



The Evolution of God

By Robert Wright

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The Evolution of God By Robert Wright

In this sweeping narrative that takes us from the Stone Age to the Information Age, Robert Wright unveils an astonishing discovery: there is a hidden pattern that the great monotheistic faiths have followed as they have evolved. Through the prisms of archaeology, theology, and evolutionary psychology, Wright's findings overturn basic assumptions about Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and are sure to cause controversy. He explains why spirituality has a role today, and why science, contrary to conventional wisdom, affirms the validity of the religious quest. And this previously unrecognized evolutionary logic points not toward continued religious extremism, but future harmony.

Nearly a decade in the making, The Evolution of God is a breathtaking re-examination of the past, and a visionary look forward.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In his illuminating book, *The Moral Animal*, Wright introduced evolutionary psychology and examined the ways that the morality of individuals might be hard-wired by nature rather than influenced by culture. With this book, he expands upon that work, turning now to explore how religion came to define larger and larger groups of people as part of the circle of moral consideration. Using a naïve and antiquated approach to the sociology and anthropology of religion, Wright expends far too great an effort covering well-trod territory concerning the development of religions from primitive hunter-gatherer stages to monotheism. He finds in this evolution of religion, however, that the great monotheistic (he calls them Abrahamic, a term not favored by many religion scholars) religions—Christianity, Islam, Judaism—all contain a code for the salvation of the world. Using game theory, he encourages individuals in these three faiths to embrace a non-zero-sum relationship to other religions, seeing their fortunes as positively correlated and interdependent and then acting with tolerance toward other religions. Regrettably, Wright's lively writing unveils little that is genuinely new or insightful about religion. (*June*)

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Straddling popular science, ancient history, and theology, this ambitious work sets out to resolve not only the clash of civilizations between the Judeo-Christian West and the Muslim world but also the clash between science and religion. Tracking the continual transformation of faith from the Stone Age to the Information Age, Wright, a self-described materialist, best known for his work on evolutionary psychology, free trade, and game theory, postulates that religious world views are becoming more open, compassionate, and synthesized. Occasionally, his prescriptions can seem obvious—for instance, that members of the different Abrahamic faiths should think of their religions as “having been involved, all along, in the same undertaking.” But his core argument, that religion is getting “better” with each passing aeon, is enthralling. Copyright ©2008 [Click here to subscribe to The New Yorker](#)

From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

An articulate writer with a spry sense of humor, Wright offers an optimistic vision of the future of humanity. Avoiding any hint of the sermon, Wright's line of reasoning tends to straddle the middle ground of belief, “too open to theism for the [atheists and] too rooted in scientific rationalism for the [fundamentalists]” (*Boston Globe*). A few critics lamented his focus on Western religions and his insistence that monotheism is naturally superior to other types of belief systems, and the *Wall Street Journal* thought he relied too heavily on speculation in his review of prehistoric civilizations. However, despite these objections, all reviewers agreed that Wright's analysis of cultural trends and their effects on our understanding of God are thought-provoking and encouraging.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Betty Richey:

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