



Marketplace Moments

Bibliophoria

God, The Big Bang & Bunsen-Burning Issues

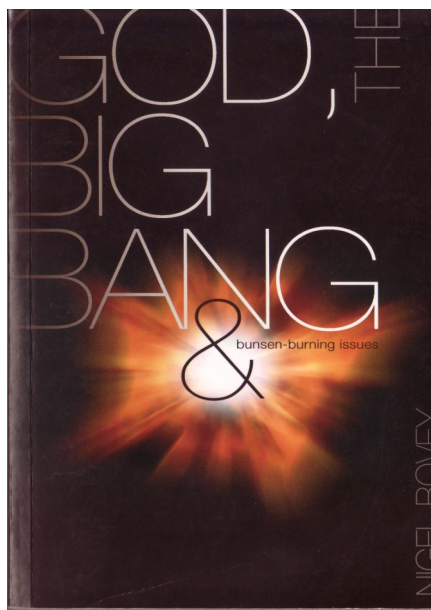
Nigel Bovey

What has God to do with Science?

The recent challenge from atheists like Richard Dawkins (author of the book, *the God Delusion*) has more or less formalized Atheism as a religion rather than a philosophical stance. Atheism by the way, is self-contradictory in nature in its fundamental proposition that "there is no god". Agnosticism is a more defensible proposition. The movement of atheism has come in the form of advertisements on public buses and summer camps for children. It is their form of evangelism and indoctrination.

However, we as believers need to understand fundamentally what has science got to do with our faith in Christ and God's creation. Graduates' Christian Fellowship Singapore's sectional group; Engineering and Science Christian Fellowship has used this book by Bovey to explore the issues.

Bovey have put together a collection of interviews with prominent professors, mostly from the United Kingdom, including John Polkinghorne, Alister McGrath, John Houghton, Francis Collins etc., ranging from Physicists, Botanist, Genetics, Astrophysicists, Biochemists. Bovey asks them to relate their field of study and expertise with their faith in God. Is it congruent to claim to be a good scientist and have a vibrant faith as a be-



liever in Jesus Christ? Are there overlaps in matters of faith and science or should they be placed in totally different categories? How does evolution or creationism fits into the grand plan of God? In what ways does the Big bang, genetics and DNA have implications on matters of our faith and understanding of God? What are some approaches to issues such as climate change and bio-ethics?

Although I do not agree with all the perspectives of the interviewees, this is a gold mine that opens up and challenge us to seek scriptures and relate our field of study in science and engineering. If we are not able to come to any form of conclusion immediately, at the very least, we are aware of the issues and viewpoints involved.

Timothy Liu

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Of the Heart and Mind

Economy, the Final Religion

The economy last year grew at an exceptional double digit rate of 14.7% according to released information from Ministry of Trade and Industry. However, a quick look at the GINI index reveals that Singapore is ranked 29th at 48.1 (as at 2008) with Hong Kong as the only other developed economy at 16th place. Zaobao on the 3rd Jan 2011, reported that real wages has actually fallen 2.4% and 1% in 2008 and 2009 respectively. Inflation is also at a high of 2.8%. But since the calculation of inflation only includes limited number of items, actual inflation is estimated at 3% and above.

With the number of natural disasters plaguing various parts of the world, supply of scarce resources such as oil, coal, precious metals and food have been disrupted. Many pundits expect continue rise in cost of housing and other items in 2010. It means that you can purchase less with the same amount this year compared to last year. Notice some of your bowl of noodles or rice shrinking at the hawker centers even though you pay the same price? A reporter purchased several items from the wet market at \$50 which cost her only \$35 the year before.

A cursory reading of Revelations chapters 17 and 18 reveals a lot about what is to

come.

REV 18:3 For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries.

The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."

REV 18:4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say: "Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues;

But what exactly is this false religion of the Babylon and the Harlot? There are different interpretations but I believe it relates to the economy.

REV 18:11 "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their car-goes any more..."

REV 18:17 In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!"

There are some who speaks of looming crisis with the debts in the United States, particularly the debts of individual States among which leading are California and Illinois. How long will the current 'rolling good times' last? No one knows for sure but some estimates about 1 to 2 years.

