

# Barriers to Accepting the Possibility of Creation by Means of an Evolutionary Process

BY BRUCE WALTKE

## I. Concerns of the typical Evangelical Theologian

### Introduction

My assignment, to write a white paper identifying barriers for the typical evangelical theologians to accepting the possibility of creation by means of an evolutionary process begs for definitions of “evangelical,” “typical,” “creation,” and “evolution” “Typical” could not be defined without collecting data by a survey of evangelical theologians. Thus, the paper is organized as follows: Definitions, Survey Audience, Type of Zoomerang Survey, Content of Survey, Results of Survey and Conclusions.

### Definitions

#### Evangelical

The National Association of Evangelicals states seven confessions of faith. Of these, only the first is pertinent to this essay: “We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.” B. B. Warfield’s concursive theory of inspiration influenced the evangelical understanding of inspiration to mean that the Holy Spirit superintended the human authors in their writing of Scripture.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, for most evangelicals the Bible is inerrant as to its source because of its divine authorship and infallible as to its authority for the Church’s faith and practice. This “fundamental” conviction diametrically opposes the metaphysics of naturalism to which mainline (Darwinian) science strictly adheres.

The qualifier “only” in connection with authority, distinguishes evangelicalism from liberalism, which puts reason above Scripture; from neo-orthodoxy, which restricts the authority of Scripture to its becoming the Word of God through preaching and Spirit-conviction; and from traditionalism, which locates its authority in the traditional teachings of a religious group alongside of Scripture.

For practical reasons, I restricted “evangelical theologian” to those educators within institutions whose presidents belong the Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents (FESP).

#### Typical

Typical means exhibiting the qualities, traits, or characteristics that identify a kind, class, group, or category. To define “typical” credibly, in spite of my being a novice in computer technology and statistics, I ventured to prepare a Zoomerang software program to collect the pertinent data to define a “typical” evangelical theologian by hard statistics.<sup>2</sup>

#### Evolution

The Balanced Treatment Act of Arkansas (#590 of 1981), though overturned by the Arkansas Court<sup>3</sup>, provides this definition of evolution science: “**Evolution-science** includes the scientific evidences and related inferences that indicate: (1) Emergence by naturalistic processes of the universe from disordered matter and emergence of life from non-life; (2) The sufficiency of mutation and natural selection in bringing about development of present living kinds from simple earlier kinds; (3) Emergency [sic] by mutation and natural

selection of present living kinds from simple earlier kinds; (4) Emergence of man from a common ancestor with apes; (3) Explanation of the earth's geology and the evolutionary sequence by uniformitarianism; and (6) An inception several billion years ago of the earth and somewhat later of life.”

For the purposes of the survey I abbreviated this definition to: “Evolutionary process”, which here means the sufficiency of mutation and natural selection in bringing about the development of present living kinds from simpler earlier kinds, including the emergence of man from a common ancestor with apes.

No evangelical could accept this meaning of evolution except as a qualifier of “creation”, which implies a Creator as the Primary Cause of all things and evolution as a sufficient secondary process (see below). Evangelicals commonly confess the Apostle’s Creed: “I believe in God the Father, Maker of Heaven and Earth.”

### Creation

The survey presumes the meaning of “creation” as found in Miriam Webster On Line Dictionary, “the act of creating, *especially*: the act of bringing the world into ordered existence.” In religious literature, particularly in the so-called debate between creation and evolution, the “act” of creating implies an Agent, the Creator. “So-called” because to phrase the debate in those terms assumes creation and evolution are mutually exclusive; yet they are not, as Phillip Johnson has effectively argued.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, since “creation” involves “ordered existence,” creation by the process of evolution implies--so it seems to me--the Creator’s intelligence guiding the process, not a process by unguided, purposeless chance.<sup>5</sup> Johnson agrees: “The essential point of creation has . . . to do with the element of design or purpose. In the broadest sense, a creationist’ is simply a person who believes that the world (and especially mankind) was *designed* and exists for a *purpose* [italics his].”<sup>6</sup>

