

Personal manifesto (here I come Karl Marx!) on some issues involved in my view of the science-theology dialogue:

1. My religious faith is a gift from God, in fact, it is God's gift of himself in love to me. That gift is totally unmerited. I have not reasoned my way to it. It is neither exclusively rational nor is it irrational. It transcends reason. I have the conviction that I have accepted that gift so that I am in a relationship of love with God, a relationship which I must continually seek to nourish.

2. God's gift of himself to me, my acceptance of that gift and the resulting relationship have all occurred and continue to grow within community, in my case within the Catholic Church and more specifically within the Society of Jesus (Jesuits).

3. As a scientist I engage in the rational pursuit of an understanding of the universe, of nature and I share that pursuit with my fellow scientists, in my case within the community of astrophysicists.

4. God is primarily Love and not Explanation. I am driven by my rational nature to seek to understand the God who loves me but I am at the same time convinced that God can never be understood. God is mystery, not in the sense that if I knew enough I would understand him but in the sense that he is the ground of all understanding. Science is tempted to the idolatry of seeing God as exclusively Explanation.

5. For the sake of clarity I distinguish among faith, religion and theology. Faith is as described in numbers 1 and 2. Religion is the practice of the faith (prayer, obeying the commandments, going to Church, morality, etc.). Theology is faith in search of understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum* according to the scholastic theologians; see number 4). The dialogue, therefore, should be correctly named as "science-theology," although "science-religion" and "science-faith" are commonly used.

6. I may be able to come to a knowledge of the God of the philosophers through an exclusively rational process: from the knowledge of contingent beings to the need for a necessary being (e.g. the Prime Mover of Aristotle); but I cannot come to a knowledge of the God of faith through a purely rational process.

7. The only knowledge I can have of God is through analogy and the negative way (these are technical terms used by the scholastic philosophers and theologians). Thus, if (please note "if") I believe that the God of faith is also the Creator of the universe, my scientific knowledge of nature, cleansed

of its imperfections, can provide me a glimpse of what God must be like. At the same time, I must admit that God is totally other than my glimpse of him through analogy based on my scientific knowledge of nature. God, glimpsed by analogy, is not a designer but a lover who has endowed nature with a share in his own creative activity.

8. In my attempt to glimpse God through analogy I am constantly tempted to the idolatry of making God in my own image and likeness.

9. Creation is a theological concept. The search for origins is a scientific endeavor. Creation is not one of the ways that things may have originated in competition with scientific theories such as Big Bang, quantum cosmology, inflation, etc. Creation is a theological affirmation that, however things originated, they depend upon God for their existence.

10. The Sacred Scriptures of the Judaic-Christian tradition are not teaching science. Those Scriptures were written between about 2000 years BCE and 200 CE and their intent is to teach us how to go to heaven and not how the heavens go. Modern science began in about the 16th to 17th centuries CE (not earlier than the 13th century).

11. Categorizations are not very helpful to dialogue. Although I am much tempted to do so, I prefer not to think of my partners in dialogue as comportamentalists, Dominicans, atheists, Jesuits, hard core ID fans (ID for intelligent design), Protestants, multiverse fans, Evangelicals, agnostics, fundamentalists, Catholics, uncritical methodological naturalists etc.

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