

Editorial: Reason and/or Religion

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Religious Indifference and Lived Atheism:
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Editorial

Reason and/or Religion

Religious people facing life crises rely on emotion-regulation strategies that psychologists also use, a new study finds. They look for positive ways of thinking about hardship, a practice known to psychologists as ‘cognitive reappraisal.’ They also tend to have confidence in their ability to cope with difficulty, a trait called ‘coping self-efficacy.’ Both have been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression, reports a study by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (2021).

”It appears that religious people are making use of some of the same tools that psychologists have systematically identified as effective in increasing well-being and protecting against distress,” said Florin Dolcos, a professor of psychology, who led the study with psychology professor Sanda Dolcos and graduate student Kelly Hohl. “This suggests that science and religion are on the same page when it comes to coping with hardship,” he said.

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Earlier studies showed that religious people use a coping mechanism that closely aligns with cognitive reappraisal by psychologists.

“For example, when somebody dies, a religious person may say, ‘OK, now they are with God,’ while someone who isn’t religious may say, ‘Well, at least they are not suffering anymore,’” Florin Dolcos said. In both cases, the individual finds comfort in framing the situation in a more positive light.

To determine if religious people rely on – and benefit from – reappraisal as an emotion-regulation strategy, the researchers recruited 203 participants with no clinical diagnoses of depression or anxiety. Fifty-seven of the study subjects also answered questions about their level of religiosity or spirituality.

The researchers asked them about their coping styles. “So, for religious coping, we asked if they try to find comfort in their religious or spiritual beliefs,” Hohl said. “We asked them how often they reappraise negative situations to find a more positive way of framing them or whether they suppress their emotions.”

The researchers also evaluated participants’ confidence in their ability to cope and asked them questions designed to measure their symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Hohl was looking for correlations between coping strategies, religious or nonreligious attitudes and practices, and levels of distress. She also conducted a mediation analysis to determine which practices specifically influenced outcomes like depression or anxiety.

“If we are just looking at the relationship between religious coping and lower anxiety, we don’t know exactly which

strategy is facilitating this positive outcome,” Sanda Dolcos said. “The mediation analysis helps us determine whether religious people are using reappraisal as an effective way of lessening their distress.”

The sought to find out individual’s confidence in their ability to handle crises – another factor that psychological studies have found is associated with less depression and anxiety – “facilitates the protecting role of religious coping against such symptoms of emotional distress,” Sanda Dolcos said. “We found that if people are using religious coping, then they also have decreased anxiety or depressive symptoms.”

Cognitive reappraisal and coping self-efficacy were contributing to those decreased symptoms of distress, she concluded. Hohl said. “It should also speak to clergy members or church leaders who can promote this kind of reappraisal to help parishioners make sense of the world and increase their resilience against stress.” “I hope this is an example of where religion and science can work together to maintain and increase well-being,” Florin Dolcos added.

Such collaboration between science and religion has been beneficial to both. So, all the articles in this volume deal with themes related to science and theology, reason and religion. It is hoped that a mature encounter will enhance the meaning and worth of human beings, especially during this pandemic.

The Editor

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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. (2021, January 8). Religion, psychology share methods for reducing distress, study finds. Science Daily. Retrieved April 24, 2021 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/01/210108111046.htm



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Science and Religion Reconciled: A Close Look at God of Evolution

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Abstract: The article is based on the book, *Thank God for Evolution*, penned by Michael Dowd. The article explores how science and religion are interdependent. Unlike the former times when religion totally rejected science and later science rejected religion, now is the high time for science and religion to reconcile. They are indispensable and are complementary to one another. This book is not exclusively about Science neither Religion. However, it is a blending of both and also it transcends both.

The article excerpts the idea from the book that evolution is not a one-time event but rather a process through natural selection. In short, the world we live in was not created just in six days but it has a story of 13.7 billion years. The article tries to extend the same idea. However, looking through the lens of Dowd's present book, the article contends that this evolution is caused by God that we worship and thus, there is nothing contrary to religion. Science in this way comes to meet religion and they reconcile.

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Keywords: Science meets religion, Big History is a creation story, Evolution is not a one-time event, God as personification of reality, Evolution as blessing, Humans as evolution.

“We didn’t come into the world we grew out of it.”
-Michael Dowd (2016)

Introduction

The book, *Thank God for Evolution: How the Marriage of Science and Religion Will Transform Your Life and Our World*, “is intended for the broadest of audiences,” (Dowd, 2007). The book starts with the “Author’s Promise.” He has been “as a once traditionally religious and now exuberantly born-again evolutionary evangelist. From gothic cathedrals to cosy living rooms, from gatherings of evangelical students to meetings of campus freethinkers, from university departments of religion and the social sciences to high school classrooms and home-schooling events, from rousing praise worship to quiet prayer circles, from local talk radio to National Public Radio: in all these venues and more, I have found diverse peoples hungering for the ideas you will encounter here. No matter who you are, and no matter what your beliefs or background, I promise that reading this book will expand the horizon of what you see as possible for yourself, for your relationships, and for our world” (Dowd, 2007). It is very interesting to note that the author assures that the book is for both Creationists and Rationalists, Scientists and Religious, believers and non-believers alike. This book puts an end to the debate between science and religion. The depiction of ‘Jesus fish’ and ‘Darwin fish’ meeting, on Dowd’s view would usher different opinions. While some could nod their head in agreement others would find it disappointing. Those who are open-minded will find this book to be not only thought-provoking but life-changing.

Dowd's Promises

In the beginning of the book itself, Dowd makes some encouraging promises (Dowd, 2016:1ff). To those of you who have rejected evolution... I promise that the secular version of evolution you have rejected is not the version of evolution presented on these pages.

To those who accept evolution begrudgingly (like death and taxes) ... I promise that this book will provide you with an experience of science, and evolution specifically, that will fire your imagination, touch your heart, and lead you to a place of deep gratitude, awe, and reverence.

To devoutly committed Christians... Whether you are Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, Anabaptist, or New Thought, and whether you consider yourself conservative, moderate, or liberal, my promise to you is that the God-glorifying evolutionary perspective offered here will enrich your faith and inspire you in ways that believers in the past could only dream of.

To Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, and other non-Christians... I promise that it will be easy to apply most of what you find here to your own life and faith.

To agnostics, humanists, atheists, and freethinkers... I promise that you will find nothing here that you cannot wholeheartedly embrace as being grounded in a rationally sound, mainstream scientific understanding of the Universe.

To those who embrace an eclectic spirituality... I promise that this perspective will enrich your appreciation of the traditions and practices that nourish you most deeply while helping you find new excitement in each.

To those who aren't sure what they believe... I promise that this holy evolutionary understanding will not only help you make sense of the world; it will also provide a rock-solid moral and ethical foundation for a life of passion and deep meaning during inevitable difficulties.

To those who struggle with addiction or co-dependence... I promise that if you say "Yes!" to the path of evolutionary integrity offered in this book, you will gain a profound understanding of yourself and others.

Finally, he addresses those with loved ones who have been unable to embrace science because of their religious faith, and those with loved ones who have been unable to embrace religion because of their scientific worldview, I promise that sharing this book will make a difference in your relationship.

Highlights of the Book, *Thank God for Evolution*

Through this book, Dowd has convincingly demonstrated how science and religion truly are interdependent. The fact of evolution does not negate the reality of God but gives a much broader understanding of God, or Ultimate reality. Religion, on the other hand, though necessarily reinterpreted through the new worldview provided by science provides the necessary moral framework that will enable us to fulfil our role as an integral part of reality. (Carlson 2020)

This book merges religion with science and claims that religious traditions and spirituality are fully compatible with the scientific evidence for evolution. Dowd opines that “Many devout religious believers have rejected evolution because the process has been depicted as random, meaningless, mechanistic and godless,” however he feels that many scientists are moving away from this earlier approach into what he calls “an emergent, developmental worldview.” (Dowd, 2008). He further writes that evolution is meaningful. By meaningful he does not mean teleological. He means that the story is inspirational and can be used much like a book of fables to teach morality. Although he talks about God a lot, what he means by God is quite different from the meaning used by a theistic evolutionist or even a personal-god pantheist. He says, “God is not a person; God is a mythic personification of reality. If we miss this, we miss everything.” (Dowd, 2008: 4) A personification is a metaphor created by an author. In other words, although God, the non-personal real universe created humanity (not teleologically out of clay but through a natural process of evolution via natural selection), it is humanity created God, the person. This usage of the word God is useful because it allows us to create a relationship with something rather than someone. A relationship we desperately need if we are to motivate ourselves to solve problems in our relationships with things like the climate.

Though the book is singly penned by Dowd himself, his wife Connie Barlow certainly deserves a special mention for the best-supporting editor. Their marriage with its ups and downs are part of the story told in the book and thus the sub-titled of the book runs, “*How the Marriage of Science and Religion Will Transform Your Life and Our*

World.” Michael Dowd is himself a big presence in the book, frequently referring to his own life and struggles.

