**Questions Asked by Teenagers Regarding Science and the Bible**

**and Answers to Them**

What are the questions that people in their middle and late teens actually ask when putting the Biblical worldview in context with scientific findings and interpretations? The questions we will discuss in this workshop were collected in a German Christian high school over a number of years and are probably representative for students in other European countries. Many, but not all of the students were from Christian families; not all of them would identify as Christians personally. This talk will focus on topics raised recurrently, group them by extracting the underlying cultural Christian and non-Christian presuppositions, and demonstrate on a selection of concrete questions how to answer them.

**Peter Imming** received degrees in pharmacy and chemistry and a PhD and venia legendi in pharmaceutical chemistry from a German university. He has been involved in drug chemistry teaching and research in Germany, the UK, China, and other countries. Currently, he is head of a pharmaceutical/medicinal chemistry department of a German university. His research focuses on the design and synthesis of new drug substances and on molecular mechanisms of drug action. He has a strong interest in the relation of science and Christian faith, frequently lecturing on related topics by invitation of e.g. universities, churches, and schools.

1. "Are faith and science compatible?"
   1. *Representative questions asked by teenagers:*

"Can some wonders be explained scientifically?"

"Does science (mathematics) have anything to do with God?"

"Please comment on Hawking's opinion that the universe came into existence without God"

"What about proofs of God's existence? Are they still valid?"

* 1. Naturalist philosophy tries to make us forget that everybody lives by faith, by trusting in presuppositions, precedence, and most importantly paragons, or role models. The contrast or even conflict between faith and science is fabricated. The real conflict is a philosophical or theological one, resulting in different interpretations of scientific findings. "By faith we understand" (Hebr. 11:3).

1. "What about the contrast between Biblical reports and scientific findings?" "How come science tells a completely different story about origins than the Bible does?"
   1. *Representative questions asked by teenagers:*

"Why does the Bible say that the sun turns around the earth?"

"Evolution, creation, or both?"

"How do creation and science go together?"

"Is it possible that the theory of evolution is true but was 'made' by God"?

"Did God start the big bang?"

"Did God start the evolution of species?"

"Cosmological background radiation from a Biblical perspective"

"The redshift and how atheists interpret it"

Adam and Eve: Origin of mankind

Adam and Eve: Incest

* 1. Like at any time in history, Christians today are challenged by what the culture they live in considers "proven" or focusses upon in humanity's struggle to make sense of a world where the voice of God, as heard in the Bible, is just one small voice in a large chorus. Christians of all professions and backgrounds need to cooperate to witness rationally and engagingly that the Bible is neither refuted nor relativised by current findings. "All men are like grass ... but the word of the Lord stands for ever." (1 Peter 1:24-25)

1. Contrast between life during Biblical times and modern (technology-blessed) life
   1. *Representative questions asked by teenagers:*

"How did Jesus talk to more than 1000 people without a microphone?"

"Why do so many Christians entertain medieval (completely outdated) thinking?"

* 1. Probably by the experience of our personal maturation from a helpless baby to an adult, we are inclined to think that the history of mankind is a history of gradually growing up. But is it really? Is technological progress the best yardstick for improvement? "God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes." (Eccles. 7:29)

1. "What about things in nature the Bible does not speak about? Doesn't this refute the Bible?"
   1. *Representative questions asked by teenagers:*

"Explain the existence of dinosaurs from a Biblical perspective"

"Why is there no mathematics in the Bible?"

* 1. Partly perhaps because the Bible is taught in churches to be all-encompassing and all-sufficient, partly because the Bible superficially is less "exciting" than many things encountered in creation or for that matter in fiction, people may misunderstand the scope and style of the Bible. Correct teaching of the Bible needs to anticipate such misunderstandings, and deal with them individually. "I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written." (John 21:25) "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." (2 Tim 3:16)

1. "What about things the Bible talks about, but there is no scientific evidence for them?"
   1. *Representative questions asked by teenagers:*

Angels

Life after death

Heaven

* 1. Again (cf. I.), the naturalist usurpation of science actually leads to a dramatic diminishment of what humans can know. While the methods of science are excellent within their scope, other sources of knowledge including immaterial ones are as commonplace as they are essential, or highly singular and essential. "No-one has ever seen God, but the only begotten Son has made him known." (John 1:18)

1. How did the Bible come to be? - Science seems to tell a different story about this than the Bible itself and Christians

This topic will not be treated in the workshop.

**Suggested readings and sources:**

John Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0745953717

http://www.genesisnet.info

R. Junker, S. Scherer, *Evolution - ein kritisches Lehrbuch*. 7. Aufl. 2013. ISBN-13: 978-3921046104 (http://www.evolutionslehrbuch.info/)

http://www.begruendet-glauben.org/

http://www.reasonablefaith.org/

http://www.evolutionnews.org/