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## THE NEW THEISTIC EVOLUTIONISTS: BIOLOGOS AND THE RUSH TO EMBRACE “CONSENSUS”

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### SYNOPSIS

BioLogos is a nonprofit foundation formed by Francis Collins in 2007 to promote the view that an evolutionary scientific position is fully correct and compatible with Christianity. The Templeton Foundation has awarded BioLogos more than \$8.7 million—enough to bring campus ministry leaders to all-expenses-paid conferences in Manhattan, expanding BioLogos’s influence.

A key difference between BioLogos and intelligent design is BioLogos’s view that design cannot, in principle, be scientifically detected in nature, or that design could be scientifically detected, but isn’t. BioLogos believes the evolutionary “consensus” should not be questioned, and maintains nonexperts should defer to the consensus. They fear that when Christians challenge the consensus, this produces “anti-science attitudes” that “hinder evangelism.” BioLogos defends the consensus, despite recent scientific discoveries affecting theories regarding the origin of life, neo-Darwinian evolution, common ancestry, and junk DNA, which contradict the consensus. Fearing the “god of the gaps” fallacy, BioLogos eschews arguments for faith that defy the consensus and argues the consensus is consistent with Christianity. This might prevent some Christians from becoming atheists, but it gives atheists essentially no intellectual reasons to become Christians.

Collins hoped to develop a new theology of creation, and BioLogos challenges the traditional theological consensus on core doctrines such as the historicity and importance of Adam and Eve. Even Collins concedes to atheists the crucial neo-Darwinian claim that life’s history *appears* “unguided” (even if it really wasn’t). If

BioLogos promotes viewpoints that are scientifically flawed, theologically hostile, and apologetically weak, why are many Christians rushing to embrace them? I believe the answer, in part, is cultural pressure.

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The BioLogos Foundation is a nonprofit organization founded by Francis Collins and others in 2007 for the purpose of promoting theistic evolution. Originally the group formed to capitalize on the positive reception enjoyed by Collins's 2006 book, *The Language of God*, wherein he described his conversion from atheism to Christianity, his experiences heading the Human Genome Project, and his reasons for believing "evolution and natural selection permitted the development of biological diversity and complexity" where "no special supernatural intervention was required."<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, BioLogos promotes the view that an evolutionary scientific viewpoint is fully correct and fully compatible with Christianity.

BioLogos unofficially commenced in 2007 after Collins submitted grant proposals to the John Templeton Foundation to create a website answering questions about *The Language of God*,<sup>2</sup> but the group did not go public until the website's launch in 2009.<sup>3</sup> Since then, BioLogos's mission has expanded greatly, and it has been awarded grants totaling more than \$8.7 million from Templeton<sup>4</sup> to advocate theistic evolution to the church and the larger culture. With enough funding to bring nationwide campus ministry leaders to attend all-expenses-paid conferences at the Harvard Club in Manhattan, BioLogos has become an influential voice in the debate over evolution, and it is vital to examine the group's history, beliefs, goals, and methodology.

### LEADERSHIP TRANSITIONS

BioLogos has seen multiple leadership changes during its relatively brief history. Collins initially served as the public leader of BioLogos, but Karl Giberson, then a physicist at Eastern Nazarene College, and Darrel Falk, a biologist at Point Loma Nazarene University, served as co-presidents in 2008. According to the journal *Science*, in 2008 Collins stepped down from his position leading the National Human Genome Research Institute, ostensibly "to write a book about personalized medicine but soon thereafter penned an op-ed piece endorsing Obama."<sup>5</sup> He then joined Obama's transition team and worked "to help religious groups come to terms with Obama's order easing limits on the use of federal funds to study human embryonic stem cells."<sup>6</sup> (This advocacy is consistent with Collins's refusal to say that human life begins at conception.<sup>7</sup>) For these efforts, President Obama rewarded Collins with an appointment to direct the National Institutes of Health in July 2009. Collins then officially resigned from BioLogos.

