

# 'Evolutionary creation'— evolution rules supreme

*Evolutionary Creation: A  
Christian Approach to Evolution*

Denis O. Lamoureux

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Lamoureux is currently identified as Associate Professor of Science and Religion, St Joseph's College, University of Alberta, Canada. The author identifies his position as that of evolutionary creation. In doing so, he attempts to avoid some of the connotations of the term theistic evolutionist (p. 447).

One striking fact about this book is its superficiality. The author has minimal understanding of creationist scholarship, and his acceptance of evolution is completely uncritical. He engages in numerous *non sequiturs*, and appears to contradict himself frequently in his thinking.

The author realizes that even figurative or poetic language presupposes some kind of reality (e.g. the modern simile 'as hard as nails' presupposes the literal fact that nails are hard). He discusses phenomenological language, or 'the language of appearance'. However, there is an essential difference between the 'language of appearance' that is incorrect, and one that is essentially correct. A 'language of appearance' can reinforce a misconception, or it can state something that seems intuitively correct, and, in some way, *is* essentially correct.

This book covers many different topics. For this reason, I can focus only on a few of them.

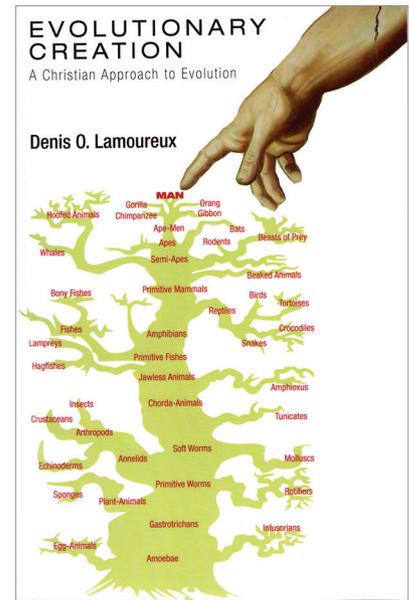
## For what was the Bible?

Consider that Lamoureux repeatedly stresses that one should be careful in inferring what the Bible teaches. If so, the author is the worst offender in this regard. He repeats the familiar line about the Bible intending only to teach spiritual truths, and not factual truths about the natural world. He repeats the standard premise of the Bible intending to teach the 'who', but not the 'how' of Creation. From where do these premises come from? Certainly not from the Bible! The dichotomy between 'factual' and 'spiritual' information is foreign to the Word of God. Consider the Resurrection—clearly vital to the Christian faith, but it is essential that it is a fact of *history* (1 Corinthians 15).

The author repeatedly falls back on the premise that the Bible taught an ancient science—that is, science as understood by the ignorant ancients. Here again is the dichotomous thinking exhibited by evolution-accepting Christians. If the science believed by the ancients is outdated and incorrect, then why is the theology (including the very belief in God), as believed in the ancients, not *also* outdated and incorrect? For that matter, what about the morality believed by the 'ancients', such as marriage involves one man and one woman?

Unlike those who insist that 'the Bible is not a book of science', Lamoureux realizes that it is. He writes:

"Using the most basic definition, science deals with knowledge about the physical world . . . . Genesis 1–11 includes knowledge regarding nature. Therefore, science appears in these chapters. The redactor of the book of Genesis clearly intended to present



a record of how the universe and life originated" (p. 265).

(Note the modernistic term 'redactor'; more on this later.)

However, according to Lamoureux, the Bible is simultaneously not a book of science in that the sincere Christian is not required to accept its teachings about the origins of the universe. Thus, according to Lamoureux, the Bible is simultaneously a book of science and a not a book of science. He cannot have it both ways!

In like manner, the author dichotomizes his unbelief and belief in the supernatural. He rejects the supernatural towards Genesis, while embracing it for the life and person of Jesus Christ.

Equally predictably, Lamoureux repeats the well-worn, unsupported contention that non-Christians are repelled from the Gospel when Christians do not embrace evolution. Consider the fact that Western Europe's churches accepted evolution soon after the *Origin of Species*. This did not prevent the eventual near-extinction of Christianity in Western Europe. In the USA, at least, conservative denominations tend to grow more than liberal ones.<sup>1,2</sup>

### **Admitted unambiguous six-day recent creation**

In the past, compromising evangelicals have tried to rationalize their acceptance of evolution by convincing themselves, and others, that the Bible is unclear about such matters as the length of the Genesis days, and so forth. They would have us believe that the Genesis account is vague, and therefore susceptible to an astonishing myriad of interpretations that ‘reconcile’ the Bible and evolution.