## II. Nature of the Survey

### Target audience: Evangelical seminary professors

To define “typical” and so collect data regarding barriers to “typical” evangelical theologians, I prepared a cover letter addressed personally to each president of the Fellowship of Evangelical Seminary Presidents (FESP). I asked them to take my Zoomerang survey and to forward an attached cover letter in which the Zoomerang program was imbedded to the educators on their faculties (see Appendix I). Surveys generally tend to be ignored. With regard to the origin of species, however, I judged the desire of evangelical theologians to narrow the gap in our understanding of the origins of species between the biblical faith in God as their originator and secular faith in the sufficiency of unguided evolution to explain their origins of sufficient interest to overcome this endemic resistance.

### Zoomerang Software: “radio-button” method

Zoomerang allows one to program either a “radio-button” (their term) survey (i.e., giving the audience the option to register “yes” by pushing the button or “no” by refraining), or a text-box survey (i.e., the audience states and comments on their perceived barriers). The latter would have been a desideratum for fuller information concerning the audience’s convictions, but that program would have been for them both more challenging and too time consuming, and for me less efficient to administer. “Challenging,” because it demands more competence to

be proactive than reactive; “too time consuming,” because Zoomerang advises that a survey should not demand more than five minutes.

Fortunately, some survey recipients responded to nuance the survey’s stated barriers (see Conclusions). One correspondent cited three theological barriers that I had neglected to list as barriers. Another called attention to distinctions not covered in the survey. Their judicious insights partially inform this white paper.

## Survey Barriers

Because evangelicalism distinguishes itself from other forms of Christianity by finding its authority for faith and practice only in the Holy Bible, I restricted my theological questions to those that involve the Bible and did not include broader theological issues that pertain to all Christians. All Christians, I assume, would find mainline science’s metaphysics of naturalism to define all reality an insuperable barrier to accepting naturalistic (Darwinian) evolution. Nevertheless, in hindsight I wish I had raised the barrier: “I do not accept creation by the process of evolution because gives it ‘gives away the store’ to naturalism.”

### First Barrier: A straightforward reading of Genesis 1-2 does not harmonize with evolution

Straightforward readings of the two creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 respectively lead to the traditional beliefs that the creation of all things took place in six consecutive twenty-four hour days. Thus, the first barrier of the survey:

1. *The creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2, when interpreted by the grammatico-historical method [hereafter assumed], cannot be harmonized with creation by the process of evolution.*

A correspondent suggested I should have included another barrier: *the process of evolution takes away from God’s glory as Creator and/or the revelation of his incommunicable attributes* (his eternal power and divine nature, Rom 1:18). Suffice it here to note this potential barrier. The barrier did not come to mind when I prepared the survey because “creation” to me assumes both the Creator’s glory and the creation’s revelation of his sublime nature.

### Second Barrier: The genealogies of Genesis do not harmonize with evolution

A straightforward reading of the linear genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, which implies they contain few gaps, leads one to draw the conclusion that the Genesis creation week occurred between 6,000 and 10,000 years ago. Since Darwinian evolution demands millions of years for the gradual evolution of species by small mutations, the Biblical chronology rules out the Darwinists’ theory of evolution. Thus, the second articulated barrier:

2. *The creation accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 and the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11 cannot be reconciled with the extended period of time demanded by creation by means of an evolutionary process*

In this connection I should have added, as the same critic noted, the potential barrier that *the process of evolution raises questions about the historicity of Adam*. This was a gross oversight on my part. Old Testament literature (cf. Gen. 9:6; Exod 20:11; Psalm 8:6-8), our Lord Jesus’ (Mar 10:6-7) and Paul’s inter-textual reference to Adam

(Romans 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45; 1 Tim 2:18) suggest the contributors to the canon read Genesis in the traditional way, yielding the teaching of an historical Adam and Eve. According to the Bible all people are descended from a common ancestor. What this means is that all humans share a common heritage and are in an ontological sense equal. Moreover, because both the genealogy our Lord Jesus Christ's reaches back to Adam and Paul's contrast between the First Adam and the Second Adam, the process of evolution raises questions about the credibility of the Bible's witness to our Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Third Barrier: Evolution does not harmonize with the doctrine that Adam brought death and decay into the world**

