed and accepted from the lot of the articles online to become part of six separate issues comprising 1,931 total pages. By comparison, we had 290 articles submitted in 2013 with 138 accepted for publication in our online and print editions. This issue has of the Journal now in your hand or more likely on your computer screen has 371 pages and 30 separate articles. All were peer-reviewed and were then skillfully moved through the production process by persons at Springer both loyal and savvy when it comes to putting the Journal together.

That is a lot of pages and the articles pile up to be reviewed and wait online for publication for more time than I or anyone else would like. For that reason, we have added to our Editorial staff (that is, me) two able persons whom you will get to know through their own words about themselves and their ideas in their new roles in subsequent issues.

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They are Stephanie St. Pierre who after a career in publishing at Random House went to Union Seminary before moving on into the field of public health. She received her MPH degree at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University and is currently finishing in the doctoral program in Public Health at the City University of New York. She is our Assistant Editor. And I have persuaded the Reverend Dr. Donald Owens who holds the James A. Knight Chair of Humanities and Ethics in Medicine at the Tulane University School of Medicine to become an Associate Editor. He has distinguished himself as both a pastor and teacher and is a leader nationally in the field of ministry in higher education. Both are writers by vocation and temperament, and both have reviewed for the Journal for some time. Both understand and have hands on experience with research standards and methods. And they both know a lot about the human dimensions of making a journal work. They are both abundantly talented and will help move us along on our journey.

For all of the above, I am looking forward to 2015. It looks to be better than ever, statistics and all.