



## The Nature Institute

Dear Friends,

If you read through the News section of this issue (as in other recent issues), you may be impressed by the wide-ranging extent to which we have managed to get The Nature Institute's work "out there." Sometimes we find ourselves impressed, too! The past several months have seen Craig and Henrike traveling the length of the Australian continent in order to lead workshops, give keynote talks, and teach courses. They then revisited Brazil to conclude a two-year intensive program in phenomenological science for a diverse collection of professionals, ranging from a medical doctor to a lawyer to an agronomist. (For all our staff engagements, you can browse through the calendar listings on our website.) Bruno has likewise continued his agricultural consultations, workshops, and conference presentations, which have taken him as far as Chile, where he consulted with biodynamic vineyards and a conventional livestock farm. If he has reduced his travel schedule a little of late, it is due to the happy occasion of his son's birth.

Not that we have to travel to distant regions in order to get our word out. You can read on page 6 about our first experiment with a fellowship program, which brought students from three continents outside North America for extended training and practice at the Institute. And, on the back cover, you will find the first, brief announcement of a new, two-year course in the foundations of phenomenological science that will include two summer intensives at our site.

Our publications are a reaching out of a rather different sort. In the feature article of this issue Steve addresses both the advocates of intelligent design theory and their more conventionally minded opponents. He suggests that the seemingly irreconcilable conflict between the two camps stems from their common assumptions. Overcoming what is faulty in these assumptions could not only heal a rather ugly cultural wound, but also lead all of biology in a healthy direction. The fundamental points of view offered by The Nature Institute—and particularly our focus on what we can learn from living activity as we observe it in the present, as opposed to hypothetical processes at work in the past—turn out to be exactly what is needed in order to move beyond the unfortunate "evolution wars" of recent years.

Moreover, we have taken a new and substantive step to promote such a phenomena-based approach. On page 10 you can read about our release of a special teaching kit put together by Craig for use in courses on human evolution. We think this kit can play a significant role in bringing the teaching of evolution into closer correspondence with the available evidences, which are never as neat as the textbook theories might suggest. And, simultaneously with the release of this kit, we are publishing Craig's new Nature Institute Perspectives booklet, *Do Frogs Come from Tadpoles? Rethinking Origins in Development and Evolution*.

You will also find on page 10 mention of various articles our staff members have published in other journals.

There are, as you can see, many possible avenues for bringing our work to bear where it can do the most good, all of which have required your generous support (for which we are grateful!). Yet we hardly think we have exhausted the possibilities. That brings us to a request: if you, in your community, can imagine ways we might connect better with the needs you see around you, please do let us know. Our resources, of course, are limited—but not our hopes!

Craig Holdrege

Steve Talbott

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### In Context

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