



James C. Peterson

Since ASA Is Open to Dialogue, Would *PSCF* Publish an Article Advocating Geo-centrism?

At the 2016 ASA Annual Meeting, I was asked the above-titled question, no doubt to test how open *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (*PSCF*) is to minority views. Let me say in response that science continues to grow in its achievements and influence. The Christian faith is the world's most global movement. Where they meet, the ASA has pioneered for 75 years. When you turn the page that you are reading now, you will see the front cover page and foreword of the first issue of this journal, then known as the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (*JASA*). Over the years, our purpose has remained quite consistent: to bring into dialogue the best of the sciences and Christian faith. To begin this issue, Chris Rios traces some of that conversation through several anniversaries. He notices that a distinctive commitment of ASA from the beginning has been to welcome into fellowship Christians of diverse views. The ASA and *PSCF* then provide a place for active listening and testing of one another's perspectives. That is essential to understand better our callings in the sciences and as part of God's people.

Groups have split off from the ASA to advocate for one particular perspective or another, but even then membership in the ASA and the new advocate groups have often substantially overlapped. What has held the ASA together has been an abiding commitment to pursue the best of both the sciences and Christian theology. At the journal, double-blind peer review is an important part of implementing that commitment. If an essay were to be submitted to the journal advocating geo-centrism, the first question would be whether the author showed the required mastery of the available data. Is the thesis sustained with an informed discussion of the applicable literature and interpretation? While geo-centrism did have its day, at this point it would fail that standard, and so the editor would send such an essay back to the author with a courteous explanation of what is needed to begin peer review.

But openness to new readings is also a deep commitment of both the ASA and the journal. If an essay appears to have a case worthy of peer reviewer time, expert peer reviewers are not asked if they agree with the author. They are asked if the author makes an informed and compelling case for a new and important contribution. That contribution might be quite different from what has been argued previously. Such is most welcome. Consensus views usually start as minority, or even solitary, views.

In this issue, Andrew Kim describes the rigorous explorations that Bernard Ramm published in *JASA* over many years. In the following article, D. Gareth Jones expresses appreciation for the fairness of ASA and *PSCF* in the discussion of bioethics. Terry Gray then writes of the challenges and advantages of wrestling openly through important topics, as *PSCF* has and, he argues, should continue to do so. Randy Isaac completes the issue, and his tenure as Executive Director, in an interview about how he always sought both to make the wide range of members feel welcome, and to spur thoughtful debate toward better understanding. He speaks as well of his hopes for ASA in the years ahead.

As cannot be said too often, all truth is God's truth. Of course, we have discovered only a sliver of that truth so far. The more we do actually learn, the more aware we become of what we do not yet know. But there is much to gain from doing what we can to understand better God's world and his calling for his people in it. The ASA at 75, and *PSCF* as a prominent part of ASA's work, have a fascinating and rewarding mission. What a challenging joy for us to work together to carry it forward into the next 75 years. ■

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The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Psalm 111:10

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- FOREWORD -

The first issue of the A.S.A. Bulletin is now in your hands. We would like to indicate by this note the purpose of the Bulletin, the editorial policy to be followed in accepting papers for publication, and the mechanism of publishing the first few issues. It is also our purpose to encourage hereby the greatest possible participation by various members in this undertaking.

The purpose of the A.S.A. Bulletin is manifold. It is intended primarily for the benefit of the A.S.A. members, and interested friends, and it is hoped that it will be instrumental in helping the organization achieve its primary purpose of witnessing to the truth of the Scriptures and elucidating the relationship of both the ideology and fruits of science thereto. Furthermore we confidently expect that in the publication of papers presented at the convention and others received from the membership at large, a real service will be rendered each of us in creating an enlarged appreciation and understanding of the Christian position in other fields of science than that of our own specialization. Also thru the A.S.A. Bulletin, we plan to give every interested member the benefit of a constructive criticism and Christian evaluation of papers presented and of reviews of books of great interest or strategic importance.

If this purpose is to be fulfilled, the cooperation of many members will be necessary. Some will be asked to write book reviews, others will be requested to outline the main problems in their field of specialization relating to science and the Scriptures, and all are expected to submit for publication articles of general interest. Not only is participation in these respects greatly desired, but earnest prayer for the success of this undertaking is sincerely requested.

The Bulletin will contain editorials from time to time. The present and past members of the Executive Council will serve as an editorial staff. Papers submitted will be referred for critical appraisal to a committee consisting of members of the A.S.A. who are specialized in the field with which the paper is concerned. These committees, appointed for each separate paper by the editor, will serve as referees and their recommendations will determine whether a paper is published. Papers submitted at the National Convention will not be handled in this way since the discussion following each convention paper serves to evaluate it.

A word of explanation of the mechanism of publication seems in order. The editor receives, assembles, edits, and prepares all material for publication in accordance with the foregoing procedure. This finished material is then forwarded to the Secretary-Treasurer, Professor Russell L. Mixter in Wheaton, Illinois for mimeographing or printing, and mailing. The format of the Bulletin is largely left up to Professor Mixter, and the question of whether it is mimeographed or printed will depend primarily on the relative expense involved.

Finally, we would like to invite suggestions. While we realize perfection, at least in the eyes of all, is probably impossible, we would like to be sure that the Bulletin meets a fair standard of acceptability. This can probably best be assured by your comments and suggestions.

M.D.B.

This foreword was written by Marion D. Barnes, ASA secretary-treasurer (1944-1948). It was published in the first issue of the first volume of the journal on January 7, 1949, in Wheaton, Illinois.