

## Denis Lamoureux

### “Beyond the Evolution vs. Creation Debate”

Episode 3 of The Advent of Evolutionary Christianity

EvolutionaryChristianity.com

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**Denis Lamoureux**, a leading evangelical contributor to the public understanding of evolution, is a professor of science and religion at the University of Alberta, Canada. He is a council member of the Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation, and author of *I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution*.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

This is **one of the most engaging of all conversations** in this series because, more than any of the others, the listener feels like “a fly on the wall”—witnessing two amazing people (who had never before spoken) delight in one another’s life journey and perspective. Dowd and Lamoureux both openly share the stories of their **youthful struggles with addiction** (which eventually led each to **salvific born-again Christian experiences**), as well as adult **temptations with lust**. Lamoureux, as a PhD biologist and university professor specializing in the teaching of science-and-religion, is enthusiastic both about teaching evolution *and* helping students fully **embrace the science without losing their faith**. Here is an in-depth look at how a biologist who identifies himself as **Evangelical** and **Pentecostal**, and who embraces the **Apostles’ Creed**, has dedicated his career to **helping evangelical students**, step-by-step, open to an evolutionary worldview.

It is one of several conversations in this series that **critique in detail the Intelligent Design movement**: Lamoureux criticizes that movement for its “God-of-the-gaps” perspective. This interview is also the most in-depth look at how our evolved human nature (specifically, addictions and lust) can pose challenges that both Christianity and evolutionary science forthrightly address. “**The Fall**” and “**Original Sin**” are thus discussed as traditional religious ways to grasp the serious challenges of the human condition, which an evolutionary understanding of our evolved nature confirms and expands.

## SUGGESTED AUDIENCES

This conversation is highly recommended for all audiences. It provides a vivid in-depth look at the reasoning and passion that contribute to a worldview that, on the one hand, will challenge the most conservative Evangelicals, and on the other will present to the liberal religious and secular a full-bodied and self-consistent picture very different from their own. It is the top-recommended audio for teen and young adult audiences—who may profoundly benefit by learning at an early age that we moderns are challenged by evolved instincts that are “mismatched” for effectively staving off temptation in a culture brimming with “supernormal stimuli” (addictive recreational drugs, internet porn, etc.)

## BLOG COMMENTS

### Gary M says:

What a thought-provoking and inspiring conversation! For quite some time I was led to believe that my rejection of biblical literalism meant I had no place within Christianity. The only reasonable voices seemed to be that of the militant atheists (the likes of Dawkins). I had virtually given up hope that I could find any solace or truth in the faith I had once held dear, and considered much of it delusional.

Yet I now know that *God* never departed, and this journey of discovery is now bringing me back from despair to the experience of delight in all that *God* is. It was funny, at one point as I was listening I asked in my mind, 'ok all this evolutionary stuff is great, but what about all the mythic stuff about sin, damnation, and hell that killed it for me?' Just after I asked this, you moved into exactly this question in the conversation! This recapturing the nature of *God* and humanity through the lens of evolutionary psychology is truly remarkable. I just can't wait to have this conversation with many more people!

### Carol Staton says:

This conversation helped me to understand evangelicals (and men! LOL) in a way I never could before. Your “breakthroughs” in understanding evolution were always obvious to me. I appreciate your work to help others see through this false dichotomy.

