

I encountered significant challenges while an undergraduate student research assistant of cosmologist Werner Israel, finding the evidence for an ancient cosmos overwhelming enough for me to switch into the safer, less faith-impacting (or so I thought), field of theoretical condensed matter physics for my doctorate. I marked that transition with a silly little claim that “cosmology can rightly deal only with the present and future.”

Over the next ten years, while completing my graduate studies, a postdoctoral position, and the early years of a faculty position, I read relevant theological and philosophical literature, including from within my Reformed tradition, and also engaged informally with some in the young-earth creationist community who were attempting to resolve cosmological questions. As a result, I became less convinced that the Bible clearly taught on the age of earth and cosmos, more convinced of the integrity of the fields of cosmology, astrophysics, and geology, and increasingly concerned about the claims of “scientific creationists.”

The RATE project (“Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth”) of the Institute for Creation Research and the Creation Research Society caught my interest, and I was even involved in a bit of the early peer-review process. It was not hard for me to tell that much of what was being claimed was not particularly scientific, and based on the kind of science-related interpretation of scripture of my youth. But I didn’t study the entire project in detail. I was therefore grateful for a helpful and thorough essay review by Randy Isaac in the June 2007 issue of *PSCF*, as well as his reply to the RATE Group’s response in the March 2008 issue, coupled with a reply by Kirk Bertsche in that same issue to a related article.

While I had been a member since 1996, this all helped me understand and appreciate more than before the nature, ethos, and value of ASA, with expert scientists who are committed Christians helping one another through respectful dialogue. These exchanges, along with many other important articles in *PSCF*, have been invaluable as resources to provide to students as well, to connect them with our network as they develop as scientists and as Christians.

Arnold E. Sikkema, Trinity Western University, Langley, British Columbia, Canada.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-23Bishop>

2008

TIMOTHY LARSEN, “War Is Over, If You Want It’: Beyond the Conflict between Faith and Science,” *PSCF* 60, no. 3 (2008): 147–55.

Over the years there have been many thoughtful, engaging, and insightful articles published in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. It is difficult to choose what has been the most impactful piece for me, but one that ranks up at the top of my list is Timothy Larsen’s “War Is Over, If You Want It’: Beyond the Conflict between Faith and Science.”

Not only has Larsen’s article helped me to articulate more clearly how the metaphor of warfare or conflict between the sciences and faith is a myth, but I have also found it helpful with students. Assigning it as reading for a class and then sitting down with students to discuss Larsen’s arguments and evidence has been very fruitful. Getting students to compare this article with the typical things they have heard in churches, schools, the media, and so forth, has proven to be very clarifying for them.

I would recommend Larsen’s article as a go-to piece to put in anyone’s hands who seems to think that Christianity has been at perennial war with the sciences. The article clarifies well how there may be some people who pursue conflicts between the sciences and faith—perhaps for atheistic or religious reasons—but there is no necessary conflict between scientific inquiry and good theology. This is an article I return to time and again.

Robert C. Bishop, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-23Bebej>

2011

KEITH MILLER, “And God Saw That It Was Good’: Death and Pain in the Created Order,” *PSCF* 63, no. 2 (2011): 85–94.

Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith has been absolutely instrumental in my own development as a Christian paleontologist. I grew up in a community in which it was simply assumed that Christian faith was incompatible with the notions of an ancient universe and an evolutionary history for life on Earth.

Article

Twenty-Five ASA Fellows and Editors Tell of PSCF Articles That Changed Their Lives

However, the more I studied biology and geology in college, the more I became convinced that living things had a long, complex history on this planet. As I explored these scientific ideas, my professors at Calvin College (now Calvin University) also helped me to see that this did not necessitate a loss of faith—that I could continue to be a strong, committed Christian, even as I studied evolution.

But as I began to intentionally integrate my faith and scientific studies, I began to encounter difficult biblical and theological questions that I was not quite sure how to deal with. My professors were immensely helpful as I thought about these issues, and one of them steered me toward *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. I found the section in the library where back issues of the journal were shelved, and I spent countless hours poring through articles related to evolution and Christianity. These articles helped me to see that I was not alone in having these hard questions—that, in fact, many Christians were thinking through some of the same things that I was, which was an immense encouragement to me as I graduated from Calvin and went on to do a PhD at the University of Michigan.

During my first year as a graduate student in paleontology, I joined the American Scientific Affiliation as a student member and attended my first ASA meeting. I looked forward to each issue of *PSCF* that arrived in my mailbox, and I can honestly say that the ASA and *PSCF* were helping my faith to continue growing alongside my development as a scientist. But that did not mean all of my questions went away. In fact, some of them even became more acute, particularly questions related to the predation, death, and extinction that were so evident in the fossil record. How could those things be part of a God-ordained and God-sustained process? These questions nagged at me as I completed my dissertation and prepared for my first faculty position, but I simply had not had the time or space to devote as much careful thought to these questions as they deserved.

It is in this context that I remember receiving the June 2011 issue of *PSCF*. I had just defended my dissertation, my wife was pregnant with our oldest son, and we were preparing to move to Illinois. Despite all the busyness, I couldn't help but flip through *PSCF* when it arrived. There I found an article from Keith Miller called "'And God Saw That It Was Good': Death and

Pain in the Created Order." Keith's earlier work had been very helpful to me in my undergraduate years as I wrestled with the compatibility of evolution and Christianity, and I remember having a brief (but very encouraging) conversation with him at the first ASA meeting I attended. I knew that he had spent a lot of time wrestling with many of the same questions that I had, and in this piece, I encountered such thoughtful engagement with several immensely difficult questions related to the goodness of creation, the effects of sin, and the roles of pain and death in God's creation.

Over the years, I have thought about these questions fairly often, and I even had the chance to explore these issues more deeply through a program sponsored by Scholarship and Christianity in Oxford back in 2018–2019. I have lost count of how many times I have returned to Keith's article to refresh my memory on some of its most salient points, but even as I read it today, with some questions answered to my satisfaction and some that may never have explanations on this side of eternity, I see this piece as a resplendent example of what Christian scholarship can be: careful, thoughtful, and humble, yet courageous in engaging with some of the most difficult questions that Christians can ask.

In its 75 years of publication, *PSCF* has published so many examples of this kind of scholarship; I look forward to what will come in the next 75 years. I imagine that I will continue to find articles from issue to issue that clarify things for me, stretch me, and invite me to consider various topics in new ways. But I also know that there are all kinds of questions that we haven't even thought about yet, and I cannot wait to see what the next generation of Christian scholars has to teach us through the pages of *PSCF*.

Ryan Bebej, Calvin University, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF9-23Contakes>

2011

ARIE LEEGWATER, "A Brief Excursion in Chemistry: 'God-Talk' in Chemistry?," *PSCF* 63, no. 3 (2011): 145–46.

The challenge that I found most perplexing, when I began my career as a chemistry faculty member at a Christian college, was that of how to "integrate"