

# SCIENCE AND RELIGION GRADED PAPER 2

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## The thesis and arguments

You chose a controversial thesis, and so you had the makings of an interesting paper. Unfortunately, your claims were hyperbolic. Worse, your claims were supported with little justification or citation. You directly suggest that ethical and moral behavior can derive only from religion, but you fail to address an atheist population (which, given the statistics quoted, includes 60% of scientists) that behaves in a perfectly moral and ethical manner. You ignore sources of such good behavior that are philosophical instead of religious, and in doing so, make outrageously aggressive claims that have no support. Ultimately, your conclusion falls flat for lack of such justification.

## The writing

You are clearly capable of writing well, but this paper seems like something written quickly and with no editing. There were frequent punctuation errors, word-choice errors, and grammatical errors.

Just as importantly, the lack of quotation and citation was disturbing. You have sources, and so many of your claims clearly came from the texts in the bibliography, yet in few places do you attribute key ideas to the appropriate source. You are therefore dancing with plagiarism.

## Items marked on the paper

(1) I agree that science cannot address these philosophical questions. What is interesting, though, is that you seem to ignore the possibility that *philosophy* can address these philosophical question, independent of religion and theology. Science is not enough to make a complete world view, but that observation does not imply that religion is necessary.

(2) Bull-pucky. Support this claim. How do you explain the atheists who regularly act in perfectly moral ways, every bit as much so as religious people? How do you explain non-religious scientists who are deeply concerned with ethical use of science (not to mention ethical behavior in the rest of their lives?) It is one thing to claim that a scientist who is religious is still perfectly capable of being a full-fledged scientist; it is quite another to claim that scientists **should** (let alone **must**) be religious.

(3) That's a useful observation, but also a superficial conclusion. Obviously there **are** scientists who are religious. The interesting question is whether they fail, in some important way, at their science when they believe?

(4) You are taking a big risk by bringing Einstein into this argument. His comments on religion are complex, difficult to interpret, and the source of substantial debate. Any simple claim you might make about his views on religion are easily refuted and likely the process of selective reading of his commentary. I see that you've found texts on the topic, but it's not a settled issue.

(5) I am sorely tempted to stop reading. That claim is not only factually false, but both the interview with Collins and his book clearly tell the story of how he found religion. He was a believer **long** before his involvement in the Human Genome Project. While he nicely fits his experience in mapping the genome into his religious views, that experience was **not** the one that "led him to acknowledge the existence of God."

I'll keep reading, but I really hope the remainder of this paper demonstrates greater effort on your part.

(6) You take two prominent scientists. One is a born-again evangelical, and thus unarguably religious in a "typical" way. The other never subscribed to *any* organized religion, and had deeply unclear thoughts on what *God* was. You then assert that because these two scientists had these (very different) religious beliefs, then scientists can be religious. You still fail to address any interesting questions about whether their religion gets in the way of their science.

(7) A scientist who is religious is motivated (to do what?); therefore it is his religious beliefs that motivated him? You have not shown the reader how you get from A to B. There's no causal link in that argument.

(8) Justify a critical claim like this one. More importantly, are you implying that irreligious scientists lack that good judgement? If not, then they must get it from some other source, undermining your argument. If so, you have a **lot** of citing and arguing to do in order to make that case.

(9) The large hadron collider is about as unlikely to create a dangerous black hole as you are to walk through a wall because your molecules lined up "just so." Moreover, concerns for safety need not (and for many, are not) religiously based. Bringing up this example by suggesting that unethical scientists—that is, the irreligious ones—are haphazardly creating a dangerous situation is misleading if not irresponsible.

The creation of the atomic bomb is a deeply complex issue. Of course, it **is** dangerous (in the extreme), but you are implying again that the immoral, atheist scientists created it without any consideration for its consequences. If that's the case, you have some history to learn, because that view is far too simple. The scientists involved were (a) not all atheists by any means (and included Einstein), and (b) were the first, **most** deeply concerned about how this device would be used and controlled, pushing the issue with the military.

**Grade:** C+

Tim White

Science and Religion

Essay #2 Topic 3

9/21/08

### The Relevancy of Religion in the Scientific World

Einstein once said, "Science without religion is lame. Religion without science is blind (1)." This statement is a unique insight; it lays the groundwork for the mutualistic relationship of seemingly diverging ideals. Indeed science and religion can, and ~~in fact~~ should work together.