## KEYWORD TOPICS

**Evangelical** (ways to embrace evolution), **science-and-religion** (as an academic subject), **hermeneutics** (biblical interpretation as necessary for accepting evolution), **evolutionary creation** (Lamoureux’s preferred term for his Bible-honoring view of science), **Apostles’ Creed** (as congruent with Lamoureux’s worldview), **Genesis 1-11** (as based on an **ancient**

**cosmology**), **inerrancy** (of God's *message*, not the biblical *words*), **Intelligent Design** (critique of), **Charles Darwin** (his understanding of "intelligent design"), **God-of-the-gaps** (in Intelligent Design), **Michael Behe** (as leader in Intelligent Design movement), **God** (concepts of), **God's ways of communicating** (which includes *evidence*), **Michael Ruse** (as philosopher of biology), **Richard Dawkins** (criticism of his philosophy), **New Atheists** (critique of), **prayer** (impersonal v. personal understanding of), **conversion experience** (via Gospel of John), **addictions** (salvation from via Christian experience), **"evo-devo"** (evolutionary developmental biology), **Marlin Lavanhar**, **church attrition** (loss of young people), **evolutionary psychology**, **evolutionary brain science**, **"mismatched instincts"**, **"supernormal stimuli"**, **The Fall**, **Original Sin** (evolutionary explanation of), **freedom** (evangelical and evolutionary forms of), **gluttony** (evolutionary explanation of), **lust** (evolutionary explanation of), **human nature** (tendency to sin), **gratitude** (access to via evolutionary understanding), **free will**, **integrity**, **"public revelation"** (Dowd's term for discoveries of science), **Young Earth Creationism**, **biblical literalism**, **"core commons"** (Dowd's search for among Christians who accept evolution), **"deep-time eyes"** (Dowd's term), **"global heart"** (Dowd's term)

## BIOGRAPHY

**Denis O. Lamoureux** is an associate professor of science and religion at St. Joseph's College in the University of Alberta. His appointment is the first tenure-track position in Canada dedicated to teaching and research on the relationship between scientific discovery and Christian faith. Lamoureux's academic specialty focuses on the modern origins controversy.

He holds three earned doctoral degrees: dentistry, theology, and biology. He is a member of the executive council of the Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation and is a Fellow of the American Scientific Affiliation. Cited in the *Who's Who of Theology and Science*, he holds membership in the Evangelical Theology Society and the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association. He is the author of *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution* (2008)—a condensed version of which was published in 2009 and titled, *I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution*. In a nutshell, his Evangelical worldview (which he calls "evolutionary creation") embraces science in this way (drawn from his website):

Lamoureux embraces the time-honored belief that there are two major sources of Divine revelation—the Book of God's Words and the Book of God's Works. The Bible and the physical world complement each other. Science reveals *how* the Creator made this spectacular design-reflecting world, while Holy Scripture declares precisely *who* created it. Together the Two Divine Books fulfill each other; alone they are incomplete.

In his web lecture "Beyond the Creation vs. Evolution Debate," Lamoureux argues that the simple either/or approach to origins inhibits everyone from making informed choices. He asserts that if the limits of both conservative Christianity and evolutionary biology are respected, then their relationship is not only complementary, but also necessary. This view of origins is known as

Evolutionary Creation. Concisely stated, it claims that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created the universe and life through an ordained, sustained, and design-reflecting evolutionary process.

Evolutionary creation underlines that the Bible is *not* a book of science. Instead, it is a God-inspired revelation that offers inerrant, life-changing Messages of Faith. Holy Scripture does indeed refer to the natural world, but it features an ancient understanding of nature. In other words, the Bible has an ancient science. Indeed, evolutionary creation is a challenging view of origins for many Christians, and Lamoureux shares his struggle to accept this position in a web lecture entitled, “Coming to Terms with Evolution: A Personal Story.” He also writes about his voyage in a book chapter that is available online.

The website of Denis Lamoureux: <http://www.ualberta.ca/~dlamoure/index.htm>

### SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEO

A 3-minute VIDEO of Lamoureux disputing Intelligent Design theory as “God of the Gaps”:  
<http://www.youtube.com/ghostsofevolution#p/u/14/4uTVp45bKl4>

### SUPPLEMENTARY WEBPAGE

Listener comments to this audio can be found at the following url. Denis Lamoureux interacts with those posting comments on this page.

