

As long as there has been even the simplest form of civilization on earth there has been a constant uneasy relationship between science and religion. Over the centuries this restless relationship has grown more divisive to the point in which most scholars say the two are truly separate and should remain that way. While other scholars try to suggest an interconnection between science and religion is possible. This has been an ongoing dilemma over the past few centuries following up to and during our time.

Conflicts of Philosophical Ideals

The historical evidence that science and religion are in conflict are readily seen in past philosophical and scientific arguments. There are ample historical examples of religious institutions and individuals that go against modern and contemporary belief in evolutionism despite the overwhelming supporting evidence. Additionally, arguments have been presented regarding the conflicts between religion and science's approach to unresolved scientific issues and discoveries. The argument claims that many religious scientists now and in the past could have achieved much more in their research over the centuries in scientific discoveries if they had not accepted religious answers to unsettled scientific issues. Such an argument was recently made by an astrophysicist from America by the name of Neil deGrasse Tyson from New York State.

In the 19th century the "Conflict Thesis" was made available by John W. Draper and Andrew D. White. The Conflict Thesis focused on the continuous conflict throughout history between religion and science, which most modern science historians dismissed in its original form claiming that it is being superseded by the succession of historical researched shade of understanding.

There have been times that science and religion seem to co-exist and almost harmonize and complement each other, studies have even shown religions such as Christianity have regularly promoted and encouraged scientific studies. Although popular and continued controversial hostilities seem to prevail from the Catholic Church and other Christian sects regarding continued research in the field of AIDS, some religious individuals and leaders claim AIDS is God's punishment, and that researching in areas such as the research for a cure for AIDS would be anti-God like. One such religious individual by the name of "Jerry Falwell" stated, "AIDS is not just God's punishment for homosexuals, it is God's punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals."

Most of the traditional, and contemporary respected leaders of the Muslim faith, not overlooking the equally religious, faithful and traditional Christians sect leaders oppose finding cures for HIV or AIDS and often times speak out against those who help in that effort. This stand is in the belief that judgment from their God has been released in the form of the AIDS virus as a plague type punishment. Most Muslims and Christian leaderships believe this to be true as their religion teaches homosexuality to be wrong sexual conduct between two men.

It is easy to see the conflicts of philosophical ideals between science and religion in such crossroad issues as AIDS or HIV, and this causes one to ponder which of the two, science or religion really has God's sympathy for humanity at stake.

Much of the foundation that the Conflict Thesis was primarily based on is acknowledged as inaccurate today. During the Middle Ages it was widely believed or claimed that people during this time period thought that the world was flat, and this still is acknowledge as true in popular culture today. But scholars today regard this as a mistaken claim; the flat earth belief began to be promoted

during the same period that the Conflict Thesis originated from. Science historians R.L. Numbers and D.C. Lindberg write “there was scarcely a Christian scholar of the Middle Ages who did not acknowledge the earth was spherical.”

Many traditional and contemporary respected scholars report that during ancient times the study of natural sciences were routinely aggravated, suppressed and killed off by the popularity and rise of Christianity, with huge amounts of evidence such historical cases build support of an image of constant conflict between science and religion.

Different Approaches to the Same World

Two distinct approaches are taken to the study of life here on earth by science and religion. Science is based almost entirely on the foundation of mathematics, while religion is anchored in the personal view from life experiences. From these two platforms conflicts are bound to arise, as science focuses on mathematics to measure and gauge the world around us, religions focus on how the world around us should be. By science yielding to a religious belief system would lead to inaccurately labeling or ascribing properties to the world of natural sciences with possible disastrous consequences.

Does Religion Fear Science?

Dan Brown’s book “Angels and Demons” throws an interesting light on the modern struggle that religion has to come to terms with the sciences. Religions and religious people benefit from science and the discoveries and technologies that it has produced like; the airplane, cars, radios, television, the computer and of course the internet. Then why or how come there seems to be so much conflict between the two?

The fear religions portray may be in the concern that science will get out-of-hand. It is without saying the atomic bombs used during the Second World War on Japan still leave mankind with a hair rising fear that these scientific devices will never be used again. As the many years have past since the 1940’s the world’s nuclear arsenal has grown to tens of thousands of such bombs that could easily destroy the earth thousands of times over, this fact makes even the non-believer consider religion.

People fear what they don’t know or don’t understand, religion is a study of life from a personal experience, so many of the religious leaders do not have the advanced training that most modern day scientist do have, such as in physics or chemical engineering. The study of science today is so vast that no one person or religion can monitor or master it all. Religious leaders not only fear the unknown scientific discoveries but more so the scientists themselves who do not know for certain the possible dangers from the science research they are conducting.

One such case where a scientist name Marie Curie made incredible gains in the study of radioactivity, but she was unaware at the time as everyone else was of the biological dangers from over exposure to radioactivity. Marie Curie died from aplastic anemia blood disorder which was assumed to be caused from long term exposure to radioactivity.

Knowledge Beyond Man’s Grasp

The awe inspired fear of new technologies and the knowledge beyond man’s grasp, this is the kind of fear science invokes in religions around the globe. The awe that comes from modern scientific

discoveries is liken to the awe a person feels when contemplating the plan of God for this world and places this reverence into the hands of men, scientific men. This enigma compels religious and even non-religious people to ask questions like, what happens when mankind via a few scientists make a ghastly mistake with knowledge or discoveries beyond our limits of understanding? What happens if new forms of technologies similar to radioactivity or chemical viruses are discovered hurriedly without the ability to contain their effects were to be let loose onto the world?

These questions and thoughts stretch the mind of men unto the unknown and into the realm of religion. The truth of the matter is man is finite limited in knowledge and understanding and this vulnerability and lack of ability to protect ourselves from ourselves compels us to consider a search for something greater than ourselves, some source or entity that we can depend on, trust in. Science then seems to push us toward religion in the end, for all men know they will eventually die by folly of their own or by others, and then the last question is ask, and then what?