

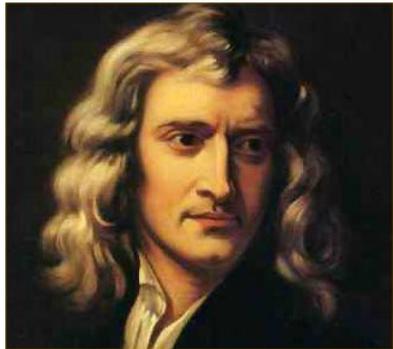
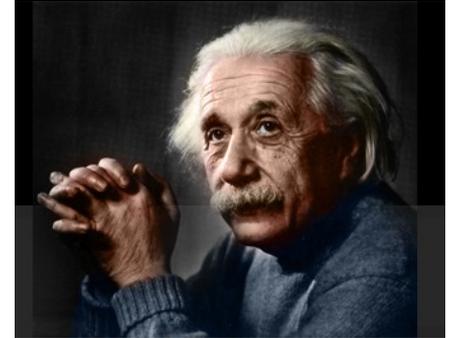
# GENESIS LIVE



Science and Faith

# Science and Faith

“I want to know God’s thoughts – the rest are details”. Albert Einstein”



“As a blind man has no idea of colours, so we have no idea of the manner by which the all-wise God perceives and understands all things.” Sir Isaac Newton

“We have a chance to see God as the greatest scientist. As we discover things about the world, we can appreciate the wonders of God’s creation. What a gift it is to be a scientist and be able to do that”. Francis Collins



# Science versus Faith?



## Professor Richard Dawkins FRS FRSL

- Emeritus fellow of New College, Oxford
- Professor for the Public Understanding of Science
- Founder of the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science
- *The Selfish Gene* (1976)
- *The Blind Watchmaker* (1986)
- *The God Delusion* (2006)

# Science versus Faith?



## Professor Antony Flew

- Professor of Philosophy, Keele
- Professor of Philosophy, Reading
- *The Presumption of Atheism* (1976)
- *Atheistic Humanism* (1993)
- *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind* (2007)

# Science versus Faith?

## Dawkins verses Flew?

'We might be seeing something similar today in the over-publicised tergiversation of the philosopher Antony Flew, who announced in his old age that he had been converted to belief in some sort of deity (triggering a frenzy of eager repetition all around the Internet).'

(The God Delusion 2006, p82)

## Dawkins verses Flew?

This whole business makes all too clear that Dawkins is not interested in the truth as such but is primarily concerned to discredit an ideological opponent by any available means. That would itself constitute sufficient reason for suspecting that the whole enterprise of *The God Delusion* was not, as it at least pretended to be, an attempt to discover and spread knowledge of the existence or non-existence of God but rather an attempt – an extremely successful one – to spread the author's own convictions in this area. (Anthony Flew, 2007)

# Science versus Faith?



Professor Sir Brian Heap  
CBE FRS

- Director of the Babraham Institute
- Master of St Edmund's College, Cambridge
- Vice President of the Royal Society
- Founder member of the International Society for Science and Religion

# Science versus Faith?



## Dr Denis Alexander

- Head of the Molecular Immunology Programme at the Babraham Institute
- Director of the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, St Edmund's College, Cambridge
- *Rebuilding the Matrix - Science and Faith in the 21st Century* (2001)
- *Beyond Belief: Science, Faith and Ethical Challenges* (2004)

# Science verses Faith?

According to a survey published in the British Journal 'Nature' in 1997...

- 40% of scientists believed in God
- 45% of scientists did not believe in God
- 14.5% described themselves as agnostics

This ratio of believers to non-believers has not changed in 80 years

EJ Larson and L Witham, 1997. Scientists are still keeping the faith. Nature 386, 435-436.

# In the beginning, God?

Genesis 1:1



## In the beginning, God?

'By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth.' (Psalm 33:6)

'Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.' (Psalm 148:5)

'God did not make them out of things that existed'  
(2 Maccabees 7:28)

'For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.' (Colossians 1:16)

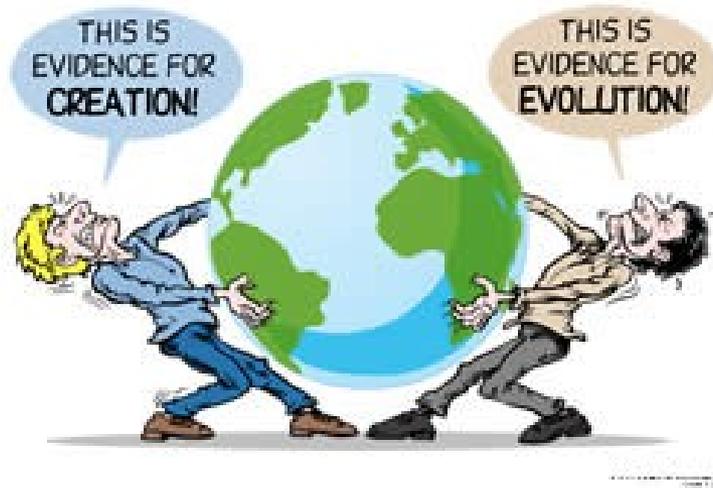
## In the beginning, God?

