

# The MIT Survey on Science, Religion and Origins: the Belief Gap

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We present a detailed survey of how different US faith communities view origins science, particularly evolution and Big Bang cosmology. We find a striking gap between people’s personal beliefs and the official views of the faiths to which they belong. Whereas Gallup reports that 46% of Americans believe that God created humans in their present form less than 10,000 years ago, we find that only 11% belong to religions openly rejecting evolution. This shows that the main divide in the origins debate is not between science and religion, but between a small fundamentalist minority and mainstream religious communities who embrace science. The fact that the gap between personal and official beliefs is so large suggests that part of the controversy might be defused by people learning more about their own religious doctrine and the science it endorses, thereby bridging this belief gap.

## I. INTRODUCTION

There has long been great interest in the relation between science and religion. Although the two often co-exist peacefully, there has been no shortage of controversies, from the trial against Galileo for arguing that Earth revolves around the Sun to current disputes about the science curriculum in US public schools. Much of the argument today is about origins science, in particular evolution and Big Bang cosmology.

Complementing the discussion of the scientific issues, many researchers have studied the sociological aspects of the controversy, surveying who believes what. According to a 2012 Gallup poll, 46% of Americans believe that God created humans in their present form within the last 10,000 years, and ten prior Gallup polls during the past three decades have reported similar numbers [1]. There have been many recent studies of the official positions on origins science held by religious communities, including surveys by Calvin Porter [2], Joel Martin [3, 4], the Pew Forum [5] and Old Earth Ministries [6]. All agree that there is a great diversity of views on origins science between different religious communities. Another conclusion, emphasized in particular by Martin, is that the official positions of many religions are more compatible with origins science than the beliefs of their members are. For example, the Roman Catholic Church endorses evolution, but nonetheless, no more than 58% of US Catholics believe that evolution is the best explanation for life on Earth [7].

The state of knowledge provided by these interesting surveys can be further improved in several ways, such as by including more faith communities to avoid missing substantial denominations, by using a classification scheme nuanced enough to convey multiple gradations in views, and by including recently updated position statements. It is therefore timely to provide a more detailed, quantitative and up-to-date analysis. This is the goal of the present survey.

The rest of this report is organized as follows. We

describe our survey methodology in Section II, present our basic results in Section III and discuss our conclusions in Section IV. Our full denomination-by-denomination analyses are presented in Appendix A.

## II. METHOD

### A. Faith communities and membership numbers

For our survey, we divided US faith communities into the 101 categories listed in Table I, which follow the classification from page 110 of the 2008 Pew Forum report [7]. The above-mentioned surveys [2–6] used mainly self-reported membership figures, whose accuracy can vary between denominations, and which can cause underrepresentation of faith communities lacking large central organizations. In contrast, the 2008 Pew Forum classification and membership analysis is based on a remarkably massive survey of over 35,000 people who were asked about their religious views, and provides a complete sampling even for relatively small and loosely organized faith groups. The membership sizes in the table are listed as a percentage of all adults in the US. Table I shows more precise numbers for groups below 0.3% than in the published report [7], which were kindly provided by Greg Smith at the Pew Forum.

### B. Classification scheme

To make our results straightforward to reproduce, we classified each of these faith community categories using the publicly available material summarized in Appendix A, which comes mainly from their official websites. For each community, we classified both the nature of its position on origins science and the extent to which it has publicly stated a position

We classified each position into one of the seven categories defined in Table II, because we found that a

Faith Community	Size	C	P	
<b>Catholic</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	5	E	"there is no conflict between evolution and the doctrine of faith"; "it is important to set proper limits to the understanding of scripture, excluding any unreasonable interpretations"
<b>Mainline Protestant:</b>	<b>18.1%</b>			
<i>Baptist mainline:</i>	1.9%			
American Baptist Churches in USA	1.2%	5	D	"find unity in diversity and diversity in unity"; "there are individual differences of conviction and theology"
Other	0.6%	0		
<i>Methodist mainline</i>	5.4%			
United Methodist Church	5.1%	5	E	"evolution [...] is not inconsistent with the religious doctrine of creation. It is not about whether God created the world, but about how." "We recognize science as a legitimate interpretation of God's natural world."
Other	0.2%	0		
<i>Lutheran mainline:</i>	2.8%			
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	2.0%	4	E	"There is no inherent conflict between scientific findings and the understanding of God as creator, redeemer and sanctifier"
Other	0.8%	0		
<i>Presbyterian mainline:</i>	1.9%			
Presbyterian Church USA	1.1%	5	E	"there is no contradiction between an evolutionary theory of human origins and the doctrine of God as Creator"
Other	0.8%	0		
<i>Episcopal/Anglican mainline:</i>	1.4%			
Episcopal Church, USA	1.0%	5	E	"the Bible, including Genesis, is not a divinely dictated scientific textbook. We discover scientific knowledge about God's universe in nature, not Scripture"
Anglican Church (Church of England)	0.3%	5	E	"Jesus himself invited people to observe the world around them and to reason from what they saw to an understanding of the nature of God"
Other	0.1%	0		
<i>Congregationalist mainline:</i>	0.7%			
United Church of Christ	0.5%	4	E	"Our Creator works patiently calling forth life through complex processes spanning billions of years and waiting for us to awaken and respond"; "there was a stupendous explosion of light and energy that some call the Big Bang"
Other	0.2%	0		
<i>Restorationist mainline:</i>	0.4%			
Disciples of Christ	0.3%	5	E	"people of faith who experience no conflict between science and their faith and who embrace science as one way of appreciating the beauty and complexity of God's creation"
Other	0.1%	0		
<i>Reformed mainline:</i>	0.1%			
Reformed Church in America	0.1%	4	E	"Since Christians have long celebrated 'the book of nature' as a means to learning more about God, it is time to see contemporary science as a potential partner"
Other	0.0%	0		
<i>Anabaptist mainline:</i>	0.1%	1		
<i>Friends mainline</i>	0.1%	1		
<i>Nondenominational mainline</i>	0.9%	0		
<i>Other mainline Christian</i>	2.5%	0		
<b>Evangelical Protestant:</b>	<b>26.3%</b>			
<i>Baptist evangelical:</i>	10.8%			
Southern Baptist Convention	6.7%	5	S	"express our support for the teaching of Scientific Creationism in our public schools." "students are now being indoctrinated in evolution-science"
Independent Baptists evangelical	2.5%	1		
Baptist Missionary Association	0.2%	2		
Free Will Baptists	0.2%	5	L	"the Bible [...] is without error in all matters upon which it speaks, whether history, geography, matters relating to science or any other subject"
General Association of Regular Baptists	0.1%	5	I	"Biblical account [...] is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process"
Other	1.1%	0		
<i>Methodist evangelical</i>	0.1%	2		
<i>Lutheran evangelical:</i>	1.9%			
The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod	1.4%	5	I	"Evolution cannot be "baptized" to make it compatible with the Christian faith"
The Lutheran Church Wisconsin Synod	0.2%	5	I	"The [Big Bang] theory does allow that the universe had a "beginning" of sorts, but that is about the only thing that it has in common with the biblical account of creation. The two really can't be reconciled."
Other	0.2%	0		
<i>Presbyterian evangelical:</i>	0.8%			
Presbyterian Church in America	0.4%	5	I	"Genesis 1-3 is [...] history, not myth". But also "unable to come to unanimity over the nature and duration of the creation days"
Other	0.4%	0		
<i>Episcopal/Anglican evangelical:</i>	0.1%	0		
<i>Congregationalist evangelical:</i>	0.1%			
Conservative Congregationalist	0.1%	2		
Other	0.0%	0		
<i>Restorationist evangelical:</i>	1.7%			
Church of Christ	1.5%	1		
Other	0.2%	0		
<i>Reformed evangelical:</i>	0.2%			
Christian Reformed Church	0.1%	5	I	"reject [...] naturalistic evolutionism"
Other	0.1%	0		
<i>Pentecostal evangelical:</i>	3.4%			
Assemblies of God	1.4%	5	D	"The Bible makes no claim to be a scientific textbook." "believing scientists and biblical scholars consider no fundamental conflict to exist between God's Word and His works"
Church of God Cleveland Tennessee	0.4%	5	S	"we give our full support to the principle that where evolution is taught in our public schools, provision be made for teaching the Biblical alternative of creation"
Four Square Gospel	0.1%	5	I	"the subject of evolution [...] conflict with God's word"
Pentecostal Church of God	0.1%	2		

TABLE I: Summary of our survey results. The basis for each classification is given in Appendix A together with the references for the above quotes. The community code C and the position code P are defined by Tables II-III; the colors indicate no conflict between faith and origins science (codes E/C/D, green), conflict (L/I/S, red) and the intermediate case (R, yellow).

Pentecostal Holiness Church	0.2%	2	
Nondenominational, independent Pentecostal	0.1%	0	
Church of God of the Apostolic Faith	0.2%	2	
Apostolic Pentecostal of the Evangelic Tradition	0.1%	0	
Other	0.8%	0	
<i>Holiness evangelical:</i>	<i>1.0%</i>		
Church of the Nazarene	0.3%	5	C "the Church accepts as valid all scientifically verifiable discoveries in geology and other natural phenomena"
Free Methodist Church	0.3%	5	S "We [...] urge that the concept of special creation be presented in, or along with, courses, textbooks, library materials and teaching aids dealing with the subject of first origins"
Wesleyan Church	0.1%	2	
Christian and Missionary Alliance	0.1%	2	
Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)	0.2%	4	D "Conformity in all matters of doctrine and practice is not the goal of the Church of God"
Other	0.0%	0	
<i>Adventist evangelical:</i>	<i>0.5%</i>		
Seventh-Day Adventist	0.4%	5	I "belief in the biblical account of creation in contrast to an evolutionary explanation"; "the seven days of creation were literal 24-hour days"
Other	0.1%	0	
<i>Anabaptist evangelical</i>	<i>0.1%</i>	1	
<i>Pietist evangelical</i>	<i>0.1%</i>	0	
<i>Nondenominational evangelical:</i>	<i>3.6%</i>	0	
Nondenominational evangelical	1.2%	0	
Nondenominational charismatic	0.5%	0	
Nondenominational fundamentalist	0.3%	0	
Other	1.4%	0	
<i>Other evangelical</i>	<i>2.1%</i>	0	
<b>Historically African-American Protestant:</b>	<b>6.9%</b>		
<i>Baptist:</i>	<i>4.4%</i>		
National Baptist Convention	1.8%	2	
Progressive Baptist Convention	0.3%	2	
Independent Baptists evangelical	0.5%	1	
Missionary Baptist	0.2%	1	
Other	1.8%	0	
<i>Methodist:</i>	<i>0.6%</i>		
African Methodist Episcopal	0.4%	2	
African Methodist Episcopal Zion	0.1%	2	
Christian Methodist Episcopal Church	0.1%	2	
Other	0.1%	0	
<i>Pentecostal:</i>	<i>0.9%</i>		
Church of God In Christ	0.6%	2	
Apostolic Pentecostal	0.1%	1	
United Pentecostal Church International	0.1%	2	
Other	0.2%	0	
<i>Other</i>	<i>0.8%</i>	0	
<b>Mormon:</b>	<b>1.7%</b>		
Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints	1.6%	4	R "Leave geology, biology, archeology, and anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research"; but "Adam was [...] the primal parent of our race"
Community of Christ	0.0%	4	C "Scientific theories do not have to be contradictory to scriptural creation stories"
Other	0.1%	0	
<b>Jehovah's Witness</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	5	I "Evolution is [...] incompatible with the Bible. Evolution presents modern man as an improving animal. The bible presents modern man as the degenerating descendant of a perfect man."
<b>Orthodox:</b>	<b>0.5%</b>		
Greek Orthodox	0.2%	4	C "The traditional Orthodox view of the Genesis account [...] does not see it as a literal scientific account"
Russian Orthodox	0.1%	4	C "precisely "how" the Creator created all things is quite secondary"; "Orthodoxy has no problem with evolution as a scientific theory"
Other	0.2%	0	
<b>Other Christian</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	0	
<b>Jewish:</b>	<b>1.7%</b>		
Reform	0.7%	5	E "demand quality textbooks that are based on modern scientific knowledge and that exclude "scientific" creationism"
Conservative	0.5%	5	E "A literal reading of Genesis, otherwise known as Creationism, is not a dogma of Judaism."
Orthodox	0.2%	4	C "Evolutionary theory, properly understood, is not incompatible with belief in a Divine Creator, nor with the first two chapters of Genesis."
Other	0.3%	0	
<b>Bhuddist</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	4	C "Buddhism [...] is not dependent on a specific cosmological narrative"; "both Buddhism and modern science share a deep suspicion of any notion of absolutes (Dalai Lama)"
<b>Hindu</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	4	D "Hindus were evolutionists long before Darwin."
<b>Muslim</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	3	R "Consistent with the diversity of the Islamic world, Muslims hold a variety of opinions regarding biological evolution."
<b>Other World Religions</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	0	
<b>Other Faiths:</b>	<b>1.2%</b>		
Unitarian universalist	0.3%	5	C "evolutionary theory [...] gave religion a new way to understand the creation of humankind"
New Age	0.4%	0	
Other	0.5%	0	
<b>No religious affiliation:</b>	<b>16.4%</b>		
Atheist	1.8%	3	C
Agnostic	2.4%	3	C
Nothing in particular	12.1%	3	C
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		

TABLE I: Summary of our survey results (continued).