The genre of the book is rather a blender – mixing all of the inspirational science writings, theological reflections, Biblical interpretations and self-improvement. Originally based on “the Greatest Story ever told,” lacks a strong narrative structure, which frankly makes the book easier to pick up, skip-around, put-down and pick-up again. But that is how this book is the best-read and used. It is a very useful book for adult religious education, youth ministries, and even for intellectual enhancement. Of course, there is no adoption at the university level, but frankly, in the pews, this book may be of greater need. However, it does not mean that the others like scientists and nonbelievers might benefit from reading something completely out-of-the-box.

Dowd has succeeded in attracting glowing endorsements for the book from a huge variety of scientists, religious leaders, and authors. “This is accomplished in part by the many generous citations included from various authors. The book is valuable simply as a collection of quotes on evolution, science, and religion (though regrettably full citations are not included). Dowd makes abundant use of Thomas Berry, both in his prose and in his citations. Second, to Berry is the work of David Sloan Wilson. He has wrapped himself in the words and wisdom of many, many others, and provided a who-is-who directory in the back, which I found myself frequently consulting. Seven chapters into the book, I had read so many quotes from so many authors that I was beginning to feel a little left out and overlooked, but then was pleased to discover my own words and name staring back at me on page 127. Thanks, Michael!” While Dowd affirms multiple religious traditions, he engages the Christian idiom in depth, offering creative evolutionary reinterpretations of concepts like Original Sin,

Resurrection, and Personal Salvation. He refers to these as “REALizing” religion, moving religious doctrines of the “Night Language” of dreams to the “Day Language” of science, from the “Private Revelations” of scriptures to the “Public Revelations” of science” (Grassie, 2008).

In Part III of the book: “The Gospel According to Evolution,” he uses evolutionary brain science and evolutionary psychology to reconstruct the doctrine of “Original Sin”. He notes the evolution of the human brain with its “Lizard Legacy” in the cerebellum and brainstem, its “Furry Li'l Mammal” in the limbic systems, its “Monkey Mind” in the neo-cortex, and its “Higher Porpoise!” in the prefrontal cortex. It is the interplay of these evolved structures of our brain that inevitably lead to sin. Here he does not redefine sin and he is not conspicuous when he speaks of what really is a “sin”. Dowd dwells on the story of Rev. Ted Haggard, President of the National Association of Evangelicals, who was ousted as a closet homosexual in November 2006, as well as several other religious and political leaders who had been tempted by their Lizard Legacy and Furry Li'l Mammal. Dowd writes:

So long as religious and political leaders continue to ignore our evolutionary heritage, and thus do not put in place structures of internal and external support that can withstand the high dosages of testosterone that high status and power necessarily confer, then there will be no hope for a less calamitous future.

Understanding the unwanted drives within us as having served our ancestors for millions of years is far more empowering than imagining that we are the way we are because of inner demons, or because the world's first woman and man ate a forbidden apple a few thousand years ago. The path to freedom lies in appreciating one's

instincts while taking steps to channel these powerful energies in ways that will serve our higher purposes (Dowd, 2007, 148).

What follows in the next few chapters is the self-improvement section of the book, as Dowd develops his “Evolutionary Spirituality”. There are sections on “Taming Our Monkey Mind” and “Evolving Our Most Intimate Relationships” (Grassie, 2008).

Points to Take Home

The first thing to keep in mind is the author Michael Dowd – a Christian scientist and is at his best as an Evolutionist rather than as a Creationist. He is a Christian Reverend who believes in evolution as something that took place over a billion years (13.7byrs) and not made just in six days (as recorded in the Christian Religious scripture) and has just five thousand years of its existence. He believes that creation is not one event but through a process of evolution. Married to a staunch atheist they both travel across North America. “Since April 2002, Connie and I have been full-time “evolutionary evangelists.” We live permanently on the road, offering a spiritually nourishing view of evolution throughout North America. In the tradition of travelling preachers, we gave up our worldly possessions, left our home, and now carry everything we need in our van.” (Dowd, 2008: XVIII)

On their van are a Jesus fish and Darwin fish kissing. “When we launched our ministry, we chose to display on our van both a Jesus fish and a Darwin fish—kissing. Many passers-by flash a smile when they see it, although disapproving responses are not uncommon. A retired biology professor Lawrence, in Kansas, took one look at the decals and laughed, “Oh great! Now you piss everyone off!” (Dowd, 2008: XVIII) It is

symbolic of Religion and Science embracing. Like in the middle age they are no longer watertight compartment but they are both complementary and supplementary in his own words, “science and religion can be mutually enriching” (Dowd, 2008: 6). But according to him, many devout religious believers have rejected evolution because the process has been depicted as random, meaningless, mechanistic, and Godless. However, this is something to rethink about for “Evolution does not diminish religion; it expands its meaning and value globally.” (Dowd, 2004: 4)

He claims himself to be the ‘Evolutionary Theologian’ or a ‘Big History Evangelist’ and his message to the world is to have a right relationship with reality. The path that he is particularly passionate about is as he says, “Sacred Realism” or “Factual Faith.” His creed is simple:

Reality is my God,
Evidence is my Scripture,
Big History is my creation story,
Ecology is my Theology,
Integrity is my Salvation and
Ensuring a just healthy future is my mission (Dowd, 2018)

When Dowd talks about God he does not talk of God as the Christians would understand Him. He talks of God as Something rather than Someone. God, for Dowd, is not a person; but God is a mythic personification of reality (Dowd, 2008) Just like Poseidon was a personification of the mighty powerful ocean and Gaia is not a spirit of the earth but the personification of the earth by the Greeks likewise the Holy Spirit of the Hebrew Bible is the personification of breath and wind. When we die the spirit leaves and that is – the breath stops.

The book, *Thank God for Evolution: How the Marriage of Science and Religion Will Transform Your Life and Our World* seems more like a collection of quotes on Science and Religion. He has given five pages of references from where he collected ideas to bring this book alive. One can be informative while reading this book but when one reads the primary sources he has relied on; the book would seem like a selected quote compiled into another book form.

Conclusion

This book starts with the author's promises and I do not see one promise without fulfilling it. The book is a good read for people from all walks of life it is meant for all audiences across the theological and philosophical spectrum. Scientists, religious (from all religions), believers, non-believers, atheists, humanists and sceptics every one could enjoy reading the book both for pleasure and information. It's very important to note that science and religion are not rivals, neither separated like different compartments of a train but they are complementary. This book celebrates this coming together of science and religion – more like a marriage between science and religion. Just like the marriage of Michael Dowd a Christian-evolutionist with Connie a staunch atheist.

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A Daring Approach in Bridging God and Darwin by Francis S. Collins in *The Language of God*

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Abstract: Francis Collins, in his book *The Language of God* bravely addresses the issues of conflict between scientific observations and religious claims. As a dedicated Christian, who had faced challenges to his Christian faith, he emerges as a strong advocate for the creation of the universe by a personal God. Collins echoes the common understanding that the Moral Law, along with the development of language, awareness of self, and the ability to imagine the future makes us, human beings stand unique as the pinnacle of God's creation created in His own image. The purpose of this review is to analyse if Collins had succeeded in his endeavour of bringing a harmonization between science and faith. Though Collins makes a genuine effort in synthesizing many conflicting issues, he falls short in providing a convincing theory that would eventually harmonize science and faith.

Keywords: Harmonizing science and faith, Theistic Evolution (BioLogos), Darwin's Origin of Species, Moral Law, Big Bang.

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Introduction

Francis S. Collins, Director of the Human Genome Project, a physician, geneticist, evolutionist, humanitarian, and as witnessed in his *The Language of God* is a commanding opponent of intelligent design theory. Collins is also a staunch born-again Christian. His most recent work is the act of bringing together in the public's eye, a harmony between William Paley and Charles Darwin; a scholarly effort to bring about harmonization between faith and science. Collins' work is an outstanding deconstruction of intelligent design theory and also a reverent version of evolution as the expression of God's plan. *The Language of God* is, therefore, the latest account on "theistic evolution." In the next section, we would find Collins confirming the evidence for Evolution and supporting Darwinian Theory to a certain extent.

Proof of Evolution

The book deals with "creation science," or "intelligent design." It includes a clear, honest summary of the latest evidence for evolution, which also includes human evolution, exactly as mainstream scientific study provides it. These chapters are filled with fascinating charts and simple diagrams that confirm origin with modification. For instance, there is a chart that reveals the probability of finding a similar DNA sequence in the genome of other organisms in connection with the human DNA. The statistics are fascinating, especially if one starts with a randomly chosen, non-coding stretch of human DNA. In Chimpanzee DNA, the probability of a match is 98 per cent. 52 per cent with a dog, 40 per cent with rat, 4 per cent with chicken, and zero with the roundworm. One can never find a more convincing demonstration of relatedness and

origin than this. According to Collins, such data make sense only in light of evolution (Collins, 2006: 127).

