

School Assembly - “Sir, did you ever have a job??”

Many years earlier, and after serving in the Army, I joined the Rolls-Royce Aero Engine Division in Derby, and trained as an Engineering Metallurgist, eventually specialising in the failure investigation of aircraft engine components both in flight and in ground-based facilities.

When Rolls-Royce crashed financially in 1971 I went to work at the Berkeley Nuclear Laboratories in the Tribology Department, investigating the effects of friction and wear between moving parts in nuclear reactors.

It was during this time that I finally responded to the persistent call of God in my life and I candidated and was accepted for the Methodist Ministry. I trained at Wesley College, Bristol, and was ordained in 1982.

I still had a lot to learn and throughout my Christian journey, through continued study, reading, and learning in fellowship with others on the same journey. On the way I have often had to change my mind - to re-think and sometimes let go of long-held believes and to see many old truths in a new light. It's not always easy - and it can be painful.

Years ago, a very wise friend said to me: “Promise me, that you will always keep your mind open to the possibility of New Truth”. I hope I have kept that promise.

There never was a time when I doubted my Christian experience - there was a day when I first gave my life to Christ and he became my Lord and Saviour...

Nor is there any conflict between my Christian faith and the sciences that are behind my understanding of how our universe, our world and the people and creatures in it came into existence. - changing and evolving over billions of years.

For me, our understanding of evolution, with its process of natural selection, is God slowly drawing back the curtain, revealing more and more of His creation and encouraging us to go on questioning and discovering.

There is much I do not understand - and probably never will there is the 'Otherness' in the world, and in the human heart, which is the presence of the Divine and for which there is no equation or formula - but I am content to understand what I can and to stand under the rest.

The 18thc hymn-writer Isaac Watts got it right when he wrote:

'Almighty God, to Thee
Be endless honours done,
The undivided Three, and the mysterious One.
Where reason fails, with all her powers,
There faith prevails, and love adores.