

## The BioLogos Foundation Sparks Excitement

America's science-and-religion conversation gets an important new voice

Can Christians accept modern scientific theories of origins like evolution and the big bang? "Yes," writes Dr. Francis Collins in his bestselling book, *The Language of God*. "But how?" his readers asked back.

To answer that question and help Christians discover harmony between science and faith, Collins created The BioLogos Foundation in 2008.

"I got so many thoughtful questions from fellow Christians," said Collins. "I needed some way to respond to the thousands of honest seekers who were contacting me other than answering a thousand e-mails."

Collins officially launched BioLogos at a gala event in April 2009. The event attracted a number of leaders in the fields of science, religion, journalism, and academics, including *Washington Post* columnist Kathleen Parker, Gordon College president Jud Carberg, CS Lewis Institute president Tom Tarrants, National Presbyterian Church pastor Earl Palmer, and NASA astronomer Jennifer Wiseman.

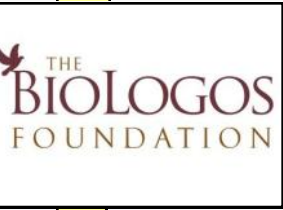
At the launch, Collins presented his vision for BioLogos and introduced the team: Executive Vice President Karl Giberson, Executive Director Darrel Falk, Program Director Syman Stevens, Marketing and Development Adviser Ralph Veerman, Media



Specialist Loretta Cooper and Web Developer Stephen Mapes. He also outlined the group's ongoing projects, which include the Web site BioLogos.org, books, high school curriculum development, and conferences and workshops.

The launch made quite a splash, with publications like *TIME* and *U.S. News & World Report* taking notice, and the response to BioLogos has exceeded expectations. According to *Washington Post* columnist Kathleen Parker, the mission of BioLogos "can only be good for civilization."

The most poignant response to BioLogos, however, comes from a reader who wrote simply: "Thanks for putting together such an invaluable resource."



### BioLogos.org Goes Live!

Syman Stevens unveiled the BioLogos Web site at the launch event in April. The heart of the site is a collection of essays composed in response to questions from readers of Collins' book, *The Language of God*. Many leading science-and-religion scholars, including theologian Alister McGrath, historian of science Ronald Numbers and astronomer Owen Gingerich, contributed responses to the most frequently asked questions. The Web site also features biographies of leaders in the field of science-and-religion, summaries of recommended books, descriptions of other organizations involved in the debate, interviews and a myriad of other resources. As Stevens put it: "We want BioLogos.org to be the single best place on the Web for people to learn about the harmony of faith and science."

#### BioLogos.org at a Glance:

Visitors since launch: 69,006  
Total number of page hits: 461,167  
Current number of FAQs: 25  
Total number of pages: 300

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Page 2—Fueling the Conversation

Page 2—Bridging the Divide

Page 3—Dispelling Misconceptions

Page 3—Laying the Foundation

Page 4—Teaching Our Teachers

## Founder Francis Collins: Fueling the Conversation

It was just three years ago that my book, *The Language of God*, was published. In it, I describe my journey from atheism to Christianity and the remarkable and satisfying harmony between spiritual and scientific worldviews. At that time, I was leading human genome research in the United States, so when a deluge of letters and e-mails in response to the book came in, I initially despaired as to how I could keep the conversation going. Ultimately, it became clear that we needed a new organization to fuel and maintain this dialogue. Thus, with help and encouragement from the John Templeton Foundation, The BioLogos Foundation was born.

With the launch of BioLogos.org in April, the foundation confirmed its commitment to providing thoughtful responses to the many questions posed by scientists, religious believers, seekers and skeptics.

As it evolves, the foundation plans to extend its goals with the help of its superb leadership team. In just a few short months, the team has made it possible to take on several additional projects, all of which are guided by the shared vision of promoting the search for truth in both the natural and spiritual realms and seeking harmony between these different perspectives.

### Note added July 8:

*When I founded BioLogos, I did not know that my term as president would be limited. I have been nominated by President Obama to lead our nation's bio-*



*medical research efforts as the director of the National Institutes of Health. If confirmed by the United States Senate, I will be required to resign any official role with BioLogos, but I am supremely confident that the outstanding leadership of my colleagues will ensure a bright future for the foundation.*

**"BioLogos is rapidly becoming the premier resource in the world for Christians who believe that science and faith can live in harmony, and that evolution is a meaningful part of God's plan."**

**-Randy Scott**

## Board Chairman Randy Scott: Bridging the Divide

It is a great pleasure to join the board of BioLogos and work with a team of people who share a common passion for science and faith in God. I have always believed that science and faith share a common theme: the search for truth. If God is the creator of the universe, then science will reveal truth about God's creation, and we should embrace such truths. While naturalistic explanations reveal the beauty of God's creation, they do little to answer the question of why we're here and what the purpose and meaning of our lives are. Just as science tells us little about the meaning of life, the Bible should not be interpreted as a scientific text — as we learned at the time of Galileo. The Bible records the history of God's interaction with mankind and provides guidelines for how to find meaning in our lives through a relationship with God. I trust God's revelation in nature with regard to scientific questions, and I trust God's revelation in the Bible regarding spiritual matters. BioLogos is one of

the first organizations to provide a consistent view for believers who accept the harmony of faith and science. As many people on both sides of the debate seek to divide science and religion, the foundation's goal is to build a bridge between science and faith. BioLogos does not have all the answers, but I believe it is approaching the questions the right way: with humility, with scientific rigor and with a view into deeper spiritual questions of life. I find this to be exciting intellectually, and I look forward to working with the BioLogos team to explore God's universe.