<http://evolutionarychristianity.com/blog/general/denis-lamoureux-pentecostal-evolutionary/>

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. **Storytelling and style.** Before we get into the content, let’s consider the *style* of this particular audio.

**Question 1A:** *How would you characterize Denis Lamoureux’s style of presentation—and did you appreciate that style when you were listening to the audio or reading the transcript?*

**Question 1B:** Lamoureux tells vignettes of his own personal story in ways **that show his missteps**. For example, he tells of his youthful goal of becoming a Young-Earth Creationist researcher in order to battle the evolutionists. He talks about his later involvement with the Intelligent Design movement, which he now criticizes. And he speaks forthrightly of **his own challenges with alcoholism and romantic misbehavior**—which ultimately led him to his faith conversion. Speaking openly about personal misdeeds is rather unusual for the distinguished speakers in this series.

*As a listener, how does that style of presentation affect you? Does it make his ideas more memorable? Does it incline you to trust him more and to be more open to considering faith conclusions that he draws that may depart from your own? Overall, do you consider this **style***

*of vulnerable and humble storytelling to be an effective method for advocating ideas that may be heard as challenging? If yes, how so? If you disagree, please elaborate.*

2. **Biblical hermeneutics for helping Evangelicals accept evolution.** Denis Lamoureux pioneered in Canada a course on the topic of “science and religion” for undergraduates. He laments that **the churches do not prepare students (especially biology majors) for their encounter with evolution at college.** He also suggests that in order for evangelical students to open to an evolutionary worldview, teachers must put substantial effort into hermeneutics—that is, helping the students **reinterpret Bible passages** in ways that mesh with science. He explains,

**The average student is compartmentalized, and they do this for their own psychological safety.** I’m not dissing them for that; we all do that when we get something that doesn’t fit our worldview too well. So in one compartment they have what they do at university in the biology department five days a week. Then on Sunday morning, the other compartment is “the world is created in six days” or some sort of anti-evolutionary context. They come in compartmentalized, but they know intuitively there’s got to be something more to that.

**My great privilege and pleasure is to present them a variety of different models in between the two extremes** of, say, the Richard Dawkins’ atheistic evolution and Ken Ham’s Young Earth Creationism. It’s just a 13-week course, but the kids *get* it completely. The course is called “Science and Religion,” but it’s really hermeneutics—in other words, “Biblical Interpretation 100.” And I do it slowly, I do it respectfully. In fact, next week I’ve got them all set up to really look hard at Genesis 1–11: what’s going on there. And they’re starting to recognize that there is an ancient near-eastern cosmology there.

Now, **as an evangelical Christian,** [I can tell them that] the Holy Spirit and the inspiration process used this as a vehicle or, if you wish, a vessel to get across some central messages of faith: **God is the creator; the creation is very good; humans are created in the image of God; and, of course, humans are sinful—they break their relationship.** Bottom line, I think my contribution is to help undergrads not stumble on this as I did.

**Question 2:** *What was your overall response to Denis Lamoureux’s method of **reconciling reverence for the Bible with a factual understanding that Earth is old and that life evolved?***

3. **The Bible contains ancient cosmologies.** Denis Lamoureux briefly recounts the first proposition that he makes in **helping evangelical students accept evolution** as fact. Here is how he summarizes what he tells his students:

I *am* an evangelical Christian, and it is **the evangelical tradition that wrestles the most with evolution**—and the reason is because **we love the Word of God.** And if you read Genesis 1–11, it certainly doesn’t align with Big Bang cosmology or evolutionary biology, and that’s absolutely true. So the basic move is to simply say, **let’s rethink what the Holy Spirit was doing in the revelatory process.**

Now, God is powerful. He can do whatever he wants. He could have put Big Bang cosmology and evolutionary biology way back *when*—3,500 years ago with the first Hebrew writers. Now, think of us today: Half the nation, both in Canada and the United States, doesn't *get* it on evolution. Do you think people 3,500 years ago who had no education *per se* compared to us—do you think they would have *got* it? No!

