

## **Views from the Pews: Does science undermine the Biblical theology of creation?**

No, quite the opposite. If the world is not good and rational, science is not possible; if the world is not free to be itself, science is not necessary to understand it. The Biblical theology of creation claims that creation is good, rational, and contingent, and that because we are children of a rational God, we are capable of understanding it.

The three most basic assumptions of science are: (1) If the universe is good, it is worthy of careful study. (2) If it is rational, it is predictable and intelligible. (3) If it is contingent, it has freedom to be otherwise than it is, although still coherent and predictable. Science confirms all three assumptions based on Biblical creation theology, so the state of things can be and has to be studied by experiment, not deduced from pure reasoning.

For Newton and many other early members of the Royal Society in London, science was a means of reaching out to God. Their legacy has ensured that, at least in the Protestant west, God's work in creation was open to science from the beginning. The far more recent idea of "creationism" has completely different, largely anti-science origins in parts of USA.

Other cultures had developed systems of organised knowledge, but no ancient science produced advanced technology based on controlled experiments. The Greeks believed that all forms of matter are inferior embodiments of pure rational forms, so that experimenting on them would be pointless. The Chinese had no geometry, and their holistic view of life saw no value in experimenting on the bits separately. Religious authorities in conservative countries, and state officials in China, exerted tight control over higher education, in contrast to the intellectual freedom of western universities.

God speaks to us in many languages, but only western biologists learned to read the language of the genes. Genes are sets of 3-letter words, which instruct an egg to grow into an adult. Genetic words assembled in different combinations determine most of the body shape and behaviour of all animals. The same language of the genes is there in the inmost parts of every one of us. We are all creatures of words, but best of all, as Christians, we also all belong to the most precious word of all, Christ the Word of God.

*Kim King*