

## Bruce Sanguin

# “Evolutionary Christian Mysticism and Cosmological Midrash”

Episode 2 of The Advent of Evolutionary Christianity  
EvolutionaryChristianity.com

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**Bruce Sanguin** is pastor of Canadian Memorial United Church, in Vancouver — a congregation that, thanks to his leadership, models openhearted evolutionary Christian spirituality. He is a leading voice in both Progressive and Integral forms of Christianity and is the author of *Darwin, Divinity, and the Dance of the Cosmos* and *If Darwin Prayed*.

### HIGHLIGHTS

This is **one of the most heartfelt, yet content-rich, of all the dialogues**. Both guest and host offer their personal stories of “awakening” to a cosmological and evolutionary perspective. Sanguin speaks of **his dark night of the soul**, and Dowd talks about how “deep-time eyes” helped him surmount the challenges of **addictions**. Concepts include: the “**theology of fragility**,” the “**theology of promise**,” the problem of postmodern “progressive” forms of Christianity, evolutionary Christian **mysticism**, the centrality of **compassion**, cosmological reinterpretations of a number of scriptural passages (especially the **Parable of the Prodigal Son**), and exploration of **how God acts in the universe**.

This is one of just several audios that deal forthrightly with a powerful gift offered by an evolutionary understanding of human nature: its role in evoking **compassionate responses to addictions and practical tools for meeting those challenges**. This also is the best audio for exploring what it means to find one’s “**essential vocation**” — that is, life purpose. Finally, this episode concludes with Sanguin reciting two of his **poems** from his 2010 book, *If Darwin Prayed*.

### SUGGESTED AUDIENCES

This audio is highly recommended for all audiences except those for whom adherence to scripture in literal ways cannot be questioned. All seminarians and discussion groups for clergy should listen to this audio for two reasons: (1) Sanguin speaks of how his crisis of faith was

especially difficult in that he had to keep delivering sermons each Sunday, and (2) he provides examples of how scriptural passages can be re-interpreted cosmologically. Groups exploring meditative spirituality can also benefit by learning how an evolutionary form of “enlightenment” differs from traditional Eastern and Western models. Any individuals experiencing a dark night of the soul or the challenges of “mismatched instincts” (e.g., addictions) will find enormous benefit in this content and its open and vulnerable style of delivery. Groups exploring the work of Thomas Berry or Brian Swimme will benefit from hearing how both speakers attribute their “evolutionary awakenings” to ideas developed and/or furthered by Berry and Swimme.

## BLOG COMMENTS

### Sarah says:

The way Bruce applied the Parable of the Prodigal Son to the universe and our place in it literally gave me chills. Thank you a hundred times over for this inspiring conversation!

### Mary says:

As a secular humanist/atheist/Unitarian Universalist from a Christian background, having degrees in biology and chemistry, I am loving the ideas expressed here. The idea that spirituality is the collection of practices that keep us in right relation with reality; that there is a “theology of fragility” that fosters new life and can connect to the suffering on the cross! (That’s a stretch for me, but I can see the connection!); and so much more! Our UU group is lay led and I will be taking some of these ideas back to our congregation in a future ‘sermon.’

## KEYWORD TOPICS

**postmodernism** (Integral critique of), **Integral** worldview, **Brian Swimme**, **enlightenment** (evolutionary form of), **vocation**, (and “essential vocation”), **faith** (loss of), **cosmology** (importance of for spiritual wellbeing), **progressive Christianity** (critique of), **mysticism** (empirical forms of), **human role** (as evolution become conscious of itself), **truth** (empirical forms of), **Thomas Berry**, **unitive experience** (with all that is), **gnosis** (evolutionary forms of sacred knowing), **spirituality** (as right relationship to reality), **public revelation** (science as a form of), **Xavier Le Pichon**, **plate tectonics** (example of destruction plus vitality), **suffering** (naturalized understanding of), **“theology of fragility”**, **empathy** (evolution of), **the cross** (cosmological purpose of), **evolutionary impulse**, **“theology of glory”** (critique of), **Joanna Macy**, **compassion** (as increasing through time), **death** (evolutionary understanding of), **Robert Lifton**, **“psychic numbing”**, **Frans de Waal**, **Jeremy Rifkin**, **trajectory of evolution** (as increasing compassion), **“night language”**, **theology of hope**, **Noah** (biblical story of), **Abraham and Sarah** (biblical story of), **Moses**, **“kindom”** (variation of kingdom), **Paul**, **God’s**

