In being speech, each volume of *The Annual* is also conversation: on the one hand, it constitutes reply and argument re-presenting the speakings of the past; on the other, it invites response, remaining unfinished in the absence of an engaged and active reader. This year's collection is unusual in offering a very vigorous conversation internal to the volume itself. Critical book discussions are a comparatively new feature of the program of the annual meeting, having been instituted in 1988. Because there are many claims on the space available in each year's volume of *The Annual* and because critical reviews of books are readily available in other publications, *The Annual* has not included these discussions in the selection process. A policy of benign neglect functions, of course, only so long as no claim arises to compel attention. This year neglect was not an option. The fiery critical discussion of *Ethics after Babel* framed matters of high interest and contemporary controversy in a crisp and definite way. Members of the editorial board who attended argued for publication (policy notwithstanding), and a fair number of unsolicited testimonials were lodged with the editor. *The Annual* is no ordinary unmoored journal. It is part of our task to reflect in this publication the qualities and emphasis that make each annual meeting distinctive, and it became clear—by popular acclaim, so to speak—that this critical engagement instanced with particular trenchancy the honesty, passion, and penetration that make the guild so valuable to its members. The issues so ably articulated by Ron Green, Sumner Twiss, and Jeffrey Stout in their Sunday morning exchange are pivotal and pressing issues, and *The Annual* is pleased to provide a forum for their publication.

Opening with this metaethical dispute, the 1990 volume includes an additional cluster of theoretical essays: John Kelsay's challenge, grounded in a historical instance taken from the period of the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258 C.E.), to the presumed affinity of divine command theories of ethics with "religiously uniform societies," Ed Vacek's assessment of the doctrine of co-creation as a departure point for Christian social ethics, and Stephen Pope's probing of conflicting positions on the moral significance of the partiality of natural love. By healthy contrast, Allison Moore gives us one of the most resolutely empirical essays we have had the pleasure to publish. Her reflections on the experiences of battered women and Terry Anderson's essay "The Strangers and the People of the Land" address in quite different ways the legacy of Enlightenment individualism. The essays by Stephen Pope, Allison Moore, and Terry Anderson, especially when taken in connection with Karen Lebacqz's

presidential address, challenge the conventions of our thinking about marriages, families, and familial love, while also making arresting arguments about the public meaning of the ways in which our private relations are ordered. This theme of the inseparability of the private and the public is sounded again in the completely different context of Richard Sparks's essay on the controverted public issue of fetal tissue transplantation for he not only offers a lucid mapping of the bioethical issues involved but also examines current debates about the consequences for private moral decisions of certain public policy decisions regarding bioethical practices. Given the high level of interest among members of the SCE in cultural and religious pluralism and in fostering sensitivity to the integrity of communities and cultures that do not belong to the hitherto dominant families in the North American cultural mélange, *The Annual* is particularly pleased to be able to offer not only John Kelsay's essay on Islamic ethics but also Terry Anderson's account of his encounters with Native-American culture and Robin Hough's historical study of the impact of the performances of the Fisk Jubilee Singers on the formation of late nineteenth-century northern attitudes concerning the culture and capabilities of African-Americans. The set of selected papers ends with two essays that are written for a more professionally specific clutch of readers, but neither is narrowly an essay in bioethics or in business ethics. I have already spoken of the larger reach of "Ethical Issues of Fetal Tissue Transplantation"; "Management as a Social Practice," by Dennis McCann and M. L. Brownsberger, will be of interest to all who struggle with "the moral meaning of commerce."

This year's professional resources section has been prepared by the American Theological Ethics Interest Group under the very able guidance of the co-conveners Bill Spohn and Tom Byrnes. It seems particularly timely to publish this compendium while H. Richard Niebuhr's hitherto unpublished monograph *Faith on Earth: An Inquiry into the Structure of Human Faith* is still a recent arrival on our desks. Not only do several of the essays lay special emphasis on Niebuhr's contribution, but the design for the section first took shape in impromptu conversations during a conference at the Harvard Divinity School in 1988 commemorating Niebuhr's theological contribution and announcing the imminent publication of the edited manuscript of *Faith on Earth*. What is clear from the essays is that these scholars of "the American tradition" do not consider themselves to be engaged in an antiquarian endeavor of memory and preservation. For all of them, the great voices from the American

past are present voices who speak to us in the midst of our own contemporary concerns and offer ready guidance in meeting the novelties of the present. The contributors have undertaken to disclose not only what might be taught and why, but how these resonant voices and these powerful texts have had an impact on their understanding of the enterprise of theological education.

The authors whose essays enliven the pages of *The Annual* are all, in some odd sense, immediately present here; in addition, this very special issue invokes the presence of all who have written for us in the past. It is immensely satisfying to offer a cumulative index recording all of the contributions that have appeared in this publication since its inception in 1975. The company of authors is a grand company indeed. We hope you will find this index valuable—both as a research tool and as a record of the concerns that have held the collective attention of the SCE over the past sixteen years. The subject index, imperfect as it may be, gives some sense of the breadth of concern that has characterized our fellowship. Constructing this subject index constituted a particular challenge. Deciding on the appropriate subject categories has been a collective enterprise of the editorial board; though we have done our best to arrive at a serviceable set of clusters, the final result is not wholly satisfying to anyone. Assigning essays among the clusters produced few certainties and many misgivings. Every paper published should be listed at least once in the subject index; many have been listed in two different categories. No doubt some of you will feel that your work might have been more appropriately presented under a different heading. The simple effort to produce a perfect index has bred in this disconsolate editor the unsettled conviction that there is no end of errors. In the eternity reserved for editors, each will be assigned a single manuscript to proofread forever and will *forever* be discovering mistakes that were not noticed before. Since material in this index will probably be incorporated in indexes produced in the future, errors and infelicities should be brought to the editor's attention.

Other presences are less identifiable but no less palpable. Chief among these are the members of the editorial board and the unnamed referees. They are the architects, stonemasons, and arbiters of this forum for speech, and the editor's gratitude to these unremarked but indispensable participants is gratitude on behalf of the entire membership. This year both Ruth Smith and Gil Meilaender retire from the editorial board, Ruth after a term of four years (we came new to this work together in