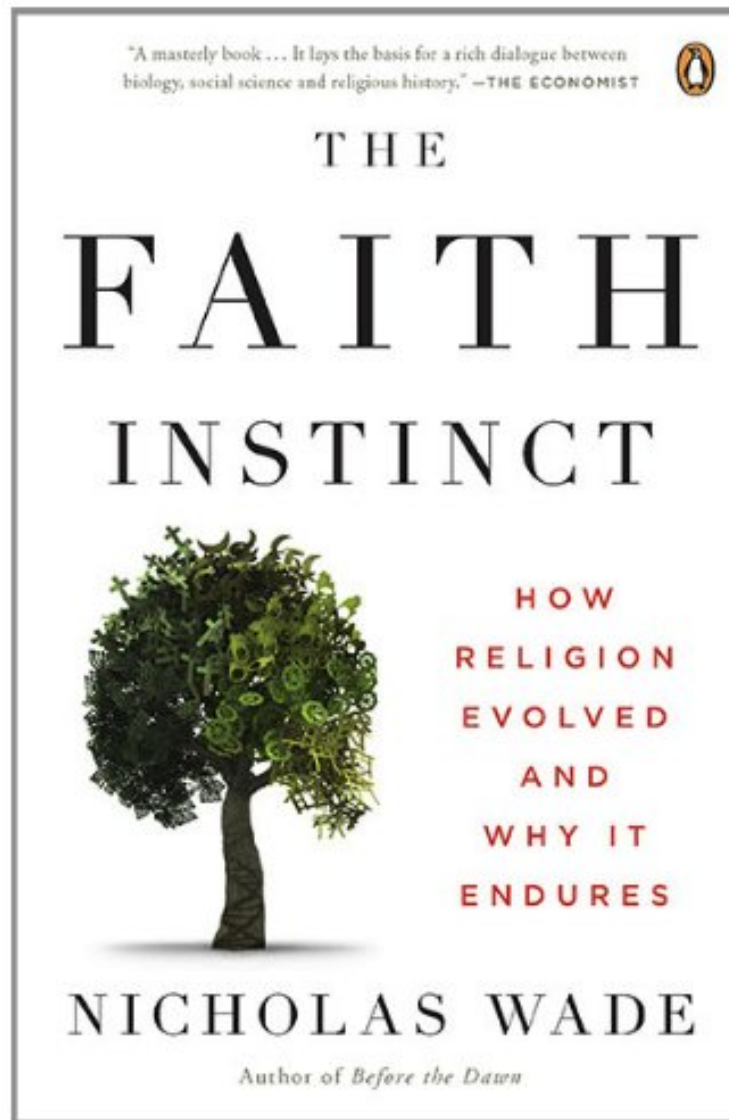


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## The Faith Instinct: How Religion Evolved and Why It Endures

Nicholas Wade

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#590361 in Books Nicholas Wade 2010-09-28 2010-09-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.47 x .68 x 5.50l, .60 #File Name: 0143118196320 pages The Faith Instinct How Religion Evolved and Why It Endures | File size: 53.Mb

**Nicholas Wade : The Faith Instinct: How Religion Evolved and Why It Endures** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Faith Instinct: How Religion Evolved and Why It Endures:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The title says it all. By Lotus The book is a non bias account of how and why religion evolved and was successful. The only thing was it was a little repetitive at times. But interesting and

good explanations. Also the author gave evidence and historical accounts of different peoples. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A fresh look at religion and the desire for meaning. By Sally Wasowski I love this book. I've given it to several people. Fresh. Thought-provoking. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. profound By Bruce Mallery I thought it was unique and profound

A New York Times science reporter makes a startling new case that religion has an evolutionary basis. For the last 50,000 years, and probably much longer, people have practiced religion. Yet little attention has been given to the question of whether this universal human behavior might have been implanted in human nature. In this original and thought-provoking work, Nicholas Wade traces how religion grew to be so essential to early societies in their struggle for survival, how an instinct for faith became hardwired into human nature, and how it provided an impetus for law and government. *The Faith Instinct* offers an objective and nonpolemical exploration of humanity's quest for spiritual transcendence.

