

Why I am a Christian:

in a scientific, humanistic and atheistic world

Part III: God created Science

A. Modern Science and technology is the result of a **Christian** world view (so sorry, atheists)

1. The 3 main assumptions of modern science:

- the universe is **orderly**;
- this orderly universe can be **known**
- there is a **motive** to discover the order

2. These assumptions were the result of the Christian world view

a. No other “religion” could have created the scientific method

- The **Greek** gods were fickle and unpredictable. Math and science were an end in of themselves, not an attempt to discover a larger purpose and context.
- Hindus saw the universe as **cyclical**, so there was no motive for scientific discovery.
- Islam sees God as so transcendent and **unknowable** that there is no reason for exploration.
- Christians believe in a transcendent God, as well. However, unlike Muslims, Christians believe that God can be known through the **evidence** of the universe that God created, hence the motive for science, exploration, and discovery.

b. Many of those who are considered the fathers of modern science were Christian, and they were motivated by their **faith** to prove that we live in an ordered universe, and that by this order, God could be known:

- Copernicus (1463-1543)
- Galileo (1564-1642) Atheist **WRONGLY** point to Galileo as the poster boy of the intolerant church. **The truth:** The church was THE patron of science and arts. Galileo had significant support and benefactors within the church. Cardinal Baronius, one of the outspoken supporters of Galileo, wrote, “[The Bible teaches] how one goes to Heaven, not how the heavens go.” However, Galileo had no tact and delighted in ridiculing the followers of Copernicus, whose theories of astronomy were then the accepted norm. Galileo’s arrogance led to the conflict, not his theories or an anti-scientific bias of the church.
- Bacon (1561-1626)
- Kepler (1571-1630)
- Pascal (1625-1662)
- Newton (1642-1662)
- Harvey (1578-1657)
- Boyle (1627-1691)
- Faraday (1791-1867)
- Maxwell (1831-1879).

Myth Alert! It is a common myth amongst atheists, as a means of diminishing the claim that these scientists were Christian, that most only claimed to be Christian so that they could survive and operate without persecution from the church. However, this view demonstrates the historical ignorance of those atheists who believe such an urban legend. These scientists were devoutly Christian, and it was their belief that the universe is orderly and that in this order, God could be known, that motivated them.

...science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind. (Albert Einstein, 1941)

Dr. Loren Eiseley (1907-1977), a Professor of anthropology, a science history writer and evolutionist, concluded that the birth of modern science was mainly due to the creationist convictions of its founders. *"It is the CHRISTIAN world which finally gave birth in a clear articulated fashion to the experimental method of science itself ... It began its discoveries and made use of its method in the faith, not the knowledge, that it was dealing with a rational universe controlled by a Creator who did not act upon whim nor inference with the forces He had set in operation. The experimental method succeeded beyond man's wildest dreams but the faith that brought it into being owes something to the Christian conception of the nature of God. It is surely one of the curious paradoxes of history that science, which professionally has little to do with faith, owes its origins to an act of faith that the universe can be rationally interpreted, and that science today is sustained by that assumption."* From *Darwin's Centenary: Evolution and the Men who Discovered it*

B. The false **dichotomy** between science and faith is the result of some...

1. ... atheists and secular humanists making a **God** out of science

a. The new atheists contend that only the **physical** world (material) can be proven by science

- The belief in anything spiritual or mystical is a **delusion**.
- Belief in God is seen as irrational, at best, or a **mental disorder** at worst
- They believe that no reasonable or rational person would believe in God

b. Scientists, however are **flawed**, therefore science is **flawed**

1) Scientists are **biased**

- Everyone has biases that color ones' interpretations of facts and events. No-one is an objective observer.
- These biases affect how information is collected, what information is collected, what information is not observed, and how that information is interpreted.
- Just because a scientist said it does not necessarily give a statement **credibility**.

Oops! An admission of guilt: *The reluctance for negative or neutral results to be published in scientific or medical journals continues to bias research and encourage the proliferation of false medical truths, found an international team of researchers.*
LifeScientist.com, April 1, 2010

2) Science is **political**

a) Opposing positions are often **ridiculed** by scientists holding the prevailing view

b) Scientists can and do **censure** scientific findings by...

