

What About Us?

In the December 2025 issue of *PSCF*, there is a book review of *Science and the Sacred: Beyond the Gods in Our Image* by C. S. Pearce and Philip Clayton (*PSCF* 77, no. 4 [2025]: 287–88). The review was written by Samuel Powell, former professor of philosophy and dean of the School of Theology and Christian Ministry at beautiful Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, where the ASA has sometimes had its annual meeting.

Powell introduced his review thus:

Protestants for whom neither atheism nor fundamentalism is an option face a declining menu of choices. On the American scene, there was a time when evangelicalism claimed a spot on that menu; however, its generation-long alignment with reactionary politics has rendered it unattractive for some Protestants. For the latter, the only thing left is some species of liberal theology. (p. 287)

I suspect that many educated Americans share such a sweeping analysis. But I, my church friends, and many of my friends in the ASA would not align with any of the four options Powell offers. Those of us in the ASA have always sought to carve out another way. As early *PSCF* editor Richard Bube used to put it, we affirm both “authentic science and authentic theology.”¹ Fundamentalism rejects key findings of science, while liberal theologians, discouraged by higher criticism from a deeper study of the Bible, have turned to other sources such as Whitehead and Teilhard for their theology. But my friends and colleagues in the ASA affirm both. They are practitioners of cutting-edge science, enjoy discussing the Bible at length, and don’t hesitate to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Furthermore, this has been done by thousands of ASA members and fellows, continuing in their scientific work despite the rise and fall of various political and theological movements over many decades. The word “evangelical” has an ancient history, but as Powell noted, it has recently been co-opted.

Let the labels go. Regardless, I see ASA members serving as boundary workers, bridge builders, and peacemakers across artificial divides. Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). God’s world—creation—transcends the world of political boundaries. This is an understanding that is affirmed by traditional creeds as well as by modern science.

Of course, the biblical texts require scholarly interpretation. Early Christians had to wrestle with the dilemma of Christ as God and man; after a struggle of a few centuries, they formulated concepts such as hypostatic union to clarify how the Bible presented Christ’s two natures. This was a successful achievement of boundary-work,

and in fact, I believe all good theology is dialogical. This approach allows ASA members to listen and learn from each other while avoiding polarization and labeling. In short, the ASA is a place for Christian fellowship within the scientific community.

Careful hermeneutical work should be an aspect of Christian scholarship. But interpretation of the revealed Scriptures should not lead to their abandonment, as liberal theologians do when they replace the God of the Bible with vague conceptions of a Deity, as with many formulations of process theology.

I am disappointed that even some professors of theology have apparently failed to notice the exemplary work of the ASA and other such ministries in the United States. Maybe it would help to carve out a new category other than evangelical, but then it would probably just turn into another label.

Note

¹Bube, Richard, personal communication. This topic is also discussed in Richard Bube, *Putting It All Together: Seven Patterns for Relating Science and the Christian Faith* (University Press of America, 1995).

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