A critique of theistic evolution
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5 editors
Moreland, Meyer, Shaw, Gauger, and Grudem
25 authors
3 sections
Scientific
Philosophical
Theological
31 chapters
1,000 pages
Quick Overview

- Brief History of ASA Views on Evolution
- My Personal Opinion of Theistic Evolution
- The Scientific Critique of Theistic Evolution
A Brief History: ASA Views

“The ASA has never taken a position on any scientific theory ... We as a group, do not believe in theistic evolution, neither do we believe in any other form of evolution.”

— H. Harold Hartzler, Executive Director ASA
Private communication, 1968
“The twelfth annual ASA convention was held at Gordon College August 27-29, 1957. It is interesting that this was the first ASA meeting that the idea of theistic evolution was openly discussed and advocated by some.”

— H. Harold Hartzler, ASA Executive Director,

“Forty Years with the ASA” in PSCF 37 (June 1985): 86-92
“We remember the days when A.S.A. first organized. We were all against evolution then. Satan has thus worked fast to bring us to such a compromise . . .”

— Letter to the editor, JASA Vol. 15, p.100 September 1963

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ASA Views

Theistic evolution gradually became more common in the ASA as evidence in favor of it mounted. Richard Bube as editor of the journal advocated that it be considered a viable option for Christians.

Terry Gray provides an excellent brief history in his article “The ASA Does Not Take an Official Position on Controversial Questions” in PSCF Vol 68, p. 177 September 2016
ASA Views

- A survey of ASA members in 2008 showed that 61% of respondents felt there was compelling scientific evidence for biological evolution of plants, animals, and humans.
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In Defense of Theistic Evolution

- ‘Theistic’ refers to the doctrine of creation
- ‘Evolution’ refers to the theory that all living species originated from one or a few forms through descent with modification and selection by survival
- ‘Theistic evolution’ refers to the compatibility of these two ideas
- Evolution is the only scientific theory of the origin of species and is used universally in biology
- Theistic Evolution is the only viable view of the origin of species for a Christian
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Stephen Meyer Rejects the “God of the Gaps” Accusation

https://youtu.be/tGqzCA1mnyM
Cause A (evolution) cannot cause Effect X (creation of new information like the genetic code in DNA)

Cause B (intelligent mind) is known to be able to generate new information

Therefore, Cause B can be inferred to be the cause of X.

It is not a “God of the gaps” logic since there is independent evidence that B is able to cause X
Randy Isaac’s Opinion

- Cause A (evolution) CAN cause new information so there is no gap
- Cause B (intelligent mind) has NOT been shown to be necessary or able to generate all types of new information
TWO DIFFERENT VIEWS

MEYER

- Natural processes cannot generate new information including the genetic code in DNA
- Intelligent agents have been shown to be capable of generating new information and can therefore generate the genetic code

ISAAC

- Natural processes can generate new biological information including genetic code in DNA
- Intelligent agents have not been shown to be necessary or capable of generating biological information including the genetic code
Steven Meyer’s Claim

“All our experience shows that information is always generated by an intelligent mind.”

Examples:
- Language
- Phone numbers
- Computer code
- Engineering designs and construction, etc.

All examples are of human-designed systems.
Randy Isaac’s Claim

- All our experience in biological systems shows that functional information does NOT REQUIRE an intelligent mind.
- Reproduction events do not require an intelligent mind.
- All reproductive events and mutations generate new information which is functional for every organism that survives and is successful in reproduction.
- Intelligent minds have not been observed to create a genetic code in biology.
FUNCTIONAL INFORMATION IS CONNECTED TO INTELLIGENCE THROUGH ABSTRACT RELATIONSHIPS

- Abstract reasoning is a defining hallmark of intelligence
- Functionality in human-designed systems is determined by abstract relationships
  - Intelligence is required
- Functionality in biological systems is determined by offspring survival and success in reproduction
  - No intelligence is required
Does Functional Information Require Intelligence?

- If functionality is determined by abstract relationships, then **YES**
  - Virtually all human-designed systems define functionality abstractly and therefore require intelligence

- If not, then **NO**
  - Biological systems determine functionality by survival and success in reproduction which is physical and not abstract
Conclusion

- It has not been shown that (1) evolution cannot and (2) an intelligent mind can cause the genetic code or any new biological information.
- The scientific critique of theistic evolution is not persuasive.
- Theistic evolution is not just a viable option but the only one for the origin of life for Christians.
For Further Study

• Perspectives on an Evolving Creation, ed. by Keith Miller, Eerdmans (2003)

• Theme issue of PSC F on information, December 2011

• BioLogos blog post series by Dennis Venema, “Letters to the Duchess” 14-part series from June 9, 2016 to June 8, 2017

• More details on my forum at www.asa3.org/Resources/Forums/Director Emeritus Musings/tag=theistic evolution