- ...Refusing to **fund**
- ...Denying **tenure**
- ...Refusing to **publish**

"Science proves nothing absolutely. On the most vital questions, it does not even produce evidence." Vannevar Bush, past Chairman of the Board of MIT

"It has become increasingly evident in our century that science is uncertain in its very nature.... Indeed one thing of which scientists can be quite certain is that they will not achieve a complete solution of any worthwhile problem." George Gaylord Simpson, Professor of Vertebrate Paleontology, Harvard

Two Case Studies of Scientific Prejudice:

The Steady State vs. The Big Bang. Georges Lemaitre, a Belgian Catholic priest, in 1927 proposed the theory that the universe is expanding. He was ridiculed by the established cosmologists, and his view often censured. None other than Einstein criticized him by saying that “*Your math is correct, but your physics is abominable.*” Fred Hoyle spoke derisively of Lemaitre, claiming that his view was motivated by his belief in God. Hoyle derisively spoke of Lemaitre’s expanding universe theory as the “*The Big Bang.*”

Warm-blooded vs. Coldblooded Dinosaurs

In 1964, the accepted belief was that dinosaurs were cold blooded. However, Dr. John Ostrom suggested that birds are the direct descendants of dinosaurs. One of Ostrom’s pupils, Robert Bakker, further argued that because of this, dinosaurs must be warm-blooded. Both were ridiculed; but yet, their opinions today are accepted by most paleontologists.

My point—Even scientists don’t like people frakkin’ with their holy grails and with their status quo. Scientists have proven that they are no better than those who tried to censure Galileo.

2. ...Christians making science out of our **theology**
 - a. The Bible is NOT a scientific **text book**. It is a book of faith.
 - It was not intended to explain **how** things came to be.
 - Faith asks **why** things came to be.
 - Faith helps to: define our **purpose**; illustrate the role of humanity to **love**; and, to face the **challenges** of life.
 - b. When did science and Christianity become seemingly antithetical?
 - 1) The confusion of Christians between primary/secondary **causes**.
 - a. Some Christians did not educate themselves as to the purpose of science.
 - Science began to explain the process by which natural phenomenon occurs
 - The scientific explanation was perceived as a **threat** to the need for God (that is certainly how secular humanists want Christians and the world to interpret it)
 - As the **God gap** closes (those natural phenomena which could not be explained by science) some believe that the need of and room for God in a secular world decreases
 - Some Christians responded by rejecting any science that did not **confirm** the poetic and faith descriptions of the Bible
 - b. However, this view is based on **ignorance**
 - The physical phenomenon that science explains is the **secondary** cause
 - There is still a **prime mover** that stands out from space and time, before the Big bang
 - Rather than making God smaller, science makes God larger and more awe-inspiring

- 2) Some Christians, like some scientists, suffer from confirmation bias
 - Some Christians treat the bible stories as though they are scientific **observations** rather than faith observations
 - Therefore, they treat the Bible as the beginning point for scientific **research**, and search for “evidence” to support a particular view
 - These faith perspectives parading as science are rightly criticized by scientists (many of the chief critics are Christians)

Two examples of Christians treating the Bible as a science text book: *Intelligent Design* and the *Young Earth Theory*. Both begin with a biblical perspective (although Intelligent Design proponents claim that they do not, all of the proponents of Intelligent Design are affiliated with the *Discovery Institute*, a think tank of the Christian Right wing), and attempt to collect data to support their perspective. Even if some of the concerns addressed by these theories are legitimate, the method of collecting and evaluating the data is blatantly biased. If we are to be critical of atheists who abuse science in this manner, we should rightly be critical of Christians who do the same. My question is: Why are we afraid to let science speak for God? If God really did create the universe, what we learn from science is not something of which we need to fear.

St. Augustine, who wrote in the 5th Century, said:

... even a non-Christian knows something about the earth, the heavens, and the other elements of this world... and this knowledge he holds to as being certain [is] from reason and experience. Now, it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these topics; and we should take all means to prevent such an embarrassing situation, in which people show up vast ignorance in a Christian and laugh it to scorn. The shame is not so much that an ignorant individual is derided, but that people outside the household of faith think our sacred writers held such opinions... Reckless and incompetent expounders of Holy Scripture bring untold trouble and sorrow on their wiser brethren when they are caught in one of their mischievous false opinions and are taken to task by those who are not bound by the authority of our sacred books. For then, to defend their utterly foolish and obviously untrue statements, they will try to call upon Holy Scripture for proof and even recite from memory many passages which they think support their position, although “they understand neither what they say nor the things about which they make assertion.” [1 Timothy 1.7] (from Ancient Christian Writers)

