



Terry M. Gray

# The ASA Does Not Take an Official Position on Controversial Questions

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*In 1971, Richard H. Bube, editor of the Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation (JASA), wrote in an article entitled “We Believe in Creation” that “ASA does not take an official position on controversial questions.” In a 1969 editorial comment, he wrote, “It is not the function of the journal to propagate a crusade for any particular interpretation ...” This neutrality position not only covered origins questions but all manner of topics, including the definition of biblical inerrancy. F. Alton Everest’s 1951 survey of the first ten years of the ASA and JASA editor Delbert N. Eggenberger’s 1956 editorial show that this attitude was part of the ASA’s DNA from the beginning. ASA has resisted efforts to become a group advocating a particular position, leaving such advocacy to others. More recently, the “no official position” viewpoint received some nuance with Randy Isaac’s tenure as executive director and his interaction with young-earth creationism (YEC), intelligent design (ID), and climate science.*

**R**ichard H. Bube wrote in 1971 in the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (JASA) that “ASA does not take an official position on controversial questions.”<sup>1</sup> This claim was in an article entitled “We Believe in Creation,” arguably one of the most significant papers ever published in JASA. He argued that “creation” as a theological topic was not controversial and that he had no “hesitancy in affirming, ‘We believe in creation,’ for every ASA member.” Bube explained that as scientific topics, however, fiat creationism—now more commonly called young-earth creationism (YEC)—and biological evolution and old-earth geology/cosmology were controversial questions for which ASA had no official position. There were ASA members with each of these viewpoints, and ASA as an organization was not an advocate for any one of them.

In many ways this “neutrality doctrine” is unique to the ASA as a Christian organization and as a scientific organization. In the Statement of Faith, ASA members

commit to the Bible, to the Christian faith (as stated in the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds), to the practice (with integrity) of science, and to the use of science and technology for the good of others.<sup>2</sup> Further detail on each plank is neither spelled out nor required of members, and thus there is a wide diversity of views represented by the membership—in ASA publications and in meeting presentations. This distinguishes the ASA from other faith/science organizations in which particular positions are advocated: YEC (Creation Research Society, Institute for Creation Research, Answers in Genesis), old-earth creationism (Reasons to Believe), intelligent design (Discovery Institute), or evolutionary creation (BioLogos Foundation). Such diversity also distinguishes ASA from many Christian

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denominations and para-church groups, given that many of these groups often have much more detailed statements of faith.

One of the more interesting consequences of this neutrality doctrine is that failure to advocate for a particular position is often seen as advocacy for the opposite position. In the early days of the organization, some members felt that because ASA did not take a YEC stance that it was becoming an advocate of theistic evolution (TE). Others thought that in not narrowly defining the inerrancy of scripture it had become theologically liberal. This perception is perhaps a natural outgrowth of the neutrality doctrine. Those who are uncompromising on a particular issue cannot tolerate those who are more open minded. Thus, they leave the ASA (or become less active), and the alternative position seems to become more prevalent. For the ASA, this is mere perception. Those committed to certain (usually more conservative<sup>3</sup>) views can still belong and participate. ASA promotes a respectful engagement and dialogue among those who hold to the Christian faith in some way and who are interested in the questions of science.

### How Early in the Life of the ASA Did This Neutrality Position Appear?

A simple review of the projects and discussions of the first decade suggests an openness to a variety of views since the beginning of the ASA.

One of the first ASA projects was the writing of what ultimately became *Modern Science and Christian Faith*.<sup>4</sup> Already evident in the ASA was the value of thoroughly discussing difficulties and not necessarily promoting a particular point of view. In “An Outline of the Aims and Purposes of the Christian Students’ Science Handbook,” a brochure calling for papers for this book, Irving Cowperthwaite wrote:

It is felt that such a frank airing of both sides of the question will appeal to the student and will receive a consideration when other more sensational approaches will not. Students are intelligent and fully capable of arriving at constructive conclusions if full data are presented. The dangerous, insidious conviction is that based on an incomplete knowledge of the problem.

The statements and representations of the SCIENCE HANDBOOK must be accurate in every detail. They must be able to meet the scrutiny of men unfriendly

to the cause of Christ and rise unscathed. Error or misrepresentations of science would seriously impair the usefulness of the book.<sup>5</sup>

Although clearly antievolutionary, *Modern Science and Christian Faith* was honestly presenting then-current scientific views on the geological ages, radiometric dating, fossil hominids, and anthropological research, despite strong support among some in the ASA for the YEC position and very strong support for the antievolution position.

In the Preface to *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, F. Alton Everest wrote,

The main function of the American Scientific Affiliation is to survey, study, and to present possible solutions. Ideas expressed in this book must not, therefore, be construed as representing the official view of the group. (p. vi)

In these earliest years (late 1940s, early 1950s), physical chemist/geochemist J. Laurence Kulp kept ASA members up-to-date on developments in radiometric dating and how this new technique significantly reinforced the arguments for an old earth. Kulp’s views generated much debate.<sup>6</sup> While some members seemed eager to adopt the tenets of YEC, ASA as an organization allowed the debate to continue and did not take a position on this controversial topic.<sup>7</sup>

The “no official position” viewpoint was thoroughly vetted in the early years. While president of the ASA Executive Council in 1976, Claude E. Stipe wrote an editorial for *JASA* entitled “Does the ASA Take a ‘Position’ on Controversial Issues?”<sup>8</sup> Stipe was responding to complaints that ASA had become a theistic evolutionist organization. He denied it and sought to prove it by rehearsing the history of the ASA, particularly with respect to the question of its taking sides. He documented this view from ASA literature and correspondence. Some of these quotes are repeated below, but the reader is invited to consult Stipe’s article for a more complete set. Everest also reflected on this question and assembled a collection of quotes from *JASA* in “What Is the ‘Position’ of the ASA?” in *The American Scientific Affiliation: Its Growth and Early Development*.<sup>9</sup>

Everest’s 1951 survey of the first ten years of the ASA shows that this attitude was part of the ASA’s DNA from the beginning.

... For what purpose does the ASA exist? ... we consider it distinctly improper for the ASA to

become so enamored by particular interpretations of these accounts that we shift our efforts from study to propaganda. Dr. Allan A. MacRae, prominent archaeologist and past Vice-President and member of the Executive Council of the ASA has wisely put it this way:

To my mind it would be unfortunate for the Affiliation to go on record strongly in favor of any one of the various views ...

... Thus in the *Journal of the ASA* you will find a paper supporting a particular interpretation and a little later another one apparently demolishing it.<sup>10</sup>

In this same review of the first decade of the ASA, Everest expresses how fortunate the early ASA was to be relatively ignorant of other faith/science groups that seemed to have a stronger predilection toward the YEC view. ASA's founders were able to consider a range of views.