Lamoureux, to his credit, is candid about the fact that the Bible unmistakably conveys the teaching of recent special creation in six literal days. He also realizes that the Lord accepted a literal Adam and Eve, and that the church had, almost unanimously, since the beginning, accepted Genesis 1–11 as teaching literal, factual history (pp. 24, 34).

To elaborate on the foregoing, the author writes,

“For the most part, the opening chapters of the Bible were intended to be a literal account of the origin of the world and the formation of the Hebrew community. The original writers used some poetic license and stylistic dressing up of the ancient scientific and historical facts. But these inspired individuals, and especially the redactor, believed that they were reporting events that had actually occurred in the past. Later biblical authors understood Gen 1–11 as literal history. In fact, Jesus Himself appealed to passages in these accounts verbatim. And the Church throughout most of time up until today has held that the main events in these chapters literally happened” (pp. 268–269).

That should settle it: God’s Word clearly teaches a literal six-day creation. The question, ‘Could God have created through evolution?’ is

the wrong one. The right question is, ‘DID God create through evolution?’ The answer from Scripture is a resounding ‘No!’

### **Non-literalist concordist approaches fail**

Lamoureux parts ways with most compromising evangelicals in other ways. Consistent with the clear teaching of Scripture on the young, six-day-created universe, Lamoureux rejects concordist attempts (such as the Day-Age theory, Gap theory, etc.) as unscriptural, contrived, and unworkable (see his table on pages 44–45). However, the ‘evolutionary creation’ position that he supports is obviously no better in this regard.

Although the author does not mention Hugh Ross in conjunction with the big bang theory, he parts way with Ross’s views on this subject. He realizes that the big bang cannot be read into Genesis 1:1–3 (p. 191).

The author complains that concordist approaches, such as the Day-Age theory, partake of the God of gaps. However, taken to its logical conclusion, his so-called evolutionary creation is even worse in this regard. There is no place to pigeonhole God even into a gap! The concept of a Creator, in any form, is foreign to evolution. Theological language aside, there is no difference between what Lamoureux believes and what the atheistic evolutionist believes.

Finally, Lamoureux rejects concordist approaches because they ‘spiritualize’ the Bible. However, his attempt to salvage theological and moral truths from the Bible, while rejecting the factuality of its admittedly unambiguous teachings, is an act of ‘spiritualizing’ in the extreme. Oddly enough, Lamoureux accepts the factuality of the eyewitness accounts of Christ’s Resurrection (p. 374). Why not take ‘spiritualization’ to its logical conclusion, as Rudolf Bultmann did,

and simply believe in a ‘Jesus Christ of Faith’, while rejecting the factuality of His miracles and teachings?

### **An undisguised sop to evolution**

Since the Bible is admittedly unambiguous in teaching a young six-day created universe, what then animates the author? Towards the end of the book, the author gives his testimony as to how he moved away from the creationist position. Pointedly, Lamoureux is transparent about the real reason for his rejection of special creation. He writes:

“The greatest problem with young earth creation is that it completely contradicts every modern scientific discipline that investigates the origin of the universe and life. There are very few scientists working in disciplines like cosmology, geology, and biology who accept this anti-evolutionary position. Today, these sciences are practiced in literally tens of thousands of universities and colleges throughout the world, and according to the scientific community, the evidence for evolution is simply overwhelming.” (p. 24).

In other words, if most intellectuals accept something, it must be true, and we must orient our thinking, and theology, accordingly.

There is no question about the fact that Lamoureux is allowing evolutionary thinking to control, even shackle, his understanding of Scripture. He comments:

“However, modern science and history reveal that there is incontestable evidence that falsifies a literal reading of Genesis 1–11. Scientific and historical concordism fail. As well, numerous conflicts between the events in these chapters indicate that they could not have occurred as stated” (p. 269).



