

"The scientific attempt to explain religion has been around for over a century, but only recently has it exploded into the cultural scene with the renewed interest in the relationship of science and religion, and particularly with the advance in the neurosciences. It now appears that we are getting close to understanding what is going on inside the religious mind, and David Comings has written a remarkable analysis, that includes the most detailed and up-to-date science ever generated on the subject of religion. *Did Man Create God?* will be the definitive scientific reference on religion for some time to come."

Dr. Michael Shermer, Publisher of Skeptic magazine, monthly columnist for Scientific American, and the author of Why Darwin Matters, The Science of Good and Evil, and How We Believe.

"One of the most integrative, innovative and revolutionary books I have read in decades."

Dr. Michael A. Persinger, C. Psych
Professor Department of Psychology and Biology, Behavioural Neuroscience and Biomolecular Sciences Programs, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada.
Author of Neuropsychological Bases of God Beliefs.

Within this volume is a great book that anyone wishing to understand the human religious impulse really needs to read..an opulently produced work.

Tim Callahan author of Bible Prophecy: Failure or Fulfillment? and The Secret Origins of the Bible

"Religion plays a huge part of everyone's lives, regardless of if they attend a church, synagogue, or mosque – but is it interfering too much with the sensible thought of the world? "Did Man Create God" Is Your Spiritual Brain at Peace with Your Thinking Brain" believes so, but keeps a spiritual stance throughout it's questioning of the world's faith – stating that spirituality is a hard wired part of the brain of humanity. An objective look at religion as a whole, it tackles all concerns and issues with religion such as fundamentalism and barriers to social progress. "Did Man Create God" Is

Your Spiritual Brain at Peace with Your Thinking Brain” is highly recommended for community library collections dedicated to religious studies of all sorts.”

Midwest Book Review

“One of the problems with our culture is that it is now so easy to fine-tune what we are exposed to. We can watch TV news slanted to our already held political beliefs (CNN or Fox?). We can carefully craft an iPod program so that we're never exposed to a rap ditty because we're so sure there isn't even one we'd like. We do the same on the net. Many have discarded their newspaper, for heaven's sake, in favor of cherry picking the news we want to hear.

Did Man Create God? is precisely for those of us who do that (and we all do to a certain extent, don't we?). It gives a reader everything to examine and re-examine their existing belief system.

If we believe in a traditional God then most likely we believe God gave us a brain to think and make decisions. This is the book for that. It is crammed full of good stuff. Philosophy. Biology. Theories. History. Illustrations. Even little summaries in red to help a person skim through what he knows, delve deeper into what he may want (or needs!) to know.

In short, Dr. David E. Comings has written a book to help us understand ourselves and our universe. The science and details and clear-headed fair approach is perfect for those who want to cut through the spiritual babble available to us to get the facts and make up our own minds. That, after all, is what God gave us brains to do, right? Or did I already say that.”

Carolyn Howard-Johnson Author of The Frugal Book Promoter

“The author is an eminent medical geneticist. Parts I and II are a very competent summary of biological evolution and a relevant rebuttal of creationism and intelligent design. Part III, with amazing clarity, deals with the ambiguities of quantum theory and modern cosmology—the big bang. We all know already that quantum mechanics is counterintuitive and no high priests of modern physics are going to try to impose belief in string theory upon us (the physicists know that they would be much less successful than medieval theologians). A few pages here and more in Part IV are devoted to

disposing of the “anthropic principle”—that the laws of nature were arranged so that life and consciousness are possible—with several quotes from seemingly unlikely sources such as Steven Hawking. Most notable is from Ken Wilbur who collected the relevant statements of Heisenberg, Schrödinger, Einstein, De Broglie, Jeans, Planck, Pauli, and Eddington: The last thing those theorists would want you to surrender is your critical intellect, your hard-earned skepticism. For it is exactly through sustained use---not of emotion, not of intuiting, not of faith---but a sustained use of the critical intellect that these greatest of physicists felt absolutely compelled to go beyond [the old] physics altogether. (page 274)

I am especially grateful to the author for Part IV. Here he describes very recent information about the anatomical and physiological basis for consciousness—the location in the brain and connections of the neurons involved. This information depends on brain imaging (functional MRI and PET scanning) of normal people and patients and animals with localized brain damage, including of course those abilities that are missing when known parts of the brain are absent or damaged. MRI stands for magnetic resonance imaging. Functional MRI shows what parts of the brain are active when thinking various kinds of thoughts (fortunately MRI involves no exposure to ionizing radiation). PET stands for positron emission tomography. Some aspects of consciousness have long been thought to make us unique among animals in possessing souls.

