



# NEWS

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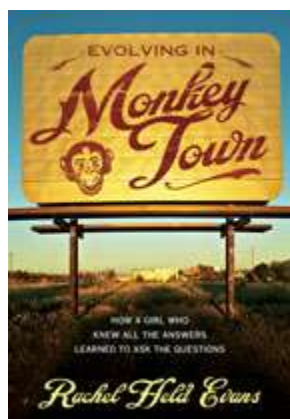
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## ***85 Years After The Scopes Monkey Trial, Views Shift on Evolution + Christianity***

***Rachel Held Evans Examines Faith and Doubt in Evolving in Monkey Town***

**Grand Rapids, MI, July 10, 2010** – In *Evolving in Monkey Town*, Rachel Held Evans recounts her experiences growing up in Dayton, Tennessee, a town that epitomized Christian fundamentalism during the Scopes Monkey Trial of 1925. Now fast forward 85 years later, Evans discovers how young Evangelical views have shifted dramatically on evolution and Christianity.



"Charles Darwin said that the survival or extinction of an organism is determined by its ability to adapt to its environment," says Evans. "I think faith operates the same way. Changes in the environment—be they cultural or experiential—test the resilience of our faith and challenge us to rethink our most fundamental beliefs and values," she adds.

For two weeks in July of 1925 Dayton was called by many, the most famous place on Earth. That summer, John T. Scopes was tried in the county courthouse for violating a state law that forbade the teaching of evolution in public schools. With the defense led by Clarence Darrow and prosecution by William Jennings Bryan, the Scopes Trial was billed as a showdown between science and religion – The Trial of the Century.

As a result, over 200 reporters from as far away as London descended on Dayton. Protestors, street preachers, and peddlers flooded the streets of the small rural town. For the first time in history, a radio station broadcasted the court proceedings live. At the end of the trial, John T. Scopes was found guilty, and Dayton, TN has never shaken its reputation as Monkey Town.

Eighty years after the Scopes Monkey Trial made a spectacle of Christian fundamentalism and brought national attention to her hometown, Evans faced a trial of her own when she began to have doubts about her faith. Growing up in a culture obsessed with apologetics, Evans asks questions she never thought she would ask. And learns that in order for her faith to survive in a postmodern context, it must adapt to change and evolve.

"Dayton is not the easiest place in the world to have a faith crisis," says Evans. "It's not an easy place to question or doubt the 'fundamentals' of the faith; but change can occur even in the most unlikely of environments, and it is here in Dayton, Tennessee that my faith has evolved into something very different than it used to be," she adds.

With fearless honesty, Evans describes how her faith survived her doubts and challenges readers alike to re-imagine Christianity in a postmodern context, where knowing all the answers isn't nearly as important as asking the questions.



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"I believe that knowing the answers isn't as important as asking the questions, and that following Jesus Christ is a lot less about being right and a lot more about, well, surviving."

*Evolving in Monkey Town* tackles head-on how faith survives by continually changing; Its purpose being to reassess the fundamental elements of Christianity in the context of a postmodern environment, her insights coming from a small town famous for its fundamentalism, others coming from wherever they may be.

Using as an illustration, her own spiritual journey from certainty, through doubt, to faith, Evans adds a unique perspective to the ongoing dialogue about postmodernism and the church that has so captivated the Christian community in recent years.

In a changing cultural environment where new ideas threaten the safety and security of the faith, *Evolving in Monkey Town* is a fearlessly honest story of survival.

Rachel Held Evans is an award-winning writer whose articles have appeared in local and national publications. She lives in Dayton, Tennessee, with her husband, Dan. Find out more at [rachelheldevans.com](http://rachelheldevans.com)

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