Code	Position on origins science
E	Statement <b>E</b> nthusiastically embracing origins science
C	Statement that their beliefs are <b>C</b> ompatible with origins science
D	Statement embracing <b>D</b> iversity of beliefs within their community or that members are free to believe whatever they want about origins science
R	Broad <b>R</b> ange of views exist within the community on whether origins science is compatible
L	Statement that scripture should be interpreted <b>L</b> iterally also in scientific matters
I	Statement that their beliefs are <b>I</b> ncompatible with origins science
S	Statement advocating teaching “creation science” in <b>S</b> chools

TABLE II: The seven categories into which we classify each faith community’s position on origins science.

simple “yes”/“undecided”/“no” scheme was not nuanced enough to capture the full spectrum of viewpoints expressed. For the first three categories (“E”, “C” and “D”), there is no conflict <sup>1</sup> between belonging to this faith community and believing in origins science, but for the last three (“L”, “I” and “S”), there is. Between them lies the “R” category, where positions both for and against origins science have been publicly stated by prominent members of the community, and no clear consensus has emerged. The “I” category goes beyond “L” by objecting to origins science explicitly rather than merely implicitly, and the “S” category goes even further by advocating that such views should be taught in public schools.

We found that this classification alone was insufficient to adequately classify all the PEW Forum faith community categories, because of a broad spectrum in decentralization and outspokenness. For example, the Roman Catholic Church has a central authority making clear position statements, while others lack a central authority, and still others are merely loose categories such as “*Other Faiths*”. To reflect this spectrum, we classify each community into one of the six categories defined in Table III, labeled by a numerical community code 0-5. If the community code is 3, 4 or 5, then a position on origins science can be clearly determined, so we append a position code from the above list E/C/D/R/L/I/S, giving a final classification such as “4E” or “5S”, say.

<sup>1</sup> This survey studies only the views of religious organizations on origins science, not views of individual members of these organizations. Individuals may of course experience inner conflict between their religious beliefs and origins science, regardless of the position of religious organizations to which they belong.

Code	Type of community & outspokenness about origins science
5	A faith community that publicly states official positions
4	A faith community where views have been publicly expressed, for example on their official website, by prominent members
3	A faith community whose views are described by a reliable external source
2	A faith community with central authority that does not publicly and prominently state views
1	A faith community lacking a central authority; no official views stated
0	Not an individual faith community, just a loose category

TABLE III: The six categories into which we classify the nature of each faith community and the extent to which it has publicly stated a position on origins science.

	Community code						Total
	5	4	3	2	1	0	
				4.5%	4.9%	20.0%	29.4%
<b>E</b>	33.0%	2.6%	0.0%				35.6%
<b>C</b>	0.6%	1.3%	16.4%				18.3%
<b>D</b>	2.6%	0.5%	0.0%				3.1%
<b>R</b>	0.0%	1.8%	0.6%				2.5%
<b>L</b>	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%				0.2%
<b>I</b>	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%				3.4%
<b>S</b>	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%				7.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.3%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

← 62%: No conflict

← 2%: Maybe

← 11%: Conflict

TABLE IV: The percentages of people belonging to faith communities with various classifications.

### III. RESULTS

#### A. Basic findings

The basic results of our survey are summarized in Table I. The detailed basis for each classification is given in Appendix A together with the references for the listed quotes. Many of the 101 faith community categories classified are seen to have relatively small memberships, at the level of small fractions of a percent. Table IV combines these numbers to show the total percentage of people belonging to faith communities with various classifications.

To get an overview of how these classifications break down between different faith groups, we summarize the highlights of Table I graphically in Figure 1, where each faith community is represented by a circle whose area is proportional to the membership. To keep this figure legible, we have grouped the 24 classifications into four categories corresponding to different answers to the question “*Is there a conflict between belonging to this faith and believing in origins science?*”:

- **No conflict:** position codes E/C/D or community code 2 (green)<sup>2</sup>
- **Internal disagreement:** position code R (yellow)
- **Conflict:** position codes L/I/S (red)
- **Insufficient information:** community codes 0/1 (white)

### B. Differences in position

A first obvious fact about Table IV and Figure 1 is that there is lots of green and not much red: only about 11% of all Americans belong to faith communities openly rejecting origins science. This means that there is a striking “belief gap” between people’s personal beliefs and the official views of the faiths to which they belong, considering that 46% of Americans believe humans have existed for less than 10,000 years according to the above-mentioned Gallup poll [1].

A second conspicuous fact is that subdivisions exist even within many denominational categories, reflecting the fact that the Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, *etc.* have each split into mainline and evangelical denominations. For example, the *Presbyterian Church USA* enthusiastically embraces origins science, whereas the *Presbyterian Church of America* does not. Table IV also shows ample diversity in community type: about 30% of Americans belong to faith communities that lack a central authority or are too small to form one of the 101 PEW Forum categories.

### C. Differences in focus

Aside from differences in *position* on origins science, there are also major differences in degree of *emphasis* of the topic. For example, despite their opposite conclusions, both the Anglican Church and the Southern Baptist Convention have in common that they devote significant attention to origins science — the former by running a “Darwin Series” on their website, and the latter by advocating for creationism teaching in public schools. In contrast, many other faith communities make little or no mention of these issues on their websites, which could be interpreted as a tacit indication that scientific issues are not central to their faith, and that taking a stance on scientific issues is not part of their core mission. For

example, the websites of many of the historically African-American churches signal greater concern with social issues directly relevant to the everyday lives of their constituents. Similarly, these issues have been described as rather irrelevant to Buddhism, which is not dependent on a specific cosmological narrative (see Appendix A).

### D. Differences over time

Of the faith communities openly and officially addressing origins science on their websites, some indicate that they have satisfactorily resolved the issue, while others make clear that vigorous internal discussions are still ongoing. For example, the Presbyterian Church in America reports that their Creation Study Committee has been “unable to come to unanimity over the nature and duration of the creation days”. The Christian Reformed Church officially adopted “Declaration F” in 1991, ruling out “evolutionary forebears of the human race”, then qualified it after reported “unease”, then decided in 2010 that it no longer reflected their official position.

Many faith communities indicate that their views have evolved or become more refined as a reflection of developments in science and society. Although there have been changes in both directions, the overall trend has arguably been toward greater acceptance of modern science. For example, the evangelical Pentecostal denomination Assemblies of God used to be openly negative toward origins science, but officially adopted a new position paper in 2011 stating that “*The Bible makes no claim to be a scientific textbook*” and “*believing scientists and biblical scholars consider no fundamental conflict to exist between God’s Word and His works*”. The Roman Catholic Church has gone from putting Galileo on trial to stating that “*scientific studies [...] have splendidly enriched our knowledge of the age and dimensions of the cosmos, the development of life-forms, and the appearance of man*”.

### E. Differences between evolution and cosmology

Although our survey of views on origins science includes both evolution and Big Bang cosmology, it encountered significantly more unease with the former than with the latter. Many of those skeptical of evolution express no reservations about the idea that the Big Bang corresponds to God’s creation of our universe. Only a very small number of faith communities now explicitly argue for Young-Earth Creationism, *i.e.*, the doctrine that our universe is less than 10,000 years old, and some religious organizations such as Old Earth Ministries [6] have even launched their own information campaigns against this position, which they argue is untenable and weakens the faith groups espousing it.

Our survey found no support whatsoever for Young-Earth Creationism outside of the three Abrahamic religions. Sacred texts of other religions generally lack any

<sup>2</sup> The “no conflict” designation follows from the definition both for the “no religious affiliation” group (where there simply is no organization whose positions do/don’t conflict with origins science) and for community code 2 (where no views are stated that conflict with origins science).

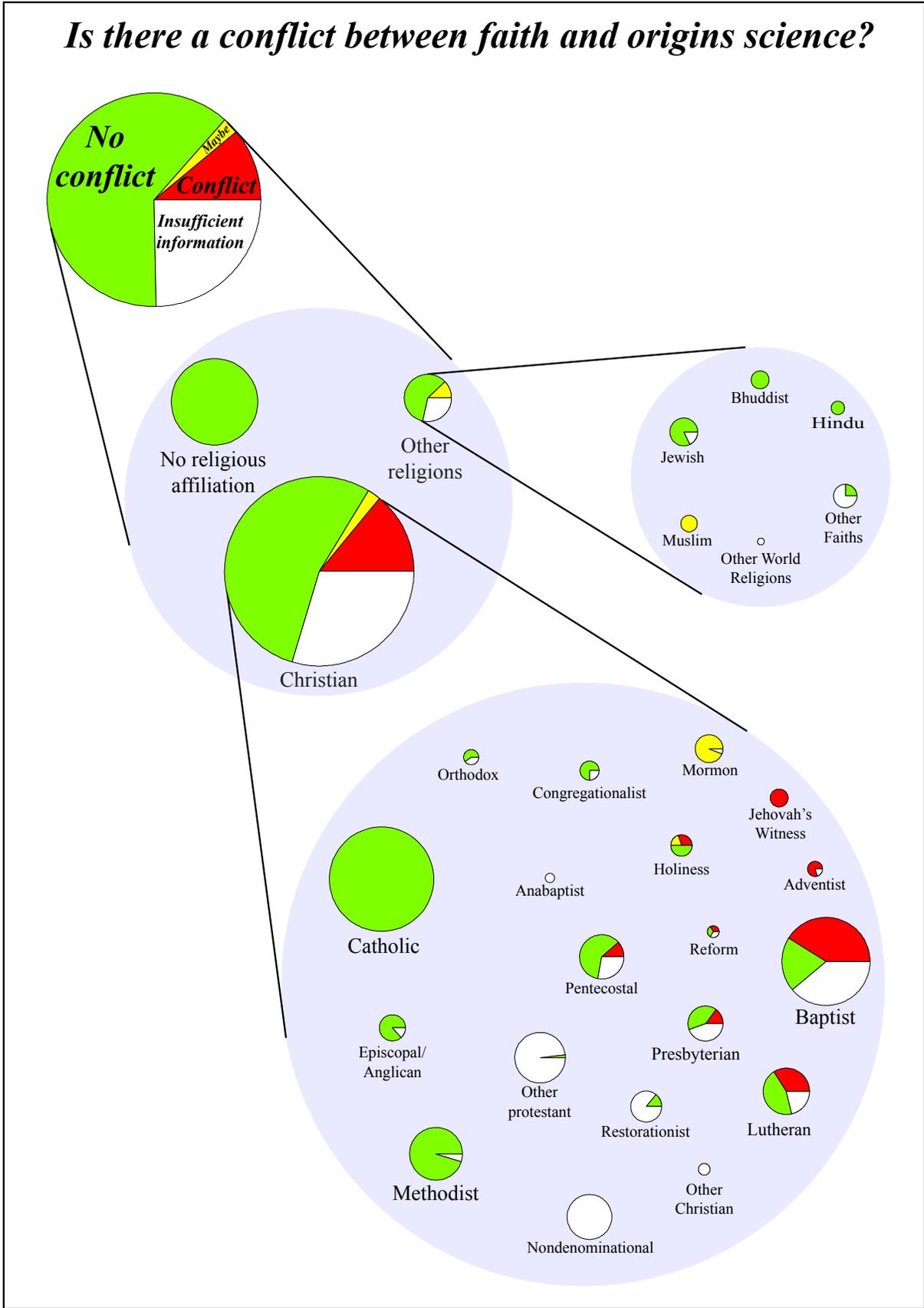


FIG. 1: Summary of our survey results. Circle areas indicate membership numbers.

indication of a young Earth, either by avoiding quantitative age claims in their cosmological narratives or by using much larger numbers than Genesis. In Hinduism, for example, billions of years are natural, and even mentioned in scripture [8]. Indeed, even within the Abrahamic religions, our survey found Young-Earth Creationism advocacy nowhere except within some Christian denominations. Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism all accept mainstream cosmology (see Table I), and a recent Islam analysis in *Science* states that “*young-Earth creationism is wholly absent in the Muslim world, and a universe billions of years old is commonly accepted*”.