**Figure 1.** Lamoureux believes the Genesis Flood account is a copy of the Gilgamesh epic.

Herein lies another inconsistency in the author's thinking. The same evolutionary theory that he espouses, and rejects a supernatural *ex nihilo* creation of living objects, also rejects the supernatural resurrection of a once-living object (Jesus Christ).

### Evolutionistic supremacy

Lamoureux's embrace of evolution is so total and so uncritical that he makes statements about evolution that many evolutionists would be reluctant to make. For instance, he would have the reader believe that scientists "see the evidence of this theory in their labs every day" (p. 25). He repeats the outdated concept of pseudogenes being non-functional,<sup>3</sup> as well as the hoary myth of the human and chimp genomes being 99% identical<sup>4</sup> (p. 285). He endows developmental biology ('evo-devo')<sup>5</sup> with quasi-magical properties in the sudden evolutionary origin of complex structures (a revival of 'hopeful monsters'), and glosses over such things as specializations when he trots out the mammal-like reptiles.

The author's understanding of geology is no better. He naively believes that a fossil out of place would falsify evolution (p. 197), when in fact anomalously occurring fossils are found all the time. He insists that, were the Bible correct, the oldest human fossils would be found in Mesopotamia (p. 201). Evidently the author, apart from having a completely uncritical

view of evolutionary-uniformitarian dating methods, has essentially zero understanding of the vagaries of fossilization and the preservation of fossils.

### Warmed-over modernism

Lamoureux repeatedly insists that he is a conservative Christian. However, he embraces most if not all of the modernistic (liberal theological) constructs: The JEPD hypothesis, the Genesis Flood account as a copy of the Gilgamesh epic (figure 1),<sup>6</sup> Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 as conflicting accounts, the Bible as nothing more than an emulation of ancient Near-Eastern motifs,<sup>7</sup> epilepsy attributed to demon possession, etc. In fact, I elaborate on some of these matters in separate chapters below.

Although the author seems to go deeply into Scripture at times, some of his statements are astonishingly naïve. Thus, we hear the old saw about the problem of Cain's wife (p. 207), the millions upon millions of species about Noah's Ark (pp. 224, 460), etc.

Lamoureux would have us believe that the perfect world before the Fall is simply a copy of ancient Near-Eastern motifs about lost idyllic ages (p. 253). If so, why is the atoning death and Resurrection of Christ *also* not an ancient Near-Eastern motif? In fact, as infidels never tire of reminding us, the resurrection of gods is a common ancient motif (although they ignore

the fact that these were cyclic seasonal death/rebirths like Tammuz, or Osiris becoming the god of the underworld).

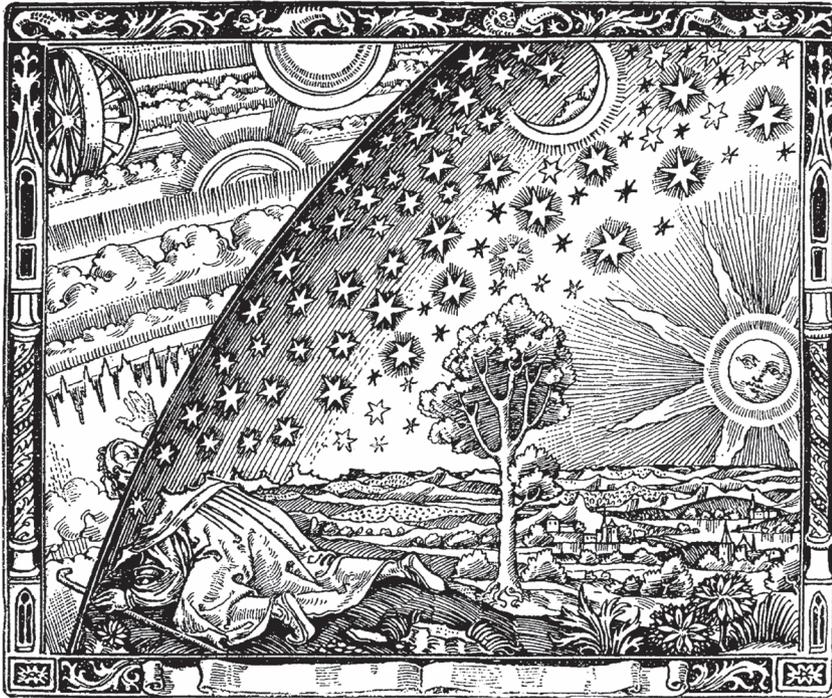
### Ancient people were essentially stupid

Lamoureux would have us believe that the Bible had to present factually incorrect scientific information because the ignorance of the ancients had to be accommodated. After all, they were incapable of understanding anything else. The author compares it to parents telling children things that are untrue for the same reason (p. 166).