In 2009, Giberson moved to the role of executive vice president, and Falk took over as sole president. Giberson eventually resigned in 2011, "to create more time for

writing.”<sup>8</sup> In July of 2012, BioLogos announced that Falk would step down at the end of the year. In early 2013, Calvin College physics professor Deborah Haarsma succeeded Falk as president.<sup>9</sup>

### **WHAT DOES BIOLOGOS BELIEVE?<sup>10</sup>**

In *The Language of God*, Collins stated one “reason that theistic evolution is so little appreciated is that it has a terrible name.”<sup>11</sup> He embarked to find an acceptable term and proposed “to rename theistic evolution as Bios through Logos, or simply BioLogos,” combining the Greek words for “life” (“*bios*”) and “word” (“*logos*”).<sup>12</sup> According to Collins, “BioLogos’ expresses the belief that God is the source of all life and that all life expresses the will of God.”<sup>13</sup> His vision was to promote “harmony” between “warring factions” in the debate over origins.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, BioLogos calls itself “an all-out effort to show that science and the Christian faith are harmonious.”<sup>15</sup> Despite Collins’s efforts to find terminology that distinguished his viewpoint, few Christians would object to those statements. Thus, it’s useful to compare the beliefs of BioLogos theistic evolutionists (BTEs) and intelligent design proponents who are Christian (CIDs).<sup>16</sup>

### **Christianity and Science are Compatible**

Both BTEs and CIDs agree there is no need for a war between “science” and “religion,” and that Christianity has contributed positively to the development of modern science. Both would also agree that science (rightly understood) contributes positively to society, that scientific research is an important and dignified calling, and that Christians should consider new scientific discoveries, no matter who makes them.

When it comes to the biblical texts (e.g., Genesis 1–3), both camps agree they reveal God as the creator of all things, and should not be treated simplistically, but should be read in light of their intentions, genre, and original meaning. BioLogos officially claims it is “committed to the authority of the Bible as the inspired word of God, and believes it is compatible with new scientific discoveries”;<sup>17</sup> most CIDs would say the same. Though ID doesn’t weigh in on questions of age, most leading CIDs accept the standard estimates of the age of the earth and the cosmos; BTEs would say the same.

### **Agreement on Evidence for Purpose**

Many (though not all) BTEs also agree with CIDs that there is at least some positive evidence for purpose in nature. Specifically, many BTEs agree with CIDs that cosmic fine-tuning, the Big Bang’s evidence for a cosmic beginning, and the fact that nature is “amazingly rationally transparent,”<sup>18</sup> suggest underlying purpose. Many BTEs would therefore agree with CIDs that scientific discoveries sometimes have theological implications.

## Avoiding New Atheists

Finally, BTEs and CIDs agree that scientism is flawed,<sup>19</sup> and that the new atheists must be answered.<sup>20</sup> However, BioLogos exhibits much more interest in attacking Darwin-skeptics within the church than engaging new atheists. I surveyed BioLogos blog articles from 2013, and found that less than 2 percent were devoted to critiquing the new atheists, whereas more than 34 percent primarily promoted scientific evidence in favor of evolution, and 40 percent promoted pro-evolution theological or historical views. Atheism was rarely critiqued, and when it was, there was typically a mere passing assertion that belief in evolution need not mandate atheism, which was often coupled with critiques of those who challenge Darwinism.

One reason BTEs rarely critique atheism may be because they feel the materialistic creation story of the new atheists ought not to be questioned. Indeed, theistic evolutionists make essentially the *same* scientific arguments as atheistic evolutionists—BTEs simply baptize materialistic theories of origins by adding, “By the way, God did it this way” —although they’d admit you can’t empirically detect God’s actions in any of it.