In 1955, ASA President H. Harold Hartzler opened a joint meeting of the ASA and the Evangelical Theological Society with an address explaining the history and purposes of the ASA, saying,

I should state here and now that the ASA does not have any official policy on any scientific matter. After all, scientific theories come and go. They are seasonal. What is good science today may not be good science tomorrow.<sup>11</sup>

The issue continued to raise its head with *JASA* editor Delbert N. Eggenberger's 1956 editorial comments explaining the neutrality position:

Since a part of the objective is to examine fields of science relating to Scripture, it is emphasized that there is *not* a uniform or official ASA interpretation. The only bounds we have are the inerrancy of the original Scriptures. To publish only articles [from a] particular theological system would defeat the very purpose for which the Affiliation was founded.

... It is doubtful that a clear-thinking individual is produced by avoiding thorny topics.

Articles and columns are presented over the authors' names and are to be considered their presentations and should not be construed as ASA policy. It is not uncommon for the Editor to strongly disagree [with] some points in the papers he selects for publication.<sup>12</sup>

And again in 1959:

It would be easy to establish a "party line" in accepted scientific theory and in theology to which any accepted paper must adhere ...

The Editor, however, believes that the ASA has a purpose, and can thus best fulfill a needed function, of open-minded study that precludes such restrictions ...

It is his (Editor's) belief that a primary function of the ASA is to allow free discussion. It should be a medium for producing new thought, new approaches, new solutions to some old problems concerning science and Christianity.<sup>13</sup>

The need to keep responding to a questioning of this position is evidence that not all agreed. An explicit statement of disagreement came from William Tinkle in 1959:

The ASA has conducted a good open forum but such a method is limited in its scope of usefulness. We ought to settle some principles, then go out and make converts among other scientists. We have no united, forceful campaign to correct the mistakes of scientists which have lessened faith in the Bible. Some members even seem willing to admit that there may be mistakes.<sup>14</sup>

Tinkle acted on his desire to have some settled principles by being part of the group that founded the Creation Research Society, a group committed to YEC, in 1963.<sup>15</sup>

In *After the Monkey Trial*, Christopher M. Rios recounts an incident in the 1960s concerning the book *The Encounter between Christianity and Science* that also suggests that not everyone was on board with the principle.<sup>16</sup> In 1961, Bube had been tasked with preparing a volume similar to *Modern Science and Christian Faith* to be published by the ASA. When the work was done, it was deemed too controversial by the ASA publications board under the leadership of Russell Maatman and was not published. (It was published a few years later by an outside publisher.) Maatman argued against the book's publication on the basis of neutrality: he feared that the author's views would be taken as the ASA's views. This seems to be a shift. In the past, the neutrality principle was used to allow the expression of controversial and progressive ideas under the author's name only (vs. the ASA as an organization). Now it was being used to block them. Bube's view eventually prevailed as described in the next section.

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The “no official position” perspective in the ASA is evident on issues other than the age of the earth and evolution. Early on, it was apparent that the ASA was not going to adopt a particular view of the early chapters of Genesis. All the major views of the days of Genesis had their adherents among ASA members. The anthropology article in *Modern Science and Christian Faith* surveyed the major options on Adam and Eve, and these are still being considered today.<sup>17</sup>

### Richard H. Bube, Controversialist

Bube, who served on the ASA Executive Council from 1964–1968 and then as *JASA* editor from 1969–1983, extended the “no official position” debate to include the very definition of biblical inerrancy.

In 1963, Bube presented a paper entitled “A Perspective on Scriptural Inerrancy” in which he distinguished between “arbitrary inerrancy” and “revelational inerrancy.” Those who accept the principle of arbitrary inerrancy believe that “the scriptures are considered to be verbally inspired, inerrant, and infallible in an arbitrarily absolute sense as factual information,” whereas those who accept the principle of revelational inerrancy believe that “the Scriptures are indeed verbally inspired, inerrant, and infallible as a *revelation* of God by himself to men.”<sup>18</sup> The key distinction is that the Bible may contain “errors,” as in mistaken opinions about the natural world held by the original human authors and the original audience, as long as these are not central to the revelatory purpose of the Bible. Bube is quick to say, “This by no means implies that there are ‘errors’ of fact in the Bible, but rather that the criteria for judging fact are often either uncertain or irrelevant to the revelational purpose of the Bible.”<sup>19</sup>

Bube’s view of biblical inerrancy was in conflict with many fundamentalists and evangelicals, and it incurred the wrath of inerrantist Harold Lindsell in his 1976 *The Battle for the Bible*. Bube is said to have “become an articulate spokesman in support of biblical errancy.” Lindsell writes, “The American Scientific Affiliation and the Evangelical Theological Society have in them people who do not believe that the Bible is free from all error in the whole and in the part.”<sup>20</sup>

In one of his first acts as editor of *JASA*, Bube approved for publication and defended Paul H.

Seely’s “The Three-Storied Universe.”<sup>21</sup> According to Seely, the Bible assumes, erroneously, that the universe is three-storied, but we do not believe that Christians are bound to give assent to such a cosmology, since the purpose of the Bible is to give redemptive, not scientific truth.<sup>22</sup>

There were critical responses to Seely’s article by R. Laird Harris, “The Typical Modernistic View of Scripture,”<sup>23</sup> and Robert C. Newman, “Infallible Inspiration Taught by Scripture Itself,”<sup>24</sup> with a response by Seely.<sup>25</sup> Editor Bube entered the fray, drawing upon the neutrality principle as a defense:

... It is not the function of the *Journal* to propagate a crusade for any particular interpretation of many questions in which science and Christian faith are mutually involved. Any article, judged to be consistent with the Constitutionally stated purposes and doctrine of the ASA and to exhibit sound scholarship in respect to factual basis and exercise of interpretation, is acceptable for publication in the *Journal*. If an author is guilty of gross scientific or exegetical error, we are confident that readers will quickly set the record straight, thereby increasing general understanding of the truth. Given Dr. Harris’ strong convictions, exactly what is needed is an “answer” to Mr. Seely’s “exegesis in detail.”<sup>26</sup>

Two years later Bube published “We Believe in Creation” (mentioned above) drawing explicitly on the neutrality principle.

Bube, ever the controversialist, tackled other issues, often challenging what might be considered the traditional Christian position. Sexual ethics,<sup>27</sup> homosexuality,<sup>28</sup> birth control and other reproductive technologies,<sup>29</sup> abortion,<sup>30</sup> euthanasia,<sup>31</sup> and energy, nuclear energy, the environment, and stewardship<sup>32</sup> all were subjects of his editorial pen. With Bube at the helm, *JASA* was an open forum where Christians could explore all these subjects that touched on science and faith.

