

Assembly – God and Science – myfishbites.com

Note

This assembly is complex, only has words and won't be suitable for many (younger) students. This is more like an apologetics session and may require the person using it to research further on their own. There are many books and online articles and sites that will help with this. You may also need to define some terms used in the assembly.

You may also have to field questions from people who question so be prepared to give an answer or get back to people, especially if their questions are genuine. Finally, don't be in a rush to speak about things that you haven't checked out.

In our world, we are seeing that those who don't believe in God are increasingly aggressive and 'evangelical' in pushing their beliefs and silencing those with different views. So don't let anyone say that it is only Christians who push their worldview.

But unlike others, we speak gently, with respect and without insult. We present the truth in love. And unlike others we don't try to silence everyone else's views!

Intro

In our world, we are seeing that those who don't believe in God are increasingly aggressive and 'evangelical' in pushing their beliefs and silencing those with different views. So don't let anyone say that it is only Christians who push their worldview.

But unlike others, we speak gently, with respect and without insult. We present the truth in love. And unlike others, we don't try to silence everyone else's views!

God and Science

OK, so here is the question that many people ask:

"Has science disproved God?" ...

... Here's the simple answer:

No. Not at all.

Sometimes we hear there is a battle between what people call 'religion' and science. Sometimes we hear the myth that religion is based on something that isn't and can't be proved, unlike science which can be proved. But it's not quite as simple as some people would like you to believe!

There are many Christian scientists including many in senior positions around the world who would not agree there is a conflict between their faith and science. But it is not just Christians who accept that science has not disproved God...

A man called David Berlinski (who is an agnostic – someone who doesn't believe in God but hasn't rejected the idea either) wrote a book called 'The Devil's Delusion'. In the book's inside flap, he wrote this among many other similar statements:

"Has anyone provided a proof of God's inexistence? Not even close... Have the sciences explained why our universe seems to be finely-tuned to allow the existence of life? Not even close."

A leading philosopher called Peter Van Inwagen has written this:

"No discovery of science (so far, at any rate) has the least tendency to show that there is no God."

Many people would argue that science actually points **to** the existence of God.

What Is Science?

Science is fantastic and has found incredible uses in all areas of life. I'd encourage everyone to get involved in science and to learn to love science. Some of my favourite lessons working in schools have been science.

Science is about repeatable, observable evidenced experiments in order to find accurate conclusions. What science cannot do is evidence things outside of itself or even everything from the distant past. As someone has written, "Science can only tell us what *is* and not *what ought to be*."

Science cannot and does not explain everything and nor should it try to. Nor is science the only kind of evidence or facts in our world. There are other forms of evidence that are equally valid such as history.

One famous Christian scientist, Sir John Polkinghorne puts it this way: the kettle is boiling and the scientific answer is that the gas is burning and it heats the water. But there's also the possible answer that the kettle's boiling and I want to make a cup of tea and would you like to have one? We can answer and ask the how and the why about this but science can only answer the one question – the how.

The very basis of modern science has been proven to come from Christians and a Christian worldview (for example Sir Isaac Newton). Or we could mention Edward Blyth who proposed natural selection 25 years before Darwin. Or Dr Raymond Damadian who invented the MRI scan. There are many Christians working at high levels across all scientific disciplines.

Sir John Polkinghorne, one of Britain's leading scientists explains how science actually leads people to God because science shows that the universe at its deepest level is full of order and signs of 'mind' which should lead us to consider whether it is the mind of God. Science is very good at answering the questions of how things happen. But there are other questions about the 'why' of life that it cannot answer but other disciplines can. Is there meaning? Is there value? Is there purpose?

Dr Owen Gingerich, internationally renowned cosmologist, says that there are many interesting unanswered questions that are beyond the scope of science – why is there something rather than nothing? Why is the universe comprehensible?

Nor is it true that the church has been anti-science all the time. Sometimes people put forward the myth that all the church believed the earth was flat. This myth has been debunked. The Bible (Isaiah 40.22) talks about the circle of the earth. And the vast majority of Christians knew the world was round (even as far back as an English monk, the Venerable Bede 673–735). It's also interesting to know that there is a modern-day and active 'Flat Earth Society' and nothing to do with the church! The leader of the society (certainly in 2013) is an atheist.

