10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars

When I look at … the stars, what is man that you are mindful of him?

Psalm 8
1. laws of nature have always existed
2. laws of nature popped into being out of ontological nothingness
3. The whole of space-time is dependent on a non-spatio-temporal reality, a being who cannot not exist.
OUTLINE

1. Big Questions
2. A Theology of Science
3. Science has deep Christian roots
4. Who am I (science version)
BIG QUESTIONS

- most questions science/faith are about theology/philosophy ..... 
- this should be uncontroversial, but 
   ....
Science has been so successful, won’t it answer all big questions for us too?
“That there is indeed a limit upon science is made very likely by the existence of questions that science cannot answer and that no conceivable advance of science would empower it to answer. These are the questions that children ask – the “ultimate questions” of Karl Popper. I have in mind such questions as:

How did everything begin?
What are we all here for?
What is the point of living?”

“It is not to science, therefore but to metaphysics, imaginative literature or religion that we must turn for answers to questions having to do with first and last things.”

-- Sir Peter Medawar, The Limits of Science,
Science is a great and glorious enterprise - the most successful, I argue, that human beings have ever engaged in. To reproach it for its inability to answer all the questions we should like to put to it is no more sensible than to reproach a railway locomotive for not flying or, in general, not performing any other operation for which it was not designed.

1. Big Questions

2. A Theology of Science

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4. Who am I (science version)
Doctrine of Creation

- The Beginning of Creation
  - Genesis 1, 2, 3 – The Creator of Heaven and Earth, human beings, the provider, the Creator rejected.

- The Songs of Creation
  - Prov 8:22-36 - Wisdom of God
  - Psalm 8 - Majesty of God
  - Psalm 19 - Glory of God
  - Psalm 148 - Universal praise of God

- The Lord of Creation
  - Luke 8:22 - The wind and the waves obey him
  - John 1:1-18 - The Word became flesh
  - Col 1:15-20 - Supremacy of Christ
  - Heb 1:1-14 - Heir of all things

Source: Message of Creation, David Wilkinson (IVP 2002)
Doctrine of Creation

• The Lessons of Creation
  • Genesis 9:1-17 -- A new trust
  • Job 38:1-42:17 -- A new understanding
  • Isaiah 40:9-31 -- A new strength
  • Acts 17:16-34 -- A new life

• The Fulfilment of Creation
  • Isaiah 65:17-25 - The Creator of a new heaven and earth
  • Romans 8:18-30 - The Creator liberates
  • 2 Peter 3:3-16 - The Creator transforms
  • Revelation 21:1-8 - The Creator Accepted

Source: Message of Creation, David Wilkinson (IVP 2002)
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.
And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.
Doctrine of Creation

Hebrews 1:1-4

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
Doctrine of Creation, miracles & science

- Miracles in the New Testament
  - Teras (a wonder)
  - Dunamis (work of power)
  - Semeion (a sign)

- A theology of science:
  - Science studies the “customs of the creator”
1. Big Questions
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Science has deep Christian roots

- “This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent being.”
- Sir Isaac Newton
Science has deep Christian roots

- Wrote “The Wisdom of God Manifested in Works of Creation”,
- Was governor of the “Corporation for the Spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England”
- Sir Robert Boyle (1627-1691)

Robert Boyle
Those who argue for the incompatibility of science and religion will draw little comfort from history......

the myth of a perennial conflict between science and religion is one to which no historian of science would subscribe.

-- Peter Harrison, Christianity and the rise of western science (2008)
Theism and science

• Theism grounds foundations of science like
  • Intelligibility
    • Unreasonable effectiveness of mathematics, a gift we neither understand nor deserve (Wigner 1960)
  • Beauty
  • Uniformity
• These principles are much more likely to be true on theism than on atheism.
• History of science shows the deep theological roots of these concepts
Vegetarian Butchers?

For us: Christianity is intellectually robust and existentially satisfying

www.oxforchristianmind.org
THE PENULTIMATE CURiosity
HOW SCIENCE SWIMS IN THE SLIPSTREAM OF ULTIMATE QUESTIONS

ROGER WAGNER & ANDREW BRIGGS
BIG QUESTIONS
OUTLINE

1. Big Questions
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4. Who am I (science version)
We share 15% of our genes with E. coli
25% with yeast
50% with flies
70% with frogs
98% with chimps

what makes us different?

Biological networks and evolution
Genes and the Logic of Life

Red dots are genes, black arrows -- show direction of control

source: U Alon
WHO AM I?
I am a self-assembled biological machine

I am the product of my genes

I am a member of a social system

WHO AM I?

I am gendered

I am a citizen

I am an economic actor

I am a father
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Mamalia
Order: Primates
Family: Hominidae
Tribe: Hominini
Subtribe: Hominina
Genus: Homo
Species: Homo Sapiens

-- Carl Linnaeus, 1758
I am a collection of chemicals (60% water):

- enough P for 2000 matches
- enough Fe for 1 nail
- enough Cl to disinfect a swimming pool
- enough fat to make 10 bars of soap
Mechanism exhausts meaning?

why is the water boiling?
WHO AM I?
Science and values

How to measure the value of a human life?

• chemist – value of the elements?
• physiologist – size of your brain
• psychologist – how smart you are
• anthropologist – how the community values you
• economist – how much economic value you produce
Science, God & the human condition

Science’s great success comes from self-imposed limits
“How did everything begin? What are we all here for? What is the point of living?”

“It is not to science, therefore but to metaphysics, imaginative literature or religion that we must turn for answers to questions having to do with first and last things.”

WHO AM I?

When I look at ... the stars
what is man that you are mindful of him?
Psalm 8
For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
Ephesians 2:10
Christians in Science

www.cis.org.uk