Outline for today

- Inspiration for this talk
- Surprises in Scripture
- What we should expect science to tell us about God
- Surprises in science
- My journey and BioLogos
“Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12

Domenichino, Saint John the Evangelist, common domain
“What do we call visible light? We call it color. But the electromagnetic spectrum runs to zero in one direction and infinity in the other, so really, children, mathematically, all of light is invisible.”

Anthony Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See*
Electromagnetic spectrum (light) – apt metaphor for reality. Much is unseen!

“All the Light We Cannot See”

Anthony Doerr

“Torrents of text conversations, tides of cell conversations, of television programs, of email... commercials for Carrefour and Evian and prebaked toaster pastries flashing into space and back to earth again... ten thousand I miss yous, fifty thousand I love yous, hate mail and appointment reminders and market updates, jewelry ads, coffee ads, furniture ads flying invisibly over the warrens of Paris, over the battlefields and tombs…”

Anthony Doerr,

All the Light We Cannot See
Surprises in Scripture:

[we need eyes to see]
Surprises in Scripture, Ex. 1: Jesus’ teachings

“You have heard that it was said...but I say to you...”
Matthew 5

“Repent and believe in the gospel.
Mark 1:15
“Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.”

Mark 6:3
Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

“Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.”

...“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

Acts 10:13-15
Surprises in science
[and what we learn about God]
What can *creation* tell us about God?

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. **For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.** So they are without excuse.”

Romans 1:18-20
God’s Revelation in Two Books: Scripture and the Created Order

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul.
   The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.
8 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.
   The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

- Psalm 19
Can we see God through science?

Not proof, but “deep resonances” between science and theology.

“...very often people say there's no meaning in life because they don't see meaning. Sometimes, it's because lenses are unfocused.”

Alister McGrath

BioLogos lecture, July 2014
Christianity as a lens

“I believe in Christianity as I believe the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it, I see everything else.”

C.S. Lewis

*Is Theology Poetry?*

Kathryn Applegate, view from Black Sail YHA, England, 2004
Surprises in Science, Ex. 1: The scope of our universe and our place in it
Andromeda (M31)

M31 is 2 million light years away
This image: 48,000 light years across
100 million stars in view

What do we learn about God?
• God is powerful
• God is extravagant
Surprises in Science, Ex. 2: Complexity and self-organization of life

E. coli cell cross-section

Cytoplasm

Illustrations by David Goodsell
The Scripps Research Institute
My PhD: How to measure this complexity?
How does order emerge at different levels?

Same genetic code, Same building blocks In all cells

Cooperation into many cell systems

By God’s providence, this occurs by regular natural processes every day!
“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.”

Psalm 139
What do we learn about God?

• God sustains his creation

• God delights in allowing creation itself to participate (e.g. Gen 1 – “let the earth bring forth living creatures”)
Surprises in Science, Ex. 3: 13.81 billion year old universe

What do we learn about God?
• God patient.
• He works through processes that take time.
• He delights in non-human creation.
Surprises in Science, Ex. 4: Evolution
[descent with modification from a common ancestor]

“A highly resolved Tree of Life, based on completely sequenced genomes,” public domain
Jeff Schloss: Evolution, Creation, and the Sting of Death

Did death occur before the Fall?

- In a Nutshell
- In Detail
- Further Reading
- Notes
Suffering in the Bible

Not to diminish the problem, but it is not *universally* negative.

As [Jesus] went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened *so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

John 9:1-3
Death as a means of life

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”

John 12:24-25

“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:13
Evolutionary biology *itself* reveals resonances

Cooperation *is* a fundamental *process* and *product* of evolution.

[Evolution is NOT driven only by selfishness and competition.]
Evolutionary biology *itself* reveals resonances

**Convergence** points to *predictable outcomes* from “deep organizational principles” and the constraints of reality.

[Evolution is NOT driven only by randomness.]

Convergent evolution: independent evolution of similar features in different lineages
Other examples of convergence:

• Enzymes
• Placental vs. mammalian body plans (e.g. flying squirrels)
• Vertebrate vs. octopus camera eyes

The wide prevalence of convergence suggests “stable points in biological space toward which things can navigate” (Simon Conway-Morris).

Evolutionary theory reveals a deep order in the living world!
Common descent: all of creation preparing the way for the coming Christ?

“When Christ took on human nature, the DNA that made him the son of Mary may have linked him to a more ancient heritage stretching far beyond Adam to the shallows of unimaginably ancient seas. And so, in the Incarnation, it would not have been just human nature that was joined to the Divine, but in a less direct but no less real sense all those myriad organisms that had unknowingly over the eons shaped the way for the coming of the human.”

- Ernan McMullin

What do we learn about God?

• “Abundant life” is not just a spiritual metaphor.
• Beauty, order, sacrifice, development, and love run top to bottom in God’s creation.
My background

The first 18 years

PhD: computational cell biology

Undergrad: math, biophysics
Our Mission

BioLogos invites the church and the world to see the harmony between science and biblical faith as we present an evolutionary understanding of God’s creation.
Evolutionary Creation

• Like all Christians, we fully affirm that God is the creator of all life – including human beings in his image.

• Like all Christians, we fully affirm that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative word of God.

• We also accept the science of evolution as the best description for how God brought about the diversity of life.
NEW TO BioLogos?

We encourage you to start with these resources:

What is Evolutionary Creation?
The view that all life on earth came about by the God-ordained process of evolution with common descent. Evolution is a means by which God providentially achieves
37 grants across North America and Europe, 5 here in Grand Rapids!
Evolution and Christian Faith:
A Conference for Scholars, Pastors, and Teachers

Featured Speakers

Oliver Crisp
Systematic Theologian, Fuller Theological Seminary

Ted Davis
Historian of Science, Messiah College

Ard Louis
Biophysicist, Oxford University

Scot McKnight
New Testament Scholar, Northern Seminary

Jeff Schloss
BioLogos Senior Scholar and Biologist, Westmont College

Mary Schweitzer
Paleontologist, North Carolina State University

Leonard Vander Zee
Pastor and Editor, Faith Alive Christian Resources

John Walton
Old Testament Scholar, Wheaton College

June 30 - July 2, 2015
The Eberhard Center
Grand Rapids, Michigan

For more information including registration and travel assistance visit us at
biologos.org/ecf/2015
Thank you

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