## DISAGREEMENTS OVER INTELLIGENT DESIGN

A primary disagreement between BTEs and CIDs is the BTE conviction that design cannot in principle be scientifically detected, or that design could be scientifically detected, but isn’t. BioLogos frames these differences as follows:

1. We are skeptical about the ability of biological science to prove the existence of an Intelligent Designer (whom we take to be the God of the Bible), while ID advocates are confident.
2. We find unconvincing those attempts by ID theorists to scientifically confirm God’s activity in natural history, while ID theorists believe they have sufficiently demonstrated it.
3. We see no biblical reason to view natural processes (including natural selection) as having removed God from the process of creation. It is all God’s and it is all intelligently designed. Those in the ID movement for the most part reject some or all of the major conclusions of evolutionary theory.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, when BioLogos claims “it is all intelligently designed,” they mean that strictly as a faith-based theological doctrine for which they can provide no supporting scientific evidence. Indeed, it’s ironic that BioLogos accuses ID of “removing God from the process of creation” when Collins writes that “science’s domain is to explore nature. God’s domain is in the spiritual world, a realm not possible to explore with the tools and language of science.”<sup>22</sup> Under Collins’s view, God’s “domain” is seemingly fenced off from “nature,” which belongs to “science.”

Since CIDs treat design as a scientific hypothesis, not a theological doctrine, they would reply that a failure *scientifically* to detect design doesn't mean God was somehow theologically absent, and would say that natural explanations *don't* "remov[e] God." BTEs thus fail to recognize that CIDs have no objection to God using natural, secondary causes. They also fail to appreciate that in some cases, CIDs argue that natural explanations can even provide evidence for design (e.g., cosmic fine-tuning). But CIDs disagree with BTEs that God must always use natural causes, and argue we should allow the possibility that God might act in a scientifically detectable manner. Thus, one important dividing line is:

- BTEs accept materialistic evolutionary explanations (such as neo-Darwinism) where the history of life appears unguided, and deny we scientifically detect design.
- CIDs hold we may scientifically detect design as the best scientific explanation for many aspects of biology.

### **For BioLogos, Not Enough Proof**

Even within physics and cosmology, BioLogos is timid in arguing that we can scientifically detect design, calling cosmic fine-tuning mere "pointers to God" that "go beyond science into metaphysics,"<sup>23</sup> and cannot be measured by "scientific explanations."<sup>24</sup> BioLogos calls the "unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics" in studying nature no more than "a hint of the presence of the Creator" since "a logical demonstration" of God's existence "is not available."<sup>25</sup> CIDs make a stronger case, saying the best *scientific* explanation for the fine-tuning and rational comprehensibility of the universe is intelligent design.

Methodological naturalism (MN)—the view that we must pretend the supernatural doesn't exist when practicing science—is another disagreement. BTEs generally believe that MN is vital for science, especially within origins research. As BioLogos states, "the demonstration of such supernatural activity in the history of the natural world is, we think, unlikely to be scientifically testable."<sup>26</sup> In contrast, CIDs believe we should not assume scientific or theological answers to how God worked, but should follow the evidence wherever it leads, unhindered by presuppositions.

### **Deferring to the Consensus**

In taking this view, CIDs are willing to challenge the evolutionary "consensus" when the evidence warrants. BioLogos, however, defines science as the "consensus": "We at BioLogos agree with the modern scientific consensus on the age of the earth and evolutionary development of all species."<sup>27</sup> They frame the differences this way: "BioLogos differs from the ID movement in that we have no discomfort with mainstream science."<sup>28</sup> While most ID theorists agree that the evidence supports the

consensus on the age of the earth, they would counter that such “discomfort” is appropriate when the “consensus” isn’t supported by the evidence.

BTEs not only defer to the consensus, but they make one of their staple arguments the contention that nonexperts in “the wider Christian community...should give deference to the consensus,”<sup>29</sup> and when Christians challenge the consensus, this leads to “anti-science attitudes in the church,” which “hinder evangelism.”<sup>30</sup> In *Coming to Peace with Science*, Darrel Falk repeatedly cites the consensus, arguing that “virtually all,” “almost all,” or “most” scientists agree with an evolutionary view.<sup>31</sup> Karl Giberson maintains the “consensus” should serve as our “criteria” for “the evaluation of what constitutes ‘science,’”<sup>32</sup> and that ID’s arguments must be “ignored,” even when made by credible scientists, if they disagree with the consensus: “We should not set aside such consensus just because a tiny group of articulate outsiders offer us some ideas that we might like better. The ID move menthas people with Ph.D.s to be sure. And a few of them have conventional scientific posts. But their pleas that we set aside scientific consensus must be ignored.”<sup>33</sup> ID proponents reply that if scientific challenges to the consensus were “ignored,” no scientific revolution could ever occur, and that a healthy science listens to dissent rather than ignoring it. Giberson, however, has a different view of science as he writes: “To suggest that this ‘data’ can be handed over to nonspecialists so they can make up their own minds is to profoundly misunderstand the nature of science.”<sup>34</sup> In contrast, the apostle Paul suggested Christians not only have the right to think for themselves but also should “test everything,” and “hold on to the good;”<sup>35</sup> BTEs suggest lay Christians should *hold on to consensus* and *not* think for themselves.

