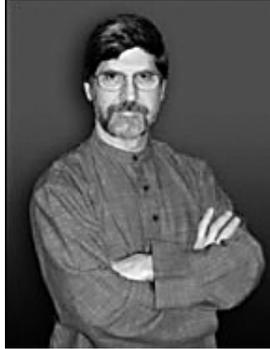


IN MEMORIAM
JAMES S. CUTSINGER
(May 4, 1953 – February 19, 2020)



‘A Serious Seeker and Socratic Teacher’

A gifted and compassionate teacher of the perennial wisdom, Professor Cutsinger possessed a penetrating insight that he brought to bear on issues of faith and modernity, challenging false assumptions prevalent within academia about the nature of man and the limits of knowledge.

He was the author of *The Form of Transformed Vision: Coleridge and the Knowledge of God* (1986) (Owen Barfield, who wrote the book’s foreword, praised Cutsinger’s ‘meticulous, unhurried, superabundantly documented exegesis of what Coleridge thought’); *Advice to the Serious Seeker: Meditations on the Teaching of Frithjof Schuon* (1997) (the book, which has influenced many a ‘serious seeker,’ explored the ideas of Frithjof Schuon and the perennialists); and three anthologies of Schuon’s writings: *The Fullness of God: Frithjof Schuon on Christianity* (2004), *Prayer Fashions Man: Frithjof Schuon on the Spiritual Life* (2005), and *Splendor of the True: A Frithjof Schuon Reader* (2013). Besides editing several of Schuon’s books and letters, he has also edited and produced several anthologies, notably the proceedings of two conferences that he organized [*Reclaiming the Great Tradition: Evangelicals, Catholics, and Orthodox in Dialogue* (1997) and *Paths to the Heart: Sufism and the Christian East* (2002)] as well as *Not of This World: A Treasury of Christian Mysticism* (2003).

'Debts I Can Never Repay'

By *Waleed El-Ansary*

I first came to know of James Cutsinger through his marvelous book *Advice to the Serious Seeker: Meditations on the Teachings of Frithjof Schuon*, which I read as a graduate student. I found the book extremely valuable in synthesizing ideas I had encountered in the writings of Frithjof Schuon, as well as in addressing certain issues I had not fully understood previously. James' book was therefore a major "intellectual bridge" for me that I will always be grateful for.

I would have never dreamt that this wonderful man would become my first faculty mentor when I took up my first tenure-track position in Islamic Studies at the University of South Carolina (USC) in 2006. My dissertation advisor, Dr. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, was the first to tell me about the opening. There was something in the demeanor with which Dr. Nasr suggested that I apply for the position that made me think this was not an "ordinary suggestion," and that something of great significance for me could come from making this move.

I therefore applied for the position with the hope that I would become a friend and colleague of James. I knew I had much to learn from him regarding Christian theology and that he was renowned as a teacher having won the highest teaching awards at USC (I was subsequently thrilled to see James among the four finalists for "best professor in the state of South Carolina" in 2011).

It was a delight to be with James during my campus visit. In the final departmental interview, somehow the subject of the virgin birth of Jesus came up. As a Muslim, I took the obvious position that the doctrine was true, and it never crossed my mind that other professors in the Department of Religious Studies, most of whom were ordained ministers, would question this. Although nobody said anything further about this during the interview, James told me on our way to the airport afterwards that he started praying to God for His intervention

To read the balance of this article, please subscribe to this volume.



SACRED WEB

A JOURNAL OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY

www.sacredweb.com