From Publishers Weekly Taking up where he left off in *Before the Dawn* (2006), an engaging examination of human evolution in light of explorations in the human genome, longtime New York Times science reporter Wade deftly explores the evolutionary basis of religion. He draws on archeology, social science and natural science as he vigorously shows that the instinct for religious behavior is an evolved part of human nature because, like other human social traits that have evolved over many thousands of years, the practice of religion conferred a decided survival advantage to those who practiced it. Natural selection operates according to principles of survival and reproduction of offspring with heritable traits. Many of the social aspects of religious behavior offer advantages such as internal cohesion that lead to a society's members having more surviving children. More importantly, since religions have evolved as their societies have developed, is it possible, Wade asks, for religions to be reworked so that as many people as possible can exercise their innate religious instincts to their own and society's benefits? Sure to be controversial for its reduction of religion to a product of natural selection, Wade's study compels us to reconsider the role of evolution in shaping even our most sacred human creations. (Nov. 16) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Evolutionary studies have accumulated enough convincing explanations based on enough factual discovery for it to be indisputable that religion is biologically rooted. Wade, a science journalist whose vita includes stints with the revered journals *Nature* and *Science* before he joined the New York Times science section, draws on the most famous and influential researchers to synthesize the story of religion through the ages. While religion has utility for the individual, it is overwhelmingly important for group cohesion and loyalty, as evidenced by the mass dancing, chanting, and trance-seeking of hunter-gatherer cultures, in which what much later Christian idealists called the priesthood of all believers genuinely obtained. When stationary communities arose, hierarchies followed in all enterprises, including religion, and if anything, religions community-binding function became more crucial as populations and then technology burgeoned. By now, it should be obvious that religion not only won't but can't be expunged. There is so much more in this compact account, including cultural-evolutionary explanations of the three great monotheisms enough, in fact, to make it a cornerstone of popular religion-and-science studies. --Ray Olson "Highly intriguing...In this probing work of science reporting, New York Times correspondent Wade sheds light on what is sure to be a controversial new field of research in evolutionary psychology, genetics and anthropology...A turning point, and advancement, in the science-religion debate." -Kirkus "[In *The Faith Instinct*], longtime New York Times science reporter Wade deftly explores the evolutionary basis of religion. He draws on archaeology, social science, and natural science as he vigorously shows that the instinct for religious behavior is an evolved part of human nature...Wade's study compels us to reconsider the role of evolution in shaping even our most sacred human conditions." -Publishers Weekly "The Faith Instinct is a big winner! Its highly intelligent and much-needed narrative about why religions have proved essential to human success kept me engrossed from its beginning to its final pages." -James D. Watson, author of *The Double Helix* "There is so much...in this compact account, including cultural-evolutionary explanations of the three great monotheisms-enough, in fact, to make it a cornerstone of popular religion-and-science studies." -Booklist "It is a rare book that will be read as eagerly by religion's defenders as by its detractors. Building on his rightly admired *Before the Dawn*, Nicholas Wade has written just such a book." -Jack Miles, author of *God: A Biography* "As he did earlier for human prehistory in *Before the Dawn*, Nicholas Wade has delivered the most balanced and fact-based account available of a subject fundamental to human self-understanding. His scholarship is thorough, and his writing crystalline and exciting." -Edward O. Wilson, author of *Consilience* and *The Future of Life* "Instead of attacking or defending religion, as so many have done lately, the biggest challenge is to explain how we became the only religious primate. In a spell-binding and wide-ranging account, Nicholas Wade offers a natural history of religion and convincingly explains why the phenomenon is here to stay." -Frans de Waal, author of *The Age of Empathy* "Of all the recent books on religion, I believe *The Faith Instinct* is simultaneously the most complete, the most correct, and the most accessible to the general public. Wade tells an extraordinary story in which morality, community, and religion are three strands of the same rope. Free of jargon and partisanship, *The Faith Instinct* is full of fascinating and up-to-the-minute scientific discoveries." -Jonathan Haidt,

author of *The Happiness Hypothesis* "With his new book, New York Times science reporter Nicholas Wade positions himself as a serious challenger to Steven Pinker for the title of Best Living Popularizer of the Human Sciences." -The National