

Call For Papers

50th Anniversary of the *JRE* (1973–2023)

In 2023, the *Journal of Religious Ethics* will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. This is an opportunity to review the work of the journal, to consider the shape of the field of religious ethics, and to identify challenges and opportunities for scholars interested in religion and ethics from a variety of perspectives. Building on the model used for the twenty-fifth-anniversary supplementary issue, the editors of the *JRE* (together with a subcommittee selected from the editorial board) have decided to devote a substantial portion of each of the four issues appearing in the anniversary year to consider the following question:

Why study religious ethics?

To that end, we have identified four sets of themes, one for each issue published during 2023, to explore this question in detail.

1. Fields and Disciplines

One of the many important essays that the *JRE* published in its first fifty years is John P. Reeder Jr.'s "Religious Ethics as a Field and Discipline" (6.1 [1978]: 32–53). Reeder's questions remain important ones to ask. What are the purposes of conceptualizing the content of the field in a certain manner? What are the ends of thinking through its best disciplinary methods? How does religious ethics contribute to broader debates about humanistic inquiry?

2. Traditions and Communities

The *JRE* has been one of the foremost intellectual sites for scholars' representation of how religious communities have reasoned, do reason, and ought to reason, through various moral issues. On one hand, the religious ethicist, through acts of interpretation and comparison, has mobilized or reconstructed particular traditions of ethical reasoning. On the other hand, the religious ethicist has also often been a gadfly, whether troubling authorities, or mobilizing a minority community's ethical resources in order to challenge hegemonic modes of moral reasoning. In this spirit, we seek essays that take up the issue of how the religious ethicist relates to a traditional past in the present moment, or otherwise situates the role of scholarship on the ethical dimensions of religious traditions.

3. Publics and Institutions

The religious ethicist is accountable to a wide swath of publics: a diverse array of students; colleagues in different disciplinary fields; university administrators; religious communities; and other secular, often non-academic, publics. When we think about the purposes of religious ethics, to what extent do these publics play a role in answering the question of "why study religious ethics?" To what extent do various institutional settings—the public research university, the religiously affiliated liberal arts college, the institute/center housed outside a department, the decline of employment opportunities in all of these settings—affect our answers

to this question and the way we train our students to answer it? How has the assumed public of the *JRE* changed in the last fifty years, and how might that encourage us to ask different questions, and/or communicate findings in different ways?

4. Futures and Uncertainties

What are the issues that will shape the field of religious ethics in the next twenty-five years? Climate change and artificial intelligence come readily to mind; so do increased globalization and cultural polarization. We can also imagine others. How might the field of religious ethics respond to these issues, or change in light of them?

We hope that this broad organizing question and the associated themes will encourage both established and emerging scholars to reflect on the shape of the field, its current strengths as well as areas where it must improve or expand its work, in light of the varied academic communities it serves.

We encourage interested contributors to keep in mind the current mission statement of the *JRE*, which sees religious ethics in terms of three key areas—“comparative religious ethics, foundational conceptual and methodological issues in religious ethics, and historical studies of influential figures and texts”—for both its strengths and its weaknesses.

Abstracts of no more than 200 words should be submitted to the editors at jre@admin.fsu.edu no later than **September 1, 2020** and should indicate which of the four sets of themes noted above the prospective contributor plans to address. The editors of the *JRE* and the members of the fiftieth-anniversary subcommittee will solicit articles from abstracts received. Initial submissions of invited articles should be 3000–5000 words and must be submitted by October 1, 2021. Questions should be directed to Aline Kalbian and Martin Kavka at jre@admin.fsu.edu.

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