

Theology vs. Science or Theology plus Science?

Appendix A: Theology vs. Science or Theology plus Science?

Note: This is one of two appendices for Steve Cable's article [Are We Significant in This Vast Universe?](#)

Are science and religion mortal enemies, or collaborating partners, or denizens of different realms with no common ground? Is the ultimate objective of science to unmask the fictitious myths behind all religions freeing mankind to pursue a rational utopia as espoused by Daniel Dennett^{1} and other atheist academics? Or should we subscribe to the prevailing Western view of a clear secular vs. sacred split, segregating out thoughts so that science and theology are not allowed to deal with any topics which intersect?^{2} Or will unbiased scientific inquiry lead us to a deeper appreciation and understanding of our Creator as espoused by early formulators of the modern scientific method, such as Isaac Newton, as well as many respected researchers, such as leading nanotechnologist, Dr. James Tour, who stated, "I stand in awe of God because of what he has done through his creation. Only a rookie who knows nothing about science would say science takes away from faith. If you really study science, it will bring you closer to God."^{3}

The current view promoted as dogma by many in academia is that acceptable, genuine science is based on a theological presupposition, namely, that any possibility of intervention by a transcendent Creator or other non-physical entity must be excluded from consideration in evaluating possible explanations for any phenomena observed in the physical world. It is ironic that Carl Sagan, one of the popular promoters of

this dogma, would take fundamental issue with his own dogma when he wrote,

A central lesson of science is that to understand complex issues (or even simple ones), we must try to free our minds of dogma and to guarantee the freedom to publish, to contradict, and to experiment. Arguments from authority are unacceptable. [\[4\]](#)

In a similar fashion, a common viewpoint promoted in some theological circles is that theology trumps science in any areas in which they have an intersecting interest, i.e. a viewpoint that looks only at the Bible without allowing its interpretation of Scripture to be informed by the findings of science. From this viewpoint, science is at best a limited field of study looking at only a small part of reality, and at worst is spending large amounts of resources studying an illusion masquerading as reality. It is assumed that science cannot provide insights to help deepen our understanding of theology.

I propose that both of these viewpoints share a common shortcoming of prejudging the result before examining the evidence. Both scientist and theologians should be free to follow the evidence where it leads, whether the evidence comes from observation of the physical aspects of our universe, or from philosophy and logic, or from divine revelation.

One area where this clash of viewpoints is reaching a fever pitch is in the field of Intelligent Design science. Researchers in this emerging field say, let us follow the evidence where it leads. If the makeup of the physical realm includes evidence of an intelligent designer, let's admit it and pass the information on to the theologians. If the physical makeup is more indicative of the handiwork of random variations and natural processes, let's cite it and pass that information along as well. As demonstrated in the 2008 documentary, *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, these

researchers are facing stiff opposition and even persecution from the defenders of the scientific establishment. Ironically, but not unexpectedly, the more we learn about the fine tuning required to support life, the history of our planet, and the complexity of living organisms, the more the evidence aligns with the presence of an intelligent designer rather than the results of random, undirected processes. As one scientist observed,

[0]n whatever volume scale researchers make their observations – the universe, galaxy cluster, galaxy, planetary system, planet, planetary surface, cell, atom, fundamental particle, or string – the evidence for extreme fine-tuning for life’s sake, and in particular for humanity’s benefit, persists.[{5}](#)

As Christians, we need not fear science. If the Bible is revelation from our actual Creator, it will not crumble in the presence of scientific studies into the nature of our universe. We do need to be concerned about agenda-driven science which is focused on manipulating scientific results and the popular public perception of those results to prove a predetermined theological point, whether it is atheism or a particular interpretation of the Bible.

If God is the Creator of the universe and the Bible is revelation directly from God, then accurate observation of the universe will ultimately prove to be consistent with His revelation. By combining the general revelation of science with the special revelation of the Bible, we should be rewarded with a greater understanding of the nature of our Creator and His intentions for mankind.

Notes

1. Daniel Dennett, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a Natural Phenomenon* (New York: Viking Press, 2006).
2. Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from*

Its Cultural Captivity (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004).

3. Candace Adams, "Leading Nanoscientist Builds Big Faith," *Baptist Standard*, March 15, 2000.

4. Carl Sagan, *Billions and Billions: Thoughts on Life and Death at the Brink of the Millennium* (New York, Random House, 1997).

5. Hugh Ross, *Why The Universe Is The Way It Is* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 124.

© 2009 Probe Ministries