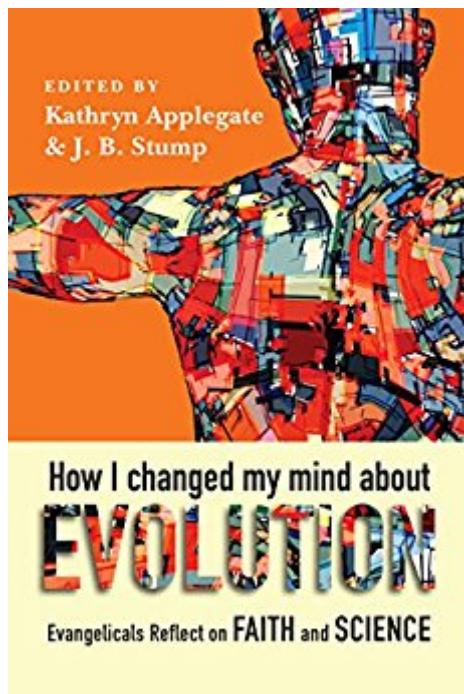


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How I Changed My Mind About Evolution: Evangelicals Reflect On Faith And Science (BioLogos Books On Science And Christianity)



Synopsis

Perhaps no topic appears as potentially threatening to evangelicals as evolution. The very idea seems to exclude God from the creation the book of Genesis celebrates. Yet many evangelicals have come to accept the conclusions of science while still holding to a vigorous belief in God and the Bible. How did they make this journey? How did they come to embrace both evolution and faith? Here are stories from a community of people who love Jesus and honor the authority of the Bible, but who also agree with what science says about the cosmos, our planet and the life that so abundantly fills it. Among the contributors are Scientists such as Francis Collins, Deborah Haarsma, Denis Lamoureux, Pastors such as John Ortberg, Ken Fong, Laura Truax, Biblical scholars such as N. T. Wright, Scot McKnight, Tremper Longman III, Theologians and philosophers such as James K. A. Smith, Amos Yong, Oliver Crisp.

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Customer Reviews

When you see a title like this, your first inclination would probably be to think that this is a book by several ex-atheists who came to Christ and then as a result changed their minds on evolution.

That's a natural idea to think. Unfortunately, it's dead wrong. In fact, this is about Christians who came to either believe in evolution or be open to it and saw no conflict with their Christian faith. I find this interesting because I find myself in the category of people who are open. If you ask why I don't come out and affirm, it's because I don't possess the scientific acumen to really examine the evidence. I also don't possess the desire to spend years reading about it when my focus is elsewhere. How did I reach this conclusion? It actually happened when I was studying at Southern Evangelical Seminary. I was writing a research paper on science and religion and thinking about the interplay between the two and how so many people so often claim that war is going on between the two. I also combined this with the Thomism that I had been learning about. I thought about the five ways and how those were valid ways of showing God exists long before the scientific arguments of our day came along such as the first two ways of William Lane Craig or of the Intelligent Design movement. I started asking how much could I grant and still have Christianity? I realized it was quite a lot. My research got me to realize that if evolution is true, we have to accept it. We have no other choice. If something is true and if we believe the Bible is inerrant, it will not contradict the Bible. We might have to change our interpretation of the Scriptures.

In this collection of personal stories of Christians who have come to accept biological evolution, I thought that it was rather odd that the very first essay was by James K. A. Smith, professor of philosophy at Calvin College, who is such a lukewarm supporter of evolutionary creation: "Indeed, I began to realize that while some of my friends and colleagues who were evolutionary creationists affirmed a very different sort of science from what I'd been taught at Bible college, they actually mirrored my Bible college professors in so far as they were using science in a similar way. While they had swapped positions (and many of them had been former young-earth creationists), they hadn't given up the culture war stance that comes with such positions. Science was still a weapon used in a war. The point was winning, not witness. And it seemed to me that this stance was fostered by fear. If young-earth creationists feared the erosion of biblical faith and a compromise of the gospel "a fear that drove their culture war stance" then some of my evolutionary creationist colleagues seemed to fear being perceived as hicks and fundamentalists, losing the respect of their colleagues in the academy or opinion-shapers in culture." (p. 27) Several other essays would have been better choices for Chapter 1, such as the essays by Deborah Haarsma, Jeff Hardin, Francis Collins, Justin Barrett, Denis Lamoureux, or Kathryn Applegate. Additionally, the essays by Amos Yong and Richard Dahlstrom were particularly good. Prof. Amos Yong summarizes his current Pentecostal Christian position very nicely: "But as

a Christian who is committed to a high view of Scripture, I still have to understand how the Bible is compatible with, if not complementary to, what science tells us.

Anyone who knows me knows that I do not shy away from tough topics or from potentially controversial ones, even if that means reading things that go against what I have always thought. Just this year, I switched to teaching science instead of English language arts. As a result, I have been diving deeper into scientific topics than I have in the past. Obviously, this leads to questions on things such as evolution and the age of the earth. I was raised with a Young-Earth Creationist view, and have only slightly studied outside of that view, including Old-Earth Creationism, Intelligent Design, and to a lesser degree, a Literary Framework view. One view I had not really read on was a Christian view of evolution. Yes, you read that right. A view of evolution in support of the idea from a Christian viewpoint. I like reading about all sides of an issue, and I prefer to read about them from proponents of the view, as opposed to just reading about it based on critiques from its opponents. I heard that InterVarsity Press had a newer book called "How I Changed My Mind about Evolution: Evangelicals Reflect on Faith and Science," and I thought it would be a good place to start learning about a Christian view of evolution. IVP was kind enough to send me a copy, and I am glad they did. The book is not so much an explanation of evolution as it is an attempt by various contributors to explain why they came to believe in evolution, even as Christians, and why they don't believe it contradicts their evangelical faith. Let me state up front that as far as I can tell, none of the contributors are what we would think of as liberal; they all embrace evangelicalism, and they hold the Bible in high regard.

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