

## Faith and Science Follow-up

I noticed a lot of interest in last week's question, "Do faith in God and science contradict?" Mary seems to have struck a chord with that topic, and the library filled up after the service. The distributed printout which posed the question and offered an answer did not include any recommended resources, but the original online article<sup>1</sup> did include one recommended book: "Surprised by Meaning: Science, Faith, and How We Make Sense of Things" by Alister McGrath. As a Christian theologian and a microbiologist, McGrath is a qualified and valuable source of information on this subject.

There are diverse views within Christianity regarding the relationship between faith and science, so there are many different resources and lines of thought to explore. In an interview<sup>2</sup>, McGrath outlined the four main positions. I would like to share McGrath's list of the leading views along with his descriptions. Below his brief summaries, I have listed some resources for more information along with my notes and descriptions of those sources for those interested in further exploring the subject.

### 1. Young Earth Creationism

"Young Earth Creationism says the Earth is about 6,000 years old and was made pretty much in the form that we see now. This conclusion, they say, is a natural reading of the Book of Genesis."

Online resource: [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)

Answers In Genesis is the leading Young-Earth Creationist organization. They maintain strict Biblical creationism and deny an old age for the universe, arguing instead that everything was created in 6 days about 6,000 year ago. They defend Adam and Eve as the parents of the human race and argue that the global flood explains the fossil record and other geological discoveries. This is the current majority view among Christians in America.

Book: "**The New Answers Book, Volume II**" edited by Ken Ham

This book gathers some of Answers in Genesis' leading contributors and other creationist authors and scientists. It offers Young-Earth answers to several big questions about science and the Bible, as well as the origin of evil, and social/political issues. The book also critiques opposing views of creation within the Christian community.

### 2. Old-Earth Creationism

"Another school of thought - old Earth creationism - while agreeing that God made the Earth and everything in it within a limited time frame, says that there are gaps within the Genesis account. For example, God creates the Universe, then there's a gap and then he creates something else. In other words, the Universe is extremely old but God made the Earth and us at a much later stage. That, again, is a perfectly legitimate way of interpreting the Book of Genesis."

Online resource: [www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org)

Founded by astronomer Hugh Ross, Reasons to Believe accepts modern cosmology and geology, but works them into a Biblical framework and argues for the special creation of humans. This ministry has an evangelistic nature, reaching out to people interested in science who may have found the Young-Earth denial of most modern science unconvincing.

Book: "**Why The Universe Is The Way It Is**" by Hugh Ross

This book deals with Ross's main field of study, astronomy, and offers Biblical explanations as to why the universe is so large, old, dark, and entropic. Ross engages the scientific data with enthusiasm, all the while demonstrating a theological view that addresses the implications of astrological discoveries. His acceptance of an ancient universe puts him at odds with Young-Earth creationists such as Answers in Genesis-which frequently attacks Ross's views and maintains that even the light from distant galaxies was created about 6,000 years ago. Ross holds a strictly inerrant view of Scripture while challenging some of the current Christian majority's interpretation of Genesis.

### 3. Intelligent Design

"A more recent development... This is quite similar to old Earth creationism, but the talk is not so much about 'God' as about an 'intelligent designer'. The basic argument is that we cannot explain the way the world is by purely naturalist explanations. We have to invoke an intelligent designer to explain what we find. This argues that a purely Darwinian account of the world cannot give a total picture."

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Online resource: [www.discovery.org](http://www.discovery.org)

The Discovery Institute is a conservative think-tank which funds and advances the Intelligent Design movement and often lends legal and academic support to school boards challenging evolution in the classroom. Since it battles in public schools and courts, the Discovery Institute does not use religious arguments or the Bible; they merely argue in favor of an unidentified intelligent designer (but many of the leading proponents are Christians who clearly believe that the Designer is God). They have produced many materials against Darwinian evolution and their ideas were representing in the popular documentary "Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed" which focused on academic persecution, critiques on evolutionary theory, and the suggestion that Darwin's ideas led to the Holocaust.

Book: "**The Case For A Creator**" by Lee Strobel

Strobel continues his popular book series by focusing on some of nature's mysteries and his personal journey to faith in a loving Creator. He interviews Intelligent Design advocates, theistic evolutionists, and notable Christian philosophers and apologists to make his case. He accepts an Old-Earth age, denies evolution, but does not present arguments for or against a historic Adam and Eve or a global flood. Strobel identifies the Designer as the God of the Bible, and shares his personal journey to Christian faith.

#### **4. Theistic Evolution**

"This sees evolution as the way in which God providentially exercises his creative processes and brings the world into being. This approach finds a lot of favor among Christian biologists and links in well with some parts of the Book of Genesis, particularly those that talk about the Earth bringing forth things, which seems to imply there's some kind of ongoing natural process."

Online source: [www.biologos.org](http://www.biologos.org)

The BioLogos Foundation was founded by Francis Collins, an evangelical Christian and leading scientist. He served as the former director of the Human Genome Project and currently heads the National Institutes of Health. His foundation brings together Christians actively involved in the scientific community as well as influential theologians such as Alister McGrath, N.T. Wright, Peter Enns, and others. They accept the scientific consensus in the fields of geology, cosmology, and biology, but argue that these are compatible with Christianity. They deal with the science and theology. Although some of their views may be condemned by some Christian leaders (particularly Young-Earth organizations), the BioLogos Foundation affirms the Bible as the inspired Word of God and holds to the tenants of orthodox Christian faith such as the divinity of Jesus and His virgin birth and resurrection.

Book: "**The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence For Belief**" by Francis Collins

In this book, Collins shares his personal testimony and talks about his role in several significant scientific discoveries in genetics and medicine and how his faith in a loving God and Jesus has enhanced his view of science. He also presents the scientific evidence for the history of life and the planet while explaining the aspects that point to God as the Creator.

*I would also like to recommend the following books that explain and defend Christianity:*

"**Belief: Readings On The Reason For Faith**" edited by Francis Collins

This book compiles essays from leading, theologians, scientists, philosophers, and apologists making the case for faith and reason. It is a good introduction to the writings of Timothy Keller, C.S. Lewis, Alvin Plantinga, and other Christian writers, as well as some classic arguments from Plato and early Christian theologians Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas.

"**Mere Christianity**" by C.S. Lewis

A classic and influential book from one of Christianity's most famous theologians and apologists.

"**The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism**" by Timothy Keller

Often described as "the modern 'Mere Christianity' ", this book by Presbyterian pastor and apologist Timothy Keller makes a broad and thorough case for faith by appealing to logic and reason and answering the claims of critics and atheists.

<sup>1</sup> The original question distributed at the church library can be found here: [www.gotquestions.org/science-God.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/science-God.html)

<sup>2</sup> Alister McGrath quotes were taken from this interview: [www.christianevidencesociety.org.uk/article/articles/25/](http://www.christianevidencesociety.org.uk/article/articles/25/)  
Each recommended book can be found on Amazon.com along with a description, reviews, and excerpts to preview.  
Most can also be purchased at Christian bookstores and checked out at public libraries.