

Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (Free Press, 2006). Reviewed by Dr. Reed D. Acheson.

(Editor’s Note: It is rare to receive two reviews for the same book, but it can be helpful to have two viewpoints.)

“The advances of science in the modern age have come at the cost of certain traditional reasons for belief in God.” This statement, which begins chapter 4 of Dr. Francis Collins’s very readable and understandable book, *The Language of God*, could stand as a summary for his motivation to contribute substantially to the science and religion ‘debate’ and his very personal testimony of faith. Dr. Collins, best known for his efforts to identify the gene responsible for cystic fibrosis, and head of the recently completed effort, known as the Human Genome Project, to characterize the human ‘genetic code’, has written convincingly of his belief that science and faith are more than just compatible. Collins suggests that there are positive reasons to believe in God, based on a real knowledge, which affirms his personal faith, and can confirm that faith of others in this scientific age.

The recent popularity of the writings of atheistic evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), and philosopher Daniel Dennett (*Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*), have promoted the idea that belief in God is pointless, and for a scientist to affirm a personal faith in God is akin to intellectual suicide. Whether one embraces the scope of scientific understanding, or is more comfortable in avoidance, or ignorance, of such matters, those in the parish know that the tensions which seem to surface

when scientific understanding, and faith issues ‘rub together’ remain real.

Refreshingly, Dr. Collins lays out a summary which enables a layperson, or pastor, with minimal background in science, to understand the source of tensions in the evolutionary debate, and those of the companion issues of creationism, and intelligent design. Collins’ concise style minimizes detail and cuts through the rhetoric and passion in a way enabling those seeking clarity in these matters to either satisfy their curiosity, or propel one to further exploration. Dr. Collins suggests that there are “clear, compelling, and intellectually satisfying” solutions to the search for truth in what he terms “theistic evolution” or “BioLogos”, or as he states without reservation, “The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome.”

Professor Collins completes his book with a personal statement of faith which, from one of the pre-eminent scientists in this day, is truly refreshing!