#### F. Differences in reasoning

Appendix A quotes a large number of arguments used by various faith communities to justify their positions on origins science. Most of them involve four broad and interrelated questions:

1. Should scripture be interpreted literally or metaphorically?
2. Should scripture or nature be the ultimate authority in science?
3. What should the relation between science and religion be?
4. Has man evolved or devolved?

Table V gives a selection of answers from faith communities on both sides of the conflict/no-conflict divide. The second question parallels the one that defined the modern scientific revolution: should the final word in science be that of established authorities (such as Aristotle and Ptolemy), or to empirical observation of nature?

#### G. Dependence of results on methodology

Our survey methodology described above made specific choices for treating both membership figures and classification. Let us briefly discuss the quantitative impact of these choices on the results.

Given the massive scale and careful design of the 2008 PEW Forum survey upon which we based our membership figures, and its good agreement with the 2008 ARIS report [10], the greatest source of membership inaccuracy is likely to be demographic changes since its 2008 publication. The PEW Forum conducted a 2012 survey with tenfold smaller sample size, and highlighted as the main change that Americans without religious affiliation had increased by about five percentage points since 2008, to about 20%. This shift would slightly increase the green/“No Conflict” fraction in Figure 1.

In terms of the classification methodology, we have taken the conservative approach of using only material from authoritative and verifiable sources. With a more aggressive approach of making assumptions, some of the areas colored white in Figure 1 could be reclassified as red/yellow/green. If we were to make the extreme assumption that the unclassifiable faith communities should be classified in the same way as the others in their broader category, there would be about 10.7% more red (from Evangelical Protestants) and about 9.5% more green (6.5% from Mainline Protestants, 1.9% from Evangelical protestants, 0.3% from Jews and 0.9% from other faiths).

In summary, it appears as though none of these methodological details affect the basic qualitative conclusions of our report: that only a small minority of Americans belong to a faith community rejecting origins science, and that there is a large gap between people’s personal beliefs and the official views of the faiths to which they belong.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

We have presented a detailed survey of how different US faith communities view origins science, particularly evolution and Big Bang cosmology. We found a striking gap between people’s personal beliefs and the official views of the faiths to which they belong. Whereas Gallup reports that 46% of Americans believe that God created humans in their present form less than 10,000 years ago, we find that only 11% belong to religions openly rejecting evolution.

Why is this “belief gap” so large? Interestingly, this is not the only belief gap surrounding a science-religion controversy: whereas Gallup reports that 18% of Americans believe that the Sun revolves around Earth [12], 0% belong to religions supporting this view. The fact that the geocentric belief gap remains large even though the controversy was settled hundreds of years ago suggests that it has more to do with education than with intellectual disputes, and the same may be true for the origins science belief gap as well. A significant part of the controversy might therefore be defused by people learning more about their own religious doctrine and the science that it endorses, thereby bridging the belief gap.

In this survey, we have examined the views of religious groups on science, and found that a large majority see no conflict between science and religion. This conciliatory view is shared by most leading science organizations. For example, the American Association for the Advancement of Science states that science and religion “*live together quite comfortably, including in the minds of many scientists*” [13] and continue: “*Science and religion ask different questions about the world. Many individual scientists are deeply religious. They see scientific investigation and religious faith as complementary components of a well-rounded life.*” The vocal intelligent-design critic

Dividing line	Conflict between faith & origins science	No conflict between faith & origins science
Should scripture be interpreted literally or metaphorically?	<p><i>"We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and man; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race."</i> (General Association of Regular Baptists)</p> <p><i>"inspiration extends to the very words of the Scriptures, not just to the thoughts and ideas expressed by human authors."</i> (Free Will Baptists)</p>	<p><i>"The Bible [...] is not a divinely dictated scientific textbook"</i> (Episcopal Church, USA)</p> <p><i>"God calls the worlds into being' [...] understand this to be a poetic or anthropomorphic way of describing the origin of the Universe that scientists speak of as the Fireball, Big Bang, or Great Radiance."</i> (United Church of Christ)</p> <p><i>"It is important to set proper limits to the understanding of Scripture, excluding any unseasonable interpretations which would make it mean something which it is not intended to mean."</i> (Roman Catholic Church)</p>
Should scripture or nature be the ultimate authority in science?	<p><i>"The Bible is without error and trustworthy in all its teachings, including cosmogony, geology, astronomy, anthropology, history, chronology, etc., as well as in matters of faith and practice. Being the very Word of God, it is God's final revelation and our absolute authority."</i> (Free Will Baptists)</p> <p><i>"We would also be making a very serious error simply to accept the theories of science without question. Many aspects of evolutionary theory are directly contradictory to God's Word."</i> (Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod)</p>	<p><i>"We discover scientific knowledge about God's universe in nature not Scripture."</i> (Episcopal Church, USA)</p> <p><i>"Nowhere is the process by which God made, created or formed man set out in scientific terms. A description of this process in its physical aspects is a matter of natural science. The Bible is not a book of science."</i> (Presbyterian Church USA)</p> <p><i>"There is nothing here that contradicts Christian teaching. Jesus himself invited people to observe the world around them and to reason from what they saw to an understanding of the nature of God (Matthew 6: 25-33)."</i> (Church of England)</p>
What should the relation between science and religion be?	<p><i>"Since the Bible is the Word of God, it is without error in all matters upon which it speaks, whether history, geography, matters relating to science or any other subject."</i> (Free Will Baptists)</p> <p><i>"there is a need for God's people to unite against the teaching of evolution as a scientific fact"</i> (Church of God Cleveland Tennessee)</p>	<p><i>"Our responsibility as Christians is to deal seriously with the theories and findings of all scientific endeavors, evolution included"</i> (Presbyterian Church USA)</p> <p><i>"We preclude science from making authoritative claims about theological issues and theology from making authoritative claims about scientific issues. [...] Science and theology are complementary rather than mutually incompatible. We therefore encourage dialogue between the scientific and theological communities and seek the kind of participation that will enable humanity to sustain life on earth and, by God's grace, increase the quality of our common lives together."</i> (United Methodist Church)</p> <p><i>"For Buddhism, it is pretty much irrelevant. Although the Buddhist religion has a rich store of myths and stories, it is not dependent on a specific cosmological narrative."</i></p>
Evolution or devolution?	<p><i>"Evolution is therefore incompatible with the Bible. Evolution presents modern man as an improving animal. The Bible presents modern man as the degenerating descendant of a perfect man."</i> (Jehovah's Witnesses)</p>	<p><i>"And we hold that it is better and nobler, - better to have risen from cave and jungle than to have fallen from Eden; better to have developed from the animal than to have degenerated from the angel; better to have begun at the bottom and toiled to the top, than to have begun at the summit and rolled down to the base; better to have the golden age before us than behind us; better to be on the way to perfection, with hope and courage, than to be trudging dis-crowned and dishonored, away from perfection."</i> (Unitarian Universalists)</p>

TABLE V: Examples of arguments given by faith communities to justify their positions on origins science. (References and context are given in Appendix A.)

Lawrence Krauss had this to say [14]: “*State school board science standards would do better to include a statement like this: While well-tested theories like evolution and the Big Bang have provided remarkable new insights and predictions about nature, questions of purpose that may underlie these discoveries are outside the scope of science, and scientists themselves have many different views in this regard.*”

Albert Einstein agreed that there is no conflict between science and religion unless they overstep their boundaries, with science trying to dictate laws of ethics or religion trying to dictate laws of nature [15], and argued that they can complement each other: “*Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.*”

In summary, mainstream religion and mainstream science are neither attacking one another nor perceiving a conflict. As Scott Hoezee puts it on the website of the

Reformed Church in America [16]: “*Most scientist and most believers do not fit the wilt-eyed fanatical stereotypes that create such great television drama when placed side-by-side on one of Sean Hannity’s split screen debates.*” This means that the main divide in the origins debate is not between science and religion, but between a small fundamentalist minority and mainstream religious communities who embrace science.

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# Appendix A:

## Basis for Faith Community Classification

In this appendix, we provide the source material that forms the basis for our classification in Table 1.

### V. CATHOLIC (5E)

**Official Website:** <http://www.vatican.va>

The Roman Catholic Church has repeatedly affirmed that there is no conflict between the scientific account of the origins of the world and man and the account given by the scriptures. Acknowledging the contribution of his predecessors to the dialogue between science and religion on this topic, Pope John Paul II stated in 1996:

*“In his encyclical Humani Generis (1950), my predecessor Pius XII has already affirmed that there is no conflict between evolution and the doctrine of the faith regarding man and his vocation, provided that we do not lose sight of certain fixed points.”* adding that *“It is important to set proper limits to the understanding of Scripture, excluding any unseasonable interpretations which would make it mean something which it is not intended to mean. In order to mark out the limits of their own proper fields, theologians and those working on the exegesis of the Scripture need to be well informed regarding the results of the latest scientific research.”* ( <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP961022.HTM> )

Similarly, Pope Benedict XVI addressed in 2007 the debate between science and religion on the topic of origins calling the seeming antithesis between the two “absurd”:

*“Currently, I see in Germany, but also in the United States, a somewhat fierce debate raging between so-called “creationism” and evolutionism, presented as though they were mutually exclusive alternatives: those who believe in the Creator would not be able to conceive of evolution, and those who instead support evolution would have to exclude God. This antithesis is absurd because, on the one hand, there are so many scientific proofs in favour of evolution which appears to be a reality we can see and which enriches our knowledge of life and being as such. But on the other, the doctrine of evolution does not answer every query, especially the great philosophical question: where does everything come from? And how did everything start which ultimately led to man? I believe this is of the utmost importance.”* (Pope Benedict XVI, 2007, [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2007/july/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20070724\\_clero-cadore\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2007/july/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20070724_clero-cadore_en.html))

Not only does the Roman Catholic Church believe that there is no opposition between science and religion but moreover its catechism talks about the importance of scientific discoveries for religious life:

*“The question about the origins of the world and of man has been the object of many scientific studies, which have splendidly enriched our knowledge of the age and dimensions of the cosmos, the development of life-forms and the appearance of man. These discoveries invite us to even greater admiration for the greatness of the Creator, prompting us to give him thanks for all his works and for the understanding and wisdom he gives to scholars and researchers. With Solomon they can say: “It is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements. . . for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me.”*

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_P19.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P19.HTM))*

### VI. MAINLINE PROTESTANT

#### A. Baptist mainline

##### 1. American Baptist Churches in USA (5D)

**Official Website:** <http://www.abc-usa.org>

The official website of the American Baptist Churches in USA does not mention evolution or the Big Bang, and does not offer an official position on the origins of the world and humanity that would clash with these scientific theories. In their identity statement, the American Baptist Churches in USA emphasize responsible interpretation of the Bible, openness to pluralism in matters of faith and the importance of living up to date with the present age:

*“the Bible is the final authority and trustworthy for faith and practice. It is to be interpreted responsibly under the guidance of God’s Holy Spirit within the community of faith;”*