C. What science says about God.

1. We may be wired **biologically** to believe
 - Sam Harris argues that this is the result of our evolution that can be unlearned, and that this irrational belief in God can be directed into a secular/scientific spiritualism
 - Or, there is another explanation: it is placed there by God so that we desire to **seek** God.
2. Archeology **confirms** much of the history of the bible that was once discounted as mere myth
3. The expanding universe theory (the Big Bang) does have theological consequences:
 - There was a **beginning**
 - There is a prime mover that exists **outside** of the realm and limitations of our universe

About that Big Bang... Georges Lemaitre lived to see his theory supported by scientific proof. In 1965, Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson of Bell Telephone Laboratories, from observation of the microwave background radiation in the universe, validated the Big Bang Theory. There is a near consensus that this universe is 15 Billion years old and that matter is moving away from a central beginning point. In 1992, George Smoot, team leader of COBE, (NASA's Cosmic Background Explorer) said of COBE's findings which pinpointed the beginning of the universe, *"It's like looking at God."* Frederick Burnham, a science historian, said, *"These findings, now available, make the idea that God created the universe a more respectable hypothesis today than at any time in the last 100 years."* If the beginning of time coincides with a cosmological event that took place 15 Billion years ago, then there is a prime mover for which science cannot account: i.e.—God. This would indicate that God is transcendent and operates outside of the boundaries of this universe, and is not contained by this universe. However, Stephen Hawkins announced recently that due to his discoveries about the nature of black holes, he has concluded that the beginning of the universe does not need to be understood as the work of God. *"...there would be no singularities at which the laws of science broke down and no edge of space-time at which one would have to appeal to God or some new law to set the boundary conditions for space-time . . . The universe would be completely self-contained and not affected by anything outside itself. It would neither be created nor destroyed. It would just BE . . . What place, then, for a creator?"*

While most agree with the scientific consensus of the Big Bang Theory, though not necessarily their theological implications, there are some respected scientists who disagree with the theory itself. In particular, Jeffery Burbidge of UC at San Diego believes that the Big Bang is just a biblical theory masquerading as science. Burbidge said, sarcastically, that these findings come from the "first church of Christ of the Big Bang." Burbidge believes that those who subscribe to the Big Bang do so because of "confirmation bias": they see what they want to see, and they want to see God. Burbidge still sees the universe through the lens of the Steady State Theory: we live in a universe that goes through predictable and regular cycles of collapsing and rebirth, a view he claims supports the view of Hinduism, which would, in turn, disprove Christian theology.

4. Philosophically speaking, what is more palatable: eternally existing **matter** without beginning or end; or, an eternally existing **God**? Since matter cannot be created out of nothing, something prior to the Big Bang, outside of the realm of this universe, exists. Theists and non-theists both agree on this. Whether that thing that pre-existed is God or another universe is a matter of debate. Both views seem to suffer from the same philosophical weakness: something has existed eternally. I'm inclined to believe that the eternal non-existence of matter is more palatable than either option; however, matter does exist. Therefore, we are left with choosing an eternal God, or the eternal existence of matter and its derivatives in another dimension or universe prior to the big bang.
5. **History** teaches that Christianity has been the prime force in science, technology, and human advancement, despite what atheists claim:

Kenneth Scott LaTourette, Sterling Professor at Yale University, wrote, *"Across the centuries Christianity has been the means of reducing more languages to writing than have all other factors combined. It has created more schools, more theories of education, and more systems than has any other one force. More than any other power in history it has impelled men to fight suffering, whether that suffering has come from disease, war or natural disasters. It has built thousands of hospitals, inspired the emergence of the nursing and medical professions, and furthered movement for public health and the relief and prevention of famine. Although explorations and conquests which were in part its outgrowth led to the enslavement of Africans for the plantations of the Americas, men and women whose consciences were awakened by Christianity and whose wills it nerved brought about the abolition of slavery (in England and America). Men and women similarly moved and sustained wrote into the laws of Spain and Portugal provisions to alleviate the ruthless exploitation of the Indians of the New World."*