Collins, in the second half of his book, reconciles science and faith by exploring three options; atheism/agnosticism, Intelligent Design, and theistic evolution

The evidence of God is present in our longing to do the right thing.

(BioLogos). The primary argument of Collins in the chapter on atheism and agnosticism is against the claim of Richard Dawkins that a study of evolution and natural origins inherently leads one to atheism. He is against the idea that methodological naturalism necessitates philosophical naturalism. Collins gives a reasonable conclusion that it would be impossible to gain insight into the natural and the supernatural if they inhabit separate realms (Collins, 2006: 6). The powerful tool that Collins uses as a defence against Darwinian Evolutionary Theory is the universal law of Morality; the sense of right and wrong.

Moral Law: The Cornerstone of *The Language of God*

This distinguished scientist is an admirer and student of C. S. Lewis, the remarkable Oxford literary professor, essayist, and novelist who dedicated the latter part of his life to Christianity. Lewis was looked upon as one of the most talented of the 20th-century Christian apologists and as a brilliant writer. But he made no outstanding impression on theology or philosophy. The view that human life differs from animals in its universal moral law; the sense of right and wrong and an altruistic tendency towards all life forms is an idea that Collins borrows heavily from C. S. Lewis. For him, it is an impossibility to find an explanation from an evolutionary perspective as he explains that it must have been programmed by God. Other arguments

are minor in comparison. According to him, moral law is beyond biology and history. Though the author is well aware of disciplines such as evolutionary psychology, which mainly deals with altruism, a tendency or virtue not just present in human beings, he merely brushes them aside as “sociobiology.” The evidence of God is present in our longing to do the right thing. If a multitude of believers are convinced that God wants them to annihilate their fellow humans, that’s just their fault. Human behaviour has evolved, similar in the case of animal behaviour; but Collins makes an exception with morality (Collins, 2006: 200-201). Morality becomes his powerful tool to engage in battle against the Intelligent Design Theory of Darwin and his followers.

Intelligent Design Debate

Collins in his historically significant work on the Human Genome Project has mapped the genetic language, DNA, in which he is certain that God directs his living creation. The concept of genetic information is impressively taught to the lay public by the author. The proof for Darwin’s understanding of the evolutionary mechanism, Collins explains, may be observed in strange, nonfunctioning features of the genetic code. According to Darwin’s theory, there was no transcendent intelligence to guide this mechanism, which raises the question among believers, of what need was there of a God to command his creation. Obviously, this burns down to the Intelligent Design debate. For Darwin, an unguided and purely material mechanism of natural selection was advocated, which operated on random genetic variation. According to Intelligent Design, there is no positive evidence that this mechanism was guided. To summarize, the coding or the

software in the DNA just happened on its own (Collins, 2006: 100-107).

Argument from Personal Incredulity

Collins rejects the argument of Intelligent Design as an “argument from personal incredulity.” According to him, it is difficult to comprehend how such a mechanism, as propounded by Darwin could have produced certain aspects of

Collins rejects the argument of Intelligent Design as an “argument from personal incredulity.”

biological information. This calls forth for an accomplished Designer to have done it. Some argue that Collins has misrepresented Intelligent Design, and it appears that he has not followed the latest scientific trends on the subject. A common misconception among the general public is that Darwin’s theory does not deny God as the creator. Evolution was programmed, just like a clock by the clockmaker which negates the idea of being guided all along. The problem with such thinking is that it comes into conflict with the mainstream Darwinian Theory. Collins cleverly moves away from this approach of proving God’s guidance in his creation. His focus shifts from the external to the internal; the presence of love in our hearts. This view is akin to the view of the famous philosopher Immanuel Kant, whose popular phrase is that he is filled with awe and wonder “the longer and more earnestly I reflect on them: the starry heavens without and the Moral Law within” (Goodreads, 2018). But this places Collins in the exact same situation which he rejects while arguing about the “Intelligent Design,” which is the “argument from personal incredulity” (Collins, 2006: 186).

Collins' take on "Moral Law" could be weighed on the same scales. The demonstration of God's being and caring; his favourite objection against "argument from personal incredulity" suffers under its own weight. For him, the source of ethics, charity, and altruistic attitude can come only from God. The DNA sequence is inadequate to offer explanations to the human characteristics, such as the knowledge of the Moral Law and the Universal search for God. According to the Darwinian Evolutionary Theory, particularly in *The Descent of Man*, Darwin propounded evolutionary progress to altruism. Collins' finds satisfaction in his clever way of bridging Darwin's evolutionary process with the Christian belief by stating that God is beyond the confines of time. Therefore, the unpredictability of evolution is, in fact, predictable from the perspective of God.

Collins' Questions to his Readers

At the end of the book, Collins addresses specific questions to readers who are theists and atheists. He formulates five questions as to why their acceptance is difficult:

1. If the hypocritical behaviour of those who profess belief turned one down? (Collins, 2006: 231)
2. If philosophical questions such as the problem of evil are a hindrance to one's faith? (Collins, 2006: 231)
3. Is it due to the lack of answers owing to the insufficiency of scientific tools that could explain the mystery of existence? (Collins, 2006: 232)

4. Does recognizing the possibility of God places one in a situation that might make one rethink one's life project and actions? (Collins, 2006: 232)
5. Ever considered thinking about the worldview from a spiritual perspective? (Collins, 2006: 232)

Collins is a remarkable man and a shrewd writer, but it is easy to sense where he is arriving at with these questions. The main purpose for him to write *The Language of God* was to make any sceptical reader who approached the book with one of these questions now begin their conversion to Christianity. Now coming to his questions, I would like to answer the first three, as for the rest, they are more subjective and depends on one's attitude and orientation towards life and I leave it to the readers of this review to formulate their own answers.

The Challenging Core Concepts

Coming to the first question, he is addressing times when religion has caused more harm than good or when Christians have not been what they profess to be. In his book, he describes human beings as rusty containers who simply carry the pure holy water of God, and warns not to evaluate Christ solely based upon the impressions of his followers. But, that is not the case everywhere. It may also be due to certain core values within the Christian Faith such as the Virgin Birth, the doctrine of Consubstantiation, Resurrection, the Second Coming of Christ, etc., which may not have sound appeal to reason and at times even appear incorrigible; like eating the body and blood of another person that sounds cannibalistic; or the events in the Bible that side too much on the realm of supernatural and do not follow the laws of physical nature like rising from the dead and walking on water.

The Problem of Evil

When talking about the problem of evil, he originally ascribes it to God, who is perfect; a God who created human beings who incurred imperfection through sin and became the cause of evil by his own volition. Unfortunately, Collin's handling of the problem of evil is inadequate. His theodicy is elementary. He is of the opinion that it would not be interesting if God were to reveal himself too clearly to human beings. Because it would result in a uniform belief. According to Collins, the necessity of evolution is the cause of evil, like crest and trough, constructive and destructive patterns change over time with necessary failures along the path. That contradicts God's omnipotence and goodness, which doesn't seem to be a matter of concern. One finds here a theistic evolution, but not a weak version with an uninvolved or a remote God, but on the contrary, the strongest version.

The Inadequacy of Science

Coming to the third question, Collins makes a clear distinction between the questions of "what" and "why". Science, according to him can answer the "what" questions but it struggles to answer the questions of "why" such as, why only earth? Why am I here? Scientists in the 19th century presumed that the universe was eternal. But this view changed with the rise of the Big Bang theory in the 20th century. The cosmologists of today commonly agree that the Universe had a beginning followed by a period of rapid expansion. In line with many other contemporaries, Collins offers the conclusion that behind the event of Big Bang and fine-tuning there is an intelligent cause. He employs the method of "Inference to the Best

Explanation” (IBE). He asks which offers the best explanation for the life forms to exist on earth despite there are billions of planets and even multiple universes with various constants exist. This cannot be explained as a matter of chance as the odds are against it, and moreover, the majority of celestial bodies are unobservable with the present technology (Collins, 2006: 76). He uses Ockham’s razor to deduce design; from which, the scientific world from further exploration and analysis would establish that the physical constants that so far are determined by experimental observation may not be accurate in their probable numerical value. Therefore, there may be something more profound that may not be known at the moment with the given resources. Science, according to Collins is always on the verge of change. So, the argument for design is not emphasized to merely fill a gap in our knowledge, but rather, based upon the present evidence. Intelligence could be the best explanation available according to him (Collins, 2006: 204-210).

The unconceivable machination of the physical laws of the universe, at the moment of the Big Bang, against incredible odds is a signpost for us to believe that we were pre-conceived ideas in the mind of God. Collins quotes Stephen Hawking, “It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just this way, except as the act of a God who intended to create us” (Hawking, 2020). Collins’ take on the Big Bang is that there is no possibility that nature could have created itself.

Accepting science and religion is the most philosophical and fascinating way of penetrating into “the mystery of mysteries,” for Darwin, the puzzle of the origin of species.

