

How is BioLogos different from Theistic Evolution, Intelligent Design and Creationism?



Introduction

Chapters 8 – 10 of *The Language of God*, by Dr. Francis Collins, contain brief descriptions of Theistic Evolution, Intelligent Design and Creationism. Below are definitions of each term and clarifying points to distinguish them from BioLogos.

BioLogos

BioLogos is most similar to Theistic Evolution. Theism is the belief in a God who cares for and interacts with creation. Theism is different than *deism*, which is the belief in a distant, uninvolved creator who is often little more than the sum total of the laws of physics. Theistic Evolution, therefore, is the belief that evolution is how God created life. Because the term evolution is sometimes associated with atheism, a better term for the belief in a God who chose to create the world by way of evolution is BioLogos. BioLogos comes from the Greek words *bios* (life) and *logos* (word), referring to the gospel of [John](#):

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

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Intelligent Design

Contrary to some interpretations, Intelligent Design, or ID, makes no specific theological claims. Proponents of ID only argue that "certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection."² This definition can be confusing because Theistic Evolutionists also believe an intelligent being created the world. Theistic Evolutionists, however, also believe evolution by natural selection is the process God used to create. Although advocates of ID do not disagree that evolution is change over time, they deny the biological process of evolution by natural selection could account for the present complexity of life forms on Earth.

Intelligent Design proponents argue evolution cannot explain certain aspects of creation. In particular, ID claims certain features of the world are irreducibly complex and could not have evolved from less complex predecessors. Although ID supporters believe that such findings refute evolution, Theistic Evolutionists — along with the vast majority of mainstream scientists — do not see these examples as a threat to the theory of evolution by natural selection. Collins writes about several popular examples of irreducible complexity in chapter nine *The Language of God*.

Creationism

BioLogos and ID agree the Earth and the universe were created. Creationism, however, generally refers to the belief that life on Earth is a result of a direct act of intervention on God's part. This act cannot be explained by science but is described in the early chapters of Genesis. There are several versions of Creationism, two of which are Young Earth Creationism (YEC) and Old Earth Creationism (OEC).

Young Earth Creationism

Young Earth Creationism is often referred to as Biblical Creationism, although it is not the only view held by those who believe the Bible. Young Earth Creationism is both a theological and scientific belief about the world. It states the God of the Bible created the world in six 24-hour periods, as understood by a literalist interpretation of the first and second chapters of Genesis. With this theory, the Bible provides a scientific account of human origins. Theistic

Evolution, however, does not contend the first two chapters of Genesis were written as historical documentation of God's creative process. Although Young Earth Creationism is currently popular in the United States, this was not always the case.

Old Earth Creationism

Unlike Young Earth Creationism, Old Earth Creationists do not necessarily believe God created everything in six 24-hour periods. However, Old Earth Creationists do believe that God intervened in creation for certain key stages. Because there are many options for how and when God acted in the creation process, there are several approaches to Old Earth Creationism. The most popular perspectives are called Gap Creation and Progressive Creation. Old Earth Creationism also allows for many different interpretations of Genesis including the Day-Age perspective, the Gap theory and the Framework interpretation.

Although members of other faiths might believe in an Old Earth Creationist viewpoint, the term is generally used to refer to the Christian perspective. Because BioLogos includes belief in a creator, it is sometimes thought to be a version of Old Earth Creationism. However, because BioLogos does not require that God miraculously intervened in the process of evolution in the sense of working outside the laws of nature, and because BioLogos also claims that biological evolution is the way by which God created the world, it is not a form of Old Earth Creationism.

Consulted Experts:

The BioLogos Foundation is grateful for the assistance of [Karl Giberson](#) and [Francis Collins](#) in drafting this response.³

Notes

1. John 1:1 (NASB)
2. Discovery Institute, "Top Questions," Discovery Institute: Center for Science and Culture, <http://www.discovery.org/csc/topQuestions.php> (accessed 12/26/08).
3. All of Dr. Francis Collins' work on this response was completed before [being sworn in](#) as Director of the National Institutes of Health.

Further Reading

Intelligent Design

- The Discovery Institute. "[The Center for Science and Culture](#)."
- The Center for Science and Culture. "[The Science of Intelligent Design](#)."

Young Earth Creationism

- Answers in Genesis. "[Get Answers](#)."
- Institute for Creation Research. "[Evidence for Creation](#)."
- Numbers, Ronald L. "[Creationism History](#)."
- Numbers, Ronald L. *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993.

Old Earth Creationism

- Answers in Creation. "[Old Earth Belief](#)."
- Northwest Creation Network. "[Old Earth Creationism](#)."
- Reasons to Believe. "[FAQs: Evolution vs. Creationism](#)."

Note: Because Theistic Evolution necessitates an 'old earth', it is often labeled as a version of Old Earth Creationism. Some of these websites serve as an example. But for the reasons illustrated above, Theistic Evolution (and therefore BioLogos) is distinct from Old Earth Creationism.

Theistic Evolution

- The Faraday Institute. Lectures on [Evolution](#).
 - The American Scientific Affiliation. [Creation and Evolution](#).
 - Christians in Science. [Creation](#).
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