Critical responses were also published. Duane Gish wrote a letter to the editor, “An Open Letter of Protest,” complaining about Bube’s statements on homosexuality and YEC.<sup>33</sup> Notably, Editor Bube responded with a full affirmation of the neutrality principle:

We have frequently pointed out that the ASA does not take positions on controversial issues,

and the inside cover of the *Journal* always carries the statement that articles published in the *Journal* should not and cannot be taken to represent the position of the ASA. The reason for this policy is that the ASA exists as an open forum to discuss the interface of science and Christian faith within the context of a commitment to biblical Christianity and to authentic science. In other organizations it may well be that the word of the publication must conform in every respect to the official pronouncements of the hierarchy, and that therefore the word of the publication can be taken to represent the official position of the organization. This is not true of the *Journal ASA*, never has been true, and as far as I am able to affect it, will not be true in the future.

We shall continue ... to maintain that which is also clearly stated on the inside front cover of the *Journal ASA*,

Open discussion of all issues is encouraged in the expectation that the pursuit of truth can only be enhanced by exposure to conscientious and honest inquiry.<sup>34</sup>

In the early years, the call for the ASA to advocate for a particular position came most frequently from those arguing against an old earth, evolutionary biology, human evolution, and approaches to scripture that would accommodate these scientific conclusions. In refusing to do so, the ASA became a haven for Christians adopting nontraditional views. Some have taken this to mean that the ASA had become theologically liberal, had adopted theistic evolution, and promoted the latest progressive social ethic. But we must resist this interpretation of the neutrality principle. ASA takes no official position on these controversial matters. Everest noted that Henry Morris and Duane Gish, both founding members of the Creation Research Society, a YEC organization, continued to be members of ASA until 1980 and 1978, respectively, many years after they founded the Creation Research Society.<sup>35</sup> As late as 1971, Gish defended a YEC position in the pages of *JASA*.<sup>36</sup>

In August 2000, a five-member subcommittee of the ASA Commission on Creation (consisting of William Dembski, Keith Miller, Paul Nelson, Robert Newman, and David Wilcox) published a "General Statement on Creation" which was approved by the whole Commission and which, in addition, included more specific statements drafted to represent the diversity of views in the ASA (young earth view,

old earth view, theistic evolution view, and intelligent design view).<sup>37</sup> There is no doubt that old-earth and old-universe views dominate the membership of ASA.<sup>38</sup> However, this is not the result of an official ASA position on this topic. An article supporting YEC appeared as recently as the March 2008 issue of *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith (PSCF)*<sup>39</sup> despite overwhelming rejection of that view by ASA members and by the general scientific community. The neutrality principle is alive and well.

## Biological Evolution and Intelligent Design

Because of the neutrality principle, the question of evolution was an open question. As far as the ASA is concerned, biological evolution is a controversial matter for which there is no official position. Thus, ASA members were quite willing to debate the matter. In its first three decades, most ASA members felt that the evidence for biological evolution was not compelling, especially at the higher taxonomic levels. The fossil record was still quite sparse with few transitional forms and the molecular data was nonexistent. *Evolution and Christian Thought Today*,<sup>40</sup> published in 1959, was in the spirit of *Modern Science and Christian Faith*. Biological evolution was a "controversial" matter about which Christians disagreed.<sup>41</sup>

The year 1978 saw the publication of a special issue of *JASA* entitled "Origins and Change: Selected Readings from the *JASA*," edited by David L. Willis, Professor of Biology, Oregon State University.<sup>42</sup> This special issue brought together several key articles on origins previously printed in *JASA* and represented the full spectrum of ASA members' views. With the exception of the introductions by the editor, each article had been previously published in *JASA*. This collection is a good snapshot of the ASA in 1978. While the issue included at least one voice unsympathetic to evolutionary biology, the overall impression given is that old earth geology, biological evolution, and Christianity can coexist.<sup>43</sup>

If evolution is a controversial matter on which the ASA has no official position, the converse is also true. The ASA does not take a position on antievolution. Thus, the antievolutionism of the intelligent design (ID) movement found a place in the ASA. In the open forum spirit of the ASA, the debate was fully embraced.

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Somewhat anticipatory of the ID movement was the publication in 1986 of the booklet *Teaching Science in a Climate of Controversy: A View from the American Scientific Affiliation* by ASA's Committee on Integrity in Science Education composed of ASA members David Price, John Wiester, and Walter Hearn.<sup>44</sup> *Teaching Science*, consonant with the majority in the ASA, rejected the YEC view as being unscientific and an inappropriate intrusion of a particular religious viewpoint into the science classroom. However, it also warned against science trying to answer religious and philosophical questions beyond its competence, for example, extrapolating from observed random chemical processes to philosophical accidentalism.

The booklet walked through four topics of modern origins science: the Big Bang, origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, and human origins. Not surprisingly, *Teaching Science* was criticized by YEC advocates and teachers in Christian schools teaching from a YEC perspective, but, to the surprise of the authors and to many in the ASA, it was also highly criticized in the mainstream science education and creation/evolution literature as being just another "creationist" tract. In "The American Scientific Affiliation Booklet Controversy," Jerry Bergman traced this story, citing the critical reviews and quoting parts of them.<sup>45</sup>

To some, even within the ASA, *Teaching Science* felt as if the ASA were taking an official position. It all depends on whether its publication is viewed as a statement of the official position of the ASA or merely as the position of its authors. If *Teaching Science* expressed the official position of the ASA, its clear rejection of YEC was a departure from the neutrality position. Also, some in the ASA objected to what appeared to be antievolution arguments in the discussion of the origin of life, the Cambrian explosion, and human origins.<sup>46</sup> The phrase "a view from the American Scientific Affiliation" suggests something official, but in light of the history of the ASA not taking official positions, it is not a stretch to say that *Teaching Science* simply represents one of many viewpoints held by ASA members.

While ID seemed to be firmly rejected by the mainstream scientific community, ASA considered ID to be an idea about which Christians in science could disagree and debate. Thus, ASA annual meetings and articles in *PSCF* engaged the ID manifestos,

*Darwin on Trial* (1991), *Darwin's Black Box* (1996), and *Intelligent Design* (1999) and their respective authors, Phillip Johnson, Michael Behe, and William Dembski.<sup>47</sup> Other proponents of ID defended that view, and many ASA members found in ID a framework that was useful in faith/science discussions. For the most part, this debate continues to the present. In keeping with the neutrality principle, the ASA has no official position on ID. In 2005, in his inaugural address as executive director of the ASA, Randy Isaac stated, in the context of his reflections on the neutrality principle,

I would like to make it very clear to everyone that ASA will not become an ID advocacy group nor will it become an anti-ID advocacy group. But we will provide the forum for clear thinking and debate—strong and forceful and vigorous debate—but in an atmosphere of love and respect without ridicule and scorn ...<sup>48</sup>

The dialogue continues to this day with continued discussion of ID ideas spurred on by Stephen Meyer's *Signature in the Cell* (2009) and *Darwin's Doubt* (2013).<sup>49</sup> There has also been lively debate in the ASA surrounding the historicity of Adam and Eve, with a 2009 annual meeting symposium at Baylor University, and a special issue of *PSCF* in 2010 devoted to the topic.<sup>50</sup> Here the ASA discussion anticipated a willingness in broader evangelicalism to discuss the Adam and Eve question.<sup>51</sup> ASA has no official position on the matter.