Conclusion

Harmonization is a strong and continuing human need but it has not happened so far. Science, like any other branch of knowledge, is prone to changes, some aspects gradually, some instantly. Nothing could be right about the physical reality of things recorded or written some millennia or centuries before, then, or now. The same applies to the way of things right now, which may be proved absolutely wrong within the turn of this century or even sooner. *The Language of God*, intrigues and challenges anyone who has doubts about whether if, Darwinism may reasonably be encompassed alongside biblical faith. Collins, though offers an attractive, passionate, and sincere defence of his own Christian faith, argues that there is no need to choose between Science and God. Accepting them both, according to him, is the most philosophical and fascinating way of penetrating into “the mystery of mysteries,” for Darwin, the puzzle of the origin of species.

The book’s subtitle “Evidence for Belief,” suggests that there must be a mistake. Maybe it was meant to read, as certainly it should have been, “Evidence of Belief,” for that is what it culminates into. If we start the book with the hope that Collins would teach us something new about the harmony of the scientific facts of human life with the spiritual; then our hope is not

The students and readers interested in this topic owe their debt of gratitude to Francis Collins for deepening our thinking about issues that get easily brushed aside. One thing is certain, it is not possible to harmonize fully the paradoxes of theology and science in a book review, nor perhaps in any book that has yet to be written.

fully satisfied. Surprisingly, Collins did not try any other approach to harmonize science and faith, an approach more promising. Intelligent Design could be dismissed but with a rich variety of Theological and philosophical approaches. Collins could have offered a perspective that totally negates the random and unguided evolutionary approach while still endorsing Darwinism. If a meaningful result is the result of a meaningless process then it is highly likely that the meaninglessness was a mere camouflage for the goal which was already envisioned at the beginning of the entire process. The end justifies the means, the end result sheds light on the complete process.

It is doubtful whether it would be possible to reconcile science and faith without striking a compromise. But, the students and readers interested in this topic owe their debt of gratitude to Francis Collins for deepening our thinking about issues that get easily brushed aside. One thing is certain, it is not possible to harmonize fully the paradoxes of theology and science in a book review, nor perhaps in any book that has yet to be written.

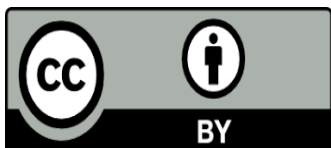
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Science and/vs Religion: What Do Scientists Really Think about Religion?

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Abstract: Science vs Religion by Elaine Ecklund demonstrates that we must move beyond general statements, to a nuanced view of questions around religious attitudes towards science... Science Vs Religion; what Scientists Really think? Explores the religious views of some of the Popular scientists from U.S. research universities. And it is recommended as a very important book for those who pursue science and religion. Elaine presents the true findings of what Scientists think and, moreover, their views about Religion. We come across some of the interesting findings, portraying their religious faith and how few scientists keep the balance between their faith lives and work. Seeking creative ways to work with the tensions between science and faith outside the society.

Keywords: Science and Religion, Elaine Howard Ecklund, Galileo, Arik, faith-based thinking.

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Introduction

Science vs Religion is allegedly a century-old debate. Many argue even today there is an existence of an irreconcilable difference between science and religion. But we have scientists from a religious background and non-religious background. Therefore, we can't say that they live in conflict with their religion or that they avoided religion because it conflicts with their science. Perhaps, we need to ask them why they walk the paths they do. In her book, Ecklund reveals how scientists-believer sceptic alike- are struggling to engage the increasing number of religious students in their classrooms and argues that many scientists are searching for boundary pioneer to cross the picket lines separating religion. Perhaps, this book is a dose of reality to the science and religion debates.

A Long History of the Conflict Paradigm

“Galileo, a father of modern science, insisted that the earth revolved around the Sun not the other way around, but according to the church, this contradicted the holy scripture.” (Machamer, 1998) The scientific findings did not conflict with religion, unfortunately, the people in charge did not agree. The idea that religion and science are necessarily in conflict has been institutionalized by some of the nation's elite universities. And the idea that science was oppressed by religion and would over time even replace religion was nicely encompassed in the title of White's (2009). landmark volume, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. Over the past hundred years, scholars have continued to find that scientists are generally less religious than other Americans,

pointing to this as proof that religion and Science remain in conflict.

The God Gene, embryonic stem cell research, teaching evolution in public schools the religion-science conflict narrative is up on us again, returning with a vengeance in the early twenty-first century. The debate propelled by current controversies depicts higher education in particular as the enemy of religion and the friend of science. And there is some evidence that the more educated individuals become less likely they are to be religious. Highly religious individuals especially those Christians who believe that the Bible must be taken literally, tend to have a more adversarial relationship with science, particularly evolutionary theory (Ecklund, 2010: 2). Increased knowledge of science does seem to suppress some traditional religious forms, just as Galileo's discovery forced a re-reading of the Old Testament's claim that the earth cannot be moved. Scientists need to do a better job of communicating the importance of science to religious people. And to the content that religion could be a resource to motivate people to study science in order, for instance to better care for God's creation, this resource should not be left untapped. If the public thinks that to be a successful scientist, you have to be either anti-religious or clueless about religion, this can only be the determinant of scientific progress and public funding. (Ecklund, 2010: 2). "Since, the dawn of the scientific revolution there have been religious challenges to science, and there will be more in the future. Scientists have usually taken a defensive posture in these threats, but they need to go the offensive. They can begin by examining themselves." (Ecklund, 2010: 23). This book puts scientists in a virtual conversation with one another. Looking inside their own lives and the lives of their peers to better understand their own collective forms of religion and spirituality and where these differ from and overlap with those Americans.

We depend too much on science and not enough on faith. And that scientific research these days doesn't pay enough attention to the moral values of society. The message of this book for Americans of faith is that even the most secular of scientists of ten struggle with the implications of their work for religion. Especially in that many of them look to religious communities for the moral education of their children or for guidance in ethical matters, moreover, there are scientists who share your faith and who work to maintain their traditions in the midst of the demands of their scientific career (Ecklund, 2010: 9).

The Voice of Faith

This topic examines the lives of scientists who do not have any religious beliefs, with a particular focus on their reasons for not being religious. To explain this better Elain brings a physicist named Arik. At the age of 13 itself, he was very drawn to scientists and their stories. He is an easy-going person, but when discussions come to religion, he becomes passionate, Arik truly believes that religion should not exist. Basically, he was raised Jewish and he abandoned Judaism in any format sense over what he views as its meaningless rituals and anti-intellectualism. He describes religion as a form of intellectual terrorism. And so, he has raised his children non-religiously. He remarks proudly that his children have been thoroughly and successfully indoctrinated to believe as he does, that belief in God a form of mental weakness (Ecklund, 2010: 13).

To Arik religion opposes science; it's a tool to wield power over those who are not intelligent enough to know better. He often applied the metaphor of a virus to describe religion or faith as a child, he was infected by religion or faith. "As a child, he was infected by religion, but now he is immune. He believes that this sort of view is shared by other

scientists, and he explains that we have this viral nature of faith-based thinking because parent infect their children and there is a new generation and they go on to infect more.” (Ecklund, 2010:13). In contrast, science holds almost a magical quality for Arik.

He and his colleagues view science as a dear product of human minds. He is furious that others do not understand the importance of basic science. For example, Arik does not see why mother Teresa got more attention than MRI machines and doctors; in his irritation, too many people believe in the power of prayer over the power of science. He assumed as science continues to make further advances in the pursuit of knowledge, they reasoned it is going to be harder and harder for religion to have peace in the society. It is clear that these scientists have a very particular notion of what constitutes science. Science is a fact, those who adhere to this unwavering conflict position hold religion under the lamp of what they see an empirical reality. In this light religion is vacant. However, today scientists have many reasons to reject Religion. And there are also scientists who maintain their faith irrespective of demanding careers. (Ecklund, 2010: 14)

From the research of Elaine, it is very clear that the majority of religious scientists were raised in homes with a faith tradition. And the survey shows that 50 per cent of those from a protestant tradition retained religious beliefs and practices of some type. Unsurprisingly those who said that religion was important in their family when growing up were less likely to say that they currently see no truth in religion, do not believe in God or do not attend religious services.

On the other hand, just because scientists were raised with faith and eventually retained faith does not mean that they went through their lives without experiencing a personal struggle between religion and science. There was a tremendous struggle

for those connected with faith and still had an interest in science. (Ecklund, 2010: 23). These struggles often brought scientists to a deeper understanding of how science and religion connected for them personally from here Elaine moves on to discuss what is religion? Elaine speaks of occasional public faith, regarding this there is controversy among religious scientists about how out spoken they should be about their faith. Some think that being open about faith practices and beliefs are paramount to what it means to be a practitioner of their tradition and Elaine shares about few scientists and about their faith. “She refers to a person called Jack who is a biologist in his late forties when she asked him about religion, he immediately referred to the Latin root word, as ‘that which keeps us together’.” (Ecklund, 2010:49). Jack thinks that being raised a catholic made him the person that he is, but became frustrated with some of the teachings of the church and went through a period he described as ‘very worldly’. Further, he explained that many of his beliefs are consistent with evangelicalism although he stressed that is not a fundamentalist and that his church would not really be called evangelical. (Ecklund, 2010:51). When Elaine asked Jacks about personal beliefs, he held, he replied, I ask myself, how should we live and that should be the guiding principles? I think Jesus Christ provided those even though Jack was a biologist he was open about his faith. Although we think that most other biologists would prefer not to talk about religion. Jack went on to say with a sense of humour some of my friends on the faculty actually try to persuade me against religion. They tried to put religion down and then to get me to renounce it. Realistically speaking today, we have scientists who hold the double-sided view. Ecklund, 2010: 53). Hence forth we shift our focus on how science and religion are being practised in universities.