This is chronological snobbery with a vengeance, and his reasoning is flawed on several counts. To begin with, it is not necessary to tell children untruths. For instance, instead of answering a 'where did I come from?' question from a child by presenting the tale of the stork who brings babies, a parent can simply provide the correct explanation without going into details (e.g. 'you grew in mummy's tummy'). The same holds for such painful events as the death of a loved one. Another flaw in Lamoureux's reasoning is that evolution *is* often taught to children today.

Nor does it follow that the ancients had to be taught special creation because they could not have understood evolution. To the contrary, many ancient cosmologies were evolutionary. For instance, ancients commonly believed that life came from non-life, and

Credit: Wikipedia



**Figure 2.** Lamoureux insists that Scripture is teaching that the sky is necessarily a solid dome, and that this cannot simply mean a spreading-out of space, as commonly taught.

that part-human/part-animal entities existed. Ironically—if anything—it would have been easier for ancients to understand an evolutionary progression than a creation *ex nihilo*.

The inconsistency of accommodationist argumentation is obvious. If what Lamoureux disbelieves in Scripture was an accommodation, then why is that which Lamoureux does believe in Scripture also not an accommodation?

Finally, the notion that the Lord would accommodate Himself to the ignorance of His audience flies in the face of how the Lord actually taught. He frequently presented truths that were variously counterintuitive, in conflict with what His audience believed, or uncomfortable.

### Ancient Near-Eastern cosmogonies?

In order to ‘prove’ that the Bible accommodated itself to the misconceptions of the ancients, Lamoureux manages to dust off all the old infidel arguments about the Bible teaching a solid sky, flat earth with circumferential sea,

etc. (see his table on page 150) (figure 2). Owing to their numbers, I discuss only some of them. Rather than referring to apologetics materials to refute them, I employ a little common sense to expose their fallacy, and, whenever possible, allow Lamoureux to refute himself.

The author warns against modern Christians engaging in eisegesis—reading in modern notions (such as a spherical earth). Once again, Lamoureux is the one engaging in eisegesis—and doing so with a vengeance. He is reading ancient Babylonian ideas into the Bible!<sup>8</sup>

The author assumes that, since the ancient Babylonians believed in such things as a flat earth with a circumferential sea, therefore the ancient Hebrews believed this also, and understood their readings of Scripture accordingly. In addition, he confuses what the ancient Hebrews believed (or were supposed to have believed) with what Scripture actually teaches, or requires the reader to accept.

The very fact that the Bible verses in question can be endowed with

‘modern’ interpretations supports the premise that the Bible is not, and never has been, teaching ancient Babylonian concepts of the earth (even if some people in the past had understood it that way). In addition, core truths remain the same, albeit with expanded applications in the light of new knowledge. For instance, the core teaching on ‘the waters below’ was probably understood by the ancients exclusively in terms of the water drawn from wells. The same core teaching can be applied today to embrace other forms of ‘waters below’, such as untapped and deep-seated groundwater, the connate water in sedimentary rocks, and even the chemically-bound water that is in the mantle.

### The flat earth with the circumferential sea

Some of the author’s arguments, even taken at face value, defy common sense. For instance, the argument behind the circumferential sea assumes that the Middle East traveller will always come to a sea. Actually, someone going eastward from ancient Israel would not come to a sea. This is unless he managed somehow to traverse all across the massive Asian landmass and to reach the Pacific coast of China!

Finally, to press this issue further, considering the fact that the earth’s surface is over 70% water-covered, is it not proper to think of all land masses, of whatever size, coming to an end at some sea? In addition, since all the oceans are interconnected, is it not logical to think of every land mass as ending in ‘the sea’?

