

Story of Faith: Larry Kennon

For ten years my dog Barnabas was in a state of evolution. I watched his development with awe and amazement. He sat exactly like a person on the couch, head propped on a pillow, front legs crossed on his chest. He had no shame in his humanness. He was a rightful occupant of our house. ...one of us. More and more he acted like a human.

So I wondered what it was that caused Barnabas to take a final step toward peoplehood. Was it eating from table scraps and listening to our constant chattering or watching TV shows we left on all day? Was it a conscious decision or more like fate or modeling our human behavior? How is it that evolution means becoming more like WE are? Just maybe when the dog woke closer to humanness, he actually took a step backwards. I don't know much about animal consciousness, but I do believe that a high degree of spirituality is there, uncluttered by neurotic worries, work, world, systems, politics, traffic and relationship issues.

The book of Genesis has at least two accounts of how God planned it all out. But I stay fascinated beyond my creationist beliefs, how dogs, people and other gentle creatures change and evolve....sometimes casting off parts of themselves necessary to the life for which the species was created. Barnabas the dog did not seem to be in pain as he evolved. I know that on my way through the halls of evolution, to make significant changes caused me pain. I can't say that I lay quietly on the sofa, not the least bit unsettled, when my gills became lungs. The truth is that I struggled to remain a fish long after I could no longer breathe in water. Sometimes it is only with great resistance I changed toward a new equilibrium and way of life. I did and do not evolve smoothly.

But Barnabas does it without true awareness. He didn't even notice he was becoming undoglike. He seemed to have no worries about his change in likeness and doggy behavior. But evolution keeps happening to me. God seems to insist on it with His creation which moans in His Presence. Once the fingers and toes begin to recede, there is no stopping the forces that will carry me to my newest form. Whether I will fly or swim next, I can only speculate. The reality is that I WILL change. It is God's plan. My job is simply to grow the wings or sprout the flippers that will take me to my newest destination and, of course, to trust the Creator. Peace to all who evolve.