No God on the Quad

Historian George Marsden, in his eloquently titled book ‘The Soul of the American University; From Protestant establishment to established nonbelief’, (Marsden, 1996: 97). argues that the modern American university began with a soul that sprang from religious roots and was later trammelled by movements to secularize the academy. Over time, Americans began to see science less as a cultural threat and more as a saviour, with the ability to ensure the place and prominence of the United States on the world stage. The connection between religion and science was a central concern of what sociologist Christian Smith calls the movement to secularize the academy. Smith has argued that this institutional shift in the model of the modern university is a shift, in other words, in what universities ought to become complete with funds and institutional leaders who wanted to bring about more secular education. (Ecklund, 2010: 87-88). The efforts of professional associations (such as the American Sociological Association) and benefactors were a huge success; religious concerns were redefined as irrelevant to the educational mission of universities. As a result, religion was pushed to the outskirts of university life, to take place only in chapels, divinity schools, religious studies departments, and specialized campus ministries. After years of researching university and college ministries across the country, they find strong evidence that indicates a new story needs to be told about religion in the academy, one that recognizes the resilience of the study of the sacred in a secular institution. And foundations such as the Teagle Foundation have committed resources to the specialized mission of developing models of character in higher education. Princeton University like Duke and Emory might be more open to integrating religion into the curriculum because they are located in the South, amid a populace that is more likely to be religious. (Ecklund, 2010: 88-90).

a. Models of University Life

This lack of commitment among scientists in talking about and responding to religion on their particular campuses come for both religious and non-religious faculty from particular models of the university. When a university is seen as a place that should be religion-free, the result is an institutional separation of religion from the rest of intellectual life and, in some cases, actual suppression of religion. For him, to accept religion in university life would be to support opinions that he sees as dangerous to the mission of science in the university. In this topic and the next, we are moving beyond scientists' abstract views about religion and science to discover what place they think religion ought to occupy on their particular campuses as well as in universities more generally. This topic delves into the views of scientists who think that religion is irrelevant or even dangerous to the mission of science within universities. (Ecklund, 2010: 90-91). Before we explore the activities of scientists are right or wrong it is worth studying why religion is seen as a threat?

b. Why is Religion is Seen as a Threat?

Scientists come to their views about religion in the midst of what they see as religiously based opposition to their freedom of speech movements led by David Horowitz and others who argue that universities are overrun by liberal academics' hostility to religion. Given the decrease in public funding for science, the need for greater science literacy among the general public, a growing fear that faculty will be attacked if they appear to malign religion, and recent court cases that threaten to give religion more place in public life, scientists feel they have good reasons for thinking that religion might threaten science education.

And since elite universities are the places that train the next generation of top scientists, it makes sense to some scientists that they should do all they can to constrain or marginalize religion. Increased discussion about religion at major U.S. research universities is seen in an increase in the number of religious studies departments, societies for the scholarly study of religion, and scholarly institutes devoted to dialogue between religion and science. In addition, because religious scientists often have a closeted faith, their nonreligious colleagues might find little reason to question their assumption that there is simply no place for religion in the academy. (Ecklund, 2010: 91-92) We turn to the activities of scientists by moving beyond the classrooms.

What Scientists Are Doing Wrong that They Could be Doing Right

This topic moves beyond classrooms and universities to examine how scientists see themselves as addressing religion-science controversies in their interactions with the rest of the U.S. populace. Some think scientists should not waste their precious research time talking about issues of science and faith with the public, that religious America will never be won over to science and scientific understanding. And those who think that imparting better scientific understanding to members of the American public is a central goal for scientists are sometimes at a disadvantage. The ones who are the most religious sometimes see themselves as having a special disadvantage at the same time the ones who are the most religious sometimes see themselves as having a special responsibility to help religious people better understand that religion and science do not have to conflict with each other. Here, Elaine synthesizes the voices of scientists themselves as they comment on this role in shaping public understanding of the relationship between science and religion. If that is a goal, scientists first need to develop a more indicative

language and set of frameworks for religion and for the relationship between religion and science regardless of whether they personally identify with a religious tradition. Here we both examine the impediments to scientists taking a role in shaping public understanding of possible science-religion intersections and shed light on some of the best practices in which individual scientists are already engaged. (Ecklund, 2010: 127-128).

a. What Scientists are Doing Wrong

If scientists believe that religion in general and some forms, in particular, might be a threat to the advancement of science in the united states, then what are they specifically doing to engage with religion so that it does not halt the advancement of science. Now we hear from scientists who in response to their colleagues who are fearful of religion's threatening encroachment would argue that the onus is ultimately on scientists themselves to advance the cause of public science through more thoughtful dialogue with members to the general public. Some scientists Elaine talked with would say Rather critically that a biologist like this one should use his position as a platform for convincing the general public about the value of science and science education. They feel that scientists talk mainly to one another about issues of public science, leaving them with little direct familiarity with members of the public and little ability to relate to those outside of academia, especially when important religion-and-science issues come to the fore. Scientists coitized their colleagues in very specific ways, challenging them to reorient their sense of what it means to be a scientist in a university setting and what their responsibilities are to the public. We have heard the voices of scientists who think that religion in the general public is dangerous to science. We have heard the voices of those

who think that scientists themselves ought to be doing more to engage nonscientists about issues related to religion and science. Now we will hear from some who have ideas about what their colleagues could do better to advance the cause of science among a religious public. (Ecklund, 2010: 131-132).

b. What Scientists Are Doing Right

Scientists have a tremendous ability to affect the public perception of science and are something about which all scientists should develop nuanced views. We might think of the dialogue scientists enter into with the public about issues of religion as having distinct stages, not hierarchical stages, wherein all scientists ideally proceed from one to the next, but stages where scientists might choose to enter and remain or to progress from the next, depending on their own backgrounds and propensities. This base stage would be for scientists to recognize that there is a diversity of religious traditions and that different traditions intersect with science in distinct ways. The third stage especially for religious scientists would be a willingness to talk publicly about the connections between their own faith and the work they do as scientists. This engagement would provide models for religious members of the public who might be otherwise unwilling to entrust and endorse (Ecklund, 2010: 133).

It will be especially important to open a dialogue with the broader public about issues of religion and science because of the increasing diversity of the nation as a result of recent immigration.

Recognizing Religious Diversity

It will be especially important to open a dialogue with the broader public about issues of religion and science because of

the increasing diversity of the nation as a result of recent immigration. (more Hindus, Muslims, and Buddhists are coming to the united states, and Christian immigrants are changing the racial and ethnic composition of established American Christianity). And their religious colleagues are critical of them for not recognizing the diversity in religious perspectives that exist both in their midst and within the broader public. But public-minded religious scientists, in particular, think their colleagues still need to understand the variety of religious traditions that are in the broader world and stop promoting stereotypes about religious people. She suspects that this same politicization might be happening in the united states; there are a lot of people using religion to back their political views, and these folks may not be the most religious. An economist, talking about the place of religion in the broader American public, explained that there are certainly places where it's a negative force, but there are millions and millions of people who try to do good, and partly the reason that they do so is because of their religious teachings. Scientists thought that more ought to be done to dispel misconceptions that some in the general public have about the incompatibility of religion and science. She thinks that an essential part of the work scientists must do to reach out to the religious in the general public is to help them know that there are scientists involved in religious communities, such as those she knows of who have managed to integrate their faith with their work as scientists.

a. Addressing Religious Challenges to Evolution

Few of the Scientists whom Elaine interviewed would agree with Binder's idea that it would have a minimal impact on science curriculum and the teaching of evolutionary theory to state school provides a model for how scientists could

actively and productively respond to those who have religious views that appear to contradict and sometimes even stand in the way of science. In his sense of things, scientists should be engaging more with the public about issues related to religion and the public transmission of science, and he feels that educating high -school science teachers is a good place to start. He believes instead that science and religion can coexist quite happily and what scientists are doing wrong that they could be doing right. The only kind of religion that is in conflict with science is very narrow religion, for example requires a seven-day creation in order to be true. In his

From Elaine's work, we can understand that to be a complete scientist or religious, we need both science as well as religion. It is clear from Elaine that no science can be complete without religion and no religion can be complete without science. For science and religion to be complete they require each other because they support each other's enterprises.

own tradition of Catholicism, he finds little if any conflict between religion and science. My personal agenda, he said, which is shared by a lot of people around here, is that the scientists who are using evolutionary biology as a club against religion are really doing a lot of harm. What this biologist is doing is also helping to create a sense of best practices for dialogue between religion and science that others can learn from. Having seen the challenges to evolution, it is also worth seeing some of the best practices that would help science and religion. (Ecklund, 2010: 143-144).

b. Implementing Best Practices

Even religious scientists those we would think would be the most invested in seeing their coreligionists think more about the

connections between religion and science also mentioned doing little in the way of outreach efforts. For him, the group is a place to talk about the specialized challenges to people of faith in the academy. The biggest challenges that scientists with faith face, he said, do not have to do with reconciling science and religion, because most elite scientists seem to have reconciled these well before they came to their current posts. Still, he feels the pressure of their disapproval; in fact, some of my colleagues think I am crazy for devoting any time to this at all in two courses over seven years. What does this biologist say to those colleagues who think he is engaged in something not worth the precious time of a high-level science researcher? (Ecklund, 2010: 146-147).