As noted earlier, ASA's unwillingness to become an ID advocacy group has made room for organizations such as the Discovery Institute, which takes a strong pro-ID position. ASA's unwillingness to become an anti-ID advocacy group (or a pro-TE/evolutionary creationist (EC) advocacy group) has made room for organizations such as the BioLogos Foundation, which takes a strong pro-TE/EC position.

Perhaps not insignificant is the name change experienced by *JASA* in September 1986. Here is the explanation given by Wilbur L. Bullock, then editor, as the name was changed to *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*:

We have changed the name of our Journal, primarily to indicate more specifically our major purpose: we are not merely an in-house publication of an organization, but are a vehicle for the discussion of the many aspects of science as they relate to Christian faith. We need to reaffirm

that, as evangelical Christians, we are committed to Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Redeemer of mankind, as well as to the Scripture as our only infallible rule of faith and practice. Within that framework, there are now, and there have been throughout the history of the Christian church, differing views and traditions. In the ASA we encompass a spectrum of perspectives on creation and evolution, church and state, war and peace, Arminianism and Calvinism, and certainly on the highly controversial, recent issues of the ethics of the biotechnological manipulation of the world around us, including animal and human life. If you disagree with the position taken by any of our contributors, we encourage you to write a regular paper, a communication, or a letter. We can't publish everything we receive, but our major guidelines are for clear and concise writing in a spirit of respect and gentleness. We may not always achieve this goal, but that is the end toward which we strive.<sup>52</sup>

Ever since, the fact that "perspectives" is plural has been noted—clearly in keeping with the "no official position" position.

## Does Integrity in Science Demand "Official" Positions?

In more recent times, there has been pressure for the ASA to take an official position against a young earth and flood geology, and to affirm an earth history that stretches back billions of years. Such a history has been definitively established by modern science. To do so is thought to be necessary for the ASA to remain credible as an organization that promotes integrity in science.

Everest began his reflection on "What Is the 'Position' of the ASA?" in *The American Scientific Affiliation: Its Growth and Early Development*, noting the following:

In 1981, Executive Director Herrmann received a letter which contained this gem:

As I sat listening to the ... presentations, the panelists, and especially comments from members of the audience—I thought, "This wheel has been going around for forty years? When is it going to stop?"

The writer, a well-qualified university professor, a geologist, is strongly in favor of eliminating the neutral stance of the ASA on the subject of evolution in favor of a "positive" one.<sup>53</sup>

Randy Isaac, Executive Director of the ASA from 2005 to 2016, provided a perhaps more nuanced view of the neutrality principle that would allow ASA to reject certain views on the basis of integrity in science. At his inaugural address as executive director, he devoted about one-third of his 20-minute talk to this subject.

However, we do need to think through what it means because I think too often we have misrepresented it. And one of the things that it does *not* mean is wishy-washy relativism. It does not mean that oh, whatever you think is fine, whatever you think is fine, oh, yeah, okay, you believe something else, fine, everything is okay. That's not neutrality. That's not neutrality and that's not what ASA is all about.

We have a strong platform of two planks that is not very neutral at all. On the one hand we have a strong statement of faith ...

The second one is our commitment to integrity in science. Extremely important. There is so much in today's world that tries to pass off as science, a bunch of technical jargon. We are committed to integrity in science. And we have some slightly different views as to exactly what that means but the scientific methodology is time tested and, through its process, we arrive at a better understanding of a description of our world. We must ensure integrity in science ...<sup>54</sup>

A written version of these ideas appeared in the July/August 2007 *Newsletter of the ASA and CSCA* which included this even stronger statement:

Our stand for integrity in science puts us in contrast to those who modify scientific understanding to conform to their theological preferences. Although we may not understand all things, we should not yield to the temptation to misrepresent scientific results to make it easier to integrate science with our faith.

Let us not permit our policy of neutrality to lure us into a mode of reluctance to take a stand on any particular issue. Rather, let us do the hard work of testing ideas against the standards of our creeds and of our integrity in science and then let us share these perspectives in an atmosphere of love and respect.<sup>55</sup>

Exactly what he meant is explained in his *Essay Review* of the RATE Project:

The ASA does not take a position on issues when there is honest disagreement among Christians

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provided there is adherence to our statement of faith and to integrity in science. Accordingly, the ASA neither endorses nor opposes young-earth creationism which recognizes the possibility of a recent creation with appearance of age or which acknowledges the unresolved discrepancy between scientific data and a young-earth position. However, claims that scientific data affirm a young earth do not meet the criterion of integrity in science. Any portrayal of the RATE project as confirming scientific support for a young earth, contradicts the RATE project's own admission of unresolved problems. The ASA can and does oppose such deception.<sup>56</sup>

It appears that Isaac is willing to say that, even with the neutrality principle, the ASA should be able to take a stand that the scientific evidence supports an old earth. While he allows equivocation on the basis of appearance of age or some unknown discrepancy, he does not seem to think that integrity in science allows for a scientific argument for a young earth. Despite Isaac's affirmations of the neutrality position, this seems to be a shift—perhaps a shift that would finally allow ASA as an organization to embrace and promote more fully old-earth and old-universe views.

## Climate Change

The ASA has had a long history of promoting environmental stewardship and creation care. Its statement of faith declares, "We recognize our responsibility, as stewards of God's creation, to use science and technology for the good of humanity and the whole world."<sup>57</sup> The ASA has seen no conflict between the message of the environmental movement and the Christian faith. We have already mentioned Bube's contributions on the subject of Christian environmentalism while editor of *JASA*. Many annual meeting presentations, keynotes, and even entire meetings have been devoted to these issues. However, the neutrality doctrine seems to apply here as well. Some ASA members have criticized aspects of the environmentalist movement and have taken advantage of the open forum character of ASA in order to express their views.