**promise** (as expressed in evolution), **hope**, **Sacred Heart** (of the universe), **supernatural God** (critique of), **God's action** (evolutionarily), **"right relationship with reality"**, **human role** (in evolution), **evolutionary psychology**, **sinful nature** (evolutionary view of), **original sin** (evolutionary view of), **Deirdre Barrett**, **"supernormal stimuli"**, **"mismatched instincts"**, **integrity** (how evolutionary perspective supports), **addiction** (evolutionary understanding of), **deep time**, **"deep-time eyes"**, **"global heart"**, **Albert LaChance**, **New Atheists** (the advantage of speaking with one voice), **Young-Earth creationists**, **emergence** (scientific understanding of), **stewardship** (ecological critique of), **Parable of the Prodigal Son**, **ecological crisis** (religious resources for healing), **epic of evolution**, **liturgy** (the need to update with the new cosmology)

## BIOGRAPHY

**Bruce Sanguin** has been serving Canadian Memorial United Church (Vancouver, BC) since 1996. Canadian Memorial is an open-hearted, open-minded congregation teaching and practicing evolutionary Christian spirituality. He is the author of *Summoning the Whirlwind: Contemporary Sermons for a Relevant Christian Faith*; *Darwin, Divinity, and the Dance of the Cosmos: An Ecological Christianity*; *The Emerging Church: A Model for Change and a Map for Renewal*; and *If Darwin Prayed: Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics*.

Sanguin's professional webpage and blog: <http://ifdarwinprayed.com/>

## SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEO

For an 8-minute VIDEO of Sanguin presenting at a Progressive Christianity conference (including his evolutionary awakening story), see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4uTVp45bKl4>

## SUPPLEMENTARY WEBPAGE

Listener comments to this audio can be found (and more added) at the url below. Bruce Sanguin substantially interacts with those posting comments on this page: <http://evolutionarychristianity.com/blog/general/bruce-sanguin-evolutionary-christian-mystic/>

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. **Awakening to evolutionary spirituality.** Bruce Sanguin tells one of the most vulnerable and detailed **"stories of awakening"** to an inspiring form of **evolutionary spirituality** of any of the guest speakers in this series. He talks about his **loss of faith**, and then how he came

through it while on a ten-day silent retreat. He credits a book by cosmologist **Brian Swimme**, *The Universe Is a Green Dragon* as the turning point for him. He recalls:

Over a period of five to ten years, **I lost a sense of conviction**, a sense of passion for the faith—because part of this liberal **postmodern perspective** has to do with *everything* being about context and perspective, and there being **no truth** (what the **Integral** folks call “the myth of the framework”). Everything is the framework, but there’s no substance. There’s no truth within it. It’s all just a constructed narrative. And I found that I actually got to a place (after I was ordained and serving my second congregation) when I just felt that I was **wandering in a desert, and my faith had no juice**. I was trying to preach Sunday after Sunday and just had lost the passion.

So I ended up going to a silent retreat in Narragansett, Rhode Island—a ten-day retreat. . . . I picked up **Brian Swimme**’s slim volume: *The Universe Is a Green Dragon*. You know, I read it in one sitting? And I *got* it!

I had this **mystical experience of being one with the cosmos**, being an expression of the cosmos, a manifestation of the cosmos after 13.7 billion years. I experienced a kind of radical connectedness and a kinship with all that it is, including what I call Spirit or God. So I kind of staggered around the seashore for four days in this state. My mantra was “**I am the universe, noticing the universe. I am the universe, feeling the universe.**”

Later in the dialogue Bruce explains why he wants to bring this same “felt experience” to others. He says,

My hope is that people will have a *felt experience* of this kind of unitive experience that we’ve talked about: as [ourselves] being **the presence of the universe in human form**. I think that that’s what shifts everything. You gain the psychic and the emotional and the spiritual energy to do this work of repairing the Earth and living in alignment with what you call “Reality.”

Similarly, host Michael **Dowd** gives an abbreviated version of his own sudden awakening to the realization that we humans are the universe becoming aware of itself. He says,

**The shift from seeing myself as separate from the universe, separate from Earth, to seeing myself as an *expression* of the universe**, as a mode of being *of* Earth: that was an enormous shift for me, as well. Brian Swimme’s writings, as well as **Thomas Berry**’s writings, played a huge role for me in that in the late ‘80s.