Science and religion are only at war from individuals who abuse their beliefs on both sides. But that does not mean there is conflict between science and God. Some people wrongly say that because of some misuse of religion that it should be thrown out. But science has its own issues with integrity, fraud and abuse. Our pursuit of truth that is essential for science only makes sense within the Christian worldview.

Prove that God exists!

OK. But first, let me issue with the opposite challenge - prove that God doesn't exist.

And second, even if someone cannot prove God exists, it doesn't mean that God doesn't exist!

In the same way that you may not be able to evidence that God exists in the way some people demand, you equally can't evidence that God does not exist.

The truth is that there are many things that can't be 'proven' scientifically but we know they exist – like love or hate or evil. And humans have deep values that are more than just 'survival of the fittest' and even go against this thinking – like people sacrificing themselves for others they don't know. As humans, we act on our beliefs even when it goes against our survival.

And even if people think the idea of God is crazy, when you consider every other explanation that people offer, God is the best explanation. Often it's because people don't want to believe there is a God that they oppose the idea of God – not because God isn't true.

In The Beginning

One way that Christians believe that God is not opposed to science is by the facts of science themselves and the evidence of the world around us, including the clear design of our world pointing to a designer and not to a cosmic accident or fluke. The biological complexity of the cells in the human body is incredibly complex with cells acting like minute (nano) technological marvels!

William Dembski has shown through mathematics and probability theory that complexity in living systems can't be designed by chance or natural selection. Bill Gates noted that the complexity of DNA is 'far, far more advanced than any software' created.

One scientist (Sir Fred Hoyle) has stated that the chances of the world simply forming by itself from a cosmic accident would be the same as a tornado smashing into a junk yard and perfectly assembling the inside and outside of a Boeing 747 plane. Not just unlikely; impossible.

So this is the argument that helps us understand that our universe is very real, had a cause and is designed fit for purpose.

1. Everything **which has a beginning** has a cause.
2. The universe has a beginning.
3. Therefore the universe has a cause.

Science itself has concluded the universe had a beginning (even being stated by the late atheist scientist, `Stephen Hawking). The Laws of Thermodynamics show that the universe had a beginning.

To take things further, our world is regular and consistent (gravity doesn't change). Why? And then we have a world that is perfectly and finely tuned for life. Just think about what is needed for life to exist on our planet and in our solar system. Everything is completely and perfectly in balance on earth.

Science itself shows that our world is so finely tuned for life in billions of ways that only a Creator, God, could have so perfectly pieced it together so that it both formed and continues to sustain life.

The problem is not always lack of evidence of religion vs science, the issue is often people's starting point when looking at evidence.

There are many scientists, philosophers and atheists who have publicly stated they won't accept there is a God, even if proven and will do and say anything to fight against the truth of there being a God. This approach and the one of mocking and bullying put forward by people like Richard Dawkins is both unscientific and intolerant of the very values of science and society as a whole.

If God does not exist...

If God does not exist and we were not created by a loving powerful God, then we are simply what one writer calls 'cosmic accidents'. We're here by accident and have no meaning or purpose. We're therefore simply a bunch of chemicals that mysteriously arranged themselves to form an incredibly complex human in an incredibly complex universe. If this is what people believe, no wonder so many people struggle with their true identity.

It takes away any value that we find in the knowledge of a loving creator God who shaped each one of us uniquely for a purpose in our lives, each with unique eyes, fingerprints and gifts.

If there is no God and we are simply a cosmic accident, than how can we answer the deepest questions of life that we have... What am I really here for? How do I fulfil my desires? What about pain and suffering? You see, your world view really does make a difference to how you live your life. Only in believing in God does life make sense and do you fit into your purpose in life and find true meaning beyond what is shallow and hollow.

Many people would argue that the weight of evidence is that there is a God, not that there isn't. So really the weight of evidence is on science to disprove God, not the other way round.

We believe that ultimately, science proves and leads to God and not away from God.