A series of articles in *PSCF* in the mid-1990s from Calvin DeWitt, Richard Bube, and Richard Wright called Christians to environmental activism.<sup>58</sup> Included among these articles was a reprint of "An Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation."<sup>59</sup>

Alternate positions were expressed by Calvin Beisner and Edwin Olson with a response to Beisner by Wright.<sup>60</sup> Olson concluded his paper with the following line that captures the spirit of the neutrality policy:

Richard Wright is to be commended for his comprehensive overview of environmental controversy. I hope that his paper, Beisner's response, and my critique stimulate further discussion of this important subject. From my standpoint, that discussion should emphasize papers which focus on a single environmental issue and are multidimensional—including scientific, economic, political and theological dimensions. It would also help to lower the emotional pitch.<sup>61</sup>

Since that exchange and until December 2014, all the articles in *PSCF* concerning environmental issues seemed to promote the mainstream environmentalist point of view. Perhaps ASA actually did have an "official" position on these different topics (climate change, global warming, stratospheric ozone, acid rain, biodiversity loss, etc.) despite there appearing to be the backlash among politically conservative and religiously evangelical Americans that Wright had begun to sense in 1995.<sup>62</sup>

In 2015, *PSCF* had a special issue devoted to environmental science in which there was one out of six articles that could be said to be outside the consensus (among ASA members and among the scientific community in general) viewpoint on environmentalism and climate science. Donald Morton's "Climate Science and the Dilemma for Christians" emphasized the uncertainties in the atmospheric temperature records and the connection between atmospheric temperature and atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations. While Morton's climate change "skeptic" paper was published, it was accompanied with an invited response entitled "Christian Action in the Face of Climate Change" by atmospheric scientist Thomas Ackerman.<sup>63</sup> Previously, in 2007, Ackerman had published in *PSCF* "Global Warming: Scientific Basis and Christian Responses."<sup>64</sup> The exchange between Morton and Ackerman continued in the June 2015 issue of *PSCF*.

Such a dialogue in the pages of *PSCF* is continued evidence of the neutrality doctrine in which the ASA does not take an official position on a controversial question such as global warming or climate change. Apparently, the absence of contrary views means

only that no one is offering them for publication either in the journal or at ASA meetings.

Interestingly, however, some have argued that perhaps integrity in science demands that ASA not be neutral on the question of climate change and anthropogenic global warming. On January 17, 2007, Executive Director Randy Isaac participated in a press conference announcing “An Urgent Call to Action: Scientists and Evangelicals Unite to Protect Creation.”<sup>65</sup> Isaac’s signature on the document showed his affiliation with ASA. While there was much symbolism in the event, I think it was clear that he was not stating any official ASA position other than what is found in ASA’s statement of faith. Positions on specific creation-care related topics were personal positions.

In responding to the theft and public release of emails from the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia in 2009 (popularly dubbed “Climategate”), Isaac wrote in the *Newsletter of the ASA and CSCA*,

...Science isn’t free of fraud, error, and subjectivism. Rather, it is the rigor of scientific methodology that sooner or later ferrets out such error. The emphasis on the reproducibility of results, clarity of the details of all experiments, peer review, and many other tactics is designed to correct any errors that will inevitably arise. We must ensure that this methodology is scrupulously followed.

We tend to modify scientific interpretations in order to conform more closely to our preferred interpretation of the Bible or our theological perceptions. This isn’t in keeping with integrity in the practice of science. Changes in scientific understanding must go through the rigor of scientific methodology substantiated with solid data and clear analysis that the entire community can address. When it has earned the status of majority acceptance, there is integrity in the result.

It is my personal opinion, after three years of studying the literature and meeting with scientists of various persuasions, that there is indeed compelling evidence for current and future global warming due predominantly to the consumption of fossil fuel ... Several ASA members disagree with my personal view, and I welcome that diversity as an important part of our dialog.<sup>66</sup>

There is a suggestion here, I think, that Isaac anticipates a day when integrity in science may demand

the acceptance of the consensus view just as it does for him in the case of the age of the earth. That day is not yet here, it seems, and so the “no official policy on controversial questions” remains in place.

Later that same year, Isaac wrote,

In ASA we have a healthy diversity of views on climate change. That diversity should not be suppressed but should instigate fruitful dialog leading to real action. Unfortunately, this diversity of opinion can often devolve into cheerleading and derision. It’s important that the debate go forward with civility, decorum, and loving respect for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We need the best minds and the best ideas to solve the difficult problems ahead of us.

A second aspect of integrity in the process of science is to follow the data. The self-correcting nature of science ensures that data win. Continued focus on collecting and understanding data will lead to the correction of any errors or misinterpretation that may have occurred in the past. If any errors have been made by the climate change community, the only way to correct it with integrity is to provide better data. Defaming the character of other scientists, whether it be by the inappropriate release of emails taken out of context or by accusing them of ulterior motives, is not within the bounds of integrity.<sup>67</sup>

Again, while Isaac does not actually pull the “integrity in science” lever, it seems that he anticipates being able to do so at some point. We are still in the midst of the global warming and climate change debate, and while there appears to be a near consensus in the scientific community and among ASA members, it remains to be seen if ASA will be home to a debate that seems to be finished in the mainstream scientific community.

## Whither ASA? and Some Personal Reflections

In practice, ASA’s neutrality doctrine accomplishes two things:

1. It allows the full exploration of new views—biblical, theological, philosophical, or scientific. New views are granted a hearing and advocates are allowed to defend them.
2. It protects minority views, consensus debunked views, conservative and traditional views, and

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others. There is a sense in which ASA has committed itself to respect and to continue to engage fellow believers who hold these views.

ASA's role in producing helpful educational material is said to be hampered by this doctrine. Some members say that we should not produce educational materials with which some or even many of our members might disagree. But surely this is a misguided conclusion. The very first project of the ASA, *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, was thought to be a useful contribution even though all of the articles did not express unanimity. On the contrary, the consideration of issues from different perspectives was thought to sharpen our thinking. ASA members express agreement on only a bare bone of assertions. *PSCF's* Manuscript Guidelines (found on the inside front cover of each issue) state, "Published papers do not reflect any official position of the American Scientific Affiliation." Things stated in articles, communications, book reviews, and letters to the editor are *not* official positions of the ASA. The ASA has no official positions except those found in the ASA Statement of Faith. Why would this guideline not be true of any material produced by the ASA?

The Science and Faith Education Project (also known as the Lay Education Project) was a multimedia project focused on the physical sciences and the old-universe/old-earth views that was attempted in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In this project, it appeared that the ASA was ready to embrace and to propagate an anti-YEC perspective. The project was to include a book, a professionally produced DVD, and a study guide. It was designed for home schools, Christian high schools, and Sunday schools.<sup>68</sup> For various reasons, the project as originally planned was cancelled.<sup>69</sup> However, the project was not cancelled because it took a particular perspective (anti-YEC, but concordistic and progressive creationist friendly) even though there were some ASA members critical of the project because they disagreed with the perspective adopted.<sup>70</sup>

Many in the ASA were and continue to be frustrated by the inability of the organization to carry out its educational mission. Even though the reasons for canceling this project were many, it is clear that some seem to think that they must agree with the material that ASA produces. This seems misguided. Even in the Science and Faith Education Project, the final published material could have borne the names


of the individuals who produced it, just as a *PSCF* article bears the name of its author along with the implicit disclaimer that the article represents the views of its author and not of the ASA or all the members of the ASA. Does not ASA's history tell us that ASA is interested in producing materials representing various perspectives and that such diversity of viewpoint sharpens our thinking?