Traditional readings of Genesis 3:17-10, Romans 8:20-22 lead some evangelicals to the conviction that all death and decay is the result of human sin. Robert R. Gonzales, Jr., Dean and Professor of Biblical Studies Reformed Baptist Seminary, Easley, South Carolina, in a forthcoming polemic against Collins, writes: "Paul, following the teaching of Genesis and the rest of the OT, believed human sin had ecological ramifications."<sup>7</sup> Thus, the third barrier of the survey:

3. *God's sentence of death and decay on the creation in connection with Adam's Fall cannot be harmonized with the theory of creation by the process of evolution.*

### **Fourth Barrier: Evolution calls into question Adam as the father of original sin and of Christ as the Redeemer from the effects of sin**

Correlatively, the process of evolution threatens the Scriptural doctrine that Adam is named as responsible for bringing sin into the world and that Christ is named as the one undoing the effects of sin (Rom 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:45-49). Since in addition to calling into question the historicity of Adam, evolution could involve the emergence of humankind from more than one source and so call into question the doctrine of original sin and redemption in Jesus Christ. The survey's fourth barrier, though better stated in the above heading, inadequately expressed the barrier thus:

4. *The theory of creation by the process of evolution does not harmonize with the doctrine of Adam's headship over the whole human race.*

Before shifting from theological barriers to scientific barriers for evangelical theologians, the same critic raised the additional barrier that *evolution does not harmonize with the biblical doctrines of last things*: the Second Coming of Christ and the John's vision of the new heavens and new earth. As for the Second Coming of Christ, she notes that it is likened to situations in the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37-39) and of Lot (Luke 17:26-27). I assume she intends to imply that these intertestamental references support the traditional reading of Genesis 1-11. As for the new heaven and earth, she notes that John's vision of the new heavens and earth (Revelation 21- 22) consciously contrasts the old and new creations (Genesis 1; Revelation 21) and compares it with the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:7-17; Revelation 22). I should have included this additional barrier in the survey.

### **Fifth Barrier: Evolution is bad science in part because it presumes an old earth**

By raising barriers pertaining to science I may be moving beyond my mandate, but I have been asked to cite barriers to evangelical theologians, and I am aware that many evangelical theologians think evolution is bad science. So I included some scientific barriers in the survey. These barriers may seem puerile to a scientist, so let it be recalled I prepared the survey for theologians, not scientists.

Several parachurch organizations, especially the Institute for Creation Research (ICR), founded by Henry Morris, have advanced the traditional readings of the Bible by so-called “creation science.” These organizations, true to their evangelical heritage, want to prioritize the authority of the Bible by contending that secular science is bad science. Their belief systems consists of seven principles: 1.) that God created the universe in the first six days of earth’s existence, ruling out the Big Bang theory of the universe 13.73 billion years ago; 2.) that he rested from his creative work on the seventh day, ruling out progressive evolution until the present time; 3.) that, while allowing some gaps in the genealogies from Adam to Noah ( Genesis 5) and from Noah to Abraham (Genesis 10, 11), the original creation cannot be more than 6,000 to 10,000 years ago, thereby ruling out an old earth, which is necessary for the process of evolution; 4.) that God made and fixed the species on the fifth creative day, thereby also ruling out evolution; 5.) that he created human beings, male and female, as a distinct species, uniquely bearing his image, on the sixth day, also ruling out evolution; 6.) that Adam’s original sin destroyed the original ecology, introducing death into the entire creation--also ruling out the process of evolution, and 7.) that Noah’s Flood destroyed earth’s original creation but afterward God reconstructed the earth according to the original pattern with a few exceptions (Genesis 6-9), negating much of the putative evidence of paleontology for an old earth and evolution. This belief system has been labeled Young Earth Creationism (YEC). In the survey I stated this barrier as follows:

5. *The Institute of Creation Research, founded by Henry Morris, has presented sufficient scientific evidence to reject the theory of creation by the process of evolution.*

### **Sixth Barrier: Evolution is bad science, even though the Big Bang occurred 13.73 billion years**

YEC stands in contrast to a belief in “Old Earth Creationism” (OEC). Both YEC and OEC are committed to scientific research, but YEC gives priority to traditional readings of the Bible over mainstream scientific thought. By contrast OEC gives more credence to mainline science.