Science opens religion's eyes to the natural world while religion gives scientists faith in their "aspiration toward truth and understanding (2)." "What happens after life?" or "What existed before this universe?" These philosophical questions ~~of life, asked throughout history,~~ require more than just the limited

*It does? What does that mean, and why does it matter?*

scope of the scientific lens in order to comprehend. Having only a scientific outlook is too narrow a view of the world. A scientist can be religious and simply must be, as science without taking into account forgoes its conscience. This

②

*No.* → neglect leaves behind a keen sense of right and wrong. It is not only possible, if

not probable for a scientist to be religious as it is religion that gives the scientist principles and faith. Conversely science reflects religion, as it is religion that gives science its positivism.

*Wrong.*

*What?! How is positivism a product of religion? Support your claims.*

As stated in Francis Collins's interview, forty percent of all working scientist claim to be believers, therefore it is possible for a scientist to be religious. Specifically look at two of sciences greats, Francis Collins, the man who

③

*informal*

*not most scientists are not.*

④

mapped the human genome, and Albert Einstein. Francis Collins started his life with little religious background and through his years of scientific research discovered passion in religion. One of Collin's greatest accomplishments, creating a computer that could map genes has led him to acknowledge the existence of God.

⑤

To Collins the genome is not evidence against God but is in fact part of God's language, "the elegance and complexity of our own bodies and the rest of nature as a reflection of God's plan." Ironically he found his faith in science, while studying in medical school, reflecting upon the life and death situations of his patients. To

Collins, science is restricted to a standard of truth, for example a collection of atoms. It surely takes a leap of faith to show that there is meaning and purpose to this organized collection of truth and atoms (3).

What do atoms have to do with your argument?

Albert Einstein, who was regarded by many to be one of the greatest physicists of all time, was born into a Jewish background, and had a "lifelong respect for his Jewish heritage." Although throughout most of his life Einstein was not a practicing Jew, he was vehemently opposed to atheism. Robert Dawkins, in

Citation? Support?!

his interview with NPR (4), was mistaken when he tried to describe Einstein's view of a God. Einstein does believe in a God, only more of a Deist form of a God. The universe we live in according to Einstein is God's universe. In Einstein's studying of physics he only wanted to try and understand God's thoughts and

reference? Citation? Support?

feeling when he created this place. Einstein believed that God showed himself in the "harmony of what exists (1)." So can a scientist be religious? The examples and role of religion in these scientists' life demonstrate that the answer must be

LNCS

⑥

yes. If 40 percent of the scientific community can be religious it is clear that it is possible for a scientist to be religious.

Already stated.

The feelings that religion endows upon us are important ones to science.

Who? Cite!!

“Cosmic religious feeling is the strongest and noblest motive for scientific research,” some of the most motivated scientists in history have been the most religious. Religion is indeed a motivator as shown by the example of Georges Lemaitre. Georges Lemaitre, the man who proposed the Big Bang Theory was once a priest. It took his religious background in combination with his scientific knowledge to come to the now most accepted theory to the beginning of the universe (5).

Moreover, religion instills good judgment and brings diversity to the scientific mind. While it has been said that science doesn't need religion but there are many moral and ethical issues that can be helped when religion is applied.

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What does that mean here?

Take for example the new particle accelerator or the atomic bomb. These two items came from science but can have detrimental affect on the world. Without the conscience that religion gives us these things would solely be applied to have their most negative. Some things are not to be trifled with lightly and should be seriously scrutinized before they are applied, by religion or faith or philosophy or ethics.

False assumption.

most negative what?

Einstein wrote a series of essays on science and religion and the interaction between the two. In all the essays he concludes that it is best for a scientist to be religious. The scientific method itself supplies in the end nothing but facts and how the facts are conditioned by one another. This objective knowledge doesn't have the ability to give any answer to the large questions in life. It has nothing to do with religion.

to gain, the facts and morals can

be independent of religion.

tell us about human goals and aspirations. Knowledge is a remarkable thing to have but it is insufficient in acting as a guide (1).

It could be said that all the best scientists are those that are, “imbued with the aspiration toward truth and understanding (1),” and that feeling finds its source in religion. Goals and values are fundamentally based in religion, which is why science needs to take into account religion; otherwise it is leaving out a view of its ultimate ending point.

It is not only possible but also more likely than not that scientists are or should in some way or another be religious. The examples presented show religion plays a crucial if not essential role in science. That is why it is not just possible for a scientist to be religious. Religion gives science and scientists a conscience, which provides insight and understanding in their ultimate goals and truth.

support?

No.

40% are, so how can you make this claim?

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