I suggest that the ASA reinvigorate its educational role by allowing various types of materials to be produced in the organization's name. ASA's "no official position on controversial questions" needs to be stated explicitly. There could be a clear disclaimer saying that published works represent the views and opinions of the authors and not of the ASA. This is not to suggest an "anything goes" mentality, but to clarify that ASA leaders must be willing to produce materials with which they may not fully agree.

In today's ASA, we may be more settled than ever on questions about the age of the earth/universe or biological evolution or creation care, but there are many issues for which there is ongoing debate: the historicity of Adam and Eve, the Fall into sin and its detectability in the historical and scientific record, the multiverse, body/mind/soul issues, biblical criticism and inerrancy, homosexuality, reproductive technologies, stem cell research, and others. Sometimes complicating the faith/science debate is the fact that there is a broad range of theologies at play—from predestinarian Calvinism to open theism, from Roman Catholicism with papal authority to Pentecostalism with private revelations. Yet there is a deep unity, despite our differences, that we uniquely experience in the ASA. It stems from our common ecumenical faith and our common love for and interest in science. Finding others who put those two things together is something that we do not often find in our local churches or in the places where we live out our science-related callings.

Sometimes we are exasperated by related organizations that exist in part because of ASA's neutrality doctrine. We are frustrated that these organizations attract more followers, that those followers donate more money, that they are more successful in publishing educational materials, and so forth. Perhaps we should see them as offshoots of the ASA rather than as competitors. While the ASA values the diverse dialogue and the more open forum, the other groups value the opportunity to

consider the issues from a narrower perspective in which there is more common ground. Indeed, some of us are affiliated with multiple organizations and derive value from their respective emphases. I believe that it would be a loss to the Christian community as a whole for the ASA to turn into one of these more narrowly focused groups.

I personally value discussing faith/science topics with people with whom I share common ground, especially on the theological front. Because I am a human being, I am also going to think and to write about these topics from my particular place on the theological and philosophical landscape—whether I am talking to fellow ASA members or to theologians in my particular denomination. I expect others to do the same. But listening to others who speak from different perspectives, especially from within the broader Christian community, may open our minds to better ways of thinking. After all, we confess that we follow the same God, the same Lord Jesus Christ, the same Holy Spirit, the same Bible, and we admit that we all live in the same created universe. Our differences derive from all sorts of psychological, sociological, historical, and cultural influences, both personal and corporate. ASA can be a place where differences can at least be tolerated and perhaps even appreciated. 

### Acknowledgments

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### Notes

- <sup>1</sup>Richard H. Bube, "We Believe in Creation," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (hereafter *JASA*) 23, no. 4 (1971): 121–22, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1971/JASA12-71Bube.html>.
- <sup>2</sup>"ASA Statement of Faith," American Scientific Affiliation, <http://network.asa3.org/?ASAbeliefs>.

<sup>3</sup>The BioLogos Foundation is a counter-example. The commitment of BioLogos to a theistic evolution (TE) or evolutionary creationist (EC) view and the desire to advocate strongly for that view require that it go outside of the ASA, since such advocacy implicitly requires the organizational rejection of contrary viewpoints; it does not go unnoticed that BioLogos has a much more detailed statement of faith compared to that of the ASA and that there is an upfront commitment to the EC view. See "What We Believe," BioLogos, <http://biologos.org/about-us/our-mission/>. There is nothing wrong with this, but it is quite different from the ASA's approach.

<sup>4</sup>F. Alton Everest, ed., *Modern Science and Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Van Kampen Press, 1948; Wheaton, IL: Scripture Press, 1950).

<sup>5</sup>Irving A. Cowperthwaite, "An Outline of the Aims and Purposes of the Christian Students' Science Handbook," reprinted as Appendix 30 in *The American Scientific Affiliation: Its Growth and Early Development*, F. Alton Everest (Ipswich, MA: ASA Press, 2010), 182–83.

<sup>6</sup>As indicated in the transcribed discussion found in E. Y. Monsma, "Some Presuppositions in Evolutionary Thinking," *JASA* 1, no. 3 (1949): 15–30, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1949/JASA6-49Monsma.html>.

<sup>7</sup>Controversial, in the sense that Christians in the sciences did not agree. Already by this time, there was broad consensus in the scientific community on the age of the earth based on geological considerations.

<sup>8</sup>Claude E. Stipe, "Does the ASA Take a 'Position' on Controversial Issues?," *JASA* 29, no. 1 (1977): 1–4, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1977/JASA3-77Stipe.html>.

<sup>9</sup>Everest, *The American Scientific Affiliation: Its Growth and Early Development*, 79–83.

<sup>10</sup>F. Alton Everest, "The American Scientific Affiliation—The First Decade," *JASA* 3, no. 3 (1951): 33–38, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1951/JASA9-51Everest.html>.

<sup>11</sup>H. Harold Hartzler, "The ASA History and Purposes," *JASA* 7, no. 3 (1955): 3–5, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1955/JASA9-55Hartzler.html>.

<sup>12</sup>Delbert N. Eggenberger, "Editorials," *JASA* 8, no. 4 (1956): 2, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1956/JASA12-56Eggenberger.html>.

<sup>13</sup>Delbert N. Eggenberger, "Editorial," *JASA* 11, no. 4 (1959): 2, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1959/JASA12-59Eggenberger.html>.

<sup>14</sup>William J. Tinkle, "The ASA in Retrospect," *JASA* 11, no. 2 (1959): 8–9, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1959/JASA6-59Tinkle.html>.

<sup>15</sup>Everest, *The American Scientific Affiliation: Its Growth and Early Development*, 84–87.

<sup>16</sup>Christopher M. Rios, *After the Monkey Trial: Evangelical Scientists and a New Creationism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

<sup>17</sup>William A. Smalley and Marie Fetzer, "A Christian View of Anthropology," in *Modern Science and Christian Faith*, ed. Everest, (1950), 98–195, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/resources/MSCF/MSCF1950Smalley.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup>Richard H. Bube, "A Perspective on Scriptural Inerrancy," *JASA* 15, no. 3 (1963): 86, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1963/JASA9-63Bube.html>.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 128–31.