1949: Sir Fred Hoyle coined the phrase 'Big Bang' in a radio broadcast in order to ridicule the idea that the universe had a beginning

1959: survey taken of leading American scientists: "What is your concept of the age of the universe?" Two thirds reply that the universe had no beginning (Scientific American, 1959)

1965: Penzias and Wilson first measure the amount of cosmic microwave background radiation (Astrophysical Journal Letters 1969)

# Creation verses Evolution?



Do we have to choose?

# Creation versus Evolution?

- 1) 'Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.' (Genesis 1:11)
- 2) 'Let the water teem with living creatures' (Genesis 1:20a)
- 3) 'let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.'" (Genesis 1:20b)
- 4) 'Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind.'" (Genesis 1:24)
- 5) 'Let us make man in our image' (Genesis 1:26)

# Creation versus Evolution?

So what's the problem?

- Evolutionary process is driven by chance
- Random genetic mutations that are advantageous over time are inherited (genetic drift)
- So belief in a creator God is unnecessary and irrelevant
- “If the ‘tape of life’ were re-wound and played back, life would have taken a very different course” (Stephen Jay Gould)

# Views on the origin of life on earth

## Young Earth Creationism

- Six days of creation are literal
- Genealogy in Genesis and Matthew etc are literal and complete
- The universe is no more than 8,000 years old

## Day-Age Theory

- For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by (Psalm 90:4)
- The universe/earth is very old
- “We know that it (a day of creation in Genesis) is different from the ordinary day with which we are

# Views on the origin of life on earth

## Intelligent Design (ID)

- The natural world displays the hand of a 'designer'
- Irreducible complexity – certain features, such as eyes, are too complex to have evolved, so must have been created

## Evolutionary creationism (theistic evolution)

- Evolution is the means by which God created life

# Convergent Evolution

Definition: the acquisition of the same biological trait in unrelated lineages.

Examples:

- the wings of bats, birds, and insects evolved independently from each other but all are used to perform the function of flying
- the complex eyes of vertebrates, cephalopods (squid and octopus), cubozoan jellyfish, and arthropods (insects, spiders, crustaceans) evolved separately, but all perform the function of vision

# Convergent Evolution

- Very similar shells of brachiopods and bivalve molluscs
- Prickles, thorns and spines have evolved independently to prevent or limit herbivory
- Plant hormones such as gibberellin and abscisic acid of plants and fungi
- Koalas of Australasia have evolved fingerprints, indistinguishable from those of humans and Apes
- Even intelligence itself has evolved in very separate species including corvids (crows), dolphins and primates

# Creation and Evolution?

- “The presence of human beings, despite long odds against mankind's existence, is a miracle, and humans had to exist, exactly as we are.”
- “A world-picture that encompasses science but also the deep wisdom of theology may help us to explain how it is we can think, how we discover the extraordinary.”
- “It is the knowledge and experience of the Incarnation, the wisdom and warnings given by Jesus in the Gospels, and not least the Resurrection that in the final analysis are all that matters.” (Simon Conway Morris, 2004, *Life's Solution*)

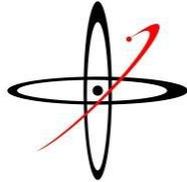
# Creation and Evolution?

- Evolutionary convergence explains that there is a metaplan, or 'deeper fabric to biology' which is inextricably linked to our world.
- The weak anthropic principle explains how a constrained 'finely tuned' universe supplies just the right conditions for intelligent life to arise.
- God is, therefore, both immanent and transcendent, both inside and outside time, Creator and Sustainer, able to oversee the fruition of the plans he has called forth 'in the beginning'.

# Science and Faith Resources



**The Faraday Institute  
for Science and Religion**  
[www.faraday-institute.org](http://www.faraday-institute.org)



**CHRISTIANS · IN · SCIENCE**



## Would you Adam and Eve it?

“My acceptance of Adam and Eve as historical is not incompatible with my belief that several forms of pre-Adamic ‘hominid’ may have existed for thousands of years previously. These hominids began to advance culturally. They made their cave drawings and buried their dead. It is conceivable that God created Adam out of one of them.

...Adam was the first *homo divinus*, if I may coin a phrase, the first man to whom may be given the Biblical designation ‘made in the image of God’. John Stott, 2003, *Understanding the Bible*; p54-56

## Would you Adam and Eve it?

“I believe that God created man, and whether it came by an evolutionary process and at a certain point He took this person or being and made him a living soul or not, does not change the fact that God did create man. ... whichever way God did it makes no difference as to what man is and man's relationship to God.”

Billy Graham: Personal Thoughts of a Public Man, 1997. p. 72-74

# Charles Darwin: Champion of the atheist cause?

“There is a grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers having been originally breathed by the Creator into one”

Origin of Species. 1859, p429

“In my most extreme fluctuations I have never been an atheist in the sense of denying the existence of a God. I think that generally, and more and more so as I grow older - but not always - that an agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind.”

Charles Darwin. 1866, Letter to M.E Boole