Conclusion

From the review, we came to know better the lives of the scientists as well as better understood the relationship between science and religion. We highlighted some of the relevant topics in science started with the classroom and concluded in the laboratory. We also explored and critically looked at what

scientists are doing as well as what are they not doing and eventually concluded by suggesting some of the best practices that scientists could implement in their field of science. As we have seen in this review that sometimes science may seem to contradict religion but often, they have been complementary to each other and the relationship has

Science and religion have been complementary to each other and the relationship has been dynamic. Science and religion are both important facets of modern life.

been dynamic. Science and religion are both important facets of modern life.

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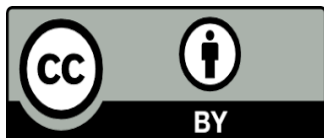
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Moving Towards One World: The Interaction of Science and Theology

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Abstract: In today's postmodern culture, with its questioning of metanarratives and doubting of claims of truthful understanding, the issue of what we can know and how we can gain knowledge is one of even greater criticality than ever before. In this highly modernized and globalized world, I feel that science somehow rejects religion in search of truth and knowledge, and in turn, religion denies science in search of supernatural realities. There are issues, controversies, and problematic thinking. Science can be without religion and religion can be without science but for human beings, both of them are needed for the truth and meaning of life. Some issues affirm that science and religion are incompatible and there is interconnectivity that affirms that science and religion are compatible. In this book review, article in style, I explore the interaction of science and theology that Polkinghorne (1987) brought forth in his book, *One World: The Interaction of Science and Theology*, which has become a classic today.

Keywords: John Polkinghorne, One World, Science-Theology Dialogue, Religion

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Introduction

When we read the book “one world: the interaction of science and religion” what arises in one’s mind and imagination is that what is that one world Polkinghorne mentioned in this book? Polkinghorne, himself says that he described the context of One World as being the post-Enlightenment realization that the quest for clear and certain ideas, which could serve as foundations for reliable knowledge. They imply post-enlightenment world, the nature of science, the nature of theology, the nature of the physical world, points of interaction, levels of description, and one world. These are the areas that the author critically looked at and investigated in this book.

The Post Enlightenment World

In this highly technocentric world and our enhanced understanding and thinking of the physical world is held to have undermined the belief of many in a spiritual reality. Whether one accepts or not, this is the reality. The author states after having done a critical investigation and assessment that to see how science and theology have come to be thought of by many as being in some way in opposition requires a historical, rather than a logical, assessment. The author clearly states that Christian doctrine of creation, with its emphasis on the Creator’s rationality (so that his world was

Collins clearly states that Christian doctrine of creation, with its emphasis on the Creator’s rationality (so that his world was intelligible) and freedom (so that its nature had a contingent character which could be discovered only by investigation, rather than by speculation) provided an essential matrix for the coming into being of the scientific enterprise.

intelligible) and freedom (so that its nature had a contingent character which could be discovered only by investigation, rather than by speculation) provided an essential matrix for the coming into being of the scientific enterprise. We all know that definitely, the church fathers had problems with the scientists. There were conflicts, issues, problems, problematic thinking, chaos, and controversies between the scientists and ecclesiastical authorities. Newton had difficulties in accepting a Trinitarian belief. There was a problem between mind and matter, materialism. Descartes proclaimed the duality of mind and matter. How the thinking substance of mind and the extended substance of matter were related was not so easy to say. Ultimately, he had to invoke God as the guarantor of their connection. The remarkable success of Newton's ideas in explaining the behaviour of physical systems, both terrestrial and celestial, encouraging reliance on a discourse of reason whose paradigm was seen in the power of mathematics. The thinkers of the Enlightenment sought by cold clear reason to comprehend an objective world of determinate order. They saw themselves as self-sufficient and were confident of their powers and human perfectibility. Even theology was affected. In line with the spirit of the age, God had become the divine Mechanic. There was considerable suspicion of religious experience less ordered and decorous than that provided by attendance at public worship. As the nineteenth century progressed, the light of reason seemed to shine with ever greater clarity on a comprehensible and determinate world.

The Nature of Science

Science during the twentieth century developed a lot more than the previous millennium. In fact, science became part

and parcel of human existence. Humankind is pushed to a state where they cannot exist without the scientific inventions in their lives. The author of the book very clearly notes that the great enhancement that the twentieth century has seen in our understanding of the world in which we live, even encompassing an account of its earliest moments fourteen thousand million years ago and including the beginnings of comprehension of how life could have evolved from inanimate matter, together with the remarkable technological developments stemming from scientific advance lends a certain credibility to this triumphalist point of view. The modern technocentrism that born in the light of science also has somehow “disproved religion” on the basis of psychological effect rather than logical analysis or truth (Polkinghorne, 2012).

Karl Popper (1934: 446), therefore, claims, “But science is one of the very few human activities, perhaps the only one in which errors are systematically criticized and fairly often, in time, corrected.....in other fields there is change but rarely progress.”

The Nature of Theology

Scientists often use the word “theological” in a pejorative sense, implying the absence of rigour and the presence of unmotivated assertion. This shows how the scientists are trying their best to twilight the theology. “The true believer must stand by his faith whatever the evidence against it” (Davis, 1983: 6). The believer is ill and prays. If he recovers, he thanks God for his healing; if he does not, he seeks to accept that also as the will of God. Either way, he believes he has received wholeness, given by the sustaining grace of God, whose exact nature is to be found only within the experience itself. The unbeliever may exclaim in exasperation, “I God’s head never

on the block? Is it always ‘heads he wins, tails you lose’?” The brilliant mistranslation of the Authorized Version does not accurately render the Hebrew, but it expresses exactly an element of the religious man’s experience when it has Job says, “Though He slays me, yet will I trust in him” (Job 13:15). Tradition certainly plays an important part in religion. So, it does in science. We inherit the legacy of those who have preceded us, and it would be disastrous if every generation had to start from scratch. The view of the theological enterprise which the author in this book wishes to defend is summed up in a splendid phrase of St. Anselm: *fides quaerens intellectum*, faith seeking understanding.

The author has given more importance to the religious experience than dogmas and dogmatic interpretation. A. N. Whitehead wrote: “The dogmas of religion are the attempts to formulate in precise terms the truths

St. Anselm: *fides quaerens intellectum*, faith seeking understanding, sums up the goal of the author.

disclosed to the religious experience of mankind. One of the strongest indicators of the validity of the claim that religion is in touch with reality is provided in the universal character of mystical experience, understood as the experience of unity with the ground of all being. The Anglican theological tradition in which the author seeks to stand perceives a three-fold basis for its inquiry. First, there is scripture, that is to say, the record of the great teachings, great events, and great figures of the past which we believe are of particular significance for us in our search for God and an understanding of his ways with men. The second basis for theological inquiry is tradition, that is to say, the record of religious experience to which we

add our own mite of personal knowledge. The third basis for theological inquiry is the reason. Not only must we exercise our rational faculties, but a concern for sound learning will encourage us to examine the relation of religious assertions to other assertions about the world and to assess the degree of consonance we find between these differing discourses. The three-fold basis of scripture, tradition, and reason provides a public domain for theological discourse and delivers the discussion from the confines of an enclosed world of personal preference and idiosyncratic experience. Ecology and science differ greatly in the nature of the subject of their concern. Yet each is attempting to understand aspects of the way the world is. There are, therefore, important points of kinship between the two disciplines. They are not chalk and cheese, irrational assertion compared with a reasonable investigation, as the caricature account would have it.

The degree of their relationship is expressed by Carnes when he writes, "The activities of the theologian are as fallible and his theories as corrigible, as those of any other scientist and any other theories!" (Carnes, 1982: 68). (i) Coherence. The discourse must hang together. The ultimate achievement of this would be total consistency, but because of the considerations we have been discussing, theology may have to be content to live with some degree of paradox (just as science had to live for a while with the unresolved conflict between the wave and particle natures of light until it found the higher rationality of quantum field theory. (ii) Economy. The ecology is not wantonly to multiply entities and explanations. This criterion might be thought to give preference to monotheism over polytheism. (iii) Adequacy. The ecology must be sufficiently rich in concepts to be able to discuss all its matters of concern. (iv) Existential relevance. There must be an interpretative scheme that links theology with the actual content of religious experience. Clearly, there is a great deal here that is analogous to the demands made of a successful scientific theory.