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- <sup>21</sup>Paul H. Seely, "The Three-Storied Universe," *JASA* 21, no. 1 (1969): 18–22, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1969/JASA3-69Seely.html>.
- <sup>22</sup>Paul Seely has advanced this view within the ASA throughout his scholarly career. It continues to be advanced in the views of Denis O. Lamoureux. For example, see Lamoureux's article, "Beyond the Cosmic Fall and Natural Evil," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* (hereafter *PSCF*) 68, no. 1 (2016): 44–59.
- <sup>23</sup>R. Laird Harris, "The Typical Modernistic View of Scripture," *JASA* 21, no. 3 (1969): 92–93, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1969/JASA9-69Harris.html>.
- <sup>24</sup>Robert C. Newman, "Infallible Inspiration Taught by Scripture Itself," *JASA* 21, no. 3 (1969): 93–94, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1969/JASA9-69Newman.html>.
- <sup>25</sup>Paul H. Seely, "Reply by Seely," *JASA* 21, no. 3 (1969): 94, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1969/JASA9-69Seely.html>.
- <sup>26</sup>Richard H. Bube, "Editor's Comments," *JASA* 21, no. 3 (1969): 93, at the end of the Harris letter.
- <sup>27</sup>Rustum Roy and Richard H. Bube, "Is There a Christian Basis for a Sexual Revolution?," *JASA* 26, no. 2 (1974): 70–81, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1974/JASA6-74Bube.html>; Richard H. Bube, "Human Sexuality: (A) Are Times A'Changing?," *JASA* 31, no. 2 (1979): 106–12, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1979/JASA6-79Bube2.html>.
- <sup>28</sup>Richard H. Bube, "Book Review of *The Returns of Love: Letters of a Christian Homosexual*," *JASA* 23, no. 3 (1971): 118–19, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/BookReviews1949-1989/9-71.html#Davidson>; —, "Christian Answers on Homosexuality: An Interview with Paul E. Larsen, E. Mansell Pattison, and John White," *JASA* 31, no. 1 (1979): 48–53, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1979/JASA3-79Bube3.html>.
- <sup>29</sup>Richard H. Bube, "Biological Control of Human Life," *JASA* 34, no. 4 (1982): 225–31, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1982/JASA12-82Bube.html>; —, "An Open Letter to Inter-Varsity Press about *Brave New People*," *JASA* 36, no. 4 (1984): 256, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1984/JASA12-84Bube.html>.
- <sup>30</sup>Richard H. Bube, "Abortion," *JASA* 33, no. 3 (1981): 158–65, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1981/JASA9-81Bube.html>.
- <sup>31</sup>Richard H. Bube, "Euthanasia," *JASA* 34, no. 1 (1982): 29–33, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1982/JASA3-82Bube.html>.
- <sup>32</sup>Richard H. Bube, "A New Consciousness: Energy and Christian Stewardship," *JASA Supplement* 1 (1976): 8–15, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1976/JASA3-76Bube2.html>; —, "A Christian Affirmation on the Stewardship of Natural Resources," *JASA* 29, no. 3 (1977): 97–98, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1977/JASA9-77Bube.html>; —, "Energy and the Environment: (A) Is Energy a Christian Issue?," *JASA* 35, no. 1 (1983): 33–37, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1983/JASA3-83Bube.html>; —, "Energy and the Environment: (B) Barriers to Responsibility," *JASA* 35, no. 2 (1983): 92–100, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1983/JASA6-83Bube.html>; —, "Energy and the Environment: (C) Christian Concerns on Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Warfare," *JASA* 35, no. 3 (1983): 168–75, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1983/JASA9-83Bube.html>.
- <sup>33</sup>Duane T. Gish, "An Open Letter of Protest," *JASA* 24, no. 2 (1972): 77–79, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1972/JASA6-72Gish.html>.
- <sup>34</sup>Richard H. Bube, "Editor's Reply," *JASA* 24, no. 2 (1972): 79, at the end of the Gish letter.
- <sup>35</sup>Everest, *The American Scientific Affiliation: Its Growth and Early Development*, 84.
- <sup>36</sup>Duane T. Gish, "An Inconsistent Position" (in response to Hale Sparks, "The Protein Clock," *JASA* 23, no. 4 [1971]: 123–28), *JASA* 23, no. 4 (1971): 125–28, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1971/JASA12-71Gish.html#Duane%20T.%20Gish>.
- <sup>37</sup>"Commission on Creation," American Scientific Affiliation, [http://www.asa3.org/ASA/topics/Evolution/commission\\_on\\_creation.html](http://www.asa3.org/ASA/topics/Evolution/commission_on_creation.html).
- <sup>38</sup>See, for example, the results of a survey on origins of ASA members in which around 85% of those participating agreed that old-earth and old-universe views were supported by credible scientific evidence: "ASA Survey on Origins," American Scientific Affiliation, <http://cymcdn.com/sites/network.asa3.org/resource/resmgr/OriginsResults.pdf>; see also Randy Isaac, "The Executive Director's Corner," *Newsletter of the ASA and CSCA* 52, no. 4 (2010): 2, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/newsletter/julaug10.pdf>.
- <sup>39</sup>Larry Vardiman, Andrew A. Snelling, Eugene F. Chaffin, Steven A. Austin, D. Russell Humphreys, Donald B. DeYoung, and Steven W. Boyd, "RATE Responds to the Isaac Essay Review," *PSCF* 60, no. 1 (2008): 35–36, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2008/PSCF3-08Vardiman.pdf>.
- <sup>40</sup>Russell L. Mixter, ed., *Evolution and Christian Thought Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1959).
- <sup>41</sup>Christopher M. Rios in chapters 2 and 5 of *After the Monkey Trial* argues that the majority of ASA leaders and members were on board with evolution by the end of the second decade. In part, it depends on how you define evolution. If you include evolution of the higher taxonomic levels (so-called macroevolution), it seems clear that questions remained. The second edition of Russell L. Mixter's *Creation and Evolution* (Mankato, MN: American Scientific Affiliation, 1967) was still cautious about evolution above the taxonomic level of order. Additionally, the energy Richard H. Bube put into making room for theistic evolution in the 1960s and 1970s suggests that not all were convinced. Finally, the openness to ID by many in the ASA reveals that the embracing of evolution may not have run very deep. In the end, whether it is the second decade as Rios suggests, or the third as I suggest, is perhaps a matter not unlike the pronunciation of the word "tomato."
- <sup>42</sup>David L. Willis, ed., *Origins and Change: Selected Readings from the Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* (Elgin, IL: American Scientific Affiliation, 1978).
- <sup>43</sup>On a personal note, this special issue of the journal was one of my first exposures to the ASA. I had the privilege in my youth and in my high school education of never having considered evolution and Christian faith to be incompatible. I did not see what I was learning at Purdue University as a biology major to be in conflict with my Christian faith. However, at Purdue, I did begin to encounter very conservative religious voices—local churches and para-church groups—promoting a conflict. It was reassuring to find the ASA's voice.
- <sup>44</sup>David Price, John Wiester, and Walter Hearn, *Teaching Science in a Climate of Controversy: A View from the Ameri-*

can Scientific Affiliation (The Committee for Integrity in Science Education of the American Scientific Affiliation, 1986); partial text available at <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/education/origins/climate2.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup>Jerry Bergman, "The American Scientific Affiliation Booklet Controversy," *PSCF* 58, no. 4 (2006): 303–309, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2006/PSCF12-06Bergman.pdf>.