*“We affirm that God through Jesus Christ calls us to be: [...]*

*An Inclusive People*

*:who, gifted by a variety of backgrounds, find unity in diversity and diversity in unity;:who embrace a pluralism of race, ethnicity, and gender; and :who acknowledge that there are individual differences of conviction and theology.*

*A Contemporary People*

*:who have a remembrance for the past and a vision for the future;:who are committed to religious liberty and to the separation of church and state; :who call our present world to make Jesus Christ Lord of all life; and :who trust the Holy Spirit for insight and power to live in the present age.”*

(<http://www.abc-usa.org/about-us/identity-statement-1998/>)

## B. Methodist mainline

### 1. United Methodist Church (5E)

**Official Website:** <http://www.umc.org>

The United Methodist Church expresses an enthusiastic endorsement of science and technology and opposes the introduction of faith-based theories into the science curriculum of public schools. More specifically regarding evolution, the United Methodist Church adopted a resolution on Evolution and Intelligent design in 2008 that says the following:

*“WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church has for many years supported the separation of church and State (164C, Book of Discipline, 2004, p. 119);*

*Therefore, be it resolved , that the General Conference of The United Methodist Church go on record as opposing the introduction of any faith-based theories such as Creationism or Intelligent Design into the science curriculum of our public schools.”*

(<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=1wL4KnN1LtH&b=4951419&ct=6481051&notoc=1>)

The official statement of the church on science and technology, as recorded in The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, affirms:

*“We recognize science as a legitimate interpretation of God’s natural world. We affirm the validity of the claims of science in describing the natural world and in determining what is scientific. We preclude science from making authoritative claims about theological issues and theology from making authoritative claims about scientific issues. We find that science’s descriptions of cosmological, geological, and biological evolution are not in conflict with theology. We recognize medical, technical, and scientific technologies as legitimate uses of God’s natural world when such use enhances human life and enables all of God’s children to develop their God-given creative potential without violating our ethical convictions about the relationship of humanity to the natural world. We reexamine our ethical convictions as our understanding of the natural world increases. We find that as science expands human understanding of the natural world, our understanding of the mysteries of God’s creation and word are enhanced. In acknowledging the important roles of science and technology, however, we also believe that theological understandings of human experience are crucial to a full understanding of the place of humanity in the universe. Science and theology are complementary rather than mutually incompatible. We therefore encourage dialogue between the scientific and theological communities and seek the kind of participation that will enable humanity to sustain life on earth and, by God’s grace, increase the quality of our common lives together.”*

(<http://www.umc.org/site/apps/nlnet/content.aspx?c=1wL4KnN1LtH&b=5066247&ct=6715227&notoc=1>)

In an article entitled *“Faith and Life commentary: Creation vs. evolution a misplaced debate”*, Rev. Phil Wogaman writes:

*“That theory is not inconsistent with the religious doctrine of creation. It is not about whether God created the world, but about how.”*

([http://archives.umc.org/umns/news\\_archive1999.asp?ptid=&story=%7BA14069AB-286E-4E6A-9C7A-FEABAA55CCAB%7D&mid=3368](http://archives.umc.org/umns/news_archive1999.asp?ptid=&story=%7BA14069AB-286E-4E6A-9C7A-FEABAA55CCAB%7D&mid=3368))

### C. Lutheran mainline

#### 1. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) (4E)

**Official Website:** <http://www.elca.org>

The Evangelical Lutheran Church does not hold an official position concerning the origin of life and evolution. However the Q&A section of *The ELCA Alliance for Faith, Science & Technology* expresses positive sentiments towards sciences in general and the theory of evolution in particular:

*“The ELCA has not officially taken a position about evolution. The ELCA teaches that the scriptures witness that all of life is a gift of God. However, the scriptures do not say, for example, how God’s creating word, “Let there be...,” brings creatures into being. Lutheran tradition has respected the work of the natural sciences in investigating phenomena in the natural world and explaining how they work and how they originated. Because our knowledge both of God and of other things is partial (I Corinthians 13:9), what is accepted at any one time as valid scientific knowledge and theory can be either added to or corrected by further scientific investigation and better theories to explain the phenomena we see in the world.”*

**“I believe in an old earth theory, (4.3-4.6 Byo) and also I believe in evolution both macro and micro, does this conflict with my ELCA Church?”**

*Not at all. As a church body the ELCA believes that science per se is a gift of God to be used for the stewarding of creation, but it does not pronounce on the correctness of scientific theories or data. It does believe its members in their callings as scientists, technicians, and educated citizens should do so, though! The theories you mention represent the best thinking of science at this time. The proposed social statement on genetics puts it this way: “There is no inherent conflict between scientific findings and the understanding of God as creator, redeemer and sanctifier.”*

(<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Faith-Science-and-Technology/Ask-a-Scientist.aspx>)

Moreover the opening quote on the Faith Science and Technology section of the ELCA website reads as follows:

*“Traditional religious creation stories and evolution are complementary. Science and religion together can weave a rich tapestry of new meaning for our age.” (Philip Hefner, Ph.D.)*

Furthermore, Miriam L. Woolbert, at the Department for Communication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America stated that the church *“does not see evolution as a conflict with God having created the universe and all that is therein.”* Additionally, the church believes that *“God may have employed the Big Bang and evolutionary processes in creation.”*

### D. Presbyterian mainline

#### 1. Presbyterian Church USA (5E)

**Official Website:** <http://www.pcusa.org>

The Presbyterian Church USA sees no conflict between their beliefs about creation and the theory of evolution. As decided in 2002, by the 214th General Assembly, the church also supports science education in schools *“based on the most reliable content of scientific knowledge as determined by the scientific community”*. The resolution reached states the following:

*“1. Reaffirms that God is Creator in accord with the witness of Scripture.*

*2. Reaffirms that there is no contradiction between an evolutionary theory of human origins and the doctrine of God as Creator.*

*3. Encourages State Boards of Education across the nation to establish standards for science education in public schools based on the most reliable content of scientific knowledge as determined by the scientific community.*

*4. Calls upon Presbyterian scientists and science educators to assist congregations, presbyteries, communities, and the public to understand what constitutes the reliable scientific knowledge.”*

(<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/oga/publications/02-ga-minutes.pdf>)

Another theological statement of the church on the subject is the Evolution Statement approved by the church's General Assembly in 1969. It asserts the following:

*“Neither Scripture, our Confession of Faith, nor our Catechisms, teach the Creation of man by the direct and immediate acts of God so as to exclude the possibility of evolution as a scientific theory.”*

*“Nowhere is the process by which God made, created or formed man set out in scientific terms. A description of this process in its physical aspects is a matter of natural science. The Bible is not a book of science.”*

*“Our responsibility as Christians is to deal seriously with the theories and findings of all scientific endeavors, evolution included, and to enter into open dialogue with responsible persons involved in scientific tasks about the achievement, failures and limits of their activities and of ours. The truth or falsity of the theory of evolution is not the question at issue and certainly not a question which lies within the competence of the Permanent Theological Committee. The real and only issue is whether there exists clear incompatibility between evolution and the Biblical doctrine of Creation. Unless it is clearly necessary to uphold a basic Biblical doctrine, the Church is not called upon and should carefully refrain from either affirming or denying the theory of evolution. We conclude that the true relation between the evolutionary theory and the Bible is that of non-contradiction and that the position stated by the General Assemblies of 1886, 1888, 1889 and 1924 was in error and no longer represents the mind of our Church.”*

( <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theologyandworship/evolution/> )

## E. Episcopal/Anglican mainline

### 1. Episcopal Church in the USA (5E)

**Official Website:** <http://www.episcopalchurch.org>

The Episcopal Church in the USA enthusiastically supports science and scientific theories, including that of evolution and the Big Bang. When discussing the Bible's authority in matters pertaining to science, the Episcopal Church's Catechism of Creation says:

*“the Bible, including Genesis, is not a divinely dictated scientific textbook. We discover scientific knowledge about God's universe in nature not Scripture.”*

The Catechism also answers questions pertaining to the Big Bang and evolution in a question and answer format. Below are those relevant to this topic:

***“Are not science and the Bible in conflict with one another, as many Christians believe?”***

*Both some non-believers and some conservative Christians promote this Conflict approach. The former group claims that the universe is all there is and therefore the concept of God is outdated and irrelevant. Some conservative Christians perceive modern scientific theories to be hostile to their Christian faith and reject them as contrary to their beliefs about the Bible. There is a middle way, which some call a Complementary approach. Its supporters say that while they are separate fields of study with different sources of knowledge, science and Christian theology can complement one another in the quest for truth and understanding. Together they can create a more complete understanding of and give greater meaning to our world.*

***Does Big Bang cosmology prove the doctrine of creation out of nothing?***

*No. Big Bang cosmology seems to be in tune with both the concepts of creation out of nothing and continuous creation. However, theology does not depend upon science to verify its doctrines, just as science does not depend upon theology to verify its theories. However, science can inspire theology to think new thoughts about the relationship between God and the creation, as Big Bang cosmology and evolution have done.*

***Is it proper to speak of an evolving creation?***

*Yes. When astronomers look out into space they look back in time. Thus, they are able to see our universe at many stages of cosmic evolution since its beginning in the Big Bang. Here on earth biologists, paleontologists, geneticists and other scientists are showing that life has evolved over four billion years, and are reconstructing evolution's history. None of these scientific discoveries and the theories that explain them stands in conflict with what the Bible reveals about God's relationship to the creation.*

***Isn't evolution just a theory?”***

*Theories are not mere guesses or hypotheses, as people often suppose. When enough evidence supports a hypothesis that has been created to explain some facts of nature, it becomes a theory. A theory is a well-established concept that is confirmed by further scientific discoveries and is able to predict new discoveries. The Big Bang theory and*

cosmic evolution are confirmed by discoveries in physics ranging from the smallest known particles of matter to the processes by which galaxies are formed. Biological evolution is a web of theories strongly supported by observations and experiments. It fits in with what we know about the physical evolution of the universe, and has been confirmed by evidence gathered from the remains of extinct species and from the forms and environments of living species.

**Does this picture of human evolution conflict with the biblical statement that we humans are made in the image and likeness of God?**

The phrase does not refer to a physical image and likeness, since God is spirit (John 4:24). Theologians have sought to explain ‘image and likeness’ in various ways: that it refers to those divine gifts of unconditional love and compassion, our reason and imagination, our moral and ethical capacities, our freedom, or our creativity. To think that these gifts may have been bestowed through the evolutionary process does not conflict with biblical and theological notions that God acts in creation. Scripture affirms that God was involved (Gen. 1:26-27).

**Has the Episcopal Church spoken officially on evolution?**

No. However, clergy and scientists from both the Catholic and Evangelical traditions in Anglicanism have accepted evolution from Darwin’s time to the present. In a resolution passed by General Convention in 1982, the Church affirmed the ability of God to create in any form and fashion, which would include evolution. Several Anglicans and Episcopalians, some of whom are both theologians and scientists, are contributing to the development of new theologies of an evolving creation.”

(<http://library.episcopalchurch.org/assets/CreationCatechism.pdf>)

In an article entitled *Making room for divine imagination*, presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold once said that “[t]he divine creativity can be equally proclaimed in both the creation stories and the theory of evolution”.

Reverend Franklin Vilas (rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Chatham, N.J., member of the national church’s Working Group on Science, Technology and Faith, and a founding member of the Episcopal Environmental Coalition) asks himself in a forum exchange:

“Is it possible to believe in God as creator and also to accept the scientific findings about the life process expressed in the theory of evolution?” To this question I would answer with a resounding “yes!”

( <http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/episcopal-life/ForFeb00.html> )

The Episcopal Church has expressed support for teaching the theory of evolution in schools as concurred in its 75th General Convention which:

“Affirmed that God is Creator; stated “an acceptance of evolution is entirely compatible with an authentic and living Christian faith;” and called for church members to strongly encourage legislatures and school boards to “establish standards for science education based on the best available scientific knowledge as accepted by a consensus of the scientific community” (A129).”