OEC may be an umbrella term that includes Gap creationism (see barrier 10) and progressive (or “day age”) creationism. More normative today than the Gap Theory among OEC adherents is progressive creationism. The astronomer, Hugh Ross, founder and president of “Reasons to Believe” ministry, accepts the Big Bang Theory for the beginning of the universe and explains its further formation and expansion by naturalistic means. Although he allows that to some extent species have changed or evolved in a process continuously guided by God, he believes: 1.) God directly intervened in the natural order at key moments (i.e. as the unique moments recorded in the six days of creation in Genesis). 2.) Death existed among creatures other than human beings before Adam’s Fall. 3) Noah’s Flood was local, not global. The barrier of progressive creationism is addressed in the survey’s sixth statement:

*6. The Reasons to Believe Ministry, represented by Hugh Ross, has presented sufficient scientific evidence to reject the theory of creation by the process of evolution.*

### **Seventh Barrier: ID explains the origins of species better than evolution**

Some in the Intelligent Design (ID) movement, a relative newcomer on the evangelical scene, contend that ID refutes evolution at least on the molecular level. Among evangelical educators, Phillip E. Johnson, who confesses himself a born-again Christian, is the most influential of the ID movement. According to Johnson, Darwin's theory of the plasticity of species is based on bad science (i.e., it lacks empirical evidence) and bad logic (i.e., it begs the issue [my summary]). Michael J. Behe, professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University, while accepting evolution above the molecular level,<sup>8</sup> argues against evolution on that level because of what he calls the molecule's irreducible complexity.<sup>9</sup> The seventh survey statement restricts itself to Johnson's arguments:

*7. Apologists such as those of the Intelligent Design Movement, fathered by Phillip E. Johnson, have made a sufficient case to reject the theory of evolution and to replace it with a theory of intelligent design.*

### **Eighth and Ninth Barriers: Science is restricted to observable phenomenon, and apparent age at the time of creation confounds the scientific evidence**

Two theories that gut much of the scientific endeavor to explain the origins species are: the theory of apparent age—that is, a mature chicken came before the egg—and that of Ken Ham, founder of Answers in Genesis: science can only address the observable present, not the past, especially the origins of the universe. Evangelicals Statements 8 and 9 in the survey give voice to these two theories:

*8. Ken Ham rightly argues "Scientists only have the present—they do not have the past," ruling out the possibility of science to theorize the history of origins.*

*9. The apparent age of the universe can be explained by reckoning that God created the universe with apparent age.*

### **Tenth Barrier: The gap theory explains the fossil record**

Gap creationism,<sup>10</sup> a popular point of view from 1850-1950 to explain the fossil record, agrees with YEC in its interpretation of Genesis 1:2-11:25 but posits that there was a gap of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, allowing the possibility of two distinct creations. By appealing to an original creation in Genesis 1:1, distinct from the later six-day twenty-four hour creation (Genesis 1:2-2:3), Gap creationism, without abandoning a literalistic hermeneutic for Genesis, explains the wide range of scientific observations for an old earth such as dinosaurs, fossils, ice cores, ice ages and geological formations. For many today the Hubble telescope that reveals a 13.73 billion old universe rendered this view untenable. The tenth barrier states:

*10. The Gap Theory (i.e., the destruction of an original creation) explains the geological/fossil record) hinders me from accepting the theory of creation by evolution*

