

Science & Religion: Friends or Foes?

NACTA Annual Conference 2013*

Four Current Paradigms: Opportunity for Students to Practice Integrated Thinking.

- Conflict – reason vs faith, fact vs feeling, empiricism vs superstition
- Contrast – they ask different questions: *how* vs *why*?
- Contact – areas of agreement, reason & passion are complementary (Darwin)
- Confirmation – whenever they disagree, one/both must be wrong, ultimate Truth

Nature of Truth: Scientific Method (Verification, Falsification) vs Revelation. Agriculture students need to understand that there are different types of truth, including agrarian philosophy, poetry, music, sensual, spiritual, historical, tradition, natural law, *et al.*

Understanding of Science: Modern science is based on the non-provable assumption that the earth/cosmos is rational, orderly, predictable; challenged today by Chaos & Complexity Theories and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle (behavior of electrons).

Understanding of Scripture: Fundamental Literalism vs Scholarly Exegetics & Hermeneutics. Meaning of Biblical Inerrancy -- the Salvific Word of God in the contextual words of humans.

Framing the Questions: "Creation vs Evolution?" = false dichotomy; *Creation ex Nihilo* => Big Bang? Real Issue: One's Image of God - Trustworthy or Magician?

Evolution: Micro vs Macro, Punctuated Equilibrium vs Phyletic Gradualism, Why would God allow Extinction (rejected by Thomas Jefferson)?

Intelligent Design (ID): Two Schools of Thought.

- Extraordinary - Irreducible Complexity (M. Behe), "God of the Gaps" Theory, Miracles unexplainable by science; implies that as science advances ... evidence of God retreats.
- Ordinary – Science as Revelation (K. Miller, J. Haught, F. Collins, S. Hawking), everyday manifestations of divine activity, beauty, and order, including science.

Nature of Evil: Cosmic Contingency (Randomness/Chance) => Free Will, Altruism (is there ever such a pure motive?) Deism (detach creator God) vs Theism (involved personal God) - having faith in God's protection vs God's love.

Teleology (Purpose): Inevitable Journey to Consciousness? Many Examples ...

- Quantum Mechanics: Ratio of Mass of Electrons/Protons => Helium in Initial Stellar Furnace => Heavy Elements (Carbon, Nitrogen, Oxygen) => Life
- Astrophysics: # of Stars (10^{22}) => Keeps Universe from Collapsing or Dissipating

Abrahamic God of Novelty & Surprise?

- Chaos Theory – Small Events => Big Impacts (Butterfly Effect)
- Complexity – Ecosystem Disturbance => Higher Levels of Stasis, Awareness
- Proper Response – Hebrew Notion of Apophatic Wonder & Silence

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