He then uses a personal example to make his point. He says:

**When the Lord speaks to you, doesn't the Lord come down to your level?** When Jesus first met *you*, did He not come down to your level and meet you where you were at—using *your* ideas and your categories to speak to you?

He concludes:

Therefore, we as a modern people, when we read an ancient text, we've got to **separate the ancient cosmology—that is, the best science of their day—from the message of faith**, the theology. What I would call the inerrant message of faith is that God created it all. That's the most important thing.

**Question 3A:** *Can you appreciate how **Denis Lamoureux opens a door of possibility for conservative Evangelicals** to embrace evolution? Does his invitation to look beyond ancient cosmological views for, what he calls, "**the inerrant message of faith**" resonate with you? If yes, how so? If no, how do you think about the relationship between **ancient biblical revelation and current evidential revelation**?*

**Question 3B:** The crux of Denis Lamoureux's argument here is that, in order for God's Word to have been heard and faithfully transmitted by ancient peoples, it had to be communicated within the concepts understood in a people's "**ancient cosmology**." *Have you ever considered this point before? And do you find this idea attractive now? What difference do you think it would make if more of the religiously devout held this point of view?*

**Question 3C:** *How do you make the distinction between what should and should not be considered authoritative or prescriptive in the Bible? In other words, what guidelines do you use or teach your children regarding how to distinguish ancient cosmology or outdated moral guidance from what you'd consider normative theology (i.e., the important stuff)?*

4. **Teacher responsibility for exposing their own worldview assumptions.** Denis Lamoureux talks about what he does on the first day of teaching his "Science and Religion" class to a new group of undergraduate students. He recounts,

Because I have the freedom and liberty, even in the first class I take out **the Apostles' Creed**. I read it, I explain it, I sign it, and I date it. And I say to my students, "You don't have to believe this, but **beware of Denny's baggage**. Okay? Every professor has baggage. Don't think because I'm standing here that I have absolute truth and I'm absolutely right."

**Question 4:** *What comes up for you in learning that this is what he says in class?*

**5. The benefits and challenges of graduate training in theology.** Denis Lamoureux summarizes his worldview shift while a graduate student in theology:

That's why you'll find in a lot of churches that people who do graduate school in theology just don't want to stir it up. For example, when I go to my church on Sunday mornings, I don't even talk about this stuff because to most people there this is irrelevant, and **I don't want to stir things up.** However, for those of us who have gone through that process, when I look at the way the Holy Spirit inspired the Scripture through these ancient literary processes, to me the Scripture is even more magnificent.

Now, I don't think you need this for your faith. Most people can draw **the central messages: that God is the Creator; that Creation is very good; that we're created in the image of God.** This is seen by everyone. But if you go to that deeper level, the level of Old Testament scholarship, it is truly magnificent. I carry the parallel over into my other world of biology. When I look at evolutionary biology, to think that **God loaded it all up at the Big Bang with the intention of us appearing 15 billion years down the road:** I see this as absolutely magnificent.

**Question 5:** *If faith is so regularly challenged when a young person attends college or enters into graduate levels of theology or biology, **what responsibility (if any) do church leaders bear in adequately preparing youth** for exposure to new ideas that seem to contradict what they were taught as children?*

**6. Intelligent Design as “God-of-the-gaps.”** Denis Lamoureux criticizes the Intelligent Design movement. He begins by saying that **Intelligent Design is a belief, not a scientific theory.** He then criticizes it from a theological standpoint, by saying it is a “God-of-the-gaps” form of argument. He explains:

When it comes to these Intelligent Design theorists, I'm adamantly opposed to them because they embrace the “God of the gaps”—that God is intervening at different times, adding new information along the way. Historically, we've seen that **every time a “God of the gaps” is promoted, that gap is not a gap in the continuum of nature but a gap in knowledge.** And these gaps close over time.