(<http://library.episcopalchurch.org/article/legislative-summary-75th-general-convention>)

## 2. Anglican Church (Church of England) (5E)

**Official website:** <http://www.churchofengland.org/>

The Church of England strongly believes that there is no conflict between scientific theories, such as the theory of evolution and belief in God. Moreover, it expresses concern about the misguided feeling that one needs to choose between science and religion. The Diocese of Manchester has issued a motion on the compatibility of science and Christian belief that states:

“That this synod, concerned at the promotion of a perceived need to choose between the claims of science and belief in God:

(a) affirm the compatibility of belief in God and an understanding of science: and

(b) urge the House of Bishops and all dioceses robustly to promote a better public understanding of the compatibility of science and Christian belief” (<http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1245633/gs%201772a.pdf>)

In an effort to promote understanding of the compatibility of faith and the theory of evolution, the official website of the Church of England hosts a Darwin series: <http://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/medical-ethics-health-social-care-policy/darwin.aspx>

In his welcome address to the series, Rt Revd Dr Lee Rayfield SOSc, Bishop of Swindon, comments:

*“Theology and science each have much to contribute in the assertion of the Psalmist that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139). I hope that this website area dedicated to Darwin will not only provide a source of information and knowledge about Charles Darwin and his work, but that it will prove to be a resource for growing in wisdom and understanding.”*

<http://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/medical-ethics-health-social-care-policy/darwin/bishopswindon.aspx>

Revd. Dr Malcolm Brown adds:

*“In science, hypotheses are meant to be constantly tested. Subsequent generations have built on Darwin’s work but have not significantly undermined his fundamental theory of natural selection. There is nothing here that contradicts Christian teaching. Jesus himself invited people to observe the world around them and to reason from what they saw to an understanding of the nature of God (Matthew 6: 25-33).”*

<http://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/medical-ethics-health-social-care-policy/darwin/malcolmbrown.aspx>

## F. Congregationalist mainline

### 1. United Church of Christ (4E)

**Official Website:** <http://www.ucc.org>

The United Church of Christ does not view the theory of evolution as conflicting with any of the church’s beliefs. In his address entitled *“A New Voice Arising: A Pastoral Letter on Faith Engaging Science and Technology”*, from 2008, Rev, John H. Thomas, the former General Minister and President and thus premier spokesperson for the United Church of Christ affirms the following:

*“Evolution helps us see our faithful God in a new way. Our creator works patiently calling forth life through complex processes spanning billions of years and waiting for us to awaken and respond in conscious participation in God’s own overarching dream for all living things. Evolution also helps us see ourselves anew, as creatures who share a common origin with other species.”*

<http://www.ucc.org/not-mutually-exclusive/pdfs/pastoral-letter.pdf>

As for the Big Bang theory, Reverend Michael Dowd wrote a piece entitled *“A Great Story Perspective on the UCC Statement on Faith”* that suggests compatibility between the beliefs of the United Church of Christ and the Big Bang theory:

*“‘God calls the worlds into being’... I understand this to be a poetic or anthropomorphic way of describing the origin of the Universe that scientists speak of as the Fireball, Big Bang, or Great Radiance. And just as every word spoken reveals something of the one who speaks it, so too does every particle, every atom, every molecule, every organism, every species, every ecosystem, every planet, every solar system, and every galaxy reveal something unique of the Holy One...God planted the Universe as a seed, smaller than a mustard seed, at the center of God’s own heart 14 billion years ago, and it’s been expanding there and growing more interdependent and aware ever since. First there was a stupendous explosion of light and energy that some call the Big Bang and others call The Great Radiance.”* (<http://www.thegreatstory.org/UCCstatement.html>)

Similar views endorsing science and evolution can be found in the piece *“God in Evolution: Web of Life and Love”* by Rev. John A. Mills, a Founding Member of The United Church of Christ Science and Technology Taskforce:

*I suggest that being a Christian and being an evolutionist are entirely compatible and that a Christian can live and worship side by side with other faiths. We Progressives have much to offer in the healing of the world and of all of God’s creation. We accept and live with a God who has given us both science and religion as gifts, and who calls us to see the human face in every endeavor, in every new technological breakthrough, and in every culture and religion. We know we cannot box God into either science or the bible. We are called to forego dogma and ideology when those would drive us from God’s commandment to love one another. We are inclusive of science, religion, all people and all of creation.*

( <http://www.ucc.org/science/pdf/microsoft-word-god-and-darwin-sermon-rev-john-a-mills1.pdf> )

## G. Restorationist mainline

### 1. *Disciples of Christ (5E)*

The Disciples of Christ are part of the National Council of Churches Committee (NCCC) on Public Education and Literacy and has signed, together with other faith communities, a brochure issued by the NCCC on the topic of origin science and religion. *“This short resource seeks to assist people of faith who experience no conflict between science and their faith and who embrace science as one way of appreciating the beauty and complexity of God’s creation.”* <http://www.ncccusa.org/pdfs/evolutionbrochurefinal.pdf>

The Disciples of Christ clearly espouse the position expressed in this brochure, namely that there is no conflict between the theory of evolution and religious thought and that *“the learnings of science and religion enrich each other”*.

## H. Reformed mainline

### 1. *Reformed Church in America (4E)*

Official Website: <http://www.rca.org>

Although the Reformed Church in America (RCA) does not have an official position on origins science, several essays published by the journal of the RCA, *Perspectives, A Journal of Reformed Thought*, have been sympathetic towards the theory of evolution. For example, an essay by Scott Hoezee entitled *“Beyond Shouting: Religion and Science in Conversations”* says:

*“And then there is evolution. One of the most pernicious ideas that the scientific community has ever asserted is that evolution proves that there is not now and has never been anything akin to a Creator God. That leap into the metaphysical in which scientists make claims that are not based on (nor therefore verifiable through) their own scientific methods constitutes a fundamental epistemic mistake. But that error has been compounded through the lamest mistake Christians have in turn made in accepting the purported premise that embracing science means rejecting God, thus leading believers to seek a myriad of ways to pit their faith against science in the belief that faith and evolution/science cannot in any way cohabitate on the same earth.*

*But this adversarial pitting of science against religion is, at best, a caricature of the situation that obtains in the real world. In truth, there are many scientists who, though perhaps not particularly religious themselves, are also not particularly interested in bashing those who do adhere to a faith tradition. Similarly, there are millions of Christians who, though committed to the faith taught in Scripture, do not see any inherent conflicts between religion and science and so are only too happy to listen when scientists tell the story of the universe. Most scientists and most believers do not fit the wild-eyed, fanatical stereotypes that create such great television drama when placed side-by-side on one of Sean Hannity’s split-screen debates.”*

*“It’s merely hypocritical for believers to live as beneficiaries of all that science makes possible but then scorn that same science in case we fear it will cause us to rethink some long-held idea we’ve had about the age of the earth.*

*Since Christians have long celebrated “the book of nature” as a means to learning more about God, it is time to see contemporary science as a potential partner in finding ever-more detailed reasons for which to give praise to our endlessly inventive Creator God.”*

<http://www.rca.org/page.aspx?pid=2917>

Reverend Dr. Christopher Kaiser of the Western Theological Seminary states that the Reformed Church in America has *“never taken an official stance on the theory of evolution”* and that *“members are free to believe whatever they wish regarding those two theories”*.

## I. Anabaptist mainline (1)

Anabaptists represent different communities of faith with no common governing body and therefore no common doctrine.

## J. Friends mainline (1)

Websites:

<http://www.fgcquaker.org>

<http://fum.org>

<http://www.evangelicalfriends.org>

The Friends faith community is focused on the ministry of the individual: “*Quakers believe that we are all ministers and responsible for the care of our worship and community*” and thus do not have a central authority. Therefore, no official common position on evolution or the Big Bang can be attributed to its members. Out of the three umbrella organizations Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting and Evangelical Friends Church International, the last two do not mention evolution on their official website but the first has posts on its official websites that seem supportive of science and its theories.

The Q&A section on the website of the Friends General Conference says:

“*Quakers find compatibility in our longing for spiritual understanding and in our desire to understand the workings of the natural world.*”

<http://www.fgcquaker.org/explore/faqs-about-quakers#science>

## VII. EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT

### A. Baptist evangelical

#### 1. Southern Baptist Convention (5S)

**Official website:** <http://www.sbc.net>

The Southern Baptist Convention clearly refutes evolution and expresses commitment to scientific creationism and the teaching of it in public schools.

The Southern Baptist Convention’s Resolution on Scientific Creationism from 1982 outlines their position on the matter:

“*WHEREAS, The theory of evolution has never been proven to be a scientific fact, and WHEREAS, Public school students are now being indoctrinated in evolution-science, and WHEREAS, Creation-science can be presented solely in terms of scientific evidence without any religious doctrines or concepts, and WHEREAS, Public school students should be taught all the scientific evidence on the subject of the origin of the world and life, and WHEREAS, Academic freedom and free speech should be encouraged rather than inhibited. Therefore, be it RESOLVED, That the Southern Baptist Convention in session in New Orleans, Louisiana, June 1982, express our support for the teaching of Scientific Creationism in our public schools.*” (<http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=967>)

#### 2. Independent Baptist in the Evangelical Tradition (1)

The Independent Baptists do not have any hierarchy or recognize any authority outside the local congregation and do not have a common official doctrine. Therefore they also lack a common official position on the issue of the scientific vs. the scriptural account of the origins of humans and the universe. Most congregations however seem to hold conservative views and oppose doctrinal diversity: “True, New Testament churches strongly believe that all doctrinal error is sin as the New Testament teaches.” (<http://bible-truth.org/BaptistHistory.html>)

#### 3. Baptist Missionary Association (2)

**Website:** <http://www.discipleguide.org>

The Baptist Missionary Association does not have an official statement about either the Big Bang theory or the theory of evolution.

#### 4. Free Will Baptists (5L)

**Website:** <http://nafwb.org>

The Free Will Baptists believe that the Bible should to be interpreted literally and is the final authority in scientific matters. The Treatise of the Faith and Practices of the National Association of Free Will Baptists states:

*“Since the Bible is the Word of God, it is without error in all matters upon which it speaks, whether history, geography, matters relating to science or any other subject.” (p. 3)*

*“By verbal we mean that inspiration extends to the very words of the Scriptures, not just to the thoughts and ideas expressed by human authors.*

*We believe the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant. The Bible is without error and trustworthy in all its teachings, including cosmogony, geology, astronomy, anthropology, history, chronology, etc., as well as in matters of faith and practice. Being the very Word of God, it is God’s final revelation and our absolute authority.” (p. 18 )*

( <http://nafwb.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/FWB-Treatise.pdf> )

#### 5. General Association of Regular Baptists (5I)

**Official website:** <http://www.garbc.org>

The General Association of Regular Baptists holds that the theory of evolution conflicts with their beliefs about creation. Their article of faith regarding creation states the following:

*“We believe the Biblical account of the creation of the physical universe, angels, and man; that this account is neither allegory nor myth, but a literal, historical account of the direct, immediate creative acts of God without any evolutionary process; that man was created by a direct work of God and not from previously existing forms of life; and that all men are descended from the historical Adam and Eve, first parents of the entire human race. Genesis 1; 2; Colossians 1:16, 17; John 1:3.” ( [http://www.garbc.org/?page\\_id=31](http://www.garbc.org/?page_id=31) )*

A post on the Baptist Bulletin at [baptistbulletin.org](http://baptistbulletin.org), linked to the official site of the General Association of Regular Baptists contains the following message:

*“Humanists, evolutionists, homosexuals, and other blocs of people we believe to be contrary to the Scriptures demand changes in the law to grant their lifestyles and philosophies free reign.”*

( <http://baptistbulletin.org/?p=23279> )

#### 6. Methodist evangelical (2)

**Official Website:** <http://emchurch.org>

The Evangelical Methodist Church does not have an official position on origins science. The Discipline of the Evangelical Methodist Church handbook, which deals with matters of doctrine makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or the Big Bang.

<http://emchurch.org/downloads/General/EMC%20Discipline%20and%20Handbook.pdf>

### B. Lutheran evangelical

#### 1. The Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod (5I)

**Official Website:** <http://www.lcms.org>

The official website of the Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod makes it very clear that evolutionary theory is directly in contrast to the teachings of God.