**Question 1A:** *What opened up for you, if anything, when you heard Bruce and Michael tell their—very similar—**stories of awakening** and how those awakenings transformed their sense of life purpose?*

**Question 1B:** *Have you encountered previously the spiritual interpretation of evolution that Bruce and Michael talk about? If, yes, where did you hear of it, and did it make an impression on you when you first heard it? If not, **how might these two personal stories** invite you to explore this new cosmological perspective for yourself?*

**Question 1C:** *Imagine that Bruce and Michael had advocated this new cosmological perspective in an entirely rational way, without telling their **personal stories**. What would have been missing for you?*

2. **Evolutionary enlightenment.** Bruce Sanguin recounts that his story of awakening felt like a form of enlightenment—but that it was distinctively *evolutionary* in an important way. He explains,

What happened was that **the dualistic worldview collapsed**. [Before the collapse I felt that] here's Bruce over here, and the universe is out there—it's something I look at up in the sky somehow. Or, there's the Earth, and then there's Bruce, and I'm walking on it. But the experience was that I walking as the Earth: as the presence of the Earth in human form. And as I say, this was an experience of **enlightenment** for me; it was no less than enlightenment.

It just was like, Oh my goodness! **What cosmos have I been inhabiting?** Where have I *been*? Who did I think I was? If I am not *this*, if I am not the presence of the universe in this human form, then who do I think I am?—this little bag of skin and bones?

In important ways it **was different than the classical Eastern form of enlightenment**, which basically is kind of an *escape* from the Wheel of Life. This was more an *evolutionary* form of enlightenment, a kind of a **Western form of enlightenment** where I realized that I was the presence of the universe after 13.7 billion years—and we *all* were [that].

**Question 2:** *Is the way Bruce explains the distinction between what it felt like before enlightenment and after enlightenment clear to you? What personal and practical difference (if any) do you think this perspective shift makes — and no matter whether one is traditionally religious or secular?*

3. **“Essential vocation.”** Bruce Sanguin recounts that his story of awakening felt like a form of enlightenment—but that it was distinctively *evolutionary* in an important way. He explains,

Therefore, **my essential vocation** is to ask myself the question, What is the *future* that needs *me* in order to emerge?

**Question 3A:** *What do you think Bruce Sanguin means by “essential vocation”? Might one’s “essential vocation” actually be one’s **avocation or volunteer work**—rather than what one does to earn a living or support a family?*

**Question 3B:** *Not everyone is so fortunate as to be able to actually earn a living doing one’s “essential vocation.” What is the up-side and the down-side of having **the two forms of vocation** be distinct in one’s life?*

**Question 3C:** *How important **to human fulfillment** is it to be able to actually do one’s “essential vocation” in ways that ripple out as real action in the world? What happens if the world doesn’t reciprocate—that is, if you have a sense of your essential vocation but cannot find a way to **actualize it in the world**?*

**Question 3D:** *Where are you in your life journey, in terms of discerning and pursuing your “essential vocation”?*

**Question 3E:** *After one discovers and begins to bring to fruition one’s “essential vocation,” what are the prospects that it will remain the same for the rest of one’s life? Or, is it possible that the life journey for some people will involve **transitions** from one “essential vocation” to another—just as so many of us transit between different ways of earning a living?*

**Question 3F:** *If **raising a family** is, has been, or may yet become a focal point of your life, how might that supreme commitment and sacrifice be undertaken in ways that transform the endeavor into an “essential vocation”?*

4. **The experience of losing faith.** Bruce Sanguin tells his personal story of evolving out of biblical literalism while in seminary, but eventually finding that the **postmodern** form of Christianity he had landed in as a minister failed to nurture his life and his ministry. He says,

I found that I actually got to a place (after I was ordained and serving my second congregation) when I just felt that I was wandering in a desert, and my faith had no juice. I was trying to preach Sunday after Sunday and just had lost the passion.