**Eleventh Barrier: The framework hypothesis does not harmonize with evolution**

The framework theory argues that the days of" of Genesis creation do not set forth a chronology of any kind, but rather a metaphorical, literary artistic "framework." According to this hypothesis, the six days described in Genesis 1 present a parallel development between the first triad of days, outlining the forming of the universe, and a second triad outlining the filling the forms with rulers over the spheres that house them. This hypothesis in fact aims to support the theory of creation by evolution. Nevertheless, I have heard some students appeal to the theory as a barrier to accepting the theory of creation by evolution. Therefore, I included the following statement:

*11. The Framework Hypothesis (i.e., the days of Genesis are artistically arranged and not literal) hinder me from accepting the theory of creation by evolution*

**Twelfth Statement: No barriers to theistic evolution**

Some evangelicals raise no barriers to accepting the theory of creation by the process of evolution and so would not press the button on any of the previous potential barriers I thought it useful, however, to determine statistically how many accept creation by the process of evolution. In hindsight, I should have clearly distinguished between theistic guided evolution and evolution by natural processes apart from God's involvement, instead of assuming that Providence, not Chance, governs nature and history (see conclusion). The survey's final statement is:

*12. None of the above. I can accept the theory of theistic evolution.*

### III. Survey Results

#### Raw data

Email Invites	Visits	Partials	Screen Outs	Completes
1	659	0	0	264

Statement	Total Responses	Percentage of Completes
#1	116	44%
#2	61	23%
#3	90	34%
#4	76	28%
#5	51	19%
#6	20	8%
#7	95	36%
#8	44	17%
#9	47	18%
#10	16	6%
#11	18	7%
#12	121	46%

#### Reflections on Data

On the one hand, gratifyingly, 659 evangelical professors visited the site. This suggests that those who did not respond were not indifferent to the perceived tension between creation and evolution. On the other hand, 60% of those who visited the site chose not to participate. Why so many did not respond may be explained in part by the conflicting responses I received. Some faculty members of one institution thought the survey was *biased in favor of* the creation by the process evolution. One president hesitated to pass it on because that president thought it was *biased against creation* by the process of evolution. Still another respondent said, my naming people in connection with theories sounded like a “hit list”. (Lest I be misunderstood, my intention in naming well-known exponents of positions intended tersely to summarize barriers.) Another respondent thought I should have eliminated “sufficiency” from my definition of evolution but did not think my error compromised the survey. Another respondent stumbled over the word “cannot.” In his or her opinion one could harmonize Genesis and evolution by what they think is twisting the text from its normal reading, but this splitting of hairs would involve not a straight-forward reading of the survey statement.

Nevertheless, it is significant to note that the 40% who chose to participate completed the entire survey. The percentages that follow represent the ratio of the 264 who participated in the survey:

### **First Barrier: The traditional reading of Genesis 1-2**

Surprisingly, only 44% found a straightforward reading of Genesis 1-2 a barrier to accepting the theory of creation by the process of evolution. However, the statistic may be somewhat skewed. Two professors of one school complained that the first button did not work. Since no other participants from this or any other school complained of this glitch, hopefully the problem was an incident, not an example, of flawed technology. Whatever the case, a traditional reading of Genesis 1 and 2, is the largest hindrance to narrowing the gap between biblical faith science and secular science, albeit the hindrance was much smaller than anticipated.

As for the theological concern that the *“process of evolution” takes away from God’s glory as Creator and/or the revelation of his incommunicable attributes* (his eternal power and divine nature, Rom 1:18), the rest of the survey suggests this would not have been a “typical” concern.

