

EDITORIAL

EXPANDING HORIZONS IN A SHRINKING WORLD

The above title was the theme of the 18th annual convention of the American Scientific Affiliation held August 19-23, 1963, in Santa Barbara, California, on the campus of Westmont College. The first of many papers from that convention are published in this issue. Others are being reviewed by competent critics or are in process of revision by the authors following suggestions from program discussions and editorial referees.

The theme is very appropriate. The world and all its nations, institutions, and people are rapidly changing. The ASA itself can be viewed as a product of change. As several of these papers indicate, its future is even more challenging than its past. The growth of the Affiliation to its present membership of about 1,300 persons is accompanied by expanding opportunities to serve the cause of Christ in intellectual areas which are directly and indirectly pertinent to science. Many theoretical, theological, philosophical, and practical problems which need exploration and action will not be resolved unless ASA members *work* at significant tasks which others are neither motivated nor qualified to undertake.

All of the work of the ASA and its members occurs within a framework of commitments—commitments to our self-images as Christians and scientists, commitments to employers and fellow-workers, commitments to our numerous churches and denominations, commitments to our families and friends, commitments to our respective nations (chiefly the United States and Canada), commitments even to such international organizations and agencies as the United Nations, WHO, and UNESCO.

Cutting across all of these commitments to people and organizations is an overarching set of moral, theoretical, philosophical, and religious perspectives to which we are also committed. These provide us with guiding principles which become a part of our world-view and which are at the very core of our personalities. They make certain of our formal and informal groups more important to us than others. They are the very essence of the self. They lead us to act as if in the presence of certain persons and groups even when we are far removed from them. They provide us with conceptions of ourselves.

These self-images of who and what we are in turn become a major orienting force which guides all of our conduct, scientific and otherwise. They reflect the reality and importance of reference groups and reference orientations to which we appeal in all our decision-making.

Commitments to people, organizations, and activities often clash with each other. Even as I write, I am conscious of conflicting pressures upon me related to my obligations as a college professor, father, husband, editor, churchman, denominational servant with a significant committee chairmanship, adviser of college students, scholar, and writer. Such role-conflicts are

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resolved by irrational emotional influences as well as by reasonable appeals to one's loyalties and commitments. If we consistently follow the implications of full and true Christian faith, our highest and ultimate commitments will have a controlling influence over all the others. We will be so filled with the Spirit of God and thus with works of righteousness that we will not be misled into the works of darkness. We will make the kingdom of God our chief reference orientation. His kingdom will, in this sense, indeed be within us. What this implies for scientific activity is intimated in several contributions in this issue.

Once we have publicly declared our position on a subject, we tend to pontificate about it in order to defend our publicly displayed self-image. As the world around us changes with new scientific and technological developments daily, we must strive to distinguish between our ultimate commitments and those which are derived or secondary. Among other things, we need to see clearly the difference between "what the Bible says" and "what I believe the Bible means when it says." All too often we dogmatically use the former expression when presenting interpretations of the Bible message.

The bounds of man's habitation are rapidly expanding in terms of knowledge as well as in terms of transportation, communication, space exploration, and the population of deserts, polar regions, and other wildernesses. Yet, paradoxically, the world is shrinking. People of all nations, tribes, and clans are brought ever nearer each other in time-distance. The consequences of one nation's atmospheric testing of nuclear devices fall out upon all nations. Just as no man lives to himself, no nation can live to itself. Mankind is one. All share a common human condition, however modified it is by the numerous environmental and cultural variations apparent even to the casual observer.

Language changes, science changes, the world changes. In the midst of this changing world there is but one changeless object of commitment which can provide an enduring foundation for all personal and social life: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. It is to Him, the eternal Word of God who became flesh and dwelt among men, that the ASA gives its ultimate loyalty. Although this Word never changes, the practical implications and applications of commitment to Him must be adjusted continually to fit the changing conditions of expanding horizons in a shrinking world.

Commitment to Jesus Christ sets men free from their bondage to superstitions and traditions. It makes them free to grow in truth as well as in grace, free from shackles of enslaving traditions, free from absolute commitments to scholarly traditions doomed by the rapid pace of scientific development. Commitment to Him provides a stabilizing keel as well as a compass, map, and rudder for man's autonomous voyage through life.

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Not everything labeled "commitment to Christ" is truly such. Pseudo-Christian commitment to an earthly organizational structure (however "heavenly" the name), a theological system, a legalistic moral code, or a narrow and specific interpretation of "science and the Scriptures" takes away the glorious liberty of the children of God, replacing the bondage of "non-religious" commitments with a new slavery.

Articles in this issue reflect the nature and implications of Christian commitment. They suggest numerous fruitful avenues of exploration and adventure for the ASA and its members. The new format of the *Journal* is a suitable reflection of renewed aspirations and visions of service.

THE NEW LOOK initiated with this issue will help, we trust, to meet many of the needs which some believed could be fulfilled best through a new name. The *Journal* name contest was won by Don Fair with the title *Science and Christian Faith*. The editorial board recommended that the name be changed to *Theos and Cosmos*, a title suggested prior to the contest. The Executive Council, however, felt that there were good reasons for retaining the present name. It is our hope that the distinctiveness of the *Journal* will be promoted by the new symbolic design on the cover (the work of Robert Friederichsen, the artist and layout man for our new printer) as well as by the nature and quality of its contents.

The symbol can be interpreted in many ways, but we see it primarily as a representation of the fact that two perspectives, two types of truth, two sources of knowledge, two commitments, confront each other and converge in the ASA. We aim to remain on the exciting frontier of the confrontation of Christianity and science.

The scattering of "News and Notes" and other changes of format should make the *Journal* more readable and indeed even more marketable! Non-scientists like college professors, pastors, high school instructors, adult Sunday school teachers, and other literate laymen can profit greatly from reading the *Journal*. Tell them about it! (Send all new and renewal subscriptions to the Mankato office!)

A NEW EDITOR will assume his duties with the September issue and undoubtedly will contribute new perspectives to the expansion of our horizons in a shrinking world. All correspondence after April 1, 1964 (except that which pertains to the June issue), should be addressed to him:

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