**Question 4A:** *What, if anything, has been **your own experience** of a kind of “dark night of the soul”—and what helped you move through it?*

**Question 4B:** *What has been **your own experience of losing enthusiasm** for some aspect of your life, such as an important relationship, or the way you earn a living, or your membership in a church, or the kind of volunteer work you do, or overall how you live your life? From your own experience, what are the pros and cons of simply carrying on—or of determining to make a change? And what spiritual resources have helped you when facing the possible need to make a transition—whether or not you chose to stay the course or launch into the unknown?*

5. **Critique of progressive (postmodern) forms of faith.** Bruce Sanguin entered into a postmodern form of faith—sometimes called **Progressive Christianity**—while in seminary and in his early years of pastoring a church. But in this interview he **critiques that stage of faith**, saying that for such postmodern forms of Christianity,

Faith is a dilemma. That is, if everything is simply context and perspective and arbitrary narratives that we construct with **no underlying truth**—you know, your truth is as good as my truth—then there’s no way of valuing one truth over another. It’s simply your construction and my construction, and hopefully we can meet in the middle. But **a core is missing**.

Bruce then goes on to talk about his discovery of an evolutionary form of Christian faith that gave him back a sense of “truth”—that there *is* an “empirical reality.” He continues by saying,

So we can begin to learn some of the actual **cosmological dynamics of evolution** and enter into an inquiry of, How do these inform our traditional doctrines? How might they be in conversation and inform and enliven our doctrines of **salvation**, our doctrines of **hope** and promise, our doctrines of the **cross** and atonement?

**Question 5:** *Did you find this part of the dialogue exciting—or did it make you uncomfortable or combative (or something else altogether)? That is, are you personally curious about the faith transition that Sanguin himself made, or do you regard his transition as arriving at a kind of faith that is unattractive for you? And in what ways?*

**6. Theology of fragility.** Bruce Sanguin speaks of the geological work and spiritual insights of **Xavier Le Pichon**, who developed “a theology of fragility.” A “theology of fragility” begins with an understanding of the role of **geological “fault-lines”** in both the catastrophes and renewals of Earth’s surface, and then applies the same insights to the fault-lines in our own lives and cultures—where the suffering of humans and other life forms can lead those who witness such suffering toward greater heights of empathy. The bad of suffering thus evokes the good of increased empathy. Sanguin then expands on this analogy by offering a **cosmological interpretation of Christ’s suffering on the cross**. Bruce says,

What Xavier Le Pichon realized was that, while **the shifting of the plates create tsunamis and earthquakes**—which we regard as terrible—they are actually **a source of life**. [They bring forth] a tremendous vitality: all the water, all the nutrients come forth in a geological sense. So it’s a revitalization of Earth. But these [benefits] emerge from points of **fragility**—from the cracks on the Earth surface. In the same way, he said that **suffering’s evolutionary purpose** is to evoke in us—because he equated the suffering with the fragile places in the human realm: those who suffer experience a kind of fragility, these fault-lines. So when we’re exposed to this fragility in others, it **evokes in us an empathic response**.

So it was the first time that I started to look at the cross, the Christian symbol of suffering, and say, okay, there’s a **cosmological purpose of the cross**. We contemplate the suffering of Christ as an embodiment of all the suffering that has ever gone on cosmologically in the human species and the other-than-human species. And it evokes in us an empathic response, **an evolutionary impulse to evolve along the empathic line of intelligence**.

**Question 6:** *How would you put into your own words what Bruce Sanguin is attempting to communicate in his discussion of a “theory of fragility”? Is his **reinterpretation of how to view the cross** something that appeals to you? If yes, how so? If not, please elaborate.*

**7. Theology of glory.** Bruce Sanguin contrasts a science-grounded “theology of fragility” with the dominant forms of **evolutionary spirituality**, which tend to draw from the **sciences** far more of a triumphant sense of possibility—which Sanguin calls a “**theology of glory**.” He explains,



I think that **one of the missing pieces in evolutionary spirituality**, as I have heard it articulated with my colleagues, is that it can tend to focus on sort of a **theology of glory**—as in, “Look at our potential! Look at what we are creating! Look at our tremendous capacity to shape the future!” All of this is absolutely true, and I think that’s brilliant and important. But [we need to] to stop and think that there’s a **depth dimension to evolutionary spirituality that’s found in the fragile places**—and that you’ve got to go deep into the fault-lines. You’ve got to [take in the] **suffering** in order to allow your **empathy** to deepen. And that’s also an evolutionary impulse.

