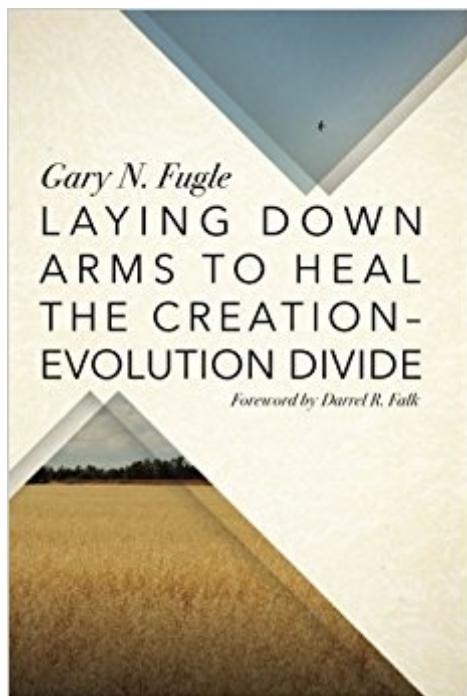


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# Laying Down Arms To Heal The Creation-Evolution Divide



## **Synopsis**

Battles over creation or evolution have been perpetuated for years by vocal Christians and scientists alike. But conflict has never been the only choice. *Laying Down Arms to Heal the Creation-Evolution Divide* presents a comprehensive, uplifting alternative that brings together an orthodox, biblical view of a sovereign Creator-God and the meaningful discoveries of modern evolutionary biology. Gary Fugle offers unique insights into this debate from his dual perspective as both an award-winning biology professor and a committed leader in conservative evangelical churches. In focusing on the stumbling blocks that surround creation and evolution debates, Fugle sensitively addresses the concerns of skeptical Christians and demonstrates how believers may celebrate evolution as a remarkable aspect of God's glory. He describes how the mainstream scientific community, as well as numerous Christians, may alter current approaches to eliminate conflicts. He explains conservative readings of early Genesis that respect both the inerrant words of Scripture and the evolutionary revelations in God's natural creation. This book is for individuals who sense that biblical Christian faith and evolution are compatible without compromising core convictions. If given good reasons to do so, are we willing to lay down our arms to affirm an encompassing vision for the future?

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"We who love Jesus and his word, and love his world and the study of it, need to do some serious thinking about how our faith relates to scientific practices and theories, and we need the voices of skillful people who think well. Gary Fugle has offered a worthy contribution to the discussion: it is

cheerful, thoughtful, and helpful.”--C. John Collins, author of *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist? Who They Were and Why You Should Care*”In *Laying Down Arms*, Gary Fugle combines a tenacious commitment to the truth of Scripture with an expert’s grasp of evolutionary science. He guides his readers through thoughtful reflections on faith and science that are biblically based, scientifically informed, engaging, and deeply relevant. This book is both wise and timely.”--Gregory S. Cootsona, author of *C.S. Lewis and the Crisis of a Christian*”In a patient, respectful, and loving manner, Fugle shows why none of the precepts that lie at the heart of a Christ-centered life, and the theology on which it is based, are changed or challenged if God chose to create through the evolutionary mechanism. . . . He presents his position with a unique knack for making biological concepts accessible to a general audience, and a profound understanding of the biblical and theological issues involved. His love for biology is contagious, his winsome affection for the church, an inspiration.”--from the foreword by Darrel R. Falk”Fugle knows what he’s talking about from both sides of the street: religion and science. He writes with an engaging, gentle, yet admonishing style, asking those who urge conflict between evolutionary biology and Christian faith to reassess their confrontational views. Instead, he urges all involved to adopt an attitude of mutual respect--and evangelical Christians, in particular, to welcome evolutionary biology as further witness to their biblical faith. I recommend *Laying Down Arms to Heal the Creation-Evolution Divide* to everyone, scientist and lay person alike, yearning for a hopeful, new approach to reconciling faith and science.”--Robert J. Russell, author of *Time in Eternity* --Wipf and Stock Publishers

Gary Fugle received his PhD from the University of California at Santa Barbara and has taught biology in the California community college system for over thirty years, most of which he spent at Butte College in northern California. He has been deeply involved in different evangelical churches simultaneously, and he especially enjoys leading worship in his local congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Gary Fugle brings a pointed perspective to a subtle and troublesome question: namely, just exactly where and how do we see the hand of God in nature? Be careful how you answer this question. 400 years ago, when Isaac Newton couldn’t get his equations of planetary motion to quite work, he assumed God must push the planets back in the place every now and then. Then Laplace figured out a more sophisticated mathematical model which solved the problem. History is replete with such examples. So.... just exactly where is The hand of God in the motion of stars and planets? Gary highlights this question as we see it in biology, using the friction between evolutionists and

creationists; creationists feel the need to specifically point out places where the operation of nature is literally miraculous. Gary argues that while seeming to be God honoring, this view actually stops science cold in its tracks and alienates scientists from faith communities. This, he says, is the location of the battle between naturalism and design. Gary says God is found in the totality of nature and in our gestalt experience of enjoying and even fearing it. But he insists it is not found in any one particular fact or measurement as though one could say "aha! I've found it!!! Prima facie evidence of the hand of God!" This is a subtle but important point. I think many people, especially those who by personality crave exact answers, are forever hunting either for a "hand of God" artifact, or in the case of atheists, the exact opposite. There are a few things here that will disappoint some readers. For example he doesn't give a great deal of attention to what many people consider to be gaping holes in Neo Darwinism or evolutionary theory. Filling those holes is not his aim. If that's what you want - and if you like myself are still largely sympathetic to his view - I suggest you read geneticist James Shapiro's 2011 book and blogs on HuffPo. Finally, unlike many other books in this genre, this text is calm and reassuring rather than inflammatory. Genuine progress here.

