

Answering Science-Based Attacks: What Every Believer Needs to Know to Respond to Scientific Atheism

This workshop will help any Christian leader involved in evangelism or apologetic ministry in how to respond when scientists attack our Christian faith. Most scientists and non-scientists are unaware how the adversarial climate is created, but Christians generally experience the tension. Cosmology and astrophysics within physics have caused the strongest “attacks” in recent years, but the whole discussion of the Higgs Boson, aka “the God Particle,” may have made the strongest recent impact. This workshop is designed for Christians with widely differing amounts of scientific knowledge. Participants who sign up ahead of time will be asked to read 6-8 pages (also available at the workshop) in preparation and be ready to discuss the ideas presented. The workshop will give a basic understanding of what is happening and practical strategies in how to respond.

Richard Carhart earned his Ph.D. in theoretical particle physics from the University of Wisconsin for work on the W^\pm mesons. He is Professor of Physics Emeritus at the University of Illinois at Chicago, having taught there and done original research for 35 years. He served as an academic missionary for one year at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and one year at Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague, Czech Republic. Richard has been a lay theologian and Bible teacher over the last 50 years. His interest in scientific apologetics stems from his own need to integrate his Biblical faith with the findings of science, and to counter prevailing erroneous world views. Richard was Founder of the European Scientific Network, a division of the European Leadership Forum, and now serves as a Forum Speaker and Mentor. He has lectured on the relationship between science and Christian faith in Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Crimea, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine, the UK, and the USA.

I. Introduction

A. What is scientific apologetics?

B. Where is apologetics needed (including scientific)?

1. Evangelism

2. Group persuasion (helping people to respect Christian faith/world view)

3. Public/cultural persuasion (level the cultural playing field)

II. Integrating Science with the Biblical World View

- A. The Biblical world view is the fully true basis for all human thought (& science).

- B. It has been revealed to us by the Self-revealing Creator of all.

- C. It provided the metaphysical/philosophical basis for science to develop in Europe.

- D. It integrates perfectly with reliable science
 - 1. In many places the Bible says there is an observable, predictable natural world that proceeds by cause and effect and is unchanged over long periods of time.

 - 2. The uncaused cause of all else is not an infinite chain of natural cause and effect into the past and the future

 - 3. The Uncaused Cause of all else is a Self-revealing Person who gives His name as “I AM.”

 - 4. This is also a direct claim to be the CREATOR AND OWNER OF ALL.

 - 5. Among created things are the laws of nature.

 - 6. These laws are not self-maintaining; they must be “upheld”/“held together” over all space and time.

 - 7. Therefore, every “natural occurrence” is a direct act of God!

8. Current physics and the Bible agree that nature had a definite beginning; cosmology claims that 13.8 Gya space, time, and matter all began to exist.
- E. Science is a gift of God so that we can share a reflection of His mind in creating the universe as we investigate the natural world, and it can shed some light on supernatural events entering the natural world.
1. Human logic, mathematics, and the power to imagine & observe form the basis for doing science.
 2. Use of these abilities has been amazingly (“miraculously”) successful in uncovering the laws of nature and using them to predict and control it.
 3. What guarantees that these functions of the human organism should have any successful relationship to the structure of nature?
 4. We have been created in the image of God, the Personal Creator of the universe.
 5. Thus our minds are a (lesser) reflection of the Mind that structured the universe, so we can partially understand and control it.
- F. Science studies real events and their causes, seeking to establish the extent of natural cause-and-effect in the world, and can help establish the occurrence of supernatural causes for some events.

III. The Cultural Pressure from Science Against Christianity

- A. The overriding problem is the *cultural marriage* of science and naturalism.
1. The natural world is all that exists; it is not embedded in a broader reality.

2. There is no valid knowledge of reality outside of scientific knowledge
 3. Natural laws as a self-existent self-maintaining machine; the ultimate uncaused cause of all that exists (vs. Personal Being as uncaused cause).
- B. We must be very alert to distinguish historical versus laboratory science.
- C. Application of our “toolkit” for responding to examples of science-based attacks
1. Stephen Hawking says, “Because there is a law of gravity, the universe can and will create itself.”
 2. “Cosmology and astrophysics will tell us where we came from and where we are going.”
 3. “The God Particle has now been discovered, which ‘gives mass’ to all the other particles, without which we would not exist.”
 4. “Using science we will understand completely the human brain & what we call ‘human mind,’ and will control human behavior, creating utopia.”
 5. The universe started 13.75 Gya, and Earth life developed starting about 3.5 Gya, which contradicts Genesis, which says everything was created about 10,000 years ago. [Problem of laboratory science vs. historical science.]

IV. Practical suggestions for generalists doing scientific apologetics.

- A. Clarifying our goals for opportunities to give scientific apologetic answers.
- B. Finding the voices we need to answer
- C. Using specialists

V. Practical suggestions for career scientists doing scientific apologetics.

- A. Seek from the Lord a true servant heart in working with local leaders
- B. This is a spiritual battle and cannot be won by human brilliance or effort; we must seek the power of the Holy Spirit through prayer.
- C. Work with those you intend to serve.
- D. Have them explain their dreams and goals for any event.
- E. Let them tell you what you can & can't say in each venue.
- F. Try to get any PowerPoint presentations or handouts to them early for translation.

Recommended Readings:

Natural and supernatural causes: C. S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*, HarperCollins, New York NY, **2001**, esp. "Miracles and the laws of nature," pp. 87-98.

Scientific challenges to the existence of God: J. C. Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* Lion Hudson plc, Oxford England, **2009**.

Science and the interpretation of Genesis 1: J.P. Moreland & J.M. Reynolds Eds., *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI, **1999**.

Response to Stephen Hawking's "The Grand Design": J.C. Lennox, *God and Stephen Hawking: Whose Design is it Anyway?*, Lion Hudson plc, Oxford England, **2011**.

Atheist conversion to intelligent design autobiography: A. Flew, *THERE IS ~~NO~~ GOD*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York NY, **2007**.