In a personal correspondence, Dr. Falk suggested that if I had proposals to narrow the gap between creation and evolution, I should do so. The first barrier can be lowered, I suggest, by recognizing the two levels of literature: the historical story level and the interpretive, creative plot level. On the story level the accounts of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 are historical; on the plot level they are creative representations of the historical reality. To help students understand the distinction between story and plot I bring to class a half glass of water. When asked whether the glass is full or half full, students hesitate to answer the obvious—it must be a trick—but when called upon to vote, they almost unanimously vote for its being half-full. I respond that it is full: full of gas, visible and invisible. I then ask them to paint a picture of invisible gas, whereupon they realize the need for creativity. I suggest representing the invisible reality by putting the water in the top half of the glass. I then ask them to paint the invisible abstraction that both the visible and invisible gases are necessary to sustain life. To paint this invisible truth I suggest adding a goldfish to the top half of the glass and a canary to the bottom. They now realize my creative, finished painting is based on ostensive reality, not on mythical fiction, and the additional creative element expresses truth beyond the historical reality. Similarly, the accounts of creation are based on real history, but presented creatively, using the form of ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies.<sup>11</sup>

### **Second Barrier: The genealogies of Genesis**

Only 23% stumbled over the genealogies of Genesis, a little more than half of those who demand a straightforward reading of Genesis creation accounts. Probably most evangelical professors realize that the linear genealogies of Genesis aim to show the connection of the last, the tenth, generation with the first; not to present a precise chronology of elapsed time between them.

### **Third Barrier: Adam’s fall brought death and decay**

Presumably, that only 34% stumble over the traditional doctrine that Adam’s fall introduced death and decay into the ecology suggests that the other 66% think the Fall brought death to the human race, not to ecology. Hugh Ross argues this case quite well.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, in my Genesis commentary, I suggest that the “wild animals,” in contrast to the domestic, mentioned in Genesis 1:24 (cf. 2:19), are carnivores (i.e., predators).<sup>13</sup>

#### **Fourth Barrier: Adam's headship of the human race**

Had I worded the barrier as precisely in the survey as in the heading, I doubt there would have been a significant difference in the response: 28% stumbled over this barrier; 72% did not.

#### **Fifth Barrier: Evolution is bad science because of YEC theory**

Only 19% of the participants accept the scientific evidence such as those presented by ICR to defend a straight-forward reading of Genesis. This is especially surprising since some evangelical schools, such as Liberty University, require their faculty to adhere to YEC.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Sixth Barrier: Evolution is bad science in spite of OEC**

Surprisingly, in spite of Hugh Ross's strong arguments from astronomy for the age of the universe, presumably, only 7% accept the argument of RTB that "day" in Genesis refers to ages of time coincidental to stages in the process of creation.

#### **Seventh Barrier: ID refutes evolution**

Those who contend for the theory of creation by the process of evolution must address the 37% that find intelligent design refutes evolution at the least on the molecular. This position presumably garnered the support of a relatively larger ratio of the respondents than the arguments of ICR and RTB for several reasons: 1.) ID presents more credible scientific arguments, 2) is a better apologetic against naturalistic evolution; and 3) comports better with the Biblical data as a whole, such as belief in a Creator, the fixed speciation and the uniqueness of humankind.

#### **Eighth and Ninth Barriers: The restricted nature of science and apparent age theories**

The ratio of the respondents to the eighth and ninth barriers shows that about 17% and 18% of evangelical educators still find these traditional, evangelical arguments that gut the evidence from geology/paleontology, astronomy and biology and other methods of dating convincing.

#### **Tenth Barrier: The Gap Theory**

A fraction of evangelical theologians, 6%, still support the gap theory. The changing tide in evangelical opinion within a century shows evangelical theologians are typically open to scientific evidence.

#### **Eleventh Barrier: The Framework Theory**

Surprisingly, 7% of the respondents found a theory, promoted to reconcile the Genesis account of creation with evolution, an obstacle to accepting it. This suggests that 7% find the framework hypothesis, which in fact is noncommittal with respect to evolution, provides a means to deny evolution.

#### **Twelfth Statement: No objection to creation by evolution**

The biggest surprise to me from the survey was so many evangelical theologians can accept the theory of creation by evolution. Slightly **more** (46% to 44%) accept the theory of creation by the process of evolution than those who find the Genesis account a hindrance to accepting that theory.

## IV. Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from this survey, in spite of its flaws and limitations.

### What can be learned

First, this survey and the survey by Badger and Tenneson (see Appendix II) shatter the caricature of evangelicalism in the media and the populace as demanding the theory of YEC.