A quote on their website sums it up:

*“We teach that God has created heaven and earth, and that in the manner and in the space of time recorded in the Holy Scriptures, especially Gen. 1 and 2, namely, by His almighty creative word, and in six days. We reject every doctrine which denies or limits the work of creation as taught in Scripture”* ([http://www.lutheran-resources.org/beliefs\\_brief\\_statement\\_page.htm](http://www.lutheran-resources.org/beliefs_brief_statement_page.htm))

Their reliable account of creation is the Bible as said on their website. The President of the Lutheran Church Missouri-Synod, Dr. A.L. Barry wrote in a piece entitled *“What About... Creation and Evolution*

*“We would also be making a very serious error simply to accept the theories of science without question. Many aspects of evolutionary theory are directly contradictory to God’s Word. Evolution cannot be ‘baptized’ to make it compatible with the Christian faith.*

## 2. The Lutheran Church Wisconsin Synod (5I)

**Official Website:** <http://www.wels.net>

The Lutheran Church Wisconsin Synod believes that their beliefs cannot be reconciled with either the theory of evolution or the Big Bang. In the question & answer section of their official website it is stated:

*“The theory does allow that the universe had a “beginning” of sorts, but that is about the only thing that it has in common with the biblical account of creation. The two really can’t be reconciled.”*

*“The text of Genesis specifically says that each day of creation was from evening to morning, or a period of darkness followed by a period of light.”*

<http://www.wels.net/what-we-believe/questions-answers/creation/length-creation>

Also, their statement of belief contains the following statement:

*“The Bible and Lutherans teach that at the beginning of time God created heaven and earth and all creatures. He did this in six days. He spoke his almighty word to create all things. He made everything out of nothing. But man and woman are God’s special creation.”*

<http://www.wels.net/what-we-believe/statements-beliefs/what-lutherans-teach>

## C. Presbyterian evangelical

### 1. Presbyterian Church in America (5I)

**Official Website:** <http://www.pcahistory.org>

The Presbyterian Church in America rejects the theory of evolution but does not explicitly reject the old age of our universe implied by Big Bang cosmology. The Report of the Creation Study Committee states the following:

*“We affirm that Genesis 1-3 is a coherent account from the hand of Moses. We believe that history, not myth, is the proper category for describing these chapters; and furthermore that their history is true. In these chapters we find the record of God’s creation of the heavens and the earth ex nihilo; of the special creation of Adam and Eve as actual human beings, the parents of all humanity (hence they are not the products of evolution from lower forms of life).”*

*“The Committee has been unable to come to unanimity over the nature and duration of the creation days.”*  
( <http://www.pcahistory.org/creation/report.html> )

## D. Congregationalist evangelical

### 1. Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (2)

**Official Website:** <http://www.cccusa.com/about-us/>

The official website makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

## E. Restorationist evangelical

### 1. Church of Christ (1)

The Churches of Christ represent autonomous congregations with no governing hierarchy beyond the congregation itself and no common doctrine.

Further information: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches\\_of\\_Christ#Variations\\_within\\_Churches\\_of\\_Christ](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Churches_of_Christ#Variations_within_Churches_of_Christ)

## F. Reformed evangelical

### 1. Christian Reformed Church (51)

**Official Website:** <http://www.crcna.org>

After numerous internal debates and revisions of their position on creation and science, the Christian Reformed Church appears to reject the theory of evolution, although less categorically than during 1991-2010. The church's Acts of Synod from 2010, a collection of doctrinal positions, shows the ongoing debate within the church on this matter, and the careful consideration it is given:

#### **“Response to Overture 18: Remove Declaration F of the 1991 Decision on Creation and Science (majority report)**

*A. Materials:* Overture 18, pp. 697-700

*B. Observations*

Synod 1991 adopted Declarations A-E, which were unanimously recommended by the Committee to Study Creation and Science (Report 28). Following is the final form of Declaration E, which Synod 1991 adopted:

*The church confesses that humanity is uniquely created in the image of God and rejects all theorizing that tends either to minimize or to obliterate this created uniqueness. We reject, therefore, atheistic and naturalistic evolutionism, which denies the creative activity of God, disputes the existence of purpose in the created order, and reduces humanity to being nothing more than the end product of a natural process.*

*(Acts of Synod 1991, p. 766)*

Declaration F was adopted by Synod 1991 as a minority recommendation.

It states:

*The church declares, moreover, that the clear teaching of Scripture and our confessions on the uniqueness of human beings as imagebearers of God rules out the espousal of all theorizing that posits the reality of evolutionary forebears of the human race.*

*(Acts of Synod 1991, p. 767)*

Unease with Declaration F resulted in Synod 1991 adding the following two notes to this Declaration (see *Acts of Synod 1991*, p. 767):

*Note 1:* Of course, private research, theorizing, and discussion are not addressed by this declaration.

*Note 2:* Declaration F is not intended and may not be used to limit further investigation and discussion on the origin of humanity.

The advisory committee reminds synod that Report 28 noted the following:

*That there are strict limitations on the extent to which the Genesis text can be reinterpreted within the Reformed tradition. However stylized, literary, or symbolic the stories of Genesis may be, they are clearly meant to refer to real events. Especially in God's acts of creation, Adam and Eve as first parents, the fall of humanity into sin, and the giving of the so-called "mother promise" (Gen. 3:15), the reality of the events described is of foundational importance for the entire history of redemption.*

*(Report 28, VI, J, Agenda for Synod 1991, p. 403)*

*C. Recommendations*

1. That synod not accede to the request in Overture 18 to remove Declaration F from the Synod of 1991 decision on creation and science.

Ground: A succeeding synod cannot rescind or remove a decision taken by a previous synod. It may alter the stand of a previous synod; it may reach a conclusion which is at variance with a conclusion reached by an earlier synod. But it may not annul or rescind it (see Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure, p. 110).

2. That synod accede to the request in Overture 18 to declare that Declaration F of Synod 1991 no longer be part of the CRCNA's official position statement on creation and science.

Grounds:

a. Declaration F, with its accompanying notes, appears contradictory and confusing.

b. The church should not bind the consciences of its members beyond what is the clear and indubitable teaching of Scripture and the creeds.

c. The remaining Declarations of Synod 1991 (namely A-E, and particularly Declaration E), as well as Section VI, J, of Report 28, sufficiently safeguard the church's confession with respect to the uniqueness of humanity as imagebearers of God.

*Note:* According to the Rules of Synodical Procedure, the minority report re the issue of the response to Overture 18 is presented as information by Rev. Jack DeJong.

**Response to Overture 18: Remove Declaration F of the 1991 Decision on Creation and Science (minority report)**

*A. Materials:* Overture 18, pp. 697-700

*B. Recommendation*

That synod not accede to section (2) of Overture 18.

*Grounds:*

1. *The testimony of the Old and New Testaments, the creeds, and the confessions declares that humanity is created in the image of God not formed into the image of God.*

2. *The testimony of the Old and New Testaments, the creeds, and the confessions declares that Adam and Eve were historical persons.*

3. *Removing Declaration F would allow for the teaching of the possibility of evolutionary forebears of the human race to students of all ages.*

4. *While Declaration F appears somewhat unclear, which is not ideal, the intention of Declaration F, with its notes, is correct in protecting this interpretation of Scripture against the possibility of evolutionary forebears of Adam and Eve while still allowing scientific study to inform our understanding.*

*Note:* Following the rules of procedure, synod returns to consideration of the recommendation of the advisory committee's majority report.

**Response to Overture 18: Remove Declaration F of the 1991 Decision on Creation and Science (majority report)**

*A. Materials:* Overture 18, pp. 697-700

*B. Recommendations*

1. That synod not accede to the request in Overture 18 to remove Declaration F from the Synod of 1991 decision on creation and science.

*Ground:* A succeeding synod cannot rescind or remove a decision taken by a previous synod. It may alter the stand of a previous synod; it may reach a conclusion which is at variance with a conclusion reached by an earlier synod; however, it may not annul or rescind it (see Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure, p. 110).

**Adopted**

2. That synod accede to the request in Overture 18 to declare that Declaration F of Synod 1991 no longer be part of the CRCNA's official position statement on creation and science.

Grounds:

- a. Declaration F, with its accompanying notes, appears contradictory and confusing.
- b. The church should not bind the consciences of its members beyond what is the clear and indubitable teaching of Scripture and the creeds.
- c. The remaining Declarations of Synod 1991 (namely A-E, and particularly Declaration E), as well as Section VI, J, of Report 28, sufficiently safeguard the church's confession with respect to the uniqueness of humanity as imagebearers of God."

**Adopted**

(<http://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/2010-acts.pdf> (p. 872))

## G. Pentecostal evangelical

### 1. Assemblies of God (5D)

**Official website:** <http://ag.org>

In 2011, The Assemblies of God have revised their position on the origins of the world to be conciliatory towards the theory of evolution and the Big Bang. Their new position paper on the doctrine of creation leaves room for a variety of viewpoints:

*"The Bible makes no claim to be a scientific textbook, nor should it be understood as such."*

*"The discoveries of science had been utilized by skeptics to question the accuracy of the biblical accounts. In response, believing scientists and biblical scholars consider no fundamental conflict to exist between God's Word and His works. The theories of the scientists are constantly changing with the introduction of new evidence. By contrast, the Scriptures are always the final, unchanging authority for Christian faith."*

( [http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position.Papers/pp\\_downloads/PP\\_The\\_Doctrine\\_of\\_Creation.pdf](http://ag.org/top/Beliefs/Position.Papers/pp_downloads/PP_The_Doctrine_of_Creation.pdf) )

The Enrichment Journal by The General Council of the Assemblies of God published an article about the Pentecostal views on origins that says:

*"Pentecostal Christians today do not share a single viewpoint on evolution. Pentecostals concur that God exists and is the Creator, but they do not speak with one voice on how ancient creation is, how much evolution has occurred, or whether science provides evidence for an intelligent designer."*

([http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201002/ejonline\\_201002\\_origins.cfm](http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201002/ejonline_201002_origins.cfm))

An online survey of church leaders is currently open on the website of the Enrichment Journal that seeks *"to help us learn about the origins perspectives of our church leaders"*.

### 2. Church of God Cleveland Tennessee (5S)

**Official website:** <http://www.churchofgod.org>

The Church of God clearly opposes evolution and expresses support to the teaching of the Biblical alternative of creation in public schools. The Church of God's Resolution on Creationism from 1980 states the following:

*"WHEREAS secular humanism and anti-God philosophies are being taught in our public educational systems; and WHEREAS there is a need for God's people to unite against the teaching of evolution as a scientific fact; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we give our full support to the principle that where evolution is taught in our public schools, provision be made for teaching the Biblical alternative of creation (58th A., 1980, p. 51)."*

([http://www.churchofgod.org/index.php/resolutions/resolution/creationism\\_1980](http://www.churchofgod.org/index.php/resolutions/resolution/creationism_1980))

### 3. Four Square Gospel (5I)

**Official Website:** <http://www.foursquare.org>

The founder of the Four Square Gospel Church, Aimee Semple McPherson is known to have famously and openly spoken against the theory of evolution. She describes in her memoir her debates against Charles Lee Smith, the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism on the topic of evolution. She writes:

*“It was at this time that I received a challenge from Charles Lee Smith, founder and president of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism. In my evangelistic itineraries, my messages, he complained, had stepped on his toes, and he wanted to debate me. He said I would not dare meet him on any platform because I knew in my own heart that evolution was true.*

*My debating experience was rather limited. With fear and trepidation, I accepted the challenge. But I decided to appear at the debates in conjunction with a nationwide lecture tour in which I would endeavor to alert the nation to the perils that threatened and to awaken America to its need of God.”*

*“Almost immediately I relaxed in my chair at the opposite table, for the realization swept over me that this atheist had not a leg to stand on. When it came time for me to rise and answer Mr. Smith, the words came tumbling out. I had studied for several weeks on the subject of evolution and its conflict with God’s Word. My book was filled with notes, but I scarcely glanced at them, for my heart was so full of the message the Lord poured within.”*