### **Is the Consensus Unassailable?**

While still with BioLogos, Giberson appealed to the consensus, arguing, “Jesus would believe in evolution and so should you.”<sup>36</sup> But is the consensus so unassailable that even divine authorities would accept it?

Writing for BioLogos, Falk has encouraged seeking unguided chemical explanations for the origin of the genetic code over inferring design.<sup>37</sup> But in this field, it’s not even clear there is a “consensus” to which one can defer. In 2007, Harvard chemist George Whitesides admitted he has “no idea” how “life emerged spontaneously from mixtures of molecules in the prebiotic Earth.”<sup>38</sup> More recently, a paper in *Complexity* acknowledged, “Many different ideas are competing and none is available to provide a sufficiently plausible root to the first living organisms.”<sup>39</sup> If origin-of-life theorists give so few scientific reasons to adopt their position, why are theistic evolutionists quick to defend them? The reason isn’t scientific, but philosophical: it stems from a deeply embedded assumption that one shouldn’t question whatever “science” says.

Arguably, biological evolution is where BTEs defer the most to Darwinian thinking. Collins and Giberson insist that “almost all Christian biologists accept

evolution” and claim they are “unfamiliar with any premier scientists who reject evolution.”<sup>40</sup> Yet highly credible scientists doubt the neo-Darwinian view that natural selection acting on random mutation was the driving force building the complexity of life. Lynn Margulis, a member of the National Academy of Sciences, explained that “neo-Darwinists say that new species emerge when mutations occur and modify an organism,” and admitted, “I believed it until I looked for evidence.”<sup>41</sup>

In 2008, sixteen leading biologists convened in Altenberg, Austria, to discuss problems with the neo-Darwinian synthesis. When covering this conference, *Nature* quoted leading scientists saying things like “evolutionary theory has told us little about” important events like “the origin of wings and the invasion of the land.”<sup>42</sup> That same year, Cornell evolutionary biologist William Provine explained that “every assertion of the evolutionary synthesis below is false,” including: “natural selection was the primary mechanism at every level of the evolutionary process,” “macroevolution was a simple extension of microevolution,” and “evolution produces a tree of life.”<sup>43</sup> Contrast Provine’s summary of evolutionary thinking with Collins and Giberson’s blanket statement that “scientists, however, make the confident claim that macroevolution is simply microevolution writ large: add up enough small changes and we get a large change.”<sup>44</sup>

The following year, leading biologist Eugene Koonin wrote that breakdowns in core neo-Darwinian tenets such as the “traditional concept of the tree of life” or that “natural selection is the main driving force of evolution” indicate “the modern synthesis has crumbled, apparently, beyond repair.”<sup>45</sup> While twenty-first-century biology is moving beyond the neo-Darwinian model—sometimes adopting the same critiques made by ID—theistic evolutionists appear stuck in the mid- twentieth century, defending a dying paradigm.

