

Book List for *Faith and Doubt* Adult Education Class Series

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* Highly recommended books

***Acts of Synod 1972*. Grand Rapids, MI: Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, 1972.**

In Supplement Report 44 – “Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority” the Synod examined the relation of faith and science in the context of the role of biblical authority.

Armstrong, Donald, ed. *Who Do You Say That I Am? Christology and the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999.

Six leading New Testament scholars argue for the centrality of an orthodox view of Christ against the common modern tendency to make Christ into who we want him to be. Includes essays by N. T. Wright, Alister McGrath, George Carey, and others.

Barbour, Ian G. *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues*. Revised and expanded edition of *Religion in an Age of Science*. New York: HarperOne, 1997.

This book explores the historical and contemporary relationship of religion and science, and considers various options for that relationship. This book is written in an academic vein, but is very readable for those willing to work through it.

Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006.

This massive work by a New Testament scholar argues that the gospel accounts are based on eyewitness testimony. Bauckham argues against many more critical readings of the gospels popular in scholarship in the past century, and defends the notion that the ‘Jesus of testimony’ should prevail over past divisions over the ‘Jesus of history’ versus the ‘Christ of faith.’

Behe, Michael J. *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*. New York: Touchstone, 1996.

This book has created much discussion in the debates over evolution. Behe is a biochemist who argues that the complexity and processes involved in cellular activity, e.g. blood clotting, cannot be sufficiently explained by processes of evolution alone, but suggest a notion of intelligent design.

Borg, Marcus J. and N. T. Wright. *The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999.

A debate over the proper view of the historical Jesus from a leading liberal Jesus Seminar scholar (Borg) and a leading evangelical New Testament scholar (Wright).

Blomberg, Craig. *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987.

Are the stories about Jesus in the gospels legendary? Can we trust the gospel accounts? Blomberg, a NT scholar from Denver Seminary, addresses these questions and more, examining the presuppositions and faulty analysis that has led to wrong conclusions about the nature of these accounts by many critical NT scholars. He provides criteria for judging the gospels and a defense of their reliability.

_____ . *The Historical Reliability of John’s Gospel: Issues and Commentary*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

Many critical NT scholars have rejected or minimized the historicity especially of the Gospel of John. Blomberg reassesses this approach and argues that John is indeed a reliable historical source. This book is structured as a commentary, and Blomberg examines the text of John to see indications for its historicity and to consider whether any portions are historically implausible.

Bruce, F. F. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* 6th edition. 1981; rpt., Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003.

In this older classic work (originally from 1943) Bruce argues for the trustworthiness of the NT canon, important for the defense of Christianity as a faith based on historical revelation.

Carlson, Richard F., ed. *Science & Christianity: Four Views*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

In four chapters four advocates of differing relations of science and Christianity make their cases. Chapters by Wayne Frair and Gary Patterson on Creationism – an inerrant Bible and effective science, Jean Pond on an independence model of mutual humility, Stephen Meyer on the qualified agreement of science and Christianity, and Howard Van Till on science and Christian theology in partnership.

Copan, Paul, ed. *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up? A Debate between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossan*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998.

A leading evangelical apologist and a leading liberal Jesus Seminar scholar debate who the ‘real Jesus’ was and is. Moderated by William F. Buckley and with responses by other evangelical and liberal scholars.

Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Revised edition. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994.

Craig is a Christian philosopher and theologian teaching at Biola University in California. This book tends toward the scholarly and covers a number of apologetic topics including the existence of God, faith and reason, the problem of miracles and historical knowledge, the reliability of the New Testament, and the resurrection of Christ.

Dembski, William A. *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.

A leading figure of the Intelligent Design movement looks at the relation of theology and science, and makes the case for the reintroduction of the notion of design into scientific explanations. Though aimed at the general public, this book is still not always easy reading.

Dembski, William A. and James M. Kushiner, eds. *Signs of Intelligence: Understanding Intelligent Design*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2001.

Several essays, many by leading Intelligent Design advocates like Dembski, Johnson, and Behe, argue for and explain the Intelligent Design movement in relation to a number of key questions and areas like the relation of religion and culture, science and religion, weaknesses in the theory of evolution, biology, fossil records, and the fine tuning of the universe.