### 4. Pentecostal Church of God (2)

**Official Website:** <http://www.pcg.org>

The official website of the Pentecostal Church of God makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

### 5. Pentecostal Holiness Church (2)

**Official Website:** <http://www.iphc.org>

The official website of the Pentecostal Holiness Church makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

### 6. Church of God of the Apostolic Faith (2)

**Official Website:** <http://www.cogaf.org>

The official website of the Church of God of the Apostolic Faith makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

## H. Holiness evangelical

### I. Church of the Nazarene (5C)

**Official website:** <http://nazarene.org>

The Nazarene Church holds that there is no conflict between “*scientifically verifiable discoveries*” and the church’s faith. The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene affirms the following with relation to creation:

### **“903.9. Creation**

*The Church of the Nazarene believes in the biblical account of creation (“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . . (Genesis 1:1). We oppose any godless interpretation of the origin of the universe and of humankind (Hebrews 11:3). (1, 5.1, 7)”*

(<http://nazarene.org/files/docs/Manual2009-2013.pdf>)

In 2009 the church adopted a resolution to amend the paragraph on creation. The amended version includes the following text:

*“However, the church accepts as valid all scientifically verifiable discoveries in geology and other natural phenomena, for we firmly believe that God is the Creator. The church affirms that the truth of God’s Word and the truth of all valid scientific evidences are the same truth.”*

([https://secure.nazarene.org/mynazarene/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=04f749be-4dbd-489f-83b0-e5c340dab1f3&groupId=10501](https://secure.nazarene.org/mynazarene/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=04f749be-4dbd-489f-83b0-e5c340dab1f3&groupId=10501))

#### 1. Free Methodist Church (5S)

The Free Methodist Church supports the teaching of “*special creation*” in schools. The 2007 Book of Discipline, the church’s guide in matters of doctrine states the following:

*“The church is concerned that concepts of first origins shall have completely fair consideration in our public schools. Instructional materials are available that permit a scientific treatment of the several concepts of origin, including special creation (that all basic life forms and life processes were created by a supernatural Creator). We therefore urge that the concept of special creation be presented in, or along with, courses, textbooks, library materials and teaching aids dealing with the subject of first origins.”*

[http://fmcusa.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/45/files/2011/07/FMC\\_Book-of-Discipline.pdf](http://fmcusa.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/45/files/2011/07/FMC_Book-of-Discipline.pdf)

#### 2. Wesleyan Church (2)

**Official Website:** <http://www.wesleyan.org>

The Wesleyan Church has no official position statement on evolution ([http://www.wesleyan.org/position\\_statements](http://www.wesleyan.org/position_statements)). Neither evolution nor the Big Bang are mentioned in the Church and Culture position statements booklet from 2009.

<http://www.wesleyan.org/wph/assets/downloads/pdf/Church-Culture-2011.Small.pdf>

#### 3. Christian and Missionary Alliance (2)

**Official Website:** <http://www.cmalliance.org>

The Christian and Missionary Alliance does not hold an official position on the topic of evolution or the Big Bang. Even though the website addresses a number of other topics deemed relevant for the church’s faith, the relationship between creation and evolution is not listed among them.

#### 4. Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) (3D)

**Official Website:** <http://chog.org>

The Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) does not have an official position on origins science. However, as proclaimed on its official website, the church embraces diversity of beliefs:

*“Diversity, within the scope of the teachings of Jesus Christ, is expected. Conformity in all matters of doctrine and practice is not the goal of the Church of God for its people. We are mutually committed to God in Christ, to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and to local, national, and international fellowship with Christians.”*

<http://chog.org/faq>

## J. Adventist evangelical

### 1. *Seventh-Day Adventist Church (5I)*

**Official website:** <http://www.adventist.org>

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church believes that both evolution and the Big Bang come in direct disagreement with the biblical account of creation, which it interprets literally. The church's statement on creation was approved and voted by the Executive Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on June 23, 2010. The statement includes the following text:

*“Statement on Creation: The Bible’s Worldview*

*The Seventh-day Adventist Church affirms its belief in the biblical account of creation in contrast to an evolutionary explanation for the origin of living organisms and the relationship of humans to other life forms.*

*Seventh-day Adventists believe that God is the Creator of all life and that the Bible reveals a reliable account of His creative activity. Further, we believe that the biblical events recorded in Genesis 1-11, including the special creation of human beings, are historical and recent, that the seven days of creation were literal 24 hour days forming a literal week, and that the Flood was global in nature.”*

(<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/statements/bible-worldview.html>)

## VIII. HISTORICALLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN PROTESTANT

### A. Baptist

#### 1. *National Baptist Convention (2)*

**Official Website:** <http://www.nationalbaptist.com>

The official website of the National Baptist Convention makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

#### 2. *Progressive Baptist Convention (2)*

**Official Website:** <http://www.pnbc.org/PNBC/Home.html>

The official website of the Progressive Baptist Convention makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

#### 3. *Independent Baptist evangelical (1)*

The Independent Baptists represent autonomous congregations with no governing hierarchy beyond the congregation itself and no common doctrine.

#### 4. *Missionary Baptist (1)*

The Missionary Baptists represent autonomous congregations with no governing hierarchy beyond the congregation itself and no common doctrine.

## B. Methodist

### 1. *African Methodist Episcopal (2)*

**Official Website:** <http://www.ame-church.com>

The official website of the African Methodist Episcopal church makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

### 2. *African Methodist Episcopal Zion (2)*

**Official Website:** <http://www.amez.org>

The official website of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

### 3. *Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (2)*

**Official Website:** <http://thecmechurch.org>

The official website of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

## C. Pentecostal

### 1. *Church of God in Christ (2)*

**Official Website:** <http://www.cogic.org>

The official website of the Church of God in Christ makes no mention whatsoever of evolution or other origins science.

### 2. *Apostolic Pentecostal (1)*

The Apostolic Pentecostals represent autonomous congregations with no governing hierarchy beyond the congregation itself and no common doctrine.

### 3. *United Pentecostal Church International (2)*

**Official Website:** <http://www.upci.org>

The United Pentecostal Church International represents autonomous congregations with no governing hierarchy beyond the congregation itself and no common doctrine.

## IX. MORMON

### A. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (4R)

**Official website:** <http://www.lds.org/>

In 1909, the official position of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, expressed by the First Presidency of the church, was that the theory of evolution contradicted the teachings of the holy books:

*“It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men. The word of the Lord declared that Adam was “the first man of all men” ( Moses 1:34 ), and we are therefore in duty bound to regard him as the primal parent of our race. It was shown to the brother of Jared that all men were created in the beginning after the image of God; whether we take this to mean the spirit or the body, or both, it commits us to the same conclusion: Man began life as a human being, in the likeness of our Heavenly Father.”* (<http://www.lds.org/ensign/2002/02/the-origin-of-man?lang=eng>)

However, a more varied range of opinions, by prominent members of the faith community, has since been expressed. In 1931, the First Presidency of the church issued an address to the General Authorities of the Church inviting members to focus on issues central to religious life and leave the debate on evolution to scientific research:

*“Upon the fundamental doctrines of the Church we are all agreed. Our mission is to bear the message of the restored gospel to the world. Leave geology, biology, archaeology, and anthropology, no one of which has to do with the salvation of the souls of mankind, to scientific research, while we magnify our calling in the realm of the Church...*

*Upon one thing we should all be able to agree, namely, that Presidents Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund were right when they said: “Adam is the primal parent of our race” [First Presidency Minutes, Apr. 7, 1931].”*

(<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/EoM/id/3666>)

Is there currently a conflict between the Mormon faith and origins science? Multiple scholarly works contrasting statements by prominent Church figures have argued that answers to this question span the range from “yes” to “no”. A recent review is given by *“Mormonism and Evolution: The Authoritative LDS Statements”* by William Evensson (Kofford Books, 2006).

### B. Community of Christ (4C)

**Official website:** [www.cofchrist.org](http://www.cofchrist.org)

The Community of Christ is part of the Latter Day Saint movement begun by Joseph Smith but its doctrines and practices have evolved separately from those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A couple of entries on the organization’s official website suggest that The Community of Christ seems to call for reconciliation between scientific and scriptural accounts on the origins of the world and between members who disagree on these matters. In the text resource *“Claimed by Christ’s Vision”*, co-written by ministers and members of the highest governing bodies in the church, Adam Wade, an ordained minister writes:

*“Christians who disagree on how we came into existence can find common ground in accepting that we are all God’s creation, we are all God’s children.”* (*The Way of Christ, Chapter 3, p.23*

(<http://www.cofchrist.org/OnlineResources/claimed/Claimed%20by%20Christ's%20Vision%20Chapter%203.pdf>)

A summer camp instructional material, posted on the official website reads as follows:

*“ Children are learning the Big Bang and other theories in schools, and they question where the biblical creation story fits in. They might even feel they need to “choose” between believing in God or in science. This is just not the case. They should be affirmed that God has created according to natural laws. Scientific theories do not have to be contradictory to scriptural creation stories that acknowledge a God (and Christ) who thought and created in spirit before creating physically. Perhaps God created the universe in an “explosion” of thought (Big Bang theory) creating light, life and substance from a formless void.”* (<http://www.cofchrist.org/camphelps/OutOfEarth/earth-theme.pdf>)

## X. JEHOVAH'S WITNESS (5I)

**Official website:** <http://www.jw.org/en/>

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that there is a fundamental conflict between the teachings of the Bible and the theory of evolution. In 2008, *The Watchtower*, their most widely distributed publication and primary means of disseminating their doctrines, published an article entitled *Is Evolution Compatible With the Bible?* which states:

*"Evolution is therefore incompatible with the Bible. Evolution presents modern man as an improving animal. The Bible presents modern man as the degenerating descendant of a perfect man."* (<http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/2008006?q=evolution&p=par> )

The *Awake!* magazine, another prominent publication of the Jehovah's Witnesses, has allotted extensive space to articles that dismiss evolution as unscientific and promote creationism, for example: *"Is Evolution Fact or Fiction?"* (<http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/102006333?q=evolution&p=par>) *"Which Approach is More Reasonable?"* (<http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/102011403?q=evolution&p=par>) and *"Is Evolution Logical?"* (<http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/102000414?q=evolution&p=par>).

Jehovah's Witnesses also express disagreement with the theory of Big Bang. The *Awake!* magazine publishes in 2009: *"If the cosmos and everything in it are the product of spontaneous combinations of elements after the primordial Big Bang, then there can be no real purpose to life."* (<http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/102009442?q=big+bang&p=par>)

## XI. ORTHODOX

### A. Greek Orthodox (4C)

**Official Website:** <http://www.goarch.org>

The Orthodox Church has not adopted an official position concerning evolution or the Big Bang:

*"The development of modern science dates to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so no ecumenical council has ever addressed how to integrate it with divine revelation in a coherent and consistent worldview. As a result, there is not a dogmatic treatment examining how to resolve conflicts, whether apparent or real, when scientific findings appear to contradict divine revelation."*

(<http://orthodoxwiki.org/Evolution>)

However, the official website of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America mentions the origins of creation in ways that suggest compatibility between the theory of evolution and the doctrine of the church. For example, his Eminence Metropolitan Maximos of Pittsburgh, in a piece entitled *"The Dogmatic Tradition of the Orthodox Church"*, writes:

*"Among the visible things that God created is the crown of His creation, man. In Genesis we read the story of God's creation. We cannot interpret this story to the letter; however, its message is loud and clear: God is the creator of everything that exists; there is order in God's creation, and a development (even "evolution") from lower forms to higher forms of life; God created everything good; man, created in God's image and likeness, has a very special place in God's creation, called to be God's proxy toward His creation."* <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith8038>

A statement from the faculty of the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, dating from March 1982, on the topic of creation science and evolution science makes it clear that the Orthodox approach is in favor of theistic evolution.