### That three-tiered universe

Lamoureux (p. 107) quotes the “in heaven and on earth and under the earth” of Philippians 2:5–11 as adhering to the ancient belief of the physical universe consisting of a heavenly realm, an earthly world, and an underworld. Time and time again, Lamoureux returns to this theme of

the three-tiered universe. The author baselessly rejects explanations based on poetic language or phenomenological language.

The three-part division is not only literal, it is based on objective reality. Consider, for example, biology. Land-dwelling creatures (notably humans) generally occupy the niches afforded by the earth's surface. Flying creatures commonly inhabit the air above the earth's surface. Earthworms and other creatures usually live below the earth's surface. Obviously, the 'three-tiered universe' is not scientific error, nor poetry, nor merely the language of appearance. It is factual.

Worse yet, Lamoureux (p. 107) insists that this 'three-tiered' universe means that the earth is flat. This is a *non sequitur* to an extreme. Actually, the shape of the earth is completely irrelevant. The earth could be shaped like a pancake, cube, pyramid, cylinder, or sphere, and the very real tripartite division would remain the same.

### The solid sky—again

The author discusses the Hebrew word *raqia*, translating it as meaning as 'to flatten', 'stamp down', 'spread out', and 'hammer out'. From this, he insists that Scripture is teaching that the sky is necessarily a solid dome, and that this cannot simply mean a spreading-out of space, as commonly taught (p. 123).

We must, first of all, remember that, before the Industrial Revolution, the hammer was one of the most versatile and widely-used tools. Could 'hammer out', then, simply mean 'to construct'? (Note the non-literal use of the term even in the English language as, for example, to 'hammer out' an agreement.) If so, the term could simply mean that God created the sky.

Let us, however, for the sake of argument, accept the hoary argument that the Bible necessarily teaches a solid sky. In a sense, it is. The distinction between a solid, liquid, and gas is relative. All three phases have such properties as density, viscosity, etc.,

though to very different degrees. At high pressures, the gas behaves somewhat like a solid. Relative to the vacuum of space, the atmosphere is very much a solid. When a meteor enters the atmosphere at high speed, it often breaks apart just as surely as if it had hit a body of water or land.

To take the foregoing further, if *raqia* necessarily means a literal 'hammering out', this could have happened to a gas. Note that a piston, by which gas is compressed, is a form of hammer. One could envision God having 'hammered out' the atmosphere by creating and then dispensing air through some kind of piston-like mechanism or behaviour.

### The static, geocentric universe?

Lamoureux dusts off the old 'earth will not be moved' verses. Once again, a little common sense vitiates his argument. Surely, the ancients were all too familiar with earthquakes, massive landslides, and giant sandstorms. Clearly, then, they could not have thought of the earth as literally unmovable. To the extent that they thought of the earth not as a planet but as a solid surface on which they lived, this was even more so. Furthermore, the same verb for 'moved' (*môt* מוט) is used in Psalm 16:8, "I shall not be moved". By Lamoureux's 'reasoning', King David must have been in a strait-jacket. Of course, the word 'moved' means 'totter, shake, slip'.<sup>9</sup>

Predictably, the author falls back on the church's past misinterpretation of Scripture in various matters, such as geocentrism, and uses this as an excuse for rejecting a literal reading of Genesis. This, too, is misplaced. Scriptural support for geocentrism was and is weak and ambiguous, whereas that for a six-day recent creation is very strong. In fact, as noted earlier, Lamoureux openly admits the latter. Also, it was the *scientific establishment* that Lamoureux so loves that provided Galileo's strongest opposition.<sup>10</sup>

It is not a matter of the Bible erroneously teaching geocentrism, or the Bible simply using phenomenological language. The relevant Bible verses have an unmistakable earth-centred perspective, ones that do not discriminate between geocentrism and heliocentrism. Thus, for instance, the sun stood still *relative to* Gibeon, and the moon stood still relative to the valley of Ajalon (Joshua 10:12). One wonders if Lamoureux 'stops' at red lights.

