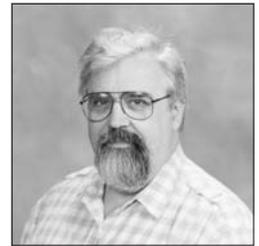




The View from Shepherd's Knoll ...



The Gathering

As a young boy an early highlight of my church experience was the Annual Conference, a gathering of representatives from many other Mennonite congregations across the United States. This inspirational gathering featured spirited singing, plenary sessions with dynamic preaching, and specialized sessions for youth, children of different ages, women, men, and pastors. These routine elements along with times of fellowship and informal conversation attracted a loyal audience. Our family typically set aside a week in early August to attend this Annual Conference as part of our family vacation experience. Since the location varied from year to year, we incorporated scenic and educational experiences along with the setting of the church conference. I vividly remember seeing Niagara Falls for the first time while attending a conference in New York state and Brookfield Zoo in Chicago while attending a conference in northern Indiana.

The Annual Meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation takes on a similar character. Those who gather on a regular basis from year to year attest to the invigorating and stimulating experience of the conference coupled with beautiful scenic settings. For example, last year we had the privilege of meeting on the attractive campus of Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, and meeting distinguished scientists such as Francis Collins, Ian Hutchinson, Charles Townes, and others. I become invigorated listening to the insightful ideas of ASA notables as debates and discussions emerge over a host of faith and science topics. The typical pre- and post-conference field trips are interesting excursions into new vistas of experience.

This summer, the ASA Annual Meeting will convene at Colorado Christian University in

Lakewood, CO, July 25–28. This meeting's "Astronomy/Cosmology" theme features renowned astronomical researchers such as Eilene Theilig, Alan Stockton, and others. As a biologist, I anticipate learning much about this area of science. I also am looking forward to attending special thematic sessions such as "Faith and Science at Work and at Church," "Divine Action in Nature," "Bioethics and Stewardship," and "Technology Development from a Christian Perspective." Unfortunately, I probably will not have the opportunity to attend all of these sessions, since the program chairperson generally plans concurrent sessions, resulting in the dilemma of being forced to choose! If you have not attended an ASA Annual Meeting, consider putting this meeting on your schedule. You will find it to be a time of refreshment and stimulation. Check out the registration form on the ASA website.

Gatherings are part of God's divine initiative and planning. The Apostle John in his vision describes the "parent of all gatherings" when he writes:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb ... And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb" (Rev 7:9–10, NIV).

You may miss your annual church conference or even the annual ASA meeting, but do *not* miss this eschatological gathering! It involves an *eternal* life-transforming experience!

See you later,
Roman J. Miller, *Editor*

In This Issue

We begin our pages with an occasional feature — "Plenary Speakers" — that highlights keynote speakers from previous ASA Annual Meetings and other conferences. This issue focuses on the insights of Ian Hutchinson and Owen Gingerich to the Faith and Science dialogue. In the September issue, we hope to feature other plenary speakers from the 2002 ASA Annual Meeting.

Next we include a Dialogue on "Interpreting the Book of Nature" initiated by Angus Menuge with Walter Thorson responding. This section is followed by two articles. Lawrence Burkholder tackles the metaphysical problem of "energy" in healing, while Robert Newman points out issues that theistic evolutionists need to consider.

A selection of twelve book reviews and six letters contribute to the final pages of this issue. The last page provides the opportunity for you to join ASA if you are not already a member.