*"Among Orthodox Christians there are varying views on the creation of the world by God and the theories of evolution developed over the years since the time of Darwin. No official Orthodox pronouncement exists on these topics. The following topics form an outline of a consistent Orthodox position that may serve as a response to the contemporary issues of the teaching of "Creation Science" together with "Evolution Science" in the public schools of the nation."*

*"The traditional Orthodox view of the Genesis account, therefore, does not see it as a literal scientific account of the physical processes of the origins of the physical universe, nor a scientific account of the origins of life, or of the origins of human existence. Thus, St. Basil writing his work "On the Six Days of Creation" in the fourth century, did not limit himself to the Genesis account, but used the scientific information and philosophical terminology of his day to present a balanced account of the origins of the world, both spiritual and scientific."*

*"Another response more characteristic of the Orthodox approach, and accepted by many Roman Catholic and non-fundamentalist Protestants, may be characterized as theistic evolution. This view rejects evolutionary theories, which*

are formulated in exclusively materialistic perspectives primarily because they fail to acknowledge the non-material spiritual verities of existence. Theistic evolutionary development, seeing in it justification for the view that God uses such processes not only to bring into existence the material world, but to guide it in its material development. The world as described by objective scientific description is, after all, God's world, and it must be understood as such so that one truth about the origins of the world is maintained."

<http://www.goarch.org/archdiocese/departments/religioused/resourcesforteachers/Faculty%20Statement%20on%20Creation%20and%20Evolution.pdf>

## B. Russian Orthodox (4C)

Website: <http://oca.org>

There exist in North America three different communities of faith that Russian Orthodox members belong to: the Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia and The Orthodox Church in America, formerly known as the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America (<http://oca.org/questions/namerica/russian-orthodox-church-in-america>).

The largest of these communities, the Orthodox Church in America, reaffirms that the Orthodox Church has no official position on either evolution or the Big Bang.

Father John Matusiak, from the Orthodox Church in America Communications Department writes:

*"The Church has no "official position" on these two theories, for they are merely "theories" – which means that even the scientific community has yet to acknowledge them as "fact" or "scientific law." The Church is concerned with proclaiming that everything that exists, visible and invisible, was created by a Creator; precisely "how" the Creator created all things is quite secondary and, ultimately, merely theory."*

*"Again, what is central to the Orthodox Christian Faith is that God is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible. Precisely "how" He created all things is not precisely known. Even with regard to the "Big Bang theory," the question still remains, where did the matter involved in the bang come from? It had to have a source or a cause; physical matter, human reasoning, etc. cannot simply evolve out of sheer nothingness, anymore than it would make any sense to deny that a TV or a watch did not have a TV maker or a watchmaker, that the individual elements and pieces simply came together on their own to form a TV or a watch."*

On the official website of the Orthodox Church of America, Fr. Lawrence Farley writes:

*"The stories of Genesis cannot be read apart from their original cultural context, and when we read them as they were meant to be read, we see that the creation story was a gauntlet thrown down before the prevailing culture of its time."*

(<http://oca.org/reflections/fr.-lawrence-farley/evolution-or-creation-science>)

Also, in the questions & answers sections of the official site of the church, the following answer is given to a question regarding evolution:

*"Orthodoxy has no problem with evolution as a scientific theory, only with evolution as some people may view it eliminating the need for God as Creator of All."* <http://oca.org/questions/contemporal/evolution-orthodoxy>

## XII. JEWISH

### A. Reform (5E)

Website: <http://www.ccarnet.org>

The Central Conference of American Rabbis, an influential rabbinic organization that often speaks for the Reform Jewish community, adopted the following resolution against the teaching of creationism in public schools:

#### *On Creationism in School Textbooks*

*Adopted by the CCAR at the 95th Annual Convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis Grossingers, New York, June 18-21, 1984*

*Whereas the principles and concepts of biological evolution are basic to understanding science; and*

**Whereas** students who are not taught these principles, or who hear “creationism” presented as a scientific alternative, will not be receiving an education based on modern scientific knowledge; and

**Whereas** these students’ ignorance about evolution will seriously undermine their understanding of the world and the natural laws governing it, and their introduction to other explanations described as “scientific” will give them false ideas about scientific methods and criteria,

**Therefore be it resolved** that the Central Conference of American Rabbis commend the Texas State Board of Education for affirming the constitutional separation of Church and State, and the principle that no group, no matter how large or small, may use the organs of government, of which the public schools are among the most conspicuous and influential, to foist its religious beliefs on others;

**Be it further resolved** that we call upon publishers of science textbooks to reject those texts that clearly distort the integrity of science and to treat other explanations of human origins for just what they are—beyond the realm of science;

**Be it further resolved** that we call upon science teachers and local school authorities in all states to demand quality textbooks that are based on modern, scientific knowledge and that exclude “scientific” creationism;

**Be it further resolved** that we call upon parents and other citizens concerned about the quality of science education in the public schools to urge their Boards of Education, publishers, and science teachers to implement these needed reforms.” <http://www.ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/resolutions/all/creationism-in-school-texts-1984/>

## B. Conservative (5E)

Website: <http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org>

The Rabbinical Assembly, an association of Conservative rabbis, founded in 1901 to shape the ideology of the Conservative Jewish community, adopted in March 2006 a Resolution on Intelligent Design and the Freedom of Scientific Inquiry that states:

*“Whereas the Rabbinical Assembly, an association of religious leaders with deep faith, believing in the truth of our Torah and the teachings of traditional rabbinic Judaism, also believes that a literal reading of Genesis otherwise known as Creationism is not a dogma of Judaism;”*

*“Therefore be it resolved that the Rabbinical Assembly oppose any effort to introduce the religious based teaching of Intelligent Design into American public school science classes;”*

*“Be it further resolved that the Rabbinical Assembly continue to support scientific inquiry and research free of any religious or political interference or coercion;”*

<http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/resolution-intelligent-design-and-freedom-scientific-inquiry>

### 1. Orthodox (4C)

Website: [www.rabbis.org](http://www.rabbis.org)

In December 2005, The Rabbinical Council of America, established in 1935 by the Orthodox Jewish community, issued a statement to clarify its views on the matter of creation, evolution, intelligent design and how they relate to Judaism. The statement maintains that varying beliefs about the origins of the universe and humanity, including the theory of evolution, are part of the Jewish legacy of “diverse approaches to the understanding of the biblical account of creation”, and therefore are compatible with the Jewish faith:

*“In light of the ongoing public controversy about Evolution, Creationism and Intelligent Design, the RCA notes that significant Jewish authorities have maintained that evolutionary theory, properly understood, is not incompatible with belief in a Divine Creator, nor with the first 2 chapters of Genesis.”*

*“There are authentic, respected voices in the Jewish community that take a literalist position with regard to these issues; at the same time, Judaism has a history of diverse approaches to the understanding of the biblical account of creation. As Rabbi Joseph Hertz wrote, “While the fact of creation has to this day remained the first of the articles of the Jewish creed, there is no uniform and binding belief as to the manner of creation, i.e. as to the process whereby the universe came into existence. The manner of the Divine creative activity is presented in varying forms and under differing metaphors by Prophet, Psalmist and Sage; by the Rabbis in Talmudic times, as well as by our medieval Jewish thinkers.”* <http://www.rabbis.org/news/article.cfm?id=100635>

### XIII. BUDDHIST (4C)

For Buddhists, therefore no conflict exists between the teachings of Buddhism and origins science, because the issue of origins is not one of relevance to religious life and practice. Buddha himself is believed to have said in Acintita Sutta:

*“Conjecture about [the origin, etc., of] the world is an un conjecturable that is not to be conjectured about, that would bring madness & vexation to anyone who conjectured about it.”*

(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an04/an04.077.than.html>)

Punnadhammo Bhikkhu, a Buddhist monk, explains:

*“For Buddhism, it is pretty much irrelevant. Although the Buddhist religion has a rich store of myths and stories, it is not dependent on a specific cosmological narrative.”*

(<http://www.buddhistchannel.tv/index.php?id=8,2026,0,0,1,0>)

As the Dalai Lama put it, compatibility between Buddhism and science come from the similarity of their underlying philosophy, being weary of absolutes:

*“On the philosophical level, both Buddhism and modern science share a deep suspicion of any notion of absolutes, whether conceptualized as a transcendent being, as an eternal, unchanging principle such as soul, or as a fundamental substratum of reality. Both Buddhism and science prefer to account for the evolution and emergence of the cosmos and life in terms of the complex interrelations of the natural laws of cause and effect.”*

(<http://www.dalailama.com/messages/buddhism/science-at-the-crossroads>)

### XIV. HINDU (4D)

**Website:** <http://hinduism.iskcon.org>

Hinduism’s focus on ritual and practice, rather than doctrine, results in little concern on the part of the faith community with issues of agreement between science and holy texts. The Heart of Hinduism, an educational resource explaining Hindu traditions, says:

*“Hinduism has neither a common doctrine nor a single scripture as the source of its various teachings. It places more emphasis on orthopraxy than orthodoxy, encouraging relative freedom of thought within tightly defined codes of conduct and morality.*

*More than Western traditions, it has succeeded in synthesizing religion with philosophy, and religious commitment with a reflective search for truth. It does not generally exhort its followers to declare allegiance to a particular faith, belief, or creed.”*

(<http://hinduism.iskcon.org/tradition/1101.htm>)

Moreover, there have been several claims that Hindu scriptural accounts of the origins match the evolution theory. In a piece entitled “Ask the Swami: Dharma vs. Darwin?”, Swami B.V. Tripurari says:

*“Hindus were evolutionists long before Darwin. Hindu scriptures teach that the various forms of life exist conceptually within God and evolve out of matter in conjunction with the desires of karmically-bound souls.”*

(<http://www.beliefnet.com/Faiths/Hinduism/2004/04/Ask-The-Swami-Dharma-Vs-Darwin.aspx?p=1>)

### XV. MUSLIM (3R)

A wide variety of opinions regarding evolution and the Big Bang are held in the Islamic world. A site dedicated to exploring the different Islamic views on evolution, explains:

*“Consistent with the diversity of the Islamic world, Muslims hold a variety of opinions regarding biological evolution. These opinions are shaped by cultural, political and social factors, as well as interpretations of religious texts and teachings. This website brings together the perspectives from history & philosophy of science, sociology, science education, religious studies and biology.”*

(<http://www.evolutionandislam.com/>)

## XVI. OTHER FAITHS

### A. Unitarian Universalist (5C)

Unitarian Universalists are inclusive of a variety of beliefs, both including and excluding a divine creator, and it is not surprising that the theory of evolution has found fertile ground in Universalist theology. The website of the Unitarian Universalist church says:

*“Unitarian Universalism welcomes people with diverse beliefs. There is a rich dialogue in our congregations about many spiritual topics.”*

(<http://www.uua.org/beliefs/welcome/index.shtml>)

In a sermon entitled *“A Theology of Evolution”*, Elizabeth Strong talks about the new meanings and understanding that the theory of evolution has brought to Universalist theology. She extensively quotes Dr. Marion Shutter, who, in the Universalist community, started the dialogue between science and theology on the matter of origins already in 1900:

*In 1900 the Rev. Dr. Marion D. Shutter, minister of the Universalist Church of the Redeemer in Minneapolis, Minn. presented 12 lectures titled Applied Evolution in which he placed Darwin’s theories within the context of Universalist theology.*

*Shutter writes:*

*“We have not lost God; we are just beginning to find Him. He is greater than we knew. He is nearer than we realized. He is better and wiser than we dreamed. We have not lost God; we have only lost an old idea of His way of doing things. The God of Evolution is inside of Nature and not outside of it. When we consider that man himself is a part of Nature, and the best part of it, we must find God also in him, preeminently in him.”*

*“Thus evolutionary theory, after showing the path that human life traversed through the centuries, gave religion a new way to understand the creation of humankind. Shutter wrote, “And we hold that it is better and nobler, – better to have risen from cave and jungle than to have fallen from Eden; better to have developed from the animal than to have degenerated from the angel; better to have begun at the bottom and toiled to the top, than to have begun at the summit and rolled down to the base; better to have the golden age before us than behind us; better to be on the way to perfection, with hope and courage, than to be trudging dis-crowned and dishonored, away from perfection.”*

(<http://www.uua.org/worship/words/sermons/submissions/179417.shtml>)

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