These observations show that specific parts of the brain are required for us to possess our traits that are associated with having souls suggesting that the soul dies with the body. This has major consequences for religion. Without a living, functioning brain there is no soul. If there is no soul, there is no afterlife, no hell, no purgatory, no reincarnation, no cosmic consciousness, no heaven, and there is no reward in heaven for good behavior. In the same sense that we have said “evolution is real, accept it” we must also say that “the neural basis for the soul is real, accept it.”. (page 295).

Again, remember that people with specific brain lesions can live and function, to a degree, with that brain damage. In other words for any given trait characterized on any existing list as indicative of the existence of a soul in humans, a disabled person can be found with that particular trait missing from his human repertoire, and yet he is still conscious and functional to some degree. The remainder of Part IV discusses temporal lobe epilepsy and how the temporal lobe of the brain is also activated by various psychedelic drugs that produce very convincing religious experiences. It is noteworthy that rational people, well aware in advance of the likelihood of induced

“religious” experience, still insist that the induced religious experiences were real. This correlates with known or strongly suspected temporal lobe epilepsy in many founders of new religious sects.

Part V deals with the complex genetics of behavior including bad behavior. Sociological research demonstrates that absence of religious upbringing of itself does not induce bad behavior in normal individuals, and a disruptive environment aggravates bad behavior mostly in genetically susceptible individuals. The book must be read with great care to understand how DNA, the chemical substance of inheritance, and other evidence leads to these conclusions (in spite of gaps in current knowledge). I know of no way to make such complex material easy.

Part VI is about the natural selection of intelligence and spirituality during eons of evolution. Like the personal traits discussed above, intelligence involves many genes. Imaging shows that increased brain connections are more important than brain size in contributing to high intelligence. It is probable that the onset of the current cycle of ice ages 250,000 years ago accelerated selection for intelligence by enhancing the ability of man to adapt to many new and difficult environments sufficiently promptly to thrive.

Self-transcendence and spiritual acceptance (the authors very words) are also inherited in a complex manner involving many genes that correlate with PET images and result in good behavior in spite of bad environment. Spirituality also improves survival by mitigating fear of death and increasing cohesiveness of social support. Are we learning to benefit from these beneficial traits of our spiritual brain while still retaining the benefits of our thinking brain? Here lies the essence Did Man Create God?

Part VII is a summary of mankind’s experience, good and bad, with religion. Part VIII lays out the evidence that man created God. I quote the most tellingly simple point:

The “problem of evil” is one of the greatest challenges for religion to explain. While many solutions have been proposed, none adequately deals with the fact that an all powerful, personal, caring God could eliminate the worst aspects of evil if he wanted to, The one solution that is the most logically satisfying to the thinking brain is to assume that Man Created God---in which case “the problem of evil” disappears. (page 620)

To me the book’s conclusion is: yes, man did create God and for good reasons. We must learn to respect our spiritual brains and our religious traditions for what they accomplish, for example, social cohesion and support as mentioned above, but we can do this without disabling our

thinking brains. This will make us more tolerant of religious traditions other than our own "inherited" ones. Emotion takes charge often enough without us condoning it. I am sure from reading his book that David Comings would agree that even if we cannot bring ourselves to believe in the God created by man, belief in a more fair-minded, benevolent God, although difficult to conceive, remains intellectually acceptable.

This is a long and closely reasoned text. To the author's credit he recognizes this. At the end of his brief preface he states flat out: "Finally, if you would like to skip the chapters on evolution and cosmology, go to Part IV." There are also red summaries interspersed in the text (about 5% of the total) that coherently express the essence of the book. However, even the formidable complete text should be understandable to a determined, educated reader even one without special competence in science.

I hope this book will be widely read for many reasons. A prominent one will be that requests for the teaching of intelligent design as an equal to evolution will become less strident for the same type of reason that Roe v Wade reduced opposition to contraception."