### Dying seeds and germinating plants

Continuing his tacit 'ancient people were stupid' ideation, Lamoureux, quoting John 12:24–25, attributes to the ancients the belief that a seed must die for a plant to grow, and that the new plant comes to existence because of the soil. Apart from the theological issue regarding to what extent plants are 'alive', the author's contentions violate even common sense. Many kinds of seed coats do not have to disintegrate, or even split apart, for plants to start growing from them (figure 3). Without a doubt, ancients observed seeds starting to sprout in the absence of contact with soil. Some seeds germinate in water. Others can begin to germinate, when stored in a sack, without visible water at all, let alone contact with any soil.

### The everywhere-seen tree and the flat earth

Lamoureux repeats the stale infidel allegation that the account in Daniel 4 teaches a flat earth. A text without a context is a pretext. Read the context! A superficial reading of the account makes it obvious that Daniel is referring to a tree visible from the entirety of Nebuchadnezzar's Kingdom (v. 22), not a tree visible from everywhere on the surface of the earth.

In addition, even if—for the sake of argument—Daniel believed in a flat earth, he must have, based on practical experience, realized that no

literal tree could possibly be seen from everywhere in even Nebuchadnezzar's Kingdom. Clearly, Daniel was knowingly engaging in metaphorical or magical thinking.

Let us therefore take Daniel's magical thinking a little further if someone wants to press the existence of a literal tree visible everywhere on the surface of a spherical earth. This could actually happen if the tree had branches that curved, from the trunk, in a radial pattern, within the atmosphere, all around the world. (One branch would be somewhat comparable to Saturn's rings, which go around Saturn in one plane, although much closer to the plane.)

Finally, the whole episode is about a dream, and from a pagan at that. It is absurd to claim that this is a biblical cosmology. One might as well claim that the Bible teaches cannibalistic wheat plants, from the dream of the Pharaoh interpreted by Joseph (Genesis 41).

### The male (seed maker) and the soil (woman)

Lamoureux falls back on Greek mythology, and modern feminist argumentation about the origins of male chauvinism, to argue that the Bible portrayed the male as the exclusive procreator, and the woman was nothing more than the soil or field in which the seed was planted. In addition, if the couple remained childless, it had to be because of the woman. All this was supposed to follow from the fact that the farmer knew nothing about ovulation, and was all too familiar with 'good soil' and 'bad soil'.

Once again, the author is engaging in eisegesis in the extreme. Nowhere in Scripture does it teach this!

In addition, Lamoureux's argument once again violates common sense. No doubt, the ancients realized that seeds, such as old ones, may 'go bad' and not sprout, causing a crop failure. Otherwise, Lamoureux estimates



**Figure 3.** Sunflower seedlings three days after germination. Note that a seed does not have to 'die' in the sense of disintegrating, or even splitting apart, for the plant to start to grow.

that, on a regular basis, 80% of seeds germinate (p. 181). This means that one in five seeds do not germinate. No doubt, the ancients noticed this, especially when seeds were in short supply, and even more so when the soil was otherwise productive. Therefore, they must have realized that the seed could be the cause of non-germination, and not the soil.

The same holds for sexual relations. No doubt some childless men, unsuccessful in impregnating a few women, next tried the same with numerous women. These unfortunate men must have realized, at some point, that the problem must lie with them, and not with every single one of the many women they had repeatedly tried to impregnate. The ability of these women to be impregnated by other men must have highlighted this obvious reality.

Common sense also teaches that the child can resemble the mother as well as the father. Some children strongly resemble their mother. How, then, could ancients suppose that procreation was solely the seed planted by the male, and that the woman plays no role in procreation other than being the 'soil'?

### Conclusions

Although this book is relatively comprehensive, it offers nothing new. It is a mixture of modernistic thinking, inconsistent and illogical reasoning often contradicted even by

common sense, a dualistic approach to Scripture, and uncritical acceptance of evolution. However, it is valuable in that it features a hostile critic admitting that the Bible unambiguously teaches a recent six-day supernatural creation. It is also valuable because it shows the fallacies of common evangelical concordist schemes that attempt to 'reconcile' the Bible and evolution. Finally, it shows, quite vividly, the folly of those who let evolution dictate their understanding of the Bible. However, when reading his attacks on the Bible, I had to keep reminding myself that the author is a professing evangelical, although his arguments could have been written by village atheists such as Dawkins or by extreme liberals such as Spong.

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