<sup>46</sup>Howard Van Till, personal communication.

<sup>47</sup>Again, on a personal note, my involvement with ASA in the 1990s began as a result of a review of Phillip Johnson's *Darwin on Trial* and a debate/dialogue with Michael Behe at the 1994 ASA Annual Meeting at Bethel College in Minnesota. See Terry M. Gray, "The Mistrial of Evolution," *The Banner*, April 13, 1992, 12–13, with an expanded online version at [http://www.asa3.org/gray/evolution\\_trial/dotreview.html](http://www.asa3.org/gray/evolution_trial/dotreview.html); and —, "Complexity—Yes! Irreducible—Maybe! Unexplainable—No! A Creationist Criticism of Irreducible Complexity" (A Review of *Darwin's Black Box* by Michael Behe), American Scientific Affiliation Annual Meeting 1994, [http://www.asa3.org/evolution/irred\\_comp1.html](http://www.asa3.org/evolution/irred_comp1.html).

<sup>48</sup>Randy Isaac, "State of the ASA," audio file of an address given at the 2005 ASA Annual Meeting at Messiah College, <http://www.asa3.org/ASAradio/ASA2005Isaac.mp3>; here is a transcript of the talk from approximately 8:00 to 13:00 containing remarks about the neutrality doctrine:

And, of course, there's that policy that says ASA won't take a stand on anything. We have our official policy of neutrality. So how can we get anything done? Permit me to digress a few minutes and comment on this policy of neutrality. First of all, I will say that as long as I'm in this role, we won't change that policy and we will not have it up for debate. Over the years, it's been fascinating to read the history in the growth and development of the ASA. This was heavily discussed many times in the origin of the ASA.

It was reaffirmed over and over again through its development. It played a strong role, and I see no reason to change it. However, we do need to think through what it means because I think too often we have misrepresented it. And one of the things that it does *not* mean is wishy-washy relativism. It does not mean that oh, whatever you think is fine, whatever you think is fine, oh, yeah, okay, you believe something else, fine, everything is okay. That's not neutrality. That's not neutrality, and that's not what ASA is all about.

We have a strong platform of two planks that is not very neutral at all. On the one hand, we have a strong statement of faith. Many of you worked long and hard to word it carefully and really structure it in the proper way based on the Apostolic and Nicene Creed and we affirm our collective belief in one triune God who is the creator of all things, whose incarnate son came to earth, to die on the cross for our salvation and was resurrected to prepare a place for us and it is through that cross that we have our salvation and that we begin to understand what this world is all about. This is our statement of faith. That is radical—that is not neutral. And that is where our proactive stand is. And we stand for that against the atheistic naturalism in this world, and we must not forget that that is a most important fight that we have and we must rally around that. That's one important plank of the ASA.

The second one is our commitment to integrity in science. Extremely important. There is so much in today's world that tries to pass off as science a bunch of technical jargon. We are committed to integrity in science. And we have some slightly different views as to exactly what that means but the scientific methodology is time tested and through its process we arrive at a better understanding of a description of our world. We must ensure integrity in science. Now how does that play out? Because in many places we will have differences of opinion as to what it means under those two umbrellas, and our position is that the role of the ASA is to encourage and enable dialogue in an atmosphere of trust and to respect the honest differences within those two key planks of our platform. And it is important that we continue to provide that.

It is not easy. And there will be many difficult times. Some of you may have been there, others of you have heard about that time forty-two years ago, when at this meeting, it was filled with discord and rancor. After the meeting, a team of ten founded the Creation Research Society. Eight of them were ASA members. It was not a good time in ASA history. It was not a meeting characterized by good relationships. I believe ASA stood firm on its principles, and I believe it was the right path.

There are many other areas we have differences of opinion. I believe the ASA was a very important environment for the development of intelligent design. Many of our members were and continue to be important in that. I'm glad to see that Sunday afternoon we have our symposium on models of creation, and we will have a debate on the topic. At this point, I would like to make it very clear to everyone that ASA will not become an ID advocacy group nor will it become an anti-ID advocacy group. But we will provide the forum for clear thinking and debate, strong and forceful and vigorous debate, but in an atmosphere of love and respect without ridicule and scorn and in recognition of our unity as a body of Christ, and our unity in our belief in the creator and that our real enemy here is atheistic naturalism.

Even as we skirmish about the best place to carry out that fight, we must never lose sight of what the real battle is all about. And I think it is so easy for us to forget, in our passion and our focus, when other people are not hearing our arguments, and we resort to ridicule and scorn. It's kind of human nature that comes out. But part of our Christian testimony—whether it be in our open meetings, whether it be on the discussion list, or in any environment as the body of Christ—it is important that we continue to value each other as the body of Christ and to give honor to him in the course of our discussion.

<sup>49</sup>Dennis R. Venema, "Seeking a Signature," *PSCF* 62, no. 4 (2010): 276–83, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2010/PSCF12-10Venema.pdf>; Fredric P. Nelson, "A Reply to 'Seeking a Signature,' an Essay Review by Dennis Venema," *PSCF* 63, no. 2 (2011): 143–44, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2011/PSCF6-11Nelson.pdf>; Steve J. Van der Weele, "A Reaction to 'Seeking a Signature,' an Essay Review by Dennis Venema," *PSCF* 63, no. 2 (2011): 144, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2011/PSCF6-11VanDerWeele.pdf>; Stephen C. Meyer, "Of Molecules and (Straw) Men: A Response to Dennis Venema's Review of *Signature in the Cell*," *PSCF* 63, no. 3 (2011): 171–82, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2011/PSCF9-11Meyer.pdf>; Dennis R. Venema, "Intelligent Design, Abiogenesis, and Learning

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- from History: A Reply to Meyer," *PSCF* 63, no. 3 (2011): 183–92, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2011/PSCF9-11Venema.pdf>; see also the December 2011 issue of *PSCF* devoted to the origins of biological information.
- <sup>50</sup>"2009 ASA Annual Meeting Abstracts," <http://www.asa3.org/slides/ASA2009Abstracts.pdf>; Theme Issue: Reading Genesis: The Historicity of Adam and Eve, Genomics, and Evolutionary Science, *PSCF* 62, no. 3 (2010), <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2010/PSCF9-10Complete.pdf>.
- <sup>51</sup>See, for example, Matthew Barrett and Ardel Caneday, eds., *Four Views on the Historical Adam* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013).
- <sup>52</sup>Wilbur L. Bullock, "Putting Things in Perspective," *PSCF* 39, no. 2 (1987): 65, <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1987/PSCF6-87Bullock.html>.
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