## Executive Vice President Karl Giberson: Dispelling Misconceptions



The BioLogos team is working on an ambitious agenda aimed at helping Christians discover the harmony of science and faith. Each team member is working on different projects with input and encouragement from the others in order to address multiple but synergistic arenas.

Together, we are working to help dispel the widespread misperception that Christians must reject modern scientific theories of origins. So far, the response has been encouraging, and there is clearly a great enthusiasm for the BioLogos message.

I am especially gratified with the response to the two major projects on which I am working. The first is the Council for Christian Colleges & Universities summer workshops project. This initiative began with a conversation with Miriam Barnard, vice-president of professional development and research for the CCCU. Together we are developing a board of advisors from CCCU schools for the program. (See sidebar.)

Along with this advisory board, BioLogos will develop a summer program for both faculty and students. Our hope is to run a pilot program in the summer of 2010 at Gordon College in Wenham, Mass.

I have also been working with InterVarsity Press, a Christian publishing company, to develop projects based on the BioLogos theme. The first project is a book featuring more in-depth answers to the FAQs on our Web site. Future books are also under discussion. We are excited to work with such an influential Christian publisher.

### CCCU/BioLogos Summer programs advisory board

- **Joel Carpenter, Calvin College**
- **Ted Davis, Messiah College**
- **Christian Early, Eastern Mennonite University**
- **James Nichols, Abilene Christian University**
- **Jeff Schloss, Westmont College**
- **Cara Wall-Sheffler, Seattle Pacific University**

## Executive Director Darrel Falk: Laying the Foundation

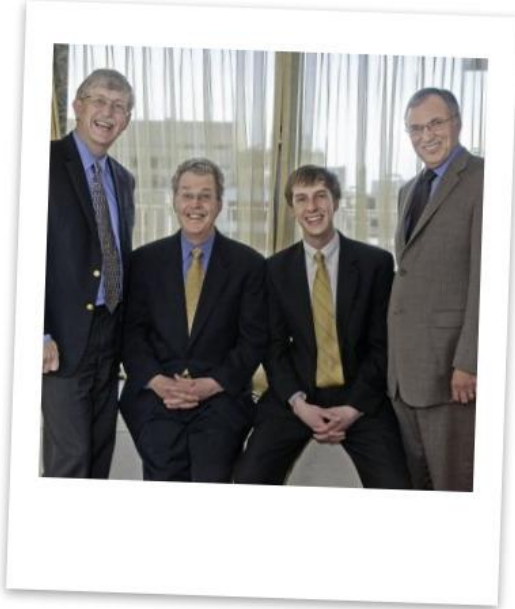
I am working with the team on two key projects. The first is a landmark conference of leading evangelical pastors, scholars and scientists who will prayerfully explore how to bring about harmony between the world of science and the world of evangelical Christianity. Our hope is that in November, this conference will lay the foundation for future workshops dealing with the harmony between science and faith and the way in which that harmony enables us to celebrate God's involvement in our lives and in creation as a whole in a richer and more meaningful way.

I am also helping to create a new high school biology curriculum for Christian schools and home schools. The goal is to develop material that will help students understand that there is compatibility

between science and faith. We want students to appreciate that science is a way of knowing about God's world and that it need not be feared or distrusted. Because evolutionary biology is central to the entire discipline, the materials will illustrate how evolution has functioned in the history of life and why this mode of creation is not inconsistent with faith — even evangelical faith.

We are preparing to visit with stakeholders in Christian education, Christian school board members, administrators, teachers and parents to identify barriers and determine how best to help. After a couple of trial lesson units, we plan to construct a complete new biology curriculum.





The BioLogos Foundation promotes the search for truth in both the natural and spiritual realms, seeking harmony between these different perspectives. BioLogos represents the harmony of science and faith. It addresses the central themes of science and religion and emphasizes the compatibility of Christian faith with scientific discoveries about the origins of life and the universe. BioLogos is led by a team of scientists who believe in God and are committed to promoting a perspective on the origins of life that is both theologically and scientifically sound.

## Helping Teachers Help Their Students

The launch of Biologos.org has been an exciting beginning for The BioLogos Foundation, but we're just getting started. Our Web site is just one of many projects we hope to undertake in the next year.

One of our most important projects is the development of an educational curriculum for use in both home and private schools. Nearly all students raised in a Christian environment learn about Genesis 1 and 2 long before they study cosmology and the big-bang theory. They hear stories about Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they study biological sciences and evolution. What happens when the information seems to conflict? Since the facts of modern science come second, many evangelical Christians either reject evolution or lose their faith. They don't see the compatibility between theology and science.

We want students to realize that these

two ways of knowing the world are different, but they are not competing claims about truth. As a result, The BioLogos Foundation is developing a robust curriculum that demonstrates how scientific explanations differ from explanations rooted in faith-based truth. We believe many Christian educators are looking for conceptual guidance and concrete tools to help them overcome the fear and misleading information that stymies their students. BioLogos is committed to providing those resources.

Our current budget for the educational curriculum project is \$50,000. So far, we have raised \$15,000. If you are interested in contributing to BioLogos, please consider supporting this project to provide a much-needed resource to Christian educators.



Stay up to date with the latest from The BioLogos Foundation. Follow us on:

facebook

AND

twitter