**Question 7A:** *What would be examples of “a theology of glory” form of evolutionary spirituality?*

**Question 7B:** *How might toning down the prevailing “theology of glory” (by paying equal attention to a “theology of fragility”) make a difference in how we look for spiritual meaning in what is being revealed about the nature of reality through science?*

**8. A trajectory of compassion.** Bruce Sanguin and Michael Dowd enter into a substantial conversation in which they explore how **human history** seems to demonstrate a long-term trajectory toward **increasing care and widening circles of compassion**. They are both excited that science itself is providing an empirical basis for theologians to focus on this trend, as an example of where science can enrich what has traditionally been a strictly theological matter. In one piece of their dialogue, Bruce talks about the overwhelm of bad news we are exposed to. He says,

We just **numb** down because the amount of suffering that’s going on is overwhelming. But the paradox is, as you’re saying, that **if we will allow ourselves to actually contemplate the suffering, to go deeper into it, our hearts will open up and open out**. We’ll become the heart of the cosmos. We’ll embody that love and compassionate impulse. We’ll be shaped according to that kind of animating heart that beats at the center of the cosmos.

**Question 8A:** *To what extent have you experienced what Bruce Sanguin is talking of here, with respect to **turning psychic numbness into compassion**? Please elaborate.*

**Question 8B:** *What about if science presents new evidence that seems to do just the opposite? What if there is solid evidence, for example, that elevates the role that selfishness and heartlessness have played in the actual trajectory of life and of human history? Should such empirical evidence, then, be ignored? Should **people of faith carefully pick and choose** which discoveries of science to pay attention to? Or might one legitimately cultivate a kind of **“faith” that our own interpretive powers** will rise to the challenge of celebrating both the reality of science and the hopes and dreams for the betterment of the human condition—no matter what discoveries may unfold?*



9. **Cosmological correlates of core Christian doctrines.** Of all the speakers in this series, it is Bruce Sanguin whose work and writings consistently press to **translate core Christian doctrines into their cosmological correlates**. That is, he examines the physical universe and the evolution of all that is, looking for examples of religious doctrines that have traditionally been interpreted by theologians in ways that narrow their relevance to the human drama and the human striving toward fulfillment with God. In this dialogue he begins with a synopsis of several examples. He says,

I was thinking about how you could look at our **solar system**, for example, and see it metaphorically as the promise that was inherent in the earliest galaxies. In other words, you could imagine that there is **an inherent yearning in those early galaxies** for increased fullness and freedom of being. After billions of years you end up with a solar system with a potential for life. I watch herons soar across the inlet where I live, and you [can] imagine that in a reptile was the **inherent promise** of the heron that is now flying across and over the top of my house. Or a single-cell bacterium: we can think of ourselves as **the promise that's inherent** in a single-cell bacterium. It's metaphorically speaking—but still, there's some empirical basis to say, “Well, this seems to be [the case], in terms of this trajectory.”

At the very end of the dialogue, Sanguin talks about his cosmological interpretation of the **Prodigal Son parable**, which he calls “The Parable of the Prodigal Species.” He says,

It was necessary in the **modernist period** for us to differentiate from the Earth. But that differentiation descended into *dissociation* in the modern period, where we became dissociated from the Earth. So the **Parable of the Prodigal Species** tells the story of that modernist journey of differentiation, of leaving home and **demanding the inheritance of 13.7 billion years**. And then basically in the course of about **300 years squandering that inheritance**. Then, like the Prodigal Son, we awaken as a species. In the [biblical] parable it says that the prodigal son “came to his senses.” I think that's the moment that we find ourselves in: We are coming to our senses as a species, having to reorient. And then **we return home with a fundamentally altered identity**. The prodigal son, in the Bible story, doesn't come home as an entitled or privileged son, but rather in **humility**. He asks to return simply as a servant.

So there's a **profound transformation**. In the evolution of our species we've come through this modernist period where we dissociated from the Earth, and now we're in a period where we're going to reunite and (hopefully) come through adolescence or some other kind of stage.

**Question 9A:** *What do you think about this kind of work—that is, of **taking traditional Bible stories** and Christian doctrines and finding ways to reinterpret them toward bigger meanings and greater relevance in today's world?*

**Question 9B:** *Focusing now on Bruce's **Parable of the Prodigal Species**, to what extent did you resonate with the way he reworked a bible story to help us to emotionally take in the human impact we are having on the planet? Please elaborate.*

10. **Critique of a supernatural concept of God.** Bruce Sanguin boldly critiques supernatural understandings of an interventionist God. He says,

Just this past Sunday, actually, I preached a sermon in which I tried to address this. The challenge is, in a sense: If God is conceived of as a kind of **supernatural bully** who intervenes every now and then (according to God's omnipotent will), and yet at other times he withholds his intervention, then it just doesn't satisfy the modernist sensibility of **the dignity of the individual**, right? It's like, Where's the **freedom** in that? If this supernatural God comes from some cosmic throne from the outside and decides at this point to intervene but somehow withholds God's self during a **holocaust**: Whoa! What kind of a God is *that!*? And what does that do to **our own human dignity and freedom**? So the question is, **How does God act in an evolutionary theology?** How does God influence reality in an evolutionary paradigm?