Points of Interaction

People sometimes say that science is concerned with questions of mechanism, with posing the question “How?” Theology is concerned with questions of purpose, with posing the question “Why?” There are contemporary points of interaction between science and theology which some perceive as areas of conflict. They include religious claims about miracles and a human destiny beyond the disintegration of the body in death. We shall have to consider them in due course. The interaction between science and theology arises from the curious way in which modern science seems, almost irresistibly, to point beyond itself. In the last chapter, I sketched a view of the world characterized by order, intelligibility, potentiality, and a tightly knit structure. Such a beautiful harmony evokes thoughts that verge on the religious. In every true searcher of Nature there is a kind of religious reverence; for he finds it impossible to imagine that he is first to have thought out the exceedingly delicate threads that connect his perceptions.

The aspect of knowledge which has not yet been laid bare gives the investigator a feeling akin to that of a child who seeks to grasp the masterly way in which elders manipulate things (Moszkowski, 1970). Natural theology, the search for God

“Nor is God less excellently revealed in Nature’s actions than in the sacred statements of the Bible.”- Galileo

revealed in the works of his creation, has a long history. It played an important part in Thomas Aquinas’ theological scheme. Not surprisingly, it appealed to the Christian founding fathers of modern physical science. Galileo asserted, “Nor is God less excellently revealed in Nature’s actions than in the sacred statements of the Bible.” Newton, in the general Scholium to the Principia, was bold enough to

claim that “to the discourse of God does belong to Natural Philosophy.” Today natural theology is not a popular pursuit among theologians. The third point of interaction between science and theology is provided by the mutual influence of their habits of thought. The fourth point of interaction, indeed of total absorption, would be provided by the assertion that all non-scientific levels of meaning are ultimately subverted by a thoroughgoing scientific reductionism (Polkinghorne, 2002). This is the claim that in the end there is “nothing but” scientifically discerned reality.

Personal Evaluation

“Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth- in a word, to know himself, so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.” I agree fully with this wise assertion of Pope John Paul II.

Science is our soul’s left hand, religion her right. By using both properly we reach divinity. Many scientists, as well as some theologians and philosophers, have argued that religion and science are not compatible. Some scientists and humanists have further suggested that natural science alone is sufficient to provide us with answers to questions about the meaning or purpose of human existence. Some scientists as well as many philosophers and theologians also have argued that science and religion are indeed compatible. I am inclined to side with them.

“To the discourse of
God does belong to
Natural Philosophy.”
Newton

The knowledge we obtain from our exploration of the world can be organized into a hierarchy, corresponding to the complexity of the systems treated as basic: physics, chemistry, biochemistry, biology, psychology, sociology, theology. All these disciplines

are contributing factors for the accumulation of knowledge. But, today the reductionists claim that ultimately everything is physics or can be reduced to the natural laws. The other disciplines are nothing but an epiphenomenal ripple on the surface of a physical substrate. We must consider all the disciplines. Here I am highlighting only science and religion since they are our concern.

The Interdependence of Science and Religion

We know that the great doctors of the church saints. Augustine and Thomas have contributed a lot to the compatibility of faith and reason. Faith and reason are complementary. Faith gives valuable service to reason by elevating the mind on its natural functioning. The reason, in turn, renders a valuable service to faith by the role it plays in theology.

St. Augustine

St. Augustine of Hippo is a very good example of dialogue between faith and reason. What is the connection that Augustine saw between the two? St Augustine called for a constructive synthesis between scientific and scriptural knowledge. Augustine emerged in the late fourth century as a rigorous defender of the Christian faith. But he was a strong compatibilist. He felt that intellectual inquiry into the faith was to be understood as faith seeking understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*). To believe is “to think with assent” It is an act of the intellect determined not by reason, but by the will. Faith involves a commitment “to believe in a God,” “to believe God,” and “to believe in God.” Augustine considered nature as the prime Word of God through which God revealed Himself. This is a key issue and theme in Augustine’s Confessions, his profound and influential account of his search for meaning and conversion to Christianity. Augustine testifies to how reason puts man on the road toward God and how it is faith that informs and

elevates reason, taking it beyond its natural limitations while never being tyrannical or confining in any way. He summarized this seemingly paradoxical fact in the famous dictum, “I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe”

St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas’ cogent argument was that faith does not contradict reason, but complements it. From the beginning of Thomistic philosophy, we can notice the relation between faith and reason, with a systematic and complete analysis of the relation. He filled his writings with reason, especially *Summa Theologica*. Faith and reason are two different modes of knowing. Reason accepts truth as known by the light of reason. Faith accepts truth as known by the light of divine revelation. Aquinas says that faith and reason do not contradict. They have their respective judicial boundaries. The truth of faith and truth of reason derives from the same origin, God who is the truth.

David Horner

Many Christians would agree with that statement. These are the kind of people who say, “If you’ve got all this evidence for it, then where is room for faith?” They see faith and reason as opposites, and the relationship might be considered the relationship of divorce. These are two entities divorced from each

The opposite of faith is not reason; the opposite of faith is unbelief or lack of trust. The opposite of reason is not faith; the opposite of reason is irrationality. -Horner

other, one on either side. David Horner (2011) uses a metaphor in his wonderful book, *Mind Your Faith*. He says it’s not divorce; it should be marriage. Faith and reason are partners working together. Reason assesses faith trusts. Horner states that reason is: “Assessing reasons for a point of view and logical relationships to see if there’s adequate justification for a belief. No conflict. The opposite of faith is not reason; the opposite of faith is unbelief or lack of trust. The opposite of reason is not faith; the opposite

of reason is irrationality. So, it certainly is possible to have a reasonable faith, and it is also possible to have unreasonable unbelief. (Horner: 2011). Mary the model for the relation between Faith and reason Mother Mary can be quoted for rationality. When the angel Gabriel greeted with the message that she will bear a child, she didn't accept immediately but she reasoned out for a while and replied to the angel

Conclusion

Science and theology are two fruitful sources of human knowledge. Though they belong to different domains, they are intertwined in every act of cognition and they complement one another in our search for truth. In the light of the insights drawn from Polkinghorne's *One World: The Interaction of Science and Theology*, we can comfortably conclude both are compatible with each other and interconnected with one another. The creative interaction between science and theology, reason and religion make our world better for the whole of humanity. That leads to one world, where we are all united with our different religions and diverse sciences. In such a world, we will be there for each other, connected and related to one another.

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Religious Indifference and Lived Atheism: The ‘Religious Pulse’ of the World at Present

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Abstract: Atheism is marked by its nearness to religion. As a trend, it was considered a potential enemy of religion. The rejection of God or any absolute or divine realities and the dismissal of religions as artificial and superfluous to mankind were regarded as the core contents of the atheistic tendencies. Nowadays these contents are replaced by religious indifference and practical non-belief in God and religion. The militant atheism has come to an end and the traditional atheistic tendencies have paved the way for practical ‘lived atheism’ in the form of religious indifference. Thus, the decline of faith and the loss of religiosity has become *Weltanschauung*. Sensing the ‘religious pulse’ of the current world shows that, it is secularism that is predominating while faith and religion seem to be losing their ground. This calls for immediate remedial measures of reinstating the natural religiosity of mankind which is expressed by *Homo religiosus*.

Keywords: Militant Atheism; Religious Indifference; *Weltanschauung*; ‘Talked Atheism’; ‘Lived Atheism’; Enlightenment; *Homo religiosus*

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Introduction

A few decades ago, atheism as a trend was considered a potential enemy of all religions. However, the trend has changed now and the use of the word atheism is very rare. It is placed as a course unit in the academic curricula and as a theory, it is studied and often discussed only in the academic arena. The core contents of the atheistic tendencies which were topics that induced heated intellectual and theoretical discussions among the learned and the elite are now in the praxis of the ordinary people.

The decline of faith and the loss of religiosity is a *Weltanschauung*. Sensing the ‘religious pulse’ of the current world signals that faith and religion seem to be losing their ground. This universal phenomenon evokes many questions about faith and religion: What is religion? Is faith reasonable? If the faith in God is deemed real and fundamental, why then there is unbelief? If both believers and unbelievers are found in society, who is correct? Who is mistaken, the believer or the unbeliever? This study deals with the transition of the human civilization from theoretical atheistic tendencies to practical ‘lived atheism’ in the form of religious indifference and proposes some remedial measures to face this crisis situation.

Atheistic Tendencies

Atheism is viewed from many perspectives. Atheistic tendencies are there from the very beginning of the concept of God and the formation of religions. Atheism is as old as theism. It is a historical phenomenon. It is seen by many historians, on the basis of dialectic processes, as a natural reaction to theistic tendencies.