**Question 6A:** *Was this critique of Intelligent Design helpful or challenging for you, and in what ways?*

**Question 6B:** *If a “God-of-the-gaps” argument is not a viable reason or justification to support religious belief, then what is?*

*Note to TEACHERS: Because several audios in this series each put forth a different criticism of the Intelligent Design movement, you might at some point want to ask students how the arguments made by Denis Lamoureux, Joan Roughgarden, John Cobb, Ken Miller, Owen Gingerich, John Haught, and John Polkinghorne are distinct from one another—and which of the arguments the students find most helpful or convincing.*



7. **God as creator, not engineer.** Host Michael Dowd concurs with Denis Lamoureux’s **critique of the Intelligent Design movement**, and then he adds his own extension. **Dowd** says:

By use of the word *design*, **Intelligent Design** advocates in some ways shoot themselves in the foot. I think I appreciate the *heart* of what Intelligent Design is trying to get at, but **by using the language of design, it almost forces one into a mechanistic mindset: that God is the clockmaker**, the watchmaker who exists outside of a mechanistic universe. It’s an *engineering* model of God—**God as engineer, not God as creator**, not God as that reality which is beyond anything we can know, think, or imagine yet also that which is present in every drop of experience, and that’s been creating for 13.7 billion years. I see Intelligent Design as offering a **trivial God**, a God merely **outside the system who occasionally intervenes**—as you say, a God of the gaps. I think also that Intelligent Design **disses the revelatory nature of science**. I see *evidence* as the way God is communicating to us collectively. . . This is the way I see grace now: that God is communicating to us today *collectively*—through **historical evidence, scientific evidence, and cross-cultural evidence**.

**Question 7A:** Michael Dowd characterizes God as creating for billions of years and suggests that God is communicating to humanity today by way of **three evidential modes**: historical evidence, scientific evidence, and cross-cultural evidence. *What do you see as the advantages or disadvantages of thinking of God as creating ongoingly, versus just at the beginning of time?*

**Question 7B:** *Does thinking of evidence as divine revelation, as modern-day “scripture,” help bridge the science and religion divide for you, or does it stir up more problems than it solves?*

8. **Richard Dawkins and the New Atheism.** Denis Lamoureux criticizes biologist Richard Dawkins for “**overlaying his own personal metaphysics**” on his science writings. In another audio of this series, Ian Barbour makes a similar point by saying that Dawkins’ voice is to be welcomed to the table so long as he clarifies when he has moved beyond the science and into stating his own philosophical position. In this interview, however, the host posits a very different viewpoint. **Michael Dowd** says that he prefers “an ecosystems approach,” and thus he is “**grateful**” for their attacks on religion, which Dowd sees as helping Christians to move to a “more reality-based understanding of God, guidance, and good news.”

**Question 6A:** *Did this conversation shift your perspective in any way about **the New Atheists**? How do you personally evaluate the movement that has grown up around bestselling authors Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and Christopher Hitchens, and popular bloggers such as PZ Myers and Jerry Coyne?*

9. **“Signs and wonders evolutionary biologists.”** Denis Lamoureux characterizes himself and some of us colleagues as, “signs and wonders evolutionary biologists.” These are biologists



who are all Pentecostal, who have experienced “divine action,” and who regard evolution as “definitely a fact.”

**Question 9:** *Did this particular interview help you to understand how that mix of characteristics is even possible? Try to step into the shoes of Denis Lamoureux and see the logic and feel the excitement that his blend of science and religion provides him. Then consider: How is your own integration of faith and reason similar to, or different from, that of Denis?*

10. **Evangelical v. evolutionary understandings of prayer.** Host Michael Dowd brings up the topic of prayer by speaking of his “**nested, emergent**” understanding of prayer as being “like a cell in the body in communion with the very body of which it is a part.” Dowd then characterizes this stance as a *more intimate* form of prayer than he had prior to his evolutionary understanding. Lamoureux then speaks of his own experience of prayer as “the insights, connections, and little coincidences happening all day long, basically.”