The entire book is based on the author's personal experiences as a Christian who taught biological evolution at the college level for 30 years. He writes with the authority of someone who has dealt with creation-evolution issues regularly throughout his career. Throughout the book he emphasizes and gives his reasons for his Christian faith. His goal is for Christians to be comfortable with the revelations of both Scripture and scientific study. The author is an evolutionary creationist and points out numerous problems with young-earth creationism and the intelligent design movement. He is *enthusiastically* interested in a dialogue among individuals who are softened to the possibility of reconciliation in which the powerful message of Christian faith and the fascinating scientific understanding of evolution are integrated together. (p. 8) In his introductory Part I, the author suggests that the voices of six-day, young-earth creationists and intelligent design advocates have not been widely suppressed or ignored by mainstream scientists; rather, they have been evaluated and deemed incomparable and incompatible with the scientific validity and value of evolutionary theory. (p. 14) He also suggests that one of the changes that will bring healing and an end to the creation-evolution wars is an understanding within the Christian church that most scientists are simply pursuing their professions and are not the enemy of biblical Christian faith. (p. 14) In Part II the author discusses real issues for Christians: how did God go about his creative activities, which comes first-the Bible or science, and presuppositions on both sides. It also includes the obligatory brief history of young-earth

creationism. He suggests that as believers in a sovereign God of creation, Christians should fully expect that nature and the Bible will complement and inform one another, which does not elevate the former over the latter, but can, and should, be elevated above any person's interpretation of the Bible if there are major conflicts between the two. In Part III, he discusses the collision of ideas, in which he argues for the separation of science and religion in our public education system, and notes that Christians are as wrong as scientists in their attacks on each other. Along the way he briefly discusses miracles, divine action, and the problems that the intelligent design movement has caused. He discusses how ID has no explanatory power, as opposed to biological evolution, which has an abundance of it. Part IV is a survey of a sample of the evidence for biological evolution and illustrations of its explanatory power. The author has two goals in this part: (1) to communicate an understanding of the biological foundation behind evolutionary theory, and (2) to continue to express how someone may accept that the biological world is both the product of evolutionary processes and the intended creation of a sovereign God. He accomplishes this by presenting examples of homologous structures, vestigial structures, embryology, the fossil record, biogeography, possible mechanisms of evolutionary modification, and various aspects of molecular genetics, within which he emphasizes that molecular data has been found to be consistent with evolutionary predictions and makes little sense if God specially created various organisms. In Part V the author discusses reading the Bible with evolution in mind. He begins with a brief discussion of biblical interpretation, emphasizing that the book of Genesis was written for the ancient Israelites. He discusses creation over six days, the framework interpretation, and John Walton's cosmic temple interpretation. He also argues that the biblical flood was not a global flood. He clearly agrees that suffering and death entered the world long before the actions of Adam and Eve, and admits that the Fall of humanity through the actions of Adam and Eve is the most critical challenge from evolutionary biology for many Christians. While acknowledging that some Christians understand the Fall as a metaphor for our inherent human condition, he focuses on the difficulties with reading the Fall as a metaphor. In his final chapter, the author discusses how to move forward, including a rejection of unjustified propositions on both sides, particularly metaphysical naturalism and strict young-earth creationism. He suggests that scientists could show more respect for belief systems and Christians could incorporate legitimate scientific discoveries into a reasoned God-centered worldview. The author recommends this book for Christians who wonder how biological evolution can be accepted along with a Christian worldview and for non-Christians who don't understand how a personal Christian faith can be embraced along with evolutionary ideas. I would also highly recommend it for

anyone who wants a refresher course in biological evolution and its theological implications. The author did not intend this book for staunch proponents of young-earth creationism who hold unswervingly to their position or for committed atheists.

I picked up this book expecting to be challenged. I was certainly not disappointed. My knowledge of evolutionary theory was fairly limited going into it. I had resigned to accept the possibility of evolution if it should prove itself (though I still didn't see it as a very solid explanation) but did not have a strong stance on matters of origin, nor a well-informed opinion with which to dialogue about it. I feel this book has given me a wealth of resources to not only engage intellectually and meaningfully with friends and fellow truth-seekers, but also a new perspective with which to explore the world I live in. Not only that but new ways to see and understand the Bible. Gary has an amazing way of delivering his points with candor and the approachability you would expect from a wise instructor. He also very carefully and thoughtfully navigated this touchy subject in a way that shows concern for all perspectives. I truly appreciate this book and the winsome way it is written. I hope it inspires more like it. Great read for anyone interested in the topic regardless of the position you hold.

A really fantastic, insightful enlightenment on creation and evolution. This book compliments and explains questions I've pondered over for years in Genesis. As a conservative Christian, I no longer feel 'evolution' is a bad word.

He wrote as well as a biologist can who has faith in the triune God.

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