***Eddy, Paul R. and Gregory A. Boyd. *The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007.**

This book is directed especially at the highly skeptical views of a legendary Jesus, against which it defends the reliability of the gospel accounts through careful investigation of the evidence and arguments. Written for college and seminary level readers.

Evans, C. Stephen. *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Examines the philosophical presuppositions of the supposedly historical research that is highly skeptical of the Bible. Evans is a well-respected Christian philosopher.

Flew, Anthony with Roy Abraham Varghese. *There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*. New York: HarperOne, 2007.

An interesting and worthwhile book from the premier philosophical defender of atheism in the last fifty years. Flew’s book is meant for a popular audience, but will be of the most interest for those with some background and/or interest in theology and philosophy and its history. Has two nice appendixes, one by Roy Abraham Varghese on a critique of the ‘New Atheism’ of Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, and others. The other is by N. T. Wright, the renowned New Testament scholar and Anglican bishop, on the evidence for Jesus’ existence and resurrection.

Frair, Wayne and Percival Davis. *A Case for Creation*. 3rd edition. Chicago: Moody Press, 1983.

A more moderate creationist stance that attempts to make serious sense of what we know from science as well as the biblical record. I have yet to read this one.

***Haarsma, Deborah B. and Loren B. Haarsma. *Origins: A Reformed Look at Creation, Design, and Evolution*. Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2007.**

The Haarsmas are professors in the Physics and Astronomy department at Calvin College. Here they examine the options for looking at origins, and how these mesh with the Christian faith. Written for a popular audience from a Reformed perspective, many should find this book helpful and engaging. Unfortunately I have yet to see this book, though a partial sample of it is online.

Habermas, Gary R. *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ*. Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 1996.

This book by a conservative evangelical scholar provides evidence for the historical existence of Jesus from non-biblical sources. Written for an educated popular audience.

Johnson, Phillip E. *Darwin on Trial*. 2nd edition. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

This Intelligent Design advocate and retired law professor from UC Berkeley has made a name for himself taking apart the arguments for evolution, attacking their presuppositions and viability. Always lively, even when you don't agree, Johnson here puts the theory of evolution "on trial." Sometimes he is unnecessarily polarizing.

_____. *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

Another book by Johnson that attacks the philosophical assumptions of much of the modern scientific academy, especially as it relates to the theory of evolution. Goes to the question of the place of science in society, and when science is no longer functioning as science but as philosophy. Readable and colorful.

***Keller, Timothy. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Dutton, 2008.**

Highly recommended! In my opinion this is likely the best popular apologetic book on Christianity since C. S. Lewis' Mere Christianity. Keller both answers common objections to belief in God and presents reasons why faith makes sense, arguing throughout in culturally relevant ways. Through it all he imbues the book with the grace of the gospel and maintains a respectful dialogue with thoughtful people. Keller is a Presbyterian (PCA) pastor with orthodox Christian views with a thriving church in mid-town Manhattan.

Lawrenz, Mel. *I Want to Believe: Finding Your Way in an Age of Many Faiths*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 2007.

A wide-ranging popular level book on doubt, faith, certainty, other religions, and other objections to the Christian faith from the pastor of Elmbrook Church here in the Milwaukee area.

***Lewis, C. S. *The Great Divorce*. 1946; rpt., New York: HarperCollins, 2001.**

Probably my favorite book of Lewis and one of my favorite popular books of all, this creative work tells the story of a busload of occupants from hell who visit heaven and what they encounter there. Powerful imagery of the goodness and ultimate reality of God and his works, and the selfish and empty alternatives humans often choose instead of him.

***_____. *Mere Christianity*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1952.**

A classic apologetic work from a man with a particular gift of communication for the faith and reasons for it. Though a bit dated in some minor respects it is still a great book for today and well worth reading.

_____. *The Problem of Pain: How Human Suffering Raises Almost Intolerable Intellectual Problems*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. 1962.

Lewis addresses this classic problem of suffering and evil and a Christian response to it. As with all his apologetic books, this is very readable.

Livingstone, David N., D. G. Hart, and Mark A. Noll, eds. *Evangelicals and Science in Historical Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

This scholarly work tries to situate the current relations and debates of Evangelicalism and science in a longer history of their interaction. Essays on a variety of topics and contexts.

***McGrath, Alister. *Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.**

McGrath here examines Dawkins' Darwinian view of the world and attacks the validity of Dawkins' strident 'scientific' arguments for atheism. Very readable.