Correlatively, the fact that 46% can accept the theory of creation by evolution confirms my suspicion that on the issue of evolution one cannot speak of a typical evangelical theologian.

Third, the organizations seeking to refute evolution and/or to narrow the gap between creation and evolution must address one another with respect and openness to be optimally effective. The gap between BioLogos and ID, I suggest, can best be narrowed by open dialogue, not by entrenched confrontation.<sup>15</sup>

### What should be done

First, a differentiation must be clearly stated between evolution guided by the Creator and evolution guided by purposeless, random chance.<sup>16</sup> In my opinion, however, no evangelical theologian can deify Chance as *ultimately* ruling the process or origins.

Second, a careful distinction must be made between deism and immanence. Evangelicals rightly reject deism—that is to say, God began the process and then walked away from it. The Trinity is immanent in all his creation (Job 38:34-41; Matt 6:25-30; Acts 17:28; Col. 1:17).

Third, the arguments of the ID movement, whether for a total negation of evolution or a rejection of it on only the molecular level, represents the main scientific challenge to the theory of creation by evolution. Moreover, the difference between total negation of evolution of, not within, species (Phillip E. Johnson) or only on the molecular level (Michael Behe) should inform any dialogue.

In short, my survey should have begun where I have ended this essay—that is to say, with more precise definitions.

## Appendix I: Letter to Faculty

Dear Professor:

Francis S. Collins, noted for his leadership of the Human Genome Project, for his recent appointment by President Barack Obama to head up the National Institute of Health and for his founding of BioLogos, has asked me to prepare a white paper by September 15, 2009 on “Identifying the barriers that hinder the typical evangelical theologians from accepting the possibility of creation by means of an evolutionary process.” The paper is one of several to be presented to a conference that has been organized by Francis S. Collins, Alister McGrath, Os Guinness, Tim Keller and Darrel Falk. The purpose of the meeting and papers is to bring together a group of evangelical leaders who will think together about the apparent gulf that currently exists between science and faith, and how the Church can best narrow that gulf without diminishing our shared commitment to the evangelical Christian faith.

To fulfill my assignment I have prepared a brief, anonymous survey-questionnaire, listing several potential barriers. I am asking you as a leading evangelical theologian to check as many barriers that hinder you from accepting creation by the process of evolution. The link to the survey is <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB229J9ETEHSU>.

The deadline for taking the survey is August 31, 2009 [revised to September 9, 2009].

The tension between faith and science with regard to the origin of species is one of the most important and urgent issues that confronts the church today. This is a unique opportunity to seek to narrow the gap between faith and science.

Faithfully,

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## Appendix II: Findings of Four Origins Surveys Administered to AG and Pentecostal Faculties

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### Three Surveys

- 2004 (224 faculty respondents)
- 2008 (70 faculty respondents)
- 2009 (145 faculty respondents)

### Response of Faculty

Self-Reported Position	2004 A/G (n=224)* <sup>1</sup>	2008 Pentecostal (n=70) <sup>2</sup>	2009 A/G (n=145)* <sup>3</sup>	CCU Biology Faculty 2005** <sup>4</sup>
Young Earth Creationists	34.8%	24.3%	23.4%	25%
Old Earth Creationist	30.8%	38.6%	41.4%	48%
Evolutionary Creationists	12.1%	25.7%	19.3%	27%
Undecided and Blank	21.4%	10.0%	15.8%	N/A
Atheistic Evolutionists	0.8%	1.4%	0%	N/A

\*  $p < 0.05$ , comparing 2004 and 2009 samples.  $\chi^2 = 11.066$ ,  $df = 3$

\*\*  $n = 67$  CCCU schools: Sutherland, J.C. (July 1, 2005) "Evangelical Biologists and Evolution." *Science* 309:51.

