



So Much to Discuss

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<https://peacefulscience.org/articles/much-to-discuss/>



Since August, in two months, the Discovery Institute (home of **Intelligent Design**) directed 12 articles to me. A [13th article](#) references me anonymously. There are several more from the month before. This comes on the heels of [my review](#) in *Themelios* of the Crossway *Theistic Evolution* book (please [take a look](#)). It seems we have much to discuss.

These 13 articles are substantive, respectful, and important. They point to common ground, such as agreement in how [we understood arguments for bad design](#) in science. Parallel conversations on the *Peaceful Science* forum with Drs. [Paul Nelson](#), [Kirk Durston](#), [Brian Miller](#), [Eric Holloway](#), [Ann Gauger](#), and [Winston Ewert](#) have been encouraging. I hope also that Drs. [Doug Axe](#), [Jonathan Wells](#), and [Michael Behe](#) will accept our invitations to come and reason with us. An important opportunity arose here too. [Dr. Arthur Hunt invites Doug Axe to come and reason with him](#). A growing community of scientists (including atheists, agnostics, and Christians) are setting aside time to understand and engage. We aim to treat ID fairly, and we will.

At the moment, my time is short. I am currently busy with my scientific work, and also with writing a book on the [Genealogical Adam](#) (for release November 2019). I, nonetheless, wanted to begin by responding to some questions from [one article by my friend, Ann Gauger](#). She asks what “theistic evolutionists” really believe.

Not a “Theistic Evolutionist”

The Crossway book was a critique of theistic evolution [*as it is found at BioLogos*]. Going into this conversation, I need to emphasize an important point. I am a Christian in science that affirms evolutionary science. [I am not a theistic evolutionist; I not an evolutionary creationist](#). For the record, I am not aligned with BioLogos. We separated ways as I was trying to clarify what science does and does not say about Adam.

To Gauger’s credit, she rightly distinguishes me from BioLogos, who is intended target of the Crossway book. I diverge significantly from BioLogos. I cannot currently endorse their approach, and I am looking to find a new way forward.

Confident Faith “In” Science?

We are taking a new way forward at *Peaceful Science*, and we are new on the scene. Our position, therefore, is somewhat enigmatic. Gauger asks a good question about a tagline:

“I find confident faith in the scientific world, whether or not evolution is true.”

Gauger asks about ambiguity in the grammar.

This, I think, doesn’t mean he has faith in science, but rather he has faith in God that doesn’t depend on whether or not evolution is true. That’s an interesting way of phrasing it. His faith isn’t shaken by evolution. But it could also mean he has faith in science even if evolution should prove to be false. Josh, you might want to clarify. \

“Finding confident faith in a scientific world” is how I titled [my story](#) when I published it a couple years ago. I tell this story often. Scientific arguments for God left me with [an unstable faith, built on sinking sand](#). I found confident faith in a scientific world. Not in science, but in Jesus. I found confident faith by trusting in God’s effort to reveal Himself. [God reveals Himself](#) to all by raising this man Jesus from the dead. This act of God in history is how I know that God is exists, is good, and wants to be known.

In the future, I might rephrase it: “confident faith *within* a scientific world,” or at least ensure enough context to make this clear.

Why Does Life Look Designed?

Gauger references my parable of [the 100 year old tree](#), and adds to this with another beautiful question.

Swamidass likes to tell a [story of a tree](#). The tree has an appearance of age, but it is really quite young. His lesson is in the form of a question: Why would God create a tree that looks a hundred years old but that is really only a week old?...Swamidass would say, I think, “Why make life look evolved, if it isn’t?” A fair response would be, “Why make life looks designed, if it isn’t?” Josh rejects the label, but I would ask the same question of any theistic evolutionist.

I hope my answers demonstrate how *Peaceful Science* is trying to map a new way forward, a third way.

Gauger asks, “**Why does life look designed?**” My answer: life looks designed because life *[is]* designed. God designed us all in a purposeful process of common descent. Yes, I affirm evolutionary science, but I also know it is not the full story. God created us all. He made this fact of the world intuitively clear. I am so confident in this truth, and I see no need to justify it with science.