***_____ . *Doubting: Growing Through the Uncertainties of Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006.**

An accessible book written for a popular audience on faith and doubt, their relationship, and the various kinds of doubts we can encounter and how to handle them.

_____ . *The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World*. New York: Doubleday, 2004.

For those who enjoy the history of thought, this book will be of interest in describing the rise of atheism in the 18th century and its fading appeal due to its internal weaknesses amidst a resilient and resurgent religion. A bit more academic in tone than his other books listed here, but still readable.

Metzger, Bruce M. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Metzger was the towering figure in NT scholarship and issues of canonicity and textual reliability, and this book is a standard scholarly text for understanding the development of the NT canon.

Miller, Keith B., ed. *Perspectives on an Evolving Creation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003.

A more scholarly but still accessible set of essays on Christianity and science that consider the context of their relationship, a look at various scientific theories for the cosmos and the theological implications of those theories.

Miller, Kenneth R. *Finding Darwin's God: A Scientist's Search for Common Ground Between God and Evolution*. New York: HarperCollins, 1999.

Miller argues that evolution and faith are not only not incompatible, they actually enrich the other.

Morris, Henry M., ed. *Scientific Creationism*. 2nd edition. 1985; rpt. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2000.

This book was created by the staff of the Institute for Creation Research, and edited by Henry Morris, who we referred to in class as a leading proponent of young earth creationism. This book summarizes the position of young earth creationism on major issues including evolution vs. creation, the age of the earth, the fossil record, and more.

Nichols, Terence L. *The Sacred Cosmos: Christian Faith and the Challenge of Naturalism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2003.

Nichols is a Catholic theologian at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul. Nichols sees harmony between science and God's activity, making a case for theistic evolution and arguing that we must move beyond metaphysical/philosophical naturalism in our understanding of the continually active Creator at work in nature as an expression of his nature and being.

O'Leary, Denyse. *By Design or by Chance? The Growing Controversy on the Origins of Life in the Universe*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Books, 2004.

A very readable book by a free-lance journalist about the debate over origins, and how design offers better explanations for those origins than chance can.

Parker, Gary E. *The Gift of Doubt: From Crisis to Authentic Faith*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1990.

Explores the value of doubt to Christian spirituality and discipleship. Have not had a chance to read yet, but at a glance it looks to be a helpful book, and was referenced by some others I respect.

Ratzsch, Del. *The Battle of Beginnings: Why Neither Side is Winning the Creation-Evolution Debate*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

Ratzsch is a philosophy professor at Calvin College. In this book he examines the problems in how the creation-evolution debate is framed, and how the claims and attacks of each side are often misconstrued or otherwise faulty.

Rees, Frank D. *Wrestling with Doubt: Theological Reflections on the Journey of Faith*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001.

An intensive theological reflection on doubt that examines a variety of theological models addressing doubt, as well as a number of biblical texts and themes. Some of Rees' theological underpinnings are a bit suspect for an orthodox Christian, but still a helpful book at many points.

***Ross, Hugh. *Why the Universe Is the Way It Is*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008.**

Ross examines various aspects of the universe and how the purposes behind some of its unusual features make it uniquely prepared for human life. He also examines the reliability of what the Bible has to say about cosmology.

Sibbes, Richard. *The Bruised Reed*. 1630; rpt. Revised edition. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998.

A classic Puritan sermon on the love and grace of Christ, mentioned in class.

Strobel, Lee. *The Case for a Creator: A Journalist Investigates Scientific Evidence That Points Toward God*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004.

I have not read this book, and from what I have read about it it appears a mixed bag.

***_____. *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998.**

The first in a number of books from Strobel defending aspects of faith through a popular format with interviews on various topics with different experts. Most of Strobel's books cover a lot of ground, but can be very good with a popular audience as they are as approachable as a newspaper article (but with some of the same weaknesses too). This book examines the evidence and arguments for taking Christ seriously, including consideration of the reliability of the New Testament information on Christ, evidence for Christ outside the Bible, evidence that Christ considered himself God, and evidence for the resurrection.

_____. *The Case for Christ for Kids*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2006.

Since some have expressed an interest in helping kids think through their doubts, I note that several of Strobel's books come in kids editions for younger readers, as well as student editions.