**Question 10:** *What came up for you in encountering that part of the dialogue? How do you understand God and think about "divine activity" in an ever-evolving cosmos?*

11. **God's influence as a "source of allurement."** After he dismisses the interventionist view of God, as espoused by the "intelligent design" movement, Bruce Sanguin presents his own view of God's action in the world. He talks of God's action as,

. . . **the presence of a field of love**—the presence of a non-coercive field of love that is a source of allurement towards greater beauty and goodness and truth.

He then explains the implications of this view of God. He says,

I know that there's lots of theological and philosophical debates we can have about [how God acts in the world]—whether or not mind can emerge out of matter: that is, can the more complex emerge out of the less complex, etc. My own feeling is that all of this **evolutionary cosmos emerges from within a field of love**. In other words, I'm imagining evolution as a divine strategy for making a world, but in a non-coercive way. And the future is indeterminate. There are no templates. There's no pre-set design to it. It literally is emerging out of **our collective capacity for choice**. Everything depends upon us awakening to **our identity as choosers** and not defaulters. As we live in to that kind of radical responsibility of being choosers, we become the presence of a sacred evolutionary impulse.

**Question 11A:** *Did you find appealing Bruce Sanguin's views about **God's action** in the world and the importance of **choice**? And what about his notion that we humans have a kind of "radical responsibility" to "become the presence of a sacred evolutionary impulse."*

**Question 11B:** *In your own view, how does God influence reality—not just in the past, but actually today? And how does God work through us?*

12. **Addictions, integrity, and "mismatched instincts."** Bruce Sanguin encourages host Michael Dowd to answer his own question about, "How do you integrate an evolutionary understanding of our evolved nature with your faith, with our Christian tradition? Dowd then launches into a summary of how an understanding of our evolved human nature can foster

greater Christ-like **integrity**. Along the way he uses two new terms: “**supernormal stimuli**” and “**mismatched instincts**.” He also emphasizes that understanding how these now-problematic instincts actually were vitally important to our ancestors can help us handle them better—primarily because we stop merely resenting and resisting them, but instead begin with **gratitude**. We are grateful for those very same instincts because, as **Dowd** says,

We wouldn't be alive today—none of us would be alive today—if our **ancestors** didn't have these very same instincts, these very same impulses, that we sometimes find problematic and challenging living in a modern world.

**Question 12A:** *Was this an important part of the conversation for you? To what extent does it invite you to want to learn more about **an evolutionary understanding of addictions** and other personal challenges?*

**Question 12B:** *What does Dowd mean by the term, “**supernormal stimuli**”? What would be some examples? [FOR INTIMATE GROUPS or GROUPS THAT HAVE BUILT TRUST]: Which supernormal stimuli cause you or your loved ones the most troubling temptations?*

**Question 12C:** *Bruce Sanguin mentions the phrase “**mismatched instincts**.” How might learning that we all have mismatched instincts shift or deepen or expand our understanding of what has traditionally been called our “inner demons” or “sinful nature”?*

**Question 12D:** In his other writings Dowd reports that, in his experience speaking to thousands of groups, **an evolutionary understanding of human nature** is one of the most powerful ways that people pick up on how an evolutionary perspective can make a real difference in their lives. For example, he has written that there would be less stigma about admitting to an **addiction and then attending a recovery group**, if one could introduce oneself as. “Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a human being with mismatched instincts surrounded by supernormal stimuli.” *SO THE QUESTION IS: Does viewing human nature through an evolutionary lens occur to you, too, as an important contribution that science can make toward bettering our lives? Please elaborate.*

13. **Sanguin's poetry.** The dialogue concludes with Bruce reading two of his poems: “If Darwin Prayed” and “The Bigger Bang of Christmas.”

**Note to facilitator:** *You might want to have that part of the transcript with you and ask for volunteers to read one or both poems.*

**Question 13:** *Any response to the poems?*

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