Koonin mentioned growing skepticism over the “tree of life,” and the technical literature contains numerous examples of conflicting evolutionary trees, challenging universal common ancestry. An article in *Nature* reported that “disparities between molecular and morphological trees” lead to “evolution wars” because “evolutionary trees constructed by studying biological molecules often don’t resemble those drawn up from morphology.”<sup>46</sup> Another *Nature* paper reported that newly discovered genes “are tearing apart traditional ideas about the animal family tree,” since they “give a totally different tree from what everyone else wants.”<sup>47</sup> A 2009 article in *New Scientist* observes that “many biologists now argue that the tree concept is obsolete and needs to be discarded.”<sup>48</sup> So severe are problems that a 2012 paper in *Annual Review of Genetics* proposed “life might indeed have multiple origins.”<sup>49</sup> Despite these critical authorities, Collins and Giberson claim that “virtually all geneticists consider that the evidence proves common ancestry with a level of certainty comparable to the evidence that the earth goes around the sun.”<sup>50</sup>

Another major area where BTEs adamantly insist the evidence demonstrates human evolution is junk DNA. In *The Language of God*, Collins claimed that some “45 percent of the human genome” consists of “genetic flotsam and jetsam,” making “the conclusion of a common ancestor for humans and mice...virtually inescapable.”<sup>51</sup> Many BioLogos articles repeat similar arguments.<sup>52</sup> But numerous examples of function have been discovered for so-called junk DNA.<sup>53</sup> A major 2012 *Nature* paper by the ENCODE consortium reported “biochemical functions for 80% of the genome.”<sup>54</sup> Lead ENCODE scientists predicted that with further research, “80 percent will go to 100” since “almost every nucleotide is associated with a function.”<sup>55</sup> Though BTEs commonly cite pseudogenes as “the mutated remains of once-functional genes,”<sup>56</sup> which show our common ancestry with apes, a 2012 paper found pseudogene function is “widespread,” and since “the study of functional pseudogenes is just at the beginning” it predicted “more and more functional pseudogenes will be discovered as novel biological technologies are developed.”<sup>57</sup> While there’s still much we don’t understand about the genome, the research trendline suggests the vast majority of DNA is vital, and isn’t nonfunctional garbage.

In these and many other areas, BTEs insist we must accept the evolutionary “consensus” and dismiss skeptics as “anti-science,” charging that skeptics “turn their backs on the discoveries of modern science.”<sup>58</sup> But clearly one need not reject the latest scientific discoveries to understand that many core evolutionary claims are unsupported by the evidence.

### FEAR OF THE GAPS

BTEs might acknowledge that the consensus lacks evolutionary explanations in some of these areas, but would argue that inferring design, or divine intervention, is still inappropriate because it inserts God into “gaps” in our knowledge. According to BioLogos, “If gaps in scientific knowledge are the basis for belief in God, then as science progresses, evidence for God’s existence continually diminishes.”<sup>59</sup> It’s better, they reason, never to use scientific evidence to argue for God at all.

This approach has major pitfalls. Because BioLogos grants so much deference to the consensus, it accedes that “science progresses” whenever some evolutionary argument is proposed, however weak. Indeed, Collins and BioLogos have already retreated from some of their once-mainstay arguments for God’s existence in the face of new evolutionary hypotheses that are incredibly weak.

In *The Language of God*, Collins argued that the one area we should reject evolutionary explanations is in the origin of human morality and religion, since humans are “unique in ways that defy evolutionary explanation and point to our spiritual nature.”<sup>60</sup> He even cited C. S. Lewis’s arguments for a “moral law” as a major reason for his conversion from atheism to Christianity.<sup>61</sup> Collins immediately faced attacks in

scientific journals, with PZ Myers charging that Collins “has got some big gaps in his understanding of the field of evolutionary biology.”<sup>62</sup>

Another critic in *Genome Biology* wrote:

*[Collins] is trying to argue that on the one hand science and religion are completely separate activities (I support this) but at the same time argues that God can intervene in the setting up of natural laws and in providing some guidance here and there in order to, for example, produce human beings in his image. The website repeats some things from Collins' book that are equally illogical — such as saying that altruism can be explained by science...but then turning around and saying that science cannot explain extreme forms of altruism.... Which is it? Is science for the natural world or not?*<sup>63</sup>

BioLogos's current statements on explanations of morality remain similarly muddled, but ultimately admit evolutionary arguments mean “the argument from the moral law...is subject to the same risk of explanation as [the] God-of-the-gaps argument.”<sup>64</sup>