Gauger correctly infers I would ask, “**Why does life look evolved if it isn’t?**” Most theistic evolutionists (and evolutionary creationists) ask this question as a taunt, ready to pounce with [the deceptive God](#)

objection. Not me. I asked because I thought there must theologically sound answers that do not make God a liar. Theologians responded to my invitation. Everyone noted the irreplaceable role of Jesus in bringing us to God. My favorite answer, a legitimate one in my view, was submitted by a Lutheran: God is an artist. \

Darwinism Died in 1968

Gauger ascribes “Neo-Darwinism” to me. This is an error. I reject both Neo-Darwinism and Darwinism.

Long before I became a scientist, most evolutionary scientists reached wide agreement that Darwinian mechanisms are not enough to explain the diversity of life. Back in 1968, the great Dr. Motoo Kimura first convinced us that we need non-Darwinian mechanisms too. Time warped, Intelligent Design argues against Darwinism; this is the focus of The Scientific Dissent from Darwinism, and is the only version of evolution that Behe argues against. Why tilt against windmills? Of course, the word “Darwinian” appears in the scientific literature, but we know that non-Darwinian processes are needed too. Strict Darwinian evolution died 50 years ago, long before Intelligent Design arose.

I also reject any claim that science has ruled out God’s action. I’ve made the case, successfully it seems, that there is no evidence against the de novo creation of Adam and Eve, ancestors of us all, just 6,000 years ago. Relying on Kimura’s insights, I also explained how we do not expect God’s guidance of evolution to be detectable. Science is silent about God, but in light of Jesus, we can still rationally come to believe He guides evolution.

I take advice from my friend Dr. William Lane Craig at this point:

If the elephant were in this room we would expect to see evidence of it. Therefore the absence of that evidence is good reason to think there is no elephant here. But in the case of the flea, if the flea were in this room we wouldn’t expect to have evidence of it. Therefore our failure to see the flea is not at all good reason to think that there is no flea in this room.\

Our untutored instinct is that God’s guidance in biology is an elephant. Then we find out, from non-Darwinian evolution, that God’s guidance is more like a flea. We do *not* expect to see evidence. Absence of evidence, therefore, is not good reason to doubt His guidance. **This is a third way forward**. Maybe science is neutral on questions about God. In light of non-Darwinian evolution, we do not expect to find evidence for or against divine design in DNA.

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What About The Rest?

I am answering questions about *Peaceful Science* and my views on these things. The real purpose of the Crossway book was to critique BioLogos. The Crossway book critiques BioLogos, not me. This makes Gauger’s question important:

| I wonder how many theistic evolutionists agree?

She is asking about my middle ground position on God’s guidance. BioLogos seems uncomfortable with a de novo Genealogical Adam, even though there is no evidence against it. An important scholar (and a very nice guy), Denis Lamoureux, is the one who coined the term “evolutionary creationist.” Brian Miller published two articles highlighting his concern with Lamoureux’s front-loading view of evolution (*Peaceful Science* commentary here). Confusingly, this view is identical to Dr. Michael Behe’s view, so I’m not sure why Lamoureux was singled out.

Regardless, Miller’s and Gauger’s implied question is still salient. *Where exactly does BioLogos stand?*

Many of us in the growing *Peaceful Science* community are asking exactly the same question. Many Christians of all sorts, including those that affirm evolutionary science, are drawn to *Peaceful Science*, but BioLogo seems cold to us. It is a puzzle to me. I hope they will explain and justify their position on these things.

For the moment, *Peaceful Science* is looking for another way forward. A new generation wants a better way. Perhaps we can find it together in a truthful community that, nonetheless, does not depend on agreement. Perhaps we can gather around the grand questions together, even now.

I will respond to more of these articles from the Discovery Institute as I can. We have so much to discuss together. I’ll look forward to seeing more from them engaging us too. This is an important conversation. The invitation from *Peaceful Science* is heart felt. **Come reason with us.**

Will **Doug Axe**, **Jonathan Wells**, and **Michael Behe** accept our invitation? **Arthur Hunt** and I are waiting to engage. We want to understand and to be understood.

We are facing the grand questions. They matter. There is much to discuss. Come reason with us.

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