

Evolution Views, and Climate Change Skepticism," *Environment and Behavior* 49, no. 9 (2016): 985–1006, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916516674246>.

³James H. Jones, *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (Norton, 1997).

⁴Elizabeth F. Loftus, "The Reality of Repressed Memories," *American Psychologist* 48, no. 5 (1993): 518–37, <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0003-066X.48.5.518>; and Michael E. Shulman, "What Use Is Freud?" *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 69, no. 6 (2021): 1093–113, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00030651211059546>.

⁵Roy F. Baumeister et al., "Relation of Threatened Egotism to Violence and Aggression: The Dark Side of High Self-Esteem," *Psychological Review* 103, no. 1 (1996): 5–33, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.103.1.5>.

Steven Willing, MD
ASA Member

Deborah Haarsma Responds to Letter from Steven Willing

I am grateful to Dr. Willing for engaging my recent article and for the insights he brings to these issues.

We agree on vaccines; he echoes points I made in the article. Regarding climate change, current survey instruments actually do ask separately about views on science and views on policy. My article reported 2025 results on both.

Regarding the larger framing of my article, the nationwide data I report clearly show that distrust in science is more common among evangelicals (variously defined) than in any other demographic, justifying the focus of my article. I agree with Willing that scientists and progressives are also subject to Haidt's findings that moral intuitions precede reasoning, and my paper acknowledged this in one example (the sudden rise in democratic confidence in science during Covid). I have written elsewhere in more depth about the influences of scientists' world-views on their interpretations of science.

I was unfamiliar with the historical incidents Dr. Willing cites, and I appreciate his sharing them with *PSCF* readers. My article used a similar example from the Scopes Trial: it was theological liberals and leading biologists who pushed social Darwinism and eugenics in the early 1900s, contributing to the concerns of conservative Protestants about evolution; social Darwinism and eugenics were later shown to be scientifically flawed. I also named the Tuskegee experiments and other bio-ethical issues in science, and recommended that communicators acknowledge that science has not always been good. I could have framed more positively the ethical concerns that evangelicals have about gene-editing. AI and gene-editing are critical moral issues that Christians need to speak to today.

Deborah Haarsma
ASA Fellow

A Clarification That Would Strengthen Haarsma's Argument

I read Deborah Haarsma's recent article with appreciation. Her synthesis of the sociological research on evangelical distrust of science is valuable, and her practical guidance for Christian scientists is the kind of work this journal exists to publish. I write only to offer a clarification on one point that I think would strengthen her argument considerably – and that her readers deserve to have right.

In treating the historical background, the article rightly notes that historians have discredited the "warfare" thesis associated with John William Draper and Andrew Dickson White. But the more important and frequently missed point concerns where that narrative came from. The conflict thesis did not arise from an actual collision between science and religion. It was forged within nineteenth-century Protestantism itself, by liberal Protestants who were seeking to reform and redefine the faith and who deployed "science" as a polemical instrument against traditional, creedal, and dogmatic theology. What was presented to the public as "science versus religion" was, at bottom, one theological vision contending against another.

This matters for Haarsma's project more than it might first appear. If the historic quarrel was really intra-Protestant—a dispute over biblical authority, the person of Christ, and who would define orthodoxy in a modern age—then evangelical wariness toward "science" is not simply anti-intellectual reflex. It is the residue of a genuine theological contest, one in which conservatives correctly sensed that more than empirical findings was being asked of them. Recovering that history reframes the distrust she describes and, I would suggest, points toward more durable ways of rebuilding trust than treating the problem as primarily one of communication.

Haarsma cites *Of Popes and Unicorns* (Oxford University Press, 2021), which I co-authored with David Hutchings and which offers an accessible introduction to these themes. For readers who wish to follow the argument to its sources—the actual documentary record of how and why the conflict narrative was constructed—I would point them to the fuller scholarly treatment in *Science, Religion, and the Protestant Tradition: Retracing the Origins of Conflict* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019). My hope is simply that those persuaded by Haarsma's call to "stay in conversation" will also have the most accurate possible account of how the conversation went wrong in the first place.

With gratitude for the journal and for Haarsma's contribution,

James C. Ungureanu
Adjunct Professor for Intellectual Foundations
Carthage College