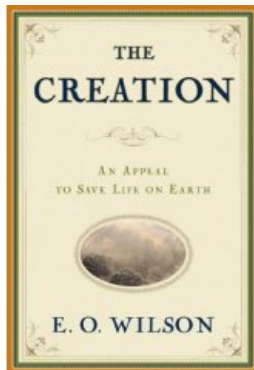


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Common Ground on Creation? The E. O. Wilson Interview

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Professor Edward O. Wilson of Harvard University joined me today on *The Albert Mohler Program* [listen [here](#)]. We discussed his recent book, *The Creation: An Appeal to Save the Earth*. Dr. Wilson was gracious in our conversation, but he was also clear. He explained his proposal to unite secular scientists with evangelical Christians in an effort to create a new environmentalism.

One central issue became clear in our conversation. Evangelical Christians base a biblical approach to environmentalism on the concept of stewardship. We are concerned for the creation precisely because we know and worship the Creator. We do not worship the creation itself.

Professor Wilson, on the other hand, holds that what he calls “scientific humanism” as the only valid means of knowledge. His “provisional deism” leaves him with nothing greater than the creation itself—which he then capitalizes. This is a radical distinction that leads to inevitable conflicts.

Dr. Wilson described his worldview succinctly in a 1995 article in the *Harvard Magazine*:

The impact of the theory of evolution by natural selection, nowadays grown very sophisticated (and often referred to as the Modern Synthesis), has been profound. To the extent it can be upheld, and the evidence to date has done so compellingly, we must conclude that life has diversified on Earth autonomously without any kind of external guidance. Evolution in a pure Darwinian world has no goal or purpose: the exclusive driving force is random mutations sorted out by natural selection from one generation to the next.

What then are we to make of the purposes and goals obviously chosen by human beings? They are, in Darwinian interpretation, processes evolved as adaptive devices by an otherwise purposeless natural selection. Evolution by natural selection means, finally, that the essential qualities of the human mind also evolved autonomously. Humanity was thus born of Earth. However elevated in power over the rest of life, however exalted in self-image, we were descended from animals by the same blind force that created those animals, and we remain a member species of this planet's biosphere.

In that article, Professor Wilson certainly did *not* call for any joint effort with evangelical Christians. Consider these two paragraphs:

So, will science and religion find common ground, or at least agree to divide the fundamentals into mutually exclusive domains? A great many well-meaning scholars believe that such rapprochement is both possible and desirable. A few disagree, and I am one of them. I think Darwin would have held to the same position. The battle line is, as it has ever been, in biology. The inexorable growth of this science continues to widen, not to close, the tectonic gap between science and faith-based religion.

Rapprochement may be neither possible nor desirable. There is something deep in religious belief that divides people and amplifies societal conflict. In the early part of this century, the toxic mix of religion and tribalism has become so dangerous as to justify taking seriously the alternative view, that humanism based on science is the effective antidote, the light and the way at last placed before us.

Let us note clearly that Dr. Wilson does understand the importance of worldviews. He sees scientific humanism as the “antidote” to what he oddly calls “faith-based religion.”

So, does ground for *any* common environmental understanding exist? Time will tell, but E. O. Wilson is honest in explaining that, without the involvement of evangelical Christians, his effort is not likely to get very far.

SEE ALSO: My previous article on Professor Wilson’s proposal, [available here](#).

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