_____. *The Case for Christ – Student Edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2002.

The student edition is an easier to read and shorter version of the original that is targeting junior and senior high students.

_____. *The Case for Faith: A Journalist Investigates the Toughest Objections to Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000.

Strobel here examines several objections to faith and responds through his characteristic approach of interviews with various experts, one for each topic. Each chapter topic has books written about it, so it is only a popular introduction, but still can be very useful. Topics include the problem of evil, miracles and science, evolution, the exclusive claims of Jesus, a loving God and hell, church history and violence, and doubting.

_____. *The Case for the Real Jesus: A Journalist Investigates Current Attacks on the Identity of Christ*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2007.

Strobel's most recent 'case' examines current debates over Christ's identity stemming from books (and movies) like The Gnostic Gospels and The Da Vinci Code.

Taylor, Daniel. *Is God Intolerant: Christian Thinking about the Call for Tolerance*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2003.

A fine little book that discusses the meaning of tolerance (and intolerance) from a biblical perspective.

* _____. *The Myth of Certainty: Trusting God, Asking Questions, Taking Risks*. 1986; rpt. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992.

Taylor has written a very helpful book for those he terms 'reflective Christians,' those who often ask questions that are not easily answered. His book is both very personal and well thought and written. I recommend it.

Van Till, Howard J. *The Fourth Day: What the Bible and the Heavens Are Telling Us About the Creation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986.

At the time of its writing, Van Till was a professor at Calvin College. He examines what we know through science and Scripture of God and the creation, and argues that what we know of God through Scripture and science complement each other.

Van Till, Howard J., Robert E. Snow, John H. Stek, and Davis A. Young. *Portraits of Creation: Biblical and Scientific Perspectives on the World's Formation*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990.

A number of essays exploring issues of origins and creation from the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship. Includes essays on the history of the relation of science and theology, on cosmology, on the natural sciences, a critique of Creation Science, a study of Scripture's view of creation, and more.

Wells, Jonathan. *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Darwinism and Intelligent Design*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2006.

Wells is a strong advocate for intelligent design (he works at an intelligent design think tank) and a critic of evolutionary theory. He argues that evolution is a worldview more than a theory lacking proper evidence.

Witherington, Ben III. *The Gospel Code: Novel Claims about Jesus, Mary Magdalene and da Vinci*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

This book presents a devastating critique of the historical assumptions behind The Da Vinci Code. Scholarly but readable.

* _____. *What Have They Done With Jesus? Beyond Strange Theories And Bad History: Why We Can Trust The Bible*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006.

More critique of the various alternate histories and Gnostic gospels being promulgated in the popular media and elsewhere as undermining the biblical portrayal of Jesus.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *The God I Don't Understand: Reflections on Tough Questions of Faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008.

Very recent book. I have yet to read it. Sections on evil and suffering, violence and the God of the Old Testament, the cross, and the end of the world. The book is recommended by John Stott, and Wright apparently heads an organization previously run by Stott.

Wright, N. T. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003.

What happened at the resurrection? Anyone who argues that the resurrection is not historical must deal with this mammoth work from one of the leading New Testament historical scholars on the historicity of the resurrection. Wright has changed the face of NT scholarship with this and other books. This book is geared strongly toward a scholarly audience, but shorter and more popular versions of it are available as well.

_____. ***Who Was Jesus?* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992.**

Tom Wright looks at some of the pictures of Jesus presented by Barbara Thiering (Australian scholar who wrote Jesus the Man, suggesting that Jesus was married, divorced, and married again and had three children), A. N. Wilson (British biographer who wrote the highly skeptical book, Jesus), and Bishop John Spong (ultra-liberal Episcopal bishop and popularizer of a new form of revised Christianity who wrote Born of a Woman describing the damage done by the doctrine of the virgin birth). Written for laypersons.

Young, Davis A. *Christianity and the Age of the Earth.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982.

An evangelical Christian and a professional geologist, Young examines the geological evidence for the age of the earth and argues persuasively that the earth is around 4.5 billion years old. He also surveys historical views of the age of the earth and the changing views of Christians in the light of new evidence.

Zacharias, Ravi. *Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message.* Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2000.

A popular Christian apologist defends the claims of the Christian faith and compares them to those of other faiths. I read this some years ago and have only looked at it briefly recently, but a helpful book. A youth version is also available.