

Lamoureux, Denis O. *I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009. xvii + 184 pp. Paperback. ISBN 9781556358869. \$22.00 Paperback.

Denis Lamoureux is Associate Professor of Science and Religion at St. Joseph's College in the University of Alberta. Lamoureux wrote this book as a more accessible version of his earlier 500-page *Evolutionary Creation: A Christian Approach to Evolution*. His spiritual journey plays a significant role in the current work. He grew up in a Christian home believing in a literal six-day creation. A college biology class convinced him that Darwinian evolution was true and he became an atheist. A few years after college he experienced a powerful conversion while reading the Gospel of John. He returned to school to earn a doctorate in biology for the express purpose of refuting evolution. While in graduate school he was once again convinced that evolution is a historical fact, but instead of reverting back to atheism he instead embraced theistic evolution (or evolutionary creationism). Today Lamoureux is an active member of a Charismatic church and affirms evangelical distinctives such as the historicity of the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, he rejects the historicity of Adam and Eve, and this puts him at odds with most evangelicals. Lamoureux contends that an abandonment of a literal original couple and a concomitant redefinition of the inspiration of Scripture do no damage to the Gospel or biblical authority.

Lamoureux argues for evolutionary creationism (or theistic evolution) in seven succinct and lucid chapters. The first two chapters explain the relevant terms and definitions (evolution, creation, intelligent design, and concordism), and survey the spectrum of positions concerning creation and evolution (young earth creation, progressive creation, evolutionary creation, deistic evolution, and dysteleological evolution) currently advocated by various proponents. In chapters three and four

Lamoureux argues that the biblical authors believed in the “ancient science” of their day, which viewed the world as a three-tiered universe. Rather than correct this model, the Holy Spirit accommodated revelation to communicate inerrant theological truth through the errant worldview of the writers. He calls this the “message-incident principle”, where the inerrant theological message is communicated using the incidentally incorrect science of the day (45). Genesis 1-11 should be understood as accommodated myth. In chapters five and six Lamoureux makes the case for an ancient earth, common-descent evolution, and finally human evolution. These are probably the strongest chapters of the book because Lamoureux has a gift for making large, complex arguments accessible to lay readers. In the final chapter he summarizes his argument, that “God created the universe and life through evolution, and this fact has no impact whatsoever on the foundational beliefs of Christianity” (149).

I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution is brief, clear, and to the point. His presentation of the genetic and fossil evidence is as understandable as any I have read. Lamoureux makes his claims unambiguously, even when he knows that most evangelicals will not receive his positions easily. He demonstrates evangelical fervor. The “I love Jesus” part of the title comes through clearly. Lamoureux does not gloss over the areas where his case is weak, particularly when it comes to his interpretation of the accounts of Creation and the Fall in such a way that does justice to the authority of Scripture.

As noted, Lamoureux makes two claims: that evolution is true and the theological adjustments to accommodate this fact (i.e., abandoning a historical Adam and redefining the inerrancy of Scripture to mean simply inerrancy of purpose) do not adversely affect the Christian faith. As for his first claim, evangelicals need to take seriously the empirical case

made by evolutionary creationists. This reviewer remains unconvinced, but acknowledges the force of their arguments. Biologists and geneticists associated with organizations such as the Discovery Institute and Reasons to Believe are in a better position to answer Lamoureux's scientific arguments than I am.

As for his second claim—concerning theological adjustments—his case is much weaker. Despite his stated good intentions, Lamoureux's recommendations in fact do negatively impact the foundational beliefs of Christianity. However, it is not at all clear that accepting evolution entails a rejection of a historical Adam or the abandonment of inerrancy (as defined by the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy). A number of theistic evolutionists retain belief in an actual original couple (see, for example, Denis Alexander's *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?* or Vernon Bauer's *Can a Christian Be An Evolutionist?*). Some of the clearest warnings about the theological consequences of jettisoning the historicity of Genesis 1-11 have been made by Lamoureux's fellow evolutionary creationists. Inerrantists have long recognized the accommodated nature of Scripture. Lamoureux correctly notes that the Holy Spirit, when inspiring the prophets and apostles, made no attempt to correct the erroneous views of "ancient science". But the biblical authors often used terms and concepts that had pagan origins without endorsing the worldview from which those terms and concepts were derived. Their main concern was to communicate in ways that their audience would understand. *I Love Jesus and I Accept Evolution* presents an intriguing case for some type of evolutionary processes but advocates a theological response that ultimately is unsatisfactory.

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