**Question 10:** *Did the speakers adequately illustrate their own prayer lives for you to grasp how prayer occurs to each? How do you understand and experience **your deepest form of communion with ultimacy** — whether you call that prayer, contemplation, or meditation?*

11. **Salvific faith conversion and long-term loyalty to the faith.** Denis Lamoureux concludes his story of conversion to Christianity, followed by acceptance of evolution in this way:

I put my hands up in the air, rolled my eyes, and I said to the Lord, “Well, my Evangelical tradition has done the following: It has given me a really lousy approach to how to interpret the opening chapters of *Genesis*. It is absolutely abysmal in terms of dealing with the evolutionary evidence. (How often have I heard Evangelicals say we evolve from monkeys? No evolutionary biologist in the world believes that.) Evangelicals just do not know the evidence, regrettably. However, Evangelicalism brought me to the foot of the Cross, and for that I’ll be forever grateful. For that, I will always be an Evangelical to help Evangelicals come over this problem.

**Question 11:** *What response do you have to Lamoureux’s story?—Specifically, can you feel how it is possible, on an evidential basis, to say “Yes” to evolutionary biology—while also remaining beholden to and grateful for the emotional cleansing and salvation he received “at the foot of the Cross”?*

12. **Young people leaving the faith.** Denis Lamoureux warns:

Evangelicals who go to public universities, by the end of their fourth year of college, 50% of them have **lost their faith**. The evolution issue, the science issue, is one reason. Unless we start addressing this properly, **we’re going to lose an entire generation** of kids simply because we have not done our homework—both in the science and, in particular, in the Scripture.

**Question 12:** *What is your response to Lamoureux’s discussion of why young Evangelicals so often turn away from their faith? Do you think his own method for (and success in) helping his students accept evolution without losing faith is **replicable by others**—not just by other college professors, but perhaps also by pastors and religious educators? If yes, how so? If no, why not?*

13. **“Mismatched instincts”, “supernormal stimuli”, and the growth of compassion.** Denis Lamoureux vulnerably (and with humor) presents his own personal example of how evolution has provisioned human beings with a **sinful nature**. Dowd concurs by telling of his struggles with lust, and offers that the new scientific disciplines of **evolutionary psychology** and evolutionary brain science are in sync with Christian doctrines of **“The Fall”** and **“Original Sin.”** Lamoureux says:

Let’s take the example of **sex**, which is always provocative and at the same time something we can connect on. Is there an innate tendency within me to want to propagate with many women? The answer is, absolutely! **That’s my evolutionary past, and it’s always there.** Another example is wonderful, fatty hamburgers. I could just become a **glutton** and a real doughboy if I didn’t discipline myself. I mean, the problem today is that we’ve got Safeway, McDonald’s, and Burger King all around us.

Is that tendency there all the time? My answer is, yes. But at the same time, I think we have also crossed a barrier by which we can have command over this—if we so choose. **I believe in free will. So, is there a battle with my will and, say, my Neolithic body? The answer is, yes.** And it’s deeply, deeply embedded in my neocortex. It’s not like this thing is going to disappear. Rather, it is going to be a challenge. I think that makes it exciting, in terms of: **Can we take this Neolithic body and now can we glorify the Lord through it?**

**Question 13A:** This blend of **openness, lightness, and sincerity** about our shared human struggles with temptation is rather unusual in this culture. And yet each speaker was able to take this stance because of their ongoing success in leaving behind a past marred by poor choices in acting out on these evolutionary instincts. *SO THE QUESTION IS: Was this discussion meaningful to you, and if so, how?*

**Question 13B:** *The host, Michael Dowd, introduces two terms drawn from evolutionary psychology—“**mismatched instincts**” and “**supernormal stimuli.**” What is meant by those terms?*