### **Removing Morality from the Equation**

BioLogos's deference to evolutionary arguments has made it quick to surrender classic arguments for God's existence when faced with weak, after-the-fact evolutionary explanations.<sup>65</sup> As a result, Collins and BioLogos have backed away from arguing that human religion and morality scientifically reflect God's special design.<sup>66</sup>

This irony is striking. When Collins explained why he moved from atheism to Christianity, it wasn't simply because evolution was compatible with religion. Rather, he cited the *inability* of evolutionary models to explain morality as a major reason for needing God. Yet BioLogos's philosophy shrinks from making the very argument that brought Collins to faith. This retreat reflects not so much the strength of evolutionary arguments for the origin of morality or religion but rather their philosophy that one ought not to question evolutionary arguments, lest one “hinder evangelism.” But does BioLogos's refusal to challenge evolutionary claims itself “hinder evangelism”? To put the question another way, *if Collins had adopted BioLogos's approach to evidence while an atheist, would he have found any scientific reasons to believe in God?*

BioLogos believes it can reach skeptics by not challenging evolution, but by completely accepting it. Today, it focuses on promoting the bare claim that belief in evolution is compatible with Christianity. This might prevent some Christians from becoming atheists, but it gives atheists few, if any, intellectual reasons to become Christians. As one BioLogos article admits, “Evolutionary creationism does not necessarily add apologetic value to the Christian faith.”<sup>67</sup>

## **THEOLOGICAL DISAGREEMENTS**

Many CIDs would argue that BioLogos's deference to the evolutionary "consensus" also invites challenges to faith, opposing the church's faithfulness to orthodox Christian doctrines. While ID has no official position on specific theological doctrines, many CIDs would disagree with certain theological positions of BTEs, including questions about:

- Whether it's coherent to claim God guided an unguided evolutionary process when creating life;
- Whether God exercised freedom, or even had freedom, to intervene supernaturally when creating life, and the extent to which God pre-planned human existence;<sup>68</sup>
- The historicity of the Fall. As Giberson admits, Darwinism is an "acid" that destroys belief in "the fall, 'Christ as second Adam,' [and] the origins of sin;"<sup>69</sup> and
- The historical existence or theological importance of Adam and Eve.

### **Can God Guide an Unguided Process?**

Regarding the first item, according to textbooks and leading evolutionary biologists, neo-Darwinian evolution is defined as an unguided or undirected process of natural selection acting upon random mutation.<sup>70</sup> Thus, when theistic evolutionists say that "God guided evolution," what they mean is that somehow God guided an evolutionary process that for all scientific intents and purposes *appears unguided*. As Francis Collins put it in *The Language of God*, God created life such that "from our perspective, limited as it is by the tyranny of linear time, this would appear a random and undirected process."<sup>71</sup> Whether it is theologically or philosophically coherent to claim that "God guided an apparently unguided process" I will leave to the theologians and the philosophers. ID avoids these problems by maintaining that life's history *doesn't appear unguided*, and that we can *scientifically detect* that intelligent action was involved.

Theistic evolutionists sometimes try to obscure these differences, such as when BioLogos says "it is all intelligently designed." But when pressed, they'll admit this is a strictly theological view, since they believe none of that design is *scientifically* detectable. CIDs wonder how one can speak of "intelligent design" if it's always hidden and undetectable. "We're promoting a scientific theory, not a theological doctrine," replies ID, "and our theory detects design in nature through scientific observations and evidence."

Some theistic evolutionists will then further reply by saying, "Since we both believe in some form of 'intelligent design,' the differences between our views are small." ID proponents retort: "Whether small or not, these differences make all the difference in the world."

And there's the rub. By denying that we scientifically detect design in nature, BTEs cede to materialists some of the most important territory in the debate over

atheism and religion. Biologically speaking, theistic evolution gives no reasons to believe in God.

To be clear, I'm not saying that if one accepts Darwinian evolution then one cannot be a Christian. Accepting or rejecting the grand Darwinian story is a "disputable" or "secondary" matter, and Christians have freedom to hold different views on this issue. But while it may be possible to claim God used apparently unguided evolutionary processes to create life, that doesn't mean Darwinian evolution is theologically neutral.