The rejection of God or any absolute or divine realities and the dismissal of religions as artificial and redundant to mankind are regarded as the core contents of atheistic tendencies. Atheism properly so-called does not deny merely a plurality of gods or

merely a particular way of worshipping God or even simply a personal 'theistic' God. It denies any belief in God and any divine reality whether understood in the mythological, theological or philosophical realm. Atheism can be either speculative or practical. Speculative atheists make recourse to science and reason to say that there cannot be any rational proof for the existence of any God or divine reality. Such people will theoretically present sound arguments that God cannot exist. However, in practice, they may behave as if there is God. Practical atheists are those who on a practical level are not convinced about the existence of God. They may in theory accept God and religion, but do not put into practice their beliefs. There may be many baptized atheists in Christianity. Practical atheism is regarded as grave because it involves wilfully negating God and divine realities.

At the theoretical level, many trends of atheistic tendencies were prevalent in a different era of history. Naturalistic, materialistic, socio-political, anthropological, psychoanalytic and pragmatic are some of those trends through which atheism was viewed by different thinkers during the diverse epochs of history.

Atheistic tendencies were there from the very beginning among various civilizations. However, at a certain point of the moment in history, particularly after the advent of modernity and the upheaval of enlightenment, atheism intruded on a big scale into Western society. Gradually it became a prominent trend of thought and a popular movement all over the world. As a thought pattern and a way of life of the ordinary people, it started posing a real menace to all the religions, above all to Christianity, because the trends of modernity and enlightenment had their outbreak in Europe. Among the diverse philosophies and practices of atheism, it was communist atheism, as an

organized system both intellectually and practically that lasted longer than other atheistic tendencies. Through the well-organized communist political parties and all the way through the popular movements like trade unions, the communist atheistic tendencies were able to influence and impose a strong impact on ordinary people.

The Fall of Militant Atheism

Militant atheism was considered as the most infringing and propelling dynamism to forcibly remove God and religion from the memory of the human race. The communist revolutions which were successful in different parts of the world were promoting militant atheism to the point of killing the leaders and practitioners of religions.

After ‘Perestroika’ and ‘Glasnost’¹ which brought reforms and caused the collapse of the then Soviet Union during the last decade of the 20th century, people around the world thought that these were remarkable moments in the contemporary era to create a new global order in the socio-political, economic and religious arenas. People who feared the elimination of religious beliefs from the world due to the immense growth of the ‘atheistic’ Soviet Union as a world power celebrated these events with a new hope. This shows how atheism, especially the well-organized political atheism, was regarded as a great danger for religious beliefs.

Currently many speak of atheism not as a philosophy or a system or a trend of thought but as a lived reality. After the reforms of ‘Perestroika’ and ‘Glasnost’ and the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989, which resulted in the collapse of the communist

¹ Perestroika is a Russian word that means ‘restructuring’ in English. It is a political reformation within the Communist Party of the USSR during the latter part of 1980s and is commonly associated with the then leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his glasnost policy reform.

Soviet Union, atheism has left out its intellectual and theoretical pedestals. In other words, atheism is seen as a way of life, except being placed as a course unit in the academic curricula. It is no more a theory. It is a lived reality for many people in the world. The core contents of the atheistic tendencies are nowadays replaced by religious indifference and lived atheism, that is, to live a life as if there is no God or any divine realities.

From 'Atheism' to 'Religious Indifference'

Chris Sidoti, a lawyer and an international human rights consultant from Australia, has shared his reflection about virtually going back for worship to the churches after the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. He manifests a dilemma and feels that his presence or absence in the church for worship in the past did not make anything positive or negative to God or to himself. He also feels that the effect made on him in the past by going for worship in the churches physically was nothing (Sidoti, 2020). Such an attitude of a believer shows clearly the difference between atheism and religious indifference. Chris Sidoti is not an atheist. He is a Catholic believer. However, he manifests a type of religious indifference which might have been the result of various reasons.

Religious indifference is not a professed doctrine. Rather, it is a lived and unspoken personal attitude about God and religion. It is characterized by disinterestedness and a type of alienation. According to Edmund Goblots, "Indifference in the religious or philosophical field is the state of mind which does not pass judgment, which does not affirm and does not deny, either out of heedlessness or out of scepticism" (Goblots, 1945). Indifference is a celebrated psychological state of mind. Religious indifference closes all possibilities for God or religion. Modernity and enlightenment have taught human

beings self-reliance and self-sufficiency and therefore the human growth is reckoned without any reference to God or religion.

Religious indifference allows many interpretations and may manifest itself in different forms. There are those who are indifferent to religious beliefs and values but are not indifferent to religion as such. They may take part in religious practices and celebrations without any conviction. For them, religion is one of the choices of consumption and it is good if it is useful. For this reason, some scholars tend to speak of ‘secular religion’ to suit such tendencies. Such a pragmatic approach to religion makes religion a commodity and satisfying the material and social needs of human beings rather than satisfying their spiritual needs. Some are indifferent to all the aspects of religion. For them, religion is merely a human product as some sociologists and psychologists assert. Such an expression of indifference reflects a pessimistic attitude to life.

From ‘Talked Atheism’ to ‘Lived Atheism’

Many would agree that unbelief in God and religion has become very common among the people in the world at present. It is not exaggerating to say that many no longer bother about God and religion. Contemporary human civilization seems not to be wasting its time and energy trying to negate and reject God and religion as in the past.

The ‘talked atheism’ of the past lived in the intellectual discussions and political agendas. Only a few learned elites of the society upheld such atheistic tendencies. However, the ‘talked atheism’ which survived in the discussions of the intellectuals has permeated the ordinary people and has transformed itself into a ‘lived atheism’. The majority of the people are very comfortable in not referring to such realities like God, religion, divine, morality and values. When references are made to such realities, many people manifest a

surprise and ignorance as if they never existed. Humanity, having lost its ‘ultimate goal’ is very busy only with the temporal world in searching for every comfort. This leads humanity to choose a ‘world’ without God. Such negligence is referred to as ‘lived atheism’ which is prevalent among the majority of the people in the world today. The seriousness of this phenomenon may differ from place to place and from culture to culture; however, it has become a universal phenomenon and a weltanschauung. This ‘lived atheism’ is seen by some thinkers as secularism and it is triumphing over the religiosity of the people. Rapid developments in communication and technology have paved the way for the loss of values and growth of consumerism, secularism and materialism. The ‘talked atheism’ as a system and trend of thought do not endanger religions any longer. But the ‘lived atheism’ on a mass scale challenges the world of its values and religiosity.

Secularism as the ‘Religious Pulse’ of Today’s World

Secularism is a doctrine that denies any validity to the religious dimension, especially in the public sphere and refers to the decline of religious values in society (Gallagher, 1995: 12). The ‘secularisation’ process of modernity has already stripped off all the powers of medieval Christianity. Secularism and secularisation do not refer to the same reality. However, both of them, in practice, have distanced humanity from faith and religious institutions.

The ‘talked atheism’ as a system and trend of thought do not endanger religions any longer. But the ‘lived atheism’ on a mass scale challenges the world of its values and religiosity.

Secularism does not admit any validity for religious matters (Pannenberg, 1989: 43). If one can sense the ‘religious pulse’ of the current world, it is secularism that is predominating while faith and religion seem to be losing their ground. This shows that the natural tendency of man to be religious

and to be 'sick of God' (Scheler, 1961: 27) has been artificially replaced by secularism and its escorts religious indifference and lived atheism.

Conclusion: Reinstating the *Homo religiosus*

Homo religiosus is one of the many perspectives to study the human mystery. Naturally, human beings are religious. This means religion is something essentially connected to human nature. Atheistic tendencies made religion something alien to human nature. Such notions prevail in the current world in the forms of religious indifference and lived atheism.

In the contemporary background of globalization, extreme materialistic tendencies together with pragmatic doctrines have taken the upper hand; *Homo religiosus* is substituted by *Homo economicus*. Here capitalism becomes a new religion; money or the capital is the god; business or transaction is the liturgy; the material profit is the satisfaction or religious experience. All these negate the natural tendency of the *Homo religiosus*. Therefore, there is a necessity that *Homo religiosus* has to be reinstated. "The desire for God is written in the human heart because man is created by God and for God, and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness that he never stops searching for..." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #27). Faith and religious practices enable humans to find the meaning of life here on earth and the means to reach their ultimate destiny.

Both believers and non-believers in their own ways seek the meaning of the mystery of life. The human mystery remains puzzled and life's riddle unsolved. But for a believer, it is clear that in the light of Jesus Christ one can find the meaning of the mystery of life and the means to achieve it. The ultimate meaning of being human is hidden in God. This mystery can be understood only through man's submission to God in faith. A believer lives life with a clear set of goals but a non-believer, lacking such goals lives life as it comes. Therefore, a life based on faith can give meaning to human life and give the answer to the fundamental questions regarding the purpose and destiny of mankind.

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