John A. Frantz, MD, NASW National Association of Science Writers

"Written by a physician and scientist, David Comings's *Did Man Create God?* is a highly detailed book that substantiates theories of evolution while also discussing how spirituality is important to evolution. That's a challenging task for any physician or scientist, but Comings, who is a neuroscientist, behavioral and molecular geneticist, appears more than up to it. Comings work is the perfect read for people who share some of his expertise, or those who serve an academic or policy organization committed to evolution. But it's too demanding and too detailed to be more than a reference book for the rest of us.

Being a non-scientist, but also interested in the politics of evolutionary theory and religion, I found myself skipping to find major points throughout the book. Fortunately, Comings provides extremely detailed drawings, as well as brightly highlighted conclusions. Among the more interesting scientific chapters were the proof of transitional forms in fossil records of varied species and human organs, such as the human eye; transitional forms provide evidence that species do evolve and adapt to their environments. Transitional forms are also evidence to refute the idea of a super-natural creator or intelligent designer.

Comings takes his science beyond evolution to prove that man created religion. As one example, he discusses the centers of the brain—temporal lobes—that cause man to have religious experiences, for instance hearing spiritual voices. He states, with scientific proof, that Temporal lobe epilepsy and its spiritual manifestations may have played a major role in the religious conversions of many historical figures and in the origin of several religions.

The author also presents extensive information on the neurological connections between spirituality and near-death experiences where a loss of oxygen to the brain begins a series of biochemical reactions that produce a state of peaceful bliss. He writes that spirituality is an intrinsic biological trait controlled by genes and unique environment and is not determined by cultural influences such as religious education. He sums up by saying: Spirituality comes from within, and that people are often spiritual without necessarily being religious. But he also adds that high levels of religiousness are positively associated with lower levels of abuse of alcohol, drugs and tobacco, as well as decreased levels of depression and a longer lifespan.

This book also takes you through the historic origins of the major world religions, as well as spiritual arts such as mysticism, myth, ritual and psychedelics. The author also refutes the thought that a divine God plays favorites; that view is inconsistent with the existence of a fair and impartial God who loves all, and that a desire to be chosen or special is a human wish, not a Godly one.

There was another interesting point related to fundamentalist beliefs: the difference between petitionary prayer, where an individual prays for him—or herself and intercessory prayer, where someone else prays for an individual who may not know he or she is being prayed for. In petitionary prayer, prayer is a powerful coping mechanism for the afflicted; it is a placebo effect. This placebo effect does not exist in intercessory prayer. So, telling someone to fight for their life may be more effective than praying for divine intervention to save someone's life. In conclusion, this is a comprehensive, but overwhelming work. I'd send it to every politician who believes in intelligent design, but I would have to mark all of the key pages or make a Powerpoint to get their staff to read it first."

Stuart Nachbar, Best Books Reviewed

As the title suggests, *Did Man Create God* attempts to outline all salient explanations for the existence of God. While this is a long book (over 650 pages) and covers some complex areas of study, it is written for the general audience and provides the necessary scientific background in a way that is not difficult to grasp. Chapter summaries are provided in red for those who prefer to skip right to the main point. However, I suspect those who would want to read this book are just as interested in the actual argument as in the summaries.

The book is divided into eight parts. Part 1 consists of three chapters and discusses evolution. It starts with Darwin's theory of evolution and discusses more recent versions of Darwin's original theory. Part 2 has sixteen chapters each refuting arguments made by supporters of Intelligent Design. Part 3 contains five chapters discusses cosmology, specifically the Big Bang theory, quantum physics, and the relation between the two. Part 4 is made up of eleven chapters that focus on neurology. Part 5 and Part 6 can be thought of as one unit and are extensions of Part 4. Part 5 consists of five chapters while Part 6 has two chapters. Both focus on the evolution of the brain. Part 7 contains ten chapters and outlines some of the major religious beliefs. Part 8 can be thought of as one chapter and it summarizes the salient arguments presented in the previous chapters.

...There is a lot of science, and scientific attempts to explain the existence of God. Readers who take this approach are likely to enjoy reading this book and will probably want to delve into the various implications modern scientific theories have on spiritual questions. While the author is an atheist, readers who like linking science to spirituality will find this book enjoyable- no matter what their religious persuasion.

Muhammed Hassanali TCM Reviews