According to orthodox Darwinian thinking, undirected processes created not just our bodies, but also our brains, our behaviors, our deepest desires, and even our religious impulses. Under theistic Darwinism, God guided all these processes such that the whole show *appears* unguided. Thus, theistic evolution stands in direct contrast to Romans 1:20 where Paul taught that God is "clearly seen" in nature. In contrast, theistic evolution implies God's involvement in creating humans is *completely unseeable*.

Theistic evolution may not be absolutely incompatible with believing in God, but it offers no scientific reasons to do so. Perhaps this is why William Provine writes: "One can have a religious view that is compatible with evolution only if the religious view is indistinguishable from atheism."<sup>72</sup>

### **Adam and Eve**

Regarding the last item, BioLogos officially states it "does not take a firm position on the historicity of Adam and Eve, but welcomes a range of perspectives."<sup>73</sup> That statement seems misleading. BioLogos acknowledges the possibility of an Adam and Eve, but only if they are redefined to mean something other than the parents of the entire human race. Speaking for BioLogos, Falk asserted, "The data are clear that humans have been created through an evolutionary process and *there was never a time when there was a single first couple, two people who were the progenitors of the entire human race*" (emphasis added).<sup>74</sup> Falk's claim is relevant not only to those who see Genesis as portraying Adam and Eve as real people, but also those who take New Testament references to Adam and Eve seriously:

- *Adam and his sin are integral to Paul's theology in Romans 5 and I Corinthians 15 regarding why Christ had to become the "last Adam" and redeem humanity. Irremovable from Paul's arguments is the idea that Adam was a real person and the progenitor of humanity.*
- *Acts 17:26 states: "From one man he made all the nations."*
- *In 1 Corinthians 11:8–9, Paul expressly endorses the special creation of Eve.*

But are the data really so "clear" that science demands we reject Adam and Eve, or is this another example of BioLogos surrendering too quickly to the evolutionary

“consensus”? Falk must make a stack of assumptions to claim he *knows* that God never intervened to create Adam and Eve as the progenitors of the human race. Indeed, biologist Ann Gauger scrutinized BTE scientific arguments against a “first couple,” identifying their scientific assumptions, and found the assumptions are dubious, and the arguments severely flawed.<sup>75</sup>

BioLogos’s capitulation to the evolutionary consensus not only fails to “add apologetic value to the Christian faith” but also welcomes serious challenges to historical Christian beliefs, hindering its other goal of preventing Christians from losing an orthodox faith.

### IS THE BIOLOGOS STRATEGY BENEFICIAL?

When seeking a term to describe his view, Collins warned that theistic evolutionists “dare not use the wor[d] ‘creation’” for “fear of confusion.”<sup>76</sup> But BioLogos’s home page now claims it advocates “evolutionary creation,”<sup>77</sup> a term rife with potential for confusion. When BioLogos says they believe in “creation,” they do not mean nature resulted from what they pejoratively call “a direct flurry of supernatural intervention.”<sup>78</sup> Rather, they mean God guided evolution such that, as we saw in Collins’s own words, it “would appear a random and undirected process.”<sup>79</sup> This might be possible to reconcile with faith, but it stands in direct contrast to Paul’s teaching that God is “clearly seen” in nature.<sup>80</sup> Under theistic evolution, God’s involvement in creating humans—and all life—is *completely unseeable*, at least by the general revelation of nature studied by science.

If BioLogos promotes viewpoints that are scientifically flawed, theologically hostile, and apologetically weak, why are many Christians rushing to embrace them? I believe one major answer may be cultural pressure: some people view accepting Darwinian evolution as the price for social acceptance, cultural popularity, or scientific advancement. When we adopt a view because it’s the popular “consensus” in certain circles, and not because it’s scientifically or theologically sound, we risk entrapping the church in that old snare—fear of man.

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#### NOTES

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  - 9 "Our History: 2006 to Today."
  - 10 The author thanks Jay Richards for his insights on agreements and disagreements between BioLogos and ID.
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