Science and Christianity

1. Limitations of science

"The existence of a limit to science is made clear by its inability to answer childlike elementary questions ... 'How did everything begin? What are we all here for? What's the point of living?'" (Sir Peter Medawar, Nobel prize-winning biologist)

"There is no reason to suppose that science cannot deal with every aspect of existence." (Peter Atkins, Chemist)

2. Creation and evolution

"The theory of evolution is about as much open to doubt as the theory that the earth goes round the sun." (Richard Dawkins, evolutionary biologist)

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

"Anyone who tells you that he or she knows how life started on earth some 3.4 billion years ago is a fool or a knave. Nobody knows." (Stuart Kaufman, evolutionary biologist)

"The problem of the origin of life is clearly basically equivalent to the problem of the origin of biological information." (Bernd-Olaf Küppers, philosopher of science)

"In China we can criticise Darwin, but not the government; in America you can criticise the government, but not Darwin." (Jun-Yuan Chen, evolutionary biologist)

3. Ethics and morality

Where does "morality" come from?

The Crusades, the Spanish Inquisition, Al-Qaeda, etc.

"They totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded." (Joshua 10:40)

"The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference." (Richard Dawkins, evolutionary biologist)

4. Cosmic fine-tuning

"It seems as though someone has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the universe ... The impression of design is overwhelming." (Paul Davies, physicist)

The electromagnetic force constant, the gravitational force constant and 10^{40} coins

The Anthropic principle

5. Cosmic order

"The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible." (Albert Einstein)

"I consider the comprehensibility of the world ... as a miracle or an eternal mystery." (Albert Einstein)

"The enormous usefulness of mathematics in the natural sciences is something bordering on the mysterious, and there is no rational explanation for it ... it is an article of faith." (Eugene Wigner, physicist)

Fibonacci numbers, daisies and stock prices

Trinity, unity and plurality

"In the beginning was the Word." (John 1:1)

6. Miracles and history

"He is not here, for he has risen." (Matthew 28:6)

Miracles just don't happen, right?

"In its favour … there exists such overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury in the world could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection story is true." (Lord Darling, former Lord Chief Justice)

The sovereignty of God

"A prior commitment to materialism." (Richard Lewontin, evolutionary biologist)

The problem of induction

Steve Jeffery, June 2014

steve@northlondonchurch.org