1. Tenneson, M. and Badger, S., "Teaching Origins to Pentecostal Students." In Yong, Amos, ed., *The Spirit Renews the Face of the Earth: Pentecostal Forays in Science and Theology of Creation*. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick Press, 2009)
2. Tenneson, M., "Measuring Pentecostal Attitudes and Beliefs about Origins." Paper presented at the American Scientific Affiliation Annual Meeting, Baylor University, Waco, TX (August 1, 2009)
3. Badger, S. and Tenneson, M., "Does the Spirit Create through Evolutionary Processes? Pentecostals and Biological Evolution." In James K. A. Smith & Amos Yong, eds., *Science and the Spirit: Pentecostal Engagements*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, forthcoming in 2010)
4. The statistics for the Counsel of Christian Colleges and Anversities were included for comparative purposes and published in Sutherland, J.C., "Evangelical Biologists and Evolution." *Science* 309 (July 1, 2005),51

## Appendix II (cont.)

### Do you embrace the theory of Intelligent Design? (2009 survey)

Response	Faculty	Students
Yes	84.1%	83.2%
No	4.1%	3.8%
Blank	11.7%	13.0%

## End Notes

1. B.B. Warfield summed up his understanding of Biblical inspiration by saying, “The Biblical books are called inspired as the divinely determined products of inspired men; the Biblical writers are called inspired as breathed into by the Holy Spirit, so that the product of their activity transcends human powers and becomes Divinely authoritative. Inspiration is, therefore, usually defined as a supernatural influence exerted on the sacred writers by the Spirit of God.” (B.B. Warfield, *Inspiration and Revelation of the Bible*, [Nutley, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1951], p. 131.
2. About the time I finished this essay Dr. Stephen Badger, professor of chemistry at Evangel University, kindly sent to me an online survey of viewpoints of origins among faculties of Assemblies of God and Pentecostal Schools that he and Dr. Tenneson, professor of biology at Evangel University, prepared (see Appendix II).
3. The Act was rejected in part because it specified only two alternatives: so-called Young Earth Creationism (see below) and so-called science evolution.
4. Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (InterVarsity Press, 1993), pp. 3-4.
5. The book of Job implicitly argues against Darwin that one cannot get God off the hook for what humankind calls “evil” in the world by attributing evil to evolution. The book of Job argues that God bounds evil with good, the mysterious chaos with ordered cosmos of which chaos is a part. He feeds the predator its prey (Job 38:39-41). That book also teaches that the mysterious surd humbles humankind by illuminating its finitude in the face of the Infinite (see Job 38-41). Elsewhere, God takes full responsibility for the deaf, the mute and the blind (Exod 4:11; cf. John 9:1-3).
6. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*, p. 115.
7. Robert R. Gonzales, *Where Sin Abounds* (Wipf & Stock, 2009 forthcoming).
8. “I find the idea of common descent . . . fairly convincing, and have no particular reason to doubt it . . . However, I do not believe it [natural selection working on variation] explains molecular life.” (Michael Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge of Evolution*, Touchstone, 1996), p. 5).
9. “By *irreducibly complex* [his] I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning.” (Ibid, p. 36).
10. Also known as Ruin-Restoration creationism, Restoration creationism, or “The Gap Theory.”
11. Bruce K. Waltke with Charles Yu, *An Introduction to Old Testament Theology* (Zondervan, 2007), pp. 173-208.
12. Hugh Ross, *Creation As Science* (NavPress, 2006), p. 79.
13. Bruce K. Waltke with Cathi Fredrickson, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Zondervan, 2001), p. 64.
14. Stephen Badger, personal communication.
15. In a personal correspondence, one highly respected scholar—were it otherwise, I would not cite him-- wrote that it is alleged that Collins will not publicly engage an adherent of anti-evolution ID; he further suggested that if this is not so, Collins should make this clear.
16. A professor, who responded to the essay with several judicious comments, wrote: “The biggest issue here theologically is the guided / unguided nature of the creation. Historically, this has deep roots, and Asa Gray corresponded with Charles Darwin at length on the issue. Gray saw no problems with Darwin’s proposed mechanisms, provided they were guided (and perhaps limited). Darwin refused to permit any notion of guidance, because of all the evil in the world that exists, which a God who could guide nature could prevent.