



James C. Peterson

Where at Least Some People Still Listen to Each Other

At a time of polarizing echo chambers and a constant stream of new stressors and conflicts, let's take a moment to appreciate this journal as a place where people still listen to each other. *PSCF* welcomes and learns from fellow Christians across disciplines, institutions, generations, and geography. In doing that as accessibly as possible, it fruitfully reveals to professionals across disciplines what each other is doing and learning.

Consider the articles of two of our most recent issues. In the March 2021 issue, the lead essay is written by an assistant professor at her first post in a Canadian Christian university. The second is by an emeritus professor at Ontario's research power, McMaster University. The third by a full professor at a university in England, and the fourth, by a professor at the state university of North Dakota.

In the June 2021 issue, the lead article is by an emeritus professor writing of New Zealand's experience with our current pandemic. The second is by a New Testament scholar who just completed his PhD at California's Fuller Theological Seminary. The third is by a senior physicist in Scotland, and the fourth by a team that includes a woman in graduate school at Yale University, a senior leader from commercial research and the ASA, and an associate professor in the state university system of Maryland.

In just these eight articles from two recent issues, one can see *PSCF* bringing to our common purpose, every stage of professional career, specialties from epidemiology to New Testament to physics, institutions ranging from Christian colleges and seminaries to state and private research universities to commercial research, and home locations spanning five countries.

As to the current issue now before you, it was printed in Pennsylvania after being fact and grammar checked in Ontario, and typeset in Massachusetts. I am writing to you from Virginia. The lead article stems from an author in Colorado, followed by two coauthors working together though one lives in Peru and the other in Italy. Then we hear from Canada. The piece that follows was developed from experience in Los Angeles. The review essay is from Seattle. The book reviewers are from Vancouver, Houston, Grand Rapids, Montreal, Norwich, Glasgow, and other cities, as they insightfully explain and dialogue with authors and publishers across the globe. As you read and reflect on this issue, wherever your local circle is, you are joining a thoughtful conversation with people in very different geographies and contexts.

This gathering to work together is seen not only in the finished pages, but also in the process each article goes through before being printed. Several expert peer reviewers have critiqued each of the articles that made it into rewrites, and eventually the journal. The peer reviewers and editors work with the authors to make each piece the best case for the perspective it brings, and to discern what will best serve the readers' time. The authors and reviewers do not always agree with each other, but they make a thorough case for the perspectives presented.

So we return here to expand on the standards that were enumerated eight years ago in the lead editorial (December 2013). We look for each piece in the journal to *further our mission*, that is to foster an accurate and fruitful dialogue between the best of the sciences and Christian faith. The journal cannot publish everything for everyone, but it does seek to be a leader in working through new territory and insight in the interaction between the best in theology and science.

Editorial

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In each article, the reader should see documented what is available on the topic for and against the author's thesis, *especially from previous discussion in PSCF*. Almost always, authors are joining a discussion that has already borne careful consideration. The *PSCF* index makes that treasure trove readily available under publications at ASA3.org. At the leading edge of inquiry, multiple views are in play and each should be given its best case.

There is no point in publishing an article that meets the above standards, but is difficult to decode. While our readers are erudite, they cannot know the inside jargon in every specialty. The content in this interdisciplinary field will usually be challenging, but the communication of it should not be any more difficult than it has to be. The selected essays are *to be clear*.

There can be recurring questions and themes, but each new article articulates some aspect worthy of consideration that was not part of the literature before. That contribution could be in the conclusion, or in an argument, or in a way of explaining the issue, but there will always be *an important new contribution*. The role of the journal is not to repeat what is already commonplace or a party line. If a perspective or argument has been articulated before in the journal and is relevant to the current article, it should be referenced, not done again. The point of each article in a current issue is to go on to new insights.

If a reader does not find a colleague's proposal here persuasive, they will hopefully submit their better approach to the journal's blind peer review process and potential publication. We are not a vanity press, nor for casual musing. Each essay has to stand on its own as building its case that is worthy of attention. Contrary to Foucault, *PSCF* is not pursued as a power game. It is not about one author triumphing over another. Rather, we are all to be listening for and submitting to what is actually the true, the good, and the beautiful. Indeed, to be delivered from a false view is to be appreciated with gratitude.

In sum, you may sometimes read an article in *PSCF* and be delighted to find someone so clearly articulating what you have always thought (even if maybe inchoately). Other times you may find a perspective that you had not even considered, but now you can see its point. We do not claim that *PSCF* is always brilliant in its corner, but at least we can say with confidence that there is a warm and welcome glow here that is to be particularly noticed when so much public cacophony has become as obscuring as it is ubiquitous. Here, at least, is one of the places where people still assume that the other has something to offer, listen to understand, respectfully test claims, and are better for it.

Carry on!



James C. Peterson, *Editor-in-Chief*

WINTER SYMPOSIUM

"God, Science, and the Pandemic: With Lessons from John Donne"

ONLINE EVENT

January 29, 2022
12 pm EST / 9 am PST

PHILIP YANCEY
Internationally known evangelical author and speaker, editor-at-large of *Christianity Today*

THE AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION