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SCIENCE AND THE EVANGELICAL MISSION IN AMERICA

by KEN WILSON

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My evangelical heart was first exposed to the issue when I sat down for coffee with the only biology graduate student attending our church at the time. I asked Theresa an innocent question: “We have grad students in English, social work, and engineering—why aren’t there more science and biology students in our church?”

Theresa’s laughter alerted me to a lurking brutal fact, which she then blurted out: “Ken, what did you think? It’s evolution!”

I resisted her point with a counterpoint: “But I’ve never taught against evolution! I’m a C. S. Lewis Christian. I have no problem with the Creator working through evolutionary process.”¹

“Yes,” she replied in earnest, “but have you ever taught that from the pulpit? Ken, you co-authored a book called *Empowered Evangelicals*. Vineyard is an evangelical church, even though it’s not in your face on these hot button issues. Scientists, especially biologists, expect American evangelicals to attack evolutionary science, not support it. Scientists don’t view evolution as some marginal scientific issue. It’s the primary narrative of modern science. That’s why they don’t bother to darken the door of an evangelical church. Would you, if you were in their shoes?”

“Oh,” I replied uncomfortably, *facing* what I had always known for the first time.

There it sat, the brutal fact—unyielding, immovable, but quite obviously ignorable.

The evangelical posture toward modern science has missional consequences. We have inherited a defensive posture toward science that serves as a roadblock to faith for many people. The question is: what are we going to do about it?

If the essence of evangelicalism is a singular passion to see the gospel of Jesus embraced by as many people as possible, we must learn to think again like missionaries sent to a mission field.

Consider this simple table, comparing two distinct cultural sensibilities in the United States, widely recognized as a cultural divide. Let’s borrow the latest lingo and label the two distinct cultural sensibilities “red” and “blue.”

RED SENSIBILITY	BLUE SENSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Votes Republican • Considers Earth 10,000 years old • Thinks species are fixed • Views environmentalism skeptically • Regards climate change skeptically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Votes Democratic • Considers Earth 4.5 billion years old • Thinks species related by common ancestry • Views environmentalism positively • Regards climate change as real

One could add several more items to the above table: legalized abortion, gay marriage, even talk-radio station preference (a.m. talk vs. NPR talk). But there is one item that would especially concern us if we were thinking missionally about our own culture: church attendance.

RED SENSIBILITY	BLUE SENSIBILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Votes Republican • Considers Earth 10,000 years old • Thinks species are fixed • Views environmentalism skeptically • Regards climate change skeptically • High church attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Votes Democratic • Considers Earth 4.5 billion years old • Thinks species related by common ancestry • Views environmentalism positively • Regards climate change as real • Low church attendance

In the recent Pew “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey” the fastest growing religious orientation in the United States is “none,” a group that has doubled in size over a generation.² The “nones” (not a misspelling of nuns) are an assortment of atheists, agnostics, secularists, and believers who have simply renounced any formal religious affiliation. While faith in Jesus is growing globally, it is not growing domestically. The United States remains a highly religious nation, but the number of those who attend religious services “regularly” has remained more or less constant since 1960, while the number of those who attend “occasionally” or “never” has steadily increased.³

WHERE IS THE MISSION FIELD IN AMERICA?

So how do we conceive of the mission field in America today? Those who share a blue sensibility largely populate it. And this is a *big* mission field: roughly half the population of the United States leans blue. The

survey data on these cultural markers tend to hover around the 50 percent mark. Presidential elections tend not to be landslides. Those who accept the main outlines of evolution vary from 49-51 percent in Gallup polls conducted in 1999, 2001, 2004, and 2006.⁴ Those who accept the majority scientific view on climate change (that the earth is warming due in significant part to human generated heat trapping carbon emissions) were 47 percent in 2007, and 36 percent in 2009.⁵

If you were an evangelical missionary sent from a different country to spread the gospel in the United States, where would you focus your energy? Among those whose perspectives lean blue.

It would be fair to ask how important a person's posture toward modern science really is. After all, there aren't that many scientists in the population, especially if you don't include physicians and engineers, who apply scientific knowledge but aren't strictly speaking, scientists. How much energy should we expend trying to reach a small group of science geeks, one might reasonably ask?

*One's posture toward science is
a cultural marker.*

As scientist E.O. Wilson has said, science and religion are the two most powerful forces in the world today. This means that one's posture toward science is a cultural marker. Science touches all of our lives and we all have a predisposition toward scientific knowledge even if we don't have much personal interest in science. When surveyed about evolution, very few of us respond, "no opinion."⁶

Picture the blue sensibility regarding science as a set of concentric circles. The smallest circle in the middle is composed of people with advanced degrees in a scientific discipline (biology, physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy, etc.) The next circle includes those who read periodicals like *Scientific American*, *Discover*, *Nature*, and *National Geographic* without thinking, "I wish they wouldn't put so much stock in evolution and climate change." The next circle, the widest circle, encompassing roughly half the population of the United States, includes those who identify culturally with those in the inner two circles.

We're not just talking about a small group of science fanatics; in other words, we're talking about a massive mission field.

But are we thinking missionally about this mission field? Are we confronting the brutal facts, asking the difficult questions, and examining cultural assumptions that affect our effectiveness in the mission field? Are we thinking clearly and passionately (as missionaries must) regarding the men and women who inhabit this mission field, so that we may help them uncover the treasure hidden in this field?

CONFRONT THE BRUTAL FACTS

In *Good to Great*, business guru Jim Collins describes a set of traits common to companies that made the transition from good to great, including the willingness to confront the brutal facts affecting their business. American Evangelicals are in the early stages of this painful process.

I was motivated to consider this once we decided to plant a church ten years ago in Ann Arbor, home to the University of Michigan, a major scientific research center and a community with decidedly blue leanings. (My daughter's middle school voted 596-6 for Kerry in the mock student body presidential election held in 2004.)

The mission of our church was clear: "to humbly bear the transforming presence of Jesus into the heart of Ann Arbor." We didn't see many evangelical churches in our hometown effectively reaching secular, progressive, environmentally conscious Ann Arborites, and we wanted to try.

The brutal facts represented in the table above were waiting for us the day we arrived. I knew I would have to address science and Scripture from the pulpit, especially after conversations like the one I had with Theresa. I would not be able to dodge this issue for the sake of congregational peace. If the pastor doesn't lean toward the lost, the church will not.

I had to choose between pleasing my evangelical friends and *being* evangelical.

So I addressed the question of human origins in a sermon series titled *Science and Faith at the Crossroads of Creation*. I described the four Christian views on this topic—views a faithful Christian might adopt: young earth creation, old earth creation, intelligent design, and theistic evolution. I acknowledged theistic evolution as my personal view—affirming the conclusions of scientists while also affirming belief in a transcendent Creator and divine agency. I framed the issue carefully as a matter of personal opinion—what the apostle Paul referred to as a "disputable matter" (Rom. 14:1), leaving others free to hold their own views. Finally, I asserted that our shared treasure is Jesus, not our view of how science and faith interact.

The series had an impact. We lost some contributing members of the church to other evangelical churches in town. But we also made room for scientists and others who accepted the idea that the earth was very old and who agree that species are not immutable but over long periods of time adapt to a changing environment as nature selects for traits that enhance survival.

Along with a few bristling emails, I had people approach me in the lobby—men, mainly⁷—one with tears in his eyes to say “Thank you! This is one of the issues that has caused me to keep my distance from Christianity.”

EXAMINE YOUR CULTURAL ASSUMPTIONS

Few evangelical leaders in the United States, when pressed, would insist that rejecting evolutionary science or climate science is part of the cost of discipleship—especially when leading a person of blue sensibility to faith in Jesus. It’s just that they don’t get the chance to do this very often, because evangelical churches are populated with people who dispute the modern scientific consensus.⁸ This in turn, creates a cultural climate that is unfriendly to other views, and without intending to be, unfriendly to the *people* who hold these views.

We are most powerfully affected by culture when we are least aware of it, especially in our own faith community settings.

Culture is everywhere, which makes it easy to ignore. We are most powerfully affected by culture when we are least aware of it, especially in our own faith community settings. When a person with blue sensibilities walks into a cultural setting dominated by a red sensibility, it doesn’t take long for that person to feel out of place. If Rush Limbaugh is quoted sympathetically, they feel out of place. If environmentalists are the butt-end of off-hand jokes, they feel out of place. If there’s a crackle in the atmosphere when the word “evolution” is mentioned, they feel out of place.

They may not be politically active, or scientifically literate, or feel like they have a dog in the global warming controversy. All they know is that they feel out of place, because they identify with a different crowd than this. Rare is the person who says, “I may be out of step with these people culturally, but I need their gospel.” The gospel often takes time to seep in, and they will be long gone before that ever happens.

The gospel is God’s homecoming message, but many people who don’t share a red sensibility feel out of place, marginalized, even condemned in that part of the American religious landscape named after the gospel—evangelicalism. What do people do when they feel out of place in a place? They leave the place. But even more to the point, they avoid coming to the place in the first place. People of blue sensibilities are not coming to our churches in droves. The people *for whom the churches are built* are not coming.

This reality places a burden on those of us who care about the gospel to examine our cultural assumptions, as any good missionary must do. Is it necessary to insist that men wear ties when they come to church? Is contemporary pop music an appropriate medium for honoring God? These questions involve cultural assumptions regarding reverence. They

are easy assumptions to examine because, for the most part, cherished beliefs are not at stake; plus previous generations have done the heavy lifting on moving these sacred cows out of the gospel's way.

But the assumptions fueling our defensive posture toward modern science are more difficult to examine; perhaps this is the reason we've taken so long to get around to it. Especially when it comes to evolutionary science, a great deal seems to be at stake. American fundamentalism is the common ancestor of most American evangelicals. This movement was energized in reaction to the teachings of Charles Darwin in science along with the rise of higher criticism in Protestant theology. Fierce opposition to evolution lies at the heart of American fundamentalism; it is an aspect of fundamentalism that has never been directly examined or challenged by the modern evangelical movement in America.

We don't examine our cultural assumptions in a cultural vacuum. We examine them as we find ourselves—embedded in a particular culture. Even though I am an evangelical pastor who never felt at home with young earth creationism, I hesitated to address this issue from the pulpit. I knew I was part of a quiet minority within my evangelical family and had little cultural incentive to rock the boat, even to provide a safe haven for those escaping a flood of judgment.

BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MISSING LINKS IN THE FOSSIL EVIDENCE?

Invariably, when I speak to evangelicals about this, I field a flurry of objections regarding the scientific evidence for evolution and climate change. Typically, questioners ignore the missional case I am making, and instead focus on disputing the science. I enjoy a good recreational debate as much as any thoughtful evangelical, and more often than not, I get sucked into these discussions. And there are appropriate times and places to have these discussions. But when we do, more often than not, we are not thinking like evangelical missionaries. We are thinking like good American culture warriors who love nothing better than to replay the debates that can be found on any cable news channel.

As an evangelical missionary, all I really want to do is to advocate for a shift in the burden of proof that we bring to these scientific questions. Given the missional implications of a defensive posture toward science, we have a compelling reason to examine our views: are they fueled by pure faithfulness to Jesus and the Bible, unadulterated by cultural assumptions that may share nothing in common with Jesus and his book? Can we find a way to approach science less defensively and retain faithfulness to Christ?

As anyone who has served on a jury knows, the burden of proof is an important threshold. How many jury deliberations bog down in lengthy discussions on the meaning of “beyond a reasonable doubt”? Does beyond a reasonable doubt mean beyond *a shadow* of doubt? Does it mean beyond *any* doubt? Or is it something less than either? How much less? When you’re serving on a jury—let alone being judged by a jury—a great deal depends on where the burden of proof is set.⁹

Is it really necessary to insist that the early chapters of Genesis were written to convey a scientifically accurate perspective on the origin of species?

When our perspectives on scientific matters are known to hinder the spread of the gospel among those who most need it, why is it so easy to advance these positions and link them so tightly with faithfulness to the Bible? Why don’t we experience more *pause* before doing so? Is it really necessary to insist that the early chapters of Genesis were written to convey a scientifically accurate perspective on the origin of species? Are we even *considering* the missional price that we are paying for this thoroughly modern perspective? Why are we so convinced that climate science is a big hoax, knowing that this perspective makes it more difficult for us to reach the people with the least opportunity to hear the gospel?

Something greater than the science is at stake here. Access to the gospel is at stake.

Do a little thought experiment. Imagine a person with a blue sensibility coming to your small group, Bible study, or church to assess the cultural climate (something we humans do quite adeptly when we visit churches). The person imagines what it would be like to express his or her views on evolution and climate change in this setting. Does he or she expect to be warmly received? You know how it feels to be in the minority around people with strong convictions. How do you imagine such a person feels in your evangelical congregation?

Notice the word *feel*. Feelings are contagious and difficult to hide. People will feel welcome among us when we are inclined to feel that their perspectives on a given subject are reasonable. If we feel that they are being duped by the Darwinist agenda of secular scientists—whether or not we say so—they will feel uneasy. Feeling this, they may not easily trust us, or even wish to be around us.

So let me ask a pointed missional question: How do you *feel* about scientific hot button issues like evolution and climate change? Does something inside you bristle when evolution is treated as a fact? Does something inside you cringe when climate change is treated as a fact?

I am not asking what you think about these matters of science. Because in this case what you think is less relevant to your ability to be effective in the mission field than how you feel.

In order to deal with our feelings about matters of science like evolution or climate change—issues of science surrounded by controversy in our culture—we will have to do some soul searching. Where do these feelings come from? Are these feelings fueled by the pure Spirit of Jesus? Or could they be fueled at least partly by cultural assumptions that may have nothing to do with Jesus?

I am not being facetious; I am dead earnest when I say: *for the sake of the gospel, bring these feelings to God in prayer for examination under the penetrating light of the Spirit.*

A year after listening to my sermon series on science and faith, Susan approached me in the church lobby with tears in her eyes and the following story. After wrestling through the material, Susan gathered her adult children together. None of her children were active churchgoers, though they were raised in a strict fundamentalist Baptist setting. In prayer, Susan had discerned that her approach to evolution had unnecessarily alienated her children from the gospel. Susan apologized to her children for insisting that they had to accept her young earth creation views. Susan told them that she didn't accept evolution herself, but she deeply regretted insisting that they accept her views as the only view a faithful Christian could accept.

Susan was never more evangelical than when she engaged in this soul-searching work.

WHAT WILL IT COST TO BE AN AMERICAN EVANGELICAL?

In order to be truly evangelical in American culture today, we may have to risk our reputation with some fellow evangelicals. That is the sad but painful truth. Which is more important though, reaching the lost or maintaining our reputation with the found?

We must begin to plant churches that are unencumbered with the present defensive posture toward modern science.

Practically speaking, we must begin to plant churches that are unencumbered with the present defensive posture toward modern science. These churches should be planted where the most blue sensibility people reside: in university towns, in cultural centers like Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington D.C., and San Francisco, and in the low church attendance regions of the country like the Pacific Northwest and the Northeast.

Unfortunately, it is not likely that we will be able to plant new churches fast enough to reach this vast harvest field. Church growth in these new churches will be slower as it won't be supported by the usual evangelical transfer growth. Financial support for planting such churches may not be easy to come by. This means that some of our existing churches will have to become more missionally-minded and this too will be costly.

Existing churches that want to be effective in the blue sensibility harvest field face an uphill climb. As I survey the evangelical landscape I see churches that fall into one of three cultural missional categories as it pertains to reaching blue sensibility people: Level 1: Tolerated Minority; Level 2: Accepted Minority; Level 3: Integrated Minority.¹⁰

Level 1: Tolerated Minority

In these churches, people with blue sensibility are met with little direct confrontation regarding their scientific views, yet there is no doubt that they are in the cultural minority. Those who have blue sensibility perspectives on science tend to leave them at home when they come to church. They are part of these churches in spite of their views and they are extremely unlikely to invite any friends with similar views to attend their church.

Level 2: Accepted Minority

The pastoral staff and some key leaders actively support the blue sensibility person's right to hold their views on scientific matters, even though they may disagree with these views. The church leadership however, clearly and openly views these matters as secondary and not an integral part of the Christian message. They don't host young earth creation workshops or spread climate-change-is-a-hoax emails. Level 2 churches are able to retain some "already committed Christian science people" (for example the science friendly spouse of a devout believer committed to the church), but these are also unlikely to invite like-minded friends to church.

Level 3: Integrated Minority

In these churches there is open if infrequent vocal acceptance for science friendly views along with ministry opportunities that correspond to these views, such as environmental stewardship or creation care ministries. The pastor and key leaders hold or support science friendly views themselves so that these perspectives are respected in the congregation, even if a majority does not hold them. The culture of such churches represents a significant missional advantage because those with blue sensibility perspectives will more freely invite like-minded friends to church. Over time the church culture may shift to include a majority of blue sensibility people while remaining accepting and friendly toward red sensibility people.

The scale of course, assumes that there is a Level 0 category in which blue views on science are not tolerated at all. From this vantage point, Levels 1 and 2 represent significant missional advantages. These churches can provide a church home for some blue sensibility people. Any movement up the category scale is missionally worthwhile.

Leading a change process in an existing church is not a short-term growth strategy, per se. But it is a missional strategy.

But any movement up the scale will require a costly change process. We live in anxious times; this background anxiety is caused by more change than most people crave. Leading a change process in an existing local church is not a short-term church growth strategy, per se. But it is a missional strategy. It will make more room for the very people Jesus is after. Some loss of nervous members may counteract gains, especially in the early going; but new members will include more people sympathetic to the mission, more new Christians, and Christians who have never before found a church home because of the cultural alienation they feel.

We do well to count the cost. Many evangelical churches will not be able to transition from Level 1 or 2 to Level 3. Some are surely not called to do so. Transition between levels should be measured in years, not months, unless the congregation has an unusual capacity for change. But we should measure this accounting with the missional costs of our current approach in mind. Who are we not reaching now because the costs are too high?

There isn't a surplus of evangelical pastors in America today who could, with conviction, lead a Level 3 congregation. I don't have any survey data to support this, but I know a lot of evangelical pastors, and most of them do not hold blue sensibility perspectives on science. Those who do keep their views to themselves. When I start talking science with my evangelical pastor colleagues, I am aware that my window of opportunity is short indeed; their eyes quickly glaze over in that, "Oh-another-big-issue-I don't-have-time-to-think about!" look that leaders know so well.

Which means that if you are an evangelical pastor or influential leader with blue friendly perspectives on science, you might well examine your heart and ask whether God may be calling you to lead an intentional change process in your church or partner with a church plant designed from the get go to reach this harvest. It's likely you've been used to keeping quiet about your own views. You may have built a wall of partition between the evangelical self and the blue view self in the congress of persons that is you before God. It may be time to tear down that partition or at least visit across the aisle. It may be that the harvest for you doth wait.

READ OUTSIDE THE BOX

In order to reach people who are currently outside the reach of the typical evangelical church, read outside the box. Eighteenth and nineteenth century evangelical pastors were readers. John Wesley, in particular, insisted that his circuit readers read voraciously, and not just the Bible and theology. He also urged them to read science. The

pioneers in what became “biology” included many evangelical leaders who were well read in what was then called “Natural Philosophy.”¹¹ So try reading some science outside the “critical-of-science” box.

Here’s a short reading list:

Almost Everyone’s Guide to Science: The Universe, Life, and Everything by John Gribbin (Yale University Press, 2000). It tells the story of science as a continuous narrative. Like the gospel, science isn’t just a collection of facts; it is a collection of facts that tells a story about the way things are.

Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism by George M. Marsden (Eerdmans, 1991). Marsden reveals how prominently science and religion in America figured into the formation of the current culture wars. It’s important to understand the family history.

The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief by Francis Collins (Free Press, 2006) won the Christianity Today 2007 Book of the Year Award in Evangelism for good reason. It’s a groundbreaking work written by an evangelical Christian who is now the head of the National Institute of Health. Collins offers a faith and science based defense of theistic evolution, but with a respectful approach toward other views.

The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate by John H. Walton (IVP Academic, 2009). This is the book on Genesis that I wish I’d read before I taught on this subject. Walton, Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, offers an interpretation of the first chapter of Genesis that paves the way for a reassessment of the modern American evangelical posture toward science.

These books may or may not influence your views on science, but reading them will help you to become more effective in the mission field.

LOOK BEYOND A DEFENSIVE STRATEGY

We’ve been playing defense too long with respect to modern science. It’s not a winning strategy for the gospel. Besides, the insights of modern science are slowly but surely prevailing despite all this emphasis on critique, criticism, and conspiracy theory. Young earth creationism is giving way to old earth creationism, which in turn is giving way to intelligent design. Each step on this path embraces more of the science denied by the previous view. One of the heroes of the Intelligent Design movement, Michael Behe, acknowledges the scientific validity of common ancestry and natural selection, pillars of evolutionary thought denied by young earth and old earth creationists. The differences between these perspectives are obscured because the posture in each

tends to be defensive—focused on disagreement with modern science. Concerned scientists sigh in exasperation over each of them equally. But the trend within these competing defensive views is toward accepting more of the underpinnings of evolutionary science.

Our allergic response is keeping us from making hay, and headway.

Meanwhile, the defensive habit has prevented us from recognizing developments in modern science that constitute huge opportunities for the gospel. Our allergic response to science is keeping us from making hay, and headway.

For example, recent work in the field of neuroscience indicates that the human brain is wired for God, or at least for conducting a spiritual quest. The ancient biblical disciplines of prayer (silence, solitude, meditating on Scripture, prayer at intervals through the day) turn out to be neurologically savvy the more we know about the workings of the brain. Prayer isn't just something we're supposed to do; it's something we can't help but do, because we have praying brains.¹²

Modern physics has been undergoing a revolution called Quantum Mechanics. It turns out that at the smallest level, matter is not nearly as predictable as once thought. Quantum particles pop into and out of existence all the time. Yes, into and out of existence! The universe is known to be something much more mysterious than Sir Isaac Newton thought. The new physics¹³ makes new room for faith with positive implications for a transcendent realm, the power of prayer, and the resurrection of Jesus. The quantum level gives plenty of room for God to move.

And for the first time since the modern environmental movement began, major environmental leaders are reaching out to people of faith to help solve the global environmental crisis. Biologist E. O. Wilson, arguably the world's most preeminent scientist, has urged his colleagues to make room again for referring to the natural world as a "creation," though Wilson himself is a secular humanist (and former Southern Baptist).¹⁴ I sat in a room with Gus Speth, former dean of the Yale School of Forestry and the Environment, when he said, "I used to think the major problems facing the world were climate change, the collapse of land for farming, and loss of bio-diversity and that with thirty years of good science we could solve these problems. I was wrong. The major problems facing us are greed, selfishness and apathy and for that we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. We scientists don't know how to do that."

I could hardly believe my ears. Then Speth looked around at the dozen or so evangelical leaders in attendance and said, "We need your help." With that, the hair on my arms stood up, my throat tightened, and my eyes filled with tears.

Yes we can help, we who have been given the good news to share far and wide to all of creation. The gospel is good news *for* creation. The whole creation longs for the children of God to be revealed. In the meantime we are to be practicing and advocating good stewardship of God's earth, made to be a temple for his glory, not a dumping ground for our trash.

These are historic opportunities for the gospel in three major areas of cutting edge science.

It seems to me that God is like an *offensive* lineman in football these days, opening up some huge holes in the line for anyone willing to take the ball and run—forward, on the balls of our feet, not backward on our heels. But too many of us are huddled on the sidelines reviewing defensive schemes aimed at slowing the advance of modern “secular” science.

For the love of God and for the sake of the lost, let's take the ball and run with it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you have any personal experience or observations to support the author's assertion that the cultural climate in a local church regarding science can be an obstacle to faith for outsiders? What goes into a church's "cultural climate"?

2. In your own experience, do you think that those who object to evolutionary science are also more likely to object to climate science? If so, why do you think this is often the case?

3. What experience do you have being in a "cultural minority" within a church setting?

4. How does what the author calls the "burden of proof" threshold affect our consideration of disputable issues?

5. Which missional category best represents your church with regards to blue sensibility people: Level 1: Tolerated Minority, Level 2: Accepted Minority, or Level 3: Integrated Minority? What would it take to move up the scale?

6. What aspects of the recent "culture wars" have had a negative impact on the spread of the gospel among those who have not yet embraced it?

END NOTES

1 This was also the view of B.B. Warfield, sometimes referred to as “the father of the doctrine of biblical inerrancy.” A 2006 Gallup Poll indicates that 36 percent of Americans also agree with this view (“Almost Half of Americans Believe Humans Did Not Evolve” by Frank Newport, Gallup News Service, June 06, 2006).

2 According to the 2009 Pew U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: <http://religions.pewforum.org/reports>.

3 *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State* by Andrew Gelman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 81.

4 “Almost Half of Americans Believe Humans Did Not Evolve” by Frank Newport, Gallup News Service, June 06, 2006.

5 Pew Research Center, <http://people-press.org/report/556/global-warming>.

6 Those who answered “other/no opinion” in the Gallup Poll surveys on evolution of 1999, 2001, 2004, and 2006 ranged from 4-5 percent; presumably those with “no opinion” on this issue are less than 4-5 percent.

7 Gallup polling data indicates that significantly more men than women accept the scientific view that humans developed from other life forms (“Almost Half of Americans Believe Humans Did Not Evolve” by Frank Newport, Gallup News Service, June 05 2006).

8 Nearly two-thirds of Americans who attend church at least weekly dispute the evolutionary science; presumably the proportion would be even higher in evangelical churches; *ibid*.

9 Think of the threshold for the burden proof as the fulcrum of a lever (picture a see-saw in a schoolyard). If the fulcrum is in the middle, it takes equal weight on each side of the see-saw to balance. If the fulcrum is shifted to one side, that side can maintain balance with less weight. When the burden of proof shifts, so does the weight of the evidence needed to arrive at a given conclusion.

10 “Minority” refers to blue sensibility, a minority perspective within most evangelical churches.

11 Consider John Wesley’s exhortation to read, especially science, in “An Address to Clergy”: “And as to acquired endowments, can he take one step aright, without first a competent share of knowledge? . . . Some knowledge of the sciences also, is, to say the least, equally expedient . . . Should not

a Minister be acquainted too with at least the general grounds of natural philosophy?”

12 See *Mystically Wired: Exploring New Realms in Prayer* by Ken Wilson (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010).

13 See, for example, *Quarks, Chaos, and Christianity* by John Polkinghorne (New York: Crossroad, 2005).

14 *Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* by E. O. Wilson (New York: Norton, 2006).

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