ENGAGING WITH SCIENCE

Posted on December 1, 2021 by Eddie

I'm a big fan of science: but the world needs Jesus!
Category: Observations

This is the third in my series of posts on my thoughts about faith and science. In this one, I'd like to think about how Christians can engage with science and scientists.

Learn About Science. In the UK, we are still living with an antiquated mindset that sees knowledge and education primarily in terms of the arts and humanities. You are expected to have read Dickens but not, say, Jim Al-Khalili. However, the realities that we are living through, be they a global pandemic or climate change underline the need for people to have a basic understanding of science. You don't need to be Einstein or Stephen Hawking to spot some of the ridiculous conspiracy theories out there, but some basic scientific knowledge does help.

I am always struck by the way in which scientists enthuse about the discoveries they make and their deepening understanding of the world around them. As a Christian, I can have the same thrill, but it is even deeper, because I realise that what they are discovering is the handiwork of my Heavenly Father.

Engage Critically With Science. I mentioned in the first post in this series that most scientists are not trying to disprove Christianity or the Bible (read the post to get why I say this). However, it can't be denied that there is a widespread belief in our society that science has disproved religion. I would argue that Western society rejected God and then used science as an excuse, rather than science being the actual cause, but that's a discussion for another day.

As Christians we need to think through these issues for a couple of reasons. Firstly, if your faith is shaky under the pressure of what society holds to be self-evident, then it is good to see that things aren't quite as they are presented. Secondly, it is good to have some answers for people who glibly state that science disproves religion.

There are lots of good resources out there to help us think through this stuff, but I'd like to point you to the YouTube channel God New Evidence. They have a lot of excellent material on a range of subjects, but two particular playlists are relevant to this discussion Bad Faith: are science and Christianity in conflict? and God: new evidence. I'll post a video from each playlist at the foot of this post.

Talk About Jesus! Let's just imagine that you get into a discussion with a friend about science and faith and you manage to convince them that science does not prove the existence of God. Then what? Believing that there might be a God does not make them a Christian. There are still lots of

conversations that need to take place before that happens.

There is a place for arguments and discussions about the interaction between science and faith, especially for those who are qualified to engage in them (hence me linking to the God: new evidence videos). However, I believe that we have often allowed the pressures of society to drag us away from discussing the centre of our faith: Jesus. Christians feel obliged to talk about science, sexuality or a number of other subjects where most of us are completely unqualified and we are reluctant to talk about the one subject that we have personal knowledge of: Jesus of Nazareth.

The need of our age is not for people to adopt an evangelical ethic or viewpoint about science (whatever they are), but for them to have a living and transformative encounter with Jesus Christ; and we are his witnesses.

Me and Jesus. I find this really difficult, but there is a need to talk about our own experience of walking with Jesus. What difference does knowing him make in my life?

Jesus and the Gospels. The Christian faith is based in history. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus are well attested. We need to be prepared to point people to this (God: new evidence has a couple of good playlists on this, too).

Jesus in Contemporary Society. I love Paul's hymn to Jesus in Colossians 1:15-23. It is a stunning reflection on Jesus as the incarnate son of God. However, Paul also weaves through his words references to the cult of the Emperor and the way in which it impacts life in Colosse. Towards the end of this section, in what I have called the Strangest Verse in the Bible, Paul turns the Roman justice system upside down and shows how God, in Christ is doing something far greater. It is brilliant poetry, theology and an exercise in subverting contemporary culture. What is even better, is that right at the end of Colossians we have a reference to Onesimus who is one of the people carrying the letter from Paul. If you've read the book of Philemon, you will recognise that name - Onesimus was a runaway slave, a renegade, an outlaw. But Paul describes him as a faithful and dear brother. That's the sort of transformation that an encounter with Jesus brings. We need to learn to present Jesus in our culture in the way that Paul did in the Roman one.

Science is great. I'm a big fan of science. But the world needs Jesus!

https://youtu.be/vAoBwum4p9o

https://youtu.be/uwiBbt4b_tU