**Question 13C:** *Although our culture today generally supports longer, safer, and vastly more comfortable lives than our ancestors experienced, do you now understand that we have far greater **challenges** for staying on a path of integrity? How have you, yourself, experienced this?*

**Question 13D:** *Why does pondering the challenges of our living with “mismatched instincts” while surrounded by “supernormal stimuli” typically engender greater **compassion** for self and others?*

**Question 13E:** *Do you think it would be helpful to teach those who are challenged by **substance addictions, overeating, or lust** about the findings of evolutionary psychology? To what extent might it help them resist temptation and live in impeccable integrity? Or, do you fear that such knowledge might have the opposite effect: offering, instead, a “good excuse” for just giving in to temptations?*

14. **Scientific discovery as “public revelation.”** The host, **Michael Dowd**, is well known for a concept that he brings up in this interview—that of “public revelation.” *Public revelation* is a term he invented, and this is how he briefly explains it here:

For me, **what God has been revealing through evolutionary psychology** and evolutionary brain science is this deeper understanding of what could only have been revealed in the way that it was revealed 2,000 years ago or 3,000 years ago. There is this progressive revelation—what I sometimes call “**public revelation**”—that God is revealing things *publicly* now through the whole worldwide scientific community, even among scientists who don’t recognize God or use God language. Those of us who *do* have the eyes of faith can **see scientific discoveries in a sacred way—as gifts of grace.**

**Question 14:** *How does Michael Dowd use the concept of “public revelation” to heal the wounds in the longstanding battle between science and religion? In what ways do you find Dowd’s approach helpful—or not?*

15. **In quest of a “core commons.”** At the end of their dialogue, Michael Dowd announces that he is in quest of a “core commons.” He is attempting to articulate what all of the Christians interviewed in this series might agree upon. Dowd articulates two likely elements of a core commons: “**evidential deep-time eyes**” and a “**global heart and commitment.**”

**Question 15A:** *Do these two elements resonate with you? If yes, how so? If no, how not?*

**Question 15B:** *Can you think of other possible candidates for inclusion in a “core commons” — important values or perspectives that most, if not all, Christian evolutionaries might share?*

16. **A “Bible-thumping Evangelical” meets an “evidence-thumping Evangelical.”** The two speakers joyfully conclude their conversation with forthright statements of faith that share some features but that also differ. Lamoureux refers to himself as a “Bible-thumping Evangelical.” Dowd refers to himself as an “evidence-thumping Evangelical.” Ultimately,

Lamoureux has faith in a **God of love** (as do many of the speakers in this series: both those who are theistically liberal and those who are not.) Lamoureux concludes:

So, if we've all been created in the image of God—including atheists—we *all* are certainly going to be able to experience **the creative impulse (that God is our creator) and also the loving impulse**. And so, in that regard, I think God meets us wherever we happen to be. Salvation is not a multiple-choice exam. Salvation is an existential reality. For me personally (and it is a personal inclusive move), **I find my salvation in Jesus**. Now, is it possible I might change that position? I leave all doors open. But personally, this is the account that makes the most sense for me.

**Question 16A:** *What is there about the temperaments of the two men that make it possible for them to **differ substantially in some of their beliefs, while still delighting in their budding friendship**? Recall, too, that Denis Lamoureux characterized one of his biology colleagues as both an atheist and as one of his dearest friends. To what extent can you surmount worldview differences in your personal relationships? That is, can you freely talk about religious differences, yet remain on good terms with those you talk with? Or is it usually necessary to avoid any mention of religious differences? Might it be that a happy result to such discussions is only possible if both parties are open in that way? In other words, might even Denis Lamoureux be unable to discuss religious differences in friendly and open ways if he has to deal with someone who is judgmental and closed?*

**Question 16B:** *Ultimately, **whose faith stance** did you resonate with more: that of Denis Lamoureux or Michael Dowd? And in which ways?*

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