Does this mean that we are in the times of Rev 18? I frankly do not know but we need to be aware of what is going on. Dr Larry Bates likens our current debt base economy to being on crack cocaine. We require a larger boost of fiat money every time we run into a contraction in the econ-

omy (negative GDP growth). Governments then print more money (termed Quantitative Expansion) and spend more money to stimulate the economy. But if a country or economy is already in debt, where do they get more money? You also require larger and larger infusion of fiat money to get the next 'kick'.

Ancient kings used to take their gold coins, add impurities to the gold, thus creating more 'gold coins' to finance their debts.

"Come out of her my people, my people, so that you will not share in her sins". I suggest a few ways that we can consider.

- 1) Be contented in God's provision. It is so easy to see others gaining bonuses and getting higher pay, moving to a new job etc. It is also tempting at shopping malls, dealerships and property launches. Don't buy on impulse.
- 2) Clear your debts if you have them, especially credit card debts. If you require help, talk to Crown Finances Ministry.
- 3) Plan your finances to hedge against inflation and conserve resources. There are many financial consultants out there. Not all give good advice.
- 4) Help others. Take time to be involved in volunteer organizations for those who are disadvantaged and not gaining from this market growth.

God is still in control. Read Rev 19-22. God is never caught by surprise. Take the opportunity to share of God's purpose and goodness. Let us continue to be faithful to our calling in the marketplace this New Year.

Eyes in a Darkened Room

Agora

Set in the 4th century A.D. in the city of Alexandria, the story speaks of a noblewoman Hypatia played by Rachel Weisz. Story revolves in part of 3 students of Hypatia who had crushes on her (who can blame them), but primarily revolves around the theme of religious tolerance and humanists' philosophy.

Of her three students, Orestes (Oscar Isaac) became a Christian and was part of the Roman authority. Synesius (Rupert Evans) became a Bishop and Davus (Max Minghella) join part of a Christian militia.

The aristocracy that Hypatia belongs to was increasingly challenged by the rebellious Christian population. In order to quell this, the pagans sorted to retaliate while supposedly the Jews were caught in the middle of it all. The movie presents Hypatia as the voice for humanity and reason. She is portrayed as the heroine who was enamored with the stars and planets, accredited in the movie who has discovered laws that governs them per-

haps before Kepler and Galileo.

There were also various speeches and counter speeches. Most of which in my opinion is biased against religions, Christianity in particular, in favor of liberal humanism.

Here lies why I suggest Christians go watch this movie.

The speeches and various dialogues and allegories are laden with half truths and self-contradictory statements. It sets a priori that faith and reason does not go together and imposes that only humanism is congruent with reason. With Rachel as the embodiment of humanism, the movie presentation of humanism is 'visually compelling'.

Although the theme of the movie focuses much of religious intolerance and how power and religion does not go hand in hand, (much is sadly documented in our history books), we also need to realize that humanism, for that matter, atheism or agnosticism are as much 'religions' of a different kind. There may be no figurine



statues or concepts of gods involved. However, atheism operate much like a religion where there is a strongly held believe system that are a priori and requires as much faith to be an atheist as it is to be Christian. What humanism tries to do is to claim exclusive rights and access to reason.

As Christians, we also need to honestly face up to a dark past where many have used the name of their God in vain. Rather than denying them, we need to face our critics and acknowledge the atrocities and yet direct them to what scriptures has to say. What was done, was in blatant violation of the teaching of our Lord Jesus.

This movie provides many point of engagement from various perspectives of what it means for religious harmony and tolerance.

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Kingdom Building at the Workplace

Coming Events

For more information check our web-site.

15 Jan Crossings—The Other side
(For Crossings Alums)



It also provide perspectives on the various approaches to a philosophy or worldview. There is a human and political element in all these that we cannot ignore. Here are some questions we can ask at various points in the movie:

- 1) What are some of the arguments that are inconsistent?
- 2) What are some correct and erroneous representation of various faiths (including atheism)?
- 3) How is religion twisted to achieve the various ambition of individuals portrayed in the movies?
- 4) What are ways in which these are done today?
- 5) To what extend we understand tolerance in a post-

- modern world and a biblical perspective?
- 6) How do we uphold truth in a world of pluralism?
- 7) How much does social injustices play in these religious conflicts?
- 8) How should Christians respond to religious violence?
- 9) Discuss what are some possible scenarios which we can avoid?
- 10) How would different religious affiliations affect